On March 29 and 30, southwest Florida welcomed more much needed precipitation following the showers that fell across region on March 29 and 19. The FAWN Weather Station in Immokalee reported a total accumulation of 1.75 inches for the event. Rainfall totals varied widely with many areas around LaBelle reporting up to two and a half inches while eastern parts of Hendry County and areas south and east of Immokalee received an inch or less.

Temperatures for most of the period have been close to seasonal averages. Daytime highs have been mostly in the mid 70’s to low - mid 80’s, with night temperatures in the 40’s, 50’s and 60’s. Windy conditions have been rough on many crops.

Planting of most crops is essentially complete and harvesting is beginning to gain momentum. Most crops are in fair to good condition. Some crops are seeing a higher than normal grade out due to weather related problems earlier in the season. Vegetables available include tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, potatoes, sweet corn, snap beans, cucumbers, squash, eggplant, watermelons and specialty crops.

The National Weather Service in Miami forecast is calling cooler conditions over the next few days with highs in the upper 70’s to low 80’s and nighttime temperatures in the lower to mid 50’s. Skies will be clear and breezy.

A number of respondents continue to report salt related problems and salt damage in plantings. Some fields are in rough shape and will experience significant reduction in yield. There have also been indications of rising salt levels in well water being pumped in coastal areas.

Immokalee Weather Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Air Temp °F)</th>
<th>Rainfall (Inches)</th>
<th>Hours Below Certain Temperature</th>
<th>(hours)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>40°F</td>
<td>45°F</td>
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<td>44.2</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>1.75</td>
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SFWMD REPORTS THAT SIGNIFICANT RAINFALL TRIGGERS CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

On March 30, the South Florida Water Management District reported that rainfall amounts of up to three inches had been recorded with more predicted to come. The much-needed precipitation altered the district decision to move to phase III restrictions.

The significant rainfall recorded throughout the SFWMD created an opportunity to begin the process of replenishing critically low water levels in Lake Okeechobee. The District began harvesting the rainfall runoff and pumping it into Lake Okeechobee. Lake Okeechobee is the most efficient area to store water for future use.

The commencement of pumping during the rain event is an emergency effort to improve the dangerously low levels of the lake. Lake Okeechobee serves as the backup water supply system for the district.

More information regarding the water shortage and water use restrictions is available 24 hours a day on the District's web site at http://www.sfwmd.gov. Citizens may also contact the SFWMD water shortage hotline at 1-800-662-8876. The special phone line is operational Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

SFWMD GOVERNING BOARD APPROVES COMPREHENSIVE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Plan addresses cutbacks in regional water for local diversion and impoundments; "at risk" utilities; increased storage; aggressive outreach; stepped-up compliance/enforcement; and modified water-use restrictions effective April 2

At a special meeting held at its West Palm Beach headquarters, the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board approved a comprehensive drought management implementation plan designed to minimize adverse economic impacts while protecting water supplies in drought-stricken areas of south Florida.

The approved plan includes a series of resource management tools and actions to help manage and stretch the region's dwindling water supplies. It also acknowledges and incorporates input from local governments, business owners and the general public.

Key components of the drought management plan include:

A fifty-percent cutback in water deliveries from regional storage areas to "diversion and impoundment" permit-holders. This means that residents and businesses in Acme Improvement District, Lake Worth Drainage District, City of Boca Raton, and northern Broward County will notice lower levels in community ponds and lakes, but it will not impact drinking water supplies.

The establishment of resource-based "triggers" to define the specific parameters that indicate a resource may be harmed. These will serve as a basis for declaring various levels, or severity, of water-use restrictions.

Corrective action measures and funding for identified "at risk" utilities, including new/repair of intake facilities and submersible pumps for the Lake Okeechobee communities of South Bay, Bryant, Clewiston, Pahokee, Belle Glade and Okeechobee.

Opportunities to enhance storage in the Water Conservation Areas and Lake Okeechobee through changes in the existing minimum elevations and water supply back pumping.
More concerted and aggressive outreach and education with the general public and with affected industry groups. New public service announcement messages will reflect the seriousness of the water shortage with the theme: "Wasting Water is a Crime." Also, several major businesses have also agreed to distribute educational material to customers.

Increased compliance and enforcement coordination with state and local law/code enforcement entities, including creation of a multi-jurisdictional "Compliance/Enforcement Task Force."

Modification of existing Phase 2 restrictions and alternative water conservation measures.

Modified Phase 2 restrictions apply to the Lower East Coast (Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties), the Lower West Coast (Lee, Collier, Hendry, Glades and Charlotte counties) and to the non-agricultural Lake users in Okeechobee County and took effect April 2, 2001.

Vehicle Washing -- Commercial

Commercial Establishment - Permitted anytime. Limited to 75 gallons for cars, vans and small trucks; limited to 150 gallons for large trucks.
Licensed Individual/Company - Permitted anytime using low volume methods.

Nurseries

- **Inside (overhead)** - 7 days a week; 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- **Outside (overhead)** - 7 days a week; 2 a.m. to 8 a.m.

- **Stress Relief** (all size pots) - 7 days a week, between 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m.; limited to 10 minutes per zone

- Low volume and low volume hand watering - no restrictions / allowed anytime

More information regarding the drought management plan is available at [http://www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov)

Whiteflies numbers have begun to escalate increase dramatically in many areas. Counts as high as 50 per plant have been reported, with eggs and immatures present. IGR’s such as Knack and Admire can help populations in check where Admire has begun to wear off.

Growers can also turn to broad-spectrum materials including a variety of pyrethroids, such as Asana, Danitol and Warrior as well as some of the organo-phosphates (Monitor) and carbamates such as Thiodan. As we approach the end of the season, effects on beneficials become less of a concern and cost and efficacy assume greater importance.

Most reports indicate that thrips populations are beginning to fall off. Florida flower thrips (*Frankliniella bispinosa*) are the main species being observed and seem to be the most damaging on pepper. Most respondents are reporting counts of 1-2 per bloom although higher numbers are present in some places.

Leafminers are still active but most reports indicate a reduction in pressure compared to the situation a few weeks ago.

Pinworms are beginning to show up in traps. Respondents indicate average trap counts ranging from 0.8 to 4.2 moths per night. There have been only a few widely scattered observations of pinworms being found in crops typically around field margins.
As the spring season draw to a close, pest pressure that have been increasing gradually all year may suddenly intensify. In tomato these include whitefly and tomato pinworm. The host range of tomato pinworm in our region is limited to tomato, potato, eggplant and tropical soda apple. Thus, the summer break is effective in reducing populations to low levels, except possibly where soda apple is prevalent. Pinworms attack both leaves and fruit. Images and guidelines can be found in the Tomato Scouting Guide [http://ftsg.ifas.ufl.edu/](http://ftsg.ifas.ufl.edu/).

Eggs are laid scattered, or in small groups of 3 to 7, mainly on the upper leaves, and on both upper and lower leaf surfaces. Mines in leaves are initially long and narrow but later widen to give a blotchy appearance. Larvae will also move out of mines to find new leaves or fruit, which they typically enter under the calyx. When mature they lower themselves to the ground to pupate but may also pupate in trash on the plant. It is important to scout tomato and eggplant carefully for the blotchy mines in lower leaves that are an early indication of activity.

**Pheromone traps give an even earlier warning.** Place one trap per 10 acres at least 25 paces inside of field. When 3 to 5 moths are caught per trap per night, then mating disruption should be initiated. Insecticidal control can be achieved with products such as SpinTor, AgriMec, Proclaim and Avaunt.

**Worm activity remains light.** There have been a few reports of southern army worm, loopers and tomato fruit worms from widely scattered locations. Some respondents have reported a mixed bag of worms causing damage to melon fruits – so-called “rind-worms.”

**Several producers have noted pickleworm activity on cucurbits.** Most reports indicate low to moderate pressure, which is being kept easily under control with a variety of lepidoterean specific products. Crops affected include cucumber, squash and melons.

**Low to moderate diamondback pressure is being reported in brassicas.** Respondents indicate that numbers are increasing.

**Pepper weevils are widely present and all reports indicate that populations are increasing to typical high spring levels.** Several growers report serious losses from weevils especially in hot pepper varieties, although all varieties of pepper are susceptible. Some growers have terminated older plantings were weevils had become unmanageable.

**Fallen fruit should be checked to determine if weevils are responsible.** Infested fruits can be recognized before they fall by the yellow calyx the presence of oviposition punctures that look like small dimples.

**Pheromone traps made by Trece are a good way to detect populations early.** Spraying needs to commence at the first sign of weevils or with flowering in fields with a history of problems. Vydate is the standard control and has given pretty good results even at 2 pts/acre when sprayed weekly in Phil Stansly’s trials at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center. A total of 24 pts can be applied for the season.

**Many growers have indicated disappointing results in obtaining satisfactory control in the field.** A number of growers have indicated obtaining good results in controlling weevils with either Capture or cryolite. All currently labeled materials are difficult to work into an IPM program once plantings begin to be harvested due to the 7 day PHI in force for all of them.

**Sanitation is important.** Remove old crops and nightshade (an alternate host) and disk crop residues under as soon as harvesting has terminated. Maintain fields free of volunteer pepper and other potential hosts to reduce survival of pepper weevil populations over the summer.
Indications are that a much-anticipated label for Actara may be in trouble due to concerns presently being raised by the EPA and demands for additional data.

Growers are advised to be alert for spider mites. Several respondents have reported problems with spider mites in tomatoes and eggplants and they are widespread in cucurbits as well. A number of growers report applying repeat applications of miticides aimed at spider mites.

Growers should be sure to scout stands of nightshade adjoining plantings, as this is a potential source of infestation and may help them circumvent possible problems. Recent field surveys have indicated high populations of mites on nightshade along ditch banks and field margins. Given projections for continued dry conditions, spider mites will remain a threat to a variety of crops.

Broadmites are being widely reported in pepper and to a lesser extent on eggplant.

Aphids are still around and populations are reported to be up-and-down seen in peppers and cucurbits. Growers have reported excellent results with Fulfill.

Late blight is widely present on tomato across the area. In some areas the incidence is high and severity moderate.

The disease thrives under cool and wet conditions. Temperatures between 50 and 80°F combined with moist conditions such as rain, fog, heavy dews, or relative humidity above 90 percent are conducive for disease development. Night temperatures in the mid-fifties with daytime temperatures from the mid-fifties to mid-seventies are ideal for this disease. Temperatures in the lower range (50 to 70°F) stimulate the formation of many swarm spores (zoospores) from the sporangia. This situation dramatically increases the potential for disease spread.

Since the disease can spread so rapidly, growers should scout their fields thoroughly each day, especially when cool and wet conditions conducive to disease development prevails. Since late blight symptoms may be confused with symptoms of other diseases, the following diagnostic pointers may help growers distinguish between the late blight and other diseases.

Late blight symptoms on leaves appear as irregularly-shaped brown to purplish lesions with indefinite border lesions can span veins. The lesions may be seen any time of day, on any stage of plant growth and on leaves of any age. Velvety, white fungal growth may appear on the lower surface of affected leaflets early in the morning before leaves dry and/or in the lower canopy.

On stems, purplish lesions may be seen any time of day and may be found anywhere on the stem. Cottony, white growth of fungus on stems with lesions can often be seen early in the morning and/or in the lower canopy. Stems with lesions are brittle and break easily.

Tomato growers should purchase disease-free transplants. This is not a seed borne disease on tomatoes.

Currently, fungicides are the most effective means of controlling late blight and will remain the primary tool until cultivars with resistance to this disease become available. Fungicides slow the rate at which the disease develops in the field by creating a protective barrier on the foliage. Just applying a chemical, however, does not necessarily equate with effective disease control. Relative effectiveness of a product, coverage, and timing must be factored into the equation for maximum benefit.

Numerous fungicide products are registered for late blight control. They are often grouped as protectants or systemics. Protectants, as the name implies, protect foliage from infection by spores. Protectant chemicals
must be well distributed over the leaf surface and must be applied before spores land on leaves. They are ineffective against established infections.

Systemics products become distributed locally within plant tissues and protect foliage from infection by spores. They may kill some established infections and may suppress production of new spores.

Protectants include a range of materials including a number of copper, maneb, mancozeb, chlorothalonil and mefenoxam compounds. Recently, Quadris (azoxystrobin) have gained favor with growers.

Downy mildew is causing serious problems in squash in several locations. There have also been a few isolated reports of downy mildew on cantaloupes and watermelon.

Gummy stem blight has been reported in watermelon from widely scattered locations. In some places incidence is moderate.

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. Use of a hand lens will reveal small, clear white (when young) to black (when old), pimple-like 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.

Nighttime temperatures and moisture conditions are ideal during much of the season in S Florida. Gummy stem blight is most severe in wet years since moisture from dew, rain or irrigation is necessary for spore germination.

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.

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.

Although most reports indicates that the incidence of TYLCV remains low, several respondents have reported a significant increase in the incidence of tomato yellow leaf curl with some fields exhibiting 2 – 3 % infection rates. Even higher incidence of the disease has been observed in some fields that have been turned over to pin hookers. Given the potential ability of whiteflies to transmit the disease rapidly under optimal conditions to new plantings, growers should be alert for whitefly buildup and take measures to control them.

Fusarium crown rot is still causing problems on tomato in some locations. Some new infections have been reported since the recent rains.

Fusarium is being widely reported on watermelons although the incidence is fairly low in most areas. Growers should avoid over-fertilization with ammonium nitrogen.

Scattered occurrence of phytophthora has been noted on pepper in areas that received high rainfall accumulations in recent storms.
Powdery mildew is widely present on squash. Incidence is moderate in some older fields. Benlate, Kocide LF and sulfur products can be used preventively. It should be noted that many Benlate resistant strains of powdery mildew are present in Florida.

Powdery mildew has also been observed in some older pepper fields where the incidence and severity is moderate to high.

Several respondents indicate observing low levels of early blight and target spot in tomato.

Low levels of bacterial leaf spot continue to be reported on pepper and tomato in some places. Incidence is low and occurrence is spotty although there has been a definite increase in activity since the recent rains. Personal observations in grower’s fields seem to suggest that poorly nourished plants are more susceptible to attack by the pathogen.

Pepper mottle virus has been detected in several fields in eastern Hendry County. Incidence and severity is moderate to high in some fields. The virus results in unthrifty stunted plants.

RHODES LIFTS BURN BAN DUE TO RECENT RAIN

On April 2, Florida Agriculture Commissioner Terry L. Rhodes released the remaining 18 counties from the emergency outdoor burning ban because of persistent recent rains throughout the state.

"The rain we have received this month allows us to rescind the emergency drought declaration we imposed nearly five weeks ago," Rhodes said. "But people still need to be very careful and check with their local forestry office for authorization if they intend to do any outdoor burning."

On February 26, Rhodes banned all outdoor burning in 39 of Florida's 67 counties because of exceedingly high drought indexes in those counties. Nine days ago, she released 21 counties from the ban because they had received adequate rainfall to ease the wildfire danger in those counties.

Despite today's action, officials caution that Florida only now is entering what traditionally are its driest months, making it possible that an outdoor burning ban could be reinstated if conditions warrant.

VISA DEADLINE APPROACHES

April 30 is the deadline to apply for visas for eligible undocumented immigrants who want to attain legal residence status by paying a fine and staying in the U.S. The Legal Immigration Family Equity (LIFE) Act and its amendments became law last December. Section 245(i) allows certain persons to apply in the U.S. if they pay a $1,000 penalty, rather than having to return to their home countries to apply.

Previously, immigrants faced a 3- or 10-year ban from returning to the U.S. if they were found to have been in this country illegally. For info call (800) 375-5283; http://www.ins.usdoj.gov

ATTENTION ALL VEGETABLE FARMERS

Magnolia Packing, Inc. will be opening in October 2001. Magnolia Packing will be located on HWY 80 between Clewiston and LaBelle (the old Dole Citrus property). Roy Lee Smith Produce Sales, Inc. with more than 40 years experience in marketing will be in charge of sales.

Magnolia Packing, Inc. will be operating in Florida October through May, and in Georgia May through October.
New state-of-the-art packing lines include:
I. Flume cooling
II. Flume packing
III. Gentle handling and
IV. Forced fan air-cooling for green beans, wax beans, Kentucky beans, eggplant, squash, bell pepper, cubanelle and cucumbers.

If you are interested in becoming part of the program, whether it is in picking, packing and marketing or your field packing and Magnolia’s receiving, cooling and marketing program please contact:

Magnolia Packing, Inc.
PO Box 863
Americus, GA 31709

Ask for Roy Lee Smith, Taylor Neighbors, or George Thurmond.

In LaBelle speak to Calvin O’Bannon 941-860-2606.

They will be happy to furnish a list of current growers in the Clewiston, Immokalee, and LaBelle areas so you may contact them on past performance.

Web Sites

**CEU Information On the Web** – your applicator license expires next week? The University of Florida Pesticide Information Office maintains a listing of CEU program opportunity throughout the state. Organized by month, this site will help you find the CEU’s you need. Go to [http://pest.ifas.ufl.edu/ceu.htm](http://pest.ifas.ufl.edu/ceu.htm)

**Florida Agricultural Facts Book** – If you need facts and/or statistics on crop production in the Sunshine State, this is the site for you. Hosted by the Florida Department of Agriculture, this site provides a wealth of information on Florida farm commodities. Set your browser to [http://www.fl-ag.com/agfacts](http://www.fl-ag.com/agfacts)

**April 2001 IPM Solutions Newsletter from GEMPLER'S** - Are you Pest Management professional interested in cutting costs and increasing profits? Would you like to develop your own IPM program but don’t know where to start? IPM Solutions is an excellent tool that will teach you how to implement an effective IPM program and update you on the latest developments in IPM news. Check it out at [http://www.ipmalmanac.com](http://www.ipmalmanac.com)

**Up Coming Meetings:**

- **April 18, 2001**
  **Role of Plastic Mulches in the Methyl Bromide Alternative Technology**
  Hendry County Extension Office
  10:30 AM - 12 Noon
  1085 Pratt Boulevard
  LaBelle, Florida
  For information, contact 863-674-4092

- **April 18, 2001**
  **Water Use Efficiency in Vegetable Crop Production**
  Hendry County Extension Office
  12 Noon – 2 PM
  1085 Pratt Boulevard
  LaBelle, Florida
  For information, contact 863-674-4092

- **April 19, 2001**
  **Florida Tomato Committee**
Southwest Florida Research and Education Center
Immokalee, Florida
For information, contact 941-658-3400

April 22-26, 2001
85th Annual Meeting of the Potato Association of America (PAA 2001)
St. Augustine, Florida.
Hosted by the University of Florida/IFAS Hastings Research and Education Center, the conference theme is Potato Plant Health into the New Millennium. Emphasis will be on challenging soil-borne diseases.

For more information visit the conference website: http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~conferweb/paa/ or contact the University of Florida, IFAS Office of Conferences by phone (352) 392-5930 or by fax (352) 392-9734, or by Email: mmatlock@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu

May 14 –18, 2001
Aquatic Weed Control Short Course - Earn up to 28 CEU’s
Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center
Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Contact Dr Vernon VanDiver – 954-577-6316

May 15, 2001
Gulf Coast Research and Education Center Vegetable Field Day
Bradenton, FL.
Contact Don Maynard at 941-751-7636 x239 or dnma@mail.ifas.ufl.edu.

May 17, 2001
Spring Vegetable Field Day and Pest and Disease Scouting Workshop
Southwest Florida Research and Education Center
Immokalee, Florida
For information, contact 863-674-4092

June 6, 2001
KaPam/VaPam Certification Course
Southwest Florida Research and Education Center
Immokalee, Florida
For information, contact 863-674-4092

August 3, 2001
Florida Certified Crop Advisor Exam
South Florida Community College
Avon Park, Florida
Call FFAA at (863) 293-4827 for registration information.

Sept. 5, 2001
Florida Tomato Institute
Naples, FL.

Oct. 2-3, 2001
FACTS Meeting
Lakeland, Florida

November 8-9, 2001
17th Annual Tomato Disease Workshop
West Palm Beach, Florida.

Presentations and discussions on the occurrence and management of tomato diseases. Both processing and fresh market tomato problems will be addressed. Colleagues from industry, academia, and extension are welcome.
For additional information visit: http://erec.ifas.ufl.edu/TDW.htm
GIVE ME AN EXCUSE

A fellow bought a new Mercedes and was out on the interstate for a nice evening drive. The top was down, the breeze was blowing through what was left of his hair and he decided to open her up. As the needle jumped up to 80 mph, he suddenly saw flashing red and blue lights behind him. "There's no way they can catch a Mercedes," he thought to himself and opened her up further. The needle hit 90, 100.... Then the reality of the situation hit him. "What am I doing?" he thought and pulled over.

The cop came up to him, took his license without a word and examined it and the car. "It's been a long day, this is the end of my shift and it's Friday the 13th. I don't feel like more paperwork, so if you can give me an excuse for your driving that I haven't heard before, you can go."

The guy thinks for a second and says, "Last week my wife ran off with a cop. I was afraid you were trying to give her back!"

"Have a nice weekend," said the officer.

Contributors include: Karen Armbrester/SWFREC, Jim Connor/SWFREC, Bruce Corbitt/West Coast Tomato Growers, Fred Heald/Farmers Supply, Sarah Hornsby/AgCropCon, Cecil Howell/H&R Farm, Leon Lucas/Glades Crop Care, Gene McAvoy/Hendry County Extension, Alice McGhee/Thomas Produce, Tim Nychk/Nychk Bros. Farm, Chuck 0bern/C+B Farm, Dr. Pam Roberts/SWFREC, Wes Roan/6 L's, Kevin Seitzinger/Gargiulo, Jay Shivler/ F& F Farm, Ben Stanaland/Pacific Tomato Growers, John Stanford/LNA Farm, Mike Stanford/MED Farms, Dr. Phil Stansly/SWFREC, Eugene Tolar/Red Star Farms, and Dr.Charlie Vavrina/SWFREC, Donna Verbeck/GulfCoast Ag.

The SW 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.

Gene McAvoy
Extension Agent II
Vegetable/Ornamental Horticulture 863-674-4092 phone
Hendry County Extension Office 941-860-8811 mobile
PO Box 68 863-674-4097 fax
LaBelle, FL 33975 gmcavoy@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu
http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~gmcavoy/index.htm
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**Rohm and Haas Company**  
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Fort Myers, Florida 33912  
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Phone 941-370-5893 Fax 941-543-7003

**Bob Conrad**  
**AGTROL International**  
6943 Scarboro Drive  
Fort Myers, Florida 33919  
Phone 941-437-9970 Fax 941-437-2646

**Shelby F. Hinrichs**  
**KeyPlex**  
PO Box 11094  
Naples, FL 34101  
Phone 941-910-4837 Fax 941-514-0168

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Immokalee, FL 34142  
Phone 941-657-8254 Fax 941-657-2005

**Gargiulo**  
Growers Shippers Importers Exporters  
David Pensabene: Production Manager  
Naples Operations  
Phone 941-353-0300 Fax 941-353-3407

**Fred Heald**  
**Griffin LLC**  
13171 Lake Meadow Drive  
Fort Myers, Florida 33913  
Phone 941-274-3102 Fax 941-274-6663

**Ed Early**  
**AGTROL International**  
6943 Scarboro Drive  
Fort Myers, Florida 33919  
Phone 941-437-9970 Fax 941-437-2646

**Mike Raines**  
**Rohm and Haas Company**  
7100 Twin Eagle Lane  
Fort Myers, Florida 33912  
Phone 941-561-8733 Mobile 941-707-2272

**KeyPlex**  
PO Box 11094  
Naples, FL 34101  
Phone 941-910-4837 Fax 941-514-0168
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Palmetto, Florida 34220-0128  
Phone 941-722-3279  Fax 941-729-5151

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*Syngenta Crop Protection*  
11051 Championship Drive  
Fort Myers, FL 33913  
Office 941-561-8568  Fax 941-561-8569

Thermo Trilogy Corporation  
Dr. Adam Muckenfuss 561-781-2233  
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Sam Hipp  
21417 1950 E St., Princeton IL 61356  
Phone 954-563-8753  Fax 815-872-1928  
[http://www.agrienergy.net](http://www.agrienergy.net)

Scott Allison  
*DIAMOND R FERTILIZER*  
1155 Commerce Drive  
LaBelle, Florida 33935  
Phone 941-675-3700  Cell 941-851-0613
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Syed Fazli, Ph.D. (Texas A&M)
Certified Professional Crop Consultant/Pathologist
Phone 954-731-2065  Fax 954-341-2152

**Dow AgroSciences LLC**
Sim Nifong
292 Lake Pearl Drive
Lake Placid, Florida 33852
Phone 941-699-9150  Cell 941-745-0237

Sarah Hornsby, CCA
*Agricultural Crop Consulting, Inc*
Scouting: Manatee, Hillsborough, Collier
Office/Fax 941-776-1122  Cell 941-713-6116
Email: AgCropCon@aol.com

**Mr and Mrs Raymond Cordell**
410 Via Esplande
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950

**Capital Agricultural Property Services, Inc.**
Thad G. Boatwright
*Monsanto Crop Protection*
1089 Forsythia Lane
West Palm Beach, FL 33415
Office 561-478-4970  Fax 561-478-4970
Cell 561-719-6820

**Chemical Dynamics**
Bobbit Jenkins
*BASF Corporation*
11100 Lakeland Circle
Fort Myers, Florida 33913
Office 941-561-2812  Fax 941-561-6985
Mobil 941-707-1603

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