

# Florida Farm Bureau Federation

*"The Voice of Florida Agriculture"*

**CONTACT:** Ronda Hemminger Evan  
Director of Public Relations & Communications  
(O) 352.374.1516 / (C) 352.727.0796  
EM: ronda.evan@ffbf.org



---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 1, 2011

## **Local farmer earns top Chamber award**

(Inverness, Florida) The county's largest business organization honored a local farmer Friday night by awarding the Rick Quinn Distinguished Citizen Award to Larry Rooks.

This award is presented to a deserving, 'low profile' community leader who exemplifies the ideals of community volunteerism every day makes outstanding contributions to improve the quality of life in Citrus County.

"I was thrilled to hand over this award to Larry," Dale McClellan said. "He deserves this honor and is truly an asset to both the farming community and all residents of Citrus County."

McClellan and Rooks serve together on the Citrus County Ag Alliance and work to increase the visibility of agriculture in their communities. They also make sure all segments of the community are represented, not just agriculture.

And Rooks is a leader in the local ranching and agricultural industry, as well as a remarkable businessman and Farm Bureau member. He is someone who understands

**(MORE)**

**Local farmer earns top Chamber award  
-page two-**

and actively supports those in his community who look to the land for their living.

He is a trusted and admired advocate for farming and ranching, and has stepped out to be a voice for agriculture. He has held several statewide positions and is a mainstay in the local Cattlemen's Association, where his leadership has been critical.

"We were delighted to see someone from the agricultural industry win this award," chamber members remarked at the dinner function. And the event emcee even wore a "No farmers, no food" sticker during the event, underscoring the importance of food production as a real business.

While running his farm and earning a living, Rooks has maintained his dedication and support of local youth programs, including livestock and horticulture ventures. He is currently serving as the president of the Citrus County Fair Association and insists the tradition of supporting youth programs is important to helping the next generation of responsible citizens succeed.

Rooks is just one example of the Farm Bureau spirit and our organization's mission to work to improve the quality of rural life across the state of Florida. Members like Rooks actively seek solutions to economic, educational, legislative and social issues affecting local business, particularly those which could negatively impact the agricultural community. Our members live, work and contribute to their communities and play a vital role in future economic success.

And there roughly 47,000 farms in Florida, most are family enterprises like the

**(MORE)**

**Local farmer earns top Chamber award  
-page three-**

Rooks' operation. Florida Farm Bureau has launched a new initiative to build upon agriculture's contributions to our state's economy. Known as "Strengthening Family Farms and Communities," this initiative highlights the support Farm Bureau members provide for the quality of life in our state.

According to a study by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), the statewide economic impact of production agriculture exceeds \$76 billion each year, and approximately 1.6 million Floridians earn a living from agriculture-related employment.

Despite the drastic economic decline in tourism and construction, agriculture held steady harvesting a bounty of food, fiber and material for renewable fuels. Production agriculture continues to perform its invaluable service of maintaining green space, wildlife habitat and freshwater recharge areas.

**# # #**

*Florida Farm Bureau is the Sunshine State's largest general agricultural organization with more than 140,000 member-families representing Farm Bureaus in 60 counties. Membership provides a multitude of benefits and you don't have to be a farmer to be a member of Florida Farm Bureau.*