

RIVER RAMBLINGS



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MAY
2024

RURAL AND FAMILY LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP) is an agricultural land preservation program designed to protect important agricultural lands through the acquisition of permanent agricultural land conservation easements. The program is written into Section 570.70, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 5I-7, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Projects are reviewed by a Technical Review Team, ranked through a formal process by the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program Selection Committee, and approved by the Governor and Cabinet.

The program is designed to meet three needs:

- Protect valuable agricultural lands.
- Create easement documents that work together with agricultural production to ensure sustainable agricultural practices and reasonable protection of the environment without interfering with agricultural operations in such a way that could put the continued economic viability of these operations at risk.
- Protect natural resources, not as the primary purpose, but in conjunction with the economically viable agricultural operations.

Originally created in 2001 with the passage of the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act, the program has successfully acquired conservation easements on nearly 69,000 acres of working agricultural land. The Rural and Family Lands Protection Program recognizes that working agricultural lands are essential to Florida's economic future. Agricultural lands are being increasingly threatened by urban development. To counter this trend, the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program coordinates with farmers and ranchers to ensure sustainable production practices while reasonably protecting natural resources. The program's conservation easements ultimately provide a two-fold benefit: protecting a viable agricultural sector while providing rural landscapes and open space.

Doug Bournique, Executive Vice President of the Indian River Citrus League stated, programs like this are important to help support and maintain the agricultural base in the peninsula of Florida. The lands basically west of I-95, and east of I-75 on Florida's west coast, provide food, water supply and key environmental habitat for all Floridians and the world and must be preserved in ways that support the growers, ranchers and farmers in Florida."

To date there are now 105,000 acres in the program. For more information, please contact:

Sue Mullins
Rural and Family Lands Director
(850) 681-5944
rflpp@fdacs.gov

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2024 FLORIDA CITRUS SHOW: A TAILGATE SUCCESS



The 2024 Florida Citrus Show, presented by AgNet Media, with its freshened-up format was an overwhelming success once again.

The open-air exhibitor area provided a laid-back, hometown feel for the show. Nestled in between the research facilities of IRREC and USDA, the more than 50 exhibitors set up in the parking lot. With the tents and food that various exhibitors provided, created a festival-type atmosphere that gave a relaxed feeling as you strolled up and down the rows. The

expanded lunch break between the educational sessions provided more time for vendors and attendees to engage and enjoy the delicious and unique food on hand.



This year there was a Top Tailgater award for the best food with Everglades Equipment Group being awarded \$500 for its outstanding ribs.

Also, the newly crowned Florida Citrus Queen, Alana Scheuerer, was on hand to support the event. She hit the road immediately after being crowned and will continue to make stops as a spokesperson promoting Florida citrus industry as it makes its comeback.



The general session, held in the morning at IRREC took on big-picture issues that are impacting Florida agriculture, while the afternoon sessions held at USDA, featured vegetable production that focused on research on key specialty crops grown in Florida, and the citrus production portion of the show was held at IRREC.

Frank Giles, of AgNet Media stated, "This was our second year in the new location at the UF/IFAS and USDA research facilities and the new format. The event was well attended, filling up the seminar auditorium. The tailgate-style lunch also was a big hit. The vendors rolled out some great food and treats for attendees to enjoy. All in all, the new approach has invigorated the show."



Doug Bournique, Executive Vice President, of the Indian River Citrus League stated, "It goes without saying, that we are looking forward to next year's event, which I expect will have even larger participation due to the astounding success of this show."



2025 INDIAN RIVER CITRUS LEAGUE FUN SHOOT

Not Too Early to Think About Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship levels are already being signed up for! Don't miss out on your company's opportunity to be a part of this growing event.

The Indian River Citrus League Fun Shoot is scheduled for January 25, 2025, at Vero Beach Clay Shooting Sports.

If interested in sponsorship opportunities, please contact Karen at the Indian River Citrus League office 772-595-5026 or email of karen@ircitrusleague.org for additional information.

Sponsors to date:

Everglades Farm Equipment
Farm Credit
Florida Coast Equipment
Hale Groves
MBV Engineering
Total Golf Cart
Wedgworth's, Inc.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training

May 23, 2024

Ft. Pierce

Florida Citrus Industry Conference

June 12 – 14, 2024

Bonita Springs

Citrus Expo

August 21 – 22, 2024

Tampa

FL Fruit & Veg. Assoc. Convention

September 16-18, 2024

Marco Island Beach

Citrus Estimate Forecast Dates 2023-2024 Season

May 10, 2024

June 12, 2024

July 12, 2024

Packinghouse Day

May 23, 2024

Ft. Pierce



FLORIDA FARMERS INCREASINGLY A POSITIVE PART OF CLEANING WATER STATEWIDE

OPINION
By Jim Spratt

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – There is a saying: “If you take care of the land, it will take care of you.” These are the words by which Florida’s farmers live.

Florida farmers, growers and ranchers are stewards of the land, and they play an integral role in the protection, restoration, and conservation of our state’s precious natural resources.

Farmers utilize Agricultural Best Management Practices, or BMPs, that were developed by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumers Services with the University of Florida and approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to restore and improve the quality of our water, while maintaining the unique ecosystems we have in the Sunshine State.

These actions include rotational grazing to improve grass and soil quality, cover crops to extend the grazing season and revitalize the soil, drip zone irrigation and precision nutrient application, and they are proven to enhance the integrity of the soil, water, air and grassland.

According to the University of Florida | Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences, “BMPs reduce the amount of nutrients, sediments, and pesticides that enter the water system.”

Statewide, more than 4.6 million acres of agricultural lands are enrolled in the BMP program.

One of the brightest spots where water is actively being cleaned by farmers is in South Florida’s Everglades Agricultural Area, or EAA, where a significant amount of the nation’s sugar is produced, and fresh vegetables are grown.

Through the use of BMPs, farmers in the EAA have exceeded the minimum annual requirements to reduce phosphorus in the water flowing off their farms by an average of 57%. That’s more than twice the 25% reduction required by law.

Collectively, they have prevented more than 3,000 metric tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades.

As a result of these efforts, water in the EAA is the cleanest it’s been in our lifetime. Nearly all (95%) of the Florida Everglades meet the strict 10 parts per billion standards for phosphorus levels.

To put it into perspective, the current water quality standard in the Everglades surpasses even that of bottled water sold in stores.

These monumental achievements are a testament to the proactive and sometimes costly efforts by farmers to restore and protect our water resources in the EAA.

Over the years, South Florida farmers have contributed more than \$450 million toward water quality improvements. To say they are invested in protecting our natural resources would be an understatement.

The environmental benefits of farms are not limited to water quality. Florida’s farmlands are wide open spaces that would otherwise be converted to row crops of rooftops.

These natural landscapes preserve the original beauty of the Sunshine State. They serve as a filter for rainfall to replenish our groundwater resources. The trees and plants absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen to restore the atmosphere.

The lands provide critical habitat for Florida's wildlife, including endangered birds and animals in South Florida's diverse ecosystem.

The work on a farm is never done, and neither are the efforts by farmers to protect our natural resources.

Under the leadership of Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson, the Florida Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the University of Florida, is updating BMP manuals for each commodity to incorporate the latest science and new technologies available to protect and restore our environment.

With approval from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, these BMPs will build on the strong foundation that we've built in the past to enhance our future efforts.

Folks can be quick to point the finger when there's a problem, but we miss opportunities to celebrate solutions.

Florida's farmers, growers and ranchers have invested their resources, time, and talents to protect and conserve our natural resources, preserving Florida's natural beauty and precious ecosystems for generations to come.

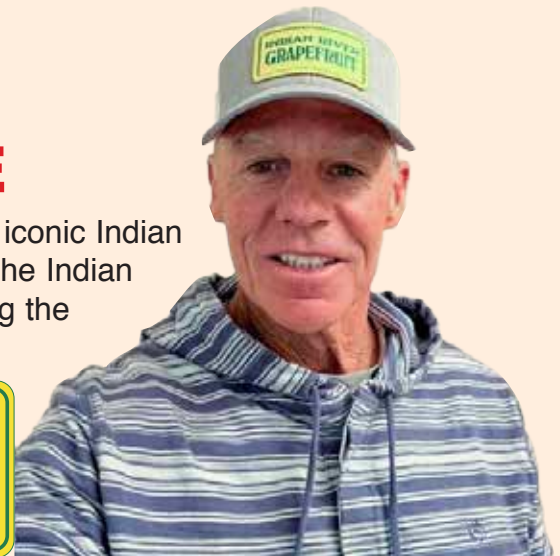
Jim Spratt is the chairman of the Florida Ag Coalition, which represents farmers, growers, and ranchers in Florida.

Source: Florida's Voice

INDIAN RIVER CITRUS LEAGUE ON-LINE STORE

Come visit the League's on-line store where you will find the iconic Indian River Grapefruit tag. In addition, we have the cap featuring the Indian River Grapefruit tag patch along with other goodies promoting the world-famous Indian River citrus growing district.

Check out the store at www.irgrapefruitshop.com to order your merch!



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Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training

May 23, 2024 8:00am – 5:00pm

UF/IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center
2199 S Rock Road • Fort Pierce, FL 34945

Who Should Attend

Fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety are encouraged to attend. [The PSA Grower Training Course is one way to satisfy the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement.](#)

What to Expect

The trainers will spend approximately seven hours of instruction time covering content contained in these seven modules:

- Introduction to Produce Safety
- Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
- Soil Amendments
- Wildlife, Domesticated Animals, and Land Use
- Agricultural Water (Part I: Production Water; Part II: Postharvest Water)

- Postharvest Handling and Sanitation
- How to Develop a Farm Food Safety Plan

In addition to learning about produce safety best practices, key parts of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements are outlined within each module. There will be time for questions and discussion, so participants should come prepared to share their experiences and produce safety questions.

Benefits of Attending

The course will provide a foundation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and co-management information, FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements, and details on how to develop a farm food safety plan.

After attending the entire course, participants will be eligible to receive a certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) that verifies they have completed the training course.

Cost to Attend: \$40 Please register at: <https://psa052324.eventbrite.com>

Cost includes training materials, lunch, refreshments, and certificate of attendance issued by AFDO. Seats are limited.

Registration closes 1 week prior to training date. For questions, email Sarah McCoy at sarahmccoy@ufl.edu.

Please note: NO walk-ins. NO substitutions, transfers, or refunds will be issued within one week of the training start date.

NO minors are permitted to attend. NO animals allowed, except those defined as service animals under the ADA.



Produce Safety
ALLIANCE

UF | IFAS
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An Equal Opportunity Institution. The University of Florida is committed to providing universal access to all of our events. For disability accommodations such as sign language interpreters, listening devices, and alternate forms of written material, please contact the event organizers at least 1 week in advance. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs. Training materials and certificate funded through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FAIN #U2FFD007446)

FLORIDA LEGISLATORS SUPPORT AGRICULTURE

With the 2024 Florida legislative session wrapped up in March, and the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association (FFVA) believes it is very clear that state legislators support the agriculture industry.

The association expressed appreciation for Florida Agriculture Commissioner Wilton Simpson and the Florida Legislature for championing legislation that sought meaningful solutions to some of the challenges facing the industry.

BENEFICIAL BILLS

FFVA provided a summary of a few ag-related bills that made it across the finish line. It is important to note that all the following await approval from Gov. DeSantis:

SB 1082 – Housing for Agricultural Workers: Approving the construction of agricultural worker housing by local governments has been challenging. This bill addresses those challenges by establishing one statewide standard for siting and construction of agricultural worker housing. The legislation adds statewide consistency and common sense.

SB 1084 – Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: Each year, the Florida commissioner of agriculture puts forth legislation to address issues that have surfaced over the prior year. This bill supports Florida agriculture and the state's farmers, ranchers and growers; expands options for customers to apply for and renew concealed weapon and other professional licenses; prohibits the sale of lab-grown meat; expands consumer protections and transparency across a number of regulated industries, and more.

SB 1492 – Employment Regulations: Local governments are attempting to establish a patchwork of county-specific heat regulations. This generates inconsistency and has led to confusion among growers. A provision of this bill prevents local governments from creating their own workplace heat exposure regulations and keeps state regulations consistent with those of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

AGRICULTURAL APPROPRIATIONS

According to FFVA, there were also a few highlights of note for specialty crop growers in the \$117-plus billion budget passed by lawmakers. This includes:

- Citrus advertising: \$12.96 million
- Citrus research: \$10 million
- Citrus Recovery Program: \$2 million
- Florida Department of Citrus marketing: \$9 million
- Farm Share: \$6.5 million
- Feeding Florida: \$6.5 million
- Fresh From Florida: \$14.67 million
- Rural & Family Lands Conservation Easement Purchase Program: \$100 million
- University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Center for Applied Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center: \$19 million
- UF/IFAS on-farm fertilizer application rate studies: \$4 million

The budget awaits the governor's approval.

Source: FFVA

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Advertising Opportunities

With the citrus season wrapped up, we wanted to share information on the new sponsorship opportunities for your budget planning purposes. Contact Karen at 772-595-5026 or karen@ircitrusleague.org for further details on the opportunities mentioned.

INDIAN RIVER CITRUS LEAGUE ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP - \$300

Newsletter Ad Specifications / Rates

- Business Card
2.833 inches across by 2 inches down
\$60/month
\$50/month w/ a monthly commitment through June
- 1/2 Page
8.5 inches across by 5.5 inches down
\$200/month
\$150/month w/ a monthly commitment through June
- Full Page
8.5 inches across by 11 inches down
\$300/month
\$225/month w/ a monthly commitment through June
- Bleed
Please allow at least 1/8" bleed.
Do not include printers marks.
- Please email all advertising materials to graphics@hirize.us
- Design services available for an additional fee

Ad Copy Specifications

Fonts

- Please embed all fonts.
- Do not use artificial font formatting; all formatting (bold, italics, etc.) must be done using stylized fonts.

Logos

- Convert all fonts to outlines.
- Preferred format: vector eps

Color

- We print in 4-color CMYK process.
- All Pantone colors must be converted to CMYK.
- Black type should be made with 100% black.

Resolution

- Resolution should be a minimum of 300 dpi at actual size.
- 72 dpi images pulled from websites are not acceptable.
- Line art should be scanned at a minimum of 600 dpi.

File Format

- PDF files and InDesign files are preferred (collected output to include layout, linked pictures, embedded pictures, color profiles, screen fonts and printer fonts).
- Other file formats accepted: eps (Adobe Illustrator), jpg (Adobe Photoshop)

GETTING INVOLVED.

MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Our Associate Membership provides opportunities to network with existing customers and potential customers by providing opportunities to sponsor events scheduled throughout the year.

Their partnership with our organization is important to us.

If interested in joining our organization, please contact the League office for further details. 772-595-5026 or karen@citrusleague.org.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Active Minerals International
Aglime Sales
AgLogic Chemical
Agromillora
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