

EMERGING TIMES

... growing toward the future

Leadership class joins FFVA board members for close-up look at Tallahassee



Members of Class 2, FFVA board members and FFVA staff received a warm welcome from Senate President Don Gaetz during their tour of the Capitol.

Members of the Emerging Leader Development Program got a firsthand look at the legislative process and FFVA's activities to protect and promote Florida agriculture during a two-day session in the state Capitol.

Class members joined FFVA board members and FFVA Director of Government Relations Butch Calhoun for various meetings with lawmakers and other state Leaders to discuss issues facing agriculture and bills moving through the legislature.

The group spent time with Senate President Don Gaetz, Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam and Assistant

Commissioner Mike Joyner as well as Susan Nardizzi and Jackie Moalli with Fresh From Florida.

They also met with Greg Munson, deputy secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection; Rep. Matt Caldwell; Committee on Agriculture chair Sen. Bill Montford; Rep. Halsey Beshears; Rep. Katie Edwards; Rep. Larry Lee; Rep. Ben Albritton; Rep. Steve Crisafulli; Rep. Jake Raburn and Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences governmental relations director Mary Ann Gosa.

The next session in the yearlong program is a trip to California in June to tour various agricultural operations.



SUSTAINING SPONSOR



Fresh From Florida makes a strong impression



by Derek Orsenigo
Grower's Management, Inc.

The most interesting presentation during our visit to Tallahassee was about the Fresh From Florida campaign. Known officially as the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign, it is administered through the state Department of Agriculture's Division of Marketing and Development. Its goal is to promote and advertise programs that help Florida growers market their products. This program is beneficial to state growers and producers because it helps to build brand awareness of the excellence of Florida products nationwide.

Through membership in the program, companies are able to take advantage of several opportunities such as the logo incentive program, which helps offset packaging costs while promoting the Fresh From Florida logo. Companies can also benefit by using the point-of-sale materials that the FAPC provides with membership.

The newest and most creative form of advertising now is through multimedia. FAPC has partnered with Chef Justin Timineri to develop a recipe page on the website using only Florida produce and seafood. They have also produced several television commercials promoting these colorful recipes. The recipes and commercials do a great job of driving home the fact that Florida has an abundance of fantastic fruits, vegetables, meats and seafood that are available almost year-round.

This Fresh From Florida campaign is a valuable asset for Florida producers to have and use. This branding never stops working for the producers, and it aids in our progressive self-promotion. There are plenty of opportunities that come with membership and all growers, both large and small, are encouraged to participate.

Meeting with legislators 'humanizes' political process



by Amber Kosinsky
Wish Farms

This was not the first visit to the state Capitol for most of us, but with FFVA's director of government relations, Butch Calhoun, as our host we had a firsthand behind-the-scenes tour of the legislative session.

While Butch reviewed an abbreviated outline of ag-related bills, I reflected on my college days of studying Cliff Notes before an exam. It was eye-opening to see a list of over 20 bills that FFVA is either supporting, monitoring or opposing, all of which are directly related to agriculture and could make a difference in how our industry does business.

Throughout our visit, we were joined by members of the FFVA board of directors. Our combined group had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with many of our legislators. For the most part, our "friends of ag" had a positive outlook on many of the bills the FFVA was supporting including the agritourism, greenbelt and Florida Fire Prevention Code bills.

Not surprisingly, state water-related issues continued to be a topic of conversation. Also, FFVA President Mike Stuart shared important progress made by the Gang of Eight on federal immigration reform. We toured both chambers and had a front-row seat in the gallery while the House was in session.

During a tour of the Senate Chamber, Senate President Don Gaetz explained this was the first time in several years that legislators were working with a monetary surplus instead of a shortfall. He was optimistic that a balanced budget and allocations would happen on time.

Having the chance to sit down with lawmakers humanized the political process for me. We follow the news and FFVA updates, but many times the issues that face our industry can seem far off in the distance. FFVA's effort at the state and federal levels give our industry a collective voice, but it is still imperative that individuals make an effort to stay informed and get involved.

Positive attitudes



by Lee Ann Hinton Coleman
Hinton Farms Produce, Inc.

Business suits and swift walking, hustle and bustle and a hurry up attitude....that's what I encountered on the ELDP's most recent trip to Tallahassee.

We were fortunate to be able to meet with several of our legislators, and it is comforting to realize how many legislators we have who are on agriculture's side this session. Learning all of the steps a bill must go through to pass was definitely an interesting segment of our trip. We were able to meet with quite a few of our elected officials, and thankfully, hear a mostly positive attitude on those issues directly affecting our businesses.

We were honored with the presence of our outstanding commissioner of agriculture, Adam Putnam, for dinner and a brief update. Of course a highlight of the trip for me was visiting my cousin, Rep. Jake Raburn, and hearing updates from him as well as being shown around the House floor.

We were privileged to share parts of the trip with some of our own FFVA board members. The trip was an amazing opportunity to see our board members talk to our legislators about issues important to agriculture and learn from them what will be expected from us as future leaders.



Butch Calhoun shows class members around the Capitol building.

Agricultural support is strong at the Capitol



by Ian Bessell

I hadn't been to Tallahassee since a fifth-grade history class field-trip, so I was excited to see firsthand how our state Legislature functions and to see it from an adult perspective. Butch Calhoun ensured that our agenda was packed with one interesting meeting after another.

After meeting with Susan Nardizzi and Jackie Moalli with the Fresh From Florida marketing campaign, we were off to lunch with members of the FFVA board and Deputy Secretary Greg Munson of the Department of Environmental Protection, who discussed water issues and Everglades legislation. Next, we had the privilege to spend some time in the Senate chamber with Senate President Don Gaetz. It was quite an experience sitting at the senators' desks and getting a close look at the chamber.

We also met with Mary Ann Gosa from UF/IFAS, who explained that this year's session has been full of lots of strange events. Later, we were treated to dinner with Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam and Assistant Commissioner Mike Joyner. They shared with us an update on one of their keystone programs, the school nutrition program.

The next day began with a breakfast with Sen. Bill Montford, whose background is in education and agriculture. Interestingly, he has the largest geographic district in the state, which spans several diverse Panhandle counties. We visited with Sen. Wilton Simpson and talked about his support of a bill to address the fire marshal issue. He also shared that he would like to see the state develop a system for using reclaimed water to help protect Florida's ground water resources. Rep. Halsey Beshears, a freshman representative from the Panhandle who is a nursery grower of fruit trees and blueberry plants and a strong advocate for agriculture, spent time with us as well.

We also had visits with Rep. Matt Caldwell, Rep. Cary Pigman, and Sen. Anitere Flores, who helped support the immigration bill last year. Rep. Katie Edwards shared with us her desire to help expand research into diseases that impact other commodities such as laurel wilt in avocados. Rep. Holly Raschein provided the

group with an update on the agritourism bill she is helping with, and was excited to report had just cleared committee. We shared a few minutes with Rep. Ben Albritton and Rep. Steve Crisafulli in the lobby outside the House Chamber. Crisafulli is in line to be the next speaker of the house in 2014. We wrapped up by talking with freshman legislators Larry Lee and Jake Raburn in the House Chamber. The take-home message is that there is a lot of support for agriculture in the current legislature, especially among the freshman class, which includes more industry people than in years past.

When you know the players, the game is more interesting



by Joby Sherrod
A. Duda & Sons, Inc.

Baseball fans can really "get in the game." They memorize the players' stats so they can recall them instantly after a fast-action play during a game. They take advantage of every opportunity to meet the players in person and perhaps get an autograph. Why? Because when you know the players, the game gets even more interesting.

On our recent legislative visit, we did just that. We had the privilege to meet with several of the "major league" players in the Legislature and discuss our industry's issues very candidly. Although we didn't get autographs, I learned so much from this experience about the legislators and their agendas and I am more aware of the legislative issues affecting agriculture.

Since our visit, I now recognize many of the legislators when I tune-in to the "action" on the Florida Channel, and I have firsthand knowledge of where they stand on the issues. It really makes watching the "game" much more interesting. So if you have the opportunity to visit the Capitol, take it, and you too can "get in the game."



Branding Florida and its bounty of products



by Tom Mitchell
Riverfront Packing Company, LLC

When you grow some of the best fruits and vegetables in the world, why not capitalize on it? That's what I asked myself during Susan Nardizzi and Jackie Moalli's discussion of the state Department of Agriculture's Fresh From Florida Program.

The program is making great strides in promoting Florida produce and just recently announced a new advertising campaign featuring Florida produce and seafood. I have seen several commercials recently that feature strawberry and citrus arugula salad, and Florida corn, tomato, and avocado salad. The program features executive Chef Justin, who travels the world preparing great dishes using Florida-grown ingredients.

As a member of the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign, you receive such benefits as use of the Fresh From Florida logo, free retail point-of-sale material, and the ability to offset some of your consumer packaging costs when using the Fresh From Florida logo. The total cost of the program is a whopping \$50. Even if your business might not take advantage of the great member benefits, you should join to support the great work that is being done to promote Florida agriculture. To join, visit "<http://www.florida-agriculture.com/business/commerce/fapc/>" <http://www.florida-agriculture.com/business/commerce/fapc/>.

The Fresh From Florida program is just one of the ways that the Florida Department of Agriculture is promoting Florida produce. Under the leadership of Commissioner Adam Putnam, this organization has undertaken some groundbreaking initiatives to promote Florida agriculture. Commissioner Putnam spoke to the ELDP and members of FFVA board of directors. As always, his passion for Florida agriculture is evident. He wants programs

such as Florida Farm to School and Fresh From Florida to promote our products locally and worldwide. Based on the overwhelming positive results they have seen so far, I am confident that Florida agriculture's markets will continue to grow.

*"When you grow
some of the best
fruits and vegetables
in the world,
why not capitalize
on it?"*

- Tom Mitchell

Sessions with lawmakers refreshingly free of jargon



by Carleton Johns
Tater Farms

The attitude toward agriculture seems to be positive during this year's legislative session. Over the course of two days, FFVA's Director of Government Relations Butch Calhoun introduced us to some 15 representatives from the Florida House and Senate, all of whom appeared to be friends of agriculture. From seasoned veterans like Senate President Don

Gaetz to freshmen representatives in newly drawn districts, all reiterated their understanding and appreciation for the importance of agriculture to our great state.

This was my first trip to the Capitol during session, and frankly I expected to hear the typical partisan political jargon that we've become accustomed to hearing on the nightly news. However, I was pleasantly surprised at the broad range of knowledge that our representatives appeared to have about the issues challenging our industry.

From the greening crisis to the Everglades restoration efforts to IFAS support, many of them shared with us at length about bills that were working their way through committees to try to combat some of these issues. Their knowledge and the bills that appeared to be destined to pass are a testament to the truly first-class job that Butch has done at cultivating relationships and garnering the trust of our legislators to a point where they'll listen to and take up the causes that he deems important.

It was refreshing to be reminded that most of these representatives lived and worked in many of the small towns that we are familiar with across the state, further reinforcing their ties and dedication to our communities. Their job while in Tallahassee is the epitome of "service" as they are tasked with listening to the needs and concerns of all, deciphering good information from bad, then determining what the best solutions are for the good of the most people, and then fighting and defending their causes as their bills navigate their way through committees. All while leaving their families for several months at a time and being paid relatively little. It's not my cup of tea, but I'm thankful they're there for us.



Agricultural bills make a positive impact



by Jessica Kerstein
Lipman

As part of our Emerging Leader Development Program, we were able to join the FFVA board members to meet with legislators and state officials while the Florida Legislature was in session up in Tallahassee.

Butch Calhoun, FFVA's director of government relations, provided our group with a very busy yet extremely educational schedule including meeting Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, Senate President Don Gaetz and Deputy Secretary Greg Munson of the Department of Environmental Protection. We learned about different bills affecting the agricultural community.

One bill dealt with people who own containers used to store or transport agricultural goods. The bill would allow the owner of such a container to adopt a mark or brand to identify exclusive ownership and use of it. This is similar to the law currently in place which allows the branding of these types of containers when used in general production, harvesting, packing, transportation, or marketing of fruits, vegetables and their byproducts.

The Department of Agriculture and Consumer is obliged to establish an agricultural water supply planning program to develop data for prospective agricultural water supply demand, under CS/SB 948. From this information, the water management districts for regional water supply are forced to consider the data supplied by DACS to determine the best available data for future agricultural water supply demands.

The third bill that stood out is an extension of the Agricultural Lands and Practices Act. It prohibits counties from enforcing any policy that duplicates limiting



Class members enjoyed learning more about Florida's Agricultural Promotional Campaign, "Fresh From Florida," from Susan Nardizzi and Jackie Moalli.

activity on farming land that is already regulated by a number of other policies including best management practices. The new bill extends the prohibition to include not only counties, but any "governmental entity" defined by the law. It also prohibits government from charging a fee for specific agricultural activity on farms.

Mike Stuart, president of FFVA, also informed our class about efforts in Washington to craft a guest-worker program for agriculture that would be part of a larger immigration reform.

Legislature shows positive progress



by Jonathan Allen
R.C. Hatton, Inc.

As part of the FFVA Emerging Leader Development Program, I was given an opportunity to travel to Florida's political warehouse- the Capitol in Tallahassee. With the help of Butch Calhoun, FFVA's director of government relations, we were able to

attend meetings and be educated by several legislators who influence the agricultural industry.

It was interesting to be able to tour the Capitol and see what goes on in the offices while producers like myself are in the field. There are tedious, continuous efforts being made toward a better agricultural future for Florida. As a producer, I make sure that all of our needs are being met and provided for, and thankfully the Legislature has made tremendous progress in doing so. One of the most enlightening bills we conversed about had to do with water supply, which had been proposed in a committee meeting on April 1 by Sen. Denise Grimsley. She said that agriculture, being the second largest economic contributor to Florida behind tourism, requires more water than any other trade. Sen. Grimsley also pointed out that ample water supply encourages conservation while still meeting demands of agricultural corporations.

The trip to the Capitol was very invigorating because it gave me peace of mind for the future of the agricultural industry. The Senate and House of Representatives are maintaining steady progress and quality improvement in all aspects of the market, and I am confident they will continue.



Producers benefit from agricultural promotional campaign



by Thomas Dalton
Farm Credit of Central Florida

Where do the fruits and vegetables in your home come from? Well, if the season is right, and Commissioner Adam Putnam and his team in Tallahassee have anything to say about it, they will be fresh from Florida. The ELDP met with Susan Nardizzi and Jackie Moalli to hear about the new ad campaign and membership benefits associated with Fresh From Florida. Nardizzi is the director of marketing for the Department of Agriculture, and Moalli is senior marketing and development

manager, Division of Marketing and Development.

Although Florida is one of the United States' largest agriculture producers, the majority of the state's farmers would be classified as small farmers. Because of their size, individually they may not have the resources available to adequately promote and market their products.

Florida's Department of Agriculture is working to eliminate this barrier to success through its Florida Agricultural Promotion Campaign (FAPC). All Florida producers can benefit from joining the FAPC, which includes promotional and advertising programs to help Florida producers market their products. In addition to being able to use the Fresh From Florida logo, members of FAPC can participate in trade shows for discounted cost, receive point-of-sale purchase materials, and have representation on local, national, and international levels.

To further support the FAPC program, the Department of Agriculture has launched a new ad campaign to promote

Florida's seasonal products. The campaign was funded by proceeds received from the BP oil spill and will air multiple commercials with recipes featuring produce and seafood. This effort will help inform consumers about when locally grown products are available in stores.

The FAPC is a wonderful program that enables Florida's growers to promote their products on a large scale. Further, with the current trends in buying local and farm-to-table, FAPC is educating consumers on the diverse product mix of Florida and the seasonality of its crops.



The group poses for a quick picture before going inside the Capitol to meet with legislators.



Pleasantly surprised by Tallahassee Tour



by Nick Basore
TKM Farms

In Tallahassee our class was given an insightful view on how the state government operates and the impact the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association has on the state Legislature. We were honored to be given a private tour of the Senate floor by Senate President Don Gaetz, who discussed how unlike the federal government the Florida Constitution requires legislators to pass a balanced budget every year during their 60 day session. This trip was an eye-opening experience to see just how hard FFVA works to promote agriculture in our state.

Butch Calhoun, director of government relations, was kind enough to line up a list of state senators and representatives to come and speak with us on Florida's current political climate and what it could mean for the agriculture industry. I was surprised to see just how eager the senators and representatives were to hear from FFVA. They wanted to hear about any issues that were presently affecting us back at the farm as well as if there were any implications to a bill being passed that would unknowingly have an adverse impact on agriculture.

I was shocked to see just how fast life at the Capitol was. The legislators are constantly running from place to place while juggling multiple tasks at once. Luckily I was given the opportunity to have a discussion with Rep. Halsey Beshears, who was able to shed some light on the current issues impacting agriculture. Rep. Beshears provided an overview of a bill that was passed which allowed any foreign national with a driver's license to operate a motor vehicle. When asked about water management, he stated, "Water is an ongoing topic and being the largest user of water, agriculture is a

frontrunner on all water issues and we must be careful on how we handle its policy." He also mentioned that on the topic of immigration, everything is currently happening on the federal level.

This trip greatly deepened my understanding of our state government as well as the experience and influence the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association brings to it.



Between meetings with legislators class members had a chance to sit in on a House session and witness the political process in action.

The class travels to California to tour agricultural operations during its next session in June. Look for those stories in the next issue.

Keep reading for updates from alumni!



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ELDP ALUMNI

... updates from Class 1



Elizabeth Malek

I have been staying busy. In the photo to the left I am showing one of our interns, Rayane, a pest on a watermelon leaf. This field is in Hardee County. The vines are setting fruit now and they should get cut within the next few weeks.

April Roe Porter

I attended the PMA Foundation's inaugural Women's Fresh Perspectives Conference in late April. The conference offered MBA-level education sessions geared to help women improve all types of business and personal skills. It's a not-to-be-missed conference and I would highly recommend it for any women leaders (emerging or established) in the produce industry.



Rob Atchley

The photo to the left is what has been keeping me busy these days. We just planted 900 acres of new groves in LaBelle. This piece went from pasture to completion in eight months.



Rachel Walters

My daughter, Lydia, turned 1 on April 30. She is enjoying the spring weather in the photo to the left.

Adam Trott

My daughter, Payton, turned 2 on May 11 and I am currently taking sailing lessons on a 27-foot sailboat.

Jennifer Hodges

In addition to my marketing responsibilities, I now have direct accounts in sales that span from Florida up to Massachusetts. Other than that, I have been spending most of my free time fishing in South Florida (see photo at bottom right) or on my family's ranch in DeLeon Springs (see bottom left).

