

Citrus connection



HIGHLANDS COUNTY CITRUS GROWERS President's Column by Emma Ezell

Greetings Fellow Growers,

What a year it has been! Wait it has only been a month? Time flies when you have no idea what day it is. I am sure there is a study out there that scientifically proves that the more we age, the faster time goes. If not, there should be one. I guess I'll just keep on keeping on the best I can until I'm proved otherwise.

The things I do remember the most are my memories from time well spent in the orange grove. My dad was much more lenient back when I was eight and wanted to take a nap in the truck because it was too hot outside. Even though the naps are fewer nowadays, I still love what I do! Being in the grove is my favorite. They say if you love what you do, then you'll never work a day in your life. I'm certainly not saying being a grower is easy, there is plenty of hard work to do and things to fret about, but the rewards far outweigh the work part in my opinion.

Speaking of hard work... I think one of the hardest jobs of being the HCCGA Board President is writing this column each month in a timely fashion. I can say I have learned a lot about myself while writing these things like: I think I'm funnier in my head than when I read these aloud, thank goodness the computer has spell check, we are all in this together and you can always find something to talk about even if it is the weather (again). With all that being said, I cannot believe this is the last official column of my presidency. I hope over the past year I have imparted some little nugget of information or gave you a thought to ponder and/or at the very least, brought a smile to your face. It has been quite a year; hurricanes, freezes, legislative issues, funding, research, a new product to try, a renewed sense of hope among other things. I take comfort, as I often do; in the fact that we are a community of growers and that we are all in this together!

Thank you Ray for keeping me straight more often than not - without your diligent tutelage and dedication to not only our organization but the citizens of Highlands County we would be a little more lost. On behalf of myself and the current board, Thank You for your time, it has been my sincere privilege to work with you during this past year and I truly appreciate your continued mentorship. Thank you to Natasha for all the help in the front office, it is always wonderful to see you and have continuing conversations about our kids. Another big thank you to the board of directors without whom I could not have gotten this far. We have had some very interesting discussions in the board room, some fun and some serious, but I think we are all better growers and people for it.

I know there are a few people I have forgotten to mention, none the least of which is my family without whom I cannot continue to do the things I love - thank you family for all the love and support you have shown me this year and beyond! You all will have to come to the HCCGA Annual Meeting on March 2nd if you'd like to hear more in a really great farewell speech (short and sweet I promise). If not for my speech then for the cocktail hour, some fellowship, some better speakers than me, the business meeting and/or the somewhat decent banquet food. It will be a good time for all and I hope to see you there!

As this is my last column maybe I should say something about actually growing oranges or the 2022-2023 harvest season, or the weather but why end on that note; let's remember the good days when we can and know that there are still good days coming ahead! I am sure there is an email waiting in your inbox that will cover all of those other topics. Thank you all for taking the time to read my columns and I know the next Presidents columns will be just as fabulous as these have been. Thank you Aaron Nelson for carrying on the tradition, you will be in good hands. Keep reading and keep growing that wonderful Florida sunshine.

Cheers, Citrus and My Appreciation,

Emma Ezell

**JAN
2023**

- USDA Crop Forecast
- ReMedium TI Seminar
- HCCGA Administrative Assistant
- Marketing Order Amendments
- Citrus Growers Institute
- Membership Renewal
- Flower Bud Advisories
- New HCCGA Board Officers
- HCCGA Newsletter Advertising
- FL Citrus Show
- Post-Bloom Fruit Drop
- HCCGA Annual Meeting
- Ag Water Requirements
- MRLs - Citrus Exports



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2023 Calendar of Events



March 2

HCCGA Annual Meeting

April 4

Florida Citrus Growers' Institute @ SFSC in Avon Park

April 13

Florida Citrus Show @ UF/IFAS IRREC and USDA Hort. Research Lab in Ft. Pierce

June 14-16

Annual Citrus Conference @ Bonita Springs

August 16-17

Citrus Expo @ Lee County Civic Center

December 9

2023 HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot @ Quail Creek

For additional information about any of these meetings or events, contact Ray or Jan at the HCCGA office



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Executive Director's Report

BY RAY ROYCE

Governor DeSantis recently released his budget proposal for the upcoming legislative session, and he recommends investing \$29.4 million in Florida's citrus industry for citrus research, the Citrus Health Response Program, and for consumer awareness marketing efforts. We are fortunate that the Governor and others in Florida's political leadership recognize the opportunity to invest in our industry's future.



Florida's federal delegation members, from both sides of the political aisle, are also taking action to move the legislative language necessary that would enable the USDA to utilize the funding that has already been appropriated to hopefully provide hurricane relief, presumably through a block grant program, to growers in the coming months. While this political progression is taking longer than any would desire, it is a process that Florida Citrus Mutual and others are fervently trying to work through.

The 2023 HCCGA Annual Meeting is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, March 2nd. We look forward to celebrating 33 years as an Association working on behalf of our membership. As part of the program, Congressman Scott Franklin and Citrus Mutual's Matt Joyner will share their perspectives on issues that affect our industry. We will also recognize those folks that have made our major fellowship and fundraising events possible. Advance registration is required, so let us know ASAP if you would like to attend.

Please know that your Association has a great Board of Directors, and collectively they and I look forward to working on your behalf in the coming months and years ahead. We strive each day to provide value to all of our members and the companies they represent by pursuing our Association's mission of **"protecting and enhancing the viability and profitability of commercial citrus groves in Highlands County"**.

In that vein, I would like to thank outgoing HCCGA President Emma Ezell for her service as our Board president over the past year – she has done a fabulous job representing our Association and it has been a true pleasure working with her. So thank you for your tremendous service Emma! Aaron Nelson assumes the Board presidency at the annual meeting, and I know that he looks forward to representing our membership for the upcoming year.

A quick reminder that since we are now in a new tax assessment year it will behoove you to contact the Highlands County Property Appraiser's office and make sure that they have current and accurate information in regards to your grove properties. Having the accurate info can make a significant difference in how your property is assessed and taxed long term. Even though all citrus properties will be assessed at "base land value" for the upcoming tax year – you want to have the proper info in their hands for the longer term.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many great companies that regularly advertise within our newsletter, sharing their message across the agricultural community of central Florida. These folks make the production, printing and mailing of this valuable communication tool possible. I encourage our readers to consider doing business with these fine folks whenever they provide a product or service that your operation requires. We can always make room for another ad or two if you want to get some great exposure for your company – just let us know.

This is your newsletter, so if there are ever any topics or issues that you would like to see covered or elaborated upon – please do not hesitate to let me know. Same goes for the work of your Association – if there are issues or services that you perceive we need to pay more attention to, please share that as well.

Since one of our goals is to keep our members as informed as possible on a wide range of issues, so please, never hesitate in contacting me day or night (cell # 863-381-8551) for additional information if you need it; or if I can be of any assistance on any matter, large or small.

Thanks, Ray

Thanks, Ray



Info Notes



2022-2023 Florida Citrus Production Guides

The 2022-2023 Florida Citrus Production Guides are available to pick up at the UF/IFAS Highlands County Extension office or the handbooks are available online (with printable sections) at: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cg101>.

2022 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute Presentations Online

The 2022 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute was held on April 5th at the South Florida State College Avon Park campus. The educational presentations were recorded and are available online at the citrus agent's website: <https://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/archived-presentations/2022/>. Here you will also find PDF versions of the slides.

UF/IFAS Podcasts for Growers

UF/IFAS and Southeast AgNet have partnered to provide the latest news on citrus-related research in a monthly "All in for Citrus" podcast. The podcasts feature short interviews with scientists working to find solutions to citrus greening and other devastating citrus diseases. The podcast complements the new research update website and citrus newsletter at: <http://citrusresearch.ifas.ufl.edu/newsletter-sign-up/>. Podcasts may be downloaded to your mobile phone, tablet or computer to be listened to at your convenience.

"Florida OJ Break" License Tags

The HCCGA office has a very good supply of the "Take A Florida Orange Juice Break" license plates to share. Please feel free to stop by the HCCGA office and get one for your vehicles. We also have a limited supply of a few other types of OJ related tags.



Sales Tax Exemption Forms for Ag Uses

Florida Farm Bureau has a very informative page on their website that lists a number of potential agriculturally related items that may be exempt from sales tax. It also contains a recommended exemption form to be utilized. It can be found at: <https://www.floridafarmbureau.org/agricultural-sales-tax-exemptions-in-florida/>

UF/IFAS Research Website

The updated Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC) website at <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/> is now live. The revamped site has the latest research information on HLB management, detailed information on rootstock trials, access to on-line presentations from UF/IFAS research scientists, EDIS documents sorted by topic for easy access, and more.

UF/IFAS OJ Break Programs

The central Florida UF/IFAS citrus extension agents are providing an OJ Break Grower meeting series in a twice monthly virtual program format. Upon registration you will be sent a Zoom link for each meeting. To see the upcoming meeting topics and register for the Zoom notice – go to: <https://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/oj-break/>.

Restricted Use Pesticide Exams

Restricted Use Pesticide exams are done using laptops at most UF/IFAS county Extension offices. Whether you are taking the test for the first time, renewing your license, or adding a new category, you can take your exam at most county Extension offices. In Highlands County, the Extension office is scheduling exams for Wednesdays and Fridays. You can schedule your exam online at <https://pesticideexam.ifas.ufl.edu/public/countyList.faces>.

FDOC Webinars

The Florida Department of Citrus hosts monthly webinars in order to provide key information on various topics important to the Florida Citrus industry. To receive notifications on webinars and other topics, please e-mail Katie Bruce at kbruce@citrus.myflorida.com and ask to be added to FDOC's email distribution list.



February USDA Citrus Crop Forecast Update



All Oranges 16.0 Million Boxes

The 2022-2023 Florida all orange forecast released on February 8th by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Board is 16.0 million boxes, down 2.00 million boxes from the January forecast. If realized, this will be 61 percent less than last season's final production. The forecast consists of 6.00 million boxes of non-Valencia oranges (early, mid-season, and Navel varieties) and 10.0 million boxes of Valencia oranges.

Non-Valencia Oranges 6.00 Million Boxes

The forecast of non-Valencia production is reduced 1.00 million boxes to 6.00 million boxes. Size and drop components were final last month. The Row Count survey conducted January 24-25, 2023, showed 92 percent of the early and mid-season non-Valencia rows, excluding Navels, are harvested. Estimated utilization for non-Valencia oranges (including Navels) to February 1, with an allocation for non-certified fruit, is 5.77 million boxes. The Navel forecast, included in the non-Valencia portion of the forecast, is 250,000 boxes.

Valencia Oranges 10.0 Million Boxes

The forecast of Valencia production is down 1.00 million boxes from the January forecast to 10.0 million boxes. Current fruit size is below the minimum and is projected to be below the minimum at harvest. Current droppage is above the maximum and projected to be above maximum at harvest.

All Grapefruit 1.50 Million Boxes

The February forecast of all grapefruit production is unchanged at 1.50 million boxes. The red grapefruit forecast is unchanged at 1.32 million boxes. The white grapefruit forecast also is unchanged at 180,000 boxes. Fruit size and drop are final in this report. White grapefruit final size is above average, while red grapefruit final size is below the minimum. Drop for white grapefruit is above average, while red grapefruit drop is above the maximum. Estimated utilization for white grapefruit to February 1, with an allocation for non-certified fruit, is 62,000 boxes and for red grapefruit is 1.11 million boxes. The Row Count survey conducted January 24-25, 2023 showed 47 percent of the grapefruit rows are harvested.

Tangerines and Tangelos 500,000 Boxes

The forecast for tangerines and tangelos is unchanged from the January forecast and is 500,000 boxes, 33 percent less than last season's utilization of 750,000 boxes. This forecast number includes all certified tangerine and tangelo varieties.

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ReMedium TI Seminar

UF/IFAS Highlands County Extension will be offering a seminar on Oxytetracycline Trunk Injections with Dr. Ute Albrecht, UF/IFAS, and Josh Steinbronn, TJ Biotech. The event will be on March 14th at 10:00 AM at the Bert J. Harris Jr. Agricultural Center. Even though the event is free of cost, pre-registration is required.

This will be a great opportunity to get the most updated information about trunk injection, learn the dos and don'ts, and ask any questions that you may have. The event flyer and registration link is at: <https://OTCseminar.eventbrite.com>.

New HCCGA Administrative Assistant

Natasha Kirkegard who has served as the HCCGA administrative assistant for the past seven years left the position as of February 7th for an important role within the Highlands County Sheriff's Office. We certainly wish Natasha the very best in her new career as a Victim's Advocate with the Sheriff's office, and thank her for her years of dedicated service to our organization.

So as of February 13th we have a new HCCGA administrative assistant, who is really a former administrative assistant. Jan Menges, who previously served in that role for us for twelve years (2003-2015) prior to retiring has agreed to come out of that well-deserved retirement to help our organization prosper into the future. As an FYI - Jan should generally be in the office three days a week moving forward and the admin@hccga.com e-mail for that position will remain the same.

If HCCGA members ever need assistance with anything, you can contact the office at (863) 385-8091 or contact Ray directly on his cell phone at (863) 381-8551 or at exdir@hccga.com.



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Florida Growers to Vote on Marketing Order Amendments

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will conduct a referendum April 3–May 1 on proposed amendments to the federal marketing order regulating the handling of oranges, grapefruit, tangerines and pummelos grown in Florida.

Notice of the referendum was published in the Federal Register on Jan. 18, 2023 at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/01/18/2023-00856/amendments-to-the-marketing-order-for-oranges-grapefruit-tangerines-and-pummelos-grown-in-florida>.

The proposed amendments would include reducing the size and quorum requirements of the Citrus Administrative Committee and revising the nomination and selection processes of committee members. The requirement to allocate committee seats based on volume from each district would be removed. Lastly, a new section would authorize the committee to receive and expend domestically sourced voluntary contributions and grant funds for promotion and research projects.

The committee, which locally administers the federal marketing order for Florida citrus under USDA's oversight, seeks these changes to reflect industry consolidation and reduced production. Having a smaller committee size would enable the committee to fulfill membership and quorum requirements, thereby ensuring a more efficient and orderly flow of business. The authority to accept voluntary contributions would allow for more collaboration with other organizations for research and promotional activities.

The proposed amendments would become effective if approved by two-thirds of the growers voting in the referendum or by those representing at least two-thirds of the volume of citrus grown by those voting in the referendum.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will mail ballots and voting instructions to growers. To be eligible to vote, a grower must have produced oranges, grapefruit, tangerines and/or pummelos in Florida from Aug. 1, 2021–July 31, 2022.

Eligible growers who have not received a ballot may request one by calling 863-324-3375 or by mailing the request to Southeast Region Branch Office, Market Development Division, Specialty Crops Program, AMS, USDA, 1124 1st Street South, Winter Haven, FL 33880. More information about the marketing order regulating the handling of Florida citrus is available on the AMS 905 Florida Citrus webpage at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/moa/905-florida-citrus>.



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2023 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute

The 2023 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute program will be held on Tuesday, April 4th on the campus of South Florida State College's University Center Auditorium in Avon Park. Save the date now to plan to join the all-day educational event complete with CEU's for Certified Crop Advisors and Restricted Use Pesticide license holders and lunch. More details on the agenda and registration will be coming soon.

2023 Membership Renewal Dues Reminder

HCCGA members should have received their 2023 membership dues renewal statements in the mail in mid-December. Most of our members have already paid their 2023 dues, however if you did not receive your renewal invoice or have any questions about your membership; please contact the HCCGA office (863) 385-8091 at your earliest convenience.

Both Grower and Associate dues for 2023 remained the same as previous years (as a *matter of fact, they are the same as they were when HCCGA was founded in 1990*). Grower dues are \$2.00 per acre with a minimum of \$100.00 and a maximum of \$2,000.00 and Associate dues are only \$100.00 per year. Prudent budgeting by your HCCGA Board of Directors, nearly 100% membership renewal from year to year and additional support of several Association social and fundraising events through the year have allowed your Association to keep the dues at this low level for the past 30 plus years.

Thank you again for your membership and support in the past, and we look forward to working on your behalf in 2023.

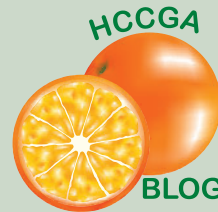
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We take pride in collaborating with growers to develop programs aimed at their specific needs. An example of this is our work with Clermont-based McLean Family Farms in their battle against citrus canker and HLB. The family grows organic citrus, along with peaches and vegetables. The family also produces Uncle Matt's organic orange juice.

The McLeans applied Magna-Bon CS 2005, which is Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI)-listed for organic production, in combination with KeyPlex 350 OR. According to Ben McLean III, the products provide "significant benefits" in helping reduce canker symptoms and improved micro-nutrient deficiencies.


"Overall, what we saw was an increase in the health and productivity of the grove," says McLean III. "There was a significant visual improvement in the health and color of the grove."

Ben's dad, Benny McLean Jr., who heads the family farm and is also Production Manager of Uncle Matt's Organic (headed by his other son, Matt) says he noticed a difference in "the look" of the grove after only two days of the first application.

"The leaf color was the biggest thing that stood out," he adds, noting the farm has used Magna-Bon CS 2005 in other growing areas, but this was the first time it was ever used in this orange grove.

We are proud to partner with USDA and UF/IFAS by donating product to help these organizations with their can-

ker management programs.

We also support the regional tradeshows, conferences, and various associations throughout the state all year long. If you see us at a show, make sure to stop by and say hello! 



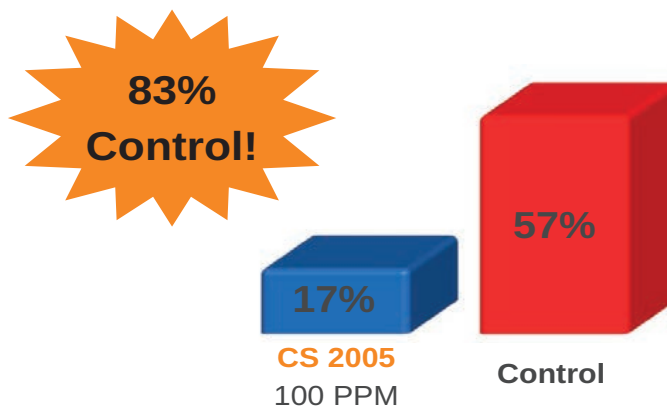
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HCCGA Board of Directors Elects 2023 Officers

The HCCGA Board of Directors, per the requirements of the HCCGA by-laws, elected new officers for 2023 during their January 12th Board meeting. Serving as Association Officers for 2023 after taking office at the HCCGA Annual Meeting on March 2nd will be:

President: **Aaron Nelson**

Vice-President: **Stanley Perry Jr.**

Treasurer: **Charlie Wilson**

Secretary: **William “Billy” Barben**

Aaron Nelson, a 2012 graduate of Florida Southern College, began his employment at Ben Hill Griffin, Inc. shortly after obtaining his citrus degree. He has served in several different capacities with that company since, most currently as an area supervisor for parts of Polk and Highlands county groves. He has been a member of the HCCGA Board of Directors for the past several years. He and his wife Kaitlyn have two children; Rhett (2) and Charlotte (6 months).

So congratulations to all of the new officers and thank you for your willingness to serve!

Association E-mails

We want to make sure that all of our members and friends that are expecting to hear from us on a regular basis via e-mail are indeed doing so. You should usually receive several e-mails a week from us in addition to the HCCGA newsletter once a month.

We have occasionally had a few problems with folks not getting some e-mails, and you are strongly encouraged to let us know if you are expecting, and/or wanting, to receive regular e-mail updates from us and are not receiving them.

There could be several reasons if you are not regularly receiving e-mail from us:

One could be that we either do not have an e-mail address for you, or what we have is an incorrect or outdated one. So if you change your e-mail address, please let us know immediately so we can make the changes in our data base.

Another reason could be that your e-mail system may be “bouncing” or “blocking”, the messages that come from us due to the e-mail management system we need to utilize. Occasionally it seems that some e-mails are “rejected” or “blacklisted” by “spamcop” or other computer protection services, **especially if you have a centurylink or embarqmail address**. Often this is just a temporary or one day event, but you never can tell. If you normally utilize a **“centurylink or embarqmail”** address but have another e-mail address that you can share with us to use – please do so.

Finally, if you normally receive e-mails from us and something changes, please check your spam folders or filters and see if that helps. Also, never hesitate in letting us know if e-mail communication stops coming so we can collectively work through it.



UF/IFAS Flower Bud Induction Advisories

The 2022-2023 Flower Bud Advisories provided by Dr. Tripti Vashisth (UF/IFAS CREC) have begun. Growers can utilize this information to better understand and predict the timing of flowering for the upcoming season. The advisories can be found at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/research/citrus-production/flower-bud-induction>.

The information is based on the Citrus Flowering Monitor, which is a model that uses area FAWN stations, cultivar type, tree age, soil type and the current date to give predictions of when flowering is expected to occur and how many bloom events to expect. The model shows the flower bud induction levels from October through April. Flower bud advisories are driven by the Citrus Flowering Monitor which predicts date(s) when citrus trees will bloom based on observed and predicted weather patterns and other parameters (cultivar, expected yield, tree age, and soil type). Growers can enter parameters specific to their grove to get a prediction. Knowing the bloom date is important for managing bloom and other related events. The Citrus Flowering Monitor also gives specific recommendations on how to manage bloom. You can also run the Flowering Monitor utilizing your own site specific information. The model is available at: <http://disc.ifas.ufl.edu/bloom/model.jsp>.

Trees begin to accumulate induction hours as cooler weather at temperatures below 68 degrees occur. During the late fall and early winter bud differentiation occurs, which means the citrus buds will sprout as either flowers or vegetative growth. Warm spells that occur intermittently during times in which we typically encounter cold weather can induce bud initiation resulting in multiple bloom events. Therefore, it is important for growers throughout the fall and winter to track how many induction hours the trees have accumulated and monitor weather forecasts for potential warm periods.

This year flowering can be unpredictable not only because of the upcoming weather conditions but also because of hurricanes Ian and Nicole. Trees lost a significant number of leaves and fruit and endured high speed wind and rain, thus, increasing the stress level on trees. Fruit presence on the tree interrupts flower bud induction, therefore, with fruit loss one can expect to see early flowering. However, the significant leaf loss that has happened in last month also plays a major role in upcoming flowering. Due to significant leaf loss most of the trees are flushing, therefore utilizing the carbohydrate resources thus reduction in carbohydrate level may reduce overall flowering. Under these circumstances and the current weather condition, Vashisth does not expect to see a significant early flowering to happen though she expects to see two to three cohorts of flowering. The situation will become clearer in the next couple of weeks as cooler temperatures are expected.

The information provided by these two modeling resources can be used by growers in their decision making processes about spray timing before flowering flushes and management of Post-Bloom Fruit Drop to reduce inoculum, especially during prolonged bloom periods and wet weather.



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So if you would like more information about how to advertise with the Association, or would like to place an insertion order, contact Ray or Jan at the HCCGA office. Below are our advertising rates:

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2023 Florida Citrus Show

AgNet Media is excited to announce that the Florida Citrus Show date is set for April 13, 2023. The event will now be held at the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Indian River Research and Education Center and the U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory. The two neighboring facilities in Fort Pierce are fighting against HLB and leading other key agricultural research, making them ideal locations to host the event.



Work is underway to bring a fresh, new approach to the show to optimize everyone's time. It will be fun, educational and a great place to network with industry friends. More details are coming soon.

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Post-bloom Fruit Drop Model

By Chris Oswalt (UF/IFAS Extension)

The folks at **AgroClimate** along with Drs. Natalia Peres and Megan Dewdney, have developed a model to alert growers to when environmental conditions are favorable for post-bloom fruit drop. The model also makes recommendations on when to spray for the disease.

The model resides on the Agro-Climate website (<http://agroclimate.org/>) under the “tools” drop-down menu labeled the “citrus advisory system” (<http://agroclimate.org/tools/cas/>). Once you navigate to this page you will see a map of Florida with traffic light colored disks (red, yellow, or green). The colors indicate PFD risk: red as high, yellow as moderate and green as low.

Once you locate a FAWN weather site near your grove location, clicking on the disk will open a new page where you are able to enter your bloom intensity, flower stage, and previous fungicide applications. The results will provide a recommendation on the need to make a fungicide application for PFD. You can also view at the disease simulation tab where a graph plots past conditions over time, with an additional three-day forecast for disease risk based on the National Weather Service local forecast for the FAWN site.

If you are further interested, there are two additional tabs for daily weather summary “daily weather” and the actual 15-minute weather data “weather” from the FAWN station. The data contains leaf wetness duration (LWD) in hours, average daily air temperature (Temp (F) or (C)) a calculation of the post-bloom fruit drop index (PFD Index) and a signal word for the risk for that particular day. The “weather” page includes temperature, humidity, rainfall amount, leaf wetness (yes or no) LWD, mean temperature, and PFD index.

Data used for the risk calculation comes from an accurate model that predicts leaf wetness (that is based on air temperature, dew point temperature, humidity, and wind), air temperature, rainfall, etc. The model incorporates a past history of the disease in the grove, so you are no longer required to enter the past disease severity, buttons present or diseased petals.

It is worth mentioning that rainfall will spread PFD spores, but it is the duration of leaf wetness that increases the risk of infection. Rainfall that extends the duration leaf wetness is more problematic than rainfall occurring when leaves are typically wet (i.e. overnight). This duration is more important to disease risk than the amount of rain.



Annual Florida Citrus Industry Conference



Just a reminder to save the dates of June 14th-16th for the Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference in Bonita Springs. Florida Citrus Mutual has planned another great conference that will include informative educational sessions and a number of industry meetings for growers and associated partners to participate in. There will also be a number of fellowship events to enjoy, and this is an extremely family friendly event and venue if you have not attended the conference at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa before.

Citrus Mutual will open conference registration on March 1st, however you can reserve your hotel accommodations now through the Citrus Mutual website at: <https://flcitrusmutual.com/florida-citrus-industry-annual-conference>.

2023 HCCGA Annual Meeting

The 33rd Annual Meeting of the Highlands County Citrus Growers Association will be held at the Seven - Sebring Raceway Hotel on the evening of **Thursday, March 2nd** with a social hour (*cash bar*) beginning at 5:30 PM and the dinner and business program commencing at 6:30 PM.

All Association members should have received an invitation and reservation/sponsorship form in the mail in January. The dinner is open to all currently paid 2023 grower and associate members, and invited guests, who wish to attend. However **advance reservations are required**, so if you would like to attend, make your reservations now!

We also appreciate all of the entities that choose to help defray the cost of this event through sponsorship investment. We would especially like to thank the **Florida Department of Citrus** for sponsoring our social hour and the audio visual aspects of the program.

During the dinner program attendees will hear from Congressman Scott Franklin and Matt Joyner of Florida Citrus Mutual in regards to multiple issues pertinent to our industry. We will also elect some new Board of Directors members, thank departing directors, hear reports from Association officers, install the Board Officers for 2023 and recognize the major sponsors of our 2022 Golf Tournament and Sporting Clays Fun Shoot fundraisers.

So contact the HCCGA office (**863-385-8091** or admin@hccga.com) ASAP to invest in event sponsorship and/or secure your reservations if you have not already done so.



Preparing for Implementation of Agricultural Water Requirements

By Taylor O'Bannon, Matt Krug and Michelle Danyluk

In December 2021, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released its proposed changes to the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) Subpart E, which covers agricultural water. The proposed changes focus solely on preharvest agricultural water and make no changes to the requirement of water used for harvest and postharvest activities. Compliance with the requirements of Subpart E has been delayed, since December 2019, to allow FDA adequate time to identify more appropriate risk-reduction strategies for managing agricultural water quality. In July 2022, FDA issued a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking related to compliance dates for agricultural water. As the December 2021 rule did not propose substantive changes to harvest and postharvest agricultural water requirements, these requirements will be enforced beginning Jan. 26, 2023, for all operations that do not meet the definitions of small or very small businesses. Subsequent compliance dates for small and very small businesses are Jan. 26, 2024, and Jan. 26, 2025, respectively.

For production water, if finalized, the rule proposed in December 2021 would replace the microbial water-quality profile and testing criteria with a systems-based preharvest agricultural water assessment. The assessment intends to take a more individualized approach to identify and reduce preharvest water-quality risks. The agricultural water assessment would include five main factors: agricultural water system(s), agricultural water practices, crop characteristics, environmental conditions and other relevant factors.

Agricultural Water Systems

The agricultural water systems component focuses on growers assessing risks based on the water source (ground or surface), the water distribution system (closed or open to the environment) and the system's protection from possible contaminants (adjacent land use, proximity to animals and other uses of the water system). Generally, water obtained from underground aquifers with a properly constructed well is considered lower risk than surface water sources open to the environment and more susceptible to contamination.

The water distribution system component identifies risks in open or closed systems. Growers may consider runoff, animal intrusion, upstream usage, discharge, seepage for open systems, and construction and maintenance for closed systems. The system's protection from possible contamination includes addressing risks such as animal impacts, adjacent or nearby land use, animal activity, biological soil amendments and applying untreated or improperly treated human waste.

Agricultural Water Practices

The agricultural water practices factor focuses on the method and timing of water application. The type of application method influences the extent that water is applied and contacts the harvestable portion of the crop. This factor focus on the interval between the last direct application and harvest because environmental conditions impact the die-off of foodborne pathogens. Maximizing the time these pathogens are exposed to these conditions impacts their survivability and chances of entering the food supply chain.

See WATER on page 18

WATER Con't. from page 17

Crop Characteristics

The crop characteristics factor intends to identify risks of surface adhesion and internalization of hazards depending on the crop type or specific weather events. Certain crops will be more susceptible to surface adhesion based on their physical characteristics (porous, netted, etc.). Current data does not indicate citrus will be considered more susceptible. Physical damage during weather events, such as freezing temperatures and hail damage, can make fruit more susceptible but is also not indicated for citrus.

Environmental Conditions

The environmental conditions factor aims to address risks associated with the survival of pathogens in the growing environment. Conditions such as rainfall, extreme weather events, heavy winds, dry periods and air temperature can impact the physical, chemical and biological conditions that either support bacterial die-off or survival.

Other Relevant Factors

Every farm is different and might consider other factors to make informed decisions about their production water quality.

Next Steps

In addition to proposing compliance dates for harvest and postharvest water in July 2022, FDA also proposed effective dates for production water. The proposed effective dates for production water are nine months after the effective date of a final rule for all businesses not meeting the definitions of a small or very small business. Subsequent compliance dates for small and very small businesses are one year and nine months and two years and nine months, respectively, after the effective date of a final rule.

It is anticipated that there will be a steep learning curve for educators, regulators and growers on how to complete an effective systems-based preharvest agricultural water assessment. In the meantime, growers should monitor their water source, review any microbial data relevant to their water source and use practices that lower the potential risk for contamination via preharvest water.

Resources Available

More information about the proposed changes can be found on the FDA website or in the **agricultural water assessment fact sheet** at <https://www.fda.gov/media/154334/download>. The FDA also has an **expanded table on the factors to be considered as part of agricultural water assessment** at <https://www.fda.gov/media/154447/download>. on the risks that may be assessed. In addition, growers may use the **FDA Ag Water Assessment Builder** at <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-modernization-act-fsma/agricultural-water-assessment-builder>. to answer questions and/or fill in information specific to their unique conditions. On-Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRR) are another way growers can receive assistance implementing food-safety principles or the PSR on their farms. Visit www.fdacs.gov/OFRR. to request an OFRR. Contact UJFoodSafety@ifas.ufl.edu for more information about the PSR requirements or questions about proposed rule changes.

*Courtesy of **Citrus Industry** magazine*

Taylor O'Bannon is a state food safety Extension agent, and Michelle Danyluk is a professor, both at the UF/IFAS CREC in Lake Alfred. Matt Krug is a state food science Extension agent at the UF/IFAS SWFREC in Immokalee.

Ever-Changing MRLs for Fresh Citrus Exports

By Mark A. Ritenour

Modern production practices for fresh fruits and vegetables usually include the use of various preharvest and postharvest chemicals, some of which are pesticides. Legally, these materials must be labeled for use on specific crops and may only be used according to label instructions. Chemical residues on fruits and vegetables are monitored by industry and regulators to assure compliance. Therefore, the United States and other countries set maximum residue limits (MRLs) on fresh produce for various chemicals.



Avoid Violations

U.S. MRLs are rarely exceeded when the label instructions are followed. However, when MRLs set by importing countries are lower than U.S. MRLs, then the use of these pesticides often must be discontinued or modified to keep from exceeding import tolerances. Except for Canada, which defaults to a 0.1 parts per million (ppm) tolerance for unlisted materials, any detectable residue will usually violate tolerances when no tolerance is stated.

The limit of detection for chemical residues is often around 0.01 ppm, depending on the testing laboratory and chemical of interest. Take note when considering which blocks are suitable for shipping to markets with low or missing MRLs because pesticide residues can remain detectable

in crops for several months after their application, depending on the chemical.

Violations of a country's MRLs will lead to rejected product, possible additional requirements for future shipments, and potential increased market restrictions for all growers/shippers of the product in the same state or country. In addition, individual buyers may set their own more restrictive standards. Similar to buyer-imposed food safety standards, buyer-imposed MRL standards, especially from large buyers, can significantly impact how pesticides are used in the field and packinghouse.

No Global Standard

Once, it was hoped that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations would set global MRLs through its Codex Alimentarius. However, most developed nations have abandoned this and developed their own MRLs, which may be dramatically different from those of other countries. The European Union (EU) tends to maintain the lowest MRLs for fresh produce.

Of particular concern over the past year, Korean MRLs for numerous pesticides expired at the end of 2021. This is especially true for grapefruit, with the MRLs of about 30 compounds dropping to essentially the level of detection. The registrants for some of these materials have submitted applications for Korean import tolerance, but it is unclear when such MRLs will come into effect. Unfortunately, some registrants have indicated they will not apply for a Korean MRL because of the cost or other factors.

See MRLS on page 20

MRLS, Con't from page 19

Stay Current

Keeping track of these constant changes is a challenge. Most problems occur when importing countries lower their MRLs and notification of the changes do not reach the relevant growers or packinghouse managers. Thus, it is critical for growers and packers wishing to export their product to have ready access to current MRLs for the materials they use. Furthermore, because MRLs for various export markets change frequently, growers and packers are encouraged to keep up to date with such changes through their respective trade group and through one or more web resources.

To assist with this, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) developed and maintains a Postharvest Resources Website at: <https://irrec.ifas.ufl.edu/postharvest/index/pesticides.shtml> dedicated to helping the industry stay current on changing MRLs. This website includes a list of MRLs (in ppm) for various chemicals specifically used on fresh Florida citrus destined for the United States and important export markets. This website also includes links to MRL databases for select countries and to BCGlobal at: <https://bcglobal.bryanchristie.com/db#/login> which provides a comprehensive list of MRLs for all commodities and markets. Because MRLs for the various export markets are continually changing, this information is intended as an initial reference source and no guarantee can be made to its accuracy. Always verify these values with other knowledgeable sources within specific markets of interest.

With continued public interest in pesticide usage on fresh produce, knowledge of current MRLs, judicious use of pesticides based on label instructions and the use of integrated pest management practices will maximize not only production but also the marketability of Florida's high-quality citrus.

Mark A. Ritenour is a professor at the UF/IFAS IRREC in Fort Pierce



The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences and Southeast AgNet have partnered to provide the latest news on citrus-related research in monthly podcasts at: <http://citrusindustry.net/allinforcitrus/>
The podcast, "All in for Citrus," features short interviews with scientists working to find solutions to citrus greening and other devastating citrus diseases. The podcast complements the UF/IFAS Citrus Research website at: citrusresearch.ifas.ufl.edu, and their monthly newsletter.



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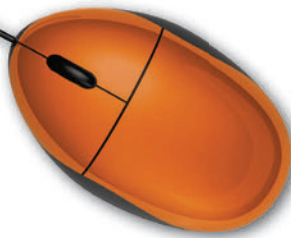
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Informational Websites



FDOC Grower Website

The Florida Department of Citrus website at: www.FDOCGrower.com is in place to provide growers with relevant information about the citrus industry. FDOC Grower features timely information about economic and market research, scientific updates, marketing activities and Florida Citrus Commission meetings in an easy-to-navigate format.

2019-20 FL Citrus Production Guide

Experts with UF/IFAS have completed the "Florida Citrus Production Guide 2019-2020." The guide covers all aspects of grove establishment and management in Florida's current growing environment. Copies are available free of charge in county extension offices or you can download a digital edition at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/production-guide>.

HLB Nutrient Mgt Web Site

Some HLB nutrient management information to accompany the HLB Guidance document has been put on the CREC website at: <http://www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/greening/index.shtml>.

CREC Citrus Industry Update

The UF/IFAS Citrus Industry Update can be found on the CREC website: www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu. These informational newsletters can be located in the publications area. Growers that would like to be added to the e-mail distribution list can do so by contacting the CREC staff at: cankergreeningupdates@crec.ifas.ufl.edu.

Black Spot Info

Information about citrus black spot is available on the Lake Alfred CREC website at: www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/black_spot/citrus_black_spot.htm

Citrus Budgets

The most current citrus budget cost summaries, harvesting and packing charges and other citrus economic information can now be found at www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/economics.

Citrus Research & Education Center Lake Alfred

www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu.

Research Updates Website

There is a website that provides a venue where you can check on all ongoing citrus related research. Each research project has a brief synopsis of what is happening so far, who is funding it, who the researchers are, etc. The site also provides a wide range of other updated information from UF/IFAS. So check out <http://citrusresearch.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

2019 Citrus Expo Presentations

The educational presentations from Citrus Expo 2019 are available at: <https://citrusresearch.ifas.ufl.edu/presentations>.

2019 Citrus Growers' Institute Recorded Presentations

Presentation recordings from the 2019 Citrus Growers' Institute are available at: <http://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/archived-presentations/index.shtml>. Recordings of each presentation can be viewed for this year's program as well as those going back to 2009.

Safe Fruits & Veggies Website

The Alliance for Food and Farming (AFF) was formed in 1989 to represent farmers of fruit and vegetables. The information on their website linked below was developed in conjunction with experts in the fields of toxicology, risk analysis, nutrition, health and farming to demonstrate how safe the food supply raised by Americans farmers is for the consuming public. You should consider utilizing facts and videos from this website in social media posts to help promote agricultural products to the general public. <https://www.safefruitsandveggies.com>

CRDF Website

The Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF) has a renovated website designed to make it easier for users to find information on research projects. For the latest in cutting edge citrus disease research information: www.citrusrdf.org.

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

<http://www.freshfromflorida.com>

University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

www.ifas.ufl.edu.

Indian River Research and Education Center, Ft. Pierce

<http://irrec.ifas.ufl.edu>

United States Horticultural Research Laboratory, Ft. Pierce

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/southeast-area/fort-pierce-fl>

FASS Reports

Florida Agricultural Statistics Service (FASS) Reports. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida.

Florida Citrus Extension Agents Web Site

This web site <http://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu> has been developed to help growers access information from around the citrus industry. You are able to read their citrus newsletters, learn about scheduled meetings, and disseminate information across the citrus industry.

Highlands County Extension Web Site

This web site: <http://highlands.ifas.ufl.edu> was developed and is managed here in Highlands County. It contains a wealth of information, and links to even more information. You will find local extension citrus meeting announcements, registration information, etc.

IFAS EDIS/IFAS Solutions for Life sites

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/> and <http://solutionsforyourlife.com>, for a plethora of information on citrus and other types of agriculture.

Soil and Leaf Tissue Testing

Information about techniques associated with soil and leaf tissue testing at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss531>.

Citrus Nutrition

For information on citrus nutrition, you can consult "Nutrition of Florida Citrus Trees" by Drs. Obreza and Morgan. The entire publication can be viewed at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss478>.

FDOC Greening Research Updates

The latest greening research information can be viewed online at: <http://www.floridacitrus.org/oj/?s=greening>.

USDA Citrus Crop Update Website

The USDA adjusts the citrus crop estimate on a monthly basis. Get the latest citrus crop estimate updates at: https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/Citrus/index

Southeast AgNet

Daily Ag news posts, audio clips and updates, including citrus news, from the state's only farm broadcast service. They Tweet and provide RSS feeds too. www.southeastagnet.com

Citrus Industry Magazine

Citrus Industry Magazine has been a grower and industry favorite for 90 years. CEU Credit articles are now available on-line here with several scheduled to appear throughout the year. www.citrusindustry.net

Florida Farm Bureau

www.floridafarmbureau.org

Florida Grower Magazine

Receive Florida Grower Magazine or their weekly E-Newsletter with Ag news that is important to Florida. CEU Credit articles are now available through Florida Grower Magazine. Sign up for free at: www.growingproduce.com/subscribe.

Low Volume Spray Application Techniques

Information from the Low Volume Spray Program series can be found online at: http://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/events/PDF/LowVolumeApplication/LVA_program.htm

The information includes currently labeled products for low volume application (2-5 gallons per acre), worker safety, application considerations and factors affecting application success.

South Florida Water Management District

www.sfwmd.gov

SWFWMD Permit Info

You can search for SWFWMD pending permits (by application number, project name, or by county) or sign up for electronic notification of application requests at <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us>. Click on the E-Permitting link on the Features List. Click the following link for access: <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/permits>

Operation Clean Sweep

The free service is available to farms/groves, greenhouses, nurseries, golf courses, and pest control entities. For more information, including how to sign up, click here: <https://floridadep.gov/waste/permitting-compliance-assistance/content/operation-cleansweep-pesticides>.

Ag Sales Tax Exemption Forms

Florida Farm Bureau has a very informative page on their website that lists all of the potential sales tax exemption forms. It can be found at: <https://www.floridafarmbureau.org/agricultural-sales-tax-exemptions-in-florida>

OSHA's Agricultural Website

This link is to OSHA's agricultural web page. <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/agriculturaloperations/index.html>

Florida Citrus Mutual

<http://flcitrusmutual.com>

FAWN

The Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN) can be accessed on the web at: <http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu>

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Central Florida Media Group
Central Florida Soil Lab
Central Life Sciences
Certis Biologicals
Chemical Containers, Inc.
Chemical Dynamics
CitraPac, Inc.
CitruSaver Fertilizer
CliftonLarsonAllen, LLC
Cohan Radio Group, Inc.
Coker Fuel
Coldwell Banker Highlands Properties
Creative Printing
Crop Disaster Recovery, LLC
Cutral Citrus Juices USA, Inc.
D & S Drainage, LLC
David Cannon Well Drilling, Inc.
DeMott Auction Co., Inc.
Diamond R Fertilizer
DFL International
Duke Energy
Dundee Citrus Growers Association
Dunson Harvesting, Inc.
Ecological Laboratories
EIP Citrus Management
Everglades Equipment Group
Everglades Harvesting, Inc.
Farm Credit of Florida
Fauls, Jackie
Fields Equipment Co., Inc.
Fleet Products
Florida Chemical Company
Florida Citrus Mutual
Florida Fertilizer Company, Inc.
Florida Grove Hedgers, Inc.
Florida Sod of Highlands County, Inc.
Florida Southern College
Florida's Natural Growers
Florikan ESA, LLC
Flo-Tec Automation Associates, Inc.
Floyd & Associates, Inc.
FMC
Frostproof Growers Supply, Inc.
Gary Cooper
Gator Ag Group, Inc.
GeoAg Solutions
Glade & Grove Supply Co., Inc.
Glades Crop Care
Glades Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Gowan
Greater Sebring Chamber of Commerce
Griffin Fertilizer Company
Grove Crafters, Inc.
H.C. Clerk of Courts Jerome Kasubowski
H.C. Commissioner Arlene Tuck
H.C. Commissioner Chris Campbell
H.C. Commissioner Don E. Elwell
H.C. Commissioner Kevin Roberts
H.C. Commissioner Scott Krouac
H.C. Office of Economic Development
H.C. Tax Collector Eric T. Zwyer
Hancock Citrus, Inc.
Harrell's LLC
Robert Hartman
Harvest Harmonics
Harvey's Fertilizer & Chemical
Heartland Ag Capital & Consulting
Heartland National Bank
Helena Agri Enterprises. LLC
Hicks Oil Co., Inc.
Highlands County Cattleman's Assoc., Inc.
Highlands County Farm Bureau
Himrod Citrus Nursery
Home & Commercial Irrigation, Inc.
Hood Citrus Caretaking
Howard Fertilizer & Chemical Company, Inc.
InTerra Ag
John H. O'Neal
Johnson Harvesting, Inc.
JW Yonce & Sons
Kahn Citrus Management, LLC/Murphy Ag Solutions
KeyPlex
Krause Services
L. Dicks, Inc.
Lake June Realty
Lake Placid Caretakers, Inc.
Lake Placid Citrus Cooperative
Laye's Tire Service
Lisa Sherman, CPA, PA
Living Water Services, Inc.
Locher Environmental Technology, LLC
Locus Agricultural Solutions
M.E. Stephens & Sons Fruit Co., Inc.
Magna-Bon II, LLC
Maxijet, Inc.
MetLife Agricultural Investments
Mid State Fire Equipment, Inc.
Miller Chemical & Fertilizer
Morgan Stanley Wealth Management
Newton Crouch, Inc.
NovaSource
Nufarm Americas, Inc.
Nutrien Ag Solutions
Nutrient Technologies, LLC
Ole South Auto Salvage, Inc.
Orchid Island Juice Company
ORO Agri, Inc.
Pantuso, Inc.
Patriot Welding Supply
Peace River Citrus Products, Inc.
Performance Nutrition/ LidoChem
Phillip Rucks Citrus Nursery, Inc.
Plant Food Systems
PGIM Real Estate Finance
Quail Creek Sporting Ranch
Rabo Agri Finance
Ridge Equipment Company
Rogers Petroleum, Inc.
Seminole Tire Co. of Lake Placid
SEVEN Sebring Raceway Hotel
Shutts & Bowen, LLP
John F. Smoak and Sons
Smoak Groves, Inc.
Somers Irrigation, Inc.
Southeast Ag Solutions
Southeast Green Space & Life Soils
South Florida State College
South Ridge Abstract and Title Co.
Southern Citrus Nurseries
Southern Gardens Grove Corp.
Southridge Citrus Nursery, Inc.
Stallings Crop Insurance Corporation
SunRidge Harvesting Company
SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzler Real Estate
Syngenta
Taylor Oil Company, Inc.
Tessengero Kerley, Inc.
The Andersons, Inc.
The Avanti Company
The Citrus Advisor
The Story Companies
TIMAC Agro USA, Inc.
Trademark Nitrogen
Tradewinds Power Corp
TriEst Ag Group
Tree Defender
Triangle Chemical Co.
Triangle Hardware
Tropicana Products, Inc.
Valent
Vortex Granular Solutions. LLC
W.A. Williams Citrus Nursery & Service Inc.
Wards Nursery, Inc.
Wauchula State Bank
Waypoints Financial
Wedgworth, Inc.
Wells and Associates Insurance
Wheeler Brothers, Inc.
Wicks, Brown, Williams and Co., CPAs
Yara North America, Inc.



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Cutting Edge Nutrition & Crop Protection for Trees Impacted by Citrus HLB

BRANDT, a leading provider of specialty inputs, offers a wide range of proprietary nutrition and crop protection products. The following products are recommended to help treat trees that have been impacted by Citrus HLB.

Spring Pre-Bloom through Post-Bloom Sprays: **Foliar Feed with Boron, Calcium and Magnesium**

- **BRANDT® Manni-Plex® Cal-Mag** - high efficiency foliar calcium/magnesium
- **BRANDT Manni-Plex for Citrus** - high efficiency foliar nutrient combo for citrus
- **BRANDT Smart B-Mo** - high efficiency foliar boron/molybdenum
- **Celite® 610** - mechanical insecticide that contains 100% diatomaceous earth, OMRI Listed

Complexed Nutrients: **Feed with Dry Lignosulfates**

- **Agra Sol** - dry soluble powder chelated micronutrients

Summer Oil Sprays: **Foliar Feed and Protect**

- **BRANDT Smart K B** - high efficiency foliar potassium/boron
- **Nordox® 75 WG or 30/30** - copper fungicide, OMRI Listed
- **TresOil®** - emulsified fungicide/insecticide spray oil, OMRI Listed

*For more information, contact J.R. Gough at
Jr.Gough@brandt.co or 863 781 0363*

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