

EMERGING TIMES

...growing toward the future

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INTRODUCTION: FFVA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2017



Class 7 begins its journey at FFVA annual convention



ELDP Class 7 (left to right): **Shane Rogers**, J&J Family of Farms; **Brent Johnson**, FMC; **Daniel Rifa**, U.S. Sugar Corporation; **Catherine Cellon**, Duda Farm Fresh Foods; **Frankie Montalvo**, Glades Formulating Corp.; **Maria Cavazos**, R.C. Hatton; **Philip Grigsby**, Premier Ag Finance; **Myles Basore**, TKM Bengard; **Adam Roe**, Wm. G. Roe & Sons. Not pictured: **Justin Pettit**, Blue Hammock Farms.

FVA's Emerging Leader Development Program Class 7 launched its year together in September at the association's annual convention in Amelia Island. As Class 6 graduated, the new class was introduced. In this issue, they share highlights from the convention.

The 10 class members will spend the next 12 months learning more about the myriad issues confronting specialty crop agriculture. The sessions also will equip them to become stronger advocates for the industry. In their next five sessions together, they will get an up-close look at the association, its people and its services. They also will tour farms and packinghouses in Florida and California and visit with legislators and state officials in Tallahassee to discuss issues. And along the way, they will build relationships and forge a strong network of their peers and industry leaders that will serve them into the future.



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ELDP News 7





Raburn touches on education, Irma in opening address



By **Myles Basore**
TKM Bengard

Rep. Jake Raburn addressed the FFVA convention at the opening luncheon this year. His knowledge from his family-owned farming business enables him to be a great advocate at the state level daily. Raburn stressed the importance of education in the agricultural industry.

As American farmers become more reliant on technology, it's important to entice the next generation to enter the agriculture field. It is also vital to educate the public on what we do as farmers. The public's lack of knowledge on the governmental regulations, food safety and labor issues we deal with is hurting the Florida farmer. It is our job as farmers to organize educational farm tours, be involved in community meetings, and stay active on social media.

A successful tool that Raburn noted is the Fresh From Florida marketing program. This marketing initiative from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services helps promote statewide fruit and vegetable products that are sold on the global market.

Raburn also spoke about the direct hit from Hurricane Irma and the widespread damage to Florida agriculture. Once everyone's power is back on and the schools are back in session, Raburn said, most residents will feel that Irma's effects are over. However,



Rep. Jake Raburn discusses the blow to Florida agriculture from Hurricane Irma.



for Florida agriculture, that isn't the case. As Florida farmers unite together and start over, there is a long road ahead, he said.

The opening session luncheon also

included the graduation of Class 6. As Class 7 starts its new role in the ELDP, it was a great honor to see the achievements of the group as it graduated at the convention.

Despite mistrust, consumers want to know more about their food



By **Maria Cavazos
R.C. Hatton**

J.J. Jones with Center for Food Integrity spoke about earning consumer trust in the Issues Forum “They Just Don’t Understand: Consumer Angst About Food and What You Can Do About It.” Food and agriculture are topics that consumers are interested in because we show our emotions through it, he said. Not only do we celebrate with food, we mourn with it and we provide it to the more vulnerable in our society.

Jones said we are trying to meet the demands of a growing population with safe and affordable foods, but consumers are asking more questions than ever before. Despite their mistrust in the food system, there is also a desire to know more. Consumers want to have a connection with the farmer



J.J. Jones explains how growers can connect with consumers through shared values.

who provides their food, he said.

Jones explained that there was a time that the larger an organization, the more respected it was. But today, more consumers believe that the larger an organization, the more likely it is to put company interests ahead of

consumer interests.

Confirmation bias (the tendency to seek people who favor the same thoughts and ideas as we do) affects the way we make decisions, as well as bad news bias, where negative information weighs more heavily in our decision-making than positive information, Jones noted.

Five years ago, people wanted to hear about sustainability. Today, they seek transparency. Health and wellness, safety, social impact and experience are important to consumers. “Transparency is no longer optional as a basic consumer expectation,” Jones said.

It is three to five times more important to build trust than rely on science, economical or technical factors, he added.

As Theodore Roosevelt said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”





Calhoun previews upcoming legislative session, issues

Butch Calhoun, director of government relations for FFVA, sat down with ELDP Class 7 to discuss the 2017 legislative session. The conversation started with one of the biggest issues, which was Senate Bill 10. The original form of the bill would have allowed the state to buy 60,000 acres of private farmland in the Everglades Agricultural Area to build a reservoir. The bill was heroically revised and designated the construction of the reservoir on publicly owned land instead. Furthermore, the new bill prohibits the government from using eminent domain to take private land in the future. This will help preserve agricultural land for future farming. The amended bill was passed and hailed as a success by growers and environmentalists.

Calhoun also noted the 2017 Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' budget requests. These included \$17.6 million for citrus greening research and related programs, \$5.8 million for marketing Florida agricultural projects, \$250,000 for the eradication of avocado trees infected with laurel wilt, and \$100,000 for the Pesticide Cleansweep Program that allows growers to safely dispose of unusable pesticides.

He concluded the discussion with topics that we will see in this years' upcoming session, including confederate monuments, constitutional amendments, FDACS and UF/IFAS budgets, environmental projects, open-carry gun laws, red light cameras and workers compensation.



By **Catherine Cellon**
Duda Farm
Fresh Foods



Keynote Speaker Andy Andrews keeps the audience smiling.

Andrews engages, entertains at Cracker Breakfast

To kick off the second day of the 2017 FFVA convention, author and motivational speaker Andy Andrews took the stage to wrap up the traditional Cracker Breakfast. Andrews is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Travelers Gift*, *The Noticer*, and *How Do You Kill 11 Million People?* He's also very influential in the motivational speaking arena in which he has become a sensation, known for his unique perspective and the delivery of his message.

Drawing from his own personal experience and real-life scenarios, Andrews kept us all on the edge of our seats. One of my favorite lines was, "I don't know what you were expecting this morning, but this speech will not be that." This one line summarized his speech as he walked through the crowd and engaged several individuals in his stories and examples. Needless to say, he had the attention of everyone in the room.

Andrews was able to relate to and capture a crowd in a way that I haven't experienced. Either through his content – which ranged from personal loss to raising children – or from the electric way that he delivered his message, he truly had a captive audience throughout his time on stage. His presence was a tremendous start to the second day of the convention in Amelia Island.



By **Philip Grigsby**
Premier Ag
Finance





Workforce issues getting worse across all Florida industries



By **Brent Johnson**
FMC Corporation

Labor has been a major issue facing Florida agriculture in recent years, making it a hot topic of discussion among the ag community. Craig Regelbrugge of American Hort spoke about the topic during the Issues Forum “Labor Outlook: Navigating Through Uncertainty.”

Labor is an issue that is bad and getting worse across all industries in Florida, Regelbrugge said. The first problem is that the current workforce is aging and those in the next generation seeking employment are not going into agriculture, creating a workforce replenishment problem. The ag industry has relied heavily upon a migrant workforce, but the number of migrant workers – particularly from Mexico – has declined because of an improved Mexican economy and increased border security enforcement.

There are three potential paths for improving our current labor situation, Regelbrugge noted: administrative, regulatory and legislative. Administrative options could be done by the current administration, including Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and his team. However, it is not clear how quickly things can get done because of hostility on both sides of the aisle, lack of understanding by all parties involved,

and the administration’s “hire-American-buy-American” mantra. It will be a challenge to have any regulatory measure or legislation passed, such as the H-2C bill, to improve our current labor situation because these things take time and face

many hurdles. Among those hurdles, Regelbrugge said, are a crowded administration and legislative calendar that includes other big issues such as NAFTA and DACA, as well as adversaries everywhere in the political community.



Craig Regelbrugge outlines the challenges of getting a workforce bill passed.





Specialty crop industry seeks improvements in NAFTA

Many parts of the American economy grew significantly with the original North American Free Trade Agreement. Row crop growers across the country saw their exports jump, as did many other industries.

But that wasn't the case for Florida specialty crop agriculture, said Caroline Gleason of McDermott, Will & Emery during the Issues Forum "NAFTA 2.0: Getting It Right." Even at the time of NAFTA's 1994 ratification, Florida growers were told that despite the "do no harm" mantra of negotiators, there are winners and losers in all trade negotiations.

The Florida specialty crop industry has



By **Frankie Montalvo Glades**
Formulating Corp.

been a loser in NAFTA for far too long. Gleason noted that Mexican dumping along with government subsidies and other injurious practices are responsible for a 166 percent increase in Mexican

tomato imports to the United States and a 40 percent reduction in American tomato production. These numbers are common among other specialty crops produced in Florida, including peppers, strawberries, and others.

While we have long known these frustrating facts, it was enlightening to hear from an expert who was able to tell us more about the nuts and bolts of the process.

Gleason offered insight on where we



stand in getting NAFTA right, educating the group about the ongoing rounds of negotiations. President Trump is including fixing specialty crop trade issues in his objectives. Unfortunately our industry will not know our fate until the last rounds of negotiations, where "redline" issues are discussed. Gleason predicted the talks will last into 2019, and a new deal would not come into effect until 2019 or 2020 at the earliest.

With more than two decades of injurious practices from Mexico, hopefully NAFTA 2.0 gets it right for Florida specialty crop producers.

Putnam urges perseverance in the wake of Hurricane Irma



By **Daniel Rifa**
U.S. Sugar Corporation

Adam Putnam, Florida's commissioner of agriculture since 2011, was the final speaker at FFVA's 2017 annual convention. He spent most of his remarks during the closing dinner focusing on the damage from Hurricane Irma and the resiliency of Florida Agriculture.

Putnam told the crowd that the level of damage he saw while traveling

throughout Florida was humbling and heartbreaking. He urged attendees to keep putting one foot in front of the other and to keep moving forward, because that's what Floridians and Americans do. He stated that this is our chance to prove that we are just as capable of overcoming adversities as previous generations.

In spite of all of the damage, Putnam said he was sure of one thing: that Florida's farmers would persevere. He was proud to see the people of this state helping their neighbors as well as strangers in the wake of Irma's destruction. He was astonished at the level of compassion Floridians were



showing for our neighbors in Puerto Rico by providing labor and resources when there was still so much to do in our own backyards. He vowed that he would fight for disaster aid for Florida's agriculture industry and present plans to the Legislature and Congress to allow farmers easy access to disaster funds. He said his goal was to move rapidly and have the disaster funds available by November.



ELDP News



- 1 Shine Taylor (Class 4)** has a new role in the Dow DuPont organization: North American Integrated Field Sciences (IFS) Insect and Nematode Management Technical Expert. Shine (right) and **Rob Atchley (Class 1)** recently went elk hunting in Colorado.
- 2 Sam Glucksman (Class 3)** and his wife, Jacqui, are expecting their third child at the end of March. They have decided to keep the gender a surprise.
- 3 Ian Bessell (Class 2)** was recently named chapter president of the newly formed South Florida Chapter of The Florida Association of Food Protection.

FFVA 2017 convention highlights

