

# NFREC NEWS



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## Early Career Award



Professor G. Clifford Lamb, Professor of Animal Science at NFREC Marianna, was honored with the “Early Career Achievement Award” presented by the American Society of Animal Science Convention” on July 12, 2009 in Montreal, Canada.

The Early Career Award was created to recognize outstanding research by young animal scientists the first ten years of their professional career. The winner must have demonstrated outstanding research in an animal science field within five years immediately prior to the year of the award, had original research work published, and been a member of the ASAS for at least five successive years.

Cliff Lamb is a native of Zimbabwe, Africa, where he was reared on a livestock operation devoted to cattle. He received his BS degree from Middle Tennessee State University and has graduate degrees from Kansas State University. Lamb is a professor in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Florida, located at the North Florida Research and Education Center in Marianna. His primary research efforts focus on applied reproductive physiology in cattle, emphasizing efficient management systems for beef heifers and cows. He is the author of more than 40 refereed journal articles, 2 chapters in texts, and more than 100 presentations and articles in other scientific and popular press. He is married to Margo Lynn Lamb, and they have three children.

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### *Special points of interest:*

- **October 3, 2009 - Raising Beef Cattle on a Family Farm**, North Florida REC - Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. For more information contact the Suwannee County Extension Office at 386-362-2771.
- **October 3, 2009 - Agave & Succulent Workshop**, North Florida REC - Quincy, FL. For more information contact Jill Williams at 850-663-2280, email [B419@aol.com](mailto:B419@aol.com) or Gary Knox at 850-875-7162, email [gwknox@ufl.edu](mailto:gwknox@ufl.edu).
- **November 13 or 14, 2009 - Advanced Topics in Hydroponics**, North Florida REC - Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. For more information contact Karen Hancock at 386-362-1725 x 101, email [khan-cock@ufl.edu](mailto:khan-cock@ufl.edu) or Wanda Laughlin at 386-362-1725 x 104, email [solus@ufl.edu](mailto:solus@ufl.edu).

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

## Sweet Onion Variety Trial, NFREC - Quincy Spring 2009

Now is the time to start thinking about planting sweet (short-day) onions. Sweet onions are a relatively minor crop in Florida. Production exists as both dry bulbs (mature) and green tops (immature). Limited production exists throughout the state. The biggest deterrent for increased production is from competition from established markets in south Texas and middle Georgia (Vidalia) areas. However, the potential exists for expanding production, especially in the areas of local sales and direct marketing.

The objective of this trial was to evaluate the performance of sweet onion varieties under northwest Florida conditions.

The transplants for this trial were produced from field beds at the NFREC, Quincy. Twenty one entries were seeded on 6 Nov 2008. Two of the entries ('Red Rhone' and 'Red Flavor') were red onions. Seed were planted at rate of about 30 seed per ft into rows spaced 12 inches apart. Preplant fertilization of seedbeds was 30-40-40 lbs/A of N-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>-K<sub>2</sub>O. Dacthal W 75 was applied over the top at 10 lb/A after seeding. Seedbeds were top dressed once with 34 lbs N/A. Entries were transplanted into the production field on 7 Jan 2009. Soil type was an Orangeburg loamy fine sand. Total fertilization was 160-80-140 lbs/A of N-P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>-K<sub>2</sub>O. Production scheme was 3 rows spaced 15 inches apart under a 6 ft tractor and in-row spacing was 4 inches (65,340 plants/A). Goal 2XL at 2 pts/A was applied on soil surface before transplanting. Registered pesticides were applied as needed to control pests.

Entries were harvested as they matured, where maturity is defined as when about 50% or more of the tops of an entry had fallen down naturally. Bulbs were lifted, allowed to dry for a few hours and tops and roots removed. Bulbs were then placed in bushel baskets and dried for 72 hours at 100° F in large drying rooms. After drying time was complete, onions were removed, allowed to cool down and graded. Grading consisted of discarding culls (small onions, splits, off color and decayed) and sizing into medium (1.5-2 inches), large (2-3 inches) and jumbo (>3 inches) categories. Bulbs were then weighed and counted.

Harvest occurred from the period of 28 April to 28 May. Total yields ranged from 989 50 lb bags/A for 'WI-3115' to 201 50 lb bags/A for 'Red Rhone' (Table 1). Only 'WI-131' produced total yield equal to 'WI-3115'. Yields were good to excellent in 2009 and growing conditions were good. 'XON 403 Y' produced the largest bulb at 14.5 oz and 'Carmelo' produced the smallest at 7.4 oz. Percent marketable bulbs ranged from a low of 36 % for 'Red Rhone' to a high of 99 % for 'Honey Bee'. Days to harvest from transplanting ranged from 111 days for 'WI-301' and 'Honeybee' to 141 days for 'Red Flavor', and 'Red Rhone'. [Steve Olson]

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## What's the Right Price for Your Product?

Correct pricing of agricultural products is one of the keys to long-term financial success. If you price too low, you can slowly go broke even though you're selling all you produce. If your prices are too high, no one will buy resulting in business failure. So, just how do you determine a fair yet profitable price?

Prices are often set by what's prevalent in the market place but really should be based on your farm's cost of production. Consider using a combination of prevalent market prices and your costs to determine appropriate pricing for your farm's long-term business survival.

In order to determine your cost of production, you must keep good records! Try to set up a simple system as your time is often limited for this activity. The types of records to keep are:

- Cultural, which include variety selections, planting dates, spacing, specific crop pest problems and other crop related observations.
- Environmentally-related events such as weather, temperature, labor to cold protect crops, irrigation frequency and costs.
- Production activities such as bed preparation and clean-up, planting, pest management /products used, harvesting and processing, the quantity and the quality of product produced, etc.
- Financial records include all expenses both direct inputs such as fertilizer, seeds, replacement stock and "hidden" or indirect costs like insurance, labor (both field and office including yourself) depreciation, utility bills, equipment and repair, marketing activities and debt service.
- Postharvest and marketing records which describe your observations on specific crops, trials on harvesting and storage as well as your success or failures at various marketing venues.

Once you develop good records, determining your break-even point for your business is straight forward. Break-even is simply the total cost(direct and indirect) of what it takes to produce, harvest and market a product divided by the number of units to be sold resulting in the break-even price for that product. The next step is for you to decide how much profit you wish to make, add that on and then begin to compare your price with competitors. If your price is significantly higher, you can cut production and/or indirect costs, reduce profit margin or convince your customers that your product is worth the extra money. By using this pricing strategy, this will help you remain profitable.

Remember, you need to calculate break-even price frequently as we live in a quickly changing world where staying competitive is a never ending task. So get started today with your record keeping activities so you can accurately determine what your real costs are so that you can price your product for profit. [Linda Landrum]

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Table 1. Onion Variety Trial Spring 2009. NFREC, Quincy.

Entry	Source	Marketable Yield		Marketable (%)	Bulb Wt. (oz)	Days to Harvest
		Jumbo	Total			
WI-3115	Wannamaker	945a <sup>z</sup>	989 a	96.5 ab	13.8 ab	114
WI-131	Wannamaker	815 ab	871 ab	94.8 ab	12.1 a-f	114
Sweet Harvest	Sakata	733 b-c	796 bc	94.0 a-c	11.4 a-f	118
XON 403Y	Sakata	768 a-c	784 b-d	74.8 ef	14.5 a	133
Sweet Deal	Shamrock	706 b-d	761 b-e	96.8 ab	10.7 b-g	117
Sugar Belle	Shamrock	723 b-d	761 b-e	80.3 c-f	12.3 a-d	121
Sweet Vidalia	Nunhems	696 b-d	747 b-f	92.8 a-c	10.9 b-g	128
WI-301	Wannamaker	666 b-e	746 b-f	92.3 ab	10.4 b-g	111
Sweet Caroline	Nunhems	692 b-d	742 b-f	91.5 a-d	10.8 b-g	128
SSC 1535	Shamrock	683 b-d	731 b-f	92.3 ab	10.4 b-g	114
Honeycomb	Shamrock	619 c-f	681 c-g	78.8 d-f	10.3 b-g	118
Sweet Jasper	Sakata	627 b-e	650 c-h	78.5 d-f	11.6 a-f	133
Honey Bee	Shamrock	548 d-g	643 c-h	99 a	9.1 c-f	111
Ponderosa	Sakata	579 c-f	600 d-i	66.8 f	12.2 a-e	134
Gobi	Nunhems	456 e-h	596 e-i	96.8 ab	8.8 d-g	128
Don Victor	Nunhems	428 f-h	568 f-i	91.5 a-d	9.2 c-g	128
Caramelo	Nunhems	383 gh	509 g-j	96.8 ab	7.4 g	118
Kalahari	Nunhems	374 gh	472 h-j	72.8 ef	9.4 c-g	135
Prowler	Nunhems	338 hi	440 ij	83.8 b-e	8.4 fg	135
Red Flavor	Wannamaker	315 hi	356 jk	51.0 g	12.7 a-c	141
Red Rhone	Wannamaker	159 i	201 k	36.0 h	8.6 e-g	141

<sup>z</sup> Mean separation Duncan's multiple range test, 5% level.

## Agave and Yucca: Tough Plants for Tough Times



Many people rightly think of agave and yucca as tough plants associated with extreme environments like deserts and dunes. What they may not realize is that agave and yucca also adapt well to home and commercial landscapes where they thrive in the sometimes harsh conditions associated with urban living.

Agave and yucca are found in native environments that typically are hot, sunny, dry, windy, or scrubby with little water and poor soil. In cultivation, this adaptability translates into low maintenance since typically they need little or no irrigation, fertilizer, pruning or spraying.

Above and beyond their toughness, agave and yucca capture the imagination of many people because of their dramatic architectural forms and unusual shapes. In addition, these plants boast intriguing defensive "weaponry": stiff, hard or leathery leaves, often armed with wicked barbs, teeth or spines. Part of the fascination with these plants may lie in this armor, because there is almost a sense of danger when growing these plants!

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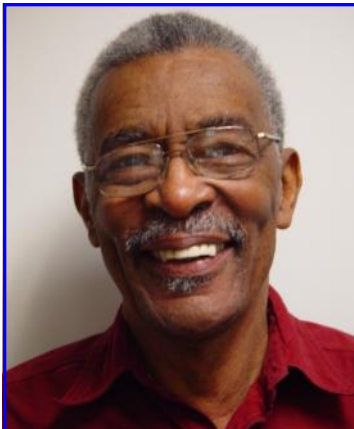
Agave tends to have more armor than yucca. Each agave plant consists of a rosette of long, stiff, spear-shaped, fleshy leaves often armed with teeth and tipped with a long terminal spine. *Agave* species is familiar to most people thanks to the commonly grown century plant, *Agave americana*. But with more than 200 additional species of *Agave*, many people don't realize the diversity of sizes, shapes and colors that are available. Agave varies in size from a few inches to more than 8 feet tall and wide. Leaf color ranges from deep green to grass green to blue green to grey, and leaves may be striped or mottled with white, cream, yellow and chartreuse. Flowering also is dramatic and attractive though it sometimes takes years before doing so. When finally flowering, however, agave develops branched spikes of yellow, rose or white tubular flowers on incredibly tall stems 6 to 40 feet above the plant. After flowering, the parent plant typically dies, although usually a number of small plants form around the base of the parent plant. The small plants are technically called "offsets" but have the more imaginative common name of "pups". These may be separated from the parent plant for propagation.

Yucca is similar to agave but often forms trunks and typically has more numerous, thinner, leathery leaves with a smaller terminal spine. Yucca leaves range in color from deep green to pale blue, and leaves may be striped in shades of white, cream, yellow and chartreuse. When in flower, yucca produces large, upright panicles of white, bell-shaped flowers. Unlike the tall flower stems of agave, yucca flower panicles are held within or just above the foliage. There are more than 20 species of *Yucca* of which 4 can be considered native to Florida.

Due to the great interest in agave, yucca and other fascinating succulents, there will be an Agave & Succulent Workshop on Saturday, October 3, from 8:30 until noon at NFREC, 155 Research Rd., Quincy (located at I-10 Exit 181, just ¼ mile north of the exit on State Road 267). This event is sponsored by the non-profit group, Gardening Friends of the Big Bend, Inc. For more information or to register for the Workshop, please go to the Gardening Friends website ([www.thegfbb.com](http://www.thegfbb.com)) and select the "Event Reservations" menu button, <http://thegfbb.com/EventReservation.html>. [Gary W. Knox]



## Know Our Staff



Mr. Barber was hired at Quincy REC in April 1997 to work in the Nematology Research program. He is responsible for maintaining all work in the laboratory and field, collecting soil samples from experimental tests plots, also collecting nematodes and identifying nematodes. Melvin has a vast amount of experience in the field of agriculture. He has a master's degree in the field of Agriculture and Biology. He taught Vocational Agriculture and science in the Gadsden County school district for thirty-two years. He is a retired officer from the military armed forces. He is the first African American to serve as Mayor to the city of Quincy, Chairman of the tri-county committee of North Florida. Mr. Barber also served for six years on the Board of professional regulations of the State of Florida under Governor Lawton Chiles. Melvin has traveled to many foreign countries since joining the University of Florida.

He and his wife Mary live in Gadsden County where he enjoys reading, photography, gardening and mentoring young children.

**Melvin Baber, Biological Scientist, NFREC, Quincy**

## Coming Events Calendar

**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](mailto:harrisong@leoncountyfl.gov).

### September 2009 FL - GA Game Management Update Series

**Sept 25** - White-tailed Deer Management, Myrtlewood Plantation, Thomas County GA

**Oct 9** - Wild Turkey Management, Osceola Plantation, Thomas County GA

**Oct 16** - Hunting Dog and Human First Aid, Remington EMS, Thomasville GA

**Nov 6** - Soils, Weeds, and Herbicides in Wildlife Food Plot and Vegetation Management, Aucilla Plantation, Thomas County GA

**October 3, 2009 - Raising Beef Cattle on a Family Farm**, North Florida REC - Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. For more information contact the Suwannee County Extension Office at 386-362-2771.

**October 3, 2009 - Agave & Succulent Workshop**, 8:30 a.m. to Noon, North Florida REC - Quincy, FL. For more information contact Jill Williams at 850-663-2280, email [B419@aol.com](mailto:B419@aol.com) or Gary Knox at 850-875-7162, email [gwknnox@ufl.edu](mailto:gwknnox@ufl.edu).

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### Coming Events Calendar (continued)

**October 28, 2009 - [2009 Florida Ag Expo](http://flagexpo.ifas.ufl.edu)**, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, Balm, FL. For More information visit <http://flagexpo.ifas.ufl.edu>.

**November 13 or 14, 2009 - [Advanced Topics in Hydroponics](#)**, North Florida REC - Suwannee Valley, Live Oak, FL. Classes are limited to 30 participants per day, cost of registration is \$100 per attendee. For more information contact Karen Hancock at 386-362-1725 x 101, email [khancock@ufl.edu](mailto:khancock@ufl.edu) or Wanda Laughlin at 386-362-1725 x 104, email [solus@ufl.edu](mailto:solus@ufl.edu).

**November 14, 2009 - Be a Hobby Beekeeper Short Course**, Clay County Agriculture Center, Green Cove Springs, FL. For more information call 904-269-6355, 284-6355 or 473-3711.

**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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