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Introduction: FFVA 2014

EMERGING TIMES

... growing toward the future

Emerging leaders embark on yearlong program at FFVA 2014



Class 4 (left to right): John Alderman (Duda Farm Fresh Foods), Shine Taylor (DuPont Crop Protection), Dustin Grooms (Fancy Farms, Inc.), Paul Miller (Pioneer Growers Co-op), Meghan Pasken (Glades Crop Care), John Beuttenmuller (Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc.), Nathan Decker (Monsanto), Matt Griffin (Lipman Produce), Teddy McAvoy (SynTech Research, Inc.), Dan Bott (Premier Citrus Management).



The fourth class of the Emerging Leader Development Program was introduced to FFVA's membership at FFVA 2014. This was the first stop in their yearlong program that will include sessions in Tallahassee with legislators, issues seminars at FFVA's main office and visits to agricultural

operations in both Florida and California.

The program is designed to provide participants with the education and tools to become effective advocates for specialty crop agriculture.



Commissioner Putnam: It begins with the land and ends with the plate



by John Alderman
Duda Farm Fresh Foods

Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam was introduced with a warm welcome to kick off FFVA's 71st Annual Convention in Naples. Putnam's "State of the Industry" address touched on many aspects of the steps that we've taken as an industry to become more successful and what we need to do to continue that success. He opened by announcing that FFVA had joined the Fresh From Florida program so its members would now receive the benefits it offers. Putnam then discussed the successes of Fresh From Florida and its outlook for the future.

Hunger and nutrition in the United States -- and in Florida -- are issues that Putnam and his staff are passionate about. "The discussion of hunger in the United States is a discussion about distribution," he said. "It's a discussion about logistics. It's a discussion of access. It is not a discussion about scarcity." He explained that the rest of the world discusses hunger issues from the perspective of access to food. For Americans, thanks to the American farmer, the issue is simply navigating the barriers to get the public access to healthy foods.

The commissioner also updated the industry on water. He explained how the issue affects every Floridian and their industries. Putnam said he gives the same speech, no matter who the audience, regarding Florida's water issues. "Florida has long-term water issues that we have to address," he said, adding that we must have a comprehensive approach to our water problems. The approach has to be long term and it has to be regional to recognize that every watershed in our state has different challenges. Policies have to be flexible to accommodate Florida's volatile weather patterns. There are many challenges that the industry will face in the coming year regarding water policies, some of which are



During FFVA's State of the Industry Update, Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam announced that all producer members of FFVA will now be members of the Fresh From Florida program.

the EPA's definitions of navigable waters, the definition of lands that are seasonally wet, and the passing of Amendment 1. Amendment 1 would require 33 percent of documentary stamp revenues to be spent on land and water conservation programs. In the first year, this would put \$600 million toward land and water conservation.

The industry continues to focus on pest and diseases that affect our crops, Putnam said. There is optimism in the citrus industry regarding citrus greening. "There's an awful lot of work being done on it. There's a lot of money being spent. It's a race against the clock," he said. The Farm Bill and the state continue to be supportive through funds and initiatives to fight greening. The concern to protect and save Florida's \$9 billion citrus industry is paramount.

FFVA honors many at awards luncheon



by Teddy McAvoy
SynTech Research, Inc.

The awards luncheon began with an introduction by Tony DiMare, vice president of DiMare Inc., and the installation of new chairman Alan Temple and vice chairman Paul Orsenigo. Plaques and flowers for years of service were awarded to outgoing Chairman Keith Mixon and his wife, Marie. Also honored for her commitment to the industry was Karen Stuart, wife of FFVA President Mike Stuart. The outgoing



chairman offered his reflections on the past year and the future of FFVA.

A major highlight of the awards luncheon was a mini-concert featuring the children of the Redlands Christian Migrant Association charter school choir. Renditions included popular classical music pieces by Beethoven, Schumann and Haydn. The children finished their performance with "Grand Old Flag." The choir received a standing ovation for the performance.

ELDP Program Director Sonia Tighe presented the program's graduating class. Members of Class 3 of the ELDP thanked DuPont for its sponsorship, the FFVA staff, and their employers for allowing them to participate in the program. A video review highlighted the trip to California and its visit to Tallahassee to meet with legislators. Members of Class 3 discussed how the program exceeded their expectations and assisted their understanding of FFVA as an organization. Jeff Goodale spoke on behalf of the class about the merits of participation in the program and diversity of the participants that the program brought together from all aspects of agriculture.

Numerous awards were presented, including scholarships as well as legislator, researcher and merchandiser awards. Two recipients of the George Sorn scholarships were announced as well. They are Sebastian Garcia, who is attending the University of Central Florida to study engineering, and Anita Munoz Trejo, who is at Florida Gulf Coast University studying nutrition. Butch Calhoun presented the Legislator of the Year awards to Rep. Jake Raburn and Sen. Denise Grimsley. Researcher of the Year award was presented to Dr. Lukasz Stelinski of UF-IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred, who was recognized for his work on low-volume sprays for the management of the Asian citrus psyllid. The Merchandiser of the Year award was presented to Winn-Dixie for its continued support of Florida agriculture.

At the conclusion of the awards luncheon, Class 4 of the ELDP was introduced to the association and longtime FFVA members were recognized for their years of membership.



A choir from a local RCMA center performed several songs during the Awards Luncheon.



This year's benefit auction featured baskets created by each ELDP class in a competition for the highest bid.



Rep. Ben Albritton was the featured speaker at the ELDP reception.



Current class member Matt Griffin and FFAA President Mary Hartney get to know each other between Issues Forums.

Defining the ultimate customer



by Matt Griffin
Lipman Produce

Local, sustainable, organic and healthy options are without a doubt on the ever-growing list of industry buzz words.

Rich Dachman of Sysco Inc. and Reggie Griffin of Reggie Griffin Enterprises provided their insight into these and other trends that are shaping the marketplace. Many of the trends are being fueled by consumers' desire to have a more in-depth knowledge of the food we're eating from field to fine dining.

Dachman said that today's consumers, fueled by technology and social media, are looking for more than just a quick ordinary meal. They are driven by the desire for a healthy, pleasurable dining experience.

Roughly half or more of meals are consumed away from the household dining table. So it's no surprise that many of the trends that pop up come from other establishments like high-end restaurants. Their effects trickle down to casual/fast dining establishments and eventually into homes. The faster pace of society has led to a need to accommodate this behavior. This is evident in the evolving of food packages, online grocery/food orders and healthy vending.

Griffin classified this new breed of consumer as the "ultimate customer," which has redefined the way agri-businesses do business. Ultimate customers can't easily be defined because they transcend mere ethnic, cultural, religious, age groups, socio-economic classes and other boundaries, he said.

I believe the future is bright for Florida producers and agriculturalists nationwide. As consumers demand healthier options and information regarding food, we have the opportunity to share our products to satisfy their demand, as well as cultivate a better-educated clientele.



Calhoun: Get to know your legislators



by Dan Bott
Premier Citrus Management

Butch Calhoun, FFVA director of government relations, addressed Class 4 to explain the intricacies of working with legislators in Tallahassee on bills that affect Florida agriculture. He also discussed the elections and future political issues the agricultural industry faces.

2013 was very a good year for passed legislation that benefited agriculture industry, he said, but it was difficult getting any bills through the Legislature in the 2014 session. He also expressed the importance of the Nov. 4 election because of the Constitutional Revision Commission.

This commission will include 15 appointments as well as the chairman of the commission by the next governor. It will have the power to change the Florida Constitution, including the number of elected Cabinet-level positions such as Commissioner of Agriculture, potentially making it as well as other Cabinet positions appointed rather than elected.

Calhoun stressed the importance of Florida Supreme Court appointments by the next governor. He added that the next Legislature will have to pass statutes to manage the EPA's proposed Waters of the U.S. rule that would result in excessive regulation of farm canal systems and seasonally wet areas.

He summarized his remarks by emphasizing the importance of communicating with our lawmakers to stress issues that are important to us and our industry. Legislators may not know how important issues are if they aren't informed. He also noted that to be a good lobbyist in Tallahassee your word has to be what you stand for.

Halperin provides insight on world of politics



by Nathan Decker
Monsanto

The Cracker Breakfast has become an FFVA convention tradition. This year's keynote speaker, political journalist Mark Halperin, gave us his witty insight on the hot topics in today's political world. He discussed President Obama's administration, the mid-term elections, and the 2016 presidential race.

Halperin started off sounding very optimistic about Obama's administration. He praised him as a president with great plans for the country and a desire to solve many of the challenges facing our country and Washington. Halperin noted that in a short amount of time the president made great strides to pass large, meaningful pieces of legislation. He cited universal

health care, a much-needed stimulus package, legislation that saved our American auto industry, and re-regulated the financial sector. The misconception about these achievements, he said, is that Obama got the legislation passed without Republican support. Not only did Obama fail to change the culture in Washington, Halperin noted, he didn't reduce the deficit and delayed immigration reform. Halperin pointed out that essentially five out of the president's eight years in office went by without him passing a single piece of significant legislation.

In the mid-term elections, it looks to be a great year for Republicans, he said. Republicans need six seats to regain majority in the Senate, which is likely, and Republicans will retain the House.

In the presidential race, the Republican Party has many possible candidates, but Halperin said he couldn't recall a time when there has not been a front-runner in place by mid-term elections. He named potential candidates as Gov. Chris Christie, U.S. Congressman Paul Ryan, Mitt Romney, and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. He added that it could be a very tough race for the Republicans if Hillary Clinton decides to run.



Class 4 members enjoyed participating in Friday's activities at FFVA 2014. Shine Taylor and Dan Bott were members of the first place team at this year's golf tournament and Meghan Pasken and her husband Nick fished with Bill Roe.



Water and the 2014 election: What should we expect?



by John Beuttenmuller
Florida Foundation
Seed Producers, Inc.

Convention attendees got timely updates on water policy and 2014 elections. Rich Budell, director of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Office of Agricultural Water Policy, started off with an overview of Florida's three main water issues: supply, quality and conservation.

Water supply is one of the most important issues to agriculture. Agricultural users will continue to face challenges in accessing water. Fortunately, recent legislative changes in Florida will allow for more consistency in water policy throughout the state. Water management districts will work with need and use projections to project the demand for water over time. If shortfalls are projected, districts are to identify alternative water supply projects, and there is financial support for these projects from the Legislature. The Central Florida Water Initiative is an example of a regional water supply project that involves the cooperation of three water management districts.

Conservation is another important issue that impacts both urban and agricultural wa-

ter users. Agricultural water users have been very successful in conserving water, as agricultural demand growth for water has been relatively flat over the past decade. Budell indicated that it will be hard for Florida to continue to rely on conservation to address increases in agricultural water use demands over time.

Regarding water quality, FDACS has seen excellent participation in its agricultural best management practices programs, with 4.4 million agricultural acres enrolled in at least one BMP program. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection maintains a total maximum daily loads program. TMDLs are the maximum amount of a given pollutant that a specific water body can absorb and still meet the water quality standards that protect human health and aquatic life. Once these TMDLs are determined, Basin Management Action Plans are established to implement strategies and actions to restore impaired waters to meet the TMDLs. The BMP programs are essential for agricultural producers to be in compliance with the basin plans. Producers who are enrolled in BMP programs have, by default, met the requirements for BMPs.

David Childs of Hopping, Green & Sams gave an overview of water legislation that could have significant impacts on agriculture. The Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative, known as Amendment 1, would re-allocate documentary stamp tax revenues for the purchase of land and for projects that would lead to the restoration of natural systems and enhance public access and recreational use of conservation lands. It is expected that this amendment would set aside \$10 billion over the next 20 years. Legislation

would be necessary to determine how these funds could be spent. At the federal level, "Waters of the U.S." is a proposed rule that would broaden the range of water bodies that fall under EPA jurisdiction. This rule would bring canals, ditches, and stormwater systems under federal oversight. Many feel this rule change is overreach by the EPA, and the implications are very large for agriculture.

Ryan Tyson, vice president of political operations for Associated Industries of Florida, gave a spirited presentation on the upcoming elections and trends on the voter population in Florida. Generally speaking, as the voter population gets younger, the percentage of those who identify with the Democratic Party is stable, the Republican Party is shrinking, and the third party is growing. The number of Hispanic voters has continued to increase, and Tyson said this voter base is the most significant segment since Baby Boomers, as it is the only portion of the electorate that is growing. Tyson indicated that younger voters, Hispanic voters, African American voters, and unmarried women voters typically do not turn out to the polls as strongly during mid-term elections as in presidential election years. These voter bases have been very influential in the past two Democratic victories in presidential elections, so a weak turnout from these bases this year could mean a successful election cycle for the Republican Party if its voters turn out, he said.



The 16th annual Benefit Auction raised \$26,125 for the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation. The funds will help support the ELDP, Sorn scholarships and RCMA among other causes.



Health care reform: Where are things now?



by Dustin Grooms
Fancy Farms, Inc.

Anytime you have an attorney opening a session, you know it will be complex and of the utmost importance. In one of the Issues Forums at the FFVA convention, that was exactly the case. Sheldon Blumling of Fisher and Phillips kicked things off with where things are now concerning health care reform. There have been so many changes and setbacks, and Blumling's goal was to help us understand the options available.

As a grower, I was hoping for more delays. However, Blumling said it will become effective in January 2015. There are several transition rules which employers will have to dissect. Generally, these rules include determining how many full-time employees are on staff, the average amount of hours for these full-time employees over a selected period, and determining whether employees fall under the definition of "seasonal employee." Any person working six months or less will be considered a seasonal employee. The break-in-service period has been reduced from 26 to 13 weeks, which may help some. Unfortunately, for those employers who use the H-2A program, the IRS declined to grant special exemptions.

Also presenting were Angie Vitale, vice president of human resources of BB&T, and Andrew Fox, employee benefits consultant at BB&T. Vitale informed us that Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) was new and not clearly defined. It is not traditional health care, but rather a minimal policy. She also stated that there will be two different penalties given if employers are not fully compliant with health care regulations for their businesses. A \$2,000 per employee penalty will be assessed when an employer declines to offer coverage to full-time employees who meet the appropriate criteria. The second penalty is a \$3,000-per-employee fine that will be imposed on employers who offer coverage to only some employees while the other employees seek out other coverage. Employers must offer at least minimally essential coverage to their employees. According to Fox, an MEC plan is an option to avoid those penalties. He also discussed trends in the marketplace nationally, within Florida, and most importantly agriculture.

Congratulations to Class 3 members who completed their program at FFVA 2014 with a graduation ceremony at the Awards Luncheon.



Class 3 (left to right): Laura Svec (representing sustaining sponsor, DuPont Crop Protection), Jordan Theis, Geoff Roe, Clayton Norman, Jamie Lang, Jeff Goodale, Sam Glucksman, Daniel Cavazos, Elton Baldy, Ryan Atwood, Cathy Atchley and Sonia Tighe (program director). Not pictured, Matt Stacey.

Class 4 meets for its second session in November. Look for those stories in the next issue.

ELDP ALUMNI

... updates from Class 1, 2, 3 & 4



Jennifer Hodges

Congratulations to Jennifer Hodges and Adam Lytch, who got engaged while in Ireland to see the UCF vs. Penn State game. They are planning a March 21, 2015, wedding in North Carolina. Adam noted that they actually met at an FFVA convention!

Shine Taylor

Samuel Andrew Taylor was born October 8 weighing in at 8 pounds 12 ounces and 21 inches long. Both Sam and mother, Kate, are doing well.



Michael Hill

Michael Hill (left) updated the Florida Blueberry Growers Association on his recent trade mission trip to Colombia, finding good opportunities for Florida blueberries there.



Daniel Cavazos

During a recent parent meeting Daniel attended at the Belle Glade RCMA center, the ELDP was met with a huge round of applause and thanks for the efforts made during last year's food drive.



Derek Orsenigo

Derek Orsenigo (left) recently spoke to attendees of the Conservation in Action Tour hosted by The Conservation Technology Information Center. Derek said that he and other growers in the EAA were proud to host the group and showcase the work they've done to protect the environment and grow the food that fills America's plates.



Ian Bessell and Amber Kosinsky

Both Class 2 participants (left) were recognized at PMA Fresh Summit for being part of Produce Business Magazine's 40 under 40.

Thomas Dalton and Lee Ann Hinton Coleman

Thomas Dalton (right) and Lee Ann Hinton Coleman (left) participated in the FFVA/PAC clay shoot hosted by FishHawk Sporting Clays in Lithia, Fla.

Sam Glucksman

Sam Glucksman was recently accepted as a Featured Member in the Covington Who's Who 2014 Registry. This honor is reserved for members who have demonstrated leadership and achievement in their chosen profession.

Cathy Atchley

In the short amount of time since convention Cathy has been matched with a "little sister" and officially began volunteering with the Big Brothers, Big Sisters program. Their mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-on-one relationships that change their lives for the better.

