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UF/IFAS Extension *Comings and Goings* is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the UF/IFAS Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>.

If you have any suggestions or would like to submit your own recognition or short article of interest, please send them to Valkyrie Aldrari.

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Aldrari at [valkyriea@ufl.edu](mailto:valkyriea@ufl.edu).

# UF/IFAS Extension *Comings & Goings*

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION



## THE BREEZE WITH TOM OBREZA

*Tom Obreza, Interim Dean and Director, UF/IFAS Extension*

When Nick Place asked me to serve as interim dean for UF/IFAS Extension, I didn't have to think very long before I said yes.

Interim roles are not new to me. This is my fourth assignment as an interim administrator in UF/IFAS since 2009. If you're a baseball fan, consider me a utility infielder, playing many positions. One good thing about stepping into this role is that I don't have to learn the culture or the climate of IFAS and Extension administration.

It's my intention to work as well with the VP and the deans as Nick did. Together they're a really great support system for what we do, and we support them too.

In addition to the VP and the deans, I have an outstanding team around me here in Extension Administration. I'm talking about Dr. Saqib Mukhtar, Dr. Michael Gutter and their teams, as well as the staff here in the office. We've all been here for a while and we're really good at what we do. The same goes for all the faculty and staff in UF/IFAS Extension throughout the state. Having hired and appraised most of you, I know how excellent your work and is how hard you work at it.

The interim administrator is a special kind of position. The first priority is to maintain our core mission—we don't put the ship in neutral and we don't let it drift with the current. We keep the engine running at greatest speed as we can and we always have our hands on the wheel and we know where we're going.

While I'm on a nautical riff, it's important to make sure that Extension doesn't feel rudderless through this transition. We have a rudder and that's where communication comes in. The dean's office will continue communicating to you through blogs, the Extension Administration website, email announcements, our newsletter and other means. I'm a better writer than I am a talker, so you will probably see more written communications coming from me.

Sometimes when there are leadership changes, people become concerned

or worried about how it might affect them or what they need to do. I want to allay any concerns that faculty and staff might have. If you do have some concerns or questions, you know where to find me. Call or email me to let me know of any uncertainties you'd like to ask about, and I'll be glad to address those.

Deciding on the next dean will be one of our most critical tasks moving forward. I have great confidence that some outstanding individuals would like to come in as the next Dean for UF/IFAS Extension, and setting them

up for success starts with a careful recruitment and selection process.

Most importantly, I want to thank Nick Place and wish him great success at the University of Georgia. Thanks to him, UF/IFAS Extension is definitely a lot farther ahead than we were eight years ago. His leadership, friendship and support have made it easy for me to step in as interim dean, and he has set the table for further success when we welcome our new dean.

## A MESSAGE FROM SCOTT ANGLE

*J. Scott Angle, Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources*



*Craig Frey inspecting a trap at a farm in South Florida. Photo credit: Adah Joy Frey*

Gene McAvoy has been writing a Florida pest-of-the-month column for 20 years. He has almost never had a repeat.

Every Thursday or Friday, Farm Bureau members across South Florida get a visit from Craig Frey, who succeeded Gene as director of UF/IFAS Extension Hendry County. In a single day each week, Craig adds about 250 miles to the 200,000 he already has on his Ford Explorer, collecting traps set for McAvoy's October 2020 pest, the [Asian bean thrips](#).

All of us in Florida agriculture are sentries on alert for pests, a new species of which is said to arrive every month in Florida. Extension agents, farmers, private sector scouts, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the FDACS Division of Plant Industry and the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service are among those in the all-hands-on-deck effort.

This heroic effort must be maintained as long as there's a thrips threat, another psyllid to watch for, another beetle. My

vision for keeping pests off your produce is to expand the UF/IFAS arsenal of expertise.

Research and Extension are the way we take the fight to the pest. The more we know about invasive pests before their arrival, the more we can turn our eternal campaign against them from whack-a-mole in your fields to targeted strategic takeout of invaders before they get a six-legged foothold on your crop.

My job is to get our scientists the resources they need to address your problems. Key to that quest to compete for limited federal research dollars is telling our story with examples of the scientist-farmer partnership that testifies to the relevance of the research.

Examples like Chuck Obern. He leaves the gate open at his C&B Farms in Clewiston so Craig can get in and out of the bean field quickly so that his 11-hour day collecting traps doesn't become a 12-hour day. Chuck also shares observations with Craig that Extension can in turn share with other growers.

Arguably, invasive species are already at the top of our research and Extension agenda when you consider the massive resources we've dedicated to fighting the Asian citrus psyllid that delivers the scourge of HLB. But there are so many threats to so many crops that deserve attention, too.

By some estimates, every agricultural research dollar has a \$20 payoff in productivity. Even if that estimate is inflated (and I don't believe it is), intuitively we know that prevention guided by publicly funded science is a better deal for you than costly eradication that comes out of your bottom line.

I'd like nothing better than to have Gene McAvoy run out of things to write about. But I'm OK with paying the gas and repair bills for Craig Frey's Explorer. The wear and tear on his vehicle tell me he's where I want him to be, on your farms helping solve your problems, pests or not.

# New & Notable Programs

Saqib Mukhtar (Associate Dean for Extension), Holly Ober, and Maia McGuire (Associate Program Leaders)

## WHO'S THAT AGENT/SPECIALIST?

While the Extension Symposium will be conducted virtually this May, there will be several opportunities for faculty to meet and learn about agents and specialists in the ag/hort and natural resources channels. On Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and Thursday May 6<sup>th</sup>, Agent & Specialist Collaboration Enhancement sessions will consist of two-minute lightning round presentations by agents (Monday) and specialists (Thursday). These are opportunities for new and seasoned faculty to make themselves known and to seek potential collaborators within the broad UF/IFAS Extension network. Be on the lookout for an email asking for participants.

## UPDATE YOUR IFAS DIRECTORY INFORMATION



The IFAS Directory is a good resource for internal use and external communication. The system contains employee contact information, specialty/program area, profile photo, cell phone, web, and social media links. The example image illustrates what a directory entry looks like.

To update your directory information, go to My Directory at <https://directory.ifas.ufl.edu/mydirectory/>. When you make the update, please pay attention to these areas:

1. specialty – it is recommended that you choose a specialty from the suggested list.
2. profile photo – upload a professional portrait (square shape) to display on the directory.

3. add as many of these links as you like to connect professionally: website (personal profile page), Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Scholar, YouTube, Instagram, ORCID, weblink to your program.

4. cell phone – reserved for internal use or text messaging.

You may also find your [Extension colleagues by program areas](#). Directory information is used for all major [IFAS email distribution lists](#), so it is important to keep your information up-to-date. If you need any technical assistance, please contact IFAS IT Help Desk at (352) 392-4636.

## Update on the Restructuring of Initiative 3 (Natural Resources)

Over the course of the past half year, Extension faculty have been engaged in designing a new structure for Initiative 3 of the Extension Roadmap. It had become apparent that a reorganization that better reflected the subject areas we collectively address would benefit faculty in their program planning, execution and reporting. A revised structure is also expected to increase opportunities for collaborations among faculty working on similar issues and/or working with similar clientele.

Faculty provided input through a listening session in June, an online survey in August, and three focus groups in September-October 2020. This input has led to the creation of three new Priority Work Groups (PWGs):

- PWG1 – ‘Sustaining natural resources’
- PWG2 – ‘Strengthening healthy ecosystems for biodiversity and human wellbeing’
- PWG3 – ‘Enhancing community and ecosystem resilience’

The next step will be to establish a leadership team. Several faculty have expressed an interest in serving as a leader of the overall initiative or one of the three new PWGs. A meeting of these individuals will take place in February to begin developing the foundations for each group (e.g., creating bylaws, writing Plans of Action). We look forward to working with all faculty who address natural resources in new and different ways.

Mike Gutter (Associate Dean for Extension)

## FCS ON FACEBOOK: ARE YOU ONE OF OUR 2,000 FOLLOWERS?

March of 2020, it became obvious that means of communication would need to go virtual. With the need for up-to-date science-based information on the pandemic, finances, mental and physical health, the Family and Consumer Sciences’ Facebook page grew rapidly. Currently, posts are being shared at least twice a day. FCS agents from

all over the state are reaching hundreds of Florida’s county residents. Want to keep up with what FCS has going on? Consider giving us a like, follow and share the wealth of knowledge our agents have to offer!

<https://www.facebook.com/UFIFASFCS>



## HERE AND NOW IN FLORIDA 4-H

Florida 4-H is continuing to transcend geographic boundaries as they bring University of Florida's best and brightest minds to youth through virtual 4-H clubs. Statewide offerings can be found at: <http://florida4h.org/blog/florida-4-h-statewide-clubs/>

Did you know...not only is Florida 4-H Camp Timpoochee the oldest 4-H camp in the state, **it's the second oldest camp in the nation**. You can support the improvements of our three 4-H camps through Gator Nation Giving Day on February 18<sup>th</sup>: [Gator Nation Giving Day \(ufl.edu\)](http://gatornationgivingday.ufl.edu)

In case you missed it.... Florida 4-H State Council Officers have unveiled the "Florida 4-H News" channel on YouTube. Check out their first episode: [Florida 4-H News \(Episode 1\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jKqKqKqKq)

## FINANCIAL COUNSELING

Did you know that FCS agents with the Accredited Financial Counselor Designation are teaming up with the UF Health Cancer Center to offer one-on-one or group sessions with oncology patients whose finances and the cost of treatment are creating a burden for their care? These innovative agents will be working in concert with social workers and clinicians to help these patients. More information can be found on this webpage: <https://fyys.ifas.ufl.edu/financial-counseling/>

## NUTRITION EDUCATION



Did you know that since the pandemic, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program has added virtual

nutrition education to its approaches and has reached 535 participants from their series-based education? This includes 512 adults and 23 youth.

The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) has also responded to the pandemic by offering virtual nutrition education and has reached 7,726 participants. This includes 6,938 youth and 788 adults. In addition, FNP Food Systems specialists continued to cultivate partnerships and build capacity with schools, farmers, and state and local agencies. Food Systems-oriented approaches include establishing and enhancing school and community gardens, engaging school districts in procurement of Florida-grown commodities, partnering with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on the Florida Crunch and gleaning initiatives with the Society of St. Andrews, working with Feeding Florida and the Fresh Access Bucks to pilot the first Double-Up Bucks program at retail stores, and encouraging schools to adopt healthy cafeteria changes.

## Meet Your Specialist

### MARCO SCHIAVON

Assistant Professor, Ft Lauderdale REC-Davie, Environmental Horticulture



I came to the University of Florida from the University of California Riverside, and was there for four years as a postdoc and three years as a professional researcher. I've also seen more rain in my first week in Florida than in 7 years in Riverside! My specialties are water conservation for turfgrass areas, including landscape, golf and athletic field industries. My research

program focuses on keeping turfgrass healthy and functional using the minimal amount of potable water for irrigation. I also take special interest in replacing potable water with alternative sources that are not suitable for human consumption (e.g. brackish, effluent water), fertility management, and any

environmentally compatible management strategies for turfgrass.

I received my Ph.D. from New Mexico State University in 2013. My Ph.D. was in Agronomy with a focus on turfgrass management and irrigation. I am originally from Italy and got into turfgrass science because I am a huge soccer fan (of course!). I got my bachelor's and master's from University of Padua, the sixth oldest University in the world: it'll be 800 years next year. Upon completion of my master's thesis, I got an offer to start a Ph.D. program at the New Mexico State University. Once I had obtained my Ph.D. I moved to Southern California, where I spent 7 years— a total of 11 years spent in the desert Southwest. Living in that area of the U.S., I learned how to manage turfgrass with minimum water inputs, as severe drought conditions limit the amount of water that can be allocated to turfgrass areas. When I received the offer from UF I was really excited to finally move to a university with an outstanding football program. I strongly believe that although Florida is a high-precipitation state, it does not mean that water resources should be depleted or left unprotected from pollution. Moreover, I am an avid scuba diver, hence I strongly encourage everyone to do their best to protect Florida's seas and reefs.

## BRETT WELLS BULTEMEIER

*Extension Assistant Professor, Agronomy, Pesticide Information Office*



I came to the University of Florida from private industry (Clarke), but I have lived in Alachua for 15 years. I worked as a water resource manager, essentially the bridge between operations and sales. I developed and implemented training related to aquatic plant management and safety for internal staff. I also worked with customers to help explain and develop comprehensive management plans for their

properties. In 2012 I received my Ph.D. from the greatest institution in the land, the University of Florida. (Go Gators!) I have been involved in aquatic plant management and the use of pesticides for over 20 years. It started working in the field directly as a licensed applicator, then to a graduate program at UF and finally helping to train others to do the same work. Now with the Pesticide Information Office our goal is to ensure that the county Extension program has the resources and skills required to help our stakeholders pass their exams, get and maintain a license and remain as safe as possible while doing so.

I also enjoy spending time at Disney with my family, podcasts, and working to restore our property with native wildflowers. I also love Sci-Fi (may the force be with you), BBQ, and reading. My family keeps me grounded and is the passion behind my work. My children (Keegan, Corwin, and Moira) make me smile and help me come up with my bad jokes during training. We are advocates for the Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep organization as they were a source of joy when we lost our son Corwin. The wildflower restoration and butterfly garden we are growing are in his memory, and thanks to the community that formed from NILMDTS! When asked where I come from, I always have to answer “depends on when we are talking” as my dad was in the Navy. We moved a lot, but I have lived in Florida longer than any other state and love it here.

## CATHERINE CAMPBELL

*Assistant Professor, Mid-Florida REC, Family, Youth and Community Sciences*



I came to the University of Florida from Georgetown University's Kennedy Institute of Bioethics where I taught ethics courses and did research on bioethics. I have previously held three positions at UF, at Program for Resource Efficient Communities, the UF/IFAS Family Nutrition Program, and the Horticultural Sciences Department. My specialties are

social science dimensions of food systems. Specifically, the role of ethics, human values, social and environmental factors on the behavior, motivation and decision making of food producers, consumers and local governments. I also take a special interest in urban food production, marketing and sales, particularly as it relates to increasing economic viability of local farms, consumer awareness of and preference for local food, and improving access to healthy foods.

I received my Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Florida in 2008 with a specialization in ethics and human behavior. I also received my Master of Public Health degree from UF in 2017 with a specialization in Food Systems and Public Health Practice. I am originally from the mountains of Virginia but have been happy to call Florida my home for the more than a decade. Outside of work, I enjoy gardening, and making jams and pickles, running and playing competitive beach volleyball with my husband.

## VIVEK SHARMA

*Assistant Professor, Agricultural and Biological Engineering*



I came to the University of Florida from the University of Wyoming, where I worked as an assistant professor irrigation specialist. My specialties are irrigation and water resources Extension activities. The main goal of my Extension program is to work with UF/IFAS Extension personnel, agents, RSAs, producers and other stakeholders in the development, promotion and adoption of economical and accurate tools and technologies in

the area of agricultural water resources.

I received my Ph.D. in Agricultural and Biological Engineering from University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2015. I am originally from India and completed by B-Tech in Agricultural Engineering, majoring in soil and water engineering from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, India. After completing my B-Tech, I also worked as an assistant manager in CLASS India, Lmt. for one year. Other than work, I love spending time with family. We have a daughter (5 years old) “Ziva Sharma”, who will start kindergarten this year. My wife Neha Sharma has a Ph.D. in Life Sciences. I love playing cricket. I am looking forward to collaborating with other faculty and Extension personnel and developing new programs and research related to Agricultural Water Management.



## A FARMER'S SUCCESS STARTS IN THE SOIL

Sylvia Willis, Row Crops/Commercial Horticulture Extension Agent I, Suwannee County



*Cattle nourished by the forages on Andy Jordan's farm in Suwannee County.*

In 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, many farmers faced a new financial reality where normal day-to-day operations became more costly and environmentally sustainable practices almost seemed out of reach, since these methods are so costly. Staying financially stable and striving to be environmentally conscious is a difficult task right now, but with the help of the Stetson Sustainable Farming Fund and UF/IFAS Extension, one farmer in Suwannee County was able to reach this goal.

The Stetson Sustainable Farming Fund provides grants to farmers in the Suwannee River Basin to assist in implementing sustainable farming practices, improving surface and

groundwater quality. Mr. Andy Jordan applied for this grant because, in his words, "We believe as stewards of God's creation that it is part of our purpose to care for our farm in ways that bring him honor." Andy wanted to identify the best fertilizer for his operation that would be environmentally sustainable, improve his soil and forage health, produce strong cattle, and be both time- and cost-effective.

Andy compared conventional fertilizer to Harrell's Control Release Fertilizer (CRF) to better understand which one was best for his farm and environment overall. CRF is a granulated fertilizer that gradually releases nutrients into the soil, reduces the amount of nitrogen applied throughout the season, and limits leaching potential. I was recommended to Andy by Joel Love (FDACS BMP Education Outreach Coordinator) to assist him in understanding which option would be best for his farm. Soil and forage sampling/analysis are two methods that can measure the success of different fertilizers in the soil.

With help and collaboration from Joel, Glenn Horvath (FDACS Environmental Consultant - Office of Agricultural Water Policy), and myself, Andy recognized the true benefits to using CRF. Next year he can adopt this BMP to reduce overall nitrogen applied on his farm. Building relationships with various agricultural stakeholders in my county allowed for connections to be made and agencies to come together to help a farmer become more environmentally sustainable and economically sound during this difficult time.

## SCOUTING HAYFIELDS REDUCES PESTICIDE USE & SAVES MONEY

Keith Wynn, Agriculture/Natural Resources Extension Agent II, Hamilton County



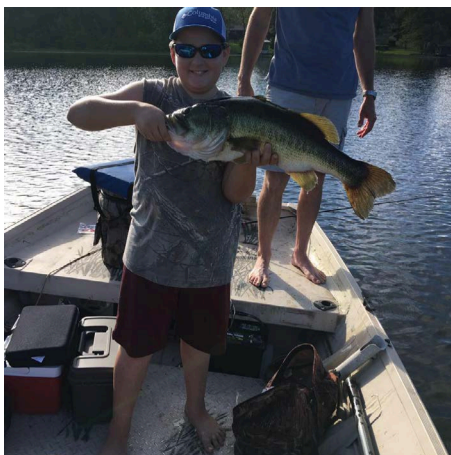
*A follow-up visit to the producer's field during harvest revealed good yields.*

In July, this agent was requested by a local hay producer to assist with diagnosing a problem in his 80-acre bermudagrass hay field. The producer described the problem as his field turning yellow even though he had applied the recommended fertilizer rates earlier in the year. The producer self-diagnosed the problem as bermudagrass stem maggot and was discussing possible pesticide options. The bermudagrass stem maggot has been a recurring pest in Hamilton County hay fields over the past six years. The adult fly lays an egg in the stem of bermudagrass, which develops into a larva that feeds on the stem, causing it to die, resulting in the plants top turning yellow like the producer's description. Once the agent arrived at the field, the description of the problem was apparent when looking across the bermudagrass. The agent

decided to scout the field and began walking through the grass to determine the stem maggot population present with the producer. Looking closer at the leaves, the agent determined that the yellowing was occurring on the leaf tips and was not showing dilapidation to the stem. This encouraged the agent to discuss past management practices with the producer to determine that 30 gallons of liquid nitrogen per acre had recently been applied to achieve 90 pounds of nitrogen. This field was stressed due to dry conditions and the liquid nitrogen created a burn on the grass that was symptomatic to damage created by bermudagrass stem maggots. The importance of scouting this field to diagnose the hay problem saved the producer \$50 per acre or \$4,000 total by suspending the scheduled pyrethroid insecticide application.

## GIVING THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME OF HUNTING

Kalyn Waters, Agriculture County Extension Director II, Holmes County



Chad Albury, recipient of a Randy Adams Memorial Lifetime Hunting License.

The mission of the UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County Outdoor Expo is to raise awareness of the natural resources within Holmes County and to educate individuals on how to manage those resource to ensure they are preserved for future generations. The 5th Annual Holmes County Outdoor Expo could not be hosted in person due to the current state of COVID-19. However, of all years, 2020 was one when we needed to highlight the

importance of being engaged in the great outdoors to improve both mental and physical health.

Over the past five years the Expo has grown to reach national audiences with the addition of a N.W.T.F. (National Wild Turkey Foundation) Grand National Turkey Calling Contest and Custom Call Makers Contest. This contest has allowed the Expo to grow, supports our mission of conservation and has been a platform to generate funding. With the status of the pandemic in 2020, most of the national turkey calling contests were canceled. In response, the Holmes County Extension Director Kalyn Waters and Matt Wilkins, N.W.T.F. Regional Director, collaborated to develop a virtual platform that allowed the Holmes County Outdoor Expo to host their calling contest. Since then, this model has been adopted by other calling contests across the nation.

In 2019 the Expo began a program to purchase lifetime hunting licenses for youth in Holmes County. This is a generous gift to a young person that supports the Expo's mission to get

youth involved in outdoor recreation, conservation and natural resource management.

Randy Adams was a tremendous supporter of Extension and a key partner in the establishment of the Outdoor Expo. Following the passing of Randy in 2020, the Expo committee decided to purchase the lifetime hunting licenses In his memory. This platform partners with the N.W.T.F. on a national level and then uses the funding generated to support the youth of Holmes County.

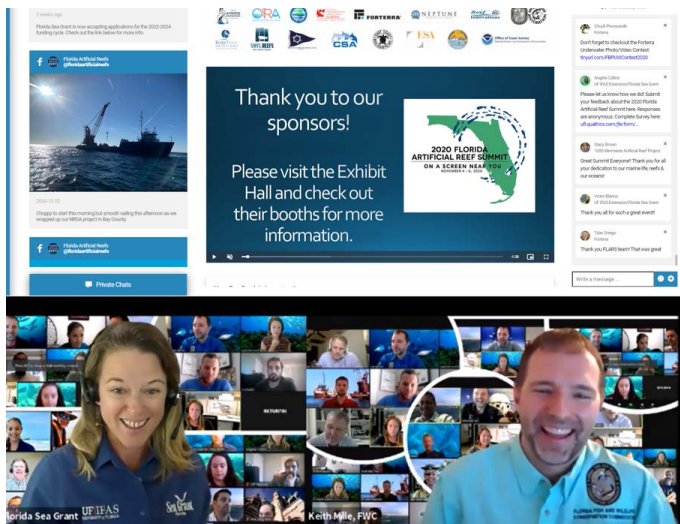
In 2020, two kids from Holmes County were awarded a Randy Adams Memorial Lifetime Hunting License. One of the 2020 recipients, Chad Albury, said "Thank you all for this amazing gift. I will do my best to uphold the values and a love of hunting that Randy shared with me."

The continued collaboration between the N.W.T.F. and UF/IFAS Extension Holmes County has allowed for the Holmes County Outdoor Expo to have a national impact that benefits the youth of Holmes County.

## THE 2020 FLORIDA ARTIFICIAL REEF SUMMIT: ON A SCREEN NEAR YOU

Angela Collins, Sea Grant Extension Agent II, Multi-County

Co-authors: Keith Mille, Brittany Hall-Scharf, Ana Zangroniz, Victor Blanco, Scott Jackson and Ed Camp



For more than three decades, UF/IFAS Extension and Florida Sea Grant have played a primary leadership role in the evolution of Florida's artificial reef program. This includes coordination with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Commission (FWC) to host regular regional artificial reef workshops, which culminate to a statewide "Florida Artificial Reef Summit" every five years. These workshops foster awareness, communication and collaboration among stakeholders, including artificial reef manufacturers, coordinators, regulators, wildlife managers, researchers and recreational user groups. Consistent regional workshops build perspective across the state and allow for evaluation of the changing needs of the broader artificial reef community that provides guidance to bi-decadal statewide Artificial Reef Summits. These workshops are especially useful in a time where it has become necessary to adapt to uncertainties (e.g. changes in permitting, decreased funding, and environmental perturbations such as hurricanes, invasive species and harmful algal blooms).

The 2020 Florida Artificial Reef Summit theme was "Bringing the Future of Florida's Artificial Reefs into Focus," and featured contributions on lessons learned, areas requiring better focus, and visions for the future of artificial reefs in Florida. Planning for the 2020 summit began in 2018, convening a steering committee of 15 that included three county government



artificial reef coordinators, six FWC employees and six UF/IFAS & Florida Sea Grant faculty. Originally scheduled for April 2020, the summit steering committee postponed the event due to COVID-19 but persevered to reschedule and ultimately reformat the entire conference to a virtual platform. Fortunately, the original agenda and participant list remained almost entirely intact throughout the transition, and included presentations from the National Marine Fisheries Service, Army Corps of Engineers, State of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, research faculty from multiple universities, and a broad spectrum of county coordinators and industry representatives. Presentations addressed today's most relevant topics facing the future of Florida's artificial reefs, including environmental mitigation, fisheries management, inshore applications, impacts of natural disturbances, human dimensions, socioeconomics, tourism, and regulatory and policy frameworks. A panel discussion was designed to engage dialogue between speakers and participants, highlighting current fisheries management considerations, including the impact that artificial reefs have on catchability of multiple commercially and recreationally important marine species.

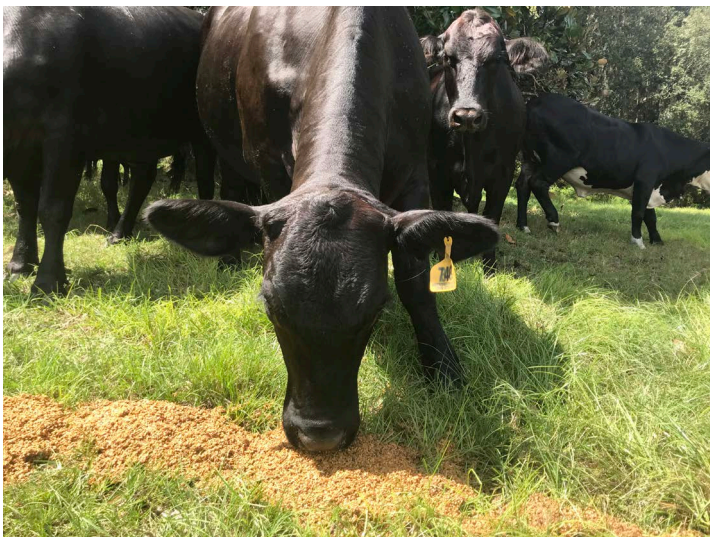
Almost 200 registered attendees participated in the virtually reformatted 2020 Summit. In addition to the presentations

listed above, a Keynote Address was delivered by Dr. Bill Lindberg, who has spent almost 40 years on the assessment of reef fisheries habitat and the application of artificial reefs in fisheries management. A special "Hindsight is 2020" session engaged Drs. Jim Bohnsack and Heyward Mathews, who together have over a century of artificial reef research experience, as they reflected on lessons learned and the best focus for future efforts. A post-event survey demonstrated that 97% of respondents (n=84) agreed that the virtual summit was a good use of time and 87% indicated that they learned something they will apply to their work with artificial reefs. When asked how they planned to incorporate knowledge gained into future behavior, responses included statements such as "define and update strategic planning based on current science;" "increase partnerships;" "coordinate with educational institutions...to discuss potential research opportunities;" and "engage stakeholders in discussing alternatives for managing fishers and fish." These statewide summits continue to foster cohesive research plans and communication with relevant stakeholders for the effective planning of artificial reef research, design and implementation – not only in Florida, but throughout the southeastern US.

For more information, check out [2020 Florida Artificial Reef Summit: On A Screen Near You](#).

## LOCAL BREWERY WINS ADAPTIVE REUSE AWARD

Wendy Mussoline, Agriculture Extension Agent II, Multi-County



Cows enjoying their spent brewers' grain.

During EPAF 2018, Alicia Halbritter (former UF/IFAS Duval County Livestock Agent) organized and hosted an amazing tour of the Anheuser-Busch Budweiser Brewery located in Jacksonville, Florida. It was a very popular excursion and it filled up within a couple days of its announcement. As a new livestock Agent, I had no idea

how breweries could benefit the cattle industry. Dr. Matt Hersom (former UF State Specialist for ruminant nutrition) educated the group on the nutritional opportunities of utilizing spent brewer's grains in cattle diets. While sampling the sauce, I recall an intriguing conversation with seasoned agent Joe Walter (UF/IFAS Brevard County Livestock Agent)

about how he helps to organize and transport spent brewer's grain to his stakeholders. The tour made an impression on me and I kept a mental note of these creative opportunities to recycle organic "waste" streams. I was groomed and mentored well by Dr. Ann Wilkie (UF Professor in Soil & Water

Science) that waste is not waste until it is wasted.

In November 2020, the Azalea City Brewing Company opened its doors after a massive renovation at the old Coca-Cola plant in downtown Palatka. Owner Andrea Conover has done a spectacular job preserving the original intricacies of the landmark and repurposing the space for sharing a local brew. Not only was she intent on keeping the products local (i.e. Ravine Red Ale, Mud Springs Stout, or the Hot Blonde infused with datil peppers), she was thrilled to hear that our local cattlemen would be interested in picking up their spent grains. Wet brewer's grains are a nutritional source of protein and fiber for cows and they are certainly packed with flavor and quite palatable for the herd. I collected a sample of the spent grains and had them evaluated by Dairy One Forage Laboratories in Ithaca, NY. The wet spent grains contain 19% dry matter (DM) but they contain a relatively high crude protein content (24% DM)



and total digestible nutrients (71% DM). Though it may appear that a cow is resting most of the time, she is consistently burning energy on growth, gestation and lactation. Her energy requirements change depending on what stage of production she is in, but typically the highest are within the first couple months of calving which is often during the winter season when forages are scarce.

After thorough evaluation of the new feedstuff, I contacted some local cattlemen who were very excited to add this flavorful supplement to their nutritional scheme year-round. I'm thrilled that this valuable organic "co-product" is being fully utilized rather than filling our limited space in the landfill. The brewery also received an honorable recognition for their efforts. As a result of the creative reuse

of the building, grain bags, and the spent grains, the Northeast Florida Regional Leadership Council awarded Azalea City Brewing Company with the Adaptive Reuse Award in January 2021. Azalea City is a fantastic addition to our community and they are all about keeping it local.

## FACEBOOK LIVE AS AN EXTENSION EDUCATIONAL TOOL

Yilin Zhuang, Water Resources Regional Specialized Agent I, Central District



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, online platforms have been more commonly used to reach stakeholders in Extension education. Facebook is the world's largest social media platform and their live streaming feature Facebook Live has been widely used for broadcasting; however, it's still new in Extension education.

The Central District Water Resources Regional Specialized Agent partnered with other Central District Agents and started a Facebook Live series called Water Wednesdays, aimed at educating homeowners on water conservation and protection practices. We live-stream a 30-minute talk about Florida's water resources and what we can do to protect them at 2 PM ET on Facebook Live every Wednesday. Topics have ranged from building your own rain barrel to calibrating your irrigation system and preparing emergency water supplies. We also post a Water Wednesday Recap blog every week, have a Water Wednesday webpage, and post recordings on YouTube to reach a broader audience. This is an on-going program. As of November 30, 2020, we have streamed 24 Water Wednesday webinars. Since the beginning of this series, the average viewership has increased to 25 viewers, and participants join in live to interact with the speakers and ask questions. These Water Wednesday videos have reached 11,425 people and received 5,733 views on Facebook, as well as 1,199 views on YouTube. A total of 35 attendees took the evaluation surveys. All respondents have indicated that they increased their knowledge and overall understanding of Florida's water quantity and quality issues. They also indicated that they

would adopt the following practices to protect the Florida's water: no watering between 10 am and 4 pm; building a rain barrel to reduce stormwater runoff; reducing plastic use; implementing agricultural BMPs; and sharing information with others. Facebook Live is easily accessible and doesn't increase technological difficulties for existing Facebook users. Participants don't need to register or learn how to use the digital platform. They can interact with the speakers in the comments session or watch the recordings. Facebook Live easily links with Zoom webinars, allowing agents to limit participants' ability to speak and interrupt. However, the novelty of Facebook Live has also increased the difficulty to evaluate the knowledge gain and practices adoptions. We have embedded the survey link in the video and used Zoom webinars to collect information from participants. More empirical research on effective use of Facebook Live and similar platforms to deliver Extension programs is needed.

Lead Agent: Yilin Zhuang, Mid-Florida Research and Education Center, UF/IFAS Extension Central District

Webpage and Graphic Design: Caroline Warwick, Mid-Florida Research and Education Center

Participating Agents: Brooke Moffis, UF/IFAS Extension Lake County; Tina McIntyre, UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County; Krista Stump, UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County; Eva Pabon, UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County; Morgan Pinkerton, UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County; Norma Samuel, UF/IFAS Extension Sumter County; LuAnn Duncan, UF/IFAS Extension Sumter County; Lisa Hamilton, UF/IFAS Extension Volusia County; Jamielyn Daugherty, UF/IFAS Lake County Extension; and Tia Silvasy, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County

Water Wednesday webpage: <https://mrec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/waterwednesday/>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/WaterCentralFlorida/>

YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/WW-YouTube>

## HEALTHIER INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Wendy Lynch, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent III, Putnam County



*Celebrating Success!*

Making healthy lifestyle choices has always been a struggle for Lisa. She considered herself a lifetime smoker and enjoyed the taste of soda, drinking more than 10 per week. Lisa also enjoyed preparing and eating southern-style foods. Lisa struggled with her weight over the years and frequently considered making changes for her overall health, but getting started was always a challenge. There wasn't a strong family support system to help stay on track. Lisa knew she had to do something to prevent further health decline. She knew this was going to be a challenge after a lifetime of unhealthy behaviors.

UF/IFAS Extension Putnam County was recruiting for the National Diabetes Prevention Program, PreventT2, when

Lisa saw the flyer posted at a local community center. After inquiring about the program, she enrolled and completed the year-long program. PreventT2 had two major program goals: losing 5-7% of starting body weight and increasing weekly physical activity to at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity

activity. PreventT2 teaches participants to achieve moderate weight loss by improving dietary intake and increasing activity. This includes topics such as basic nutrition and diabetes, calorie balance, coping strategies for triggers of unhealthy behaviors, managing stress, and increasing physical activity safely. The program also prepares participants to maintain weight loss once the program ends.

Lisa lost 8% of her body weight, exceeding the program's weight loss goal. She maintained consistent exercise throughout the program and averaged 347 minutes of weekly moderate-intensity exercise. Lisa had so many other successes, too. Five months into the program, she

eliminated her sugar sweetened beverage intake, sharing that she now "can't stand the taste of soda." By the end of the program, she also quit smoking, walked a 5K, and became a certified Silver Sneakers fitness instructor. Lisa was so proud of her hard work and shared that "this class saved my life."

Lisa is just one of the 27 participants in Putnam County's PreventT2 since 2017. The net weight loss for these participants is 216.6 lbs., with an average weight loss of approximately 7.5 lbs. Modest weight loss "is likely to produce health benefits, such as improvements in blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugars" and PreventT2 participants reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes in half by participating in this evidence-based, lifestyle intervention (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2018).

The CDC reports there are "86 million adults with prediabetes and more than 30 million that have diabetes." In Putnam County, almost 25% of adults have been diagnosed with diabetes. Since 2017, UF/IFAS Extension Putnam County has provided residents with access to diabetes prevention programming. It's all part of UF/IFAS Extension Putnam County's efforts to create healthier individuals, healthier families, and healthier communities.

## NEW VP VISITS CHARLOTTE COUNTY

Ralph Mitchell, Horticulture County Extension Director III, Charlotte County



(l to r) Ralph Mitchell, County Extension Director; Dr. J. Scott Angle, VP of UF/IFAS; Brenda Rogers, District Extension Director, Southwest District; Tommy Scott, Director, Community Services, represent the Partnership of UF/IFAS Extension - Charlotte County.

On October 22, 2020, our new UF/IFAS Vice President, Dr. J. Scott Angle, visited our humble office for lunch and a short meeting with faculty, staff, our county partners and stakeholders. Practicing social-distancing and wearing face-

coverings, we met in half of the gym at the new Centennial Park thanks to arrangements made by the facility staff. Dr. Angle spoke to our small group about his past experiences and goals for his tenure with UF/IFAS. One important thing he highlighted was the significance of the classic Extension model of educational outreach for information transfer and knowledge increase impacts. Stakeholders representing Sea Grant, 4-H, and Horticulture also expressed their support for the local Extension Service and the importance of research-based, unbiased information.

Dr. Angle was presented with a thank-you gift — a Centennial lapel pin - thanks to Community Services, and a bag of Charlotte County "goodies" courtesy of the Punta Gorda/



Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau. It was a great and rare opportunity to have the UF/IFAS VP make a visit. In addition, it was an honor to showcase and share with top UF/IFAS leadership, Centennial Park, Charlotte County as a community, Extension's engagement with its stakeholders,

and our mutual educational commitment. Extension has been in Charlotte County for 86 years, and its mission and tradition continues! For more information, please visit our website at <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/charlotte/> or call 941-764-4340.

## EFNEP'S AWARD-WINNING COOKING PROGRAM

Danielle De Vries-Navarro, EFNEP Program Extension Agent I, Palm Beach County

Nicole Owens Duffy, Family Youth and Community Sciences State Specialized Agent, FYCS



EFNEP graduate receiving incentive items from Juan Sanchez, EFNEP nutrition educator.

The UF/IFAS Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Palm Beach County (PBC) hosted an 8-hour program in partnership with the Palm Beach County Food Bank. This particular EFNEP program is called the Marjorie S. Fisher Nutrition Driven—Gets Cooking. Gets Cooking offered traditional EFNEP programming with three enhancements. Participants received a Gets Cooking Cookbook of culturally appropriate skillet recipes translated into Spanish, developed by the PBC EFNEP team. They also received groceries and an electric skillet to practice Gets Cooking recipes taught in class at home. EFNEP is administered by a team of six paraprofessional nutrition educators (NEs) and led by UF/IFAS Extension Agent and Registered Dietitian, Danielle De Vries-Navarro. Gets Cooking received a 1st place recognition at the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Conference in 2020.

The target audience of this special project included agricultural day laborers with low income living in Jupiter, Florida. Participants resided in multi-dwelling homes with limited access to cooking facilities. Participants primarily immigrated from Guatemala and Southern Mexico and identified as parents, grandparents, or adult caregivers with the primary

responsibility of feeding young children.

Gets Cooking included traditional EFNEP series-based direct education using the Eating Smart • Being Active (ESBA) curriculum. ESBA is a nine-lesson, evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention curriculum for adults with low income. Lessons were facilitated in a group setting by Juan, a Spanish-speaking NE. Each lesson consisted of a nutrition topic, food cost-saving tips, and a physical activity. Joyce, a ServSafe® certified NE, modeled proper food safety techniques while preparing a healthy 30-minute Gets Cooking skillet recipe. Recipes contained a whole grain and locally grown fresh fruits and/or vegetables.

Traditional EFNEP, including staffing, direct education, and incentive items such as measuring cups and spoons, were funded by USDA NIFA EFNEP. The electric skillets and the printing of the Gets Cooking Cookbooks were paid for with in-kind donations from

the PBC Food Bank through funds from the Healthier Jupiter Mini-Grant. The PBC Food Bank also donated the take-home groceries, which included the whole grain and produce of the class-demonstrated recipe from the Gets Cooking Cookbook.

Thirty-three participants completed all required EFNEP lessons to be formally recognized as graduates of this enhanced program. Survey results from the nationally implemented and research-tested EFNEP Food and Physical Activity Questionnaire showed that 96% of graduates made an improvement in one or more nutrition practice (i.e. eating fruits, vegetables, red and orange vegetables, dark green vegetables, drinking less sugar sweetened beverages, and cooking dinner at home). Seventy-three percent of the graduates cooked dinner in their home more often. Ninety-seven percent of graduates showed improvement in one or more food resource management practice (i.e. cooking dinner at home, comparing food prices, planning meals before shopping, looking in cupboard before shopping or making a list before shopping), with 73% of participants identified as more food secure. Participants communicated to the team that they had utilized their electric skillet at home and were implementing the recipes.

EFNEP in PBC continues to receive annual funding into the future. The PBC Food Bank received the Healthier Jupiter Mini-Grant of \$2,500 for a second time, which will be utilized to continue the Gets Cooking program. An additional 75 self-identified, Hispanic day laborers in PBC will receive this intervention in 2021.

# IMPERFECT MARKETS: A PERFECT SOLUTION FOR SMALL & MIDSCALE FARMERS

Kimberly Morgan, Extension Economist Associate Professor, SWFLREC  
Jessica Ryals, Sustainable Agriculture Extension Agent II, Collier County



In nearly all introductory economics courses, the agricultural industry serves as the poster child example of a “perfectly competitive” market structure. In theory, farmers are not able to set prices charged for their farm products, and instead “take the price” offered by market buyers. To achieve profitability, an individual grower works year-round to find ways to reduce costs, such as growing a single crop or renting more land, to take advantage of management expertise and investment in equipment.

Let’s look at the other side of the profit equation to explore opportunities for Florida’s small- and medium-sized farmers who want to find ways to improve revenues. We can do this by identifying markets where they have some measure of influence on market prices. We describe markets in which firms may offer their products by setting their own prices as “imperfectly competitive.” Why are markets considered imperfect? What does this mean to a farmer and a buyer? What are the added costs and benefits related to stepping into imperfect markets? Successful ventures into imperfect markets are motivated by the farm manager’s decision to intentionally focus on solving the WHY lurking behind a customer’s buying decision. For example, why do we eat turkey on Thanksgiving and Christmas, but rarely during the rest of the year? Are there a lack of turkeys at other times of the year? Why can my class of college freshman rattle off the names of 10+ apple varieties, but struggle to identify which nuts are picked off trees versus harvested from the ground? In this article, we highlight the power of marketing management to bring added value to customers while resulting in higher farm revenues.

When farmers find ways to invest in marketing activities, intentionally carve out a targeted segment of buyers, and invest effort in building long-term relationships with customers, they become what we describe as “defensibly differentiable.” The “defensibility” results from the ability of the farmer and the customer to nurture this relationship

over time. The “differentiation” is built around the needs and wants unique to the target market and known only to involved parties. Higher profits are driven by tracking the marketing costs and setting prices to capture improved revenues that reflect the value of this shared information.

To make money, farmers need to track customer data, as it serves as the market feedback needed to make decisions to build their defensible market strategy. Prices tell the buyer what the farmer has invested in supplying the food and communicates why they feel it serves as the best choice to meet the buyers’ needs. The consumers’ actions up to and including the decision to buy the food informs the farmer about why that item is their preferred choice. Armed with this data, the farmer discovers the answers to the economic questions of what to produce, for whom, how much, and when. This keeps customers returning to the farmer over and over while also attracting others with similar demands. Empowered with market intelligence, farmers can make annual production and marketing decisions to protect their clients from competitors and cultivate their share of the target market.

Why would a farmer be willing to invest in understanding individual food buyers’ wants and needs and setting their own prices? The food system works the way it does because it has proven to be efficient and effective over time. Keeping up with every person’s tastes and preferences is an impossible task for a single farmer. Identifying a market segment of buyers who are willing and able to spend their dollars on a specific set of food products requires committed effort and the ability to react quickly in response to dynamic situations and unexpected events. As experienced farmers know, acquiring the necessary knowledge of market trends to communicate a “price story” requires time, effort, and perhaps, additional risk to the farm business. Added marketing costs and regulatory requirements beyond the farm gate, which include packing, storage, distribution, shipping, etc., must be factored into the pricing strategy.

The key element that is driving opportunities for farmers to compete in imperfect markets is access to relatively cheap technology. Online platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are useful to build connections that shrink the distance between farm and customers. Farmers can use these platforms to position their farm story and attract the attention of key influencers. Farmers can also share their relationships with their extended networks, which capitalizes on their investment in these promotional tools. Once a marketing campaign has begun, marketing managers can collect data generated by social media platforms, internet orders and mobile purchasing apps to capture real-time market reactions to messages aimed at communicating the value of their product offerings. The Southwest Florida Fresh ([swflfresh.com](http://swflfresh.com)) website was created by a [UF/IFAS collaborative effort](#)



in response to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Irma (2017) and more recently, the 2020 pandemic, on Florida's SW farmers. The platform reduces distribution complexities and provides a regional brand for local producers, while meeting customer expectations for fresh local produce available at convenient venues. With consistent branding aimed at sharing each individual farm story, customers will continue to recognize and seek out your farm products across market outlets.

Imperfect markets offer farmers improved profit margins, driven by the ability to set prices, based on knowing why people buy. Remember, that first customer costs A LOT of money and time to attract, and data gathered along the way is valuable information. Long-term profitability for farmers who defensibly differentiate their food offerings is reliant on building loyalty and trust with customers, finding ways to encourage them to spend more at each visit, and incentivizing them to share their experiences with their friends and family networks.

## THE HEALTHY PONDS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Michelle Atkinson, Environmental Horticulture Extension Agent II, Manatee County  
Abbey Tyrna, Water Program Extension Agent II, Sarasota County



Healthy Pond Field Day participant trying out different water chemistry probes.

Stormwater is the biggest contributor to water pollution in Florida, despite the over 75,000 stormwater ponds that have been created to deal with this issue. The need for education about these systems is apparent. Extension agents often receive calls from homeowner associations or stormwater pond professionals dealing with pond problems and looking for solutions.

Faced with the need to communicate stormwater pond best management practices and with few published resources, recommendations based on science are difficult to achieve. To help close this information gap, a team made up of county Extension

agents and state specialists worked to create a training program that strives to provide pond managers with evidence-based tools for a holistic approach to pond management. The Healthy Ponds certification program focuses on enhancing water quality, wildlife habitat, and pond longevity. The program targets technicians of commercial pond management companies, homeowner association leaders (HOAs), community association managers (CAMs), local government pond managers, and private pond owners.

The Healthy Ponds certification program is also a clearinghouse for stormwater pond research and recommendations. Extension agents now have the opportunity to access, facilitate, and offer the program to improve the understanding of the physical, biological, chemical and cultural best practices for stormwater pond management. These strategies increase stormwater pond function

while making them easier to maintain, reducing chemical treatments, and increasing water quality, wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

The 8-week hybrid certification program was offered in the fall of 2020, which included an in-person field day to review skills. The 25 participants could earn up to 25 continuing education credits towards their pesticide applicator's license. Of the graduates, 70% reported that because of this course they are able to communicate better with their clientele. As a result of the field day, 30% of the graduates will incorporate water testing into their maintenance protocols. Follow-up monitoring of graduates is in place to look for successes in reducing chemical use, reducing overall problems, utilizing pond management resources, and increases in positive interactions with clientele and pond professionals.

One of our Healthy Ponds graduates stated, "It was one of the most comprehensive courses available." Another reported, "Fantastic! This is really well done and answers a lot of the questions I receive from the public about their ponds. I'm really excited to share this with colleagues and pond homeowners." Look for more Healthy Ponds Certification course offerings in 2021 and beyond.

## LUCKY GOES TO COLLEGE

*Justina Dacey, Agriculture/Natural Resources Extension Agent II, Nassau County*

As shepherds of the highest order, the Smiths realized northeast Florida needed a more local option for small ruminant producers to purchase quality sheep. In response, they invested in breeding superior 100% purebred Katahdin Hair sheep on their 12-acre property in Nassau County. Cognizant that the latest techniques for pasture management would provide the best success for their operation, they participated in Small Ruminant Workshops hosted by UF/IFAS Extension's North Florida Livestock Agents Group (NFLAG). These workshops provided best management practices (BMPs) for their growing operation. They currently test soil, rotational graze, use horses to reduce parasite load and even plant cool-season forages to improve soil quality and increase nutrition for sheep health. They are proud sheep owners. In 2019, they worked with two 4-H youth to show their rams at the Northeast Florida Fair. At the Lamb Livestock Show, their rams won Grand Champion Katahdin Ram and Reserve Grand Champion Katahdin Ram. Last year, all their ewes gave birth to twins and their pastures continue to be weed free and productive. This year, UF purchased Lucky, their prized Reserve Grand Champion ram and 5 ewe lambs to start their foundation flock for developing further parasite-resistant and Florida-heat-tolerant sheep. They have also shared their methods with Dr. Diwaker Vyas and other Extension Specialists developing the UF/IFAS Small Ruminant Program. Through UF/IFAS Extension programming and recommendations they have elevated the success of their operation and in return are helping UF/IFAS develop a robust Small Ruminant Program for a promising future of Florida sheep producers.

## DUVAL COUNTY 4-H AT-LARGE CLUB

*Kelsey Haupt, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent I, Duval County*

Duval County 4-H has traditionally hosted an At-Large 4-H club, led by 4-H agents. This is a transition club for prospective or new 4-H members who have not yet found a club to join or are waiting to join one that is full. Like many of our programs, the club needed a revamp when our program went virtual. The virtual 4-H At-Large Club focuses on arts and sciences. Before each meeting, youth would either pick up or get a package delivered to their home with supplies for that month's activity. Guest speakers were a part of many of the meetings because travel was no longer a barrier. Youth had the opportunity to play games, chat with friends, and complete arts, STEM, and culinary challenges. Most importantly, youth were given time to engage with their peers and experience "normal" time with friends during COVID-19. The At-Large club became more than a transition club, it became a place for youth to feel supported and have time with their peers. Participation grew from five to eight youth per meeting to 20-30 youth joining each session. Participants were able to articulate something new they learned and how they planned to share the information with others. All participants have been able to complete the group projects from home and they have spent time engaging with their peers via the chat box and microphone features during Zoom meetings. Watching 4-H professionals lead virtual programs has also helped participants develop their own virtual leadership skills. Youth participating in these programs have been able to take ideas back to their virtual 4-H club meeting such as activities, games, and icebreakers.

## PROMENADE OF PALMS

*Hannah Wooten, Commercial Horticulture Extension Agent I, Orange County  
Tina McIntyre, Florida Friendly Landscaping Extension Agent I, Seminole County  
Kaydie McCormick, Residential Horticulture Extension Agent I, Seminole County*

A central Florida city completed a huge park improvement project to the tune of \$4.5 million in 2018. The park boasts tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, pathways, exercise equipment, a splash pad and amphitheater, pavilions, and a prominently located promenade of palms. The community was proud of the park, but the promenade of palms was always looking paltry.

A former city commissioner, a landscaper himself, noticed the palms never really established, so he and the park director contacted UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County. They described 16 silver date palms, some looking fine and some on the brink of death. When the county agents made a site visit, they found almost the entire park planted with native plants; sticking out like sore thumbs were 16 exotic palms planted in a uniform pattern. The best of the selection looked frazzled and nutrient deficient, and the worst warranted concern prompting disease diagnostics.

The three horticulture Extension agents in Seminole County teamed up to tackle the diagnostics. The agents took soil samples to test for nutrients and drilled for trunk core samples to test for disease. NO DISEASE DETECTED. Interesting. The soil samples told the rest of the story: The best soil sample had a pH of 7.8, which is quite high; the others were creeping into mid 8 ranges. Compounding the issue was soil compaction. The soil where the palms were planted was hard as concrete! This soil condition can only be tolerated by certain plants.

The issues observed on the exotic and very expensive palm trees were consistent with high pH and compact soils. The leaves showed micronutrient deficiencies. After consulting with soil scientists, it was determined that it was unreasonable to drop the pH with sulfur and too expensive to amend the entire area with improved soil. A chelated iron product and good nutrient management could potentially limp the trees through, but the Seminole County



horticulture agents ultimately recommended the right plant, right place. In this case, the agents recommended the humble Florida native sabal palm, which is tolerant of a wide range of pH and wet to dry conditions.

For some, the sabal palm seems too southern and not stately enough, so the city resisted the UF/IFAS recommendation for years. As predicted, the 16 stately Sylvester palms worth about \$7000 per tree (before installation) continued to decline for two years. The city stayed in touch with UF/IFAS the entire

time, and in 2020, the realization that right plant, right place would lead to long-term landscape resilience, the city replaced the phoenix palms with the Florida native sabal palmetto, a \$400 alternative.

This entire situation can be avoided in landscapes big and small. Test your soil before you plant. Select the right plant for the right place. Use other Florida Friendly Landscaping practices and work with professionals who are certified in Green Industries Best Management Practices!

## Comings & Goings

We would like to welcome the following newly hired and transferring faculty. These individuals were hired following a highly competitive search, screening and selection process. In some cases, candidates interviewed both on the UF campus in Gainesville and in a county Extension office. Selection was often difficult because we typically have two or three suitable candidates. These faculty are truly the best of the best!

### NEW POSITIONS

Laura Vasquez, Urban Horticulture Extension Agent I, Miami-Dade County

*We would like to wish the following agents the best of luck in their future endeavors.*

### DEPARTURES

Whitney Cherry, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent II, Calhoun County

Aaron Stam, Agriculture/4-H Youth Development Extension Agent I, Seminole Tribe

Chandler Mulvaney, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent I, Marion County

### RETIREMENTS

Ed Skvarch, Commercial Horticulture County Extension Director III, St. Lucie County