



Fast Facts

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STRODE NAMED FARMER OF THE YEAR

Randy Strode has been named the Florida winner of the 2008 Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year award. An Apopka horticulturist, Strode owns a state-of-the-art facility that produces a wide variety of food and ornamental plants through tissue culture. The business, Agri-Starts, Inc., cultivates plant tissues in sterile environments and then pushes them to grow with liquid nutrients and growth regulators. He is now eligible for the Southeastern Farmer of the Year regional award, to be announced at the Sunbelt Ag Expo in Moultrie, Ga. on Oct. 14. Tom Hill, FFB assistant director of Field Services, nominated Strode for the honor.

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION ON FFB WEB SITE

FFB Manager of Public Relations Programs Kathy Richardson reports that there is a page on the FFB Web site that contains details about this year's annual meeting at the Peabody Orlando. It can be found at: http://floridafarmbureau.org/annual_meeting. The full convention agenda is posted there as well as hotel check-in and parking information. You can also access special Disney and Mall at Millenia deals from this page.

GROVER G. NORQUIST TO ADDRESS ANNUAL MEETING

Anti-tax activist and issues management strategist Grover G. Norquist will address the Farm PAC Luncheon on Thursday, Oct. 9, at Florida Farm Bureau's annual meeting at the Peabody Hotel in Orlando. Organized around the theme "Growing for Tomorrow," the annual meeting will begin Oct. 8 and conclude mid-day Oct. 10. "Mr. Norquist offers a unique perspective on government and taxation," said Ben Parks, Florida Farm Bureau's director of state legislative affairs. "He will provide our members with insights on taxes, politics and the November elections." Norquist is president of Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), a coalition of taxpayer groups, individuals and businesses opposed to higher taxes at both the federal, state and local levels that asks candidates for federal and state office to commit themselves in writing to oppose all tax increases. Mr. Norquist is author of the book "Leave Us Alone: Getting the Government's Hands Off Our Money, Our Guns, Our Lives," an optimistic look at how the conservative movement can and will grow during the next 25 years.

PAT COCKRELL HONORED BY FACTE

Pat Cockrell, executive assistant to the FFB president, was recently recognized by the Florida Association for Career and Technical Education (FACTE) and inducted into its Hall of Fame for Support of Career and Technical Education programs (specifically Agri-science and Natural Resources). "Career and Technical Education" is generally recognized as the new term for vocational education. Said Cockrell, "I am blessed to work for an organization whose leadership values education and recognizes that our industry needs today's best and brightest students."

CONGRESS PASSES 10-ACRE BILL

FFB Director of National Affairs Dana Brooks reports that the House and Senate both passed by unanimous consent Monday a compromise bill that eliminates the 10-acre prohibition of the 2008 farm bill for 2008 only. The provision had required producers to have a minimum of 10 base acres to receive program benefits. The legislation will allow farmers to go back to their Farm Service Agency offices through mid-November to sign up for 2008 payments that were previously denied on almost 460,000 farms. Farm Bureau will encourage the new administration to implement this provision differently in 2009, and if implementation remains the same next year, work will begin on a longer-term fix. The legislation also included several fixes to the supplemental disaster program, including a de minimis exception for the crop insurance purchase requirement for program eligibility. With the passage of this new legislation, if a portion of a farm is not of economic significance, then the risk management provision is waived.

AGRICULTURAL LABOR SEMINARS SCHEDULED

FFB Director of Agricultural Policy Kevin Morgan reports that Florida Farm Bureau is proud to co-sponsor three Ag Labor Seminars organized by the U.S. Department of Labor. Topics covered will include the H2A agricultural worker program and Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act, as well as the role and authority of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation. The Department of

Health's regulations will also be discussed (There are brand new Department of Health regulations regarding housing). Field sanitation issues will be discussed, as violations regarding field toilets and hand washing facilities continue to be all too common. The dates and locations for these seminars are as follows: Monday, Dec. 15, at the Nora Mayo Hall, Florida Citrus Building, 503 3rd Street in Winter Haven; Tuesday, Dec. 16, at the Turner Center, Annex (a.k.a. Exhibition Hall), 2250 N.E. Roan Street in Arcadia; Wednesday, Dec. 17, at the Agri-Civic Center, 4509 George Blvd. in Sebring. All of the seminars will be conducted from 5:30-9 p.m. No preregistration is necessary.

COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS SET FOR DECEMBER 11-12

All county Farm Bureau presidents are urged to attend the Council of Presidents meeting on Dec. 11 and 12 at the University Hilton in Gainesville. The meeting's theme is "Back to the Future." Sessions will begin at 1 p.m. on Dec. 11 and end at noon on Dec. 12. The deadline for room reservations is Nov. 13. To register or obtain more information, contact Nicole Kelton at: (352) 384-2630.

THARP APPOINTED TO SWIFTMUD BOARD

FFB Assistant Director of Government and Community Affairs Cara Martin reports that Gov. Charlie Crist has appointed Douglas B. Tharp to the Southwest Florida Water Management District governing board. He succeeds Judith C. Whitehead.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM TRAINING SCHEDULED

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom has scheduled its 2008 Facilitator Training for Nov. 21-22 in Tallahassee. Participants will be instructed on how to hold Florida Ag in the Classroom workshops in their home counties and schools. The facilitator workshop is free of charge. Florida Ag in the Classroom will cover the cost of curricula and materials, most meals, lodging for the evening of Friday, Nov. 21 and the cost of a substitute teacher for that day. If you are interested in attending please contact Lisa Gaskalla at (352) 846-1391 or e-mail gaskalla@ufl.edu. Please sign up quickly as only 25 slots are available. First priority will be given to teachers and volunteers in the Panhandle of Florida.

FARM-CITY WEEK COST SHARE FUNDS AGAIN AVAILABLE

FFB Manager of Public Relations Programs Kathy Richardson reports that the state organization will again partner with county Farm Bureaus to promote Farm-City Week and Farm Bureau in general. As has been the practice for the past two years, Florida Farm Bureau is offering a 50-50 cost-share program where counties will be able to purchase advertisements (generally 1/4 page) in daily, weekly or community newspapers or radio spots in some markets. Ads must run the week before Farm-City Week or during Farm City Week. This year Farm-City Week is Nov. 21-27. Deadline to apply for the cost share is Oct. 17. Please contact Richardson at (352) 374-1533 or Kathy.Richardson@ffbf.org for more information or to participate in this program.

FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM HOSTS EVENTS

The Florida Agricultural Museum will host an old-fashioned barn dance on Saturday, Oct. 11, from 6-9 p.m. The program will include cake walks, pie auction, weenie roast and refreshments. The museum will also host Florida's Haunted Trails on Friday, Oct. 24 from 6-10 p.m. Hosted in cooperation with the Habitat for Humanity and the Flagler County Human Society, the program will feature pony and wagon rides, a haunted house, trick or treat trails, story tellers, face painting, carnival games for kids and free candy. For more information on both events contact Mary Herron at (386) 446-7630 or e-mail famuseum@pcfl.net. The Florida Agricultural Museum is located in northeast Flagler County on the corner of U.S. 1 and Old Kings Road.

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LARGE VEGETABLES

FFB Assistant Director of Field Services Eva Webb reports that the South Florida Fair is looking for some extremely large vegetables for its Largest Vegetable Contest. There will be cash awards of up to \$200 with adult and youth entries judged separately. Get your plants in the ground soon as the competition will be held on Jan. 19, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. For more information and to obtain an entry form, please visit <http://www.southfloridafair.com>. Type in keywords: Largest Vegetable.

FARMERS MARKETS RECEIVE GRANTS

Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer recently announced 85 grants totaling \$3,445,000 directed by the new farm bill to spread the use of farmers markets. Eighteen of the 85 grants promote a new electronic benefit transfers (EBT) to help low-income consumers buy locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables. The Florida Association of Community Farmers Markets, Inc. in Gainesville was one of the grant recipients and received \$59,317.