

EMERGING TIMES

...growing toward the future

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INTRODUCTION: FFVA 101



ELDP alumnus gives sneak peek of program



By **Luke Davis**
Southern Gardens Citrus

To kick off ELDP Class 9 and our introduction to the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, we got to listen and interact with Josh Griffin of Grimes Produce Company and a graduate of Class 8. Griffin gave us a firsthand account of what to expect in the ELDP program and some expert advice, such as being punctual and asking good questions.

One of the highlights of the program for Griffin was the trip to Tallahassee, where he learned how agriculture policy is developed in the political arena. His class was able to see how things work in both the Senate and the House, while gaining insight to the inner workings of the Capitol from (now retired) FFVA Director of Government Relations Butch Calhoun.

The trip to California was another memorable experience for Griffin. He explained how large the specialty crop industry is out west and how growers there face many of the same challenges that we do here in Florida. The trip to California seems like it will be an eye-opening experience.

Griffin, who took time out of his vacation to come and speak with us, gave the ELDP program very high marks and said that it is a great opportunity for all of us.



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Members can connect with FFVA through many channels



By **Tim Cuellar**
Duda Ranches

Before the presentation about member engagement, I had no idea of all the different media channels available to be engaged in and stay informed.

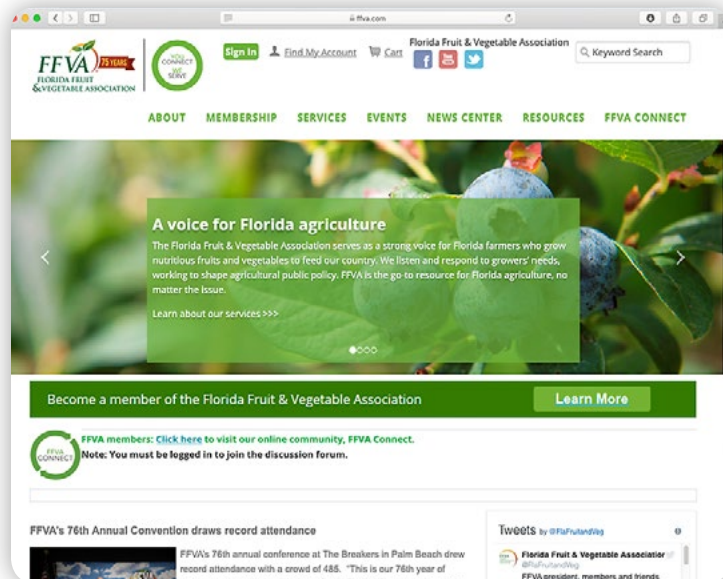
Alyssa Badalamenti serves as the communications manager, which makes her a bridge of information for members and the general public. There are four resources members can engage in and know what FFVA is doing. The first resource is FFVA.com, which Badalamenti called "the content hub." There is a wide variety of information and resources on the FFVA website, including a blog, current events, contact information for legislators, and much more. Also on the website is FFVA Connect. This is an online discussion forum only available to members.

FFVA also has numerous email publications: the weekly FFVA Voice, The Capitol Voice,

Today's Headlines, member bulletins and the ELDP newsletter. FFVA is also active on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, using these social media platforms to engage with their members and non-members to keep them up to date on current issues and other information.

Another way to keep updated is by downloading the FFVA app.

Having the app is a must if you plan to attend the annual convention in September. Visit FFVA.com for more information on any of these resources.





Joyner discusses importance of leadership, leaving a legacy



By **Ethan Basore**
TKM Bengard

It was an honor for ELDP Class 9 to meet with FFVA President Mike Joyner, who was one of the first speakers during our FFVA 101 session in Maitland. Joyner spoke about the importance of leadership. Our character defines our ability as emerging agriculturists to leave behind a legacy of leadership, he said. He asked us about

what would be on our “legacy list” – a list of accomplishments and instruction that we would leave behind for future generations.

We discussed with him our mentors and the importance of mentoring someone in the future. Joyner also reviewed the important work that FFVA has been doing in the past year, including the U.S. Mexico Canada trade agreement, H-2A labor and the new Cabinet in Tallahassee. FFVA has been in D.C. fighting for Florida’s specialty crop industry, which has been impaired by NAFTA. FFVA is now fighting for

change to the USMCA to improve markets for Florida specialty crop agriculture. Because many FFVA members rely on a large workforce, it was a relief to learn how much FFVA staff and Joyner are working with the federal government to improve the H-2A program.

As the previous chief of staff for Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, Joyner knows how to work with state legislators and the Governor’s Cabinet. His leadership and advocacy will help ensure a strong future for fruit and vegetable producers.





Food safety programs ensure safe food



By **Perry Mason**
Maury L. Carter
& Associates

I found the food safety presentation fascinating. I didn't realize the magnitude of rules and regulations related to food safety and sustainability. Farmers and harvesters have stringent guidelines that must be followed or the repercussions could be fatal to the viability of their operations.

One example I found particularly interesting was a recent E. coli outbreak in romaine lettuce. Even though the



outbreak was pinpointed and traced back to the source, it affected all farmers. This included Florida farmers who had absolutely no connection to the outbreak.

As farmers, we need to be thank-

ful for programs like the Food Safety Modernization Act, which has shifted focus from the response to foodborne illness to its prevention. As consumers, we need to educate ourselves on programs like FSMA and understand that farmers are doing everything in their power to ensure our nation is being fed safe, healthy food. The presentation has made me more thankful for our country's careful and caring farmers who grow our food in the safest, most reliable environments. Taking a dive into the regulations to which our farmers adhere reinforces my belief that farmers and other agricultural producers are the best environmental stewards the world has to offer.

Water quantity, quality are important issues



By **Anthony Cannon**
Syngenta Seeds

Water is a vital necessity for Florida's agriculture industry. Yet it is becoming more difficult to obtain for agriculture operations each year. Some farmers have even stated that water you can get your hands on will be as good as gold in the near future. Kerry Kates serves as FFVA's director of water and natural resources. He provided great insight into this "gold" we call water. Kates spoke about Florida's water law, water rights systems and the current state of agriculture related to water quality.

All business sectors in Florida use water. Residential housing, construction, tourist

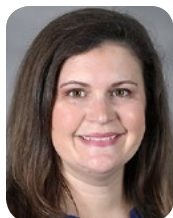
attractions, and agriculture all drink from the same "water hose." To help regulate and protect our water, Florida pulled from the eastern (Riparian) and western water laws to form Florida's Water Resource Act in 1972. A significant development was the creation of the five water management districts throughout the state. These districts help address issues that may arise in a specific area, allowing for changes or restrictions without affecting water law in its entirety. Other forms of state regulation are programs such as water monitoring, and Numeric Nutrient Criteria, which help monitor and regulate nitrogen and other nutrient levels in our waterways.

Media, public perceptions and political agendas tend to target agriculture as the responsible party when issues arise relating to water quality. With these types of challenges and our ever-growing

population, it is extremely important that we all do our part now to help educate our legislators and the public on agriculture's water needs and the conservation methods we follow to protect our water. Having an agriculture representative on the water management district governing boards and representation in Tallahassee through FFVA are just a few examples of how our voice can be heard when it comes to defending our industry's reputation and protecting our water rights.



Don't wait until a crisis strikes



By **Kim Burman**
Glades Crop Care

Blending a professional background in journalism and public relations, FFVA Director of Public Affairs Lisa Lochridge brings an experienced and grounded voice, especially in times of crisis. She and Communications Manager Alyssa Badalamenti handle FFVA communication including building public media support for pro-ag government policy, sharing and promoting the fresh produce industry's voice, and facilitating membership communication.

Lochridge offered us a closer look into another pivotal part of her job:

Cri-sey-ue (kri'sis) n., pl. cri-sis (kri'sis) n., pl. separate, discern < I cut > SHEAR, L cer turning point of a dis ery (see LYSIS) b) an 2 a turning point in t stage, or event 3 a ti whether poss

crisis communication. Some were surprised to learn this process begins well before any crisis occurs. At the hub of crisis communication is a positive relationship with the media. Through column contributions to trade magazines, expert counsel and media inquiry responses, FFVA has successfully built and maintained a foundation as a reliable media source.

Changing media trends make crisis

communication even more complex. Today's reporters are often spread thin and possess minimal knowledge of agriculture. Nationalization of local stories cause crises to impact well beyond where they actually occur. Near instant media speed means the old 24-hour response time is no longer fast enough. Silence in the presence of a crisis is not a good strategy. To confidently provide a prompt and accurate response, FFVA follows its crisis communication plan.

Members of FFVA have access to on-site media training as well as assistance in creating individualized crisis communication plans. A crisis plan delineates what to say, when to say it, and to whom. Only by being prepared for the worst can organizations achieve the ultimate goal: getting back to business as usual.





Foundation focuses on finding solutions for producers



By **Ethan Basore**
TKM Bengard

The Florida Specialty Crop Foundation was founded over 28 years ago. The mission of the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation is to benefit the general public through initiatives that provide solutions to challenges facing specialty crop producers and their stakeholders.

FFVA members realized a need to support research and educational programs for their members. Through a donation of \$10,000, the Foundation helped a new Agricultural Studies program at

Warner University. Through this generous donation, the students in agriculture classes have the opportunity for internships, field trips and mentors throughout the agricultural industry. The Foundation also supports the annual Agricultural Labor Relations Forum, which is run by FFVA's labor division. The labor relations forum brings Florida's fruit and vegetable producers to Orlando to discuss changes in labor.

The FSCF also is continuing its job of preparing leaders for the Florida fruit and vegetable industry. The Emerging Leadership Development Program was launched in 2011. ELDP



participants learn about the different problems facing Florida producers from industry experts and how to manage and solve them. ELDP also travels to California to learn about the different crops grown there. The most valuable tool that ELDP participants receive upon graduation is the networking and connections available to them. The FSCF also is committed to philanthropy through programs such as the Redlands Christian Migrant Association. The Foundation each year participates in a Christmas card project to raise money for the RCMA. The ELDP class also takes on a service project that will help benefit the RCMA. In all, the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation is a proud part of the FFVA family which continues to improve education and research for Florida producers.



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LEADERSHIP

Are you an up-and-coming leader who wants to be more involved in the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association? Consider the FFVA Emerging Leader Development Program, administered by the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation.

Applicants must be age 25 to 40, part of an FFVA member's family or their company, and must be working in or pursuing a career in Florida specialty crop agriculture. A class of eight to 10 members is selected each year.

[Newsletters](#)

THE PROGRAM:

- Develops leaders who are prepared with a depth of knowledge of the many issues facing agriculture
- Provides young professionals with the education and tools to deal with those issues
- Engages young leaders to in FFVA and other industry organizations

The schedule includes a trip to Tallahassee to meet with legislators, seminars provided by FFVA staff members and other experts on current issues, venues to study environmental issues and water management, and visits to specialty crop production areas in Florida and California.

Details: Program Director Sonia Tighe, 813-975-0377



Emerging Leadership Development Program
[View Photo Gallery](#)



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Redlands Christian Migrant

‘Time is the enemy’ in developing new citrus varieties



By **Jay Johnston**
Deseret Farms of Ruskin

On the second day of FFVA 101, Peter Chaires discussed his roles as executive vice president of Florida Citrus Packers and executive director of New Varieties Development & Management Corporation. Chaires spoke about how “time is the enemy” when it comes to the development of new citrus varieties and how NVDMC is working to support growers and streamline the breeding process.

Besides breeding for HLB-resistant trees, NVDMC also is combating the issues of smaller fruit size and declining fruit quality from the disease. NVDMC has four varieties under commercial contract (IFAS Sugar Belle, UCR Tango, IFAS Valquarius, U.S. Early Pride) and 16 varieties under evaluation contracts from California to Japan. He also reviewed current practices to combat greening with bactericides and research into alternative modes of getting the bactericide into the trees, such as trunk injection.

One thing that growers can agree on is that we need more resistant varieties to have a chance of making it through the HLB era. Citrus is at the heart of Florida’s identity, and NVDMC is a great asset for growers because it is constantly looking for better varieties to help the industry continue to grow the best citrus in the world.

New Varieties Development
NVDMC
& Management Corporation



MRLs and other crop protection issues

“MRLs and Other Molecule Mayhem” was presented by FFVA Director of Science and Regulatory Affairs Mike Aerts, who discussed the state of maximum residue limits for chemicals on produce, along with current and potential political developments for MRLs and their likely impact on the specialty produce industry.



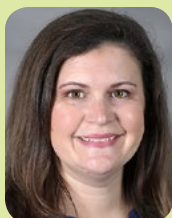
By **Jeffrey Hancock**
Peace River Packing

Aerts described a very difficult road ahead for specialty crops when it comes to crop protection. He mentioned recent rejections of shipments in Canada and Japan because of detection of unregistered pesticides. He also spoke on how misperception of pesticides and herbicides by the public and policymakers cause much of the regulatory and legal hurdles for our industry. The current backlash against glyphosate is a prominent example. Juries have given out huge awards in lawsuits despite overwhelming scientific evidence that there is no substantial cancer risk from glyphosate.

Aerts continued with details about the European Union, where it is very difficult to ship produce because of a complex regulatory environment, with several governmental bodies establishing rules for what chemicals are allowed. Additionally, individual nations in the EU impose their own regulations: implementing hazard-based assessments instead of risk-based assessments could cause Germany to prohibit use of 80 percent of currently available fungicides, while France is moving to a pesticide-free policy.

He explained that our goal should be to focus on harmonization of MRL standards around the world, educating the public and policymakers, and sharing information within the industry.

FFVA: A small but mighty association

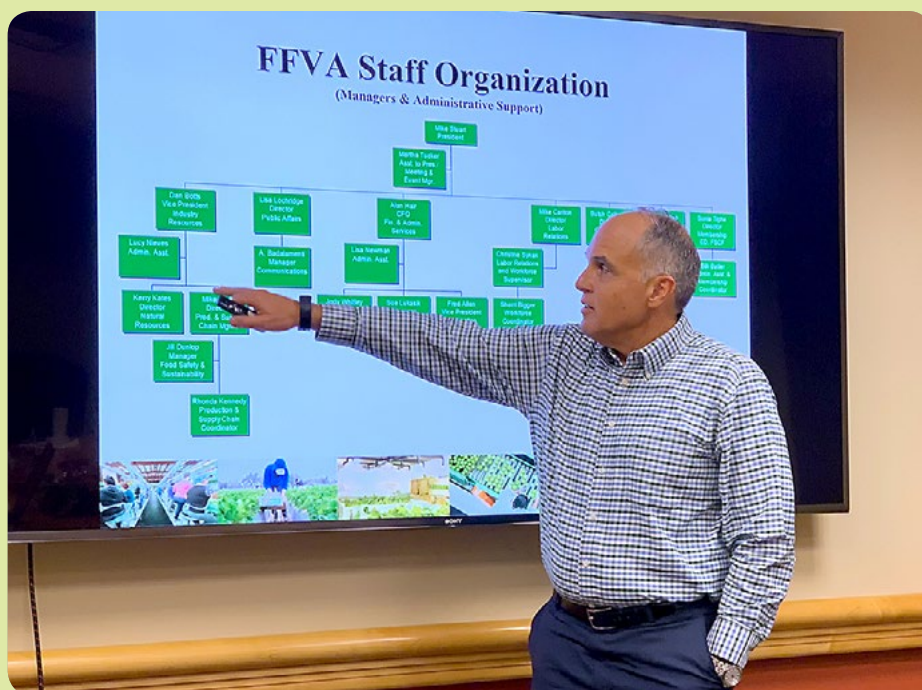


By **Kim Burman**
Glades Crop Care

The experienced and dedicated team at FFVA is exactly who Florida agriculture needs on its side. FFVA President Mike Joyner and Chief Financial Officer Alan Hair enlightened us about all that is FFVA. Highlights included the organization's evolution, its current structure and financial status, and current opportunities to get involved. Their eye-opening presentation shed light on the breadth of FFVA's services and expertise. Originally incorporated in 1948 as the Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Association, the organization and its subsidiary companies employ 170 staffers. This diversified revenue stream enables FFVA to do more with less.

With only 30 employees in FFVA, there exists a strong culture of teamwork and collaboration among FFVA's staff leadership, board and committees. Diversity of involvement enables the entire organization to stay current with complex industry needs and opportunities. While sharing FFVA's annual expense summary, Hair made clear the association is focused on "our people." Joyner shared that FFVA is "all in" on current labor and trade issues. During the past year, he personally made 15 trips to Washington, D.C., on behalf of Florida specialty crop agriculture.

The efforts of advocating, communicating, educating, researching and advancing the interests of Florida



agriculture should be a source of pride for every member of FFVA. Do not hesitate to put your passion for Florida agriculture to good use by jumping

into FFVA's opportunities for involvement both large and small. This tight-knit organization has giant heart and a widespread impact where it matters.



Tomato industry hurt over time by cheap Mexican imports



By **Anthony Cannon**
Syngenta Seeds

Michael Schadler serves as manager of the Florida Tomato Committee and executive vice president of the Florida Tomato Exchange, respectively. Schadler provided a great breakdown of the Florida tomato industry both past and present. The Florida tomato industry has seen many peaks and

valleys, starting from just 20 acres in Alachua County back in 1872, growing to 42,000 acres on over 6,000 farms by 1925. Florida's tomato industry has been plagued by obstacles throughout its history from the Great Depression in the 1930s, the introduction and then subsequent ban of methyl bromide, the 1986 introduction of several serious viruses, and of course the NAFTA agreement in 1994, which led to a new set of challenges where the industry currently sits.

Today, the industry consists of 25,000 acres represented by only 50 farms. In Florida, 25 million boxes of



round tomatoes are being picked and packed, totaling more than 1 billion pounds each year. Eighty percent are consumed in the United States, with 70 percent going to food service and the other 30 percent sold at the retail grocery level.

It's easy to see that the Florida tomato industry has had a huge footprint in the American household. That is drastically changing, however, because of the rapid growth of tomato imports coming from Mexico. In 1994, Mexico was importing roughly 800 million pounds of tomatoes into the United States annually. That number has skyrocketed to 4 billion pounds annually today.

Mexican farms are able to grow, harvest, pack and ship tomatoes to U.S. markets for half the cost compared to Florida farms. This "dumping" of product into U.S. markets is forcing Florida farms out of business. Along with the Florida Tomato Exchange, FFVA has been an active voice in Washington, D.C., representing Florida growers to help educate our federal legislators and take a stand on the importance of a fair trade deal for Florida tomato farmers. Without a U.S. Mexico Canada Agreement that brings forth fair trade laws for our farmers, Florida's tomato industry will continue to suffer.

FLORIDA
TOMATOES



**Top Tomato
Producing Regions
in Florida (2019)**





FFVA membership brings the industry together

There are many agricultural commodity associations in Florida tailored to a specific crop. The Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association is one of the few that



By **Luke Davis**
Southern
Gardens Citrus

encompasses all specialty crops and gets members from different areas of farming together to tackle the larger issues that affect us all. At FFVA's Maitland office, Class 9 was given an all-access pass to see what FFVA does for its members.

Sonia Tighe, director of membership, gave an overview of all the benefits and resources that come with being an FFVA member. The membership of the FFVA is made up of producer and trade members in Florida's specialty crop industry. Since 2013, there has been an upward trend in membership, as it seems people in the industry are more willing to unite to combat the many issues facing agriculture.

One of the major benefits discussed was being able to serve on one of FFVA's seven committees. These committees are extremely important in getting members together to discuss and solve issues that affect the specialty crop industry.

For example, the Production Management Committee focuses on important issues that affect members involved in crop production. Some of the issues that this committee tackles include regulatory issues for crop protection products, nutrient management, invasive pests and non-target impacts of farming practices. Member participation in these committees is vital toward making progress to solving some of the problems facing our industry today.



It's what's on the inside that counts



By **Johnny Lunsford**
L&M Farms

Midway through Class 9's FFVA 101 session in Maitland, it was time for Kati Lawson of the University of Florida to break the newest Emerging Leader Development Program class members out of their shells. We joined together as a group, challenged to lead in an industry where that very leadership can make or break a season. And Lawson was sure to show us the road to success.

While filling in a quick behavioral test, we quietly pondered our innermost qualms, and followed Kati's direction in assigning colors to our boldest behaviors. The program, aptly named True Colors, quickly showed the group that we each had a different perspective on our own behavior, and in some ways we were very similar.

Orange, yellow, blue and green cards were placed around the conference room. Determined to know

what each of them meant, we listened intently. We learned that individually we all expressed a dominant True Color and realized these behaviors as described in the True Color spectrum were an accurate representation of our inner selves. Now what would we do with this information?

Both our personal and professional success is greatly determined on our ability to communicate effectively with one another. Whether you are a blue,

green, yellow or orange on the True Colors behavioral spectrum, knowing how to enhance relationships with the alternate "color" can really bring personalities together in a way that many of us have never realized before.





FFVA represents members in D.C. on labor challenges

In 2010, Florida growers needed 4,500 H-2A workers. In 2018, Florida agriculture employed over 30,000 H-2A workers. We had the opportunity to hear from Mike Carlton, FFVA's director of labor relations, as he shared his knowledge on the agriculture workforce situation. He discussed general issues along with updates on a new stand-alone bill that would legalize current unauthorized workers and reform the H-2A program.

Carlton has frequently traveled to Washington, D.C. on behalf of FFVA to negotiate on the bill. We discussed the staggered-entry program that would manage the inflow of labor, as well as the Adverse Effect Wage Rate.

Carlton explained that the proposed increased wage rates are not market driven; instead, they are established by a survey of field and livestock workers' pay combined. Florida has the 13th lowest rate in terms of H-2A wages, but some other areas of the country have seen a 22 percent increase in the required wage rate for H-2A workers. Other areas are seeing a 15 percent increase. The average wage paid to workers this year would become the new base rate for next year. Carlton is advocating that this is not a sustainable model for our industry.

As our need for guest workers continues to rise, we need to be well-versed on the matter. Fortunately, the FFVA serves as a resource to provide knowledge regarding labor-related issues and as an advocate in trying to improve the programs. FFVA also provides its members assistance in filing H-2A applications and managing paperwork to avoid any potential problems.



By **Taylor Sewell**
Yara North America



FFVA working hard on transportation

“From field to fork, safely and quickly” is how Tori Bradley summed up her presentation on logistics regulatory challenges and exchange groups.



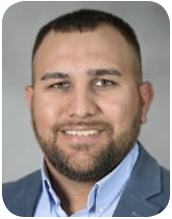
By **Tony Kalogridis**
H&A Farms

Logistics have become increasingly more difficult for agricultural products distribution since the mandatory implementation of the Hours of Service rule and its associated stipulations. Though the regulation had safety as its primary concern, it created some unforeseen issues for transportation of perishable products such as produce. Limited hours of service, mandatory breaks and limited agricultural exemptions are some the concerns FFVA is voicing. Since last fall, FFVA has visited four congressional offices, filed a formal petition for more flexible Hours of Service rules with 25 nationwide supporters, and worked with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration leadership to address these issues. Since the new Hours of Service rule was proposed, FFVA has been working with the petition supporters to provide comments to FMCSA.

Given the many challenges the agriculture industry faces, FFVA also provides support to commodity exchanges for growers and shippers looking to collaborate for greater gain. With an emphasis of trust within the group, commodity exchange members enjoy the benefits of collectively preparing, processing, handling and marketing their products, all while legally avoiding certain antitrust violations. The increased communication and the reliance on trust gives the members the ability to achieve a common goal through cooperation.



Monterey Mushrooms is a powerhouse in the industry



By **Tim Cuellar**
Duda Ranches

We wrapped up FFVA 101 with a tour of Monterey Mushrooms, an 80-acre mushroom farm in Zellwood that has been family-owned and operated since 1971. They have nine farms throughout North America, and combined they produce 200 million pounds of fresh mushrooms annually, which include white, baby bella, portabella, oyster and shitake varieties. They also produce a nutrient-rich mushroom powder that can be used in almost any recipe to add a great mushroom flavor.

Monterey Mushrooms is a vertically integrated company, involved with its product all the way from spore and compost through the growing and packing stage, and finally shipping and distribution.

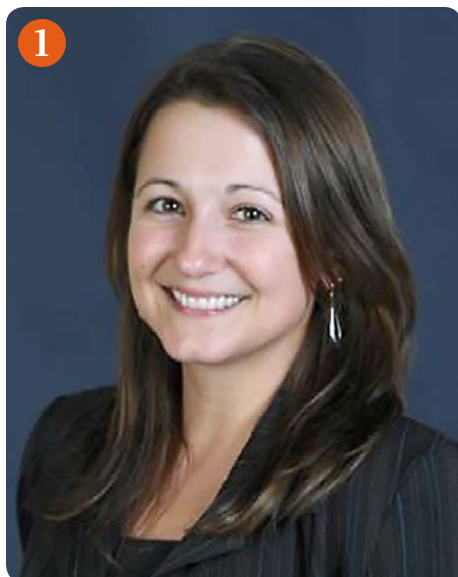
Mushroom production starts with creating compost. After the compost material is mixed, it goes through a fermentation period until it reaches a core temperature of 141 degrees Fahrenheit. The compost is put into growing boxes, where it is ready for mushroom spores. The mushroom spores are spread on top, covered with a thin layer of compost, and the boxes are put into a growing room.

The Zellwood facility has 38 climate-controlled growing rooms. The mushrooms grow very quickly and can double in size in one day. It takes a few weeks for the mushrooms to reach harvest maturity, when they are then hand-harvested and sent to the decontamination and packing room. You can find Monterey Mushrooms at many retailers and restaurants across the United States.





ELDP News



1 Elizabeth Malek (Class 1) of Lipman Family Farms is the new chair of FFVA's Research, Education and Extension Committee.



2 Frankie Montalvo (Class 7) of Glades Formulating Corp. and his wife, Alexis, are expecting their first child, a boy, in November.



3 Breanna Lawyer (Class 8) has been appointed Transformation Office Associate for Corteva Agriscience.