

Extension Comings and Goings
From the Office of the Dean for Extension
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- A streaming video message from Dr. Pete Vergot. This presentation can be viewed at:

High Speed Connection:

http://real.video.ufl.edu/~icsvideo/vergot1_april06.asx

Modem Connection:

http://real.video.ufl.edu/~icsvideo/vergot2_april06.asx

- **Get on your mark! Get set!! Go!!!**

The countdown is on for the 2006 Extension Symposium. Starting with state faculty May 15th, and then county faculty joining the symposium May 16th, we will have a total of 432 participants. We are looking forward to seeing all of you. Please make plans to join us for Tuesday's breakfast starting at 7:30 am. President Machen will be joining us and we will have the ribbon cutting ceremony for "Solutions for Your Life."

- **My First Experience with the State County Experience**

Danielle D. Treadwell

Horticultural Sciences

State Extension Specialist, Organic and Sustainable Vegetable Production

The State/County Experience is a program designed to introduce new state extension specialists with a 30% or greater extension appointment to their role in the Florida Extension system. Main objectives for both state and county faculty are:

- Appreciate the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships among state and county faculty.
- Develop an understanding of how programs are created, developed and funded at the state/county level.
- Understand the state and county level evaluation and accountability process.

- Develop educational materials that address information needs of clientele in the area of specialization of the participating faculty.

I was paired with two experienced and enthusiastic county faculty with responsibilities in vegetable crops: Teresa Olczyk in TREC (Homestead, FL) and Ed Skvarch from Indian River REC (Fort Pierce, FL). During the one and a half days I spent at each location, I was introduced to colleagues, toured research facilities including the biocontrol lab and USDA ARS lab in Ft. Pierce, and visited with proprietors of small organic farms. During car rides to and from locations, I had an opportunity to talk with Ed and Teresa about life on the front lines. We talked about the responsibilities and opportunities associated with our jobs, the day to day routines and our families. I discovered that they are never in their offices, their phones ring regularly, and they both wish they could be in two places at once to do everything they want to do. Obviously, we had a lot in common!

Ed and Teresa made sure I got to visit five really fantastic organic farms including three farms near Lake Okeechobee and two near Homestead. All the farms were less than 15 acres, and all sold their produce locally. Four were certified organic, and one was Certified Naturally Grown. One grower operates a 175 member CSA (Community Supported Agriculture). She has two drop-off locations a week, and harvests about 40 weeks a year. Another family sells at area markets and although they are only in their 3rd season of production, have regular customers and are seeking to expand. Three other growers sell to high-end restaurants and work closely with their clientele chefs to provide a wide variety of high quality, visually appealing vegetables and fruits. Some of the crops in production were micro greens, over 30 varieties of tomatoes, edible flowers including nasturtiums and borage, crucifers including many Asian varieties of all colors and flavors, many colors of beans, raspberries and strawberries. Of course, we tasted everything! The growers had many good suggestions for future research, and offered to be on-farm cooperators. Their requests for information were insightful, and each request made me say "Hey, I could write a grant for that!"

Ed, Teresa and I are currently developing informational tools for small vegetable crop producers in South Florida. Although these ideas were generated from visits to organic farms, we believe these tools will have applications across production systems for growers who desire to minimize off-farm inputs. I will be returning to South Florida soon with the materials we

have been developing for editorial work and to develop an on-farm trial for organically produced heirloom tomato varieties in South Florida. An update on these materials will be forthcoming.

Having the opportunity to visit with two outstanding faculty was truly a gift, and I am so grateful that administration recognizes the value of experiences like mine. (Thank you, Millie and Larry!) When I accepted this position, I knew I would be working intimately with county faculty and growers. It is very clear to me now that I am here to *serve* Ed, Teresa, and the entire county faculty in my field. My job is to provide research supported, accurate information in a form that can be used immediately, and I intend to keep their glasses full.

- Dr. Steve Olson has been selected the Outstanding Extension Educator for 2006 by the American Society for Horticultural Science, which will be awarded in July at the ASHS annual convention in New Orleans. This award is for a single Extension Specialist who has contributed the most over their career to further Extension education in the horticultural sciences.
- Bob Wasno, Lee County Sea Grant Extension agent coordinated the 5th annual Boca Grande Pass Underwater Marine Debris Clean-up. The Boca Grande Pass is one of the top recreational fishing areas in the world. Over 30 organizations and 100 individuals participate in these efforts. To date, over 25,000 pounds of marine debris has been recovered from these fishing grounds. As a result of these activities, the State of Florida has also revised their fishing regulations that have reduced marine and fishing debris from entering these waters.
- Betty Staugler, Sea Grant Extension Agent for Charlotte County coordinated the inaugural Peace River Derelict Crab Trap Cleanup event with the Manatee Entanglement Working Group. This cooperative effort of state agencies, environmental non-profit groups and environmental consulting group pulled 161 derelict crab traps from the bottom of the Peace River, and released a number of fish and crabs that had been trapped in these abandoned traps.
- **4-H Pizza Garden** - Gum is a by-product of a pig? Bees have something to do with agriculture? Butter is made from cream? Wow! Over 700 2-4 grade students in Pinellas County were amazed at some of the things they learned when they came to the 4-H Pizza Garden: An Agricultural Adventure fieldtrip at the Pinellas County Extension and the Florida Botanical Gardens. The students and their teachers spent several weeks prior to their fieldtrip learning about

agriculture and the importance in their daily lives using lessons from the 4-H Pizza Garden curriculum. One teacher emailed the following about the experience, "Please thank all of your staff for the wonderful unit, materials, and field trip. My class thoroughly enjoyed every moment and learned so very much. We really appreciate all the hard work that your staff and volunteers put into educating the children." One student commented, "...this was my best fieldtrip in my entire life." [Contact: Janet Golden]

- **Get Checking** - Pinellas & Hillsborough County Extension in partnership with the Prosperity Campaign, Consumer Credit Counseling, and other agencies are part of a coalition offering the *Get Checking* program in the Tampa Bay area. The program helps people who have a history of mismanaging their checking accounts and are in jeopardy of losing their banking privileges. It also helps people who have already had to close their checking accounts because of overdrafts. People who attend a *Get Checking* class are allowed to keep their account or open a new checking account. Since January, 20 people have been given a second chance at maintaining a checking account and remaining a part of the financial mainstream. [Contact: Lisa Leslie]
- Our Extension Family is growing with new faculty. Please welcome the following new hires:
Emily Phillips - Marion - Ctsy 4-H - 3/27/06
Ricardo Martinez - Broward - Ctsy - 3/20/06
Karen Headlee - Lee - EA II - 4/27/06

* Extension Comings and Goings is a monthly newsletter distributed by the Office of the Dean for Extension via e-mail and on the Extension web site at <http://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu>. If you have suggestions for contributions, please send them to klantonenko@ifas.ufl.edu.