



Comings & Goings

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE DEAN FOR EXTENSION

September/October 2015

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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 valkyries Shah@ufl.edu.

Officers Leading the Future

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Tri-County Water School Wets Whistles with Elected Officials and Community Leaders

(Whitney Elmore, Lara Milligan, Lynn Barber, Jim Moll) On Jun 12 UF/IFAS Extension Pasco County Extension hosted the Tri-County Water School in partnership with UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties at Crystal Springs Preserve in Crystal Springs, FL. [Page 4](#)

Xtreme Cuisine: Teaching youth healthy can be tasty!

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UF/IFAS Commemorates the International Year of Soils by Offering Teacher Workshops

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2015 was declared the International Year of Soils by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and is being promoted by the Soil Science Society of America? [Page 6](#)

UF/IFAS Extension Helps to Save Important Guava Trees

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Duval County Urban Forestry

(Larry Figart) Air potato is an invasive plant species in Florida that takes over wooded areas by vining over natural vegetation. [Page 10](#)

Teaching Diabetes Classes can be Fulfilling

(Cathy Rogers) Our client "Nancy" was ready to make some changes in her life. [Page 12](#)

Seminole County 4-H Youth Leadership Spotlight

(Bridgete Alfonso) Meet Andy, a shy, polite ninth grader in 2011, whose parents would diligently drop off at all the 4-H Community Club meetings. [Page 13](#)

Officers Leading the Future

Amanda Squitieri, 4-H EA I, Polk Cty

Employers nationwide have shared that new work-force entrants are ill-prepared for today and tomorrow's workplace and named communication as the most needed skill. Through participation in 4-H Officer Training and 4-H club meetings, youth develop important life skills that equip them to become leaders among their peers and engaged citizens for the workforce. During 4-H Officer Training, youth explore the qualities of good leaders, learn about the various officer positions, and participate in parliamentary procedures through experiential learning models and meeting simulation. As a result, 100% of the 17 youth survey respondents selected "strongly agree" or "agree" on a Likert self-evaluation in reference to gaining knowledge about the roles of club officers and confidence in their leadership position after attending the training. Afterwards, youth assume leadership roles in their respective officer position and practice such things as designing a meeting agenda, scribing and presenting meeting minutes, creating a treasury report, and working together to make group decisions. In a follow up survey completed by the 4-H club leaders, it was reported that 81% of 4-H club members conducted decision-making skills and 61% employed leadership skills based on the selection of "most" or "all" on a Likert scale. **The development of work-force preparation skills, like leadership, communication, and teamwork, has been cited by researchers as a major outcome for positive youth development like 4-H for the benefit of employers and the emerging young workforce.**

A Food Security Forum

Bryan Dailey, Com Res Dev CED II, Sarasota Cty

Maria Rometo, FCS EA II, Sarasota Cty

Robert Kluson, Ag/Nat Res EA III, Sarasota Cty

Ready access to quality, nutritious, and sustainable food remains a constant challenge in today's society. Food insecurity affects more than 56,000 Sarasota County residents, roughly the



Roundtable meeting.

14% national average, contributing to a myriad of health issues and increased health care costs. Numerous programs address the problem, but the problem persists. Extension recently hosted a roundtable featuring two dozen representatives from nine Sarasota County government departments, the Florida Department of Health and IFAS programs to discuss what they do, where they do it, impacts and barriers. The aim of this first-ever meeting of these key players was to educate ourselves about the topic and each other's work, plus



opportunities for collaboration and action. **Before the meeting's end, attendees were linking programs and projects so that outcomes and lessons learned could**

be shared and built upon. Survey questions at the beginning and end of the meeting showed a 32% increase in the number of attendees who felt food security was a very important issue, a 31% increase in the number of attendees who felt that Sarasota County was very active in addressing issues of food security, and all who answered a post-event questionnaire stated that the meeting was a valuable use of time.

Agriculture Meets the City

Crystal Snodgrass, Ag/Nat Res EA II, Manatee Cty

Christa Kirby, Livestock EA III, Manatee Cty

Samantha Kennedy, Com Res Dev CED II, Manatee Cty

In Manatee County, agriculture is the second largest economic driver behind tourism with an estimated economic impact of \$2.4 billion and a

farm gate value of \$646 million. With the upturn in commercial and residential building in Manatee County, there is a need to educate decision-makers and citizens about the importance of agriculture as well as how urban populations can benefit from a thriving local agricultural industry. Manatee County Extension agents were invited to present a program on farm to table topics at the Florida Planning and Zoning Conference in Bradenton, FL. The educational program included an introduction to farm to table, types of events, advantages and considerations, and myths and facts about agriculture. Participants included decision-makers and others involved with planning and zoning statewide. **Evaluation results showed that 90% of attendees increased their understanding of farm to table and local agriculture. Agents plan to present this program in other venues to promote awareness to the general public and other non-traditional audiences. Potential impacts include an integration of agriculture into urbanizing areas as well as a greater understanding of agricultural production among citizens.**

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish—Fisheries Regulations and Management Workshop Rationale

Betty Staugler, Sea Grant EA II, Charlotte Cty
Park rangers, resource managers, law enforcement officers and educators have frequent interactions with recreational anglers but are often not aware of current fisheries regulations or the rationale behind certain rules. By educating this stakeholder group about fisheries regulations and management they will be better able to transfer this type of information on to anglers that they contact. **Response:** The Agent developed a half-day workshop with support from state and federal agency partners. During the workshop, the Agent served as moderator. She also presented information on marine fish identification and marine species collection regulations. Additional top-

ics included stock assessment 101, state and federal rule changes, lionfish management and a law enforcement update. **Results:** Forty-four participants attended the Marine Fisheries Regulations and Management Workshop. Thirty-six participants completed a post workshop evaluation. Evaluation results indicated that 100% of participants increased their knowledge, ability to educate others, and planned to use information learned during the workshop. A 6-month follow-up survey was sent to all workshop participants. Sixty-seven percent of respondents (n=17) indicated that they had used information presented at the workshop and 71% indicated that they were better able to communicate with anglers. **Recreational angling generates more than \$7 billion in economic impact for Florida. It is imperative that our working professionals have the skills needed to discuss fisheries regulations and management so that anglers have correct information. By increasing the number of individuals who can provide timely and relevant information to anglers, anglers in turn will be able to make informed decisions leading to greater conservation practices being employed.**

4-H Students Impact Hunger in Polk County

Mary Beth Henry, Com Urban Env Hort EA II, Polk Cty

According to Feeding America, food insecurity affects more than 27% of children in Polk County and one in six of the overall Polk population are at risk for food insecurity. From backpack programs to free and reduced lunches in schools, many programs seek to impact the issue of hunger in Polk County. A Small Farms Extension program was launched last year to increase youth awareness of food insecurity and provide students an opportunity to contribute to the solution with their own two hands. Building on the success of the previous year, one local U-Pick allowed students to pick blueberries for donation to three local outreach centers. Fourteen participants including students, adults, and a local

food bank operator, picked 68 lbs of berries in only 2 hours. The farm nearly doubled the picked fruit and a total of 108 lbs of fresh blueberries were donated as a result. Students learned about hunger in our community, how to “tickle” blueberries, and the importance of sorting for a quality blueberry product. 71% (10/14) of participants reported they are better informed of hunger in our area and 64% (9/14) planned to purchase more locally grown food as a result of their experience. The program had a wider effect on the community as additional farms expressed interest in participating and one farm donated 1,000 lbs of fresh blueberries to these local food banks as a result of the Extension program arrangements. Fresh blueberries are a high value crop and an excellent source of antioxidants. **At a value of \$4.50 per pound for picked fruit, the program contributed a total value of \$4,986 in fresh fruit to local food banks and provided healthy food to those in need.**

Tri-County Water School Wets Whistles with Elected Officials and Community Leaders

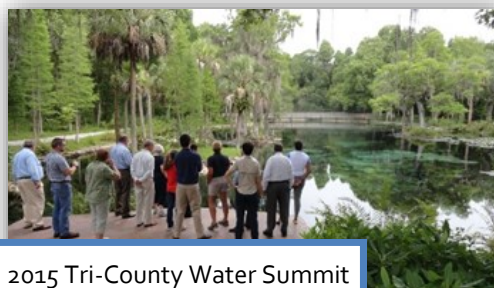
Whitney Elmore, CED III, Pasco Cty

Lara Milligan, Nat Res EA I, Pinellas Cty

Lynn Barber, FFL EA II, Hillsborough Cty

Jim Moll, Coordinator, Pasco Cty

On June 12 UF/IFAS Extension Pasco County Extension hosted the Tri-County Water School in partnership with UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties at Crystal Springs Preserve in Crystal Springs, FL. Water Schools are designed to bring elected officials and community leaders together to discuss relevant water-related issues and solutions. The 2015 Tri-County Water School focused on emerging water quality and public policy issues and featured experts from across Florida and the United States with proficient knowledge in water quality and protection as well as national and state governmental policy and economics. Topics addressed by speakers included the potential impacts of the lifting of



2015 Tri-County Water Summit Community Leaders at Crystal Springs Preserve. Photo Credit: Lara Milligan.

sanctions on Cuba on Tampa Bay Region water resources; the potential impact of micropollutants and pharmaceuticals entering waterways;

and the impacts of emerging contaminants from diffuse environmental sources.

Tri-County Water School attendees were surveyed prior to and immediately following the program to assess knowledge gain. Based on survey results and comments, the topics presented at this Water School significantly influenced the participants' perception of what is important to address in public policy concerning the protection of regional waterways. The overall knowledge gained by participants was highly significant, based on survey results and analysis, indicating there is still more work to be done to educate the public through community leaders on issues involving water protection.

Based on survey results, 92% of respondents (12) were “Extremely Likely” (5) or “Likely” (6) to use the information provided at the Water School to make professional decisions affecting water resources in their particular county or region. Additionally, 67% of respondents (12) said it was “Extremely Likely” (2) or “Likely” (6) that any of their future policy decisions would be altered as a result of the information they received at the Water School. And, 85% of respondents (13) indicated they “Strongly Agree” (9) or “Agree” (2) that “Water education programs, like this Water School, can improve public policies relating to water.” The UF/IFAS Tri-County Water School Extension Team will conduct a 3-month follow-up evaluation in September to determine behavior change as a result of participants' experience at the 2015 Tri-County Water School.

Xtreme Cuisine: Teaching Youth Healthy Can Be Tasty!

Wendy Lynch, FCS EA II, Putnam Cty

UF/IFAS Extension Putnam County and the Family Nutrition Program offered seven Xtreme Cuisine workshops for youth ages 9 to 14 during the summer of 2015. This program was offered through partnerships with the Putnam County Library, Putnam County Parks & Recreation and the Palatka Police Athletic League, reaching 82 youth.



Enjoying a Steamed Cabbage Roll.

Xtreme Cuisine taught a variety of kitchen basics and techniques including food safety, types of kitchen equipment, knife safety, how to measure properly, using a timer, and preparing a recipe. All Xtreme Cuisine participants successfully prepared 3 or 4 recipes that required a variety of food

preparation techniques and skills. The recipes included a Florida fruit parfait, roasted corn relish, Florida vegetable pizza, and steamed cabbage wraps. Each workshop not only taught youth kitchen basics, but also the benefits of choosing vegetables and fruits, low and non-fat dairy, whole grains, and lean meats. Youth also identified added sugars in foods and drinks and learned how using herbs and spices can enhance flavor without adding salt and fats. One parent shared her son's experience and the impact of Xtreme Cuisine: Using the Xtreme Cuisine Cookbook, "we had a big success with the sesame pasta, chic chicken salad, and guacamole. The pasta recipe was good; we even added mushrooms and chopped green onions. We made the corn relish again, but this time we added red qui-



Dicing bell peppers for the Florida Vegetable Pizza.

noa in it. It was delicious - this recipe is a keeper now. We really enjoy the recipes. They are easy and I like to see my son interested in helping me in the kitchen."

4-H Workshop Formulates Career for 4-H Member

Brian Estevez, 4-H EA II, Suwannee Cty

Chris DeCubellis, 4-H EA III, Gilchrist Cty

A 4-H youth participated in the Meat We Eat workshop at 4-H Congress taught by the Suwannee County 4-H agent in 2009. After that experience and participating in the Florida 4-H Hog and Ham project with her 4-H agent, this youth started the collegiate 4-H club at Santa Fe Community College, transferred and attended UF in the Agricultural Education and Communication department, and got a student job at the UF Meat Processing Center. This youth was able to benefit from several meat science opportunities including being the high individual for placing classes at the Intercollegiate Meat Evaluation Contest and winning first place at the product development contest at the National Meat Expo.

As a result of her 4-H club experiences and participating in state 4-H meat judging activities, this 4-H alum started a 4-H meat judging team back home in Gilchrist County. This team developed life skills in 15 youth during 2 years through activities related to the processing of beef, pork, and lamb, including retail identification, meat quality factors, and cooking methods. Today, this former 4-H youth is the quality control manager at Conecuh Sausage in Alabama, making more than \$52,000 a year. "I attended the 4-H Congress meat science workshop and did a year of hog and ham and that is what sparked my interest in the meat industry," said the former 4-H member.

UF/IFAS Commemorates the International Year of Soils by Offering Teacher Workshops

Libbie Johnson, Ag EA II, Escambia Cty

Did you know that 2015 was declared the International Year of Soils by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and is being promoted by the Soil Science Society of America? The purpose of this declaration was to raise awareness and to promote the sustainability of this life giving, limited natural resource. For many, the ground below our feet is just dirt, but within UF/IFAS, we understand that 95% of all agriculture production is dependent on healthy soils. Unfortunately, we are a small minority, so a small but dedicated team set out to educate



Dr. Kelly Morgan highlights the science that goes into modern soil work.

biology and agriculture instructors throughout the state about the roles and importance of soils.

The goal was to bring educators from

throughout the state to seven UF/IFAS Research and Education Centers (REC), give them a background in soils, provide lesson plans and labs focused on soils that could be incorporated into their curriculum, and make a connection between UF Soil and Water Science Department and these educators. To feed 9 billion people by 2050, we will need more STEM-trained students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The team, led by Dr. Nick Comerford and Libbie Johnson, worked with on-campus faculty Dr. Willie Harris, Dr. Heather Enloe, and Dr. James

Bonczek to develop the teaching materials

Andrew Williams from NRCS shared how soil scientists create soil maps. The soil in the western panhandle is greatly different than peninsular Florida.



for




each event. A standardized curriculum focused on basic soil properties, life in the soil, and soil's protection of the environment was offered at each location. A total of seven RECs graciously

"The multiple roles of soils often go unnoticed. Soils don't have a voice, and few people speak out for them. They are our silent ally in food production." José Graziano da Silva, FAO Director-General .

agreed to host this free, educational outreach. Each REC brought their unique perspective on soils. Teachers were exposed to the basics

of soil science through lecture materials that they could use in class (with prepared scripts) and demonstrations, along with a list of supporting websites and materials. We reinforced the lecture with field trips to provide hands-on experience with soils and share research being done at the RECs. Finally, the workshop was an opportunity for the teachers to earn Continuing Education Units. A website (http://nfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/year_of_soil/index.shtml) was created to house the information for teachers so they could access the materials in the future.

Preliminary review of the evaluations showed that the majority of the participants rated the overall quality of the workshop and information as excellent. In addition, the majority of the participants strongly agreed that they planned to use their knowledge gained during the workshop in their classroom, would use resources provided by the workshop in their classroom, would seek further information about soils from the websites, and would encourage others to contact their local extension office for information about soils and the environment. A follow-up survey is being developed to ascertain whether the teachers did utilize the curricula in their classrooms and how useful the workshops were to the participants. A full report on the pre/post-tests, evaluation, and follow up survey for the workshops will be



Dr. Gurpal Toor demonstrates tools used by soil scientists in a soil pit.

Dr. Nick Comerford talks about soil components in a fresh handful of soil.

Dr. Gurpal Toor
demonstrates tools used by
soil scientists in a soil pit.

reported in a future Comings and Goings.

Special thanks to the following for helping to teach and to really bring the IYS to all parts of Florida:

FLREC: Dr. Monica Elliott and Dr. Samira Daroub

IRREC: Dr. Alan Wright and Dr. Zhenli He, plus Ed Skvarch from St. Lucie Extension

GCREC: Dr. Gurpal Toor, Dr. Craig Stanley, and Dr. Yun-Ya Yang

WFREC: Dr. Wes Wood, plus Trent Mathews and Andrew Williams from NRCS

NFREC: Dr. Cheryl Mackowiak

SWFREC: Dr. Kelly Morgan and Marisol Sanchez

RCREC: Andrea Dunlop

We also want to thank the events coordinators, graduate students, field staff, and technicians who helped us to provide personal attention and quality instruction to every participant. Though the formal recognition of the International Year of Soil will soon end, there

is still a great opportunity for UF/IFAS. Teachers have daily contact with future scientists and extension agents, and we are uniquely positioned to help those teachers train students and develop

professionally. On the evaluation, teachers were asked for feedback on what other workshop topics would be useful to them. They were not shy, and almost every respondent gave ideas that should keep us very busy well into the future. Plant diseases, invasive and native species identification, Everglades conservation, composting, water resources/irrigation, livestock production, entomology, conducting research projects in classroom settings, and hydroponics were just a few of the subjects that were listed. Since offering this workshop, the Center Directors recently committed to make this an annual event.

Checking out the soil pit at NFREC.

Dr. Cheryl Mackowiak
from NFREC worked
with participants on labs.

UF/IFAS Extension Helps to Save Important Guava Trees

Jeff Wasielewski, Fruit Crops EA I, Miami-Dade Cty
Last Spring, a mother and daughter team of guava growers visited the UF/IFAS, Miami-Dade Extension office and asked for help getting rid of “snails, thousands upon thousands of them.” The snails were killing an estimated 60 percent of the family’s new plantings.

After talking with the growers, Tropical Fruits Extension Agent Jeff Wasielewski did not think that the snails were the cause of the trees’ decline and asked to visit their grove. When he arrived to the new five acre planting, Jeff did find snails, thousands of them, and many were attached to the dead trees’ trunks. However, these snails were beneficial tree snails that clean tree bark and do not consume live plants. He also saw that the new guava trees were planted on a small berm of crushed limestone rock and were being irrigated with a drip-irrigation system using emitters, but the emitters were installed too far away from the thirsty root ball for them to be effective. At Jeff’s recommendation, the growers installed drip emitters closer to the surviving guava trees. The trees in question did not die because of the snails; the trees died simply because they were not properly irrigated.

Thanks to Jeff, the mother and daughter guava growers were saved close to \$300 dollars in time, labor, and pesticide costs. There is only one snail bait labeled for guava production in Florida, and it is expensive and difficult to find. The growers also learned a valuable lesson on the importance of proper irrigation installation, and would not lose their next planting to careless emitter placement. Jeff followed up with the guava growers and sent them a packet designed for new growers which included information on fertilizers, chemicals, irrigation techniques, guava production, and upcoming tropical fruit workshops.

This is just one example of the hundreds of commercial tropical fruit growers who seek help from the experts at the UF/IFAS, Miami-Dade Extension office each year. Last year, more than 600 com-

mercial fruit growers were educated through workshops, field-days, one-on-one consultations, lectures and hands-on learning events.

Commercial tropical fruit workshops, taught by UF/IFAS faculty, teach growers how to use fertilizers and pesticides economically and safely, how to plant and prune fruit trees properly, and how to irrigate efficiently. Survey respondents who attended workshops last year reported that 79 percent of these growers made beneficial changes in horticultural practices, and more than 50 percent experienced additional financial gains as a result of the practice changes.

According to a study conducted by the University of Florida, roughly 67 percent of the tropical fruit growers in South Florida are part-time or have limited horticultural backgrounds; therefore, the need for horticultural training to help sustain this important industry with annual crop value of about \$75 million is enormous.

The UF/IFAS, Miami-Dade County Extension office, an equal opportunity institution, provides year-round educational opportunities that help commercial tropical fruit growers increase their sustainability, profitability, horticultural knowledge and competitiveness in an extremely challenging, global market.

Growing Agricultural Awareness: Tri-County 4-H Potato Project

Amy Hedstrom, 4-H EA I, Flagler Cty

David Dinkins, Ag/4-H EA IV, Flagler, Putnam, and St Johns Cty

Crystal McCazzio, 4-H EA II, Putnam Cty

Geralyn Sachs, Interim CED II, St. Johns Cty

Scott Taylor, Director, UF/IFAS Hastings Agricultural Research Center;

Mark Warren, Livestock/Nat Res EA II, Flagler and Putnam Cty

In our economy, there is a growing interest among consumers concerning food systems, the source of food, and food safety. At the same time, an annual report released by the STEM Food and Ag Council states there is a shortage of youth agri-



Winning design
for 5-lb potato
bag.

cultural profes-
sionals and a
need for new
professionals

trained in STEM fields.

The Tri-County Potato Project was designed to provide hands on, science-based learning experiences that will increase youth's STEM knowledge, raise awareness about the agriculture industry, provide workforce readiness life skills, and market the 4-H Youth Development program. The program has been made a success through the collaboration of UF/IFAS Extension 4-H and Agricultural agents from the Tri-County Area (Flagler, Putnam, and St Johns) along with the UF/IFAS Florida Partnership for Water, Agriculture, and Community Sustainability (PWACS) at Hastings. The program is multifaceted to reach its goals and objectives. The program includes...

Field days hosted at

PWACS: In January, the youth attend a field day where they learn about the commercial potato industry, plant three varieties of potatoes in the almost 1-acre plot dedicated to 4-H, and are given the knowledge and supplies for their individual projects. Then in May the youth return to harvest, sort, bag and taste test the potatoes they grew. During these field days youth are presented with STEM concepts like measuring spacing during planting, the science of growing the plants, technology used by the commercial industry, and much more.

Potato Project Activity Book & Individual Container Project: The activity book includes a series of 12 potato learning activities. Ac-



Youth planting
potatoes at UF/
IFAS Hastings
Research Center.
They learned the
importance of
spacing and
working together
to accomplish a
goal.

tivities include goal setting, record keeping on individual projects, plant part identification, maintenance and care of an individual plant, story writing, food safety and nutrition, agricultural history, potato defect identification, and marketing. Many youth are also given the opportunity to exhibit their individual potato plants at the local fairs.

Potato Ambassador Program: This activity is open to youth aged 13-18 and encourages public speaking through a speech contest held at the First Coast 4-H Youth Expo in Elkton. The prize is a full scholarship to 4-H Legislature that is provided by local farm contributions. The winning youth is deemed the 4-H Potato Ambassador for the year.

School enrichment programs: Programs are held in schools to increase agricultural awareness and market the 4-H program through container gardening with potatoes similar to the individual container projects done by the other youth.

Potato Bag Marketing Contest: Youth are given the opportunity to use the marketing skills they developed through the activities in the activity book to design the label put on 5-lb potato bags.

Community Service: Each youth/club is asked to donate at least part of their harvest to help others in their community. Potatoes were donated to local food pantries, Bread of Life, local churches that feed the needy, women's shelters, and many more community organizations.

Fundraiser: Many clubs used the harvested potatoes that were not donated as a fundraiser for their club. Once again youth got a chance to use marketing skills they developed to sell their product. They were faced with real-world challenges like selling the product before it spoiled, how to sell their product (50-lb or 5-lb bags), how much to sell the potatoes for, and how to reach potential customers.



Youth sorting their harvest to remove the undesired potatoes. Youth were taught to look for skin defects and other undesirable components. After sorting, potatoes were bagged, divided, and some cooked so the youth could taste their product.

This year, 59 youth and their families have actively participated in various stages of potato production. Youth have been given the opportunity to gain knowledge in commercial harvesting practices, marketing, and careers in agriculture that they will put into practice as they completed the project. As a result, youth surveyed (38) reported a gain in their ability to meet and understand the needs in their communities. knowledge of the agriculture industry and challenges facing the industry. understanding the importance of marketing. knowledge of a large variety

of careers in the agriculture industry. understanding scientific components of the agriculture industry.

Feeding a global population that will increase to 9 billion during the next 35 years will require STEM-trained professionals to face the challenge of making agriculture more efficient and productive. It is our intention to sow a seed of interest that inspires youth to pursue a future in education and careers in STEM fields.

Duval County Urban Forestry

Larry Figart, Forestry EA II, Duval Cty

Air potato is an invasive plant species in Florida that takes over wooded areas by vining over natural vegetation. It spreads by producing a tuber that resembles a potato, hence the name air potato. It has been listed by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council as one of Florida's most invasive plant species since 1993 and it was added to the Florida Noxious Weed List by FDACS in 1999. In cooperation with the Florida Department of

Agriculture, an Air Potato Beetle workshop was presented at the Duval County Extension office in the fall of 2014. There were 101 attendees. A total of 35 "boxes" of air potato beetles were raffled off. The rest were given an opportunity to be put on the waiting list to receive air potato beetles in the spring of 2015. A pre/post test revealed that 98% of attendees improved their ability to recognize invasive plants as well as their control.

A follow-up survey was distributed to 101 attendees with 49 responses. A total of 96% of attendees gained awareness of invasive species. The survey also indicates that of those that received beetles, 95% released their beetles within 4 hours as instructed, and 86% of respondents that received beetles reported that they observed damage to the air potato vines from the released beetles. A few reported that they had not been able to return to the spot where the beetles were released. A total of 67% of respondents that did not receive beetles reported signing the waiting list to receive beetles from the IFAS Hayslip Biological Control Research and Containment Laboratory in the spring 2015.



Air Potato (top) and Air Potato Beetle (bottom).



Northwest Florida 2015 Agricultural Innovator of the Year Awards

Libbie Johnson, Ag EA II, Escambia Cty

On Tuesday August 4, 2015, twelve Innovative Farmers and Ranchers were recognized by UF/IFAS Extension and Farm Credit of Northwest Florida at the Jefferson County Opera House in Monticello. This is the 5th year these two organizations have teamed up to honor a selection of the most innovative farmers from the Florida Panhandle.



The 2014 Ag Innovator Family, the Beshears from Jefferson County.



The Basfords, a longstanding farm family of Jackson County, were recognized by Doug Mayo.



Shep Eubanks poses with Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, 2015 Ag Innovators from Holmes County.



Julie McConnell recognized the Allans, the owners of a Florida Century Pioneer Farm in Bay County.

The purpose of the Agriculture Innovator Recognition Program is to annually recognize innovative farmers and ranchers from 16 Florida Panhandle counties, from Jefferson west to Escambia County. This program is intended to increase awareness of the diversity and innovation of today's modern agriculture. By sharing the story of the highlighted farmers and ranchers with local and regional media, the general public will gain a new appreciation for the business of agriculture in their area. In 2015, County Agriculture Extension Agents selected 12 Agricultural Innovators to be recognized. All of the county honorees have distinguished themselves as creative thinkers and leaders in the agricultural community. From this group of elite farmers that were honored by their home county, one is selected annually to represent Northwest Florida. This year, Jerry Davis of Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties was selected as the Northwest Florida Agriculture Innovator of the Year. The following table lists the county winners from across the panhandle.

County	Agricultural Innovators
Okaloosa	Gary & Susan Holley
Walton	Mikael L'Andre
Holmes	Raymon Thomas
Washington	Bill and Brenda Maphis
Jackson	Steve and Seth Basford
Bay	Andrew and Laura Jane Templeton Allan
Franklin	George Watkins
Gadsden	Robert Jackson
Leon	Hanah Murphy, David Newman, Tyler Cooper
Wakulla	James Gerrell
Jefferson	Douglas and Ronnie Walker

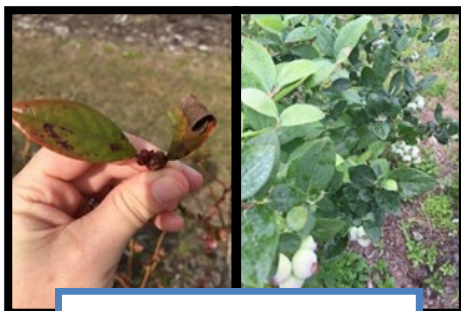
Implementing Blueberry BMPs with Local U-pick Farm

Prissy Fletcher, Hort EA I, Putnam Cty

A small U-pick farm in Crescent City known as Blueberry Hill Farm has been in existence for 5 years now. The grower contacted the extension office last year in desperate need of assistance. He informed us that the plants looked pitiful; several were dying or dead, and they lacked the vigor that was seen at establishment. There were also post-harvest issues. The first objective was to make a visit and collect samples.

At the initial site visit, it was obvious that the bushes were lacking something, or multiple things. The varieties ('Emerald,' 'Jewel' and 'Star') were situated at the top of a sand hill overlooking a small lake. The total planted area was just over 1 acre with roughly 1500 plants with micro-sprinkler emitters. After collecting samples, I questioned the grower about his fertilizer and pruning practices. He had been pruning once a year, and would alternate each year the type of pruning (top vs sides of plants). This strategy had allowed the plants to get leggy and the foliage less dense. For fertilizer he was using a quick-release blend with some micronutrients every other month.

The soil report returned, showing that the pH was perfect at 5.0, but his phosphorus and potassium levels were quite low. After a chat with blueberry specialist Dr. Jeff Williamson, it was determined that the plants were spindly to due to a lack of proper fertilizer, as the report confirmed. Blueber-



Before (March '15) and after (May '15) changes to fertilizer and pruning practices.

ries need 175 lbs of nitrogen fertilizer per acre per year, and the grower hadn't even applied half that amount.

We increased his fertilizer applications to every 3

weeks from February to late September using a blueberry blend. A plant sample was then taken to the UF/IFAS Plant Diagnostic Center where we learned that it also had *Botryosphaeria* Stem Blight. I followed up with the grower and gave a pruning demonstration to remove infected wood, along with dormant pruning techniques.

Dr. Williamson and I visited the farm about 2 months later. The grower was pleased with the short term outcomes of increasing his fertilizer rates, and the plants were looking wonderful! They were no longer leggy, and the dark green color had returned to his foliage. The fungal disease had also been eradicated. He even had several honey bee hives to assist with pollination. To address the shriveled fruit problem, Dr. Williamson pointed out that the heat was partially to blame, but also 'Star' has a short bloom to ripe interval so the produce needs to be harvested and stored quickly. While investigating other declining plants, it was discovered that his emitters were clogged so the plants had not been getting adequate moisture. The grower was informed of the importance of regularly checking the efficiency of his system.

Since this visit, the owner of Blueberry Hill Farm has been approved by the USDA for cost-shares to provide drip irrigation, an acid injector and a weather station on the property. With a desire to expand his production season to early spring, he's adding two acres of 'Endura' (UF's newest release) and 'Kestrel' cultivars. David Dinkins, Tri-County Agriculture agent, recently signed up the grower for the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), which provides individuals on WIC with

coupons that can be used to purchase locally grown produce. The grower is also passionate about youth involvement with horticulture. He has offered to host field trips for the youth participating in our 4-H Blueberry Bush project so they can compare their container grown bushes with those in the field.

Teaching Diabetes Classes can be Fulfilling

Cathy Rogers, FCS/4-H EA II, Suwannee Cty

Our client "Nancy" was ready to make some changes in her life. Though she did not have any of the health issues commonly associated with being overweight, she knew that it was just a matter of time. She was excited to begin the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) because making changes isn't easy and she figured having a lifestyle coach and a network of support from other participants was just what she needed.



Nancy

"Let me tell you about one of the changes I made a couple of weeks ago! My drive home from teaching school is about half an hour long and I am always hungry at that time of day. I thought about what I had been eating as snacks on the trip (usually a candy bar)

and switched to taking a big bottle of water and a piece of fruit. It satisfies my snack-attack and I feel better about myself!"

Nancy is doing well; she is losing weight by eating healthy and being active as a result of the NDPP course. Not only is she influencing her own family, but also her high school students and other teachers. One neighboring teacher was about to go on a weight loss diet when Nancy suggested she wait for 1 month and try the following suggestions (NDPP techniques) instead:

- Eat whatever you want but cut portion sizes.
- Track foods, calories and fat grams.
- Work up to 150 minutes of activity per week.

That teacher is losing weight, developing healthy

habits and is very happy about it! Teaching diabetes prevention classes (weight management) is so fulfilling! When I see people make a small change in their lifestyle and then another and another, I know they are avoiding or delaying chronic disease symptoms – and they feel so good about themselves!

Seminole County 4-H Youth Leadership Spotlight

Bridgete Alfonso, 4-H YD/FCS EA I, Seminole Cty

Meet Andy, a shy, polite ninth grader in 2011, whose parents would diligently drop him off at all the 4-H Community Club meetings. Andy's parents were concerned he wasn't socializing enough in school and were concerned he would have challenges making it through high school. Andy wasn't a part of a sports team or academic club at school, and being faced with a minimal family budget, there were not many options for socialization. Enter Seminole County 4-H. Annual fundraisers make it possible for the program to assist families in covering project costs, ensuring that any 4-H age youth can join regardless of family finances. The first half of the year of attending the 4-H Community Club, Andy kept to himself and did not say much at all. After being partnered with an older teen leader, a brand new Andy surfaced when he was put in charge of leading a group of 8-year-olds in their entomology project. Once quiet and reserved, Andy was planning their lesson, requesting materials from the club leader, delegating responsibilities and enthusiastically leading the youngsters in their experiments. Andy realized his group members were looking to him for direction. Pairing him with younger members allowed Andy to gain the confidence to feel comfortable in a leadership role. Andy had the opportunity to speak in public and interact with his fellow teen leaders to complete the series of lessons. By 10th grade, Andy was participating in 4-H State Events such as Legislature and 4-H University, further developing his skills in public speaking, working with diverse groups of youth and leadership develop-



From right to left: Andy is third young man (black shirt) on right pictured here with Seminole County 4-H County Council Members at the Annual Italian Dinner and Silent Auction to raise funds for 4-H Youth Summer Event Scholarships.

ment. Local businesses and private donors donated more than \$7,000 for youth like Andy to attend 4-H State Events in the summer.

Andy is one of 357 Seminole County 4-H youth members that are supported by volunteer leaders who contributed 2,131 volunteer

hours this past 4-H year. Andy continued his participation on the County level by taking on an additional leadership role with 4-H County Council, where he assisted in planning and implementing fundraisers. Andy participated in almost every fundraising and community service opportunity that Seminole County 4-H offered from 2011-2015, accruing the required hours he needed to be able to receive state scholarships to attend a private college in Indiana this fall. Additionally, Andy applied and interviewed for the Seminole County 4-H Scholarship Program and received one of two \$1,000 scholarships awarded to a junior and senior in high school to be used for college. The day before left for college in Indiana he dropped off a "thank you" note for the 4-H Agents. "Thank you very much for supporting me and the 4-H Club for all these years!" I had a lot of fun in 4-H and I learned so much to help me in the future."

GI-BMP Program Nets Three Awards

The UF/IFAS Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) program recently won two state awards and one national award for Extension program content and implementation. The Florida Association of County Agriculture Agents (FACAA) honored the GI-BMP program with two

awards at the recent Extension Professional Associations of Florida's state meeting in Naples. The first award, FACAA's communications award, spotlighted the program's online learning module and website interface and, the second, its Search for Excellence in Landscape Horticulture award, recognized the development and implementation of an outstanding Extension education program. Esen Momol, state director for the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ program, which oversees the GI-BMP program, accepted the awards on behalf of the entire GI-BMP implementation team. "The success we have achieved for the GI-BMP program can only be attributed to teamwork", said Momol. "All the Extension agents, FDEP coordinators, and our industry partners statewide who have put in countless hours for curriculum development and instructing hundreds of training classes can feel a great deal of satisfaction in the recognition provided by these awards. Florida is truly better off for their efforts."

In addition to the two state awards, Don Rainey, the state coordinator for the GI-BMP program, traveled to Rapid City, South Dakota this past July for the national meeting of the National Association of County Agriculture Agents where he accepted the national award for Excellence in Landscape Horticulture for his work with the GI-BMP program. As the national winner, Rainey was the keynote speaker at the Search for Excellence Awards Luncheon.

"It was quite a thrill for our Extension program to receive such national recognition", said Rainey. "But, most importantly, it shows how our UF/IFAS programs are leading the way nationally in protecting our natural resources."

As part of the UF/IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ program, the GI-BMP program trains landscaping professionals in proper fertilization and irrigation practices that protect Florida's water resources. To date the program has trained over 41,000 individuals using in-person and online classes given in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole.

Arrivals

We would like to welcome the following new faculty:

Stewart Swanson, Agron. Crops EA III, Hendry Cty
Shirley Bouie, FCS EA II, Jefferson Cty
Morgan Hopkins, FYN Pg Cty EA I, Miami-Dade Cty
Geovanne (Gio) Ijpkemeule, Com Hort/PM EA II, Sarasota Cty
Vanessa Bielema, Sust Ag/Food Sys EA I, Collier Cty
Hannah Wooten, Sust Ag/Food Sys EA I, Seminole Cty

Departures

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

Lindsay Adams, 4-H EA I, Indian River Cty
Amanda Thien, 4-H EA I, Nassau Cty
Erin Landauer, FCS EA I, Manatee Cty
Taylor Vandiver, Com/Res Hort EA I, Leon Cty

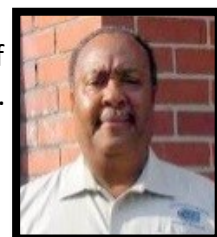
Retirement

We would like to give our best wishes for an enjoyable retirement to



Chris Kilbride, FCS EA IV, Martin County after 32 years of service

And



Roy Carter, Ag CED IV, Gulf County after 36 years of service.