

Citrus connection



HIGHLANDS COUNTY CITRUS GROWERS **President's Column** by Bert Harris

A New Year is now upon us, requiring both reflection and an optimistic gaze forward to a better year of citrus production both here in Highlands County and across our state. Since this is a PG rated newsletter, I will just say that in addition to dealing with greening and other assorted pests and diseases - our industry has also endured a run of some pretty "crummy" luck. Multiple bouts of tropical weather last year was just part of the "stuff" that has befallen us.

However, looking forward there are some reasons for guarded positivity for those that are still in the game. And if you have Ag properties that you have transitioned out of active citrus production, either temporarily or permanently, I will remind you that our Association is working on representing your interests in that realm as well.

Our Association will be very active in the development of Highlands County's 2050 Comprehensive Plan as it is being crafted by the county's staff and consultants in the coming months. This action is critical to every agricultural landowner because the Comp Plan's text and maps can foster the very real potential of either positively or negatively impacting the future value of your property. That is why I want to thank our members for their investment in Association membership. I remind you that this is precisely why our organization was founded 35 years ago!

So for some good news, we are fortunate to have some political allies, chief among them - Senator Ben Albritton, who are looking out for our interests and want to make a significant investments towards rebuilding Florida's citrus industry. The upcoming Florida legislative session should be fruitful, hopefully providing additional funding for citrus production incentives and research. I believe our state and federal political leadership understand the need to have a vibrant Florida citrus industry for a multitude of reasons.

On the OTC front, there is little doubt trunk injections are providing positive impacts on tree health and fruit quality when applied to trees that are not too far gone. It also seems that OTC injections are already starting to affect psyllid disease transmission as well.

The general consensus about OTC is that we will see even more gains from multiple years of application. CRDF and others tell us that other tree health promoting compounds, either to be utilized in conjunction with OTC or independently, are not far off from reaching the market.

CRDF leadership has narrowed their research investment focus to figuring out how to better kill Clas and Psyllids over the next several years. Apparently work being done with Bt proteins (which should have minimum regulatory hurdles) is very promising in controlling both the bacteria and vector.

One of my own grove's main nemesis's, Diaprepes, may also controlled by Bt protein applications. This alone becomes a game changer for some locations if brought to fruition.

So I want to be optimistic that a combination of factors, including perhaps a better run of luck weather wise and an infusion of additional investment by the state into the CRAFT program, will allow us to work with the current generation of trees until the more tolerant or resistant trees of the future are readily available

That's my hope for 2025. Happy New Year to you all!

Bert Harris III

DEC 2024

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2025 Calendar of Events

January 22

Citrus Nutrition Day Seminar @ UF/IFAS CREC - Lake Alfred

March 6

HCCGA 35th Annual Meeting @ Seven-Sebring Raceway Hotel

March 13

Florida Citrus Show @ UF/IFAS IRREC - Ft. Pierce

April 24

HCCGA Golf Day @ Sun N Lake Golf Club

June 11-13

Annual Citrus Conference @ Coconut Point Hyatt - Bonita Springs

August 20-21

Citrus & Specialty Crop Expo @ FL. State Fairgrounds - Tampa

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



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Executive Director's Report

BY RAY ROYCE



I hope that all of our members had a wonderful and joy filled holiday season with your family and friends. Hopefully this New Year will eventually bring us, our industry and our country a better year than 2024. I completely understand that we are all tired of hearing about resiliency and perseverance, but for those of you invested in the future of our industry – thank you for that resolve.

Please take notice in this issue some pictures of the folks that either shot pretty well or won some of the great prizes in our Association's largest networking and fundraising event, our annual Citrus Fun Shoot. We had a great 2024 shoot at Quail Creek Sporting Ranch, and hope you will make plans to join us for our 2025 Citrus Fun Shoot next December.

Hopefully many of you will be able to join us for the 2025 HCCGA Annual Meeting that is scheduled for the evening of Thursday, March 6th. An HCCGA Annual Meeting Invitation and Reservation/Sponsorship Form will go out in the mail relatively soon. We look forward to hopefully seeing you at the Seven - Sebring Raceway Hotel for a nice evening of industry fellowship.

At the Annual Meeting, membership will be asked to elect some new Board of Directors members. If a grower member would like to nominate another grower member, or themselves, for consideration for Board service – just let me know in the next couple of weeks.

I strongly encourage all growers to consider contacting Sam Klatt (863-402-6667 or sklatt@hcpao.org) at the Highlands County Property Appraiser's office in the coming weeks. It is important that the most up-to-date information on your grove properties is shared with that office on an annual basis. Your individual records can make a significant difference in your property's appraisal – so it is critical that they have accurate records for each grove block.

In a similar vein, our grower members should plan to make at least annual visits to, or contact with, two other governmental agency offices; the USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) office in Okeechobee and the Highlands Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD) office at the Bert Harris Ag Center. All three of these entities need to have the most up-to-date records available for all of your agricultural operations. Not only is there an opportunity to potentially save some tax dollars after visiting the Property Appraiser's office, there may very well be cost share or direct benefit types of programs for your various agricultural enterprises to take advantage of that the folks at FSA or HSWCD will make you aware of.

Finally, all Association members should have received their 2025 membership renewal dues notices in mid December. The collective voice of our members is truly an amazing force that demands consideration in a wide range of issue deliberations or individual entity assistance, so your continued support is both appreciated and needed. The renewal response has been very strong so far, but if you have any questions about your membership or don't think you received a membership renewal invoice, don't hesitate in giving us a call at the HCCGA office.

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 phone: 863-381-8551) for additional information if you need it; or if I can be of any assistance on any matter, large or small. And remember that if you are not getting regular e-mail updates from us, then we either do not have a good e-mail address for you or your system is blocking receipt of e-mails from the RackSpace domain (our e-mail management system) – so please let us know right away.

Thanks, Ray



Highlands Youth Citrus Project Vernia Trees

The Highlands County Fair is February 7-15, 2025. As fair season is approaching, 80 Highlands Youth Citrus Project exhibitors are getting their citrus trees ready for display and sale at the Highlands County Fair. This year, exhibitors have been raising Vernia trees since April of 2024. All of the citrus trees for sale have been grown entirely in Tree Defender IPCs, and will be PCR tested for HLB prior to sale.



During the Highlands County Fair, each tree will be set up with a clipboard with a minimum bid of \$50. The Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion citrus tree will be sold during the livestock live auction beginning at 5:00 PM on Thursday, February 13, 2025.

Your potential support of the 2025 Highlands Youth Citrus Project will be greatly appreciated by 4-H members. If you have any questions about the Highlands Youth Citrus Project or would like to make a monetary donation, please contact Alexis Cooper at the 4-H Office at (863) 402-6540 or apontius@ufl.edu

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Corporate Transparency Act Update

There have been at least 3-4 court decisions in the past month in regards to the implementation of the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) that have affected the CTA's filing deadline requirement. These court rulings have gone back and forth and continue to add to the confusion. It seems likely that eventually companies will be required to file, however you should consult your attorney and/or tax professional for the latest information. See the most recent information below.

In 2021, Congress passed the CTA as part of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act and Anti-Money Laundering Act that requires businesses to report the identity of their owners with the goal of reducing financial crime. Unfortunately, many small businesses like farms and ranches are required to comply with this requirement.

The CTA requires companies to report information to the federal government's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) about the individuals who own or control them. The final rule implementing the legislation was issued in September 2022, and it was made effective as of January 1, 2024, with a deadline for existing businesses as of that date to file their Beneficial Ownership Information (BOI) by December 31, 2024.

Who must file: Any producer whose farm or ranch employs 20 employees or less, is a corporation, limited liability company (LLC), partnership, or was formed as another type of entity by filing a document with the secretary of state or similar state office is required to file a Beneficial Ownership Report with FinCEN.

On December 3, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas issued a preliminary injunction that temporarily halted enforcement of the CTA. The U.S. government appealed the ruling and on December 23, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit overturned the injunction. After that ruling, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) announced that the deadline for beneficial ownership report filing was January 13, 2025. On December 26, the full U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit reversed their previous decision, and the Corporate Transparency Act is once again temporarily on hold.

FinCEN has suspended enforcement and will accept voluntary reports. "In a new decision, the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a previous ruling they issued before Christmas and has instead decided to uphold the injunction blocking the CTA from taking effect.



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Industry Support

Magna-Bon supports regional trade shows, all regional citrus growers' associations, and various sponsorships throughout the year. Although it is not directly citrus related, Magna-Bon helped orchestrate selling blueberries from a local blueberry farm to the Central Florida area during the pandemic shutdown.

You can read the article in the May 2020 issue of Florida Grower.

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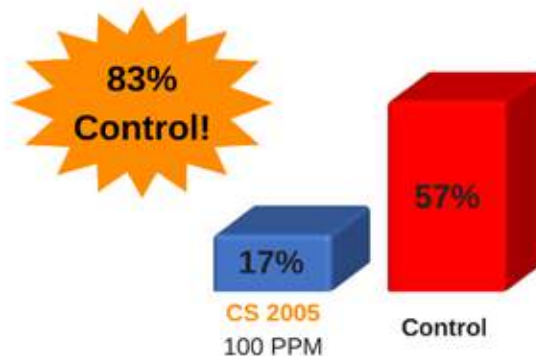
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Marketing Orange Juice as a Functional Beverage

U.S. consumers have felt the sting of inflation, but that hasn't kept them from drinking more beverages year after year, the Florida Citrus Commission (FCC) recently reported.

Tina Charpentier of Padilla, the Florida Department of Citrus' (FDOC) marketing and issues management agency, told the FCC that consumers have endured a 30% increase in food prices since 2019. During that same time, there has been a 55%-plus increase in prices for sports drinks and carbonated beverages.

"Consumers are waiting for prices to return to normal," Charpentier reported, adding that in the meantime they are buying lower-priced brands or shopping at lower-priced retailers.

Despite the challenges of inflation, beverage consumption in America continues to increase annually. Padilla representatives indicated this is due in large part to the growth in popularity of the functional beverage category. That category has played a significant role in changing the beverage landscape over the past four years. Top growth drivers in the functional beverage category are claims of immune defense, high protein source, energy, prebiotic, probiotic and digestive health.

According to Padilla, health and taste are driving factors in the growth and popularity of the functional beverage category. These factors are where the opportunity lies for Florida orange juice (OJ) to stake a claim in this category, with its nutrient density and superior taste, agency representatives stated.

According to Padilla, the FDOC's 2024-25 program strategy is built to turn marketplace dynamics into opportunities by:

- Building the value story around Florida OJ so it will resonate with the modern juice consumer, reinforcing that 100% orange juice can fulfill the desires of functional beverage drinkers, offering support for immunity, performance/energy and heart health.
- Maximizing return on media investment through AI-powered analytics, resulting in greater marketing precision and greater purchase frequency.
- Refining the definition of the modern juice consumer through more focused targets, identifying real-life demonstrated behaviors and need states



Cost-Share Funds for Water Projects

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) is accepting applications for its **Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS)** cost-share program. The program expedites water resource development and alternative water supply projects on agricultural properties by providing funding assistance to implement production-scale best management practices (BMPs).

To qualify for funding, projects must be located in the SWFWMD and include one or more of the following BMP strategies:

- Utilize an alternative water supply or technology to reduce groundwater use.
- Improve irrigation water quality and watershed ecology by reducing reliance on poorer quality groundwater.

The program is designed to serve as an incentive to the agricultural community to promote water quantity, water quality and natural systems BMPs to conserve groundwater use and promote resource sustainability.

Examples of commonly used BMPs include:

- Weather stations and soil moisture sensors with telemetry.
- Riser culverts and water-controlled structures.
- Surface water or tailwater irrigation pumps and filters.
- Remote irrigation zone controls and soil moisture and climate sensor telemetry.
- Fertigation systems.
- Cold protection measures.

FARMS is a public/private partnership developed by SWFWMD and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. It focuses on Upper Floridan aquifer withdrawal savings throughout SWFWMD as well as water quality and natural systems improvements in targeted Water Use Caution Areas and priority watersheds.

See FARMS on page 9



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 more information, visit CRAFTfdn.org or contact Steven Hall - 863.682-1115 or Steven@CRAFTfdn.org.



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FARMS, Con't from page 8

FARM goals include:

- Improve water quality within the Shell, Prairie and Joshua Creek Watersheds.
- Improve natural systems in the Upper Myakka River Watershed.
- Reduce groundwater use within the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA).
- Reduce groundwater use within the Most Impacted Area (MIA). The MIA is an area specifically affected by groundwater withdrawals within the SWUCA. It's about 700 square miles and located along the southern Hillsborough, Manatee and northwestern Sarasota counties.
- Reduce groundwater use within the Central Florida Water Initiative region.
- Reduce cold protection groundwater use within the Dover/Plant City Water Use Caution Area.
- Implement agricultural BMPs to reduce groundwater use and reduce nutrient loading.

Project guidelines include:

- Growers manage their projects and are reimbursed for approved expenses.
- Reimbursement can amount to as much as 50% to 75% of total project costs.
- SWFWMD and grower(s) enter into a signed and executed contractual agreement for the FARMS project with a contract duration of generally 5 to 10 years.
- Growers are responsible for obtaining all project-related permits and must have SWFWMD authorization prior to incurring approved reimbursable expenses.
- Permitted water use allocations are not reduced.

For a complete set of the FARMS Program Rules, refer to FARMS Governing Board Policy at: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/sites/default/files/medias/documents/Governing%20Board%20Policy%2010%202021%20FARMSProgram.pdf>.

Source: SWFWMD



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CRAFT Update

CRAFT Cycle Six Applications Under Review



The application window for the New Tree Plantings Cycle Six and Existing Tree Therapies (ETT) Round 3 has closed. CRAFT received 227 New Tree Planting applications, including 13 solid-set projects featuring plant material from the Program for Expedited Propagation (PEP), 50 traditional solid-set projects, and 164 reset applications. Together, almost 10,000 acres of new planting proposals will be considered by the CRAFT Technical Working Group (TWG) and Board of Directors for funding in Cycle Six. This demand exceeds the funding available for this cycle and eligible projects that are not selected for immediate funding will be added to the project waitlist for future funding.

Carisa Keller, CRAFT Scientific Coordinator, and Tina Buice, Assistant Program Manager, have organized the applications and the review process is ongoing. The CRAFT TWG is reviewing the applications and the application will either be recommended to the CRAFT Board of Directors for approval or moved to the waitlist. This process can take time, especially with more than 200 applications. CRAFT anticipates issuing contracts with instructions to applicants selected for funding starting in January.

Existing Tree Therapies Round Three Grower Contracts

CRAFT also received 662 Existing Tree Therapies Round Three (ETT) applications covering approximately 47,000 acres for inclusion in the ETT program. Again, the application demand exceeds the funding available for this round. Applicants that were selected for funding received their contract in December for execution and return to CRAFT by January 31, 2025. The contract package will include instructions regarding next steps and payment processes. Participants are encouraged to read the instructions carefully before signing and returning their agreements.

If you have any questions, please contact Steven Hall, CRAFT Executive Director and Program Director, at Steven@craftfdn.org or (863) 333-2931.

2025 HCCGA Annual Meeting

The 35th Annual Meeting of the Highlands County Citrus Growers Association will be held at the Seven - Sebring Raceway Hotel on the evening of **Thursday, March 6th** with a social hour (cash bar) beginning at 5:30 PM and the dinner and program commencing at 6:30 PM. **So please save the date.**

During the dinner program, the Association will hear from guest speakers about the state of our industry, elect new Board of Directors members, thank departing directors, hear reports from Association officers, install the Board Officers for 2025 and recognize the major sponsors of our 2024 Golf Tournament and Sporting Clays Fun Shoot fundraisers.

All Association members should receive an invitation and reservation form in the mail in mid-January. The dinner will be open to all current 2025 grower and associate members who wish to attend; however advance **reservations are required**, so please return your reservation/sponsorship forms as soon as possible after receiving your invitation.

HCCGA Citrus Connection Newsletter Advertising

HCCGA produces our monthly newsletter at the completion of each month, and it is published and distributed shortly thereafter. The ads you see in this newsletter are what make it possible for it to be formulated and disseminated, both electronically and via hard copy.

In addition to our membership mailing list, the newsletter is also sent to our entire electronic contact list, which includes firms associated with numerous agriculturally related enterprises across our region and the state. Our newsletters are also archived for at least one year on the Association's Website at: www.hccga.com.

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

HCCGA Newsletter Advertising Rates

Full Page - Full Color	\$ 300.00 - per month
Full Page - Black & White	\$ 225.00 - per month
Half Page - Full Color	\$ 200.00 - per month
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Third Page - Full Color	\$ 1,500.00 - one year/12 issues
Third Page - Full Color	\$ 900.00 - six months/6 issues
Business Card - Full Color	\$ 500.00 - one year/12 issues
Business Card - Black & White	\$ 400.00 - one year/12 issues
Business Card - Full Color	\$ 350.00 - six months/6 issues
Business Card - Black & White	\$ 250.00 - six months/6 issues

**** Third page and Business card size ads must be placed for a minimum of six months.**

**** Half and Full page ads must be placed for a minimum of three months.**

HCCGA Membership Dues

HCCGA members should have received their 2025 membership dues renewal statements in the mail in mid-December. If you do not receive your renewal invoice, or have questions about your membership; please contact the HCCGA office (863) 385-8091 at your earliest convenience.

Both Grower and Associate dues for 2025 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 2025.***



CITRUS 2024 FUN SHOOT



The 27th Annual HCCGA Citrus Fun Shoot took place on Saturday, December 7th at **Quail Creek Sporting Ranch** on an absolutely fabulous

day for outdoor recreation and fellowship for the roughly 350 attendees. Here are just a few pictures from the 2024 Citrus Fun Shoot.





2025 Florida Citrus Hall of Fame Inductees

The Selection Committee for The Florida Citrus Hall of Fame has announced on December 6th the selection of **Dr. Charles W. Adams (deceased), formerly of Auburndale, Fla., Dr. James H. “Jim” Graham, of Lake Alfred,** and **Daniel R. “Dan” Richey, of Vero Beach, Fla.** as the **Class of 2025** inductees.

The three distinguished leaders will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on March 28, 2025 at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, at the George W. Jenkins Fieldhouse. The event is co-sponsored by Florida Citrus Mutual and the Florida Department of Citrus, with the Florida Citrus Processors Association hosting an “OJ Meet & Greet” with the inductees, attendees and government legislators prior to the luncheon. Tickets \$125 each or \$1,750 per table of eight, and are available on the website at www.FloridaCitrusHallofFame.com.

Dr. Charles W. Adams (1879-1945)

As a partner in Adams Packing Association and Growers Fertilizer Corporation, Dr. Charles W. Adams was a leader in his field and impacted the citrus industry with his progressive ideas for growth. During the 1920s, 30s and 40s, Dr. Adams, Mac Morrow and L.P. Kirkland were responsible for the building and operating of a significant portion of the packing, processing, and marketing infrastructure that enabled citrus to grow into the major industry it became. It was a critical period for Florida’s citrus industry and a remarkable accomplishment considering the immense challenges of the Great Depression and World War II.

Adams moved from Michigan to Florida in 1911 and began what would become a 34-year involvement in Florida's citrus industry, purchasing a grove located between Lake Alfred and Auburndale. In Detroit, "Doc" Adams, as he was known, had developed what may have been the world's largest dentist office. His philosophy was one of growth and he applied the same philosophy to the citrus operation by acquiring existing groves and planting new ones. With Robert T. "Bob" Reynolds (HOF 1976) as grove manager, Adams Groves was reportedly Florida's first grower to reach the 1,000-acre mark.

After seeing success as a grower, Adams then turned his attention to other parts of the industry and, in 1927, he teamed with J.M. Morrow (HOF 1962) and L.P. Kirkland (HOF 1962) to form Adams Packing Association in Auburndale. They built what became one of the largest and most modern packinghouses of its time. In 1934, Dr. Adams and Charles Shinn started Growers Fertilizer Cooperative in Lake Alfred to provide a reliable supply of quality fertilizer for their groves and those of other growers. In 1941, Adams Packing entered the juice business and eventually became what was at one time the fifth largest juice processor in the state. Later, industry standouts Sam H. Killebrew, Sr. (HOF 2003) and Ben Adams (HOF 1996) had key roles at Adams Packing Association.

Dr. Charles W. Adams made contributions to the Florida citrus industry not just as a grower, but also by the instrumental role he played in building and operating critical fertilizer blending, fruit packing, and juice processing infrastructure starting in the late 1920's. Such infrastructure was crucial for Florida citrus to be able to grow into the major industry that it did. Although he died in 1945, his impact on the industry continued to be felt as others carried on what he had set into motion as one of the Florida citrus industry's true pioneers.

See HALL OF FAME on page 17



Citrus Nutrition Day

WEDNESDAY
January
22
2025



Learn about the latest citrus nutrition research progress and strategies for applying nutrients in Florida citrus.

Location

UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center
Ben Hill Griffin, Jr. Citrus Hall
700 Experiment Station Road
Lake Alfred, Florida

Registration

No cost to attend, but registration is required.
<https://citrusnutrition2025.eventbrite.com>

Registration Deadline: January 15, 2025

For more information, contact Jamie Burrow
jdyates@ufl.edu, 863-956-8648

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8:30 am - Registration

9:00 am - Welcome

9:05 am - Update on BMP Research Project,
Davie Kadyampakeni

9:30 am - Citrus Nutrition Box Program: The Final
Results, Jamie Burrow

9:55 am - Economics, Kim Morgan

10:20 am - Enhancing Citrus Growth: Harnessing
Silicon as a Plant Beneficial Nutrient,
Muhammad Shahid

10:45 am - Break

11:00 am - Precision Nutrient Management for
Rejuvenating HLB-affected Sweet Orange,
Tripti Vashisth

11:25 am - Macro- and Micronutrient Fertilizing
Rehabilitation of HLB-affected Citrus Trees,
Davie Kadyampakeni

11:50 am - Zinc and Potassium Research Update,
Fernando Alferez

12:15 pm - Lunch and Q & A

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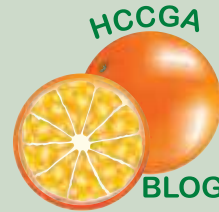
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HALL OF FAME, Con't from page 14

Dr. James H. "Jim" Graham

Throughout his 34-year career at the University of Florida's Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC) in Lake Alfred, Fla., Jim Graham has managed to devote his time almost equally to a world-class research program and to a citrus extension program that equals any in the world.

He received his Ph. D. in Mycology/Soil Science from Oregon State University in 1980 and his B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of California in 1974, and his work on citrus pathogens and root diseases has produced management strategies that have become the industry standard in citriculture.

He was very involved in trying to eliminate canker from Florida but when hurricanes made that effort impossible, he pivoted to helping the grower deal with canker, becoming the go-to researcher on canker suppression. There are few canker management practices today that were not initiated or influenced by his work, which has led to many of the recommendations on canker, greasy spot, diaprepes root weevil, phytophthora and HLB found in today's Florida Citrus Production Guide.

Along with all the research endeavors he has headed up in Florida are the many global collaborations he has participated in with other research institutions. These joint research projects allowed greater insight into diseases that were new to the United States but which have been successfully managed for decades elsewhere. Upon his "retirement," he continued to serve as an important resource for growers and as an advisor to the Citrus Research and Development Foundation, helping to wisely allocate funding on some of the most important issues facing the Florida citrus industry.

Beyond his contributions to citrus research, Graham remains a world authority on mycorrhiza fungi. He is an APS Fellow and a recipient of the Lee M. Hutchins Award. He serves on the senior editorial boards of APS Press (since 2006) and New Phytologist (since 2009). He has published more than 190 refereed manuscripts, 18 book chapters and 105 non-refereed, popular and extension articles. He is heavily sought after as a speaker and has participated in over 200 international symposia, seminars, and workshops, and is rarely absent from the agendas of Florida's citrus industry events. He is a longstanding organizer of prestigious international research conferences, including several international HLB conferences held in Florida and California, as well as the 2008 Citrus Congress held in China.

Graham has also been very active as a teacher and mentor. Aside from regular guest lectures, he taught in the Citrus Pest Management class at the University of Florida's Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC) in Lake Alfred, Fla. since its inception. He has reviewed 42 masters/doctoral candidates and served on more than 20 other student committees, while also performing as an outside examiner of several foreign dissertations. His students have garnered more than their share of research awards at numerous state and local meetings and his influence will be felt for years to come.

Daniel R. "Dan" Richey

Dan Richey is a familiar and respected face throughout Florida's citrus industry. He is best known in fresh fruit circles, but his leadership and tenacious support, promotion and defense of Florida's citrus industry is known and felt by all.

Dan has been at the helm of Riverfront Packing for decades, building it into a preeminent shipper of high-quality Indian River Grapefruit supplied into export and domestic channels. However, his service and influence extend well beyond the company he represents. Richey is currently serving as an appointed advisor to the U.S. Trade Representative and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

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regarding international trade (USDA Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee for Fruits and Vegetables, ATAC). He has served as Chairman of the Florida Citrus Commission, President of Florida Citrus Packers, Chairman and President of the Indian River Citrus League, officer and committee member of Citrus Administrative Committee, Board Member of Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, Member of the USDA Fruit and Vegetable Industry Advisory Committee, Congressional Task Force on Agricultural Trade, and Member and Director of Highland Exchange Service Cooperative. In addition, he has served on the Board of Directors for numerous banks (including Chairman), has been Chairman of the Board for Florida Citrus Business and Industry Self-Insurance Fund (FCBI), was a member of Leadership Florida Class IX, and was named one of the most influential Floridians by Florida Trend Magazine.

Often the “go-to” contact for countless politicians, staffers, and media outlets, Richey is knowledgeable about current issues facing Florida citrus and employs an unparalleled breadth of knowledge of production, regulatory, economics, logistics and trade. He demonstrates the uncommon gift of building consensus among disparate parties. He has helped open and build export markets, hosted and attended countless trade missions, and worked in concert with state and federal agencies to establish and improve export protocols for fresh Florida citrus (including spearheading the development of the Partners in Quality Program and serving as one of two pilot facilities). He also contributed to the development of the Citrus Health Response Program (CHRP), and is as equally at home with CEOs, dignitaries, and senior elected officials as he is with packinghouse employees or harvesting crews. Richey is a trusted advocate for many, and someone the citrus industry confidently and frequently chooses to represent its interests.

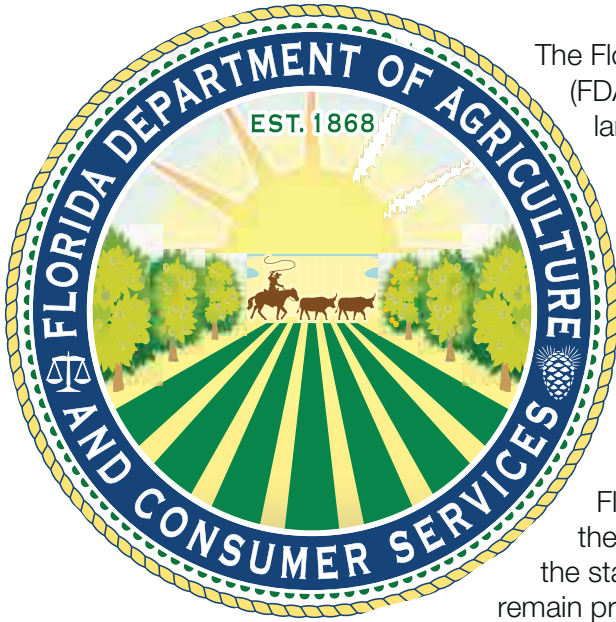
In 2006, Richey was awarded the John T. Lesley award by Florida Citrus Packers, which was a recognition by his peers that reflected his selfless long-time leadership in support of the industry, extending well beyond his personal and professional interests. In 2007, he received the Citrus Achievement Award. Again, a recognition of the breadth and scope of his influence and effective leadership on behalf of the Florida Citrus Industry.

Richey has also enthusiastically sought opportunities to support worthy causes and his local community. Though this is not directly related to the Florida citrus industry, it is further evidence of his character and personal convictions. He was Chairman of the Indian River County Planning and Zoning Commission, Board member of the Indian River Chamber of Commerce, a member of the President’s Council for Florida Southern College, and Chairman of the Board of St Edward’s School. He has volunteered at the Navy Seal Museum in Fort Pierce, founded the Tunnel to Towers Race in Vero Beach and was President of the 100 Club of Indian River County (raising funds for families of fallen police and fire personnel).

The continued viability and restoration of Florida’s storied citrus industry is more than a job for Dan Richey, it is his passion and his life.

The Florida Citrus Hall of Fame honors distinguished leaders who have made significant contributions to the Florida citrus industry. The Citrus Hall of Fame display and Archives Center is located within the Sarah D. and L. Kirk McKay, Jr. Archives Center at Florida Southern College in Lakeland. For tickets to the luncheon, visit www.FloridaCitrusHallofFame.com, which includes access to biographies and photos on all members, noting their accomplishments, as well as numerous Oral History Videos with longtime industry members.

Florida Land Protection Program Accepting Applications



The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) announced the opening of an application cycle for landowners to apply to the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program. The program partners with farmers and ranchers through rural lands protection easements to preserve working agricultural operations.

Landowners can submit applications online through Jan 29, 2025. FDACS will then review the applications for eligibility. Projects are reviewed by a technical review team, ranked through a formal process by the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program Selection Committee, and approved by the governor and cabinet.

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson called the program “a testament to the critical partnership between the state and our farmers and ranchers, ensuring these lands remain productive and vibrant for future generations.”

The program was established in 2001 with the passage of the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act. It has successfully preserved more than 196,000 acres of working agricultural land.

Agricultural lands are increasingly threatened by urban development. To counter this trend, the program partners with farmers and ranchers to ensure sustainable production practices while protecting natural resources. These easements serve as safeguards against future development, allowing agriculture operations to continue.

Florida’s governor and cabinet in December approved the preservation of more than 62,000 acres of working agricultural land totaling more than \$206 million. The 13 easements marked the most acquisitions in the program’s history to be approved at a meeting of the governor and cabinet.

The governor and cabinet also voted to approve the 2024 Rural and Family Lands Protection Program’s Project Acquisition List with more than 300,000 acres of proposed conservation projects valued at nearly \$1 billion.

A story map of all completed Rural and Family Lands Protection Program projects can be viewed at: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/67e301399e994909b66fe42cbf8c20a3>.

Source: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services





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UF/IFAS Flower Bud Induction Advisories

The 2024-2025 Flower Bud Advisories provided by Dr. Tripti Vashisth (UF/IFAS CREC) are now ongoing. These advisories are published biweekly through March 2025. 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. 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 model is available at: <http://disc.ifas.ufl.edu/bloom/model.jsp>.

The information provided by these two modeling resources can also 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.

Growers should pay attention to flower bud advisories because they discuss the predicted bloom and best practices to follow at that time of year for optimum flowering. Starting this year, each advisory will carry additional recommendations regarding use of GA to manipulate flowering.

Registration Is Open for the Florida Citrus Show

The Florida Citrus Show is scheduled for Thursday, March 13, 2025. The event will be held at the UF/IFAS Indian River Research and Education Center and the USDA Agricultural Research Service U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory in Fort Pierce.

The Florida Citrus Show combines educational seminars for both citrus and vegetable growers with a trade show featuring suppliers of products and services growers need to produce a successful crop. The tailgate-style lunch returns with participating vendors serving a variety of foods from their booths. The event location is ideal for showcasing the UF/IFAS and USDA facilities where research is being conducted to benefit citrus and specialty crop production.

The educational seminars will highlight some of that research as well as other topics of interest, including:

- Farm policy and regulatory update and outlook
- Next steps in the fight against HLB
- Water cost-share programs and incentives to get more trees planted
- Deep dive and tour of the "Grove-First" approach and the evaluation of alternative trunk-injection therapies
- A look at new varieties and rootstocks with improved HLB tolerance and the quest for an HLB-resistant citrus tree
- Grower panel discussion on keeping citrus trees alive and productive in an HLB-endemic environment
- Breakout seminar dedicated to vegetable production and best practices

Register now at: <https://citrusindustry.net/florida-citrus-show-attend>.

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