

EMERGING TIMES

...growing toward the future

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FFVA ANNUAL CONVENTION 2019



FFVA honors several with awards recognizing service



By **Jeffrey Hancock**
Peace River Packing

At the opening luncheon of the 2019 FFVA convention, members were greeted with more than just delicious food. FFVA Convention Chair David Hill welcomed attendees, and FFVA President Mike Joyner spoke about his first year in office and the future of FFVA.

FFVA board member Aaron Troyer presented the Light House Café and Ella's Closet with the Karen and Mike

Stuart Humanitarian Award. The Light House Café provides meals, counseling and ministry to Glades area residents, and Ella's Closet makes available training and resources to help families with young children. FFVA also recognized state Sen. Ben Albritton and state Rep. Bobby Payne for their dedicated service in the Legislature to agriculture in Florida. Other awards presented went to Dr. Richard Raid, Researcher of the Year, and John Alexander of Walmart, Customer of the Year. Also during the luncheon the Emerging Leader Development Program Class 8 graduated after a yearlong exploration into the agriculture industry and the challenges it faces.

CONTENTS

ELDP alum Buckley works with Legislature to fight for Florida agriculture 2

Issues Forum focuses on workforce issues, solutions..... 3

LeMieux leads us through the journey of Florida history 4

Florida vs. algae: Predicting and preventing harmful blooms 5

FFVA board members share valuable leadership lessons..... 6

Fried: USMCA is a 'bad deal' for Florida farmers 7

ELDP News 8



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ELDP alum Buckley works with Legislature to fight for Florida agriculture



By **Luke Davis**
Southern Gardens Citrus

Class 9 got a surprise visitor to kick off the 2019 FFVA convention in Palm Beach, when Emily Duda Buckley, director of legislative affairs for the Florida Department of Agriculture – and an ELDP alum – discussed with us political issues the department faces and the regulatory processes FDACS is going through to help bring the hemp industry to Florida.

As director of legislative affairs, Buckley represents the department before the state House and Senate during legislative sessions. One of the priorities for her and her team is to push for funding for programs such as Fresh From Florida. Buckley discussed in more detail the Fresh From Florida program and why it is so important to Florida farmers. She said that many of Florida's agricultural producers are small farmers who lack the means to market their products individually. Fresh From Florida helps producers in a variety of ways to lower their marketing costs, including the use of the iconic Fresh From Florida logo that we all see at our local supermarkets.

Another priority for Buckley and FDACS is bringing the hemp industry to Florida. She said the department is still in the rule-making process and experimental hemp farms are being set up for trials. Buckley stated that the hemp plant has 25,000 known uses and that this could be a crop that provides a huge economic boon to farmers.





Issues Forum focuses on workforce issues, solutions



By **Jay Johnston**
Deseret Farms of Ruskin

Craig Regelbrugge from AmericanHort spoke about agriculture labor shortages and the H-2A guest worker program during the convention's first Issues Forum. Regelbrugge is a senior vice president at AmericanHort and serves as national co-chairman of the Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform and as a member of the USDA Specialty Crop Committee.

As everyone knows, labor is a big issue throughout the agriculture industry, especially in labor-intensive crops. The H-2A program has alleviated some of that challenge. Since 2008, program use has grown by double digits. The number of applicants is up 11.5% from last year at this time. Between 2009 and 2016 the use of farm labor contractors increased significantly, according to the most recent National Agriculture Survey. Regelbrugge said he expects that this trend has continued since 2016.

Currently in Congress there are discussions of legislation to stabilize the current workforce, implement a new visa program and improve the H-2A program. There are many in Congress who understand the need to reform the program, Regelbrugge said, adding that he hopes this will include provisions to streamline the process, reduce costs and add incentives for workers to remain in the United States to work for an extended period.





LeMieux leads us through the journey of Florida history



By **Tony Kalogridis**
H&A Farms

“Once an insect-ridden swamp-land, it is now a top destination for tourism, business, agriculture and innovation,” proclaims a passage from the book *Florida Made: The 25 Most Important Figures Who Shaped the State*. Our great state of Florida. How did it start? Who brought us here? Where are we going? Luckily, we had former Sen. George LeMieux to lead us through the journey. In 2018, he and Laura E. Mize published their book, a recollection of our state’s history through the profiling and ranking of the 25 most impactful trailblazers who have influenced our state’s development.

The trailblazers he discussed ranged



from Henry M. Flagler, the man responsible for connecting Jacksonville to Key West by railroad; “The” Walter E. Disney; Dr. Joseph Y. Porter, who is

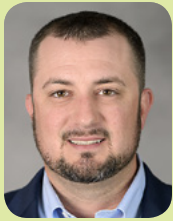
credited with pioneering mosquito control and controlling the spread of yellow fever in Florida; Douglas Dummett, the rescuer of Florida citrus after the freeze of 1835; Dr. Kurt H. Debus, the German rocket scientist who chose Florida as America’s launching point to the moon; Marjory Stoneman Douglas, the “grande dame” of the Everglades; and Julius F. Stone Jr., who saved Key West from languishing in poverty. Each of these figures was crucial in the development of our state as we know it today.

The Sunshine State has overcome many obstacles to become what it is today. But, as LeMieux pointed out, there also is no shortage of challenges in our future. Together, we are well-positioned to combat them and thrive as these trailblazers have before us.





Florida vs. algae: Predicting and preventing harmful blooms



By **Johnny Lunsford**
L&M Farms

The Issues Forum “Water Woes: Working Together on Solutions” featured a lineup of experts to discuss an important issue making headlines in Florida: harmful algae blooms.

Guest speakers were Ernie Barnett of the Florida Land Council, Dr. Wendy Graham of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, and DEP Secretary Noah Valenstein. They came together to discuss current issues and solutions at work on our beloved Florida

waterways. Drew Bartlett of the South Florida Water Management District did a great job moderating, and discussion focused on algae blooms. Graham explained the differences between red tide and blue-green algae and how they affect Florida ecosystems. Barnett said we should concentrate on using science to quantify the success of current best management practices.

Something important all listeners at the forum took away from our speakers that day was that science would be at the head of the table in the decision-making process for Lake Okeechobee discharges. Extensive research in how we manage, treat and regulate nutrient levels in our waterways should continue to lead

Florida to a path of predictably clean water management. With the Together Florida coalition initiative and the collaborative effort of all organizations to combat algae blooms, we will find the solutions necessary to keep our Florida water clean for generations to come.





FFVA board members share valuable leadership lessons



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

New to the FFVA convention this year was the Leadership Forum, a breakout session focusing on leadership principles and styles.

Participating in the session were four FFVA board members: Paul Allen, R.C. Hatton Inc., and current board chair; Aaron Troyer, Troyer Brothers, and vice chair; Paul Orsenigo, Orsenigo Farms, and immediate past chair; and Marie Bedner, Bedner's Farm Fresh Market, and chair of FFVA's Advocacy Committee. John Hall, manager of leadership development

for Farm Credit of Florida, moderated the panel.

I loved what FFVA President Mike Joyner said during his introduction: I was born in (insert town), but I was raised in the office of (insert mentor, employer, etc.). This couldn't be truer, as I believe the person who "raises" us in business has an enormous impact on the rest of our lives. I also enjoyed his slogan, "iron sharpens iron." To me, this means that I will essentially become the people with whom I surround myself.

It was incredible to hear how team-oriented some of the panelists are. For example, Allen suggested that you can grow the business from within. Troyer talked about incentivizing employees and making them accountable, but also letting them

"run." And in Orsenigo's words: "Keep the main thing, the main thing." Bedner said her business employs all ages, from high school students to retirees. Each panelist seemed to minimize distractions and stay focused on what generates value for their businesses.

As a young man (in life and in business), it was a treat for me to hear from some of the most successful men and women in our industry, each one having discovered their "why." They seem to stay grounded in their faith and family and carefully select the people with whom they spend their time. One of my favorite quotes from the forum was from John Hall: "You will be the same person you are today except for the books you read and people you meet."

Fried: USMCA is a 'bad deal' for Florida farmers



By **Taylor Sewell**
Yara North America

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried addressed a record crowd of attendees during the State of the Industry luncheon at FFVA's 76th annual convention.

Surrounded by industry members, the commissioner spoke about her team's efforts to defend the Fresh From Florida budget while educating decision-makers on its importance to Florida farmers. In addition, she discussed her team's pursuit of making hemp an alternative crop for Florida agriculture.

She also discussed the trade deal proposed to replace NAFTA. "The interests of Florida and America should come first, and the USMCA as it is written is a bad deal," she said to a round of applause from the crowd. "It was a bad deal 25 years ago, and it is a bad deal today." The agreement as written would cost Florida about 8,000 jobs and \$400 million, she noted.

Fried's office and other Florida interests have written to Congress and President Trump about Florida's concerns about USMCA. Fried said Florida's congressional delegation is standing against USMCA as communicated. She also said that the proposed trade pact will hurt more states than just Florida.

Fried concluded, "If agriculture is not thriving, we are putting our national security at risk. We must put Florida first; we must put America first – and that's what I fight for every single day."



ELDP News

- 1 Derek Orsenigo (Class 2)** and his wife, Lauren, are expecting their second daughter in mid-March 2020.
- 2 Geoff Roe (Class 3)** and his wife, Nicole, welcomed Wells Henderson Roe, their fourth son, Aug. 22. He weighed 7 pounds, 11 ounces, and Geoff reports that his three brothers are still arguing over who gets to hold him.
- 3 Zach Sweat (Class 6)** has accepted a position as a territory manager at ICL Group – Specialty Fertilizer Division. ICL is a global manufacturer of products based on unique minerals.
- 4 Catherine Cellon (Class 7)** has been named technical sales representative for Southeast Florida for H. M. Clause Seed Company.
- 5 Perry Mason (Class 9)** and his wife, Lindsay, welcomed daughter Elizabeth “Liza” Jane Mason on Aug. 13. She weighed in at 7 pounds, 2 ounces.

