



Conservation News

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District

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1945-2020 | 75 Years of Service

Summer 2020

District's Arbor Day A Success with Harrison County Landowners





So God Made A Farmer

Paul Harvey

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker." So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper and then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board." So God made a farmer.

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild. Somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait on lunch until his wife's done feeding visiting ladies and tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon -- and mean it." So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt. And watch it die. Then dry his eyes and say, 'Maybe next year.' I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make harness out of haywire, feed sacks and shoe scraps. And who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, then, pain'n from 'tractor back,' put in another seventy-two hours." So God made a farmer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain

clouds and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place. So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadow lark. It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners. Somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church.

"Somebody who'd bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says he wants to spend his life 'doing what dad does.'" So God made a farmer.

Editor's note: "So God Made a Farmer" was the name of a speech legendary broadcaster Paul Harvey gave at a 1978 Future Farmers of America Convention. The speech was originally published in Harvey's syndicated column in 1986; however, it contained some phrases Harvey first wrote in an article for the Gadsden Times in 1975.

Photo from MSU Delta Research and Extension Center

Pollinators All Around Us

Mark W. LaSalle, Ph.D., LaSalle Consulting LLC

Pollinators come in all shapes and sizes, many of whom go unnoticed. Spring is the time of the year to take notice of these busy creatures as we all stay close to home, enjoying our gardens and yards that have become our refuge.

As we take a closer look for these nectar and pollen lovers, this is as good a time as any to learn more about who our pollinators are, where they live, and how we can make our yards more pollinator friendly. Because without them, our tomato plants go unfertilized.

Besides the obvious suspects, like butterflies, moths, and honeybees, many other insects are great pollinators. The southeastern U.S. for example, is home to upwards of 400 species of solitary bees and wasps, most if not all being important pollinators. Many species of flies make up an untold number of additional pollinators, many of them quite tiny.

We all know that hummingbirds are also pollinators, but so to are other birds including nectar-feeding tanagers and orioles. Some of our common flowering plants and vines are pollinated largely by hummingbirds. Coral Bean and Cross Vine have long, tubular flowers that bloom as hummingbirds arrive from their wintering grounds in South America.

As for where these creatures live, we often forget that most pollinators are adult forms of insects, with their larval stages found on plants or nests in your yard or nearby habitats. For caterpillars of butterflies and



moths, the leaves of some of our flowers, shrubs and trees serve as host plants, like milkweed for Monarch Butterflies or Paw Paw for Zebra Swallowtails. The young of many of our solitary bees and wasps, however, are reared on insect prey provided by adult females, placed in hollow stems of plants, mud homes, or in cavities in the ground.

The neat thing is that these nests are located right under our noses, tucked away in the very landscape that we now have plenty of time to explore. Look for the mud nests of mud daubers or potter's wasp, placed under the eaves of your house or screens on your windows. Any small hollow tube or the holes of Carpenter Bees may be the nests of any number of bees or wasps, like the Grass-Carrying Wasp that leaves tufts of grass leaves sticking out of these holes. Better yet, make your own bee and wasp nest by using the hollow stems or bamboo of canes. Bee nest boxes are also an easy DIY project using scrap pieces of wood that you just couldn't throw away. Leaving natural "no mow" areas of your yard is also a great approach, especially if it includes hollow-stemmed plants like Elderberry. The Xerces Society has a wealth of information about pollinators and their value to our lives and ideas for providing nesting opportunities. Visit xerces.org.

Start the adventure today! Sit for a spell in your garden and watch the fun!

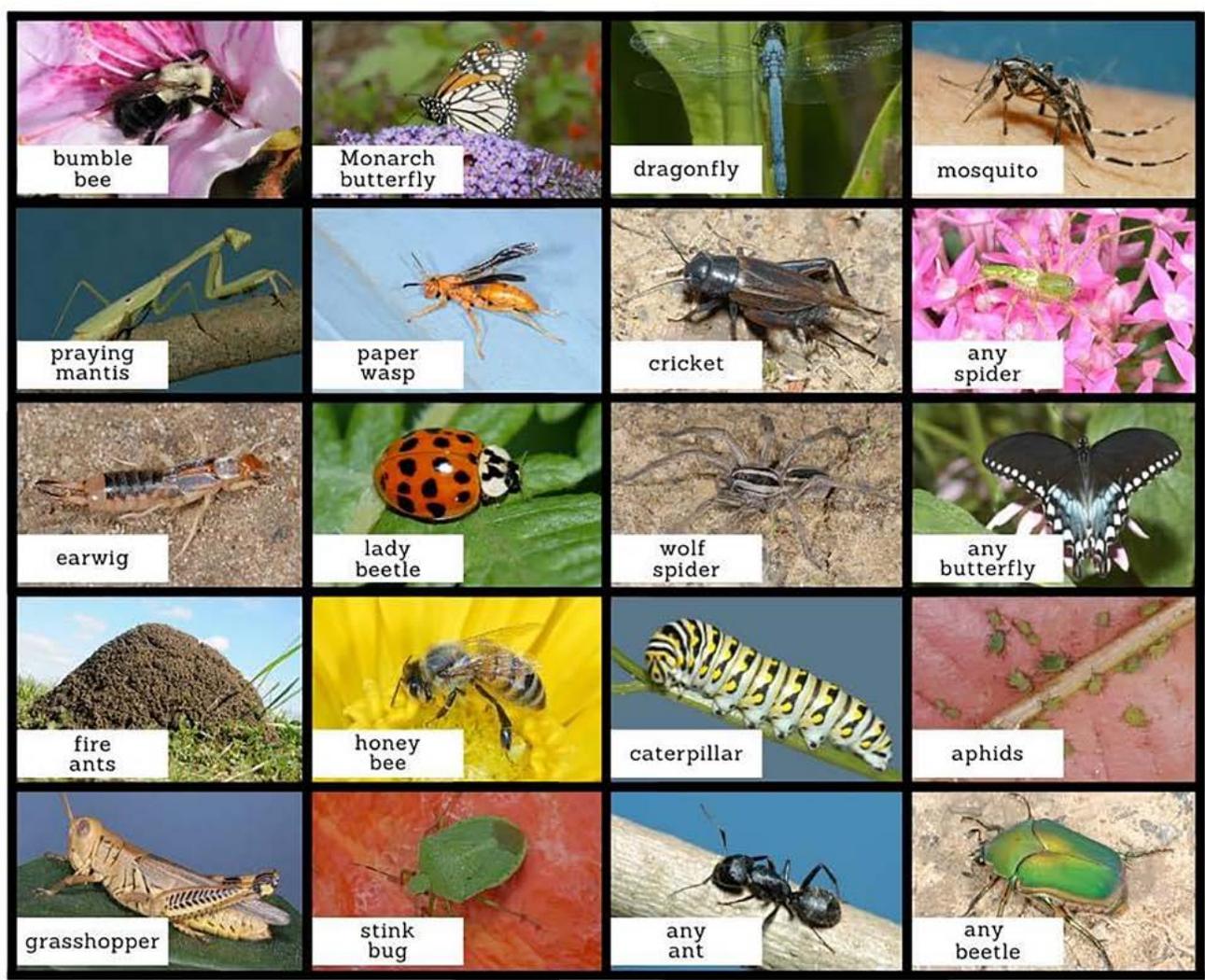
Potter's Wasp photo by Bruce Norton.
Bamboo Bundle photo by Mark LaSalle.



Let's go on a

BUG HUNT

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 EXTENSION

Cogongrass - More Ways Than One To Fight This Invasive Weed

Joe Buckley, Commissioner

It is springtime in south Mississippi and the area is blooming with wildflowers and the sounds of songbirds. The green grasses and warm days of the season of rebirth are greeting us following winter. There is one flower that we have that is not welcome though. The white seed heads of cogongrass are present along roads, in lawns, and in pastures. Many don't know that this is the marker of the 7th most invasive nuisance according to experts. We are aware that these plants are tough and very resilient. They are a formidable opponent as we try to keep them at bay. So, how did cogongrass get here and where did it come from?

Cogongrass, *Imperata cylindrica*, came to our country in 1911 from Japan accidentally in packing. Over the years it has spread to surrounding states. While most of the early research efforts have employed the use of chemical herbicides, there are other possibilities that might also prove effective in the fight to contain this weed. Cogongrass travels by two methods: The first is by rhizomes. These roots require that the grass grow tall to support the root system. The other way that the plants move is by seeds. These are produced in the white seed heads that we see this time of year. Each one can produce 3000 seeds that can be carried by the wind for miles.

If the idea of creating a large dead area on your property does not particularly appeal to you, maybe alternatives to spraying might be of interest. In research there have been found three pretty good adversaries to cogongrass: The first is tillage. The observation for this method came about as it was noticed that tilled rowcrop land was seldom affected by cogongrass. The normal treatment is to till at least 6 inches deep at an interval of about 2 months during the growing season for the grass. Cleaning of the tillage equipment should be performed on sight to prevent the spread of the rhizomes.

Another is shade. Despite early thoughts that this weed is shade tolerant, evidence shows that it fares poorly in heavy shade. If native plants can out compete cogongrass in terms of growth and density, the grass can be greatly diminished.

Another method is close cutting. I have seen this method almost eliminate this pest when performed on a weekly basis throughout the summer. One important thing to remember: do not cut this grass when those white seed heads are present! You could be spreading cogongrass for miles.

I hope that this will help in fighting this invasive weed. Internet searches can give more information for alternative approaches to cogongrass control.



Chinese Tallow Tree Application

Mississippi Coastal Plains RC&D

Landowners with Chinese Tallow (popcorn) trees may contact the MS Coastal Plains RC&D to fill out a form for chemical to control this invasive species. Our south Mississippi contact is Patty Rogers at patty.rogers@live.com. On the form you will indicate how many Chinese Tallow trees are on your property.

If in addition to Chinese Tallow trees, you also have a cogongrass infestation, list the number of acres of cogongrass. Chinese Tallow tree treatment recommendations – 1 ml undiluted or 2 ml diluted 50% solution per incision in trunk of tree at diameter at breast height. One quart will treat approximately 400 trees @ two hacks per tree. Cogongrass treatment recommendations- ½ solution of Polaris AC Complete. Always follow label directions when applying herbicides.



Lime/Litter Spreader Available for Lease

The District has available a CL-HYD-PUL Adams 16-ft pull type Lime/Litter Spreader with lime baffle and 4" center double bar kit for lease. Equipment is available to lease by Harrison County landowners by filling out a lease agreement and making an equipment deposit. Rental fee is \$5 per acre. Call 228-234-1779 to schedule use. Pickup and dropoff at Second Chance Farm, 16241 Northrup Cuevas Road, Lizana. Lease agreement form is available at hcsxcd.co.harrison.ms.us.



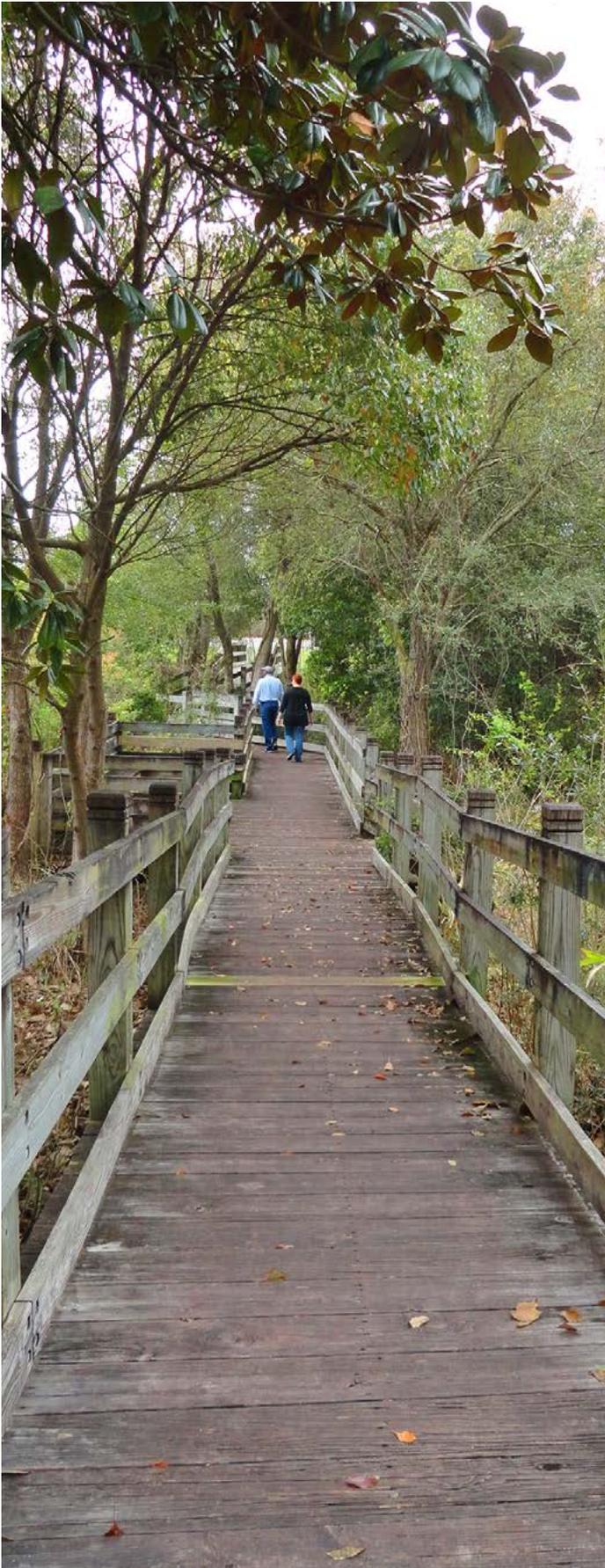
Cogongrass Application

Mississippi Department of Agriculture

Landowners with cogongrass may contact the MS Dept. of Agriculture & Commerce, Bureau of Plant Industry, to fill out a form to receive chemicals to control cogongrass. Our south Mississippi contact is Keith Pouncey at keithpouncey@hotmail.com or visit

mdac.ms.gov for the form. On the form you will indicate how many acres of cogongrass you have on your pasture, pine plantation, mix forestry, hardwood, or other agriculture land. Always follow label directions when applying herbicides.

Clower Thornton Nature Park





To Better Serve Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Tyree Harrington, NRCS District Conservationist

“More than a quarter of producers are beginning farmers,” said USDA Deputy Secretary Stephen Censky. “We need to support the next generation of agricultural producers who we will soon rely upon to grow our nation’s food and fiber.”

To institutionalize support for beginning farmers and ranchers and to build upon prior agency work, the 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to create a national coordinator position in the agency and state-level coordinators for four of its agencies – Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), and Rural Development (RD).

Sarah Campbell was selected as the national coordinator to lead USDA’s efforts. A beginning farmer herself, Campbell held previous positions with USDA and has a wealth of experience working on issues impacting beginning farmers and ranchers. She recently served as acting director of customer experience for the Farm Production and Conservation Business Center, where she led the piloting of innovative, customer-centric initiatives.

In her new role, she will work closely with the state coordinators to develop goals and create plans to increase beginning farmer participation and access to programs while coordinating nationwide efforts on beginning farmers and ranchers.

“We know starting a new farm business is extremely challenging, and we know our customers value and benefit from being able to work directly with our field employees, especially beginning farmers,” Campbell said. “These new coordinators will be a key resource

at the local level and will help beginning farmers get the support they need. I look forward to working with them.”

Each state coordinator will receive training and develop tailored beginning farmer outreach plans for their state. Coordinators will help field employees better reach and serve beginning farmers and ranchers and will also be available to assist beginning farmers who need help navigating the variety of resources USDA has to offer.

More on Beginning Farmers

Twenty seven percent of farmers were categorized as new and beginning producers, with 10 years or less of experience in agriculture, according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

USDA offers a variety of farm loan, risk management, disaster assistance, and conservation programs to support farmers, including beginning farmers and ranchers. Additionally, a number of these programs have provisions specifically for beginning farmers, including targeted funding for loans and conservation programs as well as waivers and exemptions.

More Information

Learn more about USDA’s resources at newfarmers.usda.gov and farmers.gov. For more information on available programs in your area, contact your local USDA service center. You may also reach NRCS District Conservationist Tyree Harrington at 228-860-1363 or email tyree.harrington@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Photo by MSU Ag Communications/Kevin Hudson

Lynn Meadows Discovery Center Receives District Garden Grant



Algal Leaf Spot On Southern Magnolia

Tim Ray, MSU Extension Agent

I have received several calls over the last few years concerning spots on leaves of Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*). This magnolia is susceptible to *Cephaleuros virescens*, a parasitic alga that causes leaf spots and twig cankers.

Warm, humid weather common to Mississippi encourages the growth and spread of this pathogen. Algal leaf spot begins as a round, green, somewhat fuzzy or velvety colony on the leaf surface. The green spot will turn reddish-brown with age. Often a fungus grows along with the alga, giving the spot a grayish appearance. The fungus is not parasitic on the magnolia nor the alga. Algal leaf spots that have been colonized by fungi are referred to as being lichenized. The alga spreads by rain-splashed or windblown spores that are produced in wet weather.

The pathogen overwinters and weathers adverse environmental conditions in twig cankers and leaf spots. Algal leaf spot is most severe on magnolias that are weak and in poor vigor. Trees that are

open-grown and subject to direct sunlight, high temperatures, and excessive leaf wetness from rain or irrigation are more likely to get the disease.

To help manage algal leaf spot, do the following:

1. Maintain vigorous trees with proper watering and fertilization.
2. Avoid irrigation systems that spray water onto leaves.
3. Rake and destroy fallen leaves. You may also want to pick off infected leaves from trees that have very minor infections.
4. Prune overhanging branches of surrounding plants to reduce humidity by improving air circulation.
5. Apply a copper-containing fungicide such as Southern Ag Liquid Copper Fungicide, Monterey Liqui-Cop, or SePRO CuPRO 5000. Please read and follow all label directions.

For more information call 228-865-4227 or email tim.ray@msstate.edu.

Popp's Ferry Elementary Receives District Garden Grant



34th Street Community Garden





Heading To The Woods

Alex Littlejohn, The Nature Conservancy

“Heading to the woods” was a fairly common phrase in my parents’ house growing up. As common as the sights of another load of timber headed down our county road to the mill, where some of my friends’ parents worked. This scenario plays out every day in our state’s communities, where understanding the role forests play just comes naturally. Across Mississippi, 125,000 private landowners are managing 19,700,000 acres of forestland. When you also consider the 47,000 jobs and billion-dollar annual impact the forest related industry has on our state’s economy, it becomes easy to see why every day is Arbor Day in Mississippi.

Arbor Day, celebrated each April, is the national observance every year that highlights the larger role trees play. They clean our air, our water, and serve as a renewable resource — as well as support unique habitats. Two such habitats that can be found here in Mississippi are the bottomland hardwoods of the Delta and the longleaf pines of south Mississippi.

Although these forests currently represent small percentages of their once vast acreages, their importance from a conservation perspective remains.

That’s why, over the last five years, the Mississippi Chapter has directly planted almost 2.5 million trees in effort to help restore these two Mississippi landscapes. An effort that has only been possible through great partnerships with private landowners, Delta Wildlife, Entergy Mississippi, Mississippi’s Department of Environmental Quality, the Walton Family Foundation and the US Department of Agriculture. And, before the end of the year, we hope to add yet another 700,000 trees to this total as a result of restoration efforts in partnership with the US Forest Service.

Since 1965, The Nature Conservancy has been working to conserve lands and waters in Mississippi that have provided a sense of place and connection to our natural heritage for many generations. TNC has played a key role in protecting and restoring some of our most iconic landscapes, totaling over 139,000 acres across the state. Together, we are making a measurable, lasting difference in Mississippi. nature.org



Seed Grain Drill Available for Lease

The District has available a 7 ft Sunflower Seed Grain Drill for lease to Harrison County landowners. To lease the grain drill, a lease agreement and equipment deposit must be made. Rental fee is \$5 per acre. For details and to schedule use call 228-234-1779. Pickup and dropoff at Second Chance Farm, 16241 Northrup Cuevas Road, in Lizana. Lease agreement form available at hcswcd.co.harrison.ms.us.

ConservationNews

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The Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District holds a regular monthly board meeting on the first Thursday of each month. This meeting is open to the public and held at the District Office, 12238 Ashley Dr., Gulfport, at 11:30 a.m. This board meets to administer the program of soil and water conservation in Harrison County.

For more information about any District projects and services, please call us at 228-831-1647 or visit us at hcswcd.co.harrison.ms.us.



**Harrison County Soil & Water
Conservation District
Mississippi**

**A true conservationist is a man
who knows that the world is
not given by his fathers,
but borrowed from his children.**

John James Audubon



Breakfast Casserole Recipe

1 pound	ground maple pork sausage
6 slices	soft hearty white bread
1 8oz package	shredded triple cheddar cheese
8	large eggs
2 cups	whole milk
1 teaspoon	dry mustard
1/4 teaspoon	salt
1/2 teaspoon	seasoned pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 13- by 9-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a large skillet, cook the sausage over medium heat, stirring frequently, until browned and crumbly, about 10 minutes; drain well on paper towels.
3. Cut and discard the crusts from the bread. Cut the slices in half, and arrange in a single layer in the prepared baking dish, cutting pieces to fit as necessary to cover the bottom of the dish. Sprinkle with the sausage and cheese.
4. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, mustard, seasoned salt and pepper; carefully pour the mixture over the cheese.
5. Bake casserole until set and golden, about 40 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.