



Fast Facts

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Timely Communication For Farm Bureau Leaders

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FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS BACK ON QUALIFYING GM VEHICLES

Eligible Farm Bureau members in 23 states, including Florida, may now receive a \$500 discount on each qualifying 2011 or 2012 model year Chevrolet, GMC or Buick vehicle they purchase or lease. This Farm Bureau member exclusive is offered for vehicles purchased or leased at participating dealerships through the GM Vehicle Incentive Program. Twenty-six GM models are part of the program, including the Chevrolet Silverado HD, honored as the 2011 Motor Trend Truck of the Year. A broad range of other pick-up trucks, SUVs, sedans and crossovers also are included. Members can contact **Judy Plock** at (352) 374-1585 for full details and program eligibility guidelines.

WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT NEWS

FFB Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs **Charles Shinn** reports that the South Florida Water Management District is considering selling surplus lands that could be worth \$50 million. The District governing board reviewed a list of potential surplus lands, which is the first step in a process that can take up to five months before it votes to approve selling surplus lands. Surplus District land is defined as property that is not within the scope of the District's overall mission. Florida Farm Bureau supports the selling of excess property and encourages the District to look at all properties in the light of the District's recent focus on its core mission.

• • • FFB Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs **Curt Williams** reports that **Blake Guillory** was named **Southwest Florida Water Management District's** next executive director. Mr. Guillory will be responsible for daily direction and operating of more than 700 full-time staff members, the district's \$280 million budget and all organization assets. His position is also responsible for recommending and implementing policies adopted by the District's 13-member governing board. His tenure at the district is expected to begin on Oct. 3. **In the St. Johns River Water Management District**, the top candidates for executive director will be presented to the governing board at their Oct. 11 meeting in Palatka. Prior to that presentation, there will be four public meetings across the district ending in final interviews on Oct. 4, at the SJRWMD Maitland Service Center.

APPLY NOW FOR COST SHARING OPPORTUNITIES

The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Florida is encouraging landowners, farmers and producers to visit their local NRCS office now to receive more information and apply for conservation technical assistance and possible cost share opportunities. The application process for 2008 Farm Bill conservation programs is continuous, but funding selections are only made once a year. The Florida NRCS application cutoff date for consideration for Federal Fiscal Year 2012 funds is Oct. 31. "Applications received after that date will be considered for future funding periods," said State Conservationist Carlos Suarez. "We're urging producers to get their applications in as soon as possible to be considered for this year's funding." Cost share funding is available to eligible applicants for the following Farm Bill programs: the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**; the **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)**; the **Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)**; the **Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)**; and the **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**. Additional information on NRCS, conservation assistance, and programs is available on its website at www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov or at your local USDA - NRCS office.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR CITRUS HALL OF FAME

Nominations have opened for potential inductees to The Florida Citrus Hall of Fame, with induction ceremonies scheduled to take place on Friday, March 2, 2012 at Florida Southern College in Lakeland. The luncheon is co-sponsored by Florida Citrus Mutual and the Florida Department of Citrus. Eligible nominees for the Hall of Fame are those distinguished leaders who have made significant contributions to the Florida citrus industry in any of the following fields: pioneers, harvesting, packing, processing, marketing, scientific and/or educational areas. The deadline for nominations is December 1, 2011 and all nominations must include a photo. For more information, please contact either **John Jackson** at jackson71344@yahoo.com or **Brenda Eubanks Burnette** at (561) 351-4314.

FEDERAL AGENCIES REQUESTING HEALTH CARE INPUT

FFB Federation Accountant **Becky Barclift** reports that the Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service have requested public comment on a proposed affordability safe harbor for employers under provisions included in the Affordable Care Act that will apply to certain employers starting in 2014. Under the Affordable Care Act, employers with 50 or more full-time employees that do not offer affordable health coverage to their full-time employees may be required to make a shared responsibility payment. The deadline for comments is Dec. 13. More information is available at <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/>.

PRODUCER GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE

Calls for Proposals for the 2012 Producer Grants, intended for farmers/ranchers and farmer/rancher organizations throughout the Southern region, are now available from the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) program. Proposal submission deadline is Nov. 15. Announcement of grants will take place in February 2012. Projects may be funded for up to two years for a project maximum of \$10,000 for an individual producer or \$15,000 for a producer organization. Producer organizations should be comprised primarily of farmers/ranchers and must have a majority farmer representation on their governing board. Log on to <http://www.southernsare.org/Grants/Apply-for-a-Grant> to download the current Calls for Proposal.

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING ABOUT AGRICULTURE AWARDS

Florida general education teachers who use agricultural concepts in their language arts, math, science and social studies classes are invited to nominate themselves or someone else for Florida Agriculture in the Classroom's 2012 Excellence in Teaching About Agriculture Award. The deadline for nominations is Friday, Dec. 16. Visit <http://www.flagintheclassroom.com/> for a nomination form and more information.

FARM CREDIT RECIPE CONTEST DEADLINE APPROACHING

Farm Credit is sponsoring a recipe contest with a top prize of \$3,000. **Ron O'Connor** at Farm Credit said he would love to have a Florida winner, and asked that we spread the word about the contest. Farm Credit employees, directors and their families are not eligible. Hurry, the contest ends Sept. 30. Check out the rules at <http://www.ikeepitrural.com/kir4/contest.html>.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION WORKSHOP SET FOR SEPT. 29

The Family Garden Organic Farm in Bell will host an Organic Production Workshop 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 29 that will provide practical information and advice about organic vegetable production systems and marketing opportunities for farmers seeking to learn and share knowledge about organic and sustainable farming. Admission is free and registration is required. To register for the workshop, visit www.foginfo.org/scbgworkshops and complete the registration form. For more information, call (352) 377-6355 or e-mail jose@foginfo.org.