



Fast Facts

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Timely Communication For Farm Bureau Leaders

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FIELD TO THE HILL A ROUSING SUCCESS

FFB National Affairs Coordinator Adam Basford reports that this year's visit to our nation's capital was among the most successful ever. Earlier this month Florida Farm Bureau's grassroots lobbying mission was on display when 85 Florida Farm Bureau members took time away from their farms and ranches to carry the torch for Florida agriculture in Washington, D.C. Members met with both U.S. Senators and the offices of all but one Florida delegation member in the U.S. House of Representatives. The trip included a reception in honor of Rep. Adam Putnam, who is leaving office after 10 years in the House of Representatives. FFB President John Hoblick presented Putnam with a plaque thanking him for his service. The group also visited the U.S. Department of Agriculture where members met with Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Afterwards members spread out on Capitol Hill to meet with their members of Congress and staff. FFB members did a great job of giving real-life stories about how legislation would impact their businesses and communities. Then the group went to the other side of the Hill where Sens. Bill Nelson and George LeMieux each spoke and took questions. The day wrapped up with a reception for congressional staff in the House Agriculture Committee chambers overlooking the Capitol. The mission concluded the next day when a panel of Congressional staff talked about how their offices really work and how to most effectively communicate with members of Congress.

YF&R LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE COMING TO JACKSONVILLE

FFB YF&R Coordinator Shaun Fulford reports that the 2010 State Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference, themed "Agriculture ... Green Before Green Was Cool," will be held at the Wyndham Jacksonville Riverwalk Hotel in Jacksonville July 9-11, 2010. A great agenda has been set with empowering workshop presenters and a keynote speaker sure to rally our young members to action. Registration is \$100 per person and covers meals, breaks and all conference materials. Registration for children 12 and under is \$30 and covers meals only. There are no registration costs for children under 3. Book hotel reservations directly by calling (904) 396-5100 or toll-free (866) 845-8862. The reservation cut-off date is Friday, June 18. Please refer to the Florida Farm Bureau State Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference when making your reservations in order to get our group rate of \$79 (+tax) per night. This rate is the same for either single or double occupancy and is available to conference attendees should they wish to extend their stay up to three days before and after the conference based on availability. Should you have any questions or need further information, please contact Fulford at (352) 378-8100, ext. 1030 or Shaun.Fulford@ffbf.org.

PINE BEETLE COST-SHARE PROGRAM AVAILABLE

FFB Assistant Director of Ag Policy Andrew Walmsley reports that the Florida Division of Forestry will once again be accepting applications for the Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Cost-Share Program. The sign-up period began on May 20 and will run through July 1. The goal of the program is to minimize southern pine beetle damage in Florida by helping forest landowners reduce the susceptibility of their pine stands to this destructive insect pest. Forest management practices such as thinning, prescribed burning, other competition control and use of less-susceptible pine species can improve the health of pine stands and decrease the likelihood of developing southern pine beetle infestations. The program offers an incentive payment for non-industrial private forest landowners who conduct a first pulpwood thinning and partial cost reimbursement for pre-commercial thinning, prescribed burning, mechanical underbrush treatments and planting longleaf pine. The program is limited to 44 northern Florida counties located within the range of the southern pine beetle. Qualified landowners may apply for no more than two approved practices per year. The minimum tract size requirement is 10 acres and funding requests may not exceed \$10,000. Application forms and more information on program requirements and procedures can be obtained from a local Division of Forestry office or by going online to <http://www.fl-dof.com/>.

FFB FIELD DISTRICT SEVEN HAPPENINGS

FFB Assistant Director of Field Services Tom Hill reports on the following events concluded or scheduled for Field District Seven. April 23, Martin County Farm Bureau held its annual meeting at Mrs. Iris Wall's High Horse Ranch. • • • May 7, Orange County Farm Bureau hosted the School Board and Superintendent for a tour of Randy Strode's tissue culture nursery (Agri-Starts). • • • May 20, Indian River County Farm Bureau held its annual meeting at the county fairgrounds. • • • May 27, St. Lucie County Farm Bureau held its annual meeting at the Adams Ranch. • • • June 15, Ag in the Classroom teacher workshop scheduled at the Indian River State College Summer Seminar in Ft. Pierce. • •

• June 26, the Alabama Farmer Federation state board of directors will tour the Deseret Ranch and Kempfer Sawmill with Frankie Hall and Tom Hill. • • • August 28, Okeechobee County Farm Bureau Archery Shoot is scheduled at the Hazellief ranch, North of Okeechobee. For more information contact Hill at (352) 317-6535.

NEW LEADERSHIP AT SWIFTMUD

FFB Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs Curt Williams reports that at the Southwest Florida Water Management District's May Governing Board Meeting, Ronald E. Oakley was elected chair, taking the place of Todd Pressman, who held the position for the last term. Other new elections include Hugh M. Gramling, vice chair; H. Paul Senft Jr., secretary; and Douglass B. Tharp, treasurer.

FLORIDA CLEAN ENERGY GRANTS AVAILABLE

A \$10 million Clean Energy Grant program will provide funding to promote energy efficiency measures and renewable energy deployment for eligible public, not-for-profit and agricultural entities. The maximum amount for an individual award is \$500,000 with a minimum amount of \$100,000. The program will be subdivided into two categories. Eligible applicants under Category 1 (\$8 million) include Florida state and local governments (which did not receive a direct allocation of funds from the U.S. Department of Energy for the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Program), school districts, public universities and colleges, Florida Constitutional Officers, independent special districts and not-for-profit companies. Existing Florida farms and farm operations will be considered eligible applicants under Category 2 (\$2 million). For a copy of the Florida Clean Energy Grant application go to <http://myfloridaclimate.com/index.php/content/download/70554/373575/version/1/file/Clean+Energy+Program+Solicitation+5-21-2010.pdf> (we tried to find a shorter link; sorry).

FAMILY PLANNING SEMINAR SCHEDULED

The Conservation Trust for Florida, UF/IFAS Extension and Florida's Forest Stewardship Program are hosting an interactive workshop for landowners to learn practical steps for passing their land to the next generation. "Planning for the Future of Your Family's Land" is scheduled for June 10 from 9 a.m. till 2:30 p.m. at the Columbia County Extension Office in Lake City. The cost is \$15 per person. The seminar is designed to help landowners begin discussions with their family regarding long term hopes and goals for their property and to understand options for keeping land in agriculture and forest production. More information and registration available online at <http://pfyfl2.eventbrite.com/>.

FFA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED TO FFB FAMILY STUDENT

Sarah Luther, daughter of John and Joanne Luther of McAlpin, was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship as part of a national scholarship program. A total of 50 of these scholarships for agricultural studies have been awarded by the National FFA Organization in conjunction with the American Farm Bureau Federation and Ram Trucks, a division of Chrysler Group LLC. Ram Trucks provided funding for the scholarships with the stipulation that winning FFA students had to be from a Farm Bureau family. Selection of winners also was based on the applicant's academic record, FFA and other school and community activities, supervised agricultural experience in an agricultural education program and the student's future goals. "It's an honor to recognize these 50 students from Farm Bureau families who have dedicated their academic and social activities to agriculture," said Will Gilmer, AFBF Young Farmer and Rancher chair. "With their commitment and enthusiasm, U.S. agricultural production will have a bright future." Ram Trucks sponsors the scholarships as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Scholarships are presented to the winning students by Ram Trucks dealers on behalf of the company.

DISTRICT TWO POSTER CONTEST

FFB Senior Assistant Director of Field Services Dan Buchanan reports that District 2 had three counties try something a bit new this spring. They sponsored a First Grade Poster Contest where students used their artistic skills to draw and color posters depicting "What Florida farms look like." Lafayette, Madison and Hamilton counties participated and judging was performed by FFB Director of Public Relations Rod Hemphill and other members of his staff. The county Farm Bureaus awarded cash prizes to more than 25 students and one teacher at each school

USDA RELEASES REPORT ON LOCAL FOOD

USDA Economic Research Service has just released a new report entitled: "Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts and Issues." This comprehensive overview of local food systems explores alternative definitions of local food, estimates market size and reach, describes the characteristics of local consumers and producers and examines early indications of the economic and health impacts of local food systems. A copy of the report is available for download at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR97/>.