



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

E X T E N S I O N

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SOUTH FLORIDA VEGETABLE PEST AND DISEASE HOTLINE

March 6, 2009

Another cold front this past week bought an unusually late frost to many of the normally colder areas of South Florida. Immokalee experienced some of the coldest temperatures reported with the mercury dipping to 29 degrees. Areas in Glades and Charlotte County reported lows as low as 28 degrees. While not as severe as the past two freezes crops in a number of areas were damaged. Cold winds preceding the front were also responsible for crop damage.

Most of the area has been extremely dry with most stations reporting no precipitation. National Weather Service records indicate that South Florida is experiencing one of the driest winters on record. Some growers are having trouble wetting fields particularly those where planting was delayed for several weeks by cold weather.

FAWN Weather Summary

Date	Air Temp °F		Rainfall (Inches)	Ave Relative Humidity (Percent)	ET (Inches/Day) (Average)
	Min	Max			
Balm					
1/29 – 2/19/09	31.72	83.16	0.18	62	0.1
Belle Glade					
1/29 – 2/19/09	33.82	83.14	0.00	69	0.1
Clewiston					
1/29 – 2/19/09	33.27	83.98	0.00	65	0.11
Ft Lauderdale					
1/2 - 1/29/09	43.54	83.73	0.03	66	0.1
Fort Pierce					
1/29 – 2/19/09	33.14	80.85	0.00	68	0.1
Homestead					
1/29 – 2/19/09	38.35	83.57	0.00	71	0.1
Immokalee					
1/29 – 2/19/09	29.39	85.69	0.01	66	0.1

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Crops coming to market include beans, cabbage, celery, eggplant, endive, lettuce, peppers, squash, strawberries, sweet corn and tomatoes. Volumes have been light due to frosts and freezes of the last six weeks and quality of some items has suffered.

The short-term forecast from the National Weather Service in Miami calls for little change in the weather through the weekend and next into week; although a gradual warming trend will result in highs in the low to mid 80s for much of next week. A strong ridge will continue to deflect storm systems more towards the Ohio valley much of next week meaning this pattern may be with us for some time. For additional information, visit the National Weather Service in Miami website at <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/mfl/newpage/index.html>

Insects

Aphids

Growers and scouts from around Palm Beach indicate that aphids are becoming more of a problem and note that they are as bad as they have been in many years. They are widely present eggplant, pepper, tomato, squash and cucumbers and colony formation is occurring in many locations.

Around SW Florida report aphids are just about everywhere right now. Growers are seeing colonies forming in many fields on several different crops. Dr Phil Stansly, Entomologist, UF/IFAS SWFREC reports that his suction traps are catching lots of aphids. Species include green peach, melon and some potato aphids.

In the Manatee-Ruskin area, low to very low but consistent aphid populations are present on a wide variety of crops. Some colony formation has been noted in peppers.

In the Glades, growers are also reporting low but persistent numbers of aphids on a range of leafy vegetables.

Leafminers

Reports from Manatee County indicate leafminers are currently the big pest in tomato and have increased in some fields over the past week.

Growers and scouts around Southwest Florida leafminer indicate that leafminer pressure remains low. A few hotspots have been noted including some fields in Devils Garden.

Around the Glades, leafminer activity continues on in lettuce and leafy greens.

Respondents around Palm Beach and the East Coast indicate that leafminer pressure remains low in squash, tomato and eggplant.

Whiteflies

Around SW Florida, whitefly numbers are still low but scouts have reported more and higher spikes in adults moving around in conjunction with warmer afternoons. Some scouting reports are showing adults in the 1-2 per plant range on tomato and up to 4-5 per plant on cucurbits with 2 true leaves.

Respondents around Palm Beach report that whiteflies are blowing around but numbers remain mostly low.

In the Manatee Ruskin area reports indicate that whiteflies are mostly low

Respondents in Homestead indicate that whitefly populations remain moderate to high in tomatoes and squash.

Recommendations

A. Crop Hygiene - Field hygiene should be a high priority and should be included as an integral part of the overall strategy for managing whitefly populations, TYLCV incidence, and insecticide resistance.

- Disrupt the virus-whitefly cycle in winter by creating a break in time and/or space between fall and spring crops, especially tomato.
- Destroy the crop quickly and thoroughly, killing whiteflies and preventing re-growth.
- Promptly and efficiently destroy all vegetable crops within 5 days of final harvest to decrease whitefly numbers and sources of plant begomoviruses like TYLCV.
- Use a contact desiccant (“burn down”) herbicide in conjunction with a heavy application of oil (not less than 3 % emulsion) and a non-ionic adjuvant to destroy crop plants and to kill whiteflies quickly.
- Time burn down sprays to avoid crop destruction during windy periods, especially when prevailing winds are blowing whiteflies toward adjacent plantings.
- Destroy crops block by block as harvest is completed rather than waiting and destroying the entire field at one time.

B. Other Cultural Control Practices - Reduce overall whitefly populations, regardless of biotype, and avoid introducing whiteflies and TYLCV into crops by strictly adhering to correct cultural practices.

- Plant whitefly and virus-free transplants.
- Do not plant new crops near or adjacent to old, infested crops.
- Use determinant varieties of grape tomatoes to avoid extended crop season.
- Use TYLCV resistant tomato cultivars where possible and appropriate, especially during historically critical periods of virus pressure. Whitefly control must continue even with use of TYLCV resistant cultivars because these cultivars can carry the virus.
- Use ultraviolet light reflective (aluminum) mulch on plantings that growers find are historically most commonly infested with whiteflies and infected with TYLCV.
- Apply an effective insecticide to kill whitefly adults prior to cultural manipulations such as pruning, tying, etc.
- Rogue tomato plants with symptoms of TYLCV at least until second tie. Plants should be treated for whitefly adults prior to roguing and, if nymphs are present, should be removed from the field, preferably in plastic bags, and disposed of as far from production fields as possible.
- Manage weeds within crops to minimize interference with spraying and to eliminate alternative whitefly and virus host plants.
- Dispose of cull tomatoes as far from production fields as possible. If deposited in pastures, fruit should be spread instead of dumped in a large pile to encourage consumption by cattle. The fields should then be monitored for germination of tomato seedlings, which should be controlled by mowing or with herbicides if present.
- Destroy old crops within 5 days after harvest, destroy whitefly infested abandoned crops, and control volunteer plants with a desiccant herbicide and oil.

C. Insecticidal Control Practices.

- Delay resistance to neonicotinoid and other insecticides by using a proper whitefly insecticide program. Follow the label!
- Use neonicotinoids in the field only during the first six weeks of the crop, thus leaving a neonicotinoid-free period at the end of the crop.

- As control of whitefly nymphs diminishes following soil drenches of the neonicotinoid insecticide or after more than six weeks following transplanting, use rotations of insecticides of other chemical classes including insecticides effective against biotype Q. Consult the Cooperative Extension Service for the latest recommendations.
- Use selective rather than broad-spectrum control products where possible to conserve natural enemies and enhance biological control.
- Do not apply insecticides on weeds on field perimeters. These could kill whitefly natural enemies and, thus, interfere with biological control, as well as select for biotype Q, if present, which is more resistant to many insecticides than biotype B.
- Soil applications of neonicotinoid insecticides for whitefly control.
- For best control, use a neonicotinoid as a soil drench at transplanting, preferably in the transplant water.
- Soil applications of neonicotinoids through the drip irrigation system are inefficient and not recommended.
- Do not use split applications of soil drenches of neonicotinoid insecticides (i.e. do not apply at transplanting and then again later).
- Foliar applications of neonicotinoid insecticides for whitefly control.
- Foliar applications, if used instead of or in addition to soil drenches at transplanting, should be restricted to the first 6 weeks after transplanting. Do not exceed the maximum active ingredient per season according to the label.
- Follow scouting recommendations when using a foliar neonicotinoid insecticide program. Rotate to non-neonicotinoid insecticide classes after the first 6 weeks and do not use any neonicotinoid class insecticides for the remaining cropping period.

Worms

Reports from Palm Beach indicate that worm pressure is mostly low with higher numbers of melonworms on some squash. Beet and southern armyworms and loopers are present here and there in low numbers.

Around Southwest Florida, worms have been quiet with few exceptions. Some higher numbers have been reported in Devils Garden.

Some light worm pressure is being reported in sweet corn in the Glades, species include fall armyworm and a few beet armyworms. Some problems with corn silk worms have been noted in eastern Palm Beach and the EAA.

Spider mites

Growers in scouts across south Florida report that spider mites are also becoming common and several fields have been treated for control. They note that they can often be detected building on nightshade around fields borders and along ditches before moving into the crops.

Respondents in Palm Beach note that spider mite pressure is increasing in basil, cucumber, eggplant, squash and tomato and note that pressure is highest in double crop situations.

Around Plant City scouts report seeing an increase in two-spot mites in strawberries. Spider mites are also present in double cropped watermelon.

Pepper weevils

Around Southwest Florida, scouts report pepper weevils are building in older pepper in a few isolated places but overall remain low.

Respondents in the Palm Beach area report that pepper weevil numbers are present in scattered locations and note that growers have been working on them to keep them from building.

Thrips

Growers and scouts in Palm Beach County report thrips numbers are increasing in pepper. Scouts note that the majority of thrips they are finding are Florida flower thrips with a few western flower thrips and foliage damage being reported. In a few cases where they are present in high numbers growers are reporting some damage on pepper calyxes.

In Southwest Florida, Florida flower thrips are starting to show up but numbers remain low.

Around Plant City thrips numbers are increasing in strawberries.

Diseases

Late Blight

Late blight is now present at several locations around Manatee County but with this dry weather scouts report it has not moved very much. Ted McClary of Syngenta reports that plants from two tomato fields infected with late blight were recently taken from a farm in Manatee County to the Syngenta lab in Vero Beach. The isolates from these samples proved to be sensitive to both Ridomil and Revus.

Around Immokalee growers report that late blight is still mostly contained and has all but disappeared in a number of fields where growers are conducting aggressive spray programs. In other places scouts are still reporting a low level of new activity pretty frequently. There are reports of some scattered tomato fields around with moderate levels of late blight and some stem and fruit infections. Overall problems in potato are lower.

Around Palm Beach, growers and scouts report that they are finding more late blight but it is not spreading as aggressively as it was a few weeks ago.

Reports from Homestead indicate late blight is present on tomato in a number of places.

Powdery Mildew

Growers and scouts around Immokalee report that powdery mildew pressure is very high on squash. Growers are also seeing low levels of powdery mildew on pepper, tomato eggplant and watermelon.

Respondents in Palm Beach report that powdery mildew is increasing almost everywhere and is bad on a number of crops including pepper, squash, watermelon as well as mint and dill.

Low levels of powdery mildew have been reported on Chinese cabbage in the Glades.

Powdery mildew of watermelon is a fairly recent phenomenon in Florida possibly because of the combination of dry spring seasons with the conversion of much of the watermelon acreage to drip irrigation which maintains dry foliage.

Powdery mildew of watermelon appears as yellow blotches on the oldest leaves first. Later these mosaic-like blotches become bronzed and turn dark brown or purple and may be mistaken for wind burn. The white masses of sporulation that are commonly seen with other powdery mildews are not seen commonly with the powdery mildew of watermelon. With magnification, it may be possible to observe a limited amount of the powdery mildew fungus in the yellowed areas.

Control of powdery mildew of watermelon can be achieved with chlorothalonil, the high rates of mancozeb, the strobilurin fungicides such as Amistar, Cabrio, Flint and others, and sterol inhibitors like Nova. New materials like Acrobat, Curzate Pristine and Quintec have also shown good efficacy.

Resistance management involving the rotation of fungicides of differing modes of action is especially important in combating powdery mildew as this disease has historically proven quite adept at developing resistance to fungicides with a specific mode of action such as benomyl, triadimefon and the strobilurins. Growers should be sure to follow labeled instructions regarding the number of applications per season and rotate between different fungicide classes.

Sulfur, potassium bicarbonate and copper products may provide some control for organic producers. Micronized sulfur can be quite effective but may burn foliage under the high temperatures experienced in the late spring in south Florida

Powdery mildew of pepper is caused by *Leveillula taurica*, which is a very different powdery mildew fungus from that causing powdery mildew on cucurbits. The fungus which affects cucurbits *Podasphaera xanthii* (*Sphaerotheca fulginea*) or, occasionally, *Erysiphe cichoracearum*, grows on both surfaces of a leaf and forms haustoria within some epidermal cells to absorb nutrients and produces spores on both surfaces.

In contrast, *Leveillula taurica* grows only within a leaf until it produces spores, a growth habit which is similar to *Alternaria* and most other foliar plant pathogenic fungi. Additionally, *Leveillula taurica* only produces spores on the underside of leaves. *Leveillula taurica* is a species complex that infects over 1000 plant species in 74 families, including tomato and eggplant as well as pepper.

Detecting powdery mildew on pepper can be difficult. The white powdery growth characteristic of powdery mildew diseases occurs only on the underside of leaves and it will turn brown rather than remaining white. Diffuse yellow spotting often develops on the upper surface. Affected leaves tend to drop off the plant, as occurs with bacterial leaf spot.

Fusarium Crown Rot

Around Immokalee, fusarium crown rot continues to take down plants in a number of older fields where susceptible varieties have been planted.

Reports from Palm Beach indicate that fusarium is bad in older tomato in a number of places.

TYLCV

On the East Coast, tomato yellow leaf curl virus is present in a number of scattered locations but is mostly low.

Reports from Homestead indicate that TYLCV is present on tomatoes but incidence remains low.

Around Southwest Florida TYLCV incidence remains mostly low with a few hotspots being reported around Devils Garden.

Bacterial leaf spot

Respondents on the East Coast report bacterial spot is mostly low but continues to creep along on tomato and pepper. Where thrips are present and causing fruit damage around the calyx, some bacterial spot is moving in on some pepper fruit as well.

Strawberry producers around Hillsborough County are suffering thru some of the worst bacteria they have seen following all the watering during freezes.

Around Southwest Florida, bacterial spot is mostly low but has been moving into some cold and wind damaged fruit and foliage in places and is active in pepper in a few scattered locations.

Reports from Manatee County indicate that growers are seeing very little bacteria.

Sclerotinia

Reports from around south Florida indicate that sclerotinia seems to have slowed in most places on tomato and pepper with not much new infection being reported.

Topsin M has given good results on sclerotinia. EPA has extended the expiration date of the Section 18 use of Topsin M WSB on fruiting vegetables in Florida from December 31, 2008 to April 24, 2009. Label must be in applicators possession at the time of application. Call if you need a copy of the Section 18 label.

Downy Mildew

Around Palm Beach County, downy mildew is present at low levels on squash.

Growers and scouts around Southwest Florida report that downy mildew is still active on cucumbers, and some squash.

Respondents from Homestead report some problems with down mildew on squash but not incidence is low.

Across South Florida, downy mildew is widely present on basil.

Since its appearance in South Florida downy mildew has emerged as an important disease on basil and growers should be on a very strict, preventative spray program if they want to control it. The phosphites are effective when applied early, and these should be alternated in a program with azoxystrobin (Amistar or Quadris) to provide the desired control. Spray intervals should be no more than 7-days, with 2 times per week preferable. Once plants are infected, it is very difficult to control. Research is being conducted on additional chemistries with IR-4 and soil applications for early disease control are also being researched.

Botrytis

Respondents around South Florida continue to report some problems with botrytis especially where it is gaining entrance on dead foliage. Gray mold is a fairly common problem in tomato and can also attack beans, eggplants, pepper, and potato as well as many ornamentals.

Target Spot

Target spot is mostly low around South Florida but is flaring up in scattered locations.

Early Blight

A few reports of *Alternaria* on tomato are starting to come in from several locations around South Florida particularly on freeze damaged plants.

Gummy Stem Blight

Around Southwest Florida, gummy stem is around on watermelon but has spread little in most cases.

In Florida, gummy stem blight is a serious disease that occurs annually on watermelons. Infection and symptoms may occur on all plant parts and at any stage of development from seedlings to maturity.

Symptoms appear as light to dark brown circular spots on leaves or as brown to black, lesions on stems. Wilting, followed by death of young plants may occur. Stem lesions enlarge and slowly girdle the main stem resulting in a red-brown-black canker that cracks and may exude a red to amber gummy substance. Vine wilting is usually a late symptom. Use of a hand lens will reveal small, clear white (when young) to black (when old), pycnidia embedded in older diseased tissue.

Because other plant disorders can cause exudation of a gummy substance, “gummy-ness” should not be relied upon for diagnosis of gummy stem blight. Anthracnose and inadequate liming can both cause stem lesions and gumming.

Gummy stem blight typically progresses from the central stem of the plant to growing tips. Leaf spots are variable in shape, red-brown in color and initial infections are generally seen on leaf margins and veinal areas.

The fungus (*Didymella bryoniae*) produces two spore stages, a sexually produced spore (ascospore) and an asexually produced spore (pycnidiospore). The ascospore is windborne and serves as a primary source of inoculum. The pycnidiospore functions in secondary spread of the disease. Pycnidiospores are released in a gummy substance that makes them adaptable for spread by splashing water.

Growers often comment on this disease occurring “overnight.” What they are actually seeing are the results of secondary spread, which is more difficult to control than primary spread simply because of increased spore numbers with increased diseased tissue.

Temperatures and moisture conditions are often ideal for development during watermelon season in Florida. Gummy stem blight is most severe in wet years since moisture is necessary for spore germination. After a spore germinates on a susceptible host, the fungus penetrates the plant tissue and symptoms can appear in 7 to 12 days.

Gummy stem blight can be successfully managed using a combination of control strategies. Control of primary sources of inoculum is important. Growers should purchase clean seed and avoid transplants that have gummy stem blight or other diseases.

Multiple applications of fungicides are necessary to control gummy stem blight. It is important to begin a fungicide program prior to the first sign of gummy stem blight. In south Florida, the spray program should be initiated soon after emergence or transplanting. In other areas of the state, fungicide spray programs can be initiated when the vines begin to “run.” When vines are small, band applications of fungicide over the crown area are effective and help reduce application costs.

In recent years, strains resistant to the strobilurin fungicides have been detected throughout the Southeast, so it is important that growers practice resistance management and avoid repeated

applications of these materials. New materials such as Pristine (BASF) a mixture of boscalid and pyraclostrobin has shown good efficacy against resistant strains of the disease.

Mosaic

Mosaic virus is present on squash around South Florida.

News You Can Use

Driest Winter on Record over parts of South Florida

According to National Weather Service February continued the extended period of extreme dryness across most of south Florida as the area remained stuck in a very dry weather pattern. As was the case in January, several cold fronts passed through the area last month. However, atmospheric conditions were not conducive for significant rainfall in advance of these weather systems. As a result, February 2009 went on record as one of the driest Februaries on record at several south Florida locations. These include West Palm Beach which for the second month in a row recorded a record dry month, Miami International Airport which recorded its fifth driest February, Miami Beach which recorded its fourth driest February and Naples which recorded its seventh driest February.

The three-month rainfall totals including the months of December 2008 and January and February 2009 ranked as the lowest on record at several locations. Miami and Fort Lauderdale recorded their driest December-February on record, with West Palm Beach, Naples and Miami Beach having their second driest all time winter period. Following are the winter (December-February) totals, departure from normal and driest all time rank:

Going back to November 1, 2008, the eastern half of south Florida has received less than 25 percent of the average rainfall for this period, with most western areas at 25 to 40 percent of normal. At Miami and Naples, the percent of normal rainfall since November 1 is at 18 percent, at West Palm Beach it is 20 percent, at Miami Beach it is 15 percent and at Fort Lauderdale International it is an incredibly low 8 percent. Moore Haven has a slightly higher percentage of 36 percent compared to normal since November.

South Florida continues under the influence of the large scale La Niña pattern which is one of the likely causes of the prolonged and extreme dryness this winter. This pattern typically leads to mostly dry cold frontal passages followed by periods of cool and dry air, thereby limiting the potential for significant rainfall across the South Florida peninsula. This pattern has occurred in past years, most notably in 1971, 1985 and 1989. The very dry conditions have led to extremely high fire danger over all of south Florida. The normal start of the south Florida wildfire season is in March, but the extremely high values currently being observed are well ahead of schedule and have already led to a significant number of small wildfires over the region. The combination of these factors means that eastern metro areas of south Florida are under severe drought conditions, with moderate drought conditions elsewhere except in the Naples area where abnormally dry conditions are noted.

The outlook for March through May is for continued drier than normal conditions as La Niña is expected to persist through this period. These expected dry conditions will further exacerbate the wildfire threat over the region, and fire danger levels are likely to remain extremely high during the next 3 months. During the very dry winter and spring seasons of 1985 and 1989, a combined total of over a million acres were burned as a result of wildfires. With a similar lack of rainfall expected this spring, wildfires could once again become a big concern for all South Floridians. All persons are strongly urged to heed all bans on burning and take measures to prevent wildfires during the next few months.

Florida Organic Growers-IFAS April Workshops to Provide Tools for Growers to Transition to Organic

GAINESVILLE, Fla. – Florida Organic Growers (FOG) will team up with the University of Florida IFAS to present two Organic Transition workshops in April: Wednesday, April 22 at the IFAS Extension facility in Homestead and Thursday, April 23 at the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research & Education Center in Immokalee. Commercial growers who are interested in transitioning to organic production will learn about organic farming practices, regulations, and organic farm plan development. The program includes an update on financial incentives available to transitioning producers included in the 2008 Farm Bill.

The workshops are part of FOG's Organic Transition & Pesticide Reduction initiative that offers farmers free technical assistance to transition to organic production by pairing growers with an experienced organic production crop advisor. The advisor, FOG staff, and allied professionals offer support, technical know-how and assurance growers may need or desire to successfully make the transition.

Growers who transition to organic production gain access to the organic foods marketplace, which, in the U.S., has grown from \$1 billion in sales in 1990 to an estimated \$23 billion in 2008.

“The organic marketplace continues to expand and Florida growers may want to seriously consider the market opportunities,” FOG Executive Director Marty Mesh said.

In addition to assisting transitional growers, FOG's program is open to Florida fruit, vegetable, and row-crop producers who are motivated to reduce their use of pesticides. Growers who participate with the goal of reducing pesticide use and abandoning high-risk pesticides can work with a Crop Advisor to learn and adopt sustainable farming practices and sound Integrated Pest Management.

To register for the April 22 workshop in Homestead, please contact Teresa Olczyk at 305-248-3311 or twol@ufl.edu.

To register for the April 23 workshop in Immokalee, please contact Gene McAvoy at 863-674-4092 or gmavoy@ufl.edu.

Registration is \$15 and includes lunch, refreshments, and a resource binder.

Growers who would like to work with a Crop Advisor through the Organic Transition & Pesticide Reduction program should contact Matt Vargas at (352) 377-6345 or matt@foginfo.org. More information, including the application to participate in the program, can be found at www.foginfo.org/epa

EQIP Applications Accepted until Close of Business on March 13, 2009 for the 2009 Funding Period.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practices and a maximum term of ten years. These contracts provide incentive payments and cost-shares to implement conservation practices. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the EQIP program. EQIP activities are carried out according to an environmental quality incentives program plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer that identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns. The practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. The local conservation district approves the plan.

EQIP will, if approved, cost-share up to 50 or 75 percent (depending on approved resource concerns) of the costs of certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the incentive. However, limited resource producer ranchers may be eligible for cost-shares up to 90 percent.

Farmers and ranchers may elect to use a certified third-party provider for technical assistance. An individual or entity may not receive, directly or indirectly, cost-share or incentive payments that, in the aggregate, exceed \$450,000 for all EQIP contracts entered during the term of the Farm Bill.

April 1, Deadline For Nominations 2009 Ag Environmental Awards

The deadline for submitting nominations for the Commissioner's 2009 Agriculture Environmental Leadership Awards is April 1. This award recognizes environmentally innovative farming practices of the state's growers and ranchers. The program honors agricultural producers who demonstrate a dedication to preserving the environment and conserving natural resources while helping ensure a continuing supply of food and fiber.

Since its inception, the awards program has recognized cattle, dairy, fruit and vegetable, small grain, sod, nursery, tropical fish, citrus and timber producers.

To obtain a nomination form or to receive more information about the program visit <http://www.florida-agriculture.com/agenvironmental/index.htm> or contact Ms. Stacey Dallis Reese at (850) 488-3731.

I-9 Form Changes

Changes to the I-9 form (employment eligibility verification) rule will now take effect April 3. These changes represent another attempt by the Department of Homeland Security to intensify the regulations which apply to employers and prospective employees. Information about the changes as well as a copy of the Employer's Handbook are available online at: <http://www.uscis.gov/>.

State Agency Hires 16 Investigators for Major Farm Areas

The Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) has placed 16 investigators throughout the state to inspect conditions among farm labor contractor employees. For the protection of Florida's farm workers and the agriculture industry, these inspections include field sanitation, payment of wages, and passenger vehicle safety.

The investigators have been placed in agriculturally significant areas of the state to ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal laws. Investigators are assigned to the following areas: Homestead, Ft. Pierce, Ft. Myers, Belle Glade/Clewiston, Immokalee/Labelle, Sebring Wauchula, Tampa, Orlando, Gainesville, and Quincy.

A Florida farm Labor Contractor Study Guide is posted at the DBPR's Internet site at: http://www.myflorida.com/dbpr/reg/documents/florida_farm_labor_contractor_english.pdf.

Reimbursements for Organic Certification Costs

Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. (FOG) is accepting applications from certified organic growers and handlers in Florida for reimbursement of up to 75 percent of certification costs, or a maximum of \$750. Reimbursement for certification costs paid between Oct. 1, 2008, and Sept. 30, 2009, will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are depleted. The deadline for submitting applications is Oct. 15, 2009.

To qualify for the organic certification cost share reimbursement, an operator must have certified organic farm or production facilities in Florida, must hold an organic certificate issued by a USDA accredited certification

agency issued between Oct. 1, 2008, and Sept. 30, 2009, and must not have previously received cost share reimbursement for the same period.

For additional information, including the cost share program application, visit www.foginfo.org, call 352.377.6345 or email fog@foginfo.org <<mailto:matt@foginfo.org>>.



Attention Florida Agricultural Producers: Farm Bill Meetings

The Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, commonly known as the 2008 Farm Bill, has become law and rule making is in process. As NRCS in Florida prepares to deliver the conservation programs within the bill, many of which provide cost-share and other financial assistance, we want to ensure that we address the natural resource conservation priorities within the State and get the information out to our partners and Florida's agricultural producers.

As a result, we are holding public information sessions designed to provide NRCS customers and natural resource partners the opportunity to hear what programs will be available with the new 2008 Farm Bill and changes from the 2002 Farm Bill. Information on how to make public comments will be available. A question and answer session will follow.

Several meetings will be held across Florida where topics ranging from invasive species to water conservation will be discussed.

	Meeting Room	Date and time	Address	Contact
Marianna	Marianna Agricultural Service Center	March 2, 2009 6 pm – 8 pm	2741 Pennsylvania Ave. Marianna, FL 32448	Jeff Norville (850) 482-2002 x110
Jay	Jay Community Center	March 3, 2009 6 pm – 8 pm	5259 Booker Lane Jay, FL 32565	Jeff Norville (850) 482-2002 x110
Live Oak	Suwannee County Extension Service	March 4, 2009 6 pm – 8 pm	1302 11th Street SW Live Oak, FL 32060-3611	Frank Ellis (386)-755-5100 x103
Gainesville	Doyle Conner Ag. Bldg Auditorium	March 5, 2009 9 am – 11 am	1911 SW 34 Street Gainesville, FL 32608	Frank Ellis (386)-755-5100 x103
LaBelle	USDA Service Center	March 9, 2009 9 am – Noon	1085 Pratt Blvd Labelle, FL 33975	Jeff Schmidt (561) 683-0883
Okeechobee	Okeechobee Ag Civic Center	March 9, 2009 3 pm – 5 pm	US Hwy 98 North Okeechobee, FL 34972	Jeff Schmidt (561) 683-0883
Bartow	Polk County Ag Center South Auditorium	March 10, 2009 1 pm – 3 pm	1700 Highway 17 South Bartow, FL 33830	Jeff White (941) 729-6804
Kissimmee	Osceola Heritage Park Extension Bldg. Room 161	March 11, 2009 1 pm – 3 pm	1921 Kissimmee Valley Ln Kissimmee, FL 34744	Jeff White (941) 729-6804
West Palm Beach	Palm Beach Extension Service-Exhibit Hall A	March 12, 2009 10 am – noon	559 N. Military Trail West Palm Beach, FL	Jeff Schmidt (561) 683-0883

For additional information about the sessions call the contact person for the meeting nearest you.

Green Market

A new green market in Boynton Beach had a grand opening on January 30, 2009, and is looking to offer spaces to more green market venues to share business opportunities. Rent per venue is \$40/week, or \$135/month. The green market is open on Fridays from 8AM to 1PM.

Interested party please call Lenora Glickman at 561-740-9000 Ext 266.

Farm Land for Lease

Farm Land for lease in LaBelle area – contact Greg Jones at 863-675-0545

Agriculture land available for a long term lease of 8-10 years. This 320 acre property is located in Martin County on Hwy 609 and 3 miles north of Hwy 710 (The Beeline Hwy). It is within the Troop Indiantown Water District (TIWD) which provides for irrigation water and free-flowing drainage. This land is free of wetlands and cleared for farming. Contact Miguel Perales: 561-718-4635.

Up Coming Meetings

Southwest Florida

March 13, 2009

WPS – Train the Trainer Workshop

Hendry County Extension Office
LaBelle, Florida

Contact 863-674-4092

March 24, 2009

WPS Handler Training

Hendry County Extension Office
LaBelle, Florida

Contact 863-674-4092

April 7 – 8, 2009

Spanish Pesticide License Training

Core – April 7

Private- April 8

Hendry County Extension Office
LaBelle, Florida

Contact 863-674-4092

Note tests are administered in English

Other Meetings

Mar. 9 - 13, 2009

2009 FL Postharvest Horticulture Industry Tour

For more information contact Adrian Berry at adberry@ifas.ufl.edu

June 7-9, 2009

Florida State Horticultural Society Meeting

Jacksonville, Florida

For more information contact Mary Lamberts at 305-248-3311 x234, email to lamberts@ufl.edu or go to <http://www.fshs.org/meetings.htm>

Websites

SpanishDict.com – looking to translate words from English to Spanish or want to improve on your Spanish language skills – this website offers free lessons and translations and more. Go to <http://www.spanishdict.com/>

Management of Whiteflies, Whitefly-Vectored Plant Virus, and Insecticide Resistance for Vegetable Production in Southern Florida for current UF/IFAS Recommendations, go to <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/IN695> .

Quotable Quotes

You cannot legislate the poor into freedom by legislating the wealthy out of freedom. What one person receives without working for, another person must work for without receiving. The government cannot give to anybody anything that the government does not first take from somebody else. When half of the people get the idea that they do not have to work because the other half is going to take care of them, and when the other half gets the idea that it does no good to work because somebody else is going to get what they work for, that my dear friend, is about the end of any nation. You cannot multiply wealth by dividing it. - Dr. Adrian Rogers

Sometimes when I reflect back on all the beer I drink I feel ashamed. Then I look into the glass and think about the workers in the brewery and all of their hopes and dreams. If I didn't drink this beer, they might be out of work and their dreams would be shattered. Then I say to myself, "It is better that I drink this beer and let their dreams come true than be selfish and worry about my liver. - Jack Handy

Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy. - Benjamin Franklin

Without question, the greatest invention in the history of mankind is beer. Oh, I grant you that the wheel was also a fine invention, but the wheel does not go nearly as well with pizza. - Dave Barry

On the Lighter Side

Advice for a long and Blissful Marriage

At All Saints Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, they have an annual husband's marriage seminar.

At the last session, the Pastor asked Ole Westrum, who was approaching his 50th wedding anniversary, to take a few minutes and share some insight into how he had managed to stay married to the same woman all these years.

'Vell', Ole replied to the assembled husbands, 'I've tried to treat her nice, spend da money on her, but best of all, I took her to Norway for da 20th anniversary!'

The Pastor responded, 'Ole, you are an amazing inspiration to all the husbands here! Please tell us what you are planning for your 50th anniversary.'

Ole proudly replied, 'I'm a-gonna go get her.'

Divorce vs. Murder

A nice, calm and respectable lady went into the pharmacy, walked up to the pharmacist, looked straight into his eyes, and said, 'I would like to buy some cyanide.'

The pharmacist asked, 'Why in the world do you need cyanide?'

The lady replied, 'I need it to poison my husband.'

The pharmacist's eyes got big and he exclaimed, 'Lord have mercy! I can't give you cyanide to kill your husband. That's against the law! I'll lose my license! They'll throw both of us in jail! All kinds of bad things will happen. Absolutely not! You CANNOT have any cyanide!'

The lady reached into her purse and pulled out a picture of her husband in bed with the pharmacist's wife.

The pharmacist looked at the picture and replied, 'Well now, that's different....!. You didn't tell me you had a prescription.'

Sign of the Times

A dog had followed his owner to school. His owner was a fourth grader at a public elementary school. However, when the bell rang, the dog sidled inside the building and made it all the way to the child's classroom before a teacher noticed and shooed him outside, closing the door behind him.

The dog sat down, whimpered and stared at the closed doors. Then God appeared beside the dog, patted his head, and said, 'Don't feel bad fella'...they won't let ME in either'.

Contributors include: Joel Allingham/AgriCare, Inc, Jeff Beethel/Yoder Brothers, Bruce Corbitt/West Coast Tomato Growers, Dr. Phyllis Gilreath/Manatee County Extension, Michael Hare/Drip Tape Solutions, Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, Sarah Hornsby/AgCropCon, Cecil Howell/H & R Farms, Loren Horsman/Glades Crop Care, Bruce Johnson/General Crop Management, Dr. Mary Lamberts/Miami-Dade County Extension, Leon Lucas/Glades Crop Care, Mark Mossler/UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Dr. Gregg Nuessly/EREC Chuck Obern/C&B Farm, Dr. Aaron Palmateer/TREC, Dr. Ken Pernezny/EREC, Dr. Rick Raid/ EREC, Dr Ron Rice/Palm Beach County Extension, Dr Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Dr. Nancy Roe/Farming Systems Research, Wes Roan/6 L's, Dr. Dak Seal/ TREC, Kevin Seitzinger/Gargiulo, Ken Shuler/Stephen's Produce, Crystal Snodgrass/Manatee County Extension, John Stanford/Thomas Produce, Mike Stanford/MED Farms, Dr. Phil Stansly/SWFREC, Dr David Sui/Palm Beach County Extension, Dr Gary Vallad/GCREC , Mark Verbeck/GulfCoast Ag, Alicia Whidden/Hillsborough County Extension, Dr Henry Yonce/KAC Ag Research and Dr. Shouan Zhang/TREC.

The **South Florida Pest and Disease Hotline** is compiled by **Gene McAvoy** and is issued on a biweekly basis by the **Hendry County Cooperative Extension Office** as a service to the vegetable industry.

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