



Fast Facts

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YOUNG FARMERS AND RANCHERS WILL MEET IN CRYSTAL RIVER

The 2009 State Young Farmer & Rancher Leadership Conference is scheduled for July 18-19, at the Plantation Inn in Crystal River. Registration is \$75 for adults and \$30 for children. The registration deadline is Friday, June 19. This year's conference will bring participants back to the basics of agriculture and inspire them as they head back to their operations with creative as well as innovative ideas in the areas of economics, marketing, productivity and sustainability. The meeting will provide an excellent opportunity for all those attending to meet and work with other young farmers and ranchers throughout the state. Financial assistance may be available. For more information, contact **Shaun Fulford** at (352) 378-8100, Ext. 1030.

FARM BUREAU OPPOSES THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT

Florida Farm Bureau Federation has joined Agriculture for a Democratic Workplace (ADW), a national coalition of agriculture associations unified to oppose the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). The EFCA would amend the National Labor Relations Act to make it easier for employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations. The EFCA would also deny workers their right to a secret ballot when deciding whether or not to be represented by a union. The secret ballot would be replaced with a card check scheme, which would make an individual worker's vote public to his/her employer, union organizers, and co-workers. The Florida Farm Bureau Federation states "For the purposes of uniformity, we strongly favor agricultural labor relations legislation at the national level rather than state legislation. Any legislation should include safeguards for workers, employers, and consumers, such as requiring secret ballot elections."

AWARD APPLICATIONS POSTED ON WEB SITE

FFB Young Farmer and Rancher Coordinator **Shaun Fulford** reports that the 2009 Award Applications have been released and deadlines have been set for their completion. These applications can be found online by going to <http://FloridaFarmBureau.org> and then selecting the "Programs" link from the left side menu. This will take you to a new page where you will find links to the "Young Farmer & Rancher," the "Collegiate Farm Bureau" and the "Youth Speech" competitions. For more information contact **Nicole Kelton** at (352) 384-2630.

COW/CALF BMP KICKOFF MEETINGS SCHEDULED

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, in cooperation with the Florida Cattlemen's Association and UF/IFAS, have scheduled a number of kickoff meetings to formally introduce the recently adopted cow/calf best management practices (BMP) manual. The meetings will provide producers with key information on the use of the manual, enrollment process, soil testing and forage production as it relates to water quality protection. The Sebring (May 6) and Kissimmee (May 7) meetings are scheduled to run from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. and will include lunch. The North Florida meeting (May 14) will run from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. (CDT) and will be conducted via videoconference, so producers should contact their local UF/IFAS Extension Office for more details. South Florida producers unable to attend their kickoff meetings can also participate via videoconference on May 14. BMP manuals will be distributed to all attendees. For further information contact **Bill Bartnick** at (850) 617-1700.

DOT SCHEDULES INFORMATIONAL MEETING

FFB Assistant Director of Field Services **Allen Scheffer** reports that Jackson County Farm Bureau will be hosting an "Informational/Educational Meeting" to discuss current rules, regulations and laws concerning the hauling of agricultural products and the driving of agricultural equipment on the roadways of Florida. This meeting will be held Tuesday night, May 5, at the Jackson County Ag Center in Marianna. It will begin at 6:00 pm with a dinner being served. RSVP is required by May 1. To do so, please call the Jackson County Farm Bureau office at (850) 482-5751, the county Extension office at (850) 482-9620 or **Scheffer** at (352) 538-3182.

HAPPENINGS IN FIELD DISTRICT III

FFB Assistant Director of Field Services **Greg Harden** reports that a district wide meeting will be held on April 28 at the Clay County Ag Center for all county Farm Bureau board members/leaders within the newly aligned District III which now includes Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval,

Nassau, Putnam/St. Johns and Union counties. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. The Ag Center is located on SR 16 west of Green Cove Springs. Dinner will be served. Please RSVP to Harden at (352) 538 3346 if you plan on attending. • • • **Columbia County Farm Bureau will be hosting a tri-county (Columbia, Hamilton and Suwannee counties) DOT Educational Seminar at the Columbia County Fairgrounds on April 30 starting at 6 p.m.** The purpose of this seminar is to educate Farm Bureau members on the current rules and regulations associated with the movement of agricultural commodities. Dinner will be served. Please RSVP to the Columbia County Farm Bureau at (386) 752-4003.

FFA BEAST FEAST JUST 'ROUND THE CORNER

The Florida FFA Foundation is serving up a variety of wild game and seafood at the sixth annual Beast Feast & Auction on Saturday, May 2, to benefit the Leadership Training Center (LTC). The Beast Feast will be held at the LTC at 5000 Firetower Road, off Highway 542 (Hatchineha Road) near Haines City from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The LTC hosts a variety of meetings, conferences and workshops for FFA and other organizations. Anyone wishing to help Florida FFA can do so by becoming an event sponsor, donating items for the silent or live auction and by purchasing or selling tickets. For tickets or more information about this event, contact **Dennis Der** at (813) 759-0132, Ext. 3 or **Gary Bartley** at (863) 439-7332, Ext. 6321. You can also visit the Foundation Web site at <http://www.flaffafoundation.org> and click on special events.

BEWARE: UNLICENSED AGRICULTURAL DEALERS AND HANDLERS

According to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), claims filed by growers against agricultural dealers have more than doubled during the first half of fiscal year 2008-2009, compared to the average number of claims during the same period in the past four fiscal years. Any person who is engaged in the business of buying, receiving, soliciting, handling or negotiating agricultural products for Florida producers or their agents within this state must be licensed and bonded. FDACS licenses all such individuals. The Florida License and Bond Law helps assure growers that they will receive proper accounting and payment for their products. Farm producers can determine whether a dealer is licensed and the amount of bond posted by accessing the following Internet site: <http://www.florida-agriculture.com/marketing/licensing/index.htm>.

AGRI-WOMEN SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Two \$500 scholarships will be awarded by Florida Agri-Women to two female students based on academic standing, service to the community and leadership. One scholarship will be awarded to an incoming freshman or current undergraduate college student. The other scholarship will be awarded to a current M.S. or Ph.D. student. Applicants must be female, a U.S. citizen, a Florida resident and majoring in an agriculture-related field of study. Scholarship applications and instructions may be downloaded at <http://floridaagriwomen.org/>. Completed packets should be mailed to Kelly Vineyard, 19703 NW 20th Ave., Newberry, FL 32669. All applications must be postmarked by Friday, June 12. Award recipients will be presented with their scholarship award at Florida Agri-Women's 6th Annual Founder's Day Dinner, which will be held Saturday, August 15, at 6:30 p.m. at the Embassy Suites Lake Buena Vista in Orlando.

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED BY PEANUT PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

The Florida Peanut Producers Association (FPPA) will award two \$1,200 scholarships to deserving high school seniors and/or college students. The applicant, or someone in the applicant's family, must be an actively producing peanut grower, not necessarily a member of the FPPA. The award recipients must attend a Florida junior college or four-year university. Each winner will receive \$600 when the scholarship winners are announced. The remaining \$600 will be awarded after the completion of one semester and documentation of passing grades is submitted to the FPPA office. For an application contact the FPPA office at 2741 Penn Ave., Suite 1, Marianna, FL 32448 or call (850) 526-2590. Scholarship applications must be postmarked no later than July 1.

TWO MORE HOTELS ADDED TO WYNDHAM'S LINEUP

The Wyndham Hotel Group has added Microtel Inns and Suites and Hawthorn Suites to its lineup of brands offering discounts to Florida Farm Bureau members. To book hotels, members should call (877) 670-7088 and supply their Farm Bureau member number and the discount ID code available from county Farm Bureaus or at the Florida Farm Bureau Web site. Go to <http://FloridaFarmBureau.org> and click on "Member Benefits" and then click on "Travel & Tourism." For more information contact **Judy Plock** at (352) 374-1585.

TRACTOR AND IMPLEMENT SHORT COURSE OFFERED

A Tractor and Implement short course will be offered on July 10-11 at the North Florida Research and Education Center in Quincy. Two-day registration is \$220 and includes hands-on tractor time. For more information contact **Vicky Morris** at (850) 875-7115.