

EMERGING TIMES

... growing toward the future

Emerging leaders learn about current issues and FFVA during second session



Class 3 poses with the food items they collected for their service project benefiting RCMA.



Members of FFVA's Emerging Leader Development Program met at FFVA's Maitland office for their second session in November, which focused on major issues facing the industry and the work of FFVA. Activities included an overview of how the association operates, presentations from staff members and activities designed to help class members get to know

themselves and each other better.

During the two months between FFVA 2013 and this session the class worked diligently to collect food items for the Redlands Christian Migrant Association. After the session class members distributed the food items, which filled three vehicles, to the RCMA centers with the greatest need.



Director of Labor Relations Mike Carlton gave the class an overview of the current state of immigration reform.

Marketing, membership and other mayhem



by Ryan Atwood
Keyplex

Director of Marketing and Membership Mike Aerts wears many hats and his duties are wide ranging from leading the FFVA's agricultural exchange management group to planning the annual convention. He gave a very interesting talk on a number of different subjects giving insight on international trade and how FFVA works with government agencies and other trade associations to on issues such as food safety, food inspection requirements and financial protection. There was a lively discussion on the attempt to harmonize maximum residue limits (MRLs) across countries. This is a major priority for growers, regulatory agencies and registrants. As it stands, chemicals labeled legally for crops in the United States may not allow the crop to be exported due to MRLs or worse, a violation can potentially shut down an exporter. Specific discussion on Canada ensued and how it is about to change its MRLs. There is major concern because only 6,500 pesticides are registered in Canada whereas 12,000 are registered in the United States.

Third Party Registrations (TPR) is a program administered by FFVA which allows growers the ability to get a special use label for pesticides. TPR registration requires FFVA membership and the grower agrees to hold

harmless protection to the registrant. FFVA also works on the growers' behalf to provide 24(c) local needs labeling. These are some of the many ways that FFVA works to benefit all of us who work in the agricultural industry.

Labor still an issue



by Daniel Cavazos
Veg Pro International

The second stop in the yearlong ELDP program took us to FFVA's headquarters in Maitland. There we had a healthy schedule packed with information regarding industry issues. FFVA's directors took time out of their busy schedules to sit down and have very perceptive one-on-one interaction with the members of Class 3.

Mike Carlton, director of labor relations, had a very insightful presentation regarding the current labor situation here in Florida. To be politically correct, "we're in it deep," he said. According to Mike, agriculture accounts for about 1.8 million jobs nationally. It is estimated that 75 percent of that 1.8 million do not have the correct documentation to be working in this country legally.

For the past 12 years, Mike has been working strenuously to convince Congress that comprehensive immigration reform is our only ticket to having a legalized workforce

in this country. Today's answer to a legal workforce is the H-2A program and we all know how expensive, difficult and broken that system is. Bi-partisanship is really affecting immigration reform's position in Washington. Some of the current bills out there include Senate Bill S.744, House Bills, H.R.1773 and H.R. 15. All of these bills have certain provisions, whether requiring a certain amount of a person's time to be spent working in agriculture, or mandating a limit on the amount of yearly work force. Every bill is constructed distinctively. A surplus of pros and cons surround these bills, we just need to get Washington to act and provide us with something that will fit our needs - understandably easier said than done. Approximately 92 bills have been introduced by Congress relating to agriculture.

As our time with Mike came to an end, the question of what we do now arose. Mike responded, "We don't give up, we keep up the pressure, call and send letters, keep our non-ag friends constantly informed." He also encouraged us to contact our congressman and "Ask this: 'You've told us what you're not going to do. Now tell us what you are going to do to resolve our problem.'" Mike concluded the meeting by saying something that drew everyone's attention: "Immigrants have always fed this country and they always will. It's just a matter of what country our food is going to come from. Wouldn't you rather have it come from home?"



Promoting agriculture for future generations



by Jamie Lang
PNC Bank

Engaging youth in agriculture was a prominent topic during our recent trip to FFVA's headquarters. Barbara Wunder, communications manager, spent her time with the class sharing the benefits and countless opportunities made available through Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. (FAITC). FAITC, funded by the sales of the agriculture specialty license plate, more commonly known as the "ag tag," has raised the development agenda in Florida classrooms as there is growing concern both in Florida and worldwide that young people have become disenchanted with agriculture.

Agriculture industry volunteers are strongly encouraged to spread the word about the resources available, around \$300,000 in grant opportunities and award programs through FAITC with all Florida teachers. Florida had an outstanding grassroots network of 1,593 volunteers that reached 63,000 students on Ag Literacy Day 2013 that focused on Florida's farm history. Through awareness of UF/IFAS extension, 4-H agents, farmers, gardeners, agri-science educators and volunteers, myself included, agricultural concepts have been integrated into the curriculum of students in kindergarten through 12th grade. It is vital that our youth understand where and how food is grown and where the materials in clothing and our homes come from, rather than only where it can be purchased and most importantly that farmers should be appreciated. Florida Agriculture Literacy Day is scheduled for April 29 with a working title of Florida Farms at School. We hope you will join us in the classroom.

Competitive position of Florida citrus



by Cathy Atchley
On Point Ag

What comes to mind when you hear the word citrus? Do you picture a tall glass of orange juice filled with nutrients to start your day? Or the rows and rows of Fresh from Florida pieces of fruit glistening in the sun? Truth be told, I'd never put much thought into the various marketing directions between segments in our citrus industry. I probably assumed that any citrus business was good business!

Before ending day three in Maitland, our class met with Peter Chaires. As the director of association services for FFVA, executive vice president of Florida Citrus Packers, and executive director of New Varieties Development and Management Corporation (NVDMC), Peter wears many hats. While introducing Florida Citrus Packers, Peter taught us that "fresh" is their business. Of course; it makes perfect sense: Florida Citrus "Packers" are marketing a fresh

piece of fruit. I guess I'd gotten caught up in the voice of Tom Selleck selling me that glass of orange juice, or maybe I found nostalgia in the hand reaching through the grocery store juice aisle straight to the farmer's juice stand.

Peter discussed the challenges citrus packers face with food safety compliance, regulatory issues and diseases. With eyes wide open now, I continued to ponder the complexities of marketing fresh versus processed, and even branding and marketing within our industry.

Luckily, advances in research and technology help growers face the challenges getting to market. Peter taught us about the NVDMC evaluating, licensing and bringing new varieties into use, along with the goals and opportunities of new varieties. Easy peel, "lunch box" specialties have a chance to knock off bananas as the number one convenience fruit. It's been done before, even if only for one quarter!

Finally, we learned about the Fast Track program for growers to participate in early trialing and evaluation of experimental varieties. When this program is embraced in the field, it can significantly shorten the length of time from development to commercial field operation, taking only three to five years versus 15.

We met lots of great people in Maitland. Thanks to Peter, and all, for sharing your knowledge and helping prepare the Emerging Leader Development Program Class 3. Our industry truly is competitive, complex and evolving.



Daniel Cavazos, Jeff Goodale and Sam Glucksman delivered food to the Belle Glade RCMA Center.



What's your true color?



by Sam Glucksman
Glades Crop Care, Inc.

Dr. Hannah Carter, director of the Wedgworth Leadership Institute, challenged our group in a series of personality and leadership exercises. We discussed the importance of understanding personality types and how our own personalities affect our work and personal relationships. Dr. Carter defined leadership and the skills necessary for a person to become a successful leader.

The evaluation took about five minutes, and labeled us with a color that represents one of four personality categories. Learning our "color" (personality) allowed us to realize how we can best communicate and relate to people with other colors. We reviewed how we see ourselves and how other people might view our behavior. I personally recognized several tendencies that have become habit, which may be affecting my work and personal relationships. This was extremely beneficial and crucial to developing the skills necessary to become a successful leader.

What is a leader? This seems like a simple question to answer; however several definitions exist. John Quincy Adams defined leadership as, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." We went in depth describing the skills thought necessary for a successful leader to have. The ability to manage change, inspire commitment and strategic planning were some of the top skills mentioned. W. Edwards Deming said it best in my opinion, "It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory." The class was then able to collectively discuss what we described leadership as. I thought the best explanation of leadership that Dr. Carter provided was the ability of a person to influence individuals or a group of people in a particular direction.

To say this session was enlightening would be a gross understatement. All of the exercises, information and discussion will allow the class to grow our leadership skills and strengthen our relationships. Our take home message from Dr. Carter was most appropriately stated, "learn and lead."



Dr. Hannah Carter facilitated personality and leadership exercises that got class members thinking about how they function personally and how that can impact the way they work with others.





FFVA President Mike Stuart and Chief Financial Officer Alan Hair spent time with the class going over FFVA history and operations information. Stuart also gave the class an in-depth look at the current happenings in Washington, D.C.

No shortage of things to talk about



by Matt Stacey
Crop Production Services

During our trip to FFVA headquarters President Mike Stuart presented our class with an insider look at the current issues from Washington, D.C.

Due to the nature of checks and balances that construct our government, long periods of time may pass where progress seems limited. However, approximately one and a half years ago rumblings began to surface in Washington, D.C. about the possibility of taking on immigration reform. Immigration reform is a polarizing issue for both political parties and has a huge impact on Florida agriculture. Also, the five-year Farm Bill is coming to a conclusion and the Food Safety Modernization Act appears to be gaining traction. The Food Safety Modernization Act will have major implications on Florida agriculture, especially our fresh fruit and vegetable markets.

An interesting statistic was brought to the attention of the class. In the 1980s there was a poll taken among the most liberal Republicans and the most conservative Democrats in Washington, D.C. The poll found that 324 members of Congress considered themselves moderate.

Today that number is 12. So when a contentious issue like immigration is brought to the forefront of our democratic process, there is naturally a great deal of gridlock and polarity.

Sticking with the topic of immigration, during the 2008 presidential election, 30 percent of the eligible voting Hispanic population voted for George W. Bush. Fast forward to the 2012 election - that number fell to 11 percent for Mitt Romney. So I feel it is safe to say that the Republicans have a challenge on their hands in restoring their image among the Hispanic voting population, while the Democratic Party continues to jockey for position to stay in favor.

"So how does this directly affect Florida agriculture?" Mike asked. As border security continues to tighten, the birthrate of Hispanics in Mexico is trending down to match the birthrate of the United States. These two factors, combined with gridlock in D.C. over immigration reform, creates a challenging dynamic. "A prudent question a loan officer might ask at a bank would be 'Do you have the labor secured to harvest your crop?'" Mike said. The take-home message was clearly understood by the class - this issue needs attention as soon as possible.

There appears to be pressure in Washington, D.C. to make progress on immigration reform between now and March. However, with a Republican House combined with mid-term elections of President Obama's second term, the task is fairly daunting to get completed in that timeframe. As 2013 ended the focus turned to 2014 mid-term elections, which can have a significant effect on policy making. There are hopes to make significant progress on immigration reform between now and March, but with

the vast divide between parties, progress is an elusive goal.

Mike is also spending a good amount of time on the Farm Bill through his role as co-chairman of the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance. Fruit and vegetable growers, landscape growers and processed fruit growers all come together under this banner. This role allows him to drive programs in the Farm Bill for specialty crop producers throughout the United States. The Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance was highly successful in 2008 developing a series of programs that help producers be more competitive in their respective commodity markets. This includes two different grant programs: the Specialty Crop Research Initiative which deals with big ticket, multi-million dollar research items such as robotics, and the State Block Grant Program which deals with modest ticket items in the \$75,000 to \$150,000 range such as IFAS programs, tax-specific issues and needs per state and finding new varieties for producers.

Lastly, food safety laws are focusing pretty strongly on fruit and vegetable production in the United States. The Food Safety Modernization Act is a large undertaking and the effects of this act are not likely to be known for several years in the future.



One step at a time for Florida tomatoes



by Clayton Norman
DuPont Crop Protection

In November our class had the opportunity to receive an industry update from Reggie Brown, the executive vice president of the Florida Tomato Exchange.

Mr. Brown is clearly an advocate for the tomato industry in Florida and well qualified to represent all industry issues and needs after having spent time farming in North Florida, working as an extension agent and proudly being in the United States Marine Corps. With tomatoes being a half-billion dollar industry in Florida, Brown's position is pretty important. He gave us a great history lesson of what the tomato industry in Florida was at one time, and what it is today. He discussed the hard times with NAFTA in the 1990s, and how that has changed our industry as we know it. If you consider at one time the cost to grow tomatoes per acre was roughly \$3,500 versus today's standard of \$10,000, your heart sinks a bit, especially when the prices per box have not changed much. Even with a decrease in the 50,000 acres that were once planted to today's 30,000 acres, we are still the largest tomato-producing state of the U.S.

Brown also talked about the effect the Florida tomato industry is dealing with due to the Mexican imports into the United States. Mexico is growing tomatoes in greenhouses at more times of the year with cheaper input costs, mainly labor. The breaking point for our industry came in the 2010 and 2011 seasons when a 25-pound box of tomatoes got down to \$4 to \$6. During that time Brown teamed with others to make sure the tomato industry survived in Florida. Today Brown is optimistic that with recent agreements in place, we are looking at a floor price of \$8 at which Mexico has to sell their imported tomatoes and while this isn't the best situation for the Florida grower, it is definitely a step in the right direction.

A key point I also took away from meeting with Brown was the fact that it is very

important for our industry to educate the general public on just what it is we do. We are regulated by the government on inputs, water, labor, etc. more than any other country; therefore, the message is buy U.S. produce!

Brown left us with this message at the end. "If you think about a salad, there are a lot of friends of the tomato in that bowl, but the sensitivity around the tomato seems to be more obvious than the rest." I relate this to a father saying, "Anything great worth doing will be tough, if it wasn't everyone would do it."

Foundation is making strides for growers



by Geoff Roe
Wm. G. Roe & Sons

During our trip to FFVA's office we had a chance to learn more about the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation, managed by Sonia Tighe. It has three areas of focus: research, education and philanthropy. The strategic goals are to conduct research and education initiatives that will serve as major contributions to long-term sustainability of Florida specialty crop producers, enhance the lives of children of those working in the specialty crop industry, and of young people pursuing careers in ag, to develop fundraising strategies to be financially secure and to increase awareness of Foundation goals, activities and accomplishments.

The Foundation can primarily help growers through the development of block grants. Theses block grants filter down from the federal Farm Bill to the state block grant pool and are appropriated through the Commissioner of Agriculture. The Foundation ultimately assists in the writing of proposals so that researchers are able to secure block grant funding. The Foundation is already working with 16 research projects for the 2014 block grant program.

Kids in the Kitchen is a 2013 funded block grant that educates Florida's K-12 school children on the importance of nutrition and

at the same time increases the consumption of Florida produce. The program not only helps growers, but also enhances the lives of children. While it serves a dual purpose for the Foundation and is a block grant that Mrs. Tighe is passionate about, the support of the Redlands Christian Migrant Association is the Foundation's primary source of community outreach. The Foundation teams up with RCMA on its Christmas card program each year. In this program children produce art, which is transformed into Christmas cards for customers to purchase. In 2012 this program raised around \$30,000 for RCMA.

Additionally, the Foundation manages the George F. Sorn Scholarship fund, providing college scholarships for children of farmworkers.

The Foundation receives funding primarily through donations, its annual golf tournament and benefit auction. Currently the Foundation is conducting a matching funds challenge, in which donations will be matched dollar for dollar by both FFVA and the FFVA Mutual Insurance Company (up to a total of \$25,000 each.)

Fertilizer industry focused on helping farmers



by Jeff Goodale
Duda Farm Fresh Foods

During our November visit to FFVA the class had the opportunity to hear from Joe Hodges of The Andersons, Inc. Mr. Hodges is the Vice President of the Southern Region for the Plant Nutrient Group of The Andersons, Inc. He was able to spend about an hour and a half with us giving insight into The Andersons, Inc. company as well as some of the initiatives in which the company is involved.

Mr. Hodges explained that The Andersons Company, which was founded in 1947, is a diversified company operating in both the U.S. and international markets. They operate within six distinct agriculturally based busi-



ness groups which are grain, ethanol, plant nutrient, rail, turf and specialty and retail. He gave the class a quick overview of each of the business groups but then focused extra time discussing the plant nutrient group. He spent a good portion of his time describing some efforts that the plant nutrient group is involved in to help educate the general public and school age children about fertilizers and their use in agriculture today. He expressed the value of educating these groups to help them understand where our food comes from and how farmers are able to feed the world. He shared a number of materials as well as some short video clips that the group is using to help promote this educational program. He referenced nutrientsforlife.com as the place to find more information.

Another project The Andersons, Inc. is involved in is the 4R Nutrient Stewardship and Management program (nutrientstewardship.com). This program is focused on helping farmers make the right choices on what, when, where and how much fertilizer to apply. He is hopeful that the 4R program will help farmers increase production and profitability while enhancing environmental protection and sustainability.

Mr. Hodges' time with the class helped us to appreciate how crucial the fertilizer industry and the farming community are to each other.

Ensuring a voice for ag in Florida water wars



by Jordan Theis
Prudential Agricultural Investments

Water. It is far and away the most valuable resource on the planet, but often times it is treated as if it has no value at all. It is a resource that affects every facet of the agricultural industry, but also the daily lives of every Floridian. Without proper water management, the Florida ag industry would be severely crippled. The public and farmers are the two largest consumers of water in the state, but there are numerous other stakeholders in the water debate ranging from environmental groups to golf courses. Yet with so many different voices clamoring for water, how is it possible to ensure that Florida farmers get a fair shake at the table? Donning the mantle of "agriculture protector" is Kerry Kates. As the FFVA's director of water and natural resources, Mr. Kates is a vital voice for Florida agriculture and works to ensure that the best

interest of Florida farmers are fairly represented. He serves as a bridge between Florida growers and the governmental agencies.

When the real estate boom swept the state in the mid-2000s many citrus groves were plowed over and turned into subdivisions. Certain water management districts got swept up in the frenzy and were quick to write off the future water needs of the citrus industry. As a result many citrus growers found their water allocations were woefully inadequate for their actual consumptive needs. Kates went to bat for the industry, meeting with water management officials and patiently explaining that citrus growers needed more water allocation to compensate for the losses that had occurred during the real estate boom.

Other times, agricultural water usage comes under fire from the press. In January 2010 a three-day freeze in Central Florida forced strawberry growers to pump more water to try and protect their crop. News organizations were quick to blame agriculture for sinkholes that appeared around Central Florida. Kates attempted to alleviate the situation from the grower side by reviewing the water permitting process and helping farmers obtain appropriate Consumptive Use Permits. Another important function of the FFVA water and natural resources division is the all-out effort to get farmers to enroll in FDACS' Best Management Practices (BMP) program. Having a BMP program is compulsory in those parts of the state which have implemented Basin Management Action Plans and could help farmers avoid potential lawsuits while also making them eligible for certain water-quality and water-conservation based cost-share programs.

Although it can often be a Sisyphus-like task, Kates and the FFVA Water and Natural Resource Division is working for the Florida farmers representing their interests.



Kerry Kates, director of water and natural resources, gave the class an overview of the current state of Florida's water policy.



Special thanks to the Florida's Natural Growers Foundation for presenting FFVA's Emerging Leader Development Program with a \$1,500 grant to support the upcoming South Florida production trip. The primary goal of the Florida's Natural Growers Foundation is to support the local area where their grower members are located. They distribute the proceeds from the Florida's Natural Growers Charity Classic held in March, Citrus World, Inc. and individual donors. They give 100% of the funds back to the communities of Central Florida. On the January trip, the ELDP's current class will be joined by the Western Growers Association Future Volunteer Leaders.



Congratulations to current class member Sam Glucksman and Jacqui Chaquaceda on their marriage that took place December 21, 2013.

The class travels to South Florida to tour agricultural operations during their next session. Look for those stories in the next issue.

ELDP ALUMNI

. . . updates from Class 1 & 2



Michael Hill

Brooke and I welcomed Claire Marie Hill (all pictured above) on December 17, 2013, at 12:01 p.m. She weighed 7 lbs. 2 oz. and was 19 inches long and is as cute as a bug. She is healthy and we are so blessed and thankful.

Adam Trott

I am staying busy at work. Rabo recently hired and would like to welcome Charlie Hurst, Stacy McCullough and Ben Gibson.

Amber Kosinsky

Wish Farms will be hosting a strawberry picking challenge charity event February 7 and 8. We are excited to announce that Bright House Networks, parent company of Bay News 9, will be the presenting sponsor. All proceeds will benefit the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA).

We are partnering with Radio Disney to provide onsite entertainment and commercial air time promoting the event.

The Florida Strawberry Festival and Florida Strawberry Growers Association are also sponsors and will be participating in Saturday's festivities which are open to the general public.

**Tom Mitchell**

In November I traveled to Japan alongside Governor Rick Scott on a weeklong trade mission. I was presented with the Governor's Business Ambassador Award along with three other industry representatives (pictured above).

Jennifer Hodges

I was able to take some time and do some fishing in Louisiana recently (below).

**Rachel Walters**

The Walters family poses for their Christmas card photo (below).

