

EMERGING TIMES

. . . growing toward the future

Emerging leaders introduced during FFVA Annual Convention



Class 5 (left to right): Josh Temple (DuPont Crop Protection), Ashley Layson (Farm Credit of Florida), Bradley Ferguson (Florida Pacific Farms), Casey Simmons Runkles (Simmons Farms, Inc.), John Evans (Maury L. Carter & Associates, Inc.), Amanda McClure (West Coast Tomato/Building Cleaning Solutions), Marshal Sewell (Seminis Vegetable Seed), Kevin Yue (Lipman Produce), Lauren Graham (The Andersons), Dustin Lowe (Lake Catherine Blueberries), Leigh Ann Wynn (Warner University) and Ben Lahr (Driscoll's).



The fifth class of the Emerging Leader Development Program was introduced to FFVA's membership at FFVA 2015.

This was the first step in their yearlong program that will include sessions in Tallahassee with legislators, issues seminars at FFVA's main office and visits to agri-

cultural 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.



Water, invasive pests are most critical issues



by John Evans
Maury L. Carter & Associates, Inc.

Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam delivered an outstanding opening address at the annual FFVA conference. His message was clear: In today's ever-changing local, state, national and global landscape there are two critical issues facing Florida agriculture: water policy and control of invasive pests and species.

Commissioner Putnam's foresight is keen. We have the chance, right now, to get Florida's comprehensive water policy right. It is a priority that the state acts responsibly and quickly on water issues. Water policy is centered on two factors: quality and quantity. Leaders need to take the following factors into consideration when developing water policy: availability of an abundant fresh water supply to support our population, the needs of the environment, clean water initiatives, water

storage recharge initiatives and anticipation of growth. Among all of this, Florida's agriculturalists must have a place at the table. The above-mentioned issues have many competing interests. Being a minority in the state, agriculturalists need to be involved in the processes of sharing our story, the drafting of water policy, and advocating for agriculture. If we do not, agricultural interests lose first, and we lose often.

Secondly, Florida has become a national (if not a global) leader in invasive pests/species and disease crisis management. Look no further than citrus greening. Citrus greening makes us understand the importance of protecting Florida agriculture. We must mitigate and eliminate risks that threaten it, without exception. Imminently there will be two factors that will raise the level of risks: the widening of the Panama Canal and the deepening and expansion of the Port of Miami. When these two projects are completed, pest and invasive species distribution will be on hyper-drive, and Florida's ports will be ground zero in the defense against these threats. Goods from all over the world will be shipped to our shores; many times these containers have "unwanted passengers" aboard.

Agriculturalists must be on the offensive about these issues, rather than reactionary. Florida has a duty to do so not only to itself, but to the rest of the country.

Talking to a concerned public



by Bradley Ferguson
Florida Pacific Farms

Dr. Kevin Folta, professor and chairman of the University of Florida's Horticulture Sciences Department, spoke about the controversial topic of GMOs and the importance of farmers and scientists telling their story to the public. There are many benefits of GMOs, including higher yields, herbicide resistance, pest/disease resistance, and increased or enhanced nutrient content. Yet still there is much public pushback to GMOs, mostly because of the prolific spread of misinformation about GMOs. "The internet gives people easy access to a lot of bad information," Folta said. "A few vocal critics are dominating a science-limited public conversation." Scientists and farmers are the best advocates for GMOs but are mostly absent from the public conversation. "We live in a society of opinions," Folta said. "That means we have to learn how to tell our stories and communicate with sensitivity and tact to change people's hearts and minds. We are the ones who can change this dialogue."

Folta has been committed to educating the public about the science of GMOs. For this he has been constantly criticized by activists online, in newspaper articles and on TV shows. Most recently he and UF have been subjected to time-consuming and costly Freedom of Information requests from his critics.

Humans have been manipulating genetics through selective breeding for thousands of years. Genetic engineering allows for fast solutions to major problems. Citrus greening is a major issue in Florida that is devastating the industry, and GMO resistance is likely going to be the quickest solution. "There are many good opportunities for crop and animal improvement that benefit the farmer, the environment, the consumer and the needy," Folta said.



This year's annual Benefit Auction raised funds for the Redlands Christian Migrant Association and the Emerging Leader Development Program.



Tucker Carlson, co-host of FOX & Friends Weekend and the editor-in-chief of The Daily Caller, entertained Cracker Breakfast attendees with his opinions of what will happen in the upcoming election.

The presidential breakfast scramble



by Ben Lahr
Driscoll's

From a citrus family background in California to the world of politics on the Fox News Channel in Washington D.C., Tucker Carlson has had his share of both agricultural and political experiences. He opened his keynote address at the Cracker Breakfast by saying that he wanted to present his views of different political parties' presidential candidates equally. True to his word, he took an equal approach to candidates' strengths and weaknesses and, in return, had a diverse group of around 400 people laughing several times.

Carlson admitted that people would likely want to know his prediction for the 2016 U.S. presidential election: He was unsure. He reminded the audience that even the professionals who make a living at predicting such things do not know, and that this election will likely result in something unexpected. He described how in the previous elections, such predictions were almost as easy as closing one eye, taking three steps back and seeing who looked the most presidential. However, in the coming election people are looking for something different, he said. That's why some candidates, though perhaps initially considered weak, have progressed further than expected while others who might have been considered strong have been only marginally successful.

Despite the uncertainty, Carlson said one thing he was sure of: People follow strong leaders. Political parties have changed, as has the whole atmosphere of the presidential race. The candidates running over the coming year will be different than voters have seen before. As such, he said he expected the bizarre to occur. Past elections will not predict our future president, but rather the president will be elected for the current status of America's needs, he added. Carlson summed it up best when he said, "Everything short of Heaven is a mixed blessing." Whatever the outcome, America will have a new president in 2016.

Calhoun gives a primer on the Legislature



by Lauren Graham
The Andersons, Inc.

During FFVA's annual convention, Butch Calhoun, director of government relations, spoke exclusively with Class 5. He provided an extensive look at how the Florida House and Senate are run while recounting many humorous stories along the way.

Calhoun went into detail about the process of filing bills in both the House and Senate. Describing it as a "game of chess," one must know what moves will get your bill to pass. Otherwise, it will be killed, which happens to a majority of bills.

He explained the complications that arise in government. One example is the current

transportation package that is being discussed. The federal government has given each state a few years to match federal standards. Ag transportation is included in this package and provides good things for agriculture, Calhoun said. He and his fellow lobbyists – the Ag Coalition – are focusing specifically on passing the ag portion of the package because it must be passed by March 2016.

The redrawing of Florida's congressional districts also was a topic of focus. "It could change not just Florida politics, but national politics," Calhoun said. Multiple plans have been submitted to the judge in Tallahassee because the Supreme Court ordered it after the Republican-controlled House and Senate could not agree.

He continued by explaining how the Ag Coalition works to take on issues. By these 30 or so companies working together, more bills can be pushed through.

Class 5 will head to Tallahassee for a legislative visit focusing on public policy at the end of January.



Taking “Fresh From Florida” to the rest of the world



by Ashley Layson
Farm Credit of Florida

A brightly colored dish with steak, peppers and corn, a mother smiling as she takes the dish to her patiently waiting family at the dinner table...you’ve seen the Fresh From Florida ads. The rest of the world is seeing them too.

From Canada to Colombia to Central America, people all over the world are learning about the agricultural basket that is Florida.

Dan Sleep, chief of the Bureau of Strategic Development, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, said Florida agricultural exports in 2014 had a total economic impact of \$13 billion as the state’s produce and protein were exported to 159 countries and territories.

So what is the “secret sauce” to their success? “In the early years we had a few Fresh From Florida ads,” said Sleep. “Now the logo is well known not only in Florida but around the world, connecting the local grower to quality and consistency. We have turned a few store ads into 483,000 highly visible ads.”

To give you an idea of the growing demand for Florida produce, in the year 2000 the state partnered with 298 international stores. By 2005 that number grew to 8,500 stores. Last year that number exploded to 12,000 international stores selling Florida-grown produce. And they are not stopping there. The state department is on track to add 5,000 international stores this year alone.

Canada: A Case Study: In 2002 Canada was selling Florida products in 300 stores and three Fresh From Florida ads. Last year they supplied 1,800 stores and ran hundreds of ads while raking in \$917 million in exports.

The top vegetable exports include celery, cucumbers, eggplant, fresh peppers, lettuce, potatoes, snap beans and tomatoes. When it comes to fresh fruit Canada is demanding blueberries, fresh oranges, melons, strawberries and watermelons. Canada is also the

largest market for Florida orange juice, live trees and plants, live animals and edible fish.

While Canada remains Florida’s leading export destination, Sleep warns against putting all of the state’s so-called eggs in one basket.

- In Puerto Rico the state department is hosting strawberry and watermelon samplings.
- The Dominican Republic will demand \$40 million in Florida mushrooms this year.
- Florida grapefruit cocktails will be served in 100 South Korean Outback Steakhouse restaurants.
- Scandinavia has agreed to sell Florida grapefruit in 724 stores. Another 1,000 Scandinavian stores are requesting sweet corn.
- Fresh blueberries are currently being tested for sale in Canada.

Sleep reports the Florida Department of Agricultural stands ready to help local farmers break into the international agricultural exporting industry. “The quality we deliver to international retailers is incredibly important. International markets are not the easiest to get into, but they are lucrative and they can expand and add to the longevity of your business.”

Growth through exposure and education



by Marshal Sewell
Seminis Vegetable Seed

Within an industry as dynamic as agriculture, it is great to stop and recognize some of its members and affiliates from time to time. We had the opportunity to do just that at our FFVA Awards Luncheon. Ashley Layson, a representative of Farm Credit and member of the new Emerging Leader Development Program, kicked off the session with a sponsor’s welcome and an invocation before our meal. After we enjoyed an outstanding Fresh From Florida meal, Sonia Tighe took the podium to discuss the Emerging Leader Development Program and recognize DuPont as a key sponsor of the young ambassadors. After a video was

(Next page)



Congratulations to Class 4 of FFVA's Emerging Leader Development Program on graduating during the Awards Luncheon.

shown to help convey the scope of this program and the activities in which its participants are involved, Phillip Hathcock of DuPont gave remarks on behalf of the program and its value to the industry. Sonia then introduced the graduating members of the ELDP Class 4, with John Alderman presenting a graduation speech for the group. FFVA Chairman Alan Temple presented the George Sorn Scholarship to two deserving young high school students, Abimael Albiter and Rodrigo Cruz.

Butch Calhoun gave Legislators of the Year awards to Sen. Kelli Stargell of Polk County and Rep. Tom Goodson of Brevard County for their support and commitment to the agriculture industry. The presentation of the Merchandiser of the Year Award followed, with Kroger as this year's recipient. Temple introduced the incoming ELDP Class 5, along with members of the Produce Marketing Association Career Pathways. Barbara Mainster, executive director of the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, received the FFVA Distinguished Service Award for her support of the education and care of migrant children in the state and nation.

Program expanded interest in all agriculture



by Dustin Lowe
Lake Catherine Blueberries



by Amanda McClure
West Coast Tomato/
Building Cleaning Solutions



by Casey Simmons-Runkles
Simmons Farms, Inc.

Who would have thought a state surrounded by water would have water challenges? Terry Cole, a shareholder at Gunster law firm, moderated a roundtable discussion on the issue. The Florida Legislature is in the midst of some huge decisions regarding water and land-use policy issues facing the state's agriculture industry. During the last session, water was a hot topic; the Senate passed water legislation after the House session was closed.

Frank Matthews, a shareholder with Hopping Green & Sams, says we currently have protection for existing water usage—if you aren't changing the crop or land usage. However, that could change with the upcoming legislative session. If the state government does not pass regulation, we will be subject to following the Waters of the United States (WOTUS).

Attorney Greg Munson, a shareholder at Gun-

ster, stressed the importance of long-term funding as a central piece of the upcoming legislative session to protect our water supply. Currently, there are many areas of uncertainty surrounding the state's new constitutional amendment that uses a portion of doc stamp revenue to help deal with water challenges.

Greg DeAngelo, deputy director of the Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, noted the FDEP submitted rules to the EPA establishing numeric criteria to prevent the over-enrichment of Florida's waterways. In 2013, EPA approved FDEP's rules as consistent with the requirements of the Clean Water Act. Florida now has numeric nutrient criteria for all fresh water lakes, springs, estuaries and coastal waters, and the majority of flowing waters in the state. This agreement shows Florida has established tough numeric water quality standards.

It is very important to communicate with our legislators. We have a limited number of leaders who are pro-agriculture. Be sure to contact your state senators and representatives and remind them how important water is to "feed the people."



Rep. Ben Albritton shared his knowledge and wisdom on what attributes make an effective leader at the ELDP alumni reception.

*Class 5 meets for
its session at FFVA
later this month.
Look for those
stories soon.*

ELDP NEWS



1: Congratulations to Jessica Kerstein (Class 2) who became engaged to Max Press on September 16.

2: Nathan Decker (Class 4) and his wife, Susan, are expecting their second child in late April. Future big brother, Ethan, is pictured.

The ELDP is well represented on the Florida Blueberry Growers Association board with **Michael Hill** (Class 1) serving as secretary, **Amber Maloney** (Class 2) serving as treasurer and **Ryan Atwood** (Class 3) as a board member.

3: Derek Orsenigo (Class 2) and his wife, Lauren, are expecting their first child in late April.