

NFREC NEWS



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Small Farm Conference a Highlight for Florida Farmers



Keynote speaker John Ikerd

At least 800 farmers and agriculture professionals from 54 Florida counties participated in the 2009 Florida Small Farms Conference, held August 1 & 2 at Osceola Heritage Park located in Kissimmee, Florida.

This ground-breaking 1st annual event hosted by UF-IFAS/FAMU-CESTA included 30 educational sessions, over 80 educational and industry exhibitors, plus a multi-species live animal exhibit. Two days of education included topics related to:

alternative energy, food policy and regulations, livestock, business and marketing, organic and sustainable farming and horticulture with nearly 100 speakers representing all facets of Florida agriculture.

The conference kicked off with an inspiring welcome address from Charles Bronson, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture expressing there is a place for small producers in the agriculture system. "...we need small farmers". He shared his thoughts about the Farm to Fuel Summit and the importance of becoming a more self-sustaining country less reliant on foreign oil. Another important part of the morning kick off was the Florida Innovative Farmer Awards presented to three producers for their innovation in developing and sustaining their small farm enterprise. The awards were presented to a lamb producer, pastured-poultry producer and organic citrus and vegetable producer.

A *Farm to Table* lunch was another highlight at the conference showcasing 20 farms that provided vegetables, meat or value-added products. A delicious meal was prepared by Chef Tony and staff with Savor Osceola Catering Co. using farm direct products. The luncheons brought awareness to the diversity of farmers and products available for a local food system. During lunch Keynote speaker John Ikerd, Professor delivered a passionate speech about his truth on the past, present and future of agriculture. He told us a story about the year 2050, what will that look like based upon decisions we are making today.

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Special points of interest:

- **August 20, 2009 - Peanut Field Day**, North Florida Research and Education Center, Marianna, FL. For more information call 850-482-9904.
- **August 22, 2009 - FAMU Grape Harvest Festival**, Tallahassee, FL. For more information contact Stephen Leong 850-412-5188 or email Stephen.leong@famu.edu.
- **September 19, 2009 - NFREC 8th Annual Fall Field Day**, North Florida REC, Quincy, FL. For more information contact Vicky Morris 850-875-7115.
- **September 22, 2009 - Horse Camping: A Potential Way to Add Revenue to the Farm**, Bronson, FL. For more information contact Linda Landrum at 386-362-1725 x 105, email LLandrum@ufl.edu or Helon Koehler at setc2009@aol.com.

For information on other events happening around the state go to <http://calendar.ifas.ufl.edu>

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Through several small donations from individuals, twenty Florida small farmers were able to attend on a registration scholarship. In addition, Natalie's Orchard Island Juice Company provided funding support for 10 University students to attend.

One of the most important results from this conference was the level of networking opportunities that transpired. Many participants shared their gratitude to have the opportunity to attend such a life changing event.

More information about this conference and the next statewide conference will be coming soon at www.smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu. Opportunities to be an exhibitor sponsor and/or food supplier will be available. [Nola Wilson and Bob Hochmuth]



Exhibitor Area (80 booths)



"Taste of Florida" luncheon



Hydroponics for Small Farms Session

Photos by Tyler Jones, UF/IFAS Photography Department

What is a Small Farm in Florida?

With the **Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference** having just been completed in Kissimmee, Florida, one might ask: What is a small farm in Florida and is it important to Florida agriculture? That can be addressed with answers to a few well-chosen auxiliary questions:

1. What is the official definition of a small farm? The USDA defines a small farm as: "farms with less than \$250,000 gross receipts annually on which day-to-day labor and management are provided by the farmer and/or farm family that owns the production or owns, or leases, the productive assets". So a small farm is *defined not on acreage but on sales*. It is also *defined as a family operation*.
2. How many small farms are there in Florida? Of the 47,500 farms in Florida, 44,300 fit the small farm definition. That is 93%. Of that 93% about two-thirds of small farms have gross receipts under \$10,000 per year. In the last 5 years the increase in farm numbers in Florida has been almost exclusively in the small farm category. About 25% of that increase was due to an increase in minority owned and managed farms.
3. How much of Florida farm acreage is in small farms? 46%; nearly half.
4. What is the average size of a small farm? For those farms with gross receipts under \$10,000, farm size averages 47 acres; for farms with gross receipts from \$10,000 to \$150,000 farm size averages 153 acres; and for farms with gross receipts of \$150,000 to \$250,000 farm size averages 428 acres. This is in comparison to large farm sizes which average 818 acres (\$250,000 to \$500,000 gross receipts) and 1952 acres (\$500,000 to 1 million gross receipts).
5. What are the sales per acre on a small farm? Assuming that the average farm in a sales group makes the mid-range of that group, then sales per acre range from 26% of what a large farm produces (\$105/acre; farms sales of <\$10,000) to about the same of a large farm (\$408/acre; farms with sales of \$150,000 to \$250,000).
6. What portion of Florida farm sales comes from small farms? Roughly, 15 to 37% of total Florida sales originate from small farms. That is below to approaching the national average. Clearly, small farms can be important.

We wish to congratulate the organizers of the Small Farms conference on such a successful program and we look forward to innovative programs in small farms and alternative enterprises coming from IFAS throughout the state, but especially from the Suwannee Valley campus of the NFREC. [Nick Comerford]

New Perennial Peanut Varieties Available



The recent release of perennial peanut forage cultivars UF-Tito and UF-Peace, and more ornamental types, Arblick and Ecoturf, should benefit producers by providing wider selection for the many uses of this well-adapted legume species. New forage types are high yielding and help to diversify the near-monoculture of Florigraze perennial peanut, the cultivar that dominates perennial peanut acreage in the south-east U.S. While low-growing types, like Arblick and Ecoturf, offer some ornamental types that can serve as dual purpose, providing an attractive legume ground cover, but may also be harvested for forage.

UF-Tito (PI 262826) originated in Paraguay and was collected in 1959 by W.C. Gregory. It looks very similar to Florigraze in appearance. It was first identified as the best line in a 10-yr evaluation experiment at the AFRU near Gainesville. In multi-location experiments over a 15-yr period yields were generally equal to or higher than Florigraze. UF-Tito was very good at competing with weedy common bermudagrass competition with its aggressive growth habit. UF-Tito also had the quickest rate of spread among 18 entries in their experiment. All plantings of UF-Tito were negative for peanut stunt virus (PSV) and do not have leaf discoloration often seen with the presence of the virus. UF-Tito is a very attractive new forage perennial peanut for the southeast.

UF-Peace resembles the plant type of Florigraze and UF-Tito. In multi-location evaluation experiments over a 15-year period, UF-Peace had forage yields comparable to Florigraze. It does not often show symptoms to Peanut Stunt Virus.

UF-Peace may have better adaptability in the upper Coastal Plains since it was reported to have the highest percent emergence, survival, and lateral spread among the entries evaluated in central Georgia. UF-Peace offers another genetic diversification from Florigraze and UF-Tito, and should prove to be an excellent new forage type.

Arblick is a plant introduction (PI 262839) that was among the early lines tested by the USDA-SCS at the Arcadia and Brooksville Plant Materials Centers. This accession was collected in the town of Bela Vista, located on the border of Brazil and Paraguay. It has large stems and dark green leaves, and its profuse flowers are a creamy yellow color. Arblick was considered to be slow to establish, with lower forage potential (similar to that of Ecoturf, which yields equal to or less than Florigraze in multi-location forage trials). Arblick has not been widely grown but has potential as an ornamental plant, as well as for forage.

Ecoturf (PI 262840) perennial peanut was identified by Drs. Prine and French in the early 1990s as a low growing "ground cover" type plant. This PI was collected along the Brazil-Paraguay border, near where Arblick was collected. It has been shown to form an established ground cover more rapidly than Arblick. Ecoturf has yellow-orange colored flowers, compared to the paler yellow color of Arblick flowers. It is a lower growing type that flowers profusely during its growing season. Forage yields of Ecoturf are typically equal to or lower than that of Florigraze (in multi-location forage trials). While this perennial peanut does occasionally test positive for Peanut Stunt Virus, it rarely shows leaf mottling or disfigurement due to the virus.

With the release of several new perennial peanut varieties by the FAES-IFAS, availability of these new plants will be limited over the next few years because the plants are slow to propagate from rhizomes. Containers of pure plant rhizomes are available from the Forage Program at the North Florida Research and Education Center. For more information about plant material availability contact Ann Blount paspalu@ufl.edu or Ken Quesenberry clover@ufl.edu. [Ann Blount and Ken Quesenberry]

Know Our Staff



Ms. Janice Walden, Administrative Assistant for the Quincy, Marianna and Live Oak Centers at NFREC is celebrating her 36th anniversary with the University of Florida, and 39th anniversary with the State of Florida.

Janice began working with the University of Florida in 1973 when she transferred from the State of Florida Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations and previously the Department of Education. She was born to James Edward and Mary Louise Dean in Gadsden County where she continues to reside along with her family, Jerome, husband, Jim and Jennifer, children and granddaughter, Jenna. Her hobbies include fishing, shopping and spending time with her granddaughter. Janice is currently in DROP and will retire with 41 years of service to the State in May 2011.

Congratulations to Janice from all of us at NFREC.

Coming Events Calendar

August 20, 2009 - [Peanut Field Day](#), North Florida Research and Education Center, Marianna, FL. For more information call 850-482-9904.

August 22, 2009 - [FAMU Grape Harvest Festival](#), Tallahassee, FL. For more information contact Stephen Leong, at 850-412-5199 or Stephen.leong@famu.edu.

[2009 FL-GA Game Management Update Series:](#)

August 21, 2009 - Dove and Waterfowl Management, Pickney Hill Plantation, Ashville, Florida

September 11, 2009 - Sport Fish Pond management, Camp Piney Woods, Thomas County, Georgia

September 25, 2009 - White-tailed Deer Management, Myrtlewood Plantation, Thomas County, Georgia

October 9, 2009 - Wild Turkey Management, Osceola Plantation, Thomas County, Georgia

October 16, 2009 - Hunting Dog and Human First Aid, Remington EMS, Thomasville, Georgia

November 6, 2009 - Soils, Weeds, and Herbicides in Wildlife Food Plot and Vegetation Management, Aucilla Plantation, Thomas County, Georgia

September 10, 17, 24, & October 1, 2009 - [Florida Small Farms Outreach](#), Tallahassee, FL. Each session will begin at 7 p.m. Eastern (6 p.m. Central) and end at 9 p.m. Eastern and (8 p.m. Central). For more information contact Les Harrison at 850-606-5202 or email harrisong@leoncountyfl.gov.

September 19, 2009 - [NFREC 8th Annual Fall Field Day](#), Quincy, FL. For more information contact Vicky Morris at 850-875-7115 or email vpmorris@ufl.edu.

September 19, 2009 - Be a Hobby Beekeeper Short Course, Clay County Agriculture Center, Green Cove Springs. For more information call 904-269-6355, 284-6355, or 473-3711.

September 22, 2009 - [Horse Camping: A Potential Way to Add Revenue to the Farm](#), Bronson, FL. For more information contact Linda Landrum at 386-362-1725 x 105 or Llandrum@ufl.edu or Helen Koehler at sec2009@aol.com.

September 22-24, 2009 - Southeast Herbicide Applicator Conference, Panama City, FL. For more information visit www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/sehac.

For information on other events happening around the state go to <http://calendar.ifas.ufl.edu>.

NORTH FLORIDA RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER Phone: 850-875-7100 <http://nfrec.ifas.ufl.edu>

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