



Fast Facts

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Timely Communication For Farm Bureau Leaders

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EPA HEARINGS CONCLUDE

FFB Director of Government and Community Affairs Staci Braswell reports that the second round of EPA public hearings on Numeric Nutrient Criteria wrapped up April 15 in Jacksonville. Her summary follows: "There were 271 speakers over the three days of public hearings. There were 88 speakers opposed to the rule with 47 of them representing agriculture, including 36 speakers who are Farm Bureau members. Five speakers were neutral on the rule and 178 speakers spoke in favor of the rule. Agriculture was well represented at all locations with several farmers, ranchers, UF/IFAS Extension agents and researchers attending. When you combine these numbers with those recorded during the first round of hearings in March, a final picture emerges. There were 508 speakers during the six days of public hearings. There were 269 speakers (53 percent) opposed to the rule with 113 of them representing agriculture, including 67 speakers who are Farm Bureau members. Fourteen speakers were neutral on the rule and 225 speakers (44 percent) spoke in favor of the rule." If you have questions call Braswell at (352) 374-1522.

MACHEK APPOINTED TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT POST

In early April the Obama administration announced that Richard Machek will serve as Florida state director for rural development at the USDA. "Richard Machek will be an important advocate on behalf of rural communities throughout the state and help administer the valuable programs and services provided by the USDA that can enhance their economic success," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Machek is from Delray Beach and served in the Florida House of Representatives from 2000 to 2008. He is also a former member of the Florida Farm Bureau state board. Rural Development administers and manages more than 40 housing, business, and community infrastructure and facility programs as laid out by Congress through a network of 6,100 employees located in 500 national, state and local offices.

LAND SEMINAR OFFERED

FFB Assistant Director of Ag Policy Joshua Craft reports that the Conservation Trust for Florida is offering a series of interactive seminars for landowners to learn practical steps for passing their land from one generation to the next. These seminars are designed to help landowners begin discussions with their families regarding long term hopes and goals for their properties and to understand options for keeping land in agriculture and forest production. The first of these seminars will be held on Tuesday, May 11 from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the Trinkle Center in Plant City. Register for the seminar at <http://pfyfl.eventbrite.com/>. A \$15 contribution for lunch and materials is requested in advance. For more information call (352) 466-1178.

MORGAN: "THANK GOD FOR THE AMERICAN FARMER"

FFB Executive Director Kevin Morgan and FFB Director of Ag Policy Frankie Hall participated in the University of Florida Food Summit hosted by the UF Office of Sustainability. Morgan was part of a panel focused on the opportunities and challenges for the food system in Florida. Morgan told the group, "We have the safest, most abundant and most affordable food supply in the history of mankind. It is through the remarkable achievements of modern agriculture that we have opportunities to pursue our dreams. Without modern agriculture we would all be focused on hunting, gathering or trying to grow our own food. Thank God for the American farmer."

AG IN THE CLASSROOM WORKSHOP SCHEDULED

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom's 2010 State Teacher and Volunteer Workshop "Serving Up Florida Agriculture Education" will be conducted June 17-19 at the TradeWinds Beach Resort on St. Petersburg Beach. Florida agriculture industry volunteers and Florida teachers are invited to attend. The cost is only \$170 if a teacher or volunteer shares a room with another conference participant, which covers two nights lodging at a beautiful beachfront resort, most meals and materials. The cost is \$270 for those teachers and volunteers attending who want their own rooms. Agriculture industry participants will receive instruction on how to make public presentations about agriculture and agriculture-related activities they can take back to their AgVenture field trips and farm tours. To register, visit www.agtag.org Checks or credit cards are accepted. Please contact Lisa Gaskalla at gaskalla@ufl.edu or (352) 846-1391 with any questions.

CONFERENCE WILL PRESENT FINANCIAL STRATEGIES

The Florida Agriculture Financial Management Conference will be held at the Rosen Plaza in Orlando on May 20-21. The conference theme is: "Paint Your Own Financial Picture: Financial Strategies to Survive the Tough Economy for Florida's Ag Producers." For more information on attending or sponsoring, contact Linda Reindl at the FNGLA office, (800) 375-3642, or go to <http://www.fn gla.org>.

USDA GRANTS AVAILABLE

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced the availability of \$61.2 million in national financial assistance funding for Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) projects. This funding will help producers conserve surface and ground water and improve water quality on agricultural land. Of the \$61.2 million, approximately \$40.4 million will be made available to AWEP partners whose projects were approved during last fiscal year and approximately \$20.7 million will be available for new project proposals. Deadline for partner organizations to submit a proposal is 3 p.m., May 17. To view the full request for proposal, for additional AWEP information, or to apply visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/AWEP/. • • • USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced the availability of funding for the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) to restore, enhance, protect and manage habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife. WREP is a voluntary conservation program that works through partnership agreements with states, nongovernmental organizations and tribes. Eligible partners may submit proposals to the Florida NRCS state office until May 24. For more information contact Jeffrey Woods at (352) 338-9515.

INFORMATION NEEDED FOR FARMERS MARKET DIRECTORY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is launching its latest campaign to collect information about farmers markets for the 2010 USDA National Farmers Market Directory, the official count of the nation's farmers markets. Farmers markets can be added to the directory by market managers, representatives of state farmers market associations, state departments of agriculture, farmers market personnel, and nonprofit organizations. For the past 15 years, USDA has been counting the number of operational farmers markets in the United States. Since the directory was first created in 1994, the number of farmers markets has tripled from 1,755 to 5,274. Data collection for the 2010 USDA National Farmers Market Directory will continue through May 14. If you have questions about the directory call (202) 720-8317.

BARNES WINS DISCUSSION MEET

Carly Barnes, a junior at the University of Florida, recently took first place in the 2010 Collegiate Farm Bureau Discussion Meet and will represent Florida at the national finals of the event next year in Orlando. The discussion meet competition gives students the opportunity to discuss a current agricultural issue in a committee meeting format. Barnes is an Agriculture Education and Communication major. She is from Greenwood. Sarah Burlison of Osteen took second place while Lauren Mayo of Brandon finished third. All three are students in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Florida.

INTERACTIVE MARKET WEBSITE

Market Maker is a website with an interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets of agricultural products in Florida. It provides a link between producers and consumers. Those who sell agricultural products to the public are urged to go online to register. The web address for Market Maker is <http://fl.marketmaker.uiuc.edu/index.php>.

CALS GOLF TOURNAMENT SLATED FOR MAY 14

University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences alumni and friends are invited to campus on Friday, May 14 to participate in the 8th annual CALS Alumni and Friends golf tournament. The tournament will be held at the Mark Bostick Golf Course at the University of Florida. For more information call Cathy Carr at (352) 392-1963.

IMPORTANT NEWS FOR MEDICARE RECIPIENTS

On March 9 the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) took action to terminate the Fox Insurance Company's prescription drug plan due to deficiencies and violations. Plan members must select a new plan by May 1. If not, Medicare will select one for them to avoid a break in coverage. In addition, a Special Election Period (SEP) extends an opportunity for plan members to choose their own prescription drug plan by June 30. Individuals may contact the SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) program for free and unbiased counseling assistance. Trained SHINE counselors may be contacted by calling the Elder Helpline at (800) 963-5337.