

SWFREC Update

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 SOUTHWEST FLORIDA RESEARCH
& EDUCATION CENTER

Center Director's Corner



Florida Representative Matt Hudson paid a visit to the SWFREC earlier this month to gain an up-close perspective of the center, a number of its current research projects, and the general impact of agriculture in southwest Florida.

Representative Hudson's region, District 101, covers parts of Collier and Broward counties. He currently serves on the following councils and committees in the Florida House: Healthcare Council, Committee on Health Quality, Committee on Economic Development, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety.

While at the SWFREC, Representative Hudson spent much time talking with myself, associate center director Dr. John Dunckelman, and Collier County Cooperative Extension director Robert Halman about the center, issues impacting agricultural efforts in southwest Florida, and the future of ag in our area. He



also took time to further explore three programs underway at the center: the propagation of citrus trees under cover of two screenhouse structures (with information and a tour provided by citrus horticulturalist Dr. Bob Rouse), psyllid research being conducted in a glass greenhouse (information provided by entomology assistant research professor Dr. Jawwad Qureshi), and the HLB Lab currently testing citrus samples for Huanlongbing (HLB), commonly known by growers as citrus greening disease (with information provided by plant pathologist Dr. Pam Roberts).

(From left) Dr. John Dunckelman and Rep. Matt Hudson visit a screenhouse with Dr. Bob Rouse to learn more about the propagation of citrus trees.

Representative Hudson's visit to the SWFREC was initiated by extension director Halman, to whom we owe a huge "thank you." Every effort that we—leadership at our UF/IFAS research and education centers and

extension offices—put forth to promote the valuable research and extension activities of our faculty and staff members to our elected officials and the public at large is crucial in ensuring continued funding and support of UF/IFAS programs.

And we certainly want to thank Representative Hudson for taking time out of his busy schedule to meet with us and learn more about our facility.

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Dr. Main fields questions about coyotes following his presentation to a group of homeowner association members in Estero.

Expert Provides Insight on Coyote Behavior

Wildlife ecology professor Dr. Marty Main was the featured speaker at a gathering of residential homeowner association members in Estero in May. The meeting was called following several incidents of coyotes threatening and attacking small dogs and their owners while on walks around their neighborhoods.

Dr. Main’s talk, “Coyotes in Florida: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,” discussed the history of coyotes in the state, coyote behavior, and what homeowners can do to protect themselves and their pets. The event also featured advice from local Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation officers and was covered by numerous media, including TV outlets, the local NPR station, and at least two newspapers.

Field Day Spotlights Vegetable Research

Nearly eighty growers, industry representatives, and other personnel participated in the UF/IFAS Spring Vegetable Field Day at the SWFREC in May.

The event, organized in part by Hendry County Extension director Gene McAvoy, southwest Florida’s vegetable horticulture agent, included in-field information presented about entomology trials, including whitefly control for the management of watermelon vine decline; biological control of broad-mite, spidermites, and whiteflies in eggplant; and insecticidal control of whiteflies in tomato.

Plant pathology trials discussed included watermelon studies for downy mildew and the evaluation of products to manage watermelon vine decline caused by squash vein yellowing virus.

An additional presentation focused on the C-139 Basin phosphorus BMP project update, as well as new product updates from Ag Lime Sales Inc. and Douglas Fertilizer representatives—and lunch sponsors—Donald Allen and Larry Florom, respectively.



Field day participants walk the fields for up-close looks at vegetable yields (above). SWFREC center director Dr. Christine Waddill talks with Kim Hamilton (left), aide to Rep. Denise Grimsley, and Diana McGee, regional director for Sen. Bill Nelson.



The top three finishers in the tractor rodeo contest were (from left) Pedro Miguel Ruiz, Immokalee Tomato Growers, 1st; Antonio Gaspar, BHN, 2nd; and Darwin Mauricio, Wheeler Farms, 3rd.

Farm Safety Day Educates 160-plus

Nearly 170 farm workers from throughout southwest Florida participated in the 18th Annual UF/IFAS Farm Safety Day and Tractor Rodeo on June 7 at the SWFREC. Educational sessions offered in the morning covered the following topics: sprayer calibration and drift control, food safety (hand washing and sanitation), basic farm safety (lock out and tag out), and mosquitoes and your health.

Sponsors of the event included (platinum)—Barron Collier Partnership (Everett D. Loukonen); (gold)—Cooperative Producers, Inc. (Mike Murphy) and Collier County Parks and Recreation (Annie Alvarez); and (silver)—Creel Tractor Company (Mark Creel) and Wheeler Farms, Inc. (David Wheeler).

Companies that donated gift cards, clothing, free meals, and other items used as prize giveaways throughout the day included: Rib City Grill, the Seminole Indian Casino, Lozano’s, McDonald’s, Winn-Dixie, Sewing by Patrice, Tap’s Automotive, Wendy’s, and the farm safety day committee.

SWFREC Staff News

- ◆ Several faculty members participated in April's citrus mechanical harvesting field day. Citrus horticulturalist Dr. Bob Rouse and soil and water scientist Dr. Kelly Morgan presented "Concept Grove and New Ideas for Grove Design," and citrus physiologist Dr. Robert Ebel presented "Abscission Trials."
- ◆ Congratulations to wildlife ecologist Dr. Marty Main, who has been promoted to full professor with UF/IFAS.
- ◆ Several SWFREC personnel participated in the 2008 Joint Annual Meeting of the Florida State Horticultural Society and the Soil Crop Science Society of Florida in June in Fort Lauderdale:



More than 70 people participated in the citrus mechanical harvesting field day in April.

Post-doctoral research associate Dr. Monica Ozores-Hampton served as lead author on a publication awarded Best Paper in the Vegetable Section for "Effect of Nitrogen Rate Yield of Tomato Grown with Seepage Irrigation and Reclaimed Water" (co-authors included SWFREC entomologist Dr. Phil Stansly, water resources engineer Dr. Sanjay Shukla, plant pathologist Dr. Pam Roberts, economist Dr. Fritz Roka, and former vegetable horticulturalist Dr. Kent Cushman).

Citrus physiologist Dr. Robert Ebel presented "Incorporation of Air Temperature into a Model that Predicts Loosening of Oranges by CMNP."

Assistant research professor Dr. Jawwad Qureshi, post-doctoral research associate Dr. Alejandro H. Arevalo, and Dr. Stansly presented "Impact of Insecticidal Control on Asian Citrus Psyllid and its Natural Enemies."

Dr. Arevalo also presented "Monitoring and Phenology of Thrips in Southern Highbush Blueberries."

Citrus mechanical harvesting education coordinator Barbara Hyman created and manned an informational program exhibit.

Dr. Roka presented "The Economic Value of Abscission for Mechanically Harvested Late Season 'Valencia' Oranges."

Dr. Morgan presented "The Florida Automated Weather Network: Ten Years of Providing Weather Information to Florida Growers" and "Citrus Cold Weather Protection and Irrigation Scheduling Tool Using Florida Automated Weather Network Data."

- ◆ Dr. Ebel has made the following presentations: (Also with Dr. Morgan) "Refining CMNP Applications and Mechanical Harvester Settings for Late Season Loosening of 'Valencia' Oranges" (Mechanical Harvesting Advisory Committee, Immokalee), "Effect of Drought on Efficacy of CMNP to Loosen Sweet Oranges for Mechanical Harvesting" (Mechanical Harvesting Advisory Committee, Immokalee), "Impact of Drought Stress on Efficacy of CMNP" (also with senior biological scientist Peter Newman, Citrus Harvesting Research and Advisory Council, Lake Wales), and "Response of Citrus and Vegetable Crops to Drought and Salt Stress" (Workshop on Irrigation Restrictions, Immokalee).
- ◆ Dr. Qureshi and Dr. Stansly made the following invited talks: "Management of Psyllids and Leafminers to Slow the Spread of Greening and Canker Diseases in Florida Citrus" (International Symposium on Citriculture, Victoria, Tamaulipas, Mexico) and "Biosuppression/Control of Asian Citrus Psyllid *Diuraphis citri* (Hemiptera: Psyllidae)" (Greening Summit, Avon Park).
- ◆ Dr. Arevalo participated in the Systemic Acquired Resistance seminar in Lake Alfred, as well as the Greening Summit in Avon Park.
- ◆ Soil and water scientist Dr. Ed Hanlon worked on a team that presented information on sampling and analyzing water quality to eleven extension faculty members at the Tropical Research and Education Center in Homestead. The same team trained fifteen clients in a week-long sampling and analysis course. In addition, Dr. Hanlon presented information concerning agricultural impoundments, water quality trading credits, and soil as a filter to section leaders of the St. Johns County Water Management District. Co-authors of the presentation included SWFREC faculty members Dr. Shukla, Dr. Roberts, and Dr. Main.

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Upcoming Events

August 20-21: *2008 Citrus Expo.* 8:00am-4:00pm Wednesday, 8:00am-4:00pm Thursday, Lee Civic Center, Fort Myers, FL. Includes citrus industry trade show and valuable educational seminars on timely topics. For more information, including an agenda and registration form, go online to <http://citrusexpo.net>.

September 3: *UF/IFAS Tomato Institute.* 9:00am-4:00pm, Ritz Carlton Hotel, Naples, FL.



UF/IFAS Publications Available Online

Hundreds of extension publications written by UF/IFAS faculty and staff are available via the internet by logging onto <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

EDIS stands for the university's electronic document information system, and the Web site includes a searchable database as well as a listing of individual UF/IFAS departments and programs.

Full-text documents can be viewed online and are also available as PDF documents suitable for printing.

