



- > Millennium Block Trial Update
- > Citrus Forecast Encouraging
- > CRAFT Update
- > State Aid to FL Citrus
- > FL Farm Bill

MAY  
2025

# RESILIENT CITRUS: LESSONS FROM THE MILLENNIUM BLOCK TRIAL

*Flavia Zambon, Assistant Professor of Horticulture Production of Citrus and Other Crops,  
Indian River Research and Education Center, Fort Pierce, FL*

The Millennium Block, established in 2019-20 at the Indian River Research and Education Center, continues to serve as a vital research hub in the heart of Florida's grapefruit production region. With 5,500 trees under evaluation, this large-scale trial is uncovering valuable insights into HLB-tolerant varieties—some of which are showing strong fruit attributes without the need for OTC injections. The block receives standard grower care and slow-release fertilizer, remaining a collaborative effort with numerous visitors, industry partners, and research collaborators visiting throughout the year.

The research consists of four independent trials designed to evaluate various scions and rootstocks:

1. **Trial 1:** 18 grapefruit scions and 3 rootstocks
2. **Trial 2:** 'Ray Ruby' grafted onto 31 distinct rootstocks
3. **Trial 3:** 'Glen F-56-11' Navel orange grafted onto 31 rootstocks
4. **Trial 4:** 'UF-950' Mandarin grafted onto 31 rootstocks

These trials allow researchers to assess fruit quality, yield, and overall adaptability under HLB infection. The trees, now in their sixth year, have provided valuable data on varietal performance and resilience.

## Season Highlights and Findings

Despite challenges in the 2024-25 season—including the passage of an EF-3 tornado from Hurricane Milton—several promising outcomes have emerged. Triumph grapefruit-orange hybrid maintained notable fruit retention even amidst strong winds, while juice quality across multiple varieties remained impressive. Most combinations surpassed 7° Brix, with Triumph and UF-914 averaging above 9.

Triumph exhibited an expected drop in yield, from 227 boxes per acre in 2023-24 to 92 in 2024-25, but this reduction aligns with previous observations of mild alternate bearing behavior. 'UF-914'

**See LESSONS, page 2**

LESSONS, con't from 1

pummelo hybrid also saw a yield decline in Sour Orange, US-942, and X-639 rootstocks, but its fruit quality remained high.

For the second consecutive year, UFR-15 has emerged as the leading rootstock for ‘Ray Ruby,’ producing nearly 60 boxes per acre with juice quality exceeding 7° Brix. Meanwhile, UFR-11 produced an exceptional Brix of 8.5, though with increased acidity.

The tornado season?

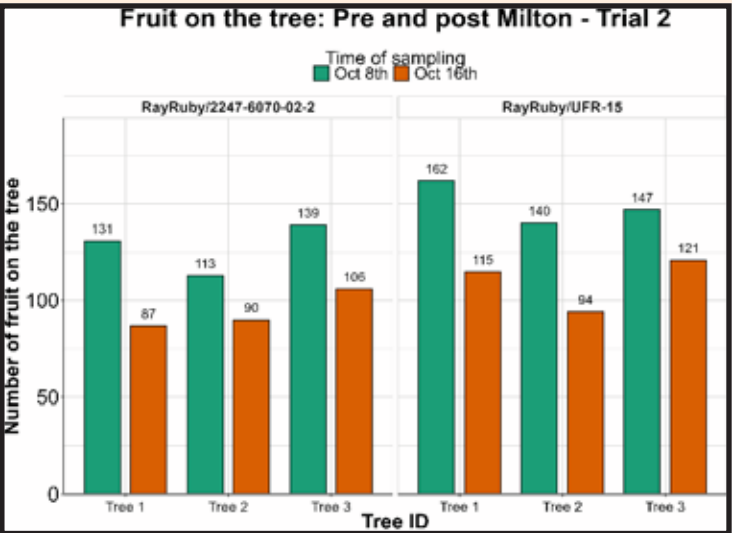
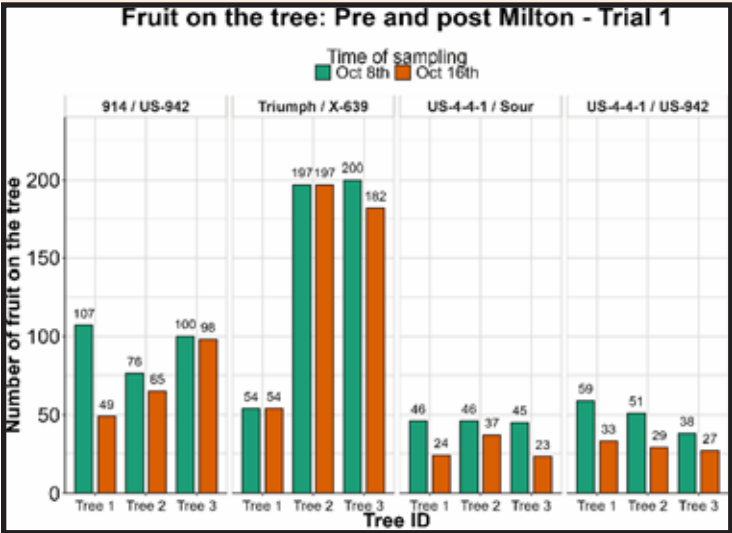
The biggest setback this season came from the unexpected tornado, which affected fruit retention across Trials 1, 2, and 3—particularly in Glen Navels. The mandarins in Trial 4 continue to struggle with holding fruit throughout the season, exacerbated by funding constraints that halted planned gibberellic acid sprays when necessary.

Despite these obstacles, the resilience of certain varieties suggests that strategic selection of scion and rootstock can help mitigate fluctuations in productivity. Additionally, Triumph’s potential alternate bearing tendencies warrant further exploration to help growers optimize their management strategies.

Six years in, and the fourth harvest to come

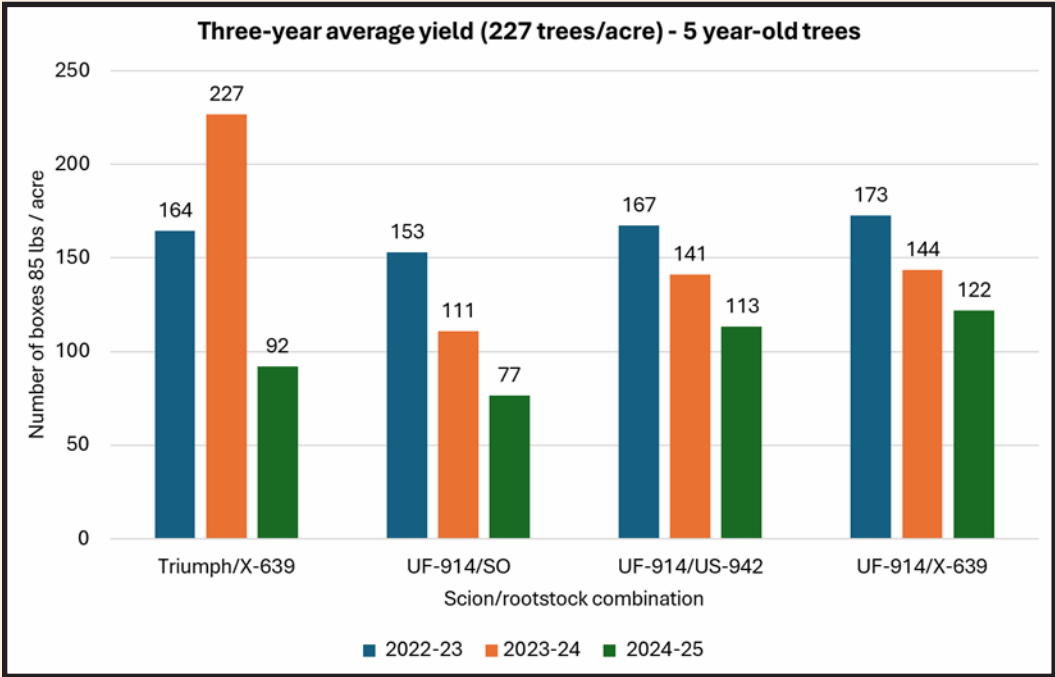
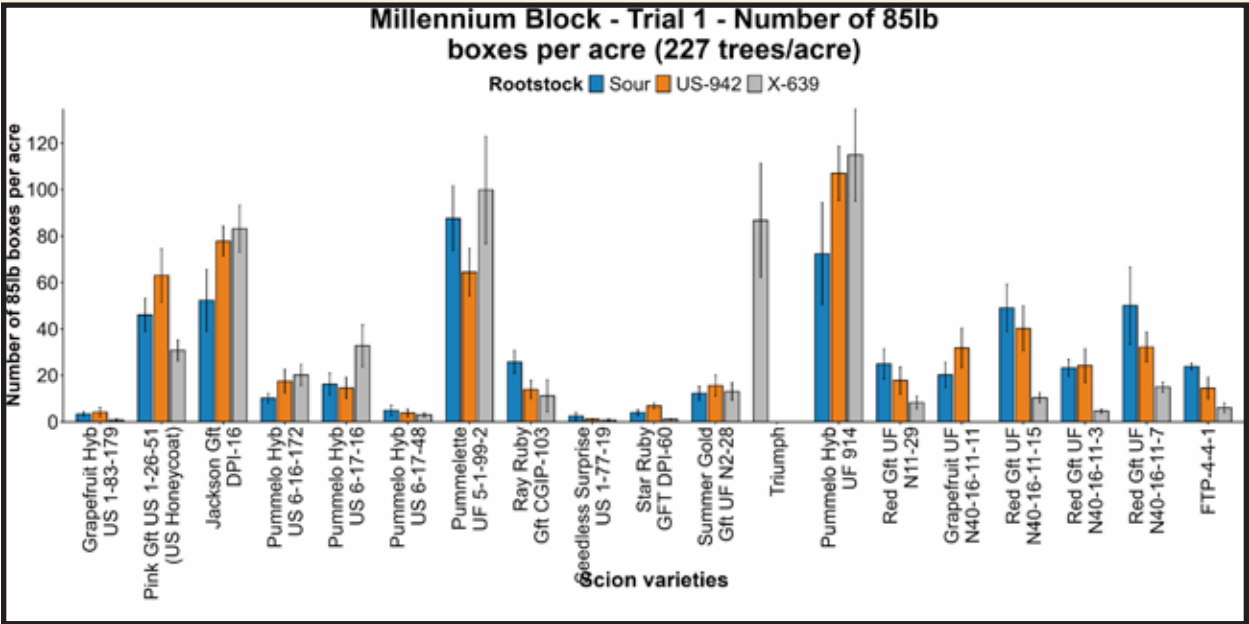
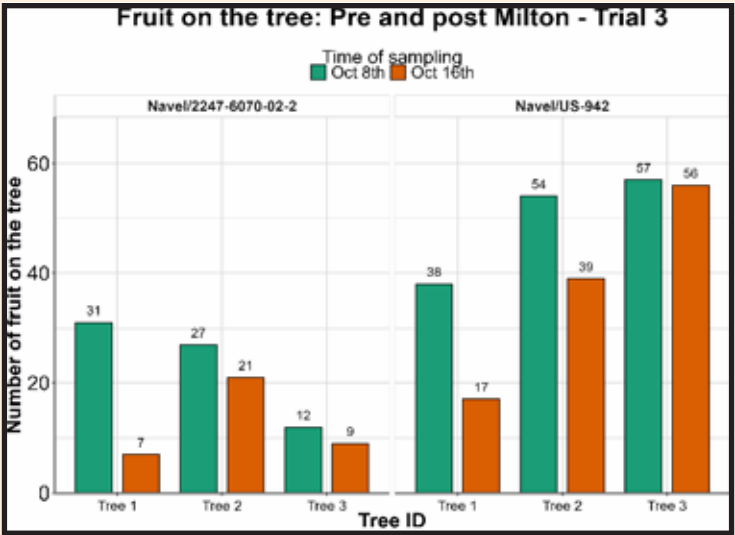
Looking ahead to the 2025-26 season, researchers remain optimistic that Triumph will rebound in productivity, offering a valuable case study in alternate bearing behavior. The Millennium Block will continue to provide growers with critical data to guide decision-making, whether in variety selection, rootstock pairing, or fresh fruit quality optimization.

By refining management strategies based on ongoing observations, we can provide growers with the tools to maintain fruit quality and yield under HLB-endemic conditions. The data collected at the Millennium Block serves as a beacon of progress, ensuring that Florida’s citrus industry remains adaptable and sustainable.

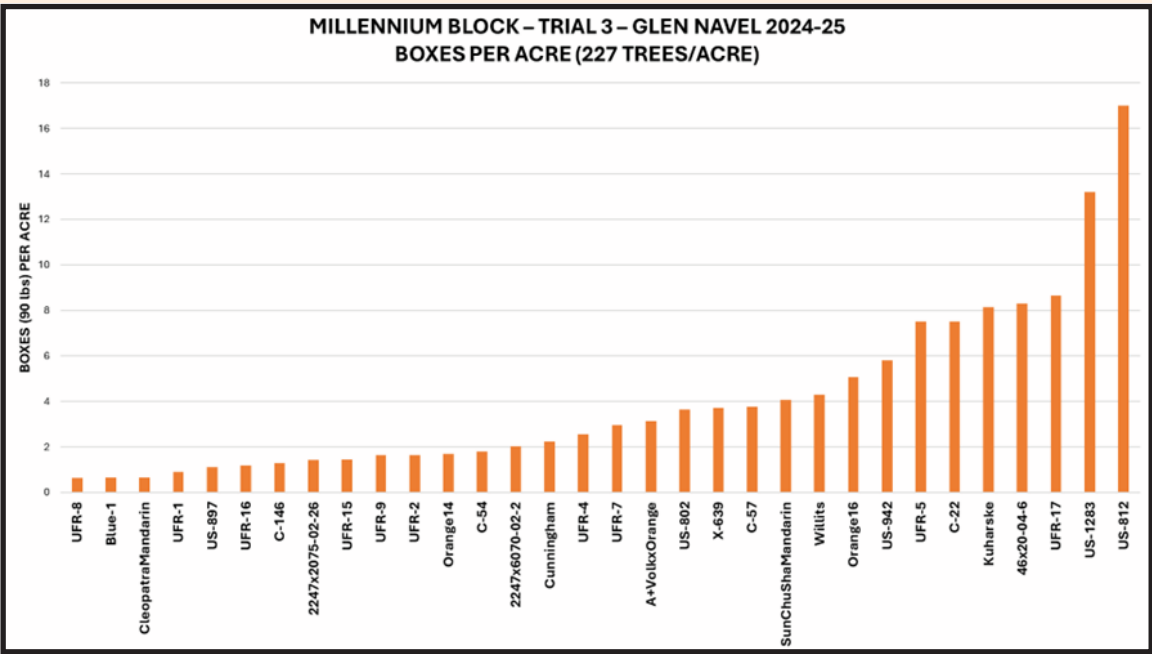
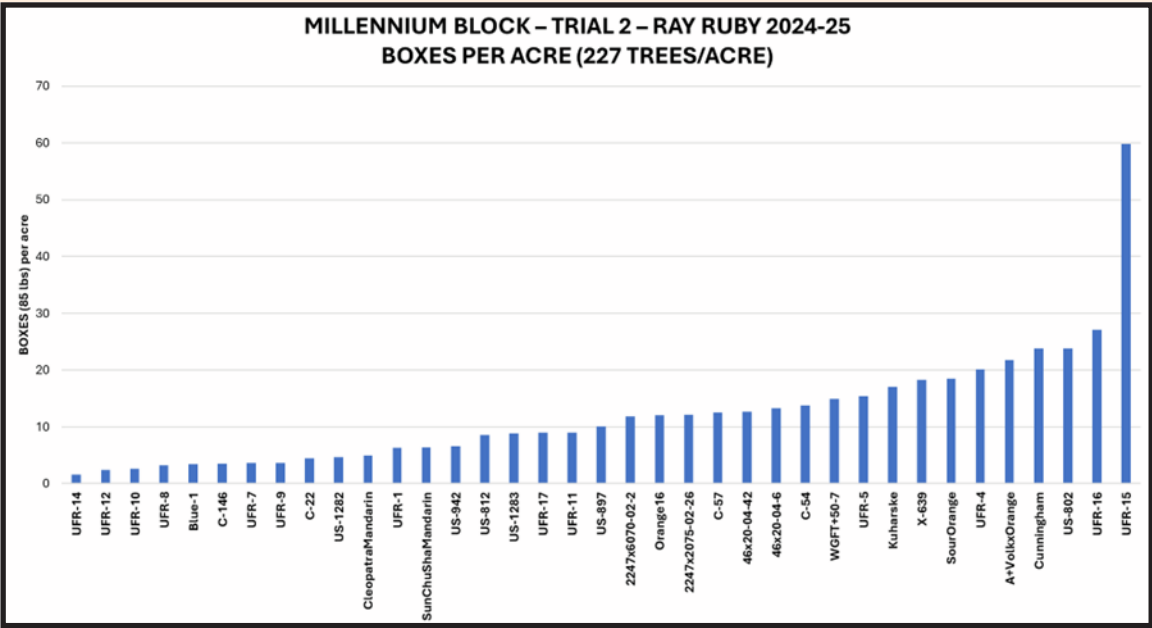


See LESSONS, page 3





LESSONS, con't from 3





# CITRUS GROWERS ENCOURAGED BY LEGISLATIVE ACTION

After beginning the year with a bleak outlook, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (**USDA**) citrus harvest projections for Florida have been steadily getting better.

The USDA published a revised citrus forecast that projects 11.63 million boxes of oranges will be harvested this growing season, along with 1.3 million boxes of grapefruit and 400,000 boxes of tangerines and tangelos.

After Hurricanes Helene and Milton blasted Florida in the Fall, citrus forecasters **tempered their outlook**. Analysts then expected only 11.5 million boxes of oranges to be harvested this year, along with 1.1 million boxes of grapefruit and 350,000 boxes of tangerines and tangelos.

But the outlook has steadily improved since then.

“Every day, I hear from Florida citrus growers who are seeing healthier trees thanks to the tools they’re using to fight citrus greening and recover from hurricanes. This month’s upward momentum reflects growers’ relentless efforts to bring a crop to market and preserve family-run operations that have sustained the industry for generations,” said **Matt Joyner**, Executive Vice President and CEO at Florida Citrus Mutual (**FCM**).

Florida Citrus Mutual officials say they’re even more encouraged as the Legislature took measures to better protect citrus growers during this year’s Session in Tallahassee.

“The Florida Senate and House have proposed differing budget allocations for the state’s citrus industry. The two chambers are negotiating to approve a budget for the 2025-26 state fiscal year, which will take effect on July 1. The outcome will determine the funding for citrus initiatives, including research, grove management and replanting efforts,” a Citrus Mutual news release said Monday.

Citrus growers are also optimistic about federal help. On April 22, U.S. Sen. **Ashley Moody**, a Plant City Republican, announced the introduction of the **Defending Domestic Orange Juice Production Act** in the Senate. The legislation proposes adjusting the standard identity of orange juice from 10.5% weight of soluble solids to 10%, which supporters say will strengthen the domestic supply of Florida’s orange juice without affecting its quality, taste or nutrition.

“The Act’s passage could deliver significant benefits to the industry, offering greater flexibility to utilize our domestic product and reducing reliance on foreign imports for U.S. citrus to reclaim a competitive advantage. FCM has advocated for this change since 2022,” the Citrus Mutual news release said.

**Source: Florida Politics**



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# 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](http://www.irgrapefruitshop.com) to  
order your merch!



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Jimmy Martin**  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Citrus Estimate

*All monthly releases are at 12  
Noon. Dial 888-844-9904, followed  
by access code: 8552986#*

June 12, 2025  
July 11, 2025

### Florida Citrus Industry Conference

June 11-13, 2025  
Bonita Springs

### Citrus Expo

August 20-21, 2025  
Florida State Fairgrounds  
Tampa





# CRAFT UPDATE

## Supplemental PEP Application

The CRAFT Supplemental PEP application period closed April 30. Thank you to all the growers who showed interest in the program and to those who applied. Contracts should be issued to the selected projects this month (May 2025).

## ETT Program

The CRAFT Foundation Board of Directors approved amendments to all Existing Tree Therapy (ETT) Round 1, 2, and 3 contracts that revise the contract payment schedule. The amendment allows Participants to be eligible for Payment 3 upon submission of data for the harvest year following the second year's approved treatment, which is a year earlier than the current payment schedule. The Board authorized this change to provide participating growers with the final contractual participation payment to assist with their treatment costs.

This change means many Participants will be eligible for their third and final payment this year. For example, a Participant that applied their first treatment in 2023 and that has received their second Payment, may be eligible for the third and final payment following submission of the 2024-2025 harvest year data to CRAFT.

All data submission surveys are available on the CRAFT website Data Entry Page at <https://craftfdn.org/craft-existing-tree-therapies-data-entry>. There are separate data surveys for each ETT Round. For example, Round 1 contracts will have a 1,000 series number (i.e. ETT-1076) and must submit their data using the Round 1 surveys.

The ETT amendments have been mailed and emailed to all participants and were due to be returned by April 30, 2025. If you have not executed and returned your amendments, please do so immediately. The submittal of the third year's treatment and harvest data remains a contractual requirement for all ETT participants. The survey to submit this information will be made available to all participants later this year.



## Upcoming CRAFT Programs

CRAFT is closely monitoring this year's legislative session in Tallahassee. Once we have a clearer understanding of available funding, CRAFT will announce program timelines and rules for the next program Cycle. If you would like the latest CRAFT information, please email Steven Hall at [Steven@craftfdn.org](mailto:Steven@craftfdn.org) to be added to our mailing list.

Growers with any questions or seeking additional information about the CRAFT program are encouraged to contact Executive Director Steven Hall at [Steven@craftfdn.org](mailto:Steven@craftfdn.org) or (863) 333-2931, Assistant Program Manager Tina Buice at [Tina@craftfdn.org](mailto:Tina@craftfdn.org), or Scientific Coordinator Carisa Keller at [Carisa@craftfdn.org](mailto:Carisa@craftfdn.org).

**Source: Florida Citrus Mutual**





# STATE AIMS TO HELP FLORIDA CITRUS

Florida Citrus Commission (FCC) Chairman Steve Johnson recently wrote about Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC) and state legislative efforts to help rejuvenate the Florida citrus industry.

Johnson described the efforts in a column titled “The Four Rs of Florida Citrus Right Now: Reset. Replant. Renew. Renaissance.”

## FDOC INITIATIVES

Johnson listed the following efforts by the FDOC:

“We’re getting ready to launch a new version of our U.S.-based website [FloridaJuice.com](https://FloridaJuice.com) — one that is more user-friendly, more up-to-date and more relevant to the modern juice consumer. In other words, we are making it work smarter and harder for our industry.

“We’re marketing smarter to reach the modern juice consumer and enhance Florida orange juice sales as well as increase awareness on streaming platforms, social media, the internet, through media relations and, of course, e-commerce platforms.

“We’re focused on key messaging that is solidifying the value of Florida orange juice while driving home its relevancy — that it’s everything the modern juice consumer is looking for and wants.

“We’re constantly doing research and monitoring trends so we can keep Florida orange juice top-of-mind in an ever-diversifying and very competitive beverage category.

“Through ongoing initiatives like the Program for Expedited Propagation, we’re helping you get the latest citrus greening-tolerant and -resistant tree varieties in the ground.”

## WORKING WITH THE LEGISLATURE

According to Johnson, the FCC, FDOC and Florida Citrus Mutual are continuing to advocate on behalf of the industry with the Florida Legislature.

“There’s no doubt that we are an industry in need of help on many levels,” said Johnson, stating that it is “certain” that the Legislature will help the industry’s recovery. “It will take time. It will take a lot of effort. It will take support from the state legislature, and it will require continued loyalty from consumers around the world who love Florida orange juice. But we will see a brighter future for Florida citrus,” he declared.

**Source: Florida Citrus Mutual**



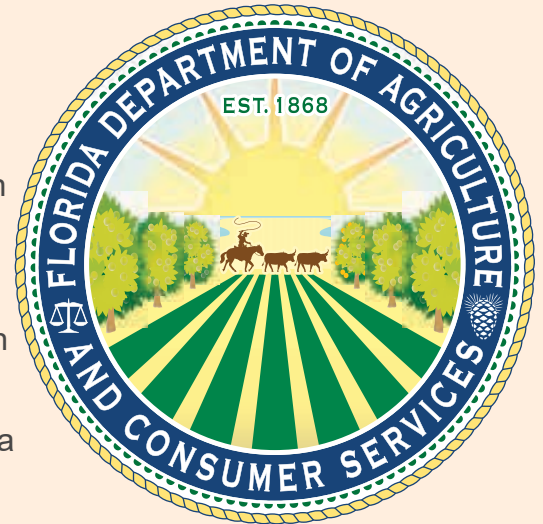
# LEGISLATURE PASSES HISTORIC FLORIDA FARM BILL

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson applauded the Florida Legislature for passing the Florida Farm Bill ([SB 700](#)), the most comprehensive agriculture-focused legislation in the state's history. Sponsored by Senator Keith Truenow and Representatives Kaylee Tuck and Danny Alvarez, the legislation was passed with strong support from both chambers, delivering sweeping reforms that protect farmland from development, invest in agricultural education, provide agricultural disaster recovery resources, preserving private property rights and much more.

"This is one of the most significant legislative victories for Florida agriculture in a generation," said Simpson. "We're defending our farmers from ESG-driven financial discrimination. We're securing farmland for future generations and protecting property owners from drone harassment. We're expanding disaster assistance for our food producers. We're putting proven science behind agricultural water-quality efforts and investing in the young people who will carry this industry forward through FFA and 4-H. We're combating illegal immigration by creating strict legal worker eligibility requirements for farmworker housing. This bill is a long-term commitment to Florida agriculture, and I thank Senator Truenow, Representative Tuck and Representative Alvarez for delivering this historic bill."

Key agricultural provisions of the Florida Farm Bill include:

- Prohibiting financial institutions from discriminating against agricultural producers based on environmental policies or set emission targets
- Enhancing disaster-recovery programs for agricultural producers impacted by hurricanes and natural disasters
- Providing the state with the ability to return solar fields back into agricultural production
- Prohibiting the use of drones on or near agricultural lands.
- Prohibiting local governments from banning housing for legally verified agricultural workers on bona fide farms
- To combat illegal immigration, creates strict legal worker eligibility requirements for farmworker housing and establishes penalties for violations
- Expanding the use of proven best management practices for small farms to protect water resources
- Protecting 4-H and FFA programs in schools from local governments' zoning laws by ensuring programs can have agriculture facilities on school property
- Supporting FFA participation through scholarships for annual dues and educational opportunities



**Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

# REGISTER NOW - CITRUS & SPECIALTY CROP EXPO

Registration is now open for the highly anticipated 2025 Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo. The event takes place Aug. 20–21 at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa. Growers and industry professionals are invited to sign up now for complimentary registration for this two-day event filled with education, networking and innovation.

Hosted by AgNet Media, the Expo is Florida's premier event for citrus and specialty crop producers. With a rich history of serving the industry, the Expo is designed to connect growers with the tools, information and partners they need to succeed in today's rapidly changing agricultural landscape.

## FREE REGISTRATION INCLUDES BIG BENEFITS

Growers who register in advance will receive:

- Access to citrus and specialty crop seminar sessions
- Entry to the trade show
- Complimentary meals both days
- Eligibility for exclusive giveaways and prizes

# CITRUS & SPECIALTY CROP EXPO



PRESENTED BY: **AgNet**  
MEDIA 

## WHAT TO EXPECT

In 2019, AgNet Media expanded the event to include a wide range of specialty crops, drawing in a broader group of growers. With the citrus industry evolving, we're doubling down on that growth this year.

*See EXPO, page 12*

## EXPO, con't from 11

What's new in 2025? We're offering five dedicated seminar sessions for specialty crop growers. Big-picture topics like labor, trade and marketing will be addressed as well as targeted tracks for specific crops. That means a more diverse, engaged audience for the trade show floor.

Beyond the seminars, the expansive trade show will showcase companies, researchers and service providers offering innovative products and technologies for growers of all sizes and specialties. Attendees will have the chance to explore new solutions, ask questions directly to vendors and build relationships with industry leaders.

## NETWORK, LEARN, GROW

One of the most valuable aspects of the Expo is the chance to connect — not only with vendors and researchers but also with fellow growers. With complimentary meals, coffee breaks and dedicated networking spaces, there are plenty of opportunities to share insights and experiences in a relaxed, professional setting.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO WIN

All attendees at the Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo will have a chance to win a custom-built BBQ smoker, generously donated by [Hays-LTI](#). Raffle tickets will be available for purchase during the event, and all proceeds will go to support Florida FFA, helping invest in the next generation of agricultural leaders. Don't miss your chance to take home this one-of-a-kind prize — and support a great cause in the process!

Growers are encouraged to register early to take full advantage of all the Expo has to offer. All preregistered growers will be entered to win a gun safe, courtesy of [Everglades Equipment Group](#).

## DON'T MISS OUT

For ag companies looking to connect directly with growers, a limited number of booths and sponsorships are still available. This is a unique chance to build brand awareness and showcase solutions directly to decision-makers.

Register today at [CitrusExpo.net](https://CitrusExpo.net) and join us this August for two days of learning, networking and opportunity.







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## Learn More:



**Contact your local Certis Bio Representative:**

Lee Shekels, (561) 284-1998, [LShekels@certisbio.com](mailto:LShekels@certisbio.com)

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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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:karen@citrusleague.org).

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Aglime Sales  
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