Ag outlook: ‘Pretty much the same’

By Pamela Glisson
Business Writer

As Louisiana’s farmers and agricultural officials look ahead to 1992, they have major concerns such as the previous bad year, negative publicity, and the constant push for more “natural” means of raising crops and animals.

“Whereas, Odom claimed, Louisiana has considerable assets such as an abundant supply of water and good business locations,” he said. One good example, he said, consists of the state’s more than 300 businesses that produce Cajun products. “We’re noted all over the world for Cajun food and products,” said Odom, but he added that we’re also facing more and more fake Cajun inventions from outside companies.

The state’s new Cajun logo now is being used by about two-thirds of Louisiana companies with Cajun products, and he hopes this will help consumers to differentiate the real stuff from the imitations.

But Odom, who is a vice president and president-elect of the National Commissioners Association, believes similar statewide cooperation is needed to tackle other challenges such as the need to create more processing of commodities grown or raised in-state.

Right now, he said, processing of major agricultural commodities such as aquaculture and forestry is being done outside of Louisiana. He’d like to see the kind of growth that’s occurred in the crawfish industry spin out among other agricultural industries.

The desire seems that much more urgent next to Guarino’s concerns regarding the past year in southern Louisiana, which he described as “terrible.” Although he said rice and sugar cane farmers did okay, he claimed that soybean and grain farmers are in dire need of federal financial relief.

He and Viator also are leery of the push toward sustainable agriculture, in which more natural agricultural methods would replace chemical herbicides and pesticides.

That’s fine, the men said, as long as people don’t think it can happen overnight and as long as they are willing to pay the price, which they assured will be higher.