

Citrus connection



HIGHLANDS COUNTY CITRUS GROWERS President's Column by Bert Harris

The view from the tailgate: The OTC tree injection seems to be slowing the march of citrus greening consequences. Research and anecdotal observations indicate that the vast majority of trees that were injected are faring significantly better than those which were not. Certainly, tree age and condition prior to the injection plays a significant role.

Varietal and age specific responses should come more into focus in the coming weeks or months. Hopefully wide spread OTC injection applications will also have a cumulative impact on how "hot" psyllids are in the future, thus reducing the re-infection rate to some degree.

Aaron Himrod, who serves as the CRDF Research Committee Chairman, advised our board just last week that there are **additional compounds showing significant promise** as injections to either complement or replace OTC. These compounds are being further tested-- but some of them should be available to our growers in the coming days or weeks. Aaron also told us that the injection results appear to be cumulative over the years. Trees which have been injected a number of years continue to improve exponentially over time.

Our growers must now determine the block specific inputs to support our trees thru the next injection and production cycle. And our decisions get to be made with or without data. AND we see more and more Highlands County groves being given a massive dose of iron (front end loader).

Your Association will continue to support the membership. We will provide both the latest tailgate observations as well as the best science-based technology, both to continue the fight.

The Association will also provide information resources to support your hard decisions regarding the change of use of your land.

For those considering land use changes, whether for specific blocks or for entire groves, several factors should be considered. Property tax, FSA, NRCS and FDACS support, and of course zoning and land use regulation. Ray has been guiding our membership and advocating for these benefits for years. Several members have benefited by Ray's advocacy during zoning and land use proceedings.

Ray will be developing a list of factors to consider should you conclude that a change of land use, either temporarily or permanently, is necessary. For example, removal of trees for the very low property tax rate; the effect of growing melons for one year on that special tax rate; USDA and FSA assistance in converting to other crops; and zoning changes.

So do not hesitate in contacting Ray at the HCCGA office if you have any questions.

Bert Harris III

MAR 2024

- Particle Film Protection
- \$47M for Citrus
- Citrus Expo 2024
- HCCGA Newsletter Advertising
- FDOC Marketing Agency
- FL Citrus Mutual Speech Contest
- CSU Hurricane Forecast
- Citrus Property Tax Valuation
- National OJ Day
- CRAFT Updates
- Ag Leadership Program
- Annual Citrus Conference
- USDA Crop Forecast
- HCCGA Golf Day
- Citrus Land Sales/Prices
- Farm TEAM Card



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2024 Calendar of Events

April 25

HCCGA Golf Day @ Sun 'N Lake Golf Club in Sebring

May 4

National OJ Day - Drink Up!

June 12-14

Annual Citrus Conference @ Hyatt Regency Coconut Point, Bonita Springs

August 21-22

Citrus Expo @ Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa

December 14

HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot



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

I have participated in a couple of meetings recently that have provided some potentially good news in regards to production tools that should be available for utilization in the battle against Greening in the relatively short term. I know that optimism is hard to come by in our industry at this stage, and that the resources required to stay in the game and try new things are perhaps even harder to come by.



However, I believe it is clear that OTC injections have proved to be beneficial to most trees – unless trees are suffering from significant issues unrelated to HLB. Growers are now experimenting with how to fine tune their OTC injection strategies (rates, trunk placement, double injection sites, etc.).

It also appears that the cumulative effect of wide spread OTC injection may be making psyllid populations less “hot”, which may reduce reinfection rates.

There also are a number of other compounds that are showing very good efficacy in some research field trials as compared to OTC injected “control trees” that we should be hearing more about very soon. It seems that there may be a number of “injectable options” for growers to utilize in the near future, both as an alternative to OTC or perhaps in conjunction with it.

Our Association's Golf Day, which is annually sponsored by our good friends at **Heartland National Bank**, is coming up real soon on the afternoon of Thursday, April 25th. It should be another great fellowship event, so check out the info in this month's newsletter if you have any interest in joining the fun.

Citrus Expo 2024 is scheduled for August 21st & 22nd. The planning for the Expo, and its educational seminars, is now underway. Seminar topics and speakers will be discussed by a planning group very soon – so it is not too late to offer suggestions if you feel there is a topic that is important to be covered during Expo – just give me a call and let me know.

I want to remind everyone that the Association is utilizing its social media presence more and more through Facebook, Twitter and our blog. Please take advantage of these venues in order to keep up to date on a wide range of topics associated with citrus and agriculture in Florida. Please also encourage your friends and neighbors to follow us on these sites – we are trying to expand our reach and communicate the good stories that our industry has to share. And finally, if you have some content you would like to see get some social media coverage – get it to me.

Speaking of social media, I would encourage each and every one of our members to do something on social media, or elsewhere, on Saturday, May 4th for **National OJ Day**. Take an active role in helping to promote our wonderful product.

I want to remind our grower members that there are at least three governmental entities that you need to make sure you are annually staying current with: the Highlands County Appraisers office, the USDA Farm Service Agency office in Okeechobee and the Highlands Soil & Water Conservation District office at the Bert Harris Ag Center. Having the correct information about your operation on file with these folks can either save you some money or potentially result in you gaining some cost share or grant assistance. So please make it part of your routine to check in with the folks in these offices at least once a year.

Our goal 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 in any matter, large or small. And remember that if you are not getting very regular e-mail updates from us - please let us know right away.

Thanks, Ray



Info Notes

2023-2024 Florida Minimum Wage

Just a reminder that the third increase dictated by the 2020 constitutional amendment, raised Florida's minimum wage rate to \$12 an hour on September 30th. The voter-approved amendment will gradually lead to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage on September 30, 2026.

2023 Citrus Expo Presentations

The educational seminars at the 2023 Citrus Expo are now available online at: <https://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/citrus-research/presentations/citrus-expo-2023/>.

2023-2024 Florida Citrus Production Guides

The 2023-2024 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://crec.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/production-guide/>.

2023 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute Presentations Online

The 2023 Florida Citrus Growers' Institute was held on April 4th at the South Florida State College Avon Park campus. The educational presentations were recorded and are available online at the citrus agent's website: Here you will also find PDF versions of the slides.

<https://citrusagents.ifas.ufl.edu/archived-presentations/2023/>

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 news@citrus.myflorida.com and ask to be added to FDOC's email distribution list.



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Protect Trees With Particle Films

By Christopher Vincent

Particle film is a useful tool to take the edge off stress to citrus trees caused by weather and HLB. University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) research over the past several years shows moderate concentrations of kaolin particle films cause trees to grow faster, suffer less water loss and keep leaves cooler, even when affected by HLB. Particle films also repel Asian citrus psyllids.

In young trees, researchers saw dramatic increases in growth and yield during the first three years of growth. This was partly due to particle films delaying HLB infection. However, particle films caused trees to grow faster even after they were infected. Researchers imposed moderate water deficits to mimic what HLB does to trees and found that the trees with particle film were able to better maintain leaf water and keep their stomata open longer for more growth and photosynthesis. This effect is strongest in the dry months of spring and the hot months of summer (March-October).

Particle films are simply a suspension of microscopic solid inert particles that can be sprayed onto leaves. When the suspension dries, it leaves a film of particles on the surface of the leaf, which reflects light away from the outer leaves of the canopy. This causes the outer leaves, which are usually stressed by high light, to be partly shaded. Particle films also can increase the light deeper in the canopy, where leaves are usually shaded.

White particle films are best for increasing light penetration into the canopy, while red-dyed films are best for shading and for reducing psyllids. Therefore, it is recommended to use white films when temperatures are more moderate (spring and fall) and red films when high temperatures are straining the trees more (summer).

Some shade is good, but too much can suppress growth, so researchers are working to identify the best rates. Currently, it is believed that 12 pounds per acre of white Surround kaolin particle film is best in March–May and October–November, while 17 pounds per acre of red particle film is ideal for June–September.

Using Raynox, a carnauba wax-based product, in 1:1 ratios with kaolin helps the particle film stay on the leaves through more than 20 inches of rain. Using Raynox means reapplication is only necessary after new growth covers the old growth.

Make red particle film by mixing in 2.5 fluid ounces of red-colored Colorback mulch colorant for each 1 pound of Surround kaolin particle film. Applications are not recommended in the cooler months of the year.

Christopher Vincent is an associate professor at the UF/IFAS CREC in Lake Alfred.



New sweet orange fruits and leaves along with red-dyed kaolin particle film applied with carnauba wax product six months ago

Florida Budget Includes \$47 Million for Citrus

Florida Citrus Mutual (FCM) recently reported that the Florida Legislature's fiscal year 2024–25 budget (*which still needs to be approved and signed by the Governor*) includes \$47 million to aid the state's citrus industry. The funding for various programs is:

- \$18 million for the Citrus Research and Field Trial Program and the Citrus Research and Development Foundation to research citrus treatments and therapies
- \$9 million for Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC) marketing to promote the state's citrus products among consumers and influencers
- \$8.3 million for the Citrus Health Response Program, administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), to help researchers develop new varieties, increase citrus production and advance technologies to treat and prevent citrus greening
- \$4 million for the Citrus Inspection Trust Fund to supplement grower assessments for citrus inspection
- \$2.7 million for pest management through FDACS in collaboration with the FDOC to suppress the Asian citrus psyllid that causes citrus greening
- \$2 million for the Citrus Recovery Program, administered by the FDOC, to advance technologies that produce tolerance or resistance to citrus greening and produce trees that show tolerance or resistance to citrus greening
- \$2 million for the citrus budwood facility through FDACS to expand the propagation of citrus greening-tolerant or resistant *Citrus sinensis* or *Citrus sinensis*-like budwood trees and seedlings, and for operations and maintenance of the greenhouse
- \$1 million for the Citrus Nursery Automation Cost Share, which provides 80% cost-share funding to citrus tree nurseries for purchase of new equipment that will reduce the cost of trees to growers

Additionally, the Florida Legislature's budget includes a \$100 million annual appropriation for the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, which aims to protect working agricultural operations from development by establishing conservation easements. The state can protect these critical lands by partnering with farmers, ranchers and growers.

"The Florida Legislature's investments today in research and innovation will support the restoration of Florida's signature crop to its former glory," said FCM Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Matt Joyner. "We are grateful to Senate President-Designate Ben Albritton, a citrus grower himself, for championing \$47 million to support the industry. With Governor DeSantis' approval of this budget, growers and researchers can script the story of a bright future for Florida citrus."

Source: FCM

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Tuesday June 11, 2024

8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Bert J. Harris Jr. Agricultural Center Auditorium

4509 George Boulevard - Sebring, FL 33875

Lunch will be served by the
Highlands County Soil & Water Conservation District



Register at <https://LAX-2024.eventbrite.com> or contact Sheila McNamara
for more information: 352-678-7015 or smcnamara@cfRPC.org

Landowners, **regardless of acreage size**, in DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Okeechobee, Osceola and Polk Counties are invited to participate in conversations related to technical assistance, cost-share opportunities, conservation easements, and the financial implications of each program.

Outreach representatives will be on hand to provide brief overviews of local, State, Federal and non-governmental programs and receive feedback from attendees.



Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, income, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the CFRPC Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Brenda Torres, 863-534-7130, or via Florida Relay Service 711, or by email: btorres@cfRPC.org at least three (3) days before the workshop.

Mark Your Calendars Now for Citrus Expo 2024

The Citrus and Specialty Crop Expo 2024 is scheduled for **August 21st & 22nd**, so please reserve these dates on your calendar. The Expo will be held at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa again this year.

Begun in 1992, the Citrus Expo has grown to become the world's premier seminar and trade show program for citrus growers and industry professionals. The two-day event is organized and operated by AgNet Media/Citrus Industry Magazine with solicited input from numerous growers, researchers and industry organizations.

The event's primary purpose is to provide unequalled education and industry fellowship opportunities annually for growers, industry leaders, decision-makers and vendors. It has become an important venue for growers to share ideas and learn about what's working in citrus groves to fight HLB and other challenges.

Grower input is strongly encouraged throughout the Expo educational seminar planning process, which will get started very soon. So please email your Citrus Expo topic and/or speaker suggestions to either royce@hccga.com or CitrusExpo@AgNetMedia.com.

Start each day the citrus way!



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HCCGA Citrus Connection Newsletter Advertising

HCCGA produces our monthly newsletter at the completion of each month, and it is published shortly thereafter. The ads you see in this newsletter are what make it possible for it to be produced and distributed, both in hard copy and electronically. In addition to our membership mailing list, the newsletter is also sent to our entire electronic contact list, which includes firms associated with other agricultural enterprises and is archived for at least one year on the Association's Website: www.hccga.com.

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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Full Page - Full Color	\$ 300.00 - per month
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Third Page - Full Color	\$ 900.00 - six months/6 issues
Business Card - Full Color	\$ 500.00 - one year/12 issues
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New Marketing Agency for FDOC

The Florida Citrus Commission (FCC) on March 20 expressed its intent to hire a new marketing agency for the Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC). The FCC, which governs the FDOC, voted to give FDOC staff approval to post the intent to award Padilla the marketing business and pursue contract negotiations with them.

Padilla would replace current FDOC agency Edible Inc. Edible has been the FDOC's consumer marketing agency for 10 years and more recently became the FDOC's agency for media relations and issues management. Padilla would become the FDOC's new agency for consumer marketing as well as for media relations and issues management.

The FDOC is required to conduct a request for proposal (RFP) process for services that exceed \$35,000 annually. On Feb. 27, an RFP workshop was held to solicit agency partners for media relations and issues management. The presenters at that workshop were decided by the top four scores given by a panel reviewing the eight initial proposals. Citrus commissioner rankings from that workshop resulted in Padilla in first place and Edible in second place.

On March 6, an RFP workshop was held to solicit agency partners for consumer marketing. The presenters at that workshop were decided by the top four scores given by a panel reviewing the 14 initial proposals. Citrus commissioner rankings from that workshop again resulted in Padilla in first place and Edible in second place.

If everything goes as planned, FDOC staff will present the actual contracts with Padilla to the FCC for approval. The FDOC contract with Edible expires June 30. A new contract with Padilla would begin on July 1.

Source: FDOC



Florida Citrus Mutual Speech Contest

Florida Citrus Mutual held its statewide inaugural Julia C. Black Memorial Speech Contest and Scholarship last month. The contest encourages students to learn more about Florida's agricultural industry, specifically Florida citrus, and supports high school students with scholarship funds.

Highlands County's own Mark Barben was the contest winner. Mark will present his speech during dinner at the Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference on Thursday, June 13, 2024.

Initial Colorado State University Hurricane Forecast

Colorado State University (CSU) hurricane researchers on April 4 predicted an extremely active Atlantic hurricane season in their initial 2024 forecast. The team cites record warm Atlantic sea surface temperatures and a likely developing La Niña as primary factors for their prediction of 11 hurricanes this year.

This is the highest prediction for hurricanes that CSU has ever issued in its April outlook. The prior highest April forecast was for nine hurricanes, which has been predicted several times since the university began issuing April forecasts in 1995. However, considerable changes can occur in the atmosphere-ocean between April and the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season from August to October.

The CSU hurricane forecast is similar to an AccuWeather hurricane forecast issued March 27. The AccuWeather forecast called for eight to 12 hurricanes.

The CSU Tropical Weather and Climate team is predicting 23 named storms during the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. Of the 11 expected hurricanes, five are predicted to reach major hurricane strength with sustained winds of 111 miles per hour or greater.

The team predicts that 2024 hurricane activity will be about 170% of the average season from 1991 to 2020. By comparison, 2023's hurricane activity was about 120% of the average season.

The CSU report also includes the probability of major hurricanes making landfall:

- 62% for the entire U.S. coastline (average from 1880 to 2020 is 43%)
- 34% for the U.S. East Coast, including the Florida peninsula (average from 1880 to 2020 is 21%)
- 42% for the Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle westward to Brownsville, Texas (average from 1880 to 2020 is 27%)

The CSU forecast is intended to provide an estimate of activity in the Atlantic during the upcoming season, not an exact measure. Forecast updates will be issued on June 11, July 9 and Aug. 6.

Source: CSU



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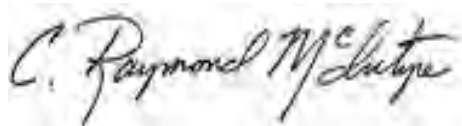
Contact the HCCGA Office Today

863.385.8091 or admin@hccga.com

2024 Citrus Property Tax Assessment Valuation

Below is a note from our Highlands County Property Appraiser Raymond McIntyre where he indicates that all Highlands County citrus property will be assessed at the base land value this year.

"As many of you know, the Highlands County Property Appraiser's Office made a decision to reduce all production based citrus assessments to the base land value of \$1,500/acre in 2023 due to production loss from hurricane Ian. After examining our citrus schedules and the harvesting reports that we received from local citrus growers this year, I have made the decision to extend that reduction. All production based citrus assessments will remain at the base land value of \$1,500/acre for the 2024 tax year. As always, this office looks forward to working with you as we all hope and pray for better days ahead."

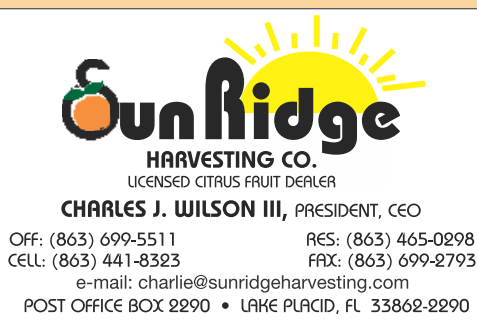


Also, please remember to keep the Property Appraiser's office informed as to the status of your grove properties, skips, pushed areas, etc. in order to potentially get those portions of your property assessed at the valuation rate of \$50.00 per acre due to disease concerns. If you have any questions about this, contact Ray at the HCCGA office or Sam Klatt at the Property Appraiser's office (863) 402-6667 or SKlatt@hcpao.org.

Thank you again Mr. McIntyre for your continued service to our county, and your professional and economic based approach to the appraisal of citrus properties.



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National OJ Day – May 4th

Just a quick reminder to all of our members and friends that Saturday, May 4th is National OJ Day. You are encouraged to start to think about how, even in a very small way, you can help assist in reminding your friends, neighbors and business associates that Americans have long had a love affair with orange juice. In fact, we drink nearly one billion gallons a year – making it America’s favorite 100 percent fruit juice.

We collectively need to promote this day as a great opportunity to raise a glass to the great taste and nutritional benefits of 100% orange juice. At the very least, please ask your social media contacts to go to [@OJfromFlorida](https://twitter.com/OJfromFlorida) on **Twitter** (#OJselfie posts are encouraged) or www.facebook.com/FloridaOrangeJuice on **Facebook** and share a fun post about 100% Florida OJ.



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.



CRAFT Program Updates

Since its inception five years ago, the Citrus Research and Field Trials (CRAFT) Foundation has worked with Florida growers to develop more than 1,400 grower-drive research trials across 17 counties and covering all of the major citrus-growing regions in Florida.

Coming into 2024, CRAFT had 1,290 traditional, new planting projects representing nearly 10,000 acres of newly planted Florida citrus trees. An additional 1,064 projects accounting for approximately 74,000 acres had been enrolled in the Existing Tree Therapies (ETT) program, looking at novel therapies on mature trees.

At their March 2024 meeting, the CRAFT Board of Directors considered recommendations from the Technical Working Group and staff, and approved a total of 118 additional new planting projects, adding more than 5,500 acres to the program total. These projects join the 11 previously approved PEP new planting projects covering an additional 455 acres to make up CRAFT Cycle Five. All Cycle Five projects must be fully planted no later than June 30, 2025.

Between traditional new plantings and the ETT program, CRAFT now has a total of 1,419 projects covering more than 90,000 acres of Florida citrus.

Participation agreements for the Cycle Five projects have been mailed to all approved growers. If you submitted an application for Cycle Five and have not received a Participation Agreement or email notifying you of your waitlist status, please contact Tamara Wood (tamara@craftfdn.org).

or Carisa Keller (carisa@craftfdn.org) for more information. All executed contracts must be returned to the CRAFT offices no later than May 1, 2024 for inclusion in the program.



CRAFT has applied for additional funding to continue to develop the program, and if successful in our requests, will plan to open the application windows sometime in late summer 2024. Additional information on future cycles will be shared as it becomes available.

An advertisement for Creative Printing. The background is black with vibrant, multi-colored paint splashes in shades of blue, green, yellow, and red. The text "CREATIVE PRINTING" is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller white font, is "WE CAN PRINT THAT". At the bottom, the phone number "863.385.8383" is displayed in a large, bold, yellow font.

An advertisement for advertising space. The top border features a decorative arrangement of sliced citrus fruits like lemons and oranges. The main text is centered and reads "Put Your Ad In This Space" in a bold, black font, followed by the phone number "863-385-8091" in a slightly larger, bold, black font.

An advertisement for Farm Bureau Insurance. It features a red and white logo for "FARM BUREAU INSURANCE". To the right of the logo, the phone number "863.385.5141" is listed, followed by "CROP FARM LIFE" and "AUTO HOME HEALTH". Below this, the email address "chad.mcwaters@ffbic.com" is provided. At the bottom, the name "Chad McWaters" is listed with his credentials: "CFP®, ChFC®, CASSL®, CLU®". To the right of his name, his contact information is listed: "Agency Manager", "Fax 863.385.5356", and "Claims 800.330.3327".

UF/IFAS Center for Leadership Launches Online Certificate Program in Agricultural Leadership

The UF/IFAS Center for Leadership is launching its new online professional certificate, "The Foundations of Agricultural Leadership." Designed to provide the essential education required to create effective leaders in the agricultural sector, this program is valuable for early-career professionals and emerging leaders in the industry.

The Foundations of Agricultural Leadership Certificate program covers a range of vital topics, including interpersonal leadership, the five practices of exemplary leadership, delivering effective presentations, personal branding, communication styles and active listening. Upon successful completion, participants will be awarded a certificate and a virtual credential from the UF/IFAS Center for Leadership.

The program is designed to be completed in an eight to 10 week timeframe and is available entirely online and self-paced. The cost to enroll in the certificate is \$550. This certificate offers flexibility and convenience for professionals looking to enhance their leadership skills without disrupting their busy schedules.

"We recognize the need for strong leadership in the agricultural sector, especially as the industry continues to evolve," said Christy Chiarelli, director of the UF/IFAS Center for Leadership. "This certificate is tailored to equip the next generation of agricultural leaders with the tools and knowledge they need to succeed."

Interested individuals are encouraged to register online at <https://bit.ly/3QNfhiz>.



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2024 Annual Citrus Conference

The 2024 Florida Citrus Industry Annual Conference will take place on June 12th-14th at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort 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.



Conference registration is now open and you can also reserve your hotel room. Visit Florida Citrus Mutual's **NEW** website at <https://www.flcitrusmutual.com> in order to learn more about the conference, view the schedule of events and register to attend.

Book your hotel room reservations now for a discounted rate. The total room rate is \$149/night when you book on or before April 30, 2024. When you book after that date, the room rate will be \$179/night.

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.

If you plan to play in the Florida Citrus Mutual Golf Tournament on Friday, June 14, be sure to sign-up when you register for the conference. This year's tournament will be held at the Saltleaf Golf Preserve and it is \$150 per golfer to play.



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USDA Citrus Crop Forecast Update

April 11, 2024

All Oranges 18.8 Million Boxes

The 2023-2024 Florida all orange forecast released on April 11, 2024 by the USDA Agricultural Statistics Board is lowered 1.00 million boxes to 18.8 million boxes. If realized, this will be 19 percent more than last season's revised production. The forecast consists of 6.80 million boxes of non-Valencia oranges (early, mid-season, and Navel varieties) and 12.0 million boxes of Valencia oranges.

Non-Valencia Oranges 6.80 Million Boxes

The forecast of non-Valencia orange production is unchanged at 6.80 million boxes. Non-Valencia harvest is over for the season. The Row Count survey conducted March 26-27, 2024 showed the relatively complete harvest of early & mid-season non-Valencia rows. The Navel forecast, included in the non-Valencia portion of the forecast, is 180,000 boxes.

Valencia Oranges 12.0 Million Boxes

The forecast of Valencia orange production is reduced 1.00 million boxes from the previous forecast and is now 12.0 million boxes. Final fruit size is below the average, requiring 271 pieces to fill a 90-pound box. Final droppage, measured at 50 percent, is above the average. The Row Count survey conducted March 26-27, 2024, showed 51 percent of the Valencia crop harvested.

All Grapefruit 2.00 Million Boxes

The forecast of all grapefruit production is lowered 200,000 boxes to 2.00 million. The Row Count survey conducted March 26-27, 2024, indicated 97 percent of red and white grapefruit rows are harvested.

Tangerines and Tangelos 500,000 Boxes

The forecast for tangerines and tangelos is unchanged at 500,000 boxes. This forecast number includes all certified tangerine and tangelo varieties.

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CRAFT's mission is to move lab and research solutions into commercial groves for commercial-scale field trials, collect data on the results of those field trials and create an integrated data management system allowing growers, researchers and other interested parties to analyze the efficacy and efficiency of various strategies, treatments and therapies.

For additional information, contact Tamara Wood - 863.698.9276 or tamara@craftfdn.org

2024 HCCGA Golf Day

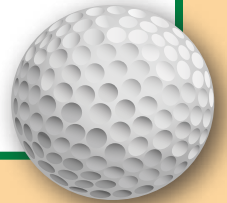
The 2024 Highlands County Citrus Growers Association's Annual Golf Day, presented by **Heartland National Bank** will take place on the afternoon of **Thursday, April 25th** this year, at the **SUN 'N LAKE Golf Club** in Sebring. So make plans now to join us for a fun day on the golf course by utilizing the registration flier in this newsletter to get signed up!

A 12:00 PM luncheon and sign-in will precede the 1:00 PM tee off. Lunch, range balls, on-course water-soda-beer, post tournament hors d'oeuvres and a raffle drawing prize ticket will be included in each golfing entry. The cost is \$100.00 per player (\$400.00 per foursome), and the tournament is open to the public. A four-player team scramble format will be used in the tournament, and there will be a number of hole contests to compete with others in your handicap class for in addition to gift certificate prizes for the top 3 teams in each of the three flights.

Thank you to **HC County Commissioner Chris Campbell** for sponsoring our Luncheon & Post Play Hors D'oeuvres, and our friends at **Syngenta** for making the roving beverage cart possible again this year.

Magna Bon II, Harvey's Fertilizer & Chemical, M.E. Stephens & Sons Fruit Company, Carlson Accounting and **HC County Commissioner Scott Kirouac** are sponsoring our 6 hole contests and **Diamond R Fertilizer** and **Duke Energy** are sponsoring the warm-up putting green and driving range respectively.

We do have raffle prize sponsorships available at \$100.00 and up, if you would like to get your company some great recognition both at the event and in our monthly newsletter. Just give Ray or Jan a call at the HCCGA office for more info.



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1:00 Shotgun Start

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Florida Citrus Land Sales and Prices

The recent Lay of the Land Florida 2023 Market Report from SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzler Real Estate highlighted 40 citrus grove sales in 12 Central Florida counties last year. The average sales price of \$11,141 per net tree acre was up 3% from the prior year. The average gross acre sales price was \$9,284, up 7%.

The highlighted grove sales totaled 15,699 acres, down 9% from the prior year. The average grove transaction size was 392 acres, up 142%.

HIGHLANDS COUNTY HAS MOST SALES

Almost half of the citrus sales, 18, were in Highlands County. Other Central Florida counties with reported multiple sales were Hardee (6), DeSoto (3), Hendry (3), Polk (3) and St. Lucie (2). Counties with one sale reported in 2023 were Glades, Lee, Manatee, Okeechobee and Osceola.

The largest citrus sale reported was 3,065 gross acres in Osceola County for \$33.08 million, or \$10,793 per gross acre. The second largest sale was 2,533 gross acres in Hendry County for \$20.64 million, or \$8,151 per gross acre.

The smallest sales reported were two 19-acre transactions in Highlands County, for \$320,300 and \$161,500, or \$16,858 and \$8,500 per gross acre, respectively.

VALUE FACTORS

“Citrus groves located in the short-term and long-term path of progress are still highly attractive for residential and commercial developers,” SVN Saunders Senior Advisor Brian Beasley reported.

Beasley noted that values for groves are based on factors including varieties, industry pricing for fruit and juice, crop production, juice quality, tree condition, irrigation and drainage, favorable marketing channels and, of course, location.

Beasley stated that groves with substantial production and “favorable forward-looking fruit contracts” generally yield profits. “However, citrus greening disease continues to be a challenge,” he added.

Source: SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzler Real Estate

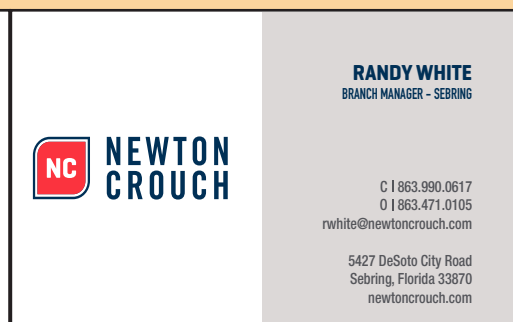


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Farm TEAM Card

Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson has announced that farmers can now apply for the Florida Farm Tax Exempt Agricultural Materials (TEAM) Card.

The plastic wallet-sized Florida Farm TEAM Card is a physical alternative to the paper exemption certificates and aims to streamline the purchasing process for sales-tax-exempt agricultural materials, making it more convenient to purchase these materials tax-exempt. The card is free, and those interested in applying or learning more (*including what is exempt*) can visit: www.fdacs.gov/FarmTEAM.

How Does The Florida Farm TEAM Card Work?

The TEAM card does not expand or create agricultural exemptions beyond those provided in s. 212.08, F.S. A farmer whose real property is classified as agricultural pursuant to s. 193.461, F.S. – OR – A farmer who has implemented agricultural best management practices on property it owns or leases.

How long does the exemption approval last?

Unless an exemption is revoked by the DOR, each approved Card is good for five years before renewal is required.

How will stores/vendors verify Farm TEAM Cards?

Each card will have a URL or QR Code that will allow stores/vendors to verify Farm TEAM Cards quickly and easily.

Can stores/vendors make a copy of my card to keep on file for quick reference?

Yes, with cardholder permission. The card will not display sensitive data such as social security numbers or tax IDs. Cards will display the individual or corporate name and address. The tax exemption number is provided by DOR.

How many cards may I request under a single entity?

FDACS will provide up to 10 cards. Each card will contain the individual business or corporate name and address. Cards will not name individual cardholders.

Will online vendors accept the TEAM Card Exemption?

User will have to follow the online vendor's procedures and any requirements, which may include submission of the Tax Exemption Certificate issued by DOR.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

FarmTEAMCard@FDACS.gov.

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- **Celite® 610** - mechanical insecticide that contains 100% diatomaceous earth, OMRI Listed

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Summer Oil Sprays:

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