

# RIVER RAMBLINGS

The newsletter of the  
Indian River Citrus League

FEBRUARY 2013

## Schirard receives Legend of the River Award

The Good, bad and the ugly was the description of the Legend of the River recipient J. Brantley Schirard's life in citrus. The award, given to an individual for their commitment in support of the Indian River citrus industry, was presented to Schirard for his life time commitment to the River. With 150 people in attendance and surrounded by friends and family, Schirard heard the bad and the ugly, but barely the good as colleagues took the opportunity to roast Schirard. Laughter filled the room as stories were shared about Schirard and his reputation of flying his Cub into any situation, including cows on the landing strip and taping down his windshield with duct tape. Also included was a slide presentation that highlighted Schirard's life and career in the citrus industry.



Indian River Citrus League Executive Vice President, Doug Bournique commented, "Brantley's lifetime of service to the fresh fruit industry is second to none, for nobody has put in more time and energy into the preservation and promotion of our industry than Brantley."

The banquet, in its tenth year, is an annual event to kick off the Florida Citrus Show held at the Fenn Center held in Ft. Pierce. Banquet sponsors were Farm Credit, Chemical Dynamics, Florida Coast Equipment, Dean Mead, Indian River Select, Carden & Associates, Southeastern Aerial Crop Service and SSI Petroleum.



Buddy Johnson of Hilliard Groves, Inc. and Brantley Schirard, Sr. of Schirard Citrus, Inc.



T. P. Kennedy of United Indian River Packers and his wife, Regina



Doug Bournique of the Indian River Citrus League and Rusty Varn of Varn Citrus and his guest Brooke Sparks



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# Grapefruit Tree Inventory and Propagations

by Peter Chaires, Florida Citrus Packers

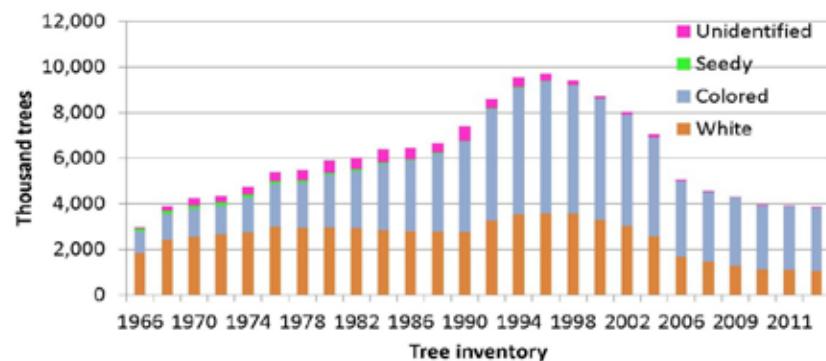
A special thanks to Candi Erick at the Florida Agricultural Statistic Service for contributing the tree census report for this article.



The Indian River District has faced every imaginable challenge over the past fifteen years. We moved from a period of oversupply, through loss of acreage to canker, hurricanes, loss of nurseries and nursery capacity, to loss of trees and productivity from HLB. Despite the set-backs, the resiliency and strength of this industry is without parallel. There is some renewed interest in replanting, but growers express frustration at the availability of trees. There is some sense that a piece of the recovery puzzle is missing, but it's hard to identify. This is a good time to assess the situation and better understand the factors that have changed the landscape. Let's take a look at planted tree inventories, grapefruit tree propagations, the changing relationship between grower and nursery and nursery capacity.

The chart below, supplied by Candi Erick, USDA, NASS, Florida Field Office shows that planted tree inventories in the Indian River District are at their lowest point since approx. 1968. The overall tree count for all grapefruit varieties is a little under 4 million. Not surprisingly, white grapefruit, as a percentage of the whole continues its precipitous decline. Seedy grapefruit are no longer of sufficient volumes to visibly show on the graph.

## Indian River District Grapefruit Trees



### A Brief History of the Tree Census and the Indian River Production

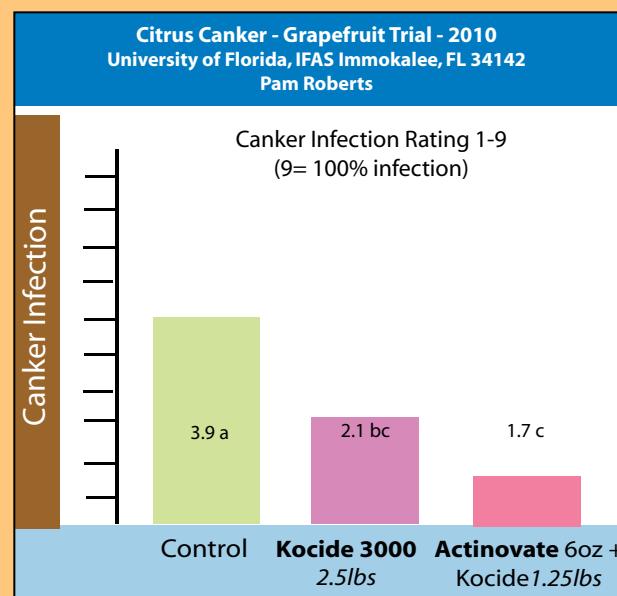
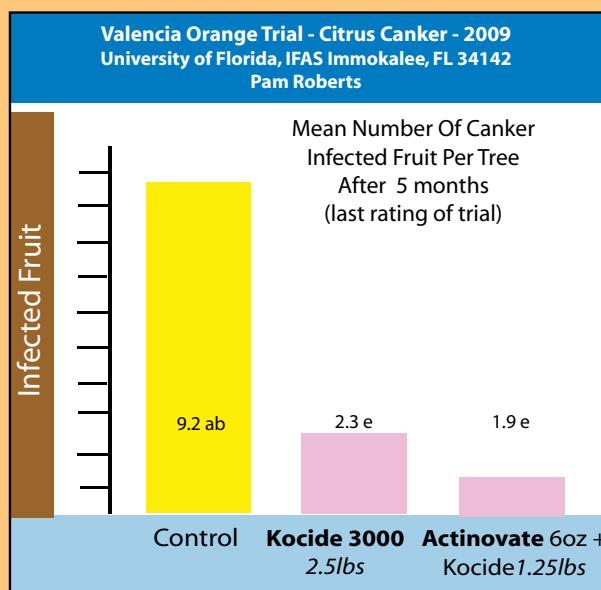
In 1966, the Florida Agricultural Statistics Service conducted the first census of Florida citrus trees using aerial photography. A total of 7,055,000 grapefruit trees were recorded with ¾ of the trees identified as seedless and seedy white grapefruit. Over 40 percent of the grapefruit trees were located in the Indian River District where seedless white and colored grapefruit trees accounted for 95 percent of the plantings.

Tree numbers continued to increase until the freezes of the 1980s took a toll. Growers responded by planting the new trees closer together and most of them were colored seedless varieties. Grapefruit trees reached a peak in 1996 with 15,116,900 and nearly 60 percent were colored seedless varieties. The change within the Indian River District mirrored what was happening statewide. The District's total

continued on page 4

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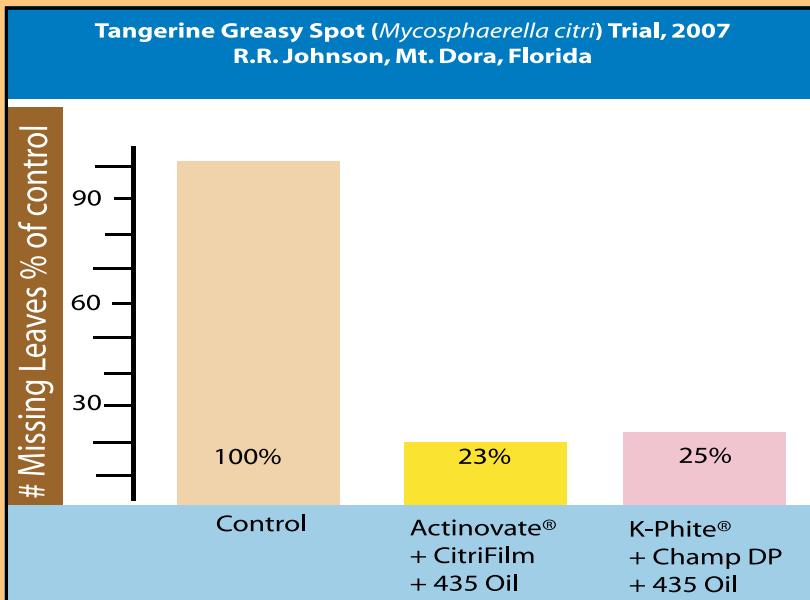
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- For Canker, Scab, *Alternaria* or Greasy Spot use 3-9 oz per acre per spray.
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- Product may be tank mixed with other fungicides, fertilizers, stimulants and other biologicals.
- May be rotated, but not tank mixed, with peroxides or other coppers.

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Winter Haven, Florida

grapefruit trees peaked at 9,710,700. Seedless grapefruit accounted for 99.8 percent but the shift from white to colored occurred here, too. In 1966, white grapefruit trees had outnumbered colored grapefruit trees by almost 2:1. In just 30 years, the number of white trees declined as the number of colored trees continued to rise resulting in 160 colored trees for every 100 white trees.

The tree population is aging. Compared to state figures, more of the District's white seedless trees fall into the older age groups and there are fewer young and non-bearing trees. About 86 percent of the white seedless were planted in 1996 or earlier and only 0.5 percent are non-bearing. The District's colored trees are similar to the state figures with 7 percent non-bearing and 76 percent planted in 1996 or earlier. A breakdown of grapefruit trees in the District shows 71 percent are colored seedless varieties, 28 percent are white seedless, and unidentified and seedy trees making up the remaining 1 percent.

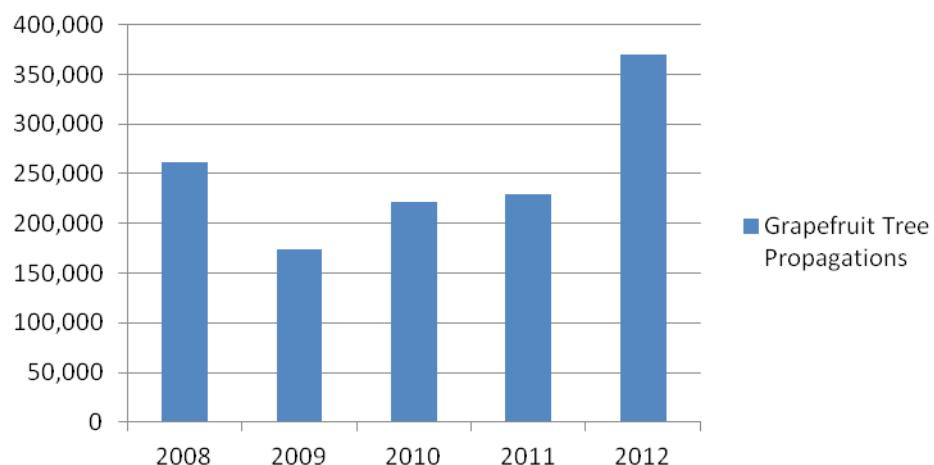
Statewide and Indian River colored grapefruit inventories have been holding relatively steady since 2008, but this figure is a little less than half the 1996 tree count. The ideal field inventory of colored grapefruit trees for the Indian River District is a moving target and subject to endless interpretation. Every person has their opinion, and none are incorrect. Most seem to feel that a tree inventory of 5 million to 6 million Indian River grapefruit trees is about where we need to be. However, in the era of HLB, the tree count doesn't tell the whole story. Production is down in many blocks, while fruit drop, poor quality and small sizes plague packinghouses and growers.

After the arrival of HLB and the ACP vector, regulations mandated substantial changes to nursery structures and all had to be screened. The cost of compliance was steep, and the number of nurseries was diminished causing statewide nursery capacity to contract. Though the number of producing citrus nurseries is recovering, the years of lower capacity and the high value of new screened nursery space changed the grower-nursery relationship substantially. First, the extreme shortage of processed orange varieties became a very high priority for most nurseries. With limited capacity, the fulfillment of processed orange orders alone absorbed the entire capacity of many nurseries for years into the future. The days of nurseries anticipating grower needs, and stocking trees on speculation that demand will materialize are gone. Screen capacity is at a premium, and growers must now plan further ahead. Nurseries produce trees to order. Even with better planning, orders may be filled two to three years down the road. Nurseries take care of their regular customers first, leaving some growers hesitant to shop around. Cancelled nursery orders are rarely a problem for nurseries, as trees are gobbled up by hungry growers without hesitation.

The chart to the right shows that statewide propagations of grapefruit trees are improving. Figures were not available for the number of resets needed to maintain our current position, but with annual grapefruit tree propagations edging toward 400,000 per year, things are slowly moving in the right direction.

Data Source: Michael Kesinger, Chief, Bureau of Citrus Budwood Registration, Division of Plant Industry

## Grapefruit Tree Propagations



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Tree capacity is being addressed in several ways. First, new nurseries have been built and their production will soon be added into the equation. Second, many existing nurseries have expanded their capacity. We are told that 500,000 trees of additional capacity is a reality and more expansion is behind this. While we will soon produce over 4 million total citrus trees per year statewide, this figure needs to be larger if replanting is to preserve the critical mass being lost to disease and diminished production from existing groves. Finally, the state needs to increase its production of available budwood of high demand varieties to better enable nursery expansion to meet the needs of industry. Many nursery operations can expand screen-house capacity quickly, but budwood production needed to fill orders lags behind approx. 2-4 years. A potential legislative appropriation to fund an expansion of DPI facilities is more important than ever. Private enterprise seems to be showing willingness to invest in structures. If the state can help supply larger quantities of budwood (of high demand varieties), it is conceivable that capacity will be more readily available for grapefruit and other fresh varieties.

Several nurseries were polled in preparation for this article, to gain insight in obstacles that might impede more rapid replacement of grapefruit acreage. These are offered for your consideration as you plan for the future: Communication between growers and nurseries remains critically important. Nurseries express frustration at the unpredictability of whether they need to have Ruby Red, Ray Ruby, Rio Red, or Flames available. The demand is viewed as fluid and unpredictable. Talk with your nursery.

The difficulty of correctly anticipating demand for grapefruit varieties, means that grapefruit – more than other varieties - is only grown to order.

Nurseries must plan well in advance – for the availability of the right rootstock liners to fill orders. There has been a lot of movement between rootstocks. There was a large movement back to sour on the River .... but this also has its challenges. Advance communication to your nursery about rootstock preference will assure that they not only have budwood for the grower's variety of choice – but also the liners.



# STOP CITRUS CANKER THIS GROWING SEASON.

Controlling citrus canker has never been easy, but now with 3 years of university data, there is a new way growers can manage canker. Natural Industries announces the addition of citrus canker to the label of Actinovate AG. Known for its anti-fungal benefits against such diseases as *Phytophthora*, *Alternaria*, Scab and Greasy Spot, Actinovate AG has demonstrated consistent and significant activity against citrus canker in several Florida trials. When combined with a low rate of copper, Actinovate outperformed the high rate of copper alone.



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DA1304-B

# February Marketing ..... Activities for Grapefruit

by Doug Ackerman,  
Florida Department of Citrus

The following are highlights of grapefruit marketing activities for the month of February:



## Public Relations - Grapefruit

- Execute Florida Grapefruit Recipe Photo Contest on Facebook to encourage consumers to use grapefruit and 100 percent grapefruit juice in their culinary endeavors and to share photos of their efforts with other grapefruit fans.
- Feature two new Florida Grapefruit "Recipe How-To" videos featuring registered dietitian Dawn Jackson Blatner to engage consumers via online and social media channels during National Grapefruit Month.
- Maintain online assets- [GoFloridaGrapefruit.com](http://GoFloridaGrapefruit.com), [Facebook.com/JuicyScoop](https://Facebook.com/JuicyScoop) and [Twitter.com/JuicyScoop](https://Twitter.com/JuicyScoop). [Facebook.com/JuicyScoop](https://Facebook.com/JuicyScoop) and [@JuicyScoop](https://Twitter.com/JuicyScoop) on Twitter each continue to maintain a robust and engaged fan base with 100,000 "likes" and 534 followers, respectively. Since the beginning of the fiscal year, the Juicy Scoop Facebook page has also experienced 60,023 consumer interactions (wall comments, status updates, "likes").
- Continue building Florida Grapefruit Pinterest page. The Florida Grapefruit Pinterest page has earned 66 followers with six boards featuring a total of 44 pins.

## Retail - Grapefruit

### • Ahold - Grapefruit and Egg Beaters Partnership Program

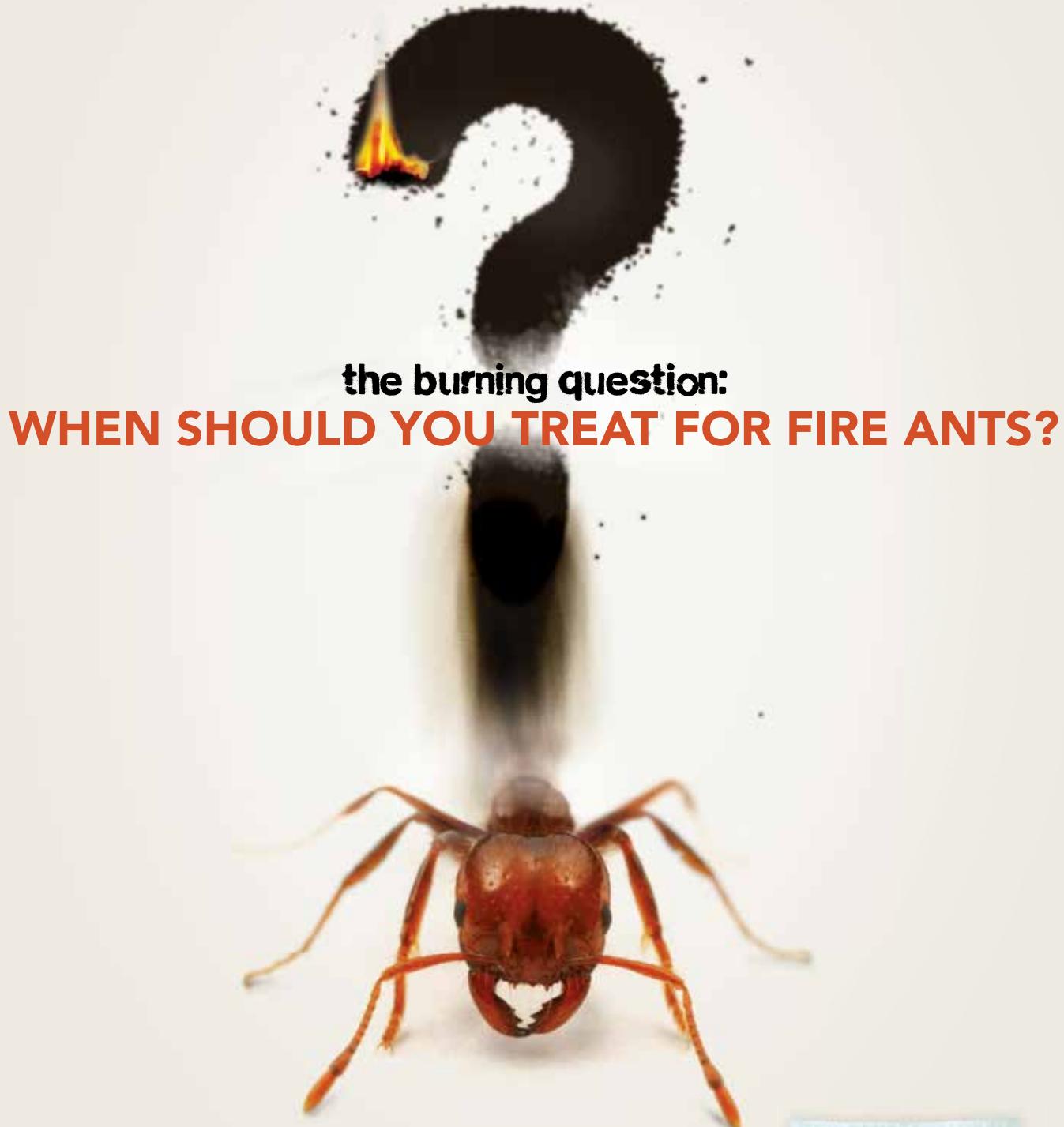
- Grapefruit and Egg Beaters coupon machine will be placed at the juice shelf while banner ads will link to a digital coupon offer. Both in-store and digital coupon offers are good for \$2 off the purchase of Grapefruit and Egg Beaters. Promotion executes in 756 stores and begins 1/28, runs through 2/24. Estimated # of impressions throughout promotion - 26.1MM
- Ahold operates 756 stores across the greater New England area including Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Ahold ranks #6 in OJ sales.

### • A&P - Grapefruit Program

- Grapefruit & Juice sampling event with coupon handout, shelf sign with coupon, floor graphic in front of fresh Grapefruit, and digital display ads linking to coupon. Starts 1/28 and runs through 2/23. Sampling, shelf sign, and digital coupon offers will be \$2 off either Grapefruit or Juice. Estimated # of impressions - 8.4MM
- A&P operates 334 stores across Connecticut, Delaware, DC, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. A&P ranks #35 in OJ sales.

### • Shoprite - Grapefruit Program

- Grapefruit sampling digital display ads and coupon campaign starts 2/10 and runs through 3/10. Digital coupon offer will be \$2 off either Grapefruit or Juice. Estimated # of impressions - 3.4MM
- Shoprite operates 247 stores across Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. Shoprite ranks #4 in OJ sales.



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# Congressman Patrick Murphy

## Tours Indian River Packinghouse and Processing Plant

Newly elected Congressman Patrick Murphy (D-18) had the opportunity to tour Packers of Indian River and Tropicana's operations to see firsthand the efforts of getting fruit from the field into boxes and juice bottles for shipment across the globe.

Executive Vice President Doug Bournique of the League along with Mike Garavaglia of the Packers, T. P. Kennedy of United Indian River Packers, Mike Sparks of Florida Citrus Mutual and Michael Minton of Dean Mead met with the Congressman to apprise him of the importance of research funding and the impact disease pressure has on production of citrus in the state.

Bournique commented, "The Congressman was engaged and seemed to understand the importance of supporting any federal research funding for our industry. I believe we have an ally in our corner."

# 2013 Florida Citrus Show

By Frank Giles • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

Florida Grower Magazine

More than 500 citrus growers, packers, marketers, and other industry-related professionals gathered in late January at the Havert L. Fenn Center in Ft. Pierce for the 2013 rendition of the 2-day short course/trade show presented by Florida Grower, the Indian River Citrus League, and UF/IFAS.

As always, the education program was packed with useful and hopeful information on production challenges of the day. Of particular note, Dr. Gene Albrigo's (UF/IFAS emeritus) presentation on this year's "horrendous" fruit drop. He noted that trees in decline due to HLB and other ailments was a common thread in the drop problem this season. New rootstocks and varieties showing some natural resistance to HLB also piqued the interest of growers on hand for the event. Transgenic breeding efforts and nutritional/antibiotic applied science also was high on the agenda, along with psyllid management techniques.



Don't miss the 2014 Florida Citrus Show. It is a great learning and networking opportunity.

# An Overview of the Affordable Care Act

## What Citrus Growers Need to Know

The Indian River Citrus League and the law firm of Dean, Mead, Minton & Zwemer are teaming up to offer a unique seminar titled, "An Overview of the Affordable Care Act: What Citrus Growers Need to Know" on Thursday, April 25, 2013 at 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. The event will be held at the Indian River Citrus League offices at 7925 20th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32966.

The presentation will feature a discussion of the legal implications of the Affordable Care Act and regulations that citrus growers need to be aware of to plan ahead for seasonal employees. Kelly Sullivan, shareholder in Dean Mead's Health Law department, will be speaking on this topic. Kindly RSVP to info@ircitrusleague.org.





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