



*Diversity in research programs to meet the needs of the diverse agriculture in North Florida*

**UF | IFAS**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

North Florida Research and Education Center  
Quincy, Marianna and Live Oak

**99<sup>th</sup>** UF/IFAS  
NORTH FLORIDA  
RESEARCH &  
EDUCATION  
CENTER  
**Anniversary**  
1921-2020



*The Systems Research Center*

<https://nfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/>



### *From the Director's Desk*

The COVID 19 Pandemic has presented us with very challenging times. In response to COVID-19, the University of Florida established policies and operating procedures that prioritized the safety of students, faculty and staff. As such, new research at NFREC has been postponed and our activities are primarily to maintain agronomic and horticulture plants in the field and greenhouses, and our cattle at NFREC-Marianna. We also are maintaining our grounds and buildings at Quincy, Marianna and Live Oak. Many of our employees can work at home to write research or extension documents or handle the normal flow of our paperwork. Our extension faculty are available to respond to phone calls or emails during this busy season however travel for on-farm visits is restricted at this time.

Like all of you, our employees at NFREC are faced with considerable frustration at the hardships we are currently facing, but I am very proud of their efforts to perform assigned tasks and maintain positive attitudes while under the present conditions. I have full confidence that the generation and dissemination of information to our growers, commodity groups and agencies will be at a high level soon after we are approved to start our research and extension activities.

#### UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center

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Marianna, FL 32446  
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Live Oak, FL 32060  
386-362-1725

## *Updates for our individual research and extension programs*

### AGRONOMY

Protocols are currently being written to plant our peanut and cotton experiments while protecting the safety of the crew by minimizing the number of people in field and keeping them socially distant. Similar protocols are being prepared for harvesting carinata at NFREC-Quincy and -Live Oak.

Drs. David Wright and Ian Smalls' PhD student, Ted Stansly, successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation titled "Response of Brassica carinata to biotic and abiotic stress through glucosinolate synthesis and distribution".

### HORTICULTURE

Due to the Pandemic, research efforts are down approximately 40% this spring because trials could not be planted. It is difficult to predict what the summer and fall effort will look like at this point.

### ENTOMOLOGY

Dr. Xavier Marini and Jefferson County Agent, Danielle Sprague, held a successful Citrus Health Forum on March 12th with 90+ in attendance.

Dr. Joe Funderburk will be retiring in July 2020 after a long productive career in developing IPM approaches to controlling thrips and other insect pests in row crop and vegetable fields. He is an internationally recognized scientist that will be dearly missed. Efforts to replace him will soon be initiated.

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## PLANT PATHOLOGY

The NFREC plant diagnostic clinic has been closed for a short period while getting the transition approval during Covid-19 for the diagnostician and instituting safety procedures. The clinic is now reopened for business part time (8 am - 12 pm) Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The NFREC front gate will be closed during this time, but a cooler is placed next to the front gate (Picture below) to drop of samples during these hours.



Please follow guidelines as indicated in the below link before dropping samples or shipping samples.

<https://nfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/media/nfrecifasufle/du/docs/pdf/PDC-Announcement-04-03-2020.pdf>

Contact Dr. Mathews Paret, Associate Professor of Plant Pathology at [paret@ufl.edu](mailto:paret@ufl.edu) or Dr. Fanny Iriarte, Plant Disease Diagnostician at [fbiriarte@ufl.edu](mailto:fbiriarte@ufl.edu) for additional information.

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND ECOLOGY

Dr. Holly Ober volunteered last October to serve as the Interim Extension Program Leader for Natural Resources. While in this detail, she maintains her office at NFREC-Quincy and her research and extension programs remain productive.

Dr. Ober published research papers on the impact of pine tree management on bee communities and bat community responses to the intensification of biomass production for bioenergy.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE

Dr. Knox and his Bio Scientist are currently watering and maintaining plants in their greenhouse, shade house and field. We certainly recognize the benefit of having Gardening Friends of the Big Bend as partners in maintaining our Ornamental Garden Area at NFREC-Quincy. We look forward to their being able to return to the Center after this Pandemic. In the meantime, we are sending an e-newsletter to keep volunteers engaged and informed about NFREC. Contact Gary ([gwknex@ufl.edu](mailto:gwknex@ufl.edu)) or Kelly ([kellymthomas@ufl.edu](mailto:kellymthomas@ufl.edu)) if you would like to be included.

We hope to initiate the development of the NFREC-Quincy Southern Heritage Garden that will be funded from an endowment from Bob and Elaine Woodward. Their funding and support is greatly appreciated.

Dr. Gary Knox co-authored paper on promoting pollinator-friendly plants through extension and outreach.

## ANIMAL SCIENCE

Our Beef Unit crew is working diligently to maintain the health and well-being of our cow herd. Our breeding season has continued with minimal disruption.

We currently are not collecting data, but will soon start developing a protocol to maintain our employees safe and distanced from each other should we have approval to start our 2020 Bull Test. There is a likelihood, however, that the test will be delayed this year.

Dr. Angela Gonella-Diaza's Molecular Lab is almost complete and is expected to be in full operation once we get approved to ramp up our research activities.

After completing her PhD Program under the direction of Dr. Jose Dubeux, Dr. Liza Jimenez was hired as a Research Scientist at NFREC-Marianna to assist faculty in coordinating their research projects. We are pleased that she recently agreed to translate EDIS documents on "Coronavirus Resources for Food Production and Service" to Spanish.

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# FORESTRY

This past winter saw significant reforestation activity in the Panhandle as we are starting to recover from damages from Hurricane Michael. Last summer and fall we tested innovations in heavy equipment, like dragging anchor chain between two large armored bulldozers, to clear the most severely damaged areas and integrated the use of herbicides and prescribed fire (in some cases) to prepare the land for planting at a reasonable cost. The spring rains have been kind to our fields and pine plantations look good. This month many growers are using selective herbicides to keep planted trees free to grow. Like most crops, good site prep, good planting stock, care in planting, and vegetation management is the key to reforestation success!



I look forward to delivering future e-newsletters.

**Glen Aiken**  
**Center Director**

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### *Awards and Honors*

- **Dr. Jose Dubeux (NFREC-Marianna)** was selected as the recipient of the International Fellow Award by the UF/IFAS International Programs Advisory Team. This award recognizes his outstanding international career accomplishments.
- **Karen Hancock (NFREC-Live Oak)** was selected as the recipient of the 2020 Meritorious Support Service Award by the Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) Florida Chapter.

### *Announcements and Updates*

- ✓ There is some great news in the middle of this unprecedented time! Nine sealed bids were opened on April 9th for the NFREC-SV educational pavilion and badly needed stormwater drainage site work at the Live Oak unit. Gamble Construction of Live Oak has been awarded the bid for all of the stormwater drainage site work and the construction of the pavilion. The great news is the automated curtain system and breezeway connecting the educational pavilion to the existing conference room will be included, all in this phase. Needless to say, this was a very significant undertaking and without such amazing support from the wonderful ag community, this would have never happened. Stakeholder support and contributions were so impressive that the UF/IFAS administration has provided all remaining funding needed to complete this entire project as described above. We can only say THANK YOU.
- ✓ Registration is now open for a workshop on Managing Visitors and Volunteers in Natural Areas: <https://programs.ifas.ufl.edu/nata/certificate-courses/managing-visitors-and-volunteers/>. This workshop teaches participants how to integrate visitors into the natural areas they manage, as well as how to utilize volunteers when managing natural areas. For the first time in over a decade, we're offering the workshop in an entirely virtual format. Participants must complete ~10 hours of work at their own pace online (in Canvas), then join us for live virtual sessions on May 13 and 14 (via Zoom). There will be an attempt to have a grower meeting for fall whitefly update in late May but may have to be postponed or done virtually.