



Fast Facts

Vol. 17 No. 3

Timely Communication For Farm Bureau Leaders

March 20, 2009

Published by Florida Farm Bureau • P.O. Box 147030 • Gainesville, FL 32614-7030 • (352) 378-8100 • <FloridaFarmBureau.org>

FARM BUREAU DAY ATTRACTS LARGE CROWD

The voice of agriculture was heard in Florida's capital city earlier this week as hundreds of Farm Bureau members arrived in Tallahassee for Farm Bureau Day activities. On Monday night, more than 200 Farm Bureau members gathered for a legislative briefing at the Tallahassee Automobile Museum. Guest speakers at the dinner were Rep. Trudi Williams and Sen. Thad Altman. FFB Director of Legislative Affairs Ben Parks spoke about Farm Bureau's priority issues for the session. Armed with this information, Farm Bureau members ascended on Capitol Hill Tuesday to discuss agricultural issues with their legislators. The annual Farm Bureau Day legislative reception was held Tuesday evening at the Leon County Civic Center. Hundreds of Farm Bureau members were able to mingle with 35 state legislators (up from last year's total of 31) as well as Commissioner of Agriculture Charlie Bronson, Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink, Secretary of State Kurt Browning and Congressman Adam Putnam. Farm Bureau extends a huge thank you to its generous sponsors and to everyone who set up exhibits and helped decorate.

AGRICULTURAL LEADERS MEET WITH GOV. CRIST

Florida Farm Bureau President John Hoblick led a delegation of Florida agricultural leaders for a meeting with Gov. Charlie Crist in the early afternoon hours during Farm Bureau Day in Tallahassee. Hoblick presented the governor with the mission statement promulgated by the Future of Florida Agriculture Task Force that he called together more than two years ago. The governor said he would give consideration to publishing the report as an Executive Order. The agricultural leaders also talked to Crist about other pressing issues, including the continuing need for a legal workforce and proposed legislation to increase maximum truck weights on Florida highways. Accompanying Hoblick to the meeting were Ben Bolusky (Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association), Jeff Doran (Florida Forestry Association), Jim Handley (Florida Cattlemen's Association), Mike Sparks (Florida Citrus Mutual) and Mike Stuart (Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association).

PARKS HONORED BY FLORIDA CHAMBER

FFB Director of Legislative Affairs Ben Parks recently received the Business Advocacy Award from the Florida Chamber of Commerce in recognition of his distinguished commitment to the Florida business community. Parks was among six recipients honored during the Florida Chamber's Capitol Days, held last month in Tallahassee. Criteria for the awards include face-to-face meetings with legislators on behalf of the chamber and assisting the chamber in recruiting new investors.

STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

FFB Women's Coordinator Shaun Fulford reports that there is still time to register for the 2009 State Women's Leadership Conference. It is scheduled for April 3-5 in Coral Springs. Registration forms can be downloaded at <http://FloridaFarmBureau.org/programs>. Click on the "Farm Bureau Women" button and then "download registration form." After completing the form, fax it to (352) 384-2604 by Monday, March 30, to reserve your spot. You may turn your \$75 registration fee in when you check-in at the conference. Fulford promises that it will be a great event that no one will want to miss. For more information contact Fulford at (352) 378-8100, ext. 1030.

HAVE SOMETHING TO TRADE? TRY THIS WEB SITE

Lafayette County Farm Bureau member Tom Lashley has established a new Web site that offers farmers and ranchers the opportunity to offer to exchange products or services with other agricultural producers. To list items or services on the site, go to <http://FarmBarter.com>.

NEW DISTRICT 4 FIELDMAN

FFB Director of Field Services Danny Raulerson reports that Joseph Siegmeister (Joe) has accepted the position of assistant director of field services, District 4. Siegmeister has been an ag teacher and FFA advisor in the Volusia and Dade County school systems for the past 10 years. He earned a B.S. degree at the University of Florida while majoring in agricultural operations management. Siegmeister will begin his employment on April 16. District 4 now includes the following counties: Flagler, Volusia, Seminole, Marion, Alachua, Gilchrist, Levy and Dixie. As an assistant director of field services, Siegmeister will be responsible for coordinating county meetings and events, as well as being a liaison between

the county Farm Bureaus and the state office. • • • As part of a recent realignment, **FFB Field District 3** now includes Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Nassau, Putnam/St. Johns and Union counties.

MARK WILSON HONORED BY CHAMBER

The Greater Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce has named Mark Wilson Agriculturist of the Year. A member of the FFB state board of directors, Wilson founded Greendale Nursery, a family-owned business, in 1985. Greendale Nursery specializes in exotic tropical foliage plants with sales to a range of customers, from small retail outlets to large chain stores located in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. Wilson has served on the board of directors of Dade County Farm Bureau. He is chairman of the Dade County Public Schools Agriscience Advisory Committee and has served as chairman of the Florida Committee for the Farm Service Agency of the USDA. Wilson also represented the nursery industry on the Governor's Committee for a Sustainable South Florida. The Agriculturist of the Year award was presented at a luncheon on March 19.

KELLY RICE APPOINTED TO BASIN BOARD

FFB Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs Cara Martin reports that Kelly Rice has been appointed to the Withlacoochee River Basin Board. The Southwest Florida Water management District's basin boards provide guidance for local programs that are specific to the basins they protect. Basin Boards work with local governments and other entities on water resource projects that have an impact in local communities. Basin boards also provide partial funding for these projects in partnership with a local government or local cooperator. Rice, president of Sumter County Farm Bureau, resides in Webster and is broker/owner of Century 21 Realty and president of Rice Cattle Company.

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED BY ALACHUA COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Alachua County Farm Bureau is encouraging high school seniors to apply for scholarships this spring. Awards are available for both academic and career technical paths for graduating high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are Farm Bureau members. Applications and all information can be accessed on the Web site: <http://alachuacountyfarmbureau.com> or by contacting the county office at (386) 418-4008. The application deadline is April 16. "We encourage students to apply for these valuable scholarships," said Alachua County Farm Bureau President **Myron Bryan**. "We are glad to be able to help young people in our county to further their education."

HURRICANE FORECASTER HAS SOME GOOD NEWS

Hurricane forecaster Joe Bastardi has released an early hurricane season forecast for 2009 that calls for fewer landfalls in the United States as well as a lower overall number of named storms. However, storms may be more likely to form in the Atlantic Basin closer to the coast and the possibility of a major hurricane making landfall in the United States cannot be ruled out. "This year's forecast shows only half as many impacts on the United States as there were last year," Bastardi said. "But keep in mind, it only takes one major hurricane hitting a highly populated area to have devastating impact." Early indications show a reduction in the overall number of named storms and major hurricanes in the Atlantic Basin compared to last year, but the number of storms should still be near or a little above normal."

STATE BOARD AFFIRMS OPPOSITION TO U.S. SUGAR PURCHASE

During their most recent meeting, the Florida Farm Bureau state board reaffirmed its opposition to South Florida Water Management District's attempt to purchase 183,000 acres of land owned by U.S. Sugar Corporation for \$1.34 billion. Florida Farm Bureau supports the rights of private property owners to acquire, use and sell property, but opposes the unnecessary acquisition of more land by government. The board is encouraging county Farm Bureaus to adopt a resolution against the acquisition. Any resolutions passed should be forwarded to the appropriate elected county government officials.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

A Grower Appreciation Dinner Dance will be held Saturday evening, April 25 at the Binks Forest Golf Club in Wellington. For more information contact **Ann Holt** at (561) 346-2826. • • • **The 31st Annual Barbecue & "Fun" Raiser** will be held on Saturday, April 25 at the DiMare Annex of the Farmers Market in Florida City. Tickets are \$100 per couple and can be purchased from any Dade County Farm Bureau director, agent or staff member. • • • **The Tampa Bay Beekeepers Association** will be hosting a honeybee seminar on Saturday, May 16, from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Upper Tampa Bay Park at 8001 Double Branch Road. For more information contact **Jane Hall** at (727) 391-5390. • • • **The Field to the Hill** trip to Washington, D.C., is scheduled for May 11-13. For more information, contact **Adam Basford** at (352) 378-8100, ext. 1449. • • • **The Florida Agriculture in the Classroom's 2009 State Teacher and Volunteer Workshop** is scheduled for **June 18-20 at the Daytona Beach Resort & Spa.** The deadline to register is May 22. For more information contact **Lisa Gaskalla** at (352) 846-1391.