

CARES Celebrates 7th Annual Recognition Dinner

FORTY-SIX FARMERS from the Suwannee River basin were recognized for their outstanding stewardship of our natural resources. The group received their awards at the seventh annual CARES dinner held in Suwannee County at Dwight Stansel's Farm on June 28, 2007. These agricultural producers have implemented best management practices (BMPs) on their farms. Using new technology and state of the art management techniques, these farmers are taking farming into the future.

The CARES (County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship) program was initiated by the Florida Farm Bureau and the Suwannee River Partnership to highlight the stewardship efforts of local farmers. Award honorees receive a plaque, gift basket and a sign for the entrance of their farm. So far, the program has recognized more than 250 farmers who are managing their farms to reduce impact on natural resources.

Guest speakers included: House Representative Debbie Boyd, Florida



Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson (left) and Florida Farm Bureau President John Hoblick (right) present Ted Henderson and Ed Henderson (Shenandoah Dairy in Live Oak) with their CARES award.



Local farmer speaks with House Representative Debbie Boyd.

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles Bronson, Florida Farm Bureau President John Hoblick, University of Florida IFAS Vice President Dr. Jimmy Cheek and Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board Chairman Louis Shiver.

In addition to these inspiration speakers, the estimated 800 guests were treated to a wonderful rendition of the national anthem by a student from Bell, Florida as well as

some good music from the local band Just in Case.

Although the evening meal was an outstanding example of teamwork and a tasty array of local products, it was the fellowship that helped make the event a success. Dwight Stansel ended the evening by applauding the efforts of the farmers and asking the rest of us, "What are YOU doing at home to protect our natural resources?" A point to ponder on the ride home.

More on CARES on page 2



Local band Just in Case entertains the crowd.



Garrett and Justin McCranie, and Ryan Ragans examine an agricultural display sponsored by Suwannee County UF/IFAS Extension and the Suwannee River Partnership.

What's Inside

CARES Celebrates 7th Annual Recognition Dinner	1
2007 CARES Award Recipients	2
New Multi-County Dairy Agent	2
SRWMD Drought Update	2
Partnership Achieves Success	3
Dates to Remember	3

2007 CARES Award Recipients

Hamilton County

Mr. Clarence Adams
 Mr. Mike Adams
 Mr. Larry Burnam
 Mr. Gary Cone
 Mr. Jon Deas
 Messrs. Larry & Kenney Newsome

Jefferson County

Messrs. Gene & Kirk Brock
 Messrs. Bury, Gary, Earnest & Stephen Fulford

Lafayette County

Messrs. Bryan Prine & Terry Folsom
 Mr. Scott Prine

Leon County

Mr. James Hart
 Mr. Payne H. Midyette

Madison County

Mr. Neal Baer
 Mr. Paul Baggett
 Mr. Lenord Bemby
 Mr. Paul Braun
 Mr. James W. Brown
 Mr. Allen Cherry
 Mr. Richard Cone
 Mr. Ray Cruce
 Mr. Solon Economou
 Ms. Vernell Flowers
 Mr. Wayne Hudson
 Mr. Travis Page
 Mr. John Parker
 Mr. and Mrs. Hoyt & Betty Jo Ragans
 Mr. Frank Rykard
 Mr. Andrew Stephens
 Mrs. Eloise Stewart
 Mr. John Webb
 Ms. Joy Wells

Suwannee County

Mr. Jack W. Barga
 Mr. Billy Blanton
 Mr. Randal Corbin
 Mr. Mark L. Crusaw
 Mr. Ed Henderson
 Messrs. Donald & Dewayne Knighton
 Messrs. Carl Lowe & Terry Reagan
 Messrs. Fred and Randy Moses
 Messrs. Jim, Henry & Sam Roberson
 Mr. Jeffrey D. Sampson
 Mr. Fabien Santos
 Mr. Ryan Smith
 Mr. Claude Starling
 Mr. Sammy Starling
 Mr. Wesley Wainwright



Wayne Hudson, of Hudson Farms in Greenville, accepts recognition award from Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson (left) and Florida Farm Bureau President John Hoblick (right).

New Multicounty UF/IFAS Dairy Agent

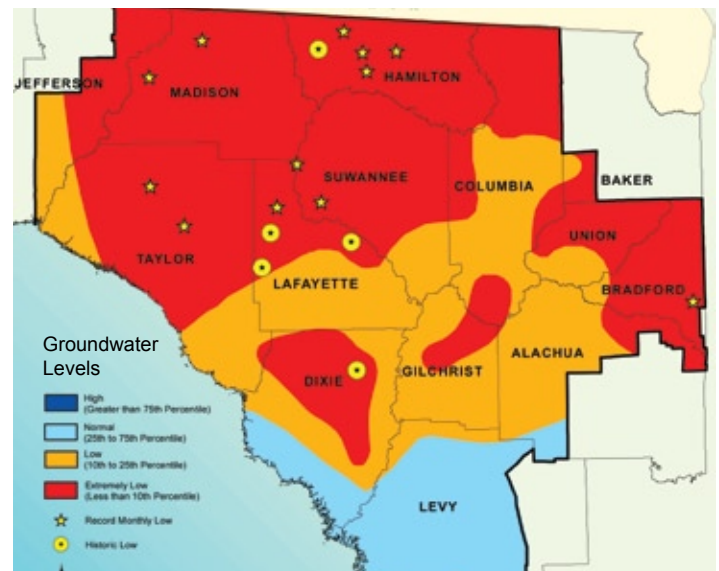


MARY SOWERBY has joined the University of Florida Cooperative Extension team as the new regional specialized livestock (dairy) agent. In this position Mary will be working primarily with dairy producers in Dixie, Levy, Gilchrist, Lafayette, Suwannee, and Madison counties on their environmental, business, and production challenges. She can be reached at the Suwannee County Extension office.

Mary is returning to Florida from East Tennessee where she has been a sales representative and community college instructor. Previously, Mary was a UF multicounty dairy agent in Central Florida. While there, she worked on two environmentally related grants experimenting with manure drum digestion and artificial wetlands to decrease lagoon water nutrient load.

SRWMD Drought Update

From July 1 to July 29, the Suwannee River Basin received an average of 6.98 inches of rain from widespread thunderstorms; average July rainfall is 7.65 inches. The estimated basin-wide 12-month rainfall deficit is 14.74 inches below normal. As of July 31, the Department of Agriculture/U.S. Drought Monitor showed the basin in a moderate to severe drought. This status has remained unchanged since June 5. A greater than 50% probability for reduced drought impacts through October has been forecast by the National Weather Service, as of July 19.



“When the well is dry, they know the worth of water” —Benjamin Franklin

Partnership Achieves Success — Still Work to Be Done

THE SUWANNEE RIVER Partnership formed in 1999 brought agencies, associations, and land owners together with the goal of reducing the use of nitrogen, which leaches into our groundwater and eventually reaches our rivers through our springs. Leaders agreed to use nonregulatory incentive based programs to help farmers and others use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to accomplish this goal.

Since starting this program, 99% of poultry farms, 90% of dairy farms, and 65-70% (over 105,000 acres) of crop farms have agreed to use BMPs associated with fertilizer, irrigation, and waste practices. Farmers have committed to maintaining and using these practices long term.

By using BMPs, farms are greatly reducing the amount of nitrogen getting into the waters of the Suwannee and Santa Fe basins. Scientists have documented through research and models that nitrogen can be reduced from 30% to 90% depending on the BMPs implemented and the type of agricultural operation. In addition to helping reduce nitrogen use, farms are improving the efficiency of center pivot irrigation systems. Last year alone, the Suwannee River Resource Conservation & Development (SRRC&D) Mobile Irrigation Lab estimated farmers saved over

1 Billion gallons of water per crop season by improving irrigation systems and by using better irrigation management.

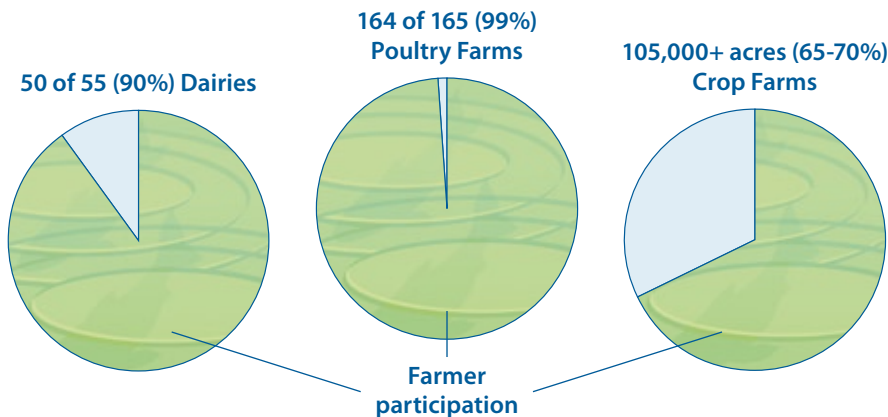
Besides working with farms, the Partnership, lead by the University of Florida IFAS' Florida Yards & Neighborhoods (FY&N) program, is working with homeowners to help protect and conserve water. During 2007, UF county extension agents have taught the FY&N program concepts to 117 master gardeners in 8 counties. These master gardeners will help homeowners adopt water protecting and saving BMPs in the region.

Even with the progress made since 1999 we are seeing mixed results, with some nitrogen trends decreasing, some increasing, and some

remaining the same in the groundwater and springs. Part of the reason for the increasing trend is that the dynamics of the water cycle and the average age of groundwater can be decades old. Experts agree it may be years before we see the positive effects of the implemented BMPs in improved water quality trends. Therefore, the Partnership will continue to work toward helping landowners and homeowners implement and maintain BMPs to reduce water- and nutrient- use in the basin. There is still much work to be accomplished!

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Farmer Participation in the Suwannee River Partnership



Dates to Remember

- Sep. 5 Why Should I Buy From You? The Good, The Bad, The Ugly**
North Florida REC—Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. For more information contact Linda Landrum at (386) 362-1725 ext 105 or LLandrum@ufl.edu
- Sep. 6 Florida Pecan Field Day**
Monticello, FL. For more information contact Larry Halsey at (850) 342-0187.
- Sep. 19 Why Should I Buy From You? Cultivating and Keeping Loyal Customers**
North Florida REC—Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. For more information contact Linda Landrum at (386) 362-1725 ext 105 or LLandrum@ufl.edu
- Sep. 28 Fall Field Day**
North Florida REC, Quincy, FL. For more information call (850) 875-7100 ext. 0.
- Oct. 4-5 Deer & Turkey Short Course**
North Florida REC, Quincy, FL. For more information contact Larry Halsey at (850) 342-0187
- Oct. 5 Ichetucknee Springs Basin Working Group meeting**
9:00 a.m., Lake City Community College, Lake City, FL
- Oct. 16-18 Ag Expo**
Moultrie, GA
- Oct. 17 Why Should I Buy From You? Advertising Tools and Tips**
North Florida REC—Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. For more information contact Linda Landrum at (386) 362-1725 ext. 105 or LLandrum@ufl.edu
- Oct. 30 Santa Fe CARES**
6:00 p.m., DeChamplain Heaven's Gate Farm, Trenton, FL. Contact Darrell Smith (386) 362-1001
- Nov. 7 Suwannee Valley Fall Workshops**
North Florida REC—Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. Call (386) 362-1725

About this Newsletter

For more information, please contact Carolyn S. Saft at (386) 362-2771 or csaft318@ufl.edu or visit our Web site: www.suwannee.org

You may also contact Darrell Smith, Hugh Thomas or Joel Love at (386) 362-0431.

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New Look

The Suwannee River Partnership newsletter has a new look! The new design better reflects the colors and watery feel of the Partnership's logo. This new design also provides us with more room for content. We hope you continue to read our newsletter and we welcome your comments or questions.

Suwannee River Partnership Members

Suwannee River Water Management District
(Chair)

Florida Department of Environmental
Protection

Florida Department of Agriculture and
Consumer Services

Florida Department of Health

Florida Department of Community Affairs

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural
Resources Conservation Service

U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources
Division

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical
University's Center for Water Quality

University of Florida, Institute for Food and
Agricultural Sciences

Florida Rural Water Association

Suwannee River Resource Conservation and
Development Council, Inc.

Pilgrim's Pride

Sunbelt Milk Producers

Florida Farm Bureau Federation

Florida Cattlemen's Association

Florida Forestry Association

Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical
Association

Florida Poultry Federation, Inc.

Florida Onsite Wastewater Association

Anderson Columbia Co., Inc

Cedar Key Aquaculture Association

Nestlé Waters of North America

PCS Phosphate

Coca-Cola Dannon

The following soil and water conservation
districts:

Alachua, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton,
Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison,
Santa Fe, Suwannee

The following county commissions:

Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie,
Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette,
Levy, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, Union

The following cities and towns:

Alachua, Bell, Chiefland, Fanning Springs,
High Springs, Lake City, Live Oak,
Newberry, Starke, Trenton, White Springs

Adopt-A-River

Santa Fe Springs Working Group

Suwannee American Cement, LLC



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