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Tallahassee

# EMERGING TIMES

*... growing toward the future*

## Leaders and FFVA board get a close-up look at Tallahassee



Class 4 on the steps of the historic Capitol.

Water legislation and Amendment 1 spending dominated the conversations in Tallahassee among legislators and members of FFVA's board of directors and Class 4 of the Emerging Leader program. The groups participated in FFVA's annual "drive-in" to the state capital to voice growers' concerns to lawmakers.

The agenda was packed with back-to-back meetings with members of both houses. The group also met with Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, and Jon Stevenson, the new secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection. Rich Budell of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Office of Water Policy also talked with the group about the department's budget needs this year.

Several of the elected officials commended the participants for making the trip to discuss their

concerns. Rep. Tom Goodson encouraged the group to stay involved with FFVA. "Don't rest or you'll get run over," he said. "Keep working on the issues and don't rest." Goodson acknowledged the challenges of the political process these days. "Anytime you have compromise, you have better government. When you have a supermajority you run over people, and when it swings the other way you'll be eating something other than doughnuts," he said.

Rep. Halsey Beshears, a Tallahassee nursery owner, told the group, "I'm glad you're taking the time to be up here. You don't realize the impact you have when you come and talk to legislators."

The group also heard from lobbyist Mary Ann Gosa Hooks on the outlook for UF/IFAS' budget priorities. They have requested \$5.5 million "to put out the work product to serve our clientele through research and extension," she said.





## Calhoun's preview sets the tone for the trip



by Dan Bott  
Premier Citrus Management

Butch Calhoun, FFVA's director of government relations, provided a legislative overview before we began our meetings with lawmakers to discuss important bills that have been introduced for the 2015 Florida legislative session.

Calhoun gave the group an overview of the structure of the Legislature, which is composed of 120 members of the House of Representatives and 40 senators. The speaker of the House of Representatives and Senate president are elected by their prospective members. After their election, the speaker and Senate president assign committee appointments.

Proposed legislation must be drafted two months before session and filed no later than noon on opening day. All bills must pass through committee before they can move to the floor of either chamber. FFVA priorities for the 2015 session are water policy, Amendment 1 funding, ag sales tax exemptions, the UF/IFAS budget, the FDACS budget, assessments on non-residential farm buildings, liability protection for gleaning, commercial vehicle review board, property rights, agritourism, melon hauling vehicles, and fire code for assemblies in farm buildings.

Calhoun summed up his address to Class 4 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 we don't tell them. He also reiterated that to be a good lobbyist in Tallahassee, your word has to be what you stand for.

## District's diversity brings challenges



by Nathan Decker  
Monsanto

Rep. Holly Raschein comes from one of the state's most diverse districts, District 120. It includes all of the beautiful Florida Keys and southern Miami/Dade County. It is a unique district because there is tourism and a major city on one end and agriculture on the other. Yet that diversity can also be a challenge.

Raschein is facing a couple of issues now, but the main one is funding. After the collapse of the housing market in 2008, funding has been a major concern across the state. Property taxes are a main revenue source of the state and without a strong housing market, state-funded programs suffer. Luckily, the jobs and housing market have picked up in recent years so the economy in Florida is gaining strength. And according to Raschein, her district is an expensive district to operate with some expensive projects to fund. One is a \$50 million project to fund a Florida Keys wastewater system. Raschein also is dealing with a lack of workforce housing. In the next five years, she projects the need for 6,000 new workers/jobs, and there is not housing to supply the expected demand.

FFVA's Butch Calhoun pointed out that Raschein was a sponsor of the first agritourism bill here in Florida. She is keeping an eye on how Amendment 1, the Land and Water and Land Conservation Amendment, plays out. This bill has the potential to affect every district and could greatly impact agriculture. She made it clear that she supports Calhoun, and she supports agriculture.

## Edwards a bridge between parties on ag



by Teddy McAvoy

State Rep. Katie Edwards of District 98, which encompasses areas of southern Broward County, met with the FFVA board members and our leadership class during our visit to the Florida State Capitol in Tallahassee. A Democrat, Edwards is an attorney by trade and serves on several committees, including the Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee (she is the Democratic ranking member), Health and Human Services Committee, Higher Education and Workforce Subcommittee and Judiciary Committee.

In the current legislative session, Edwards introduced a property rights bill to curb overzealous, anti-business municipalities from abusing their power. The bill issues guidelines for staff to follow pertaining to property rights issues. In addition, the bill allows property owners to challenge unconstitutional government actions.

Edwards is a bridge between Democrats and Republicans for the agriculture industry. She is a supporter of agriculture and its benefits to the economy and the state. Much of this year's focus in the Legislature is on the Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative Amendment, which voters passed in 2014. Edwards cautioned that releasing more water from Lake Okeechobee could be a potential hazard for flooding in her region and that a plan to prevent flooding was needed with the water policy. She also encouraged participation of young leaders such as our group in the political process.





## Rep. Tom Goodson: Walk with a big stick



by John Alderman  
Duda Farm Fresh Foods

After breakfast, the group met with Rep. Tom Goodson, chairman of Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee. Goodson is a Republican representing District 50, which encompasses part of the Space Coast. He lives in Titusville. Butch Calhoun introduced the representative as a “world class” turkey hunter and gave a little example of how he likes to fire a warning shot before taking the real shot. We had the impression that Butch and Goodson have a very good working relationship.

He explained that the water policies we discussed at breakfast with Rep. Matt Caldwell would be a very important issue for the folks in the room to take interest in. “What you know of the policy, please be aware that it will not be same when it comes back from the Senate. So I would suggest that you stay tuned.” Goodson went on to explain that the proposed GMO bill will most likely not even be heard in the House and would be a dead issue. He added, “This would be another layer of bureaucracy that would hinder your production and hinder what you do.” He explained that our water issues and demand are not going away and used Lake Lanier and other parts of the Georgia basin as a never-ending struggle that is water policy. Goodson stressed the importance of staying involved in the issues that are important to you and also staying involved in your trade organizations, stating, “If you don’t stay involved in your association, you will get run over.”



Rep. Jennifer Sullivan of District 31 addressed the group prior to dinner. Sullivan is the youngest woman elected to the Florida House of Representatives.

## Never too young to make a difference



by Meghan Pasken  
Glades Crop Care

Republican Rep. Jennifer Sullivan of District 31 was our guest speaker at dinner on Tuesday, stopping by briefly to tell us her story and speak about leadership. At 22, Sullivan is the youngest woman elected to the Florida House of Representatives. She spoke about how her inspiration to run for office started with a 4-H trip to the capital. We were all motivated by her enthusiasm and amazed at the effort her campaign gave

to knocking on thousands of doors in her district last year. She explained that her goal was to run a grassroots campaign and that she believes in limiting government regulation. During the campaign, she sought to know what was important to the voters and to explain which of her values related to their concerns. “You are never too young to start making a difference,” she said.

Sullivan, of Mount Dora, serves on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee, Civil Justice Subcommittee, Finance and Tax Committee, and the Local Government Affairs Subcommittee. She urged us to make a difference in our state by contacting our representatives and making them aware of issues that are important and why. She emphasized that constituent visits are welcomed and effective in getting the attention of representatives.



Rep. Jake Raburn met with the group, focusing on how important political involvement is to agriculture. Raburn was recognized as one of FFVA's legislators of the year in 2014.

## Raburn focuses on industry priorities



by Paul Miller  
Pioneer Growers Co-op

We had the pleasure of meeting Reps. Jake Raburn and Ben Albritton briefly at the 2014 FFVA Annual Convention in Naples. At that point, Raburn spoke to the class about how important it was to be plugged in and involved with what is going on in state and local government. Both lawmakers commended us on being a part of the leadership program and emphasized how essential it is to know our representatives.

This time the setting was different and not as casual as our introduction in Naples. We were in Tallahassee at the Senate office building in the middle of the legislative session. Raburn came into the room looking more comfortable, and he dove right in to a couple hot-button topics for agriculture. A bill to exempt sales tax on agriculture equipment would give cost-savings to farmers. The bill would exempt sales tax on irrigations parts/repairs, trailers used in agriculture production, stakes used in agriculture production, equipment used to store agriculture products, and other farm equipment that already has enormous price tags.

Raburn also discussed the UF/IFAS bud-

get and how important the funding is for a program that does so much for the agriculture industry. Even though the meeting was brief, it was great opportunity to meet with Raburn and get some inside information about what is being talked about and how things are looking in Tallahassee this session.

## Optimism for ag in this year's session



by Matt Griffin  
Lipman Produce

The legislative trip to Tallahassee is certainly a highlight of the Emerging Leader program. It was quite an experience to be in the Capitol again to meet with legislators and others from around the state and to see the political process at work. During our visit we had a pretty jam-packed schedule. Our time consisted of short sessions with different members of the Legislature to express our concerns and priorities.

Among the list of lawmakers we met with was Rep. Jim Boyd of District 71. Sitting on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee, Boyd seemed very optimistic about this year's session and policies in regards to Florida agriculture. He made it clear that although he may not

be an expert on agriculture, he certainly understood the sheer importance of the industry and the impact it has here and abroad socially, political and economically. With that, he went on to praise Commissioner Adam Putnam and House Speaker Steve Crisafulli for being champions for agriculture and the work they do to ensure the longevity of our industry and address real concerns. Like many of the other legislators we met with, Boyd reassured us that he understands the need for sound policy, and he will stay committed to this mission.

Apart from agriculture and the topics of Amendment 1, water policy, funding and others, Boyd decided to give some good insight into other issues that were under discussion. Among these were policies regarding education and the Seminole Compact. We appreciate Boyd and our elected officials for all their time and efforts.

## A rising star in the Legislature



by John Beuttenmuller  
Florida Foundation  
Seed Producers, Inc.

Rep. Halsey Beshears is a Republican member in the House of Representatives representing District 7, which comprises Madison, Jefferson, Taylor, Calhoun, and Wakulla counties. Beshears was first elected in 2012 and was subsequently re-elected in 2014. In his second term he was appointed chairman of the Business and Professions Subcommittee. He also serves as vice chair on the Energy and Utilities Subcommittee. Beshears is undoubtedly one of the rising leaders in the Legislature. During the current session, he sponsored HB 145, the Commercial Vehicle Review Board bill, which is one of FFVA's priorities.

Beshears is a unique member of the Legislature because he comes from an agricultural background. Before running for office, Beshears worked in the family

**(Next page)**





nursery business in Monticello. He spoke to the challenges of stepping aside from the family business to run for office. On top of the professional challenges, he also must find time to be a good husband and a good father to his three daughters. Because Beshears lives just 30 minutes outside of Tallahassee, even when the Legislature is not in session he is still very engaged with constituents and other politicians. When other legislators go home to their districts, they are often very far away from Tallahassee and may have an easier time disconnecting from the rigors of being a state representative. Beshears does not begrudge that; instead, he sees it as an excellent opportunity.

Beshears emphasized the importance of taking the time to get to know your representatives and to be engaged in the political process. He said water legislation and funding of Amendment 1 will be very big issues during this legislative session. He is also very focused on opportunities for tax cuts and the sales tax exemption bill, one of FFVA's priorities for this session.

## Strategic marketing for market leaders



by John Alderman  
Duda Farm Fresh Foods

Day 1 of Emerging Leader Development Class 4's trip to Tallahassee started off with a brisk walk to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services building to meet with the entire marketing team with Fresh From Florida. Susan Nardizzi is director of the Division of Marketing and Development for FDACS and oversees Fresh From Florida, a program that is providing immense benefits to the growers in Florida.

Nardizzi introduced Martin May, chief of seafood and aquaculture for the Division of Marketing. May had 100 percent of our attention since seafood and aquaculture



Susan Nardizzi, director of the Division of Marketing and Development for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shared some not-yet-released television ads with the group.

marketing was a fresh perspective outside of our focus. He touched on the department's marketing strategy and how it shifts with Florida's peak season for seafood. The results to the seafood industry that Fresh From Florida brings through its media campaigns and its work with the food service/restaurant industry throughout the state are quite amazing.

Jackie Moalli, senior marketing and development manager for the division joined Nardizzi in giving insights into the advertising placement for the Fresh From Florida media campaign. The campaign is now recognized nationally and has been recognized globally as well. We viewed all the recent TV spots which were well-received because there was at least one grower of each commodity represented in the advertisements presented. The team then described the success and recognition of the department's certified executive chef, Justin Timineri. Chef Justin is the culinary ambassador for Florida, traveling to trade shows and festivals promoting Fresh From Florida products.

## Caldwell kicks off Day 2 breakfast



by Shine Taylor  
DuPont Crop Protection

Our breakfast guest on Wednesday was Rep. Matt Caldwell of District 79. Even though Caldwell was a little under the weather, the minute he sat down and adjusted his bow tie, I knew he was ready to discuss the priorities of the day. One of the main stories of the week came up very quickly as Caldwell discussed the proposed water bill. Being from the North Fort Myers area, he has a unique and personal view on water management because the Caloosahatchee River bisects his district. The legislation is very important to him and his constituents, and one could tell he had experience discussing the ins and outs of

**(Next page)**



the bill to any audience.

From there, we discussed more general topics on how to create legislation and how it is best used. He discussed topics such as spending and the balance that he and his colleagues face every day around short-term goals vs. long-term impacts. Even though Caldwell is relatively young, he had some great insight into how the process works and was knowledgeable about the entire picture and what happens "on the hill."

## UF/IFAS requests funding for an increased workload



by Teddy McAvoy

Mary Ann Gosa-Hooks, director of governmental affairs for the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, discussed the priorities she is lobbying for in the Legislature. These priorities include \$5.5 million to fund increased workload, \$3.6 million for the beef teaching unit at UF and a \$180,000 increase for biological control research. The general workload would serve all IFAS stakeholders including citrus, vegetables, cattle and nursery industries. Specific appropriations from the \$5.5 million would go toward funding research specialists, filling gaps in research, and adding or replacing faculty at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee.

The UF Beef Teaching Unit funding would be used for updating the facility, which is outdated and falling apart, student housing and the cow pen, Gosa-Hooks said. Other appropriations would go toward quarantine facilities and research into biological control of pests and diseases. Gosa-Hooks was very

accommodating to our group and was happy to answer questions and respond to comments made by FFVA board members and the Emerging Leader Development Program class. It was eye-opening and refreshing to see firsthand the positive impacts the efforts of FFVA and UF/IFAS have on policymaking in Tallahassee.

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- Teddy McAvoy

## Water expert discusses priority state projects



by Paul Miller  
Pioneer Growers Co-op

We all know the importance of water to human existence since we need to consume it for survival, but it is also closely related to our food source in the fact that plants and animals we may eat also need water to survive as well. On our first day in Tallahassee, we met with Rich Budell, director of the Agricultural Water Policy Division of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Budell has been in the field for 30 years, and he is an expert on water and just

about anything water-related. His discussion focused on some of the 2015-2016 budget priorities.

Water was a recurring topic throughout our visit and was brought up by most of the speakers who came to talk with Class 4, so it wasn't a surprise that Budell discussed priorities concerning water projects that needed funding for the coming year. His first bullet point covered the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program. The total budget requested for this project was \$20 million, which would help with development of Best Management Practices, monitoring and implementation, while providing cost-share funding for on-farm stormwater management as well. It would also help create larger water retention and nutrient-reduction projects. The department also was requesting funding for water-supply planning, conservation and a springs initiative. Butch Calhoun of FFVA spoke about how important Budell has been to FDACS and agriculture in general. He may be winding his career down in the coming years, so whoever is slated to take Budell's position has some pretty big shoes to fill.

## Putnam continues emphasis on water



by Meghan Pasken  
Glades Crop Care

Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam joined us for lunch on Wednesday and delivered the final address to our group of emerging leaders. The commissioner pointed out that water policies were the top three dominant issues this season and spoke briefly on Amendment 1. He stressed that in today's political environment it is important for everyone to get involved. Putnam expressed the need

**(Next page)**





for folks with an ag background to get involved in water management and policy and to gain influence in permitting. Issues of particular concern that he singled out were Waters of the U.S., food safety laws and aggressive local governments.

Putnam also spoke briefly about the effect of the "farm to table" trend as being positive for agriculture, but he fears it is too niche and won't have wide-ranging appeal for everyone. When asked what the FFVA Emerging Leaders could do on a local level to promote agriculture in a more positive light, the commissioner stressed the need for friends of agriculture in city and county governing bodies. He encouraged getting in touch with county commissioners and seeing through more local legislation in favor of agriculture. Engagement in local schools is also a key to helping younger generations learn that farmers are good stewards of the land and are not the enemy. Putnam pointed out that South Florida was a particularly difficult situation due to the close proximity of premier beaches and urban development to one of the most productive agricultural areas in the state.

sales tax, saving farmers needed money that can be reinvested in their farming operation. Another legislative concern of the Florida growers and particularly FFVA is the \$5.5 million budget for UF/IFAS's workload increase. IFAS has played a critical role in the success of Florida's agriculture industry. Whether it's research in citrus, vegetables or strawberries, it is obvious that IFAS research has been vital to agricultural improvements in the state.

It is clear that agriculture is at the forefront in a positive way with our state legislators. Rick Roth of Roth Farms, who also was on our trip, commented that he doesn't remember a time when agriculture was on the offensive in the state government. He remembers a much different time when agriculture was always on the defense, against policies and bills that were not in support of one of the state's biggest industries. Finally, farmers are getting the recognition they deserve for being great stewards of our land and natural resources. We've come a long way in this state, and with our Legislature behind agriculture we are heading in a positive direction.

## Class meets new DEP secretary



by John Beuttenmuller  
Florida Foundation  
Seed Producers, Inc.

The class was introduced to Jon Steversen, the new secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Steversen was appointed DEP secretary by Gov. Rick Scott effective Dec. 29, 2014. Before his appointment, Steversen served as the executive director of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, where he was heavily involved with projects such as the protection of the Apalachicola River and Bay watershed as well as springs restoration and preservation.

Before that, Steversen worked for DEP from 2011 to 2012 as special counsel on

**(Next page)**

## Crisafulli understands importance of ag



by Nathan Decker  
Monsanto

One of the highlights of the trip to the state Capitol in Tallahassee was our visit with new Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli. From the very beginning, the speaker has recognized how vital agriculture is to Florida's economy. He understands that agriculture is a \$100 billion-plus industry in this state and it is in everyone's best interest to have that in mind when making legislative decisions.

One of the key ag interests is the agriculture sales tax exemption bill. FFVA's Butch Calhoun gave Crisafulli credit for his strong support to the measure. The bill would exempt agriculture-related purchases from



Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli, pictured with the group in his office, spent time assuring everyone that he understood the economic impact and appreciated agriculture.



policy and legislative affairs and acting deputy secretary for water policy and ecosystem restoration. Being from the Florida Panhandle, Steverson is well aware of the importance of agriculture and agricultural water uses, and he expressed his appreciation for agriculture and what our industry means to the state and the country. Steverson provided our group with some insights as to what he thought would be very big topics during the current legislative session: water legislation and funding for Amendment 1. Steverson expressed his interest in making sure that DEP is a well-run agency that serves to help its constituents. As secretary, Steverson is very watchful of developments at the federal level with respect to Waters of the U.S. legislation, as it could have significant impacts in Florida. Butch Calhoun of FFVA's Government Relations Division congratulated Steverson on several excellent appointments that he has already made during his time with DEP.

## Amendment 1 is on the minds of many



by Dustin Grooms  
Fancy Farms, Inc.

One politician after another rushed into our private conference room to talk to our class briefly before they had to rush back to session or other meetings. I found myself wondering how many deals or important decisions were made in the very room we were in. In midafternoon, we met up with Republican Sen. Kelli Stargel.

Amendment 1 funding seemed to be the main topic being discussed. Florida voters approved this amendment to set aside a third of all documentary stamp tax revenue for the next 20 years to buy, sustain, and improve conservation lands. It seemed everyone had their own ideas of how to spend the nearly \$19 billion. Stargel said the budget is subject to the low-income pool (LIP), which will be a major

factor in funding issues. LIP provides more than \$1 billion a year to help the state's hospitals with uncompensated-care costs for low-income and uninsured patients.

Stargel has helped sponsor several bills for FFVA. She has been to several farms to learn about different industries. "I would rather listen to the experts themselves," she said. In closing, she added, "I don't want to depend on foreign food." I couldn't agree more.

Someone suggested that we should encourage some of our family to be interested in politics so we in agriculture can have the upper hand. Several of the legislators we visited supported agriculture; we just need more. It seems to me that something someone depends on two to three times a day would be always of the utmost importance, but agriculture seems to be on the back burner a lot. However, it's great to know we can count on Sen. Stargel. One final thought: When that hole in their stomachs gets empty, all the politics in the world will change immediately.

## Keeping up the fight for agriculture



by Matthew Griffin  
Lipman Produce

On several occasions, I've had the opportunity to hear Commissioner of Agriculture Adam Putnam speak on issues concerning Florida agriculture. One phrase I can recall hearing him use was, "We must box above our weight class." During our visit to Tallahassee, we met with legislators from around the state, among them Rep. Ben Albritton of District 56. Albritton certainly is a great example of someone who is in the ring fighting on behalf of agriculture. During the course of our meetings on the trip, the same themes kept surfacing: Amendment 1, Everglades restoration, GMO labeling, greening, water rights/quality/quantity, and budgeting for the Depart-

ment of Agriculture and Consumer Services and UF/IFAS. Amid all the questions and concerns, Albritton allowed his optimism to shine through. For example, he noted that there are some possible reliefs coming down the pipeline to combat citrus greening.

Albritton also gave a brief but stirring call to action, urging us to become more involved in the political process to ensure that our concerns are known on every level of government. He reminded us that we need to stay proactive on issues and policies both while the Legislature is in session and on recess, and the importance of meeting and calling on legislators to ensure our uniform voice is heard. With Albritton and others, it's safe to say that we have friends near and far who are looking out for industry and dedicated to keeping our priorities in sight. Certainly, we thank them for their service and support.

*Class 4 will travel to California for its fifth session in July. Look for those stories in the next issue.*



# ELDP NEWS



**1:** Congratulations to **Clayton Norman** (Class 3) who became engaged to Candice Earl on April 3.



**2:** **Jennifer Hodges** (Class 1) and Adam Lytch were married on March 21 in Maxton, NC. The couple enjoyed a honeymoon in French Polynesia.