

# SWFREC Update

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2007

 SOUTHWEST FLORIDA RESEARCH  
& EDUCATION CENTER

## Center Director's Corner



The SWFREC has hosted several important groups over the past few months, including:

- ◆ Leadership Collier. This group of business men and women from throughout Collier County included a visit to the SWFREC as part of its agricultural education day in November. Associate center director Dr. John Dunkelmann welcomed the group and provided an overview of agricultural production in the state and in southwest Florida. Dallas Townsend, director emeritus of the UF/IFAS Hendry County Cooperative Extension office in LaBelle provided an entertaining look at the history of agriculture in south Florida and how industries have progressed. And agricultural economist Dr. Fritz Roka served as moderator of a panel discussion related to farmworker issues.
- ◆ An agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) Update roundtable meeting was conducted at the center in November. Among the participants from SWFREC were Dr. Dunkelmann, soil and water scientists Dr. Ed Hanlon and Dr. Kelly Morgan, water resources scientist Dr. Sanjay Shukla, citrus horticulturalist Dr. Bob Rouse and physiologist Dr. Bob Ebel, and post-doctoral research associate Dr. Monica Ozores-Hampton.
- ◆ Under the direction of teacher Amie Zelada, twenty-six science students from Palmetto Ridge High School in Naples visited the SWFREC in December and learned about several agriculture-related topics, including the importance of agriculture in the state. Dr. Rouse demonstrated the process of grafting citrus budwood onto an existing citrus tree, entomologist Dr. Phil Stansly presented information about pests and citrus greening disease, and senior water resources engineer Jimmy Knowles showed the group a lysimeter project in the field that determines exactly how much water is used by plants in the bed.
- ◆ Members of Leadership Lehigh, which is comprised of business men and women from Lehigh Acres, stopped at the center in December. Dr. Dunkelmann spoke to the group about southwest Florida agriculture, and UF/IFAS Hendry County Cooperative Extension director Gene McAvoy conducted an on-bus tour for the group around the SWFREC farm.



Dallas Townsend (right) presents the history of agriculture to Leadership Collier, and Jimmy Knowles talks crop irrigation practices with Palmetto Ridge students.



### Inside this issue:

<i>Groups Tour SWFREC</i>	1
<i>Fall Field Day Report</i>	2
<i>Staff News</i>	3
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	4

We appreciate the chance to showcase the SWFREC to these important individuals and look forward to similar opportunities in the future.

We wish the merriest of holidays and a prosperous new year to our clientele and their families.

*Christine Waddill*

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## Field Day Draws Growers, Industry Personnel

Nearly forty growers, industry representatives, and other personnel participated in the SWFREC Fall Vegetable Field Day in December.

In-field presentations included Dr. Phil Stansly, entomologist, who provided information about a study on whitefly control for the management of watermelon vine decline, a trial measuring insecticidal control of whiteflies in tomato, and a project examining insecticidal control of Lepidoptera in zucchini, tomato, and collards.

At a second field stop, water resources scientist Dr. Sanjay Shukla, agricultural economist Dr. Fritz Roka, and UF/IFAS Hendry County Cooperative Extension director Gene McAvoy presented an evaluation of vegetable Best Management Practices in relation to production, water quality, and farm income in southwest Florida.



Dr. Phil Stansly (above) speaks to field day participants from atop a spray tractor, and (left) growers peruse handout materials packed with research data, photographs, and in-field trial results.

Dr. Shinjiro Sato, a post-doctoral research associate in the soil and water sciences program, and McAvoy presented phosphorus recommendations for south Florida vegetable production and the results from a study titled “Nitrogen Spatial Distribution and Phosphorus Solubility in a Sandy Soil Cropped with Tomatoes under Seepage Irrigation.” Joining Sato and McAvoy in conducting these studies is soil and water scientist Dr. Kelly Morgan and post-doc research associate Dr. Monica Ozores-Hampton.

Additional data distributed to participants included “Control of Foliar Diseases on Watermelon with Foliar Sprays” and “Evaluation of Compounds for Control of Foliar Diseases in Tomato”—information resulting from plant pathologist Dr. Pam Roberts’ trials initiated last spring.

## Focus on Safety: SWFREC Personnel Complete Training

Four SWFREC employees recently completed Hazardous Material Technician/OSHA Level III training.

The hands-on emergency response sessions encompassed two full days of education, including appropriate use of SCBAs and a number of drills designed to encourage aggressive response in emergency situations. Farm operations employees Steve Taylor, Elmer Lopez, Rudy Aragus, and Jose Mesa completed the training, which was conducted by Chris Pappas, a certified hazardous materials instructor.

Rudy Aragus (left) and Jose Mesa complete a hands-on emergency response training exercise.



The training was coordinated by SWFREC maintenance and hazardous materials supervisor Roger McGill, who completed OSHA Level V training with Pappas at a seminar last summer.

## SWFREC Staff News

- ◆ Dr. Pam Roberts, plant pathologist, was honored with the Dallas Townsend Extension Award this past September at the UF/IFAS Extension Professional Association of Florida annual meeting. In addition, she, along with Dr. Alex Csinos with the University of Georgia, organized the 1st International Phytophthora capsici Meeting in November in Islamorada. Nearly sixty people participated in the first annual event.
- ◆ Entomologist Dr. Phil Stansly was invited to participate in a travel group to China as part of a scientific cooperation exchange program in September. Stansly joined Dr. Bill Castle of the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred and three other United States entomologists for the trip, which was sponsored by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences' Institute of Plant Protection. The group traveled through several Beijing districts, as well as Henan Province, Hebei Province, Shandong Province, and Kijiang Province with Chinese scientists to observe pest management practices, gather information, and share knowledge about biological control, ecology, and integrated pest management. Upon his return from China, Dr. Stansly relayed information about the trip and China's pest management practices during a vegetable growers meeting at the SWFREC in October. In addition, Dr. Stansly just returned from the American Entomological Society Annual Meeting in San Diego, California, where he and assistant research professor Dr. Jawwad Qureshi made back-to-back presentations.
- ◆ More than 100 people participated in the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP) Annual Meeting in November in Haines City. The event featured numerous environmental presentations, field trips, and opportunities for FMNP students and instructors to share information and tips on teaching others about Florida's environment. SWFREC wildlife ecologist Marty Main and senior biological scientist Ginger Allen worked in conjunction with the FMNP's Pinellas County chapter to organize the event, which also included the presentation of numerous awards. In addition, Ginger was elected to the board of directors for the Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and Service Programs.
- ◆ Soil and water scientist Dr. Ed Hanlon participated in several conferences during the last three months, including the USDA-CRSEES national review of the University of Georgia's environmental program (one of six national scientists invited); the Soil Science Society of America/American Society of Agronomy meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana (presented a poster); the 35th anniversary meeting of the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology (he serves as treasurer) in Ames, Iowa; and the South Regional Water Quality Conference (presented a poster) in Fayetteville, Arkansas.
- ◆ The following are EDIS documents published by SWFREC faculty during the last three months:

Roberts, P.D., Muchovej, R.M., Kucharek, T., Pernezny, K., and Momol, T. A Series on Diseases in the Florida Vegetable Garden: Watermelon. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP162>.

Roberts, P.D., Muchovej, R.M., Kucharek, T., Pernezny, K., and Momol, T. A Series on Diseases in the Florida Vegetable Garden: Squash. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP160>.

Roberts, P.D., Muchovej, R.M., Kucharek, T., Pernezny, K., and Momol, T. A Series on Diseases in the Florida Vegetable Garden: Cantaloupe. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/PP158>.

Main, M.B., and Allen, G. Florida's Environment (series of documents by region)—Overview (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW268>), Northwest (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW269>), Northeast (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW270>), North Central (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW271>), Central West (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW272>), Central (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW273>), Central East (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW274>), Southwest (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW275>), Southeast (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/UW276>).



In recognition of her longstanding support of the FMNP, Ginger Allen received an award from Dr. Marty Main at the FMNP Annual Meeting.

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## Upcoming Events



**December 24-28, 2007, and January 1, 2008:** SWFREC closed for holiday break. We will resume regular business hours (8am-5pm) on Wednesday, January 2, 2008.

**January 6-9:** *Application of Precision Agriculture for Fruits and Vegetables 2008*. Regal Sun Resort, Orlando. International symposium is sponsored by the International Society for Horticultural Science, the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers, and the UF/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred.

**January 8:** *Vegetable Growers Meeting*. 6-8pm, SWFREC. To RSVP, please call the UF/IFAS Hendry County Extension office at 863-674-4092.

**January 22-23:** *Indian River Citrus Seminar*. St. Lucie County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierce. Program will include updates on insect, weed, and disease control strategies, as well as information about industry trends, market conditions, fertilization, irrigation, and food safety. To register, go online to: <http://www.floridagrower.net/flgevents/>.

