

EMERGING TIMES

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FFVA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2018



Matt Caldwell on elected office: It's the "Commissioner of Dirty Jobs"



By **Nick Wishnatzki**
Wish Farms

State Rep. Matt Caldwell was the opening speaker at FFVA's annual convention in Naples. He has made a name for himself in the Legislature by standing up for natural resources, property rights and agriculture. In fact, twice he has been named FFVA's Legislator of the Year in recognition of his efforts.

As a self-described "happy warrior" in the state House, Caldwell said the race for agriculture commissioner was not initially on his radar. However, during the past 18 months, the seventh-generation Floridian traveled nearly 90,000 miles on his campaign. Caldwell calls the position of Florida agriculture commissioner the toughest in the nation because of the vast and

complex purview of FDACS.

His speech at the convention demonstrated his firm grasp of the issues that Florida's farmers face as he focused on labor, trade and water policy. On immigration, Caldwell called out the federal government: "It's Congress' job to [reform immigration], and they have ignored it. We can have a controlled border, and we can say no more illegal immigration and we can also be serious about filling our labor needs. These are not mutually incompatible goals."

On other issues, he expressed his disappointment at the removal of the seasonal provision in the final round of NAFTA negotiations but vowed to take the fight to Washington. With red tide ravaging the coast, water policy has been a hot button issue. Caldwell said we need smart investment in our water infrastructure to secure a sustainable future. He said he is optimistic that if we stop the election year "blame game," we can achieve solutions that work for everyone.

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SUSTAINING SPONSOR

Keynote speaker Phil Hansen tells us to 'embrace the shake'



By **Justin Newsome**
Bayer
CropScience

“The ultimate limitation can bring forth ultimate liberation.” This was one of the many ideas shared by Phil Hansen, keynote speaker during the Cracker Breakfast at FFVA’s 75th annual convention.

Growing up, Hansen was an aspiring artist and well on his way to a successful career specializing in pointillism. This unique form of art creates images out of thousands of tiny dots or points. As a teenager, Hansen received devastating news; He had developed an uncontrollable shake in his drawing hand and could not draw a straight line, much less practice pointillism anymore. Crushed by the development, Hansen dropped out of art school and gave up all hope of furthering his career as an artist.

Some years later at a visit with a neurologist, Hansen’s doctor urged him to “embrace the shake.”

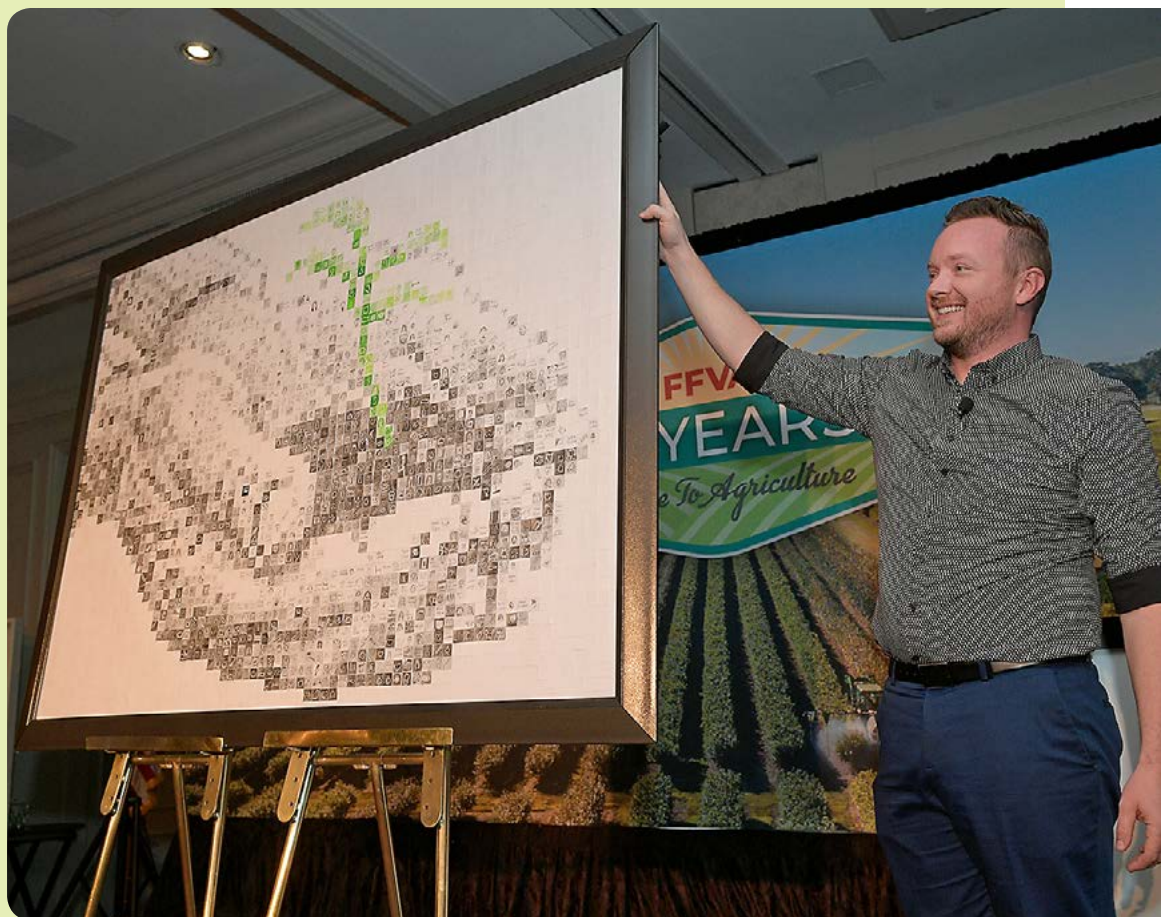
Re-energized by the statement, Hansen began to embrace his limitation as a way to drive creativity. From painting 30 images on his chest one over the other to create a silhouette of his own profile, to using cheeseburgers as his paintbrush, Hansen is more creative and successful than he ever could have imagined. He stated that he “had to be limited

to become limitless” in his creations.

Hansen and his team brought us into the creative process by having each attendee at the breakfast draw pictures on eight one-inch-square pieces of paper. With more than 400 in attendance making up over 3,200 squares of paper, Hansen told the crowd he would create an industry-themed picture

and present it at dinner.

That evening, the mosaic that Hansen created wowed the audience and proved that if we can seize our limitations, anything is possible. During an impromptu live auction that followed, the picture raised \$5,025 for the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation. The artwork will be displayed in FFVA’s Maitland office.





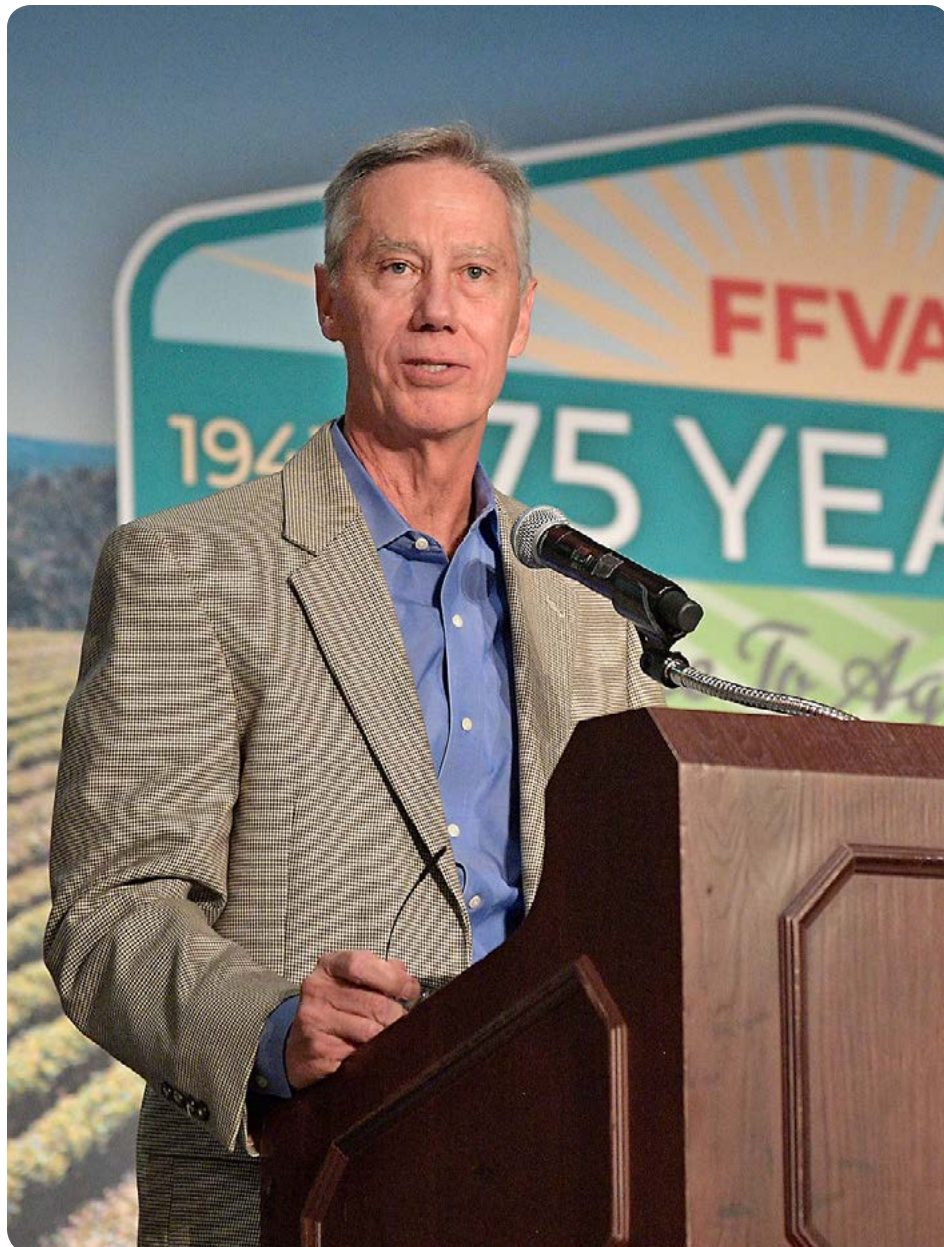
Mike Stuart: The Man, the Myth and the Legend



By **Brittany Hubbard**
S&L Beans

At every FFVA convention, the closing dinner is a time for fun on the final evening. However, unlike previous conventions, this year was the year to celebrate the past and bring in the future. FFVA celebrated a significant milestone, its 75th anniversary as the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association and Florida's leading full-service specialty crop organization. The night was filled with great food, drinks, music and even better company. Guests put in their final bids on silent auction items, and the crowd enjoyed the spur-of-the-moment live auction of the artwork created by keynote speaker Phil Hansen. The festivities made the 75th annual convention an extra-special event.

The most heartfelt and significant part of the night was honoring the retirement of the legend himself, FFVA President Mike Stuart. Anybody in the industry knows the major impact that Stuart has made in agriculture not just statewide, but nationwide. As his close friends and colleagues told numerous stories and shared countless memories, it showed how much of an impact he made on each individual – not just professionally, but also personally. Collectively in Florida agriculture, I think we can all agree that Mike Stuart has represented our industry in the best way possible. No matter the distance he had to fly or the people



he had to speak to during his career, Stuart never missed the opportunity to be the voice of Florida farmers.

As his 26 years of commitment has come to a close as FFVA president,

Mike Stuart will always be "The Man, The Myth and The Legend" of FFVA. To learn more about FFVA and Florida agriculture, as well as to connect with fellow members, visit FFVA.com.



Lessons learned from outbreaks make food production safer

Dr. Trevor Suslow from the University of California Davis' Department of Plant Sciences shared his expertise at the FFVA convention regarding foodborne outbreaks and the challenges that agriculture faces with prevention and traceability.



By **Zach Langford**
Syngenta Crop Protection

Foodborne outbreaks that reach across multistate lines are not as common, but they are generally more serious for the consumer. Technology improvements allow for faster and more definitive answers to detect and link foodborne outbreaks to identify the source. The lessons learned from outbreaks have made food production safer for everyone.

Suslow shared the steps to initiate an investigation to link an outbreak to the source of contamination. It can take a long time to determine whether consumer symptoms are related to a foodborne illness. Each operation along the food supply chain can perform its own analysis to avoid potential hazards and reduce risks of contamination. Root cause analysis starts with defining the problem, determining why it happened and taking steps to prevent a recurrence.

It's also important to understand the environment around an operation and its proximity to other farms or operations that could be a threat to the product. There are a lot of farming production practices that need to be analyzed, including water

sources and soil amendments. Farmers and the scientific community need to work together to better interpret new technology to prevent outbreaks in the future. "Communication has substantially improved, but more work is needed on all sides," Suslow said.



Lobbying focuses on building relationships

"Lobbying is an interesting job." With those words, FFVA Director of Government Relations Butch Calhoun opened his meeting with Class 8.



By **Carla Aurora de Jesus Rojas**
Southern Gardens Citrus

As FFVA's lobbyist, Calhoun promotes the interests of Florida specialty crop agriculture in Tallahassee. His role is to provide FFVA members with direct regulatory assistance and legislative representation. He and his team monitor the activities of the Florida Legislature and local regulatory agencies in order to advocate for our agriculture industry.

Calhoun said his focus is to build relationships, especially with those who are and will become leaders in agriculture. He gave many examples of bills this past session that passed and how other states look to Florida as an example to achieve results on issues such as passage of the "Dredge and Fill Permitting Authority" bill (HB 7043).

Other successful legislation passed last session included the Citrus Grown Under Protective Structure bill (SB 740) and the Tax Relief / Hurricane Recovery bill (HB 7087).

Calhoun explained that some issues can take up to six years of "fight" to be approved. He also said that most of his work occurs in the hallways. "It can be very difficult to get an appointment sometimes, and that's why my work is to build these relationships."

He also demonstrated that, even though most often his relationships are linked to legislators and regulatory agency personnel, his connections with advocacy groups, people in the private sector, and other associations and corporations are as important and can be fundamental in some circumstances.



FFVA celebrates accomplishments for agriculture at Awards Luncheon



By **Tyler Jacoby**
Highland Precision Ag

It was a true honor to witness those being honored at the 2018 FFVA Award Luncheon. As members of the incoming leadership development class, we were able to celebrate those who have dedicated not just a career but also a lifetime to the produce industry.

The first recipient to be honored was Dan Botts, a true maverick for the industry. Botts was recognized for being an integral part in developing methyl bromide alternatives throughout the world and lending his expertise in the research arena. Colleague and outgoing FFVA Chairman Paul Orsenigo honored his lifelong friend. The comradery continued as Mike Stuart, retiring president of FFVA, and Mary Hartney of the Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association described Botts as a fount of knowledge and a good friend, mentor and colleague. I could also speak to the moving testimonies because Botts was a personal mentor of mine for eight years of my academic career.

The Karen and Mike Stuart Humanitarian award went to New Hope Charities, an organization dedicated to fostering and educating children of its local communities. This particular honor was also an incredible testament to the character of Florida farmers, who do not put profit margin and crop yield above people. The Researcher of the Year Award was presented to Dr. Keith Schneider, a professor at UF/IFAS, for his contributions to improving the food safety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Florida Sen. Kelli Stargel and Rep. Holly Raschein were named as the 2018 Legislators of the Year.



Dan Botts (left) was honored ahead of his impending retirement by Mike Stuart.



FFVA board member Jesse Azqueta (left) accepts the Humanitarian Award on behalf of New Hope Charities from FFVA board member Eric Hopkins.



Dr. Keith Schneider receives the Researcher of the Year from FFVA board member Gary Wishnatzki.

Florida election was ‘unpredictable’



By **Breanna Lawyer**
Corteva Agriscience

With “no party affiliation” voter registration rising, it is no surprise that Nov. 6 was predicted to continue Florida’s trend to have close races. On Day 2 of FFVA’s convention, Joe Clements of Strategic Digital Services, Rep. Katie Edwards-Walpole and political analyst Dr. Susan MacManus weighed in on voter trends and what Floridians could anticipate in the election and the future.

Clements explained, “All Republicans think things are going well, while Democrats think things are going poorly. It’s Gillum winning where things can get interesting.” A win by Andrew Gillum for governor could mean a radically different makeup on the state Supreme Court, he said. On the flip side, if Republicans win it will be more offense than defense, with a Ron DeSantis administration being very similar to that of Gov. Rick Scott.

Walpole-Edwards walked through



constitutional amendments and what “yes” and “no” votes would mean. Amendments require at least 60 percent voter approval, she noted.

Demographically, more than 25 percent of registered voters fall into the Generation X and Generation Y group, and more than 33 percent are non-white. What surprised many convention attendees is that liberals, which now account for 22 percent of registered voters, are

the fastest-growing sector primarily because of generational replacement.

Regardless of voter affiliations, what is the key challenge for politicians in 2018? “Believability,” said MacManus, Florida’s most quoted political scientist. While the Florida U.S. Senate race is a toss-up, she said, the governor’s race is expected to draw people to the polls. She reminded the audience that for the last four elections, the margin of victory was only 1 percent. Regardless of predictions, she said turnout always wins elections, and polls can’t forecast last-minute surges.

Dr. Susan MacManus (left), Rep. Katie Edwards-Walpole and Joe Clements discussed the election during an issues forum.





A look into the future of Florida farming and harvest technology



By **Alison Sizemore**
Sizemore Farms

Dennis Donahue of Western Growers Center for Innovation and Technology began the first issues forum of the convention. Much like the issues Florida farmers face, Western Growers was born out of the California farmers' challenges in these same areas. Western Growers' proximity to Silicon Valley created a unique partnership for the center, providing access to some of the world's greatest technology.

The Western Growers program

includes problem crystallization, identification of technology, mentor and beta phases of development, and encouraging investment. Beyond developing technology, it also focuses heavily on bringing technology to the grower. The center holds many events throughout the year in agriculturally dense areas. Donahue's most practical advice: Make new friends even if they "don't look like they are from around here." Unlikely partnerships often are the source of solutions.

Gary Wishnatzki of Wish Farms in Plant City and Harvest Croo Robotics followed Donahue with an update on his company's mechanical strawberry harvesting technology. Wishnatzki described the challenge of harvesting berries: It has been done the same way

for more than 150 years. The job is unappealing to many domestic farmworkers and has resulted in a large demand on the H-2A guest-worker visa program.

Wishnatzki confirmed Donahue's advice to make new friends as he shared a picture of his robotics team – or "band of nerds," as he affectionately called them. The technology used by their mechanical harvester has been a collaborative effort with growers and universities. The harvester design creates many benefits for the grower, including lower harvest costs, a full-time workforce, higher-quality product, lower energy costs, and the potential for scouting services. Wishnatzki shared that robotic harvesting is "not that far off," exciting growers who hope to use this technology.





FFVA 2018 convention highlights

