

Comings & Goings

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION

Straughn IFAS Extension Professional Development Center Opens!



IFAS proudly opened the doors to a new professional development center on January 12th with a dedication ceremony honoring Alto and Patrecia Straughn. The Straughns' generous donation made possible the construction of the center, which offers IFAS and UF faculty and staff an extraordinary new venue to gather and connect.

March 2012

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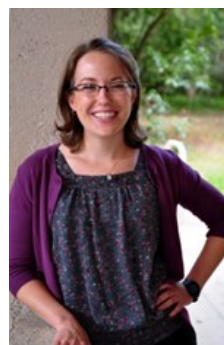
The center's large ballroom can hold up to 300 people or be divided into three separate spaces, each with state of the art audio visual equipment. The lobby offers convenient space to welcome your guests and a warming kitchen provides easy access for caterers. You'll find an additional unique meeting space in the large outdoor pavilion surrounded by a teaching garden designed using Florida Friendly Landscaping principles. The new center is located on the UF's Gainesville campus, near the Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science facilities.



The facility will continue to extend the Straughns' remarkable influence on Florida Extension by providing an outstanding learning environment for a variety of events. Several successful events have been held at the center, including a meeting of Alachua County Home and Community Educators as well as a presentation by USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan hosted by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Upcoming events on the center's calendar include a Beef Cattle Short Course, grantsmanship workshops, and several 4-H Youth Development events.



You can learn more about the Straughn IFAS Extension Professional Development Center, including rates, policies, and floor plans, on our new website, straughn.ifas.ufl.edu. However, the best way to learn about the center is to come for a tour!



Meet the center's coordinator!

Hi, I'm Lindsey McConnell (mcconnell@ufl.edu), the coordinator of the new Straughn IFAS Extension Professional Development Center. I'm excited about the potential this new space offers the IFAS community and I look forward to

assisting with the diversity of events that will be held here. Our spring calendar has filled quickly but I'd like to help you reserve space at the center for your summer and fall events. I'd be happy to tell you more about the facility, or better yet, show you around in person. Please contact me with any questions you may have or to arrange a tour.

Extension Programs Have Reduced Soil Insecticide Use in Florida Sugarcane

Sugarcane is a prolific and fast-growing crop that has shown the ability to compensate for some early season pest damage. Thus, the presence of insect pests rarely requires an insecticide treatment. Wireworms are an exception since in newly planted fields, wireworms can feed on the young bud eyes and tender roots of the plant.

Loss of these primary shoots and compromised root structures causes significant yield losses. Historically, all newly planted sugarcane fields have been treated with either phorate or ethoprop at 19.5 lbs per acre in the furrow at planting to help control wireworms long enough for the sugarcane plant to establish itself. These insecticides have historically been applied as a prophylactic measure to all newly planted sugarcane fields, regardless of the size of the wireworm population. Studies by UF/IFAS Specialists Dr. Gregg Nuessly and Dr. Ron Cherry at the Everglades Research and Education Center in Belle Glade have shown that not only are these pesticides often effective at lower rates, but that frequently they are not needed at all.

Through a series of extension workshops and on-farm consultations provided by area Extension Agents Les Baucum and Ron Rice, many growers have begun a pre-plant sampling protocol to estimate wireworm populations in order to determine if a pesticide application is warranted. In any given year the Florida sugarcane industry typically plants more than 100,000 acres of sugarcane.

Based on industry surveys, pre-plant scouting has led to a 10% decrease in the number of fields that use soil insecticides for wireworm control. Soil insecticide application rates in the remaining 90% of newly planted sugarcane field have decreased by roughly 5 lbs per acre to a lower rate of approximately 15 lbs per acre.

As a direct result of these changes in wireworm

control practices, soil insecticide use has declined by more than 600,000 lbs per year, for an annual cost savings to growers exceeding \$1.2 million per year.

Les Baucum, EA II, Hendry County

Northwest 4-H Volunteer Leader Forum

More than 70 faculty and volunteers participated in the Northwest 4-H Volunteer Leader Forum February 17th-18th at the Camp Timpoochee 4-H Center. Faculty taught workshops to help volunteers learn how 4-H clubs teach life skills through positive youth development, and how to plan educational programs that tie into the three 4-H program initiatives: Healthy Lifestyles, Science, and Citizenship and Leadership. A 4-H Shooting Sports certification was held in conjunction with the forum. Special guests included Dr. Bryan Terry, the Florida 4-H Volunteer Specialist, and Nancy Jo Davidson, the Florida 4-H Volunteer Association President.

Heather Kent, RSA 4-H Youth Dev., EA III, Gadsen County



4-H Agent Stefanie Duda (Leon County) teaches a workshop on the basics of 4-H clubs.

Partnership Improves Access to Agribusiness Education

A growing number of people in Duval County are interested in agricultural production. However, a sizable portion of these individuals have no farming background, so they must learn the production and business skills once taught by experience on farms. In order to teach these skills, a partnership was developed between [Duval County Extension](#) and the [Small Business Development Center \(SBDC\)](#) at the University of North Florida. Each of these partners contributes their expertise to develop the next generation of farmers.

The objectives of this partnership were to develop a needs assessment to identify the unique educational needs related to business skills, and to develop training sessions and materials that address these needs. Farmer respondents (n=140) indicated that their educational needs included business planning, financial management, marketing, and understanding regulations. Regarding delivery method, a majority (36%) of respondents indicated that these topics should be incorporated into a UF/IFAS workshop or program. Twenty-eight percent of respondents indicated the training should be made available as a webinar. To meet these needs, the partners developed a [training session](#), [farmer resource guide](#) and [webinars](#).

Follow-up surveys revealed that 35% of participants developed a business plan, formed a legal entity, or started production as a result of the program. One participant wrote "we would not be in business if it weren't for the business guidance we've received from UF/IFAS and the SBDC." Partnering with local SBDCs can help Extension support and sustain the industry and create new small business jobs in agriculture.

For full results of the needs assessment scan or click the following QR-Code:



Bradley Burbaugh, Ag/Nat Resources, EA I, Duval County

Escambia County Therapeutic Sensory Garden



The Escambia County Horticulture program is using the Therapeutic Sensory Garden to reach new audiences with horticulture information and garden experiences.

Completed in June 2011, this garden features design elements that are suited to all gardeners, including those with physical and cognitive disabilities.



The Extension program has taught more than 15 programs using the gardens that support school concepts of special-needs youth. The gardens are also the feature work area for five “on the job” training students from the local Westgate school that helps improve their functional level as they transition from school to productive members of the community. Funds to create the garden were from the UF/IFAS Extension Dean’s matching funds grant program in 2011.



Beth Bolles, Env. Hort., EA III, Escambia County

New Faculty

Please welcome the following new faculty:

Blake Thaxton, Commercial Horticulture, Santa Rosa County.

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

Please feel free to also forward any questions or comments about this periodical to Valkyrie Shah at valkyrieshah@ufl.edu.
