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May 27, 2021

Welcome to SWFREC Update E-news! This newsletter is distributed monthly and contains news about the center and its faculty and staff, program research updates, and upcoming events.

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## Spotlight on . . . McAvoy's Many Hats Target Ag

SWFREC associate director for stakeholder relations Gene McAvoy will jump at any chance to promote agriculture. And in his case, never turning down an opportunity to shine a spotlight on ag makes for a very busy schedule.



*"Agriculture is and always has been my passion,"* McAvoy explains. *"I learned a long time ago from working with farmers in Africa and the Caribbean, that as Theodore Roosevelt once said, 'Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care.' I have found that to be truly effective and have an impact, you have to immerse yourself and become part of the (ag) community. It's more than a job; it's a way of life. And when people know you care about them, you can effect change."*

Here are just a few of McAvoy's industry contributions during the last few months:

### Congressional Visit Days

Gene was part of a Florida team participating in the 2021 American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, Soil Science Society of America Virtual Congressional Visits Day to request support for the continuation of USDA funding for fiscal year 2022. The team visited virtually with representatives from several members of the Florida Congressional Delegation, including Senator Marco Rubio, Congressman Mario Diaz Balart, Congresswoman Debbie Wassermann Shultz, and Congresswoman Kat Cammack.

[\(See more\)](#)

## Soil Microbiologist Leads Citrus Project



Dr. Sarah Strauss, SWFREC's soil microbiologist, is leading a team of UF/IFAS researchers to explore how changes in soil health can impact citrus and other subtropical tree crops. For the four-year, \$500,000 project, funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the group specifically will be examining how quickly soil health can change in sandy soils and how specific changes can impact yield.

Mike Loizzo, a writer for the UF/IFAS Soil and Water Sciences Department, published an article about the project on the IFAS blog site. The story, "Federal Grant Funds UF/IFAS Soil Health and Citrus Study," was picked up by media outlets including Citrus Industry online and UltimateCitrus.com. To learn more about Dr. Strauss' research project, click here: <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/news/2021/04/22/federal-grant-funds-uf-ifas-soil-health-and-citrus-study/>.

## Precision Ag Group Earns Pub Recognition

An article authored by precision ag engineer Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis, engineering and research technologist Victor Partel, and engineer Lucas Costa has been named the 2021 UF/IFAS High Impact Publication Award winner!

"**Agroviz: Cloud-based Application to Process, Analyze, and Visualize UAV-collected Data for Precision Agriculture Applications Utilizing Artificial Intelligence**" was published in the July 2020 issue of Computers and Electronics in Agriculture journal. The article and its authors were recognized during the virtual 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Florida Agricultural Experiment Station Research Awards Ceremony earlier this month.



## Vegetable Growers Meeting Set for June 3

In his most recent issue of the South Florida Pest and Disease Hotline, UF/IFAS Hendry County Extension director and multi-county commercial horticulture agent Craig Frey promotes his upcoming vegetable growers meeting in the newsletter's "Research Highlights" section.

Slated for Thursday, June 3, 4-6pm, the virtual meeting will include two one-hour sessions. Session #1 is Vegetable Research Highlights. Among the presentations will be three by SWFREC faculty: "**Using Sulfur in Vegetable Production to Decrease Soil pH**" (vegetable horticulturist Dr. Phillip Williams); "**Compact Bed Geometry for Watermelon Production in Florida**" (ag and biological engineer Dr. Sanjay Shukla); and "**Herbicide Injury in Cucurbit Crops**" (weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery).

Session #2 is Watermelon Disease Management Research Highlights. Presentations will address foliar fungal and bacterial pathogens, weed hosts of whitefly transmitted viruses and management options, canine detection of viral watermelon decline, and neighborhood pest management.

CCA and CEU credits can be obtained for each session by completing the pre-test, attending the session, and successfully completing the post-test (>70% score). The pre-tests can be accessed here:

Session #1 - [https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1MOKvNLVkJ75mfau](https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1MOKvNLVkJ75mfau).

Session #2 - [https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_29NfVTQDIaK63ki](https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_29NfVTQDIaK63ki).



Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMtcuiqqzguHt35usgyk4vBP84B-VaSVfS2>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting, as well as links to save it to your calendar.

## SWFREC Included in Magazine

The June issue of Florida Trend magazine focuses on Southwest Florida in its “Custom Content Community Portrait” section, and SWFREC made the edition!

Accompanying the article “Strong Education Network Keeps Workforce Pipeline Primed” is a photo of weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery and his graduate student Biwek Gairhe working in their program’s greenhouse.

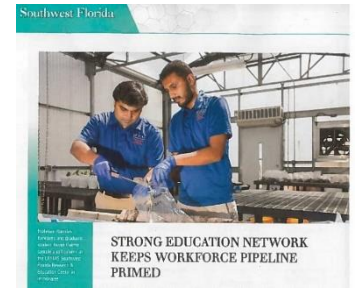


Photo credit: Tyler Jones, UF/IFAS Communications Photography.

## Graduate Students Take Society Awards

Two SWFREC Ph.D. students in Dr. Ozgur Batuman’s citrus pathology program earned awards during the virtual 17<sup>th</sup> Florida Phytopathology Society Biennial Meeting earlier this month. Salih Yilmaz won first place (and a \$400 cash prize) and Kellee Britt won second place (and a \$300 cash prize) in the meeting’s graduate student oral presentation contest.

## Faculty Present Citrus Research

Four SWFREC faculty members made presentations at the recent Florida Citrus Show in Fort Pierce: plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht presented “**Antimicrobial Delivery System,**” precision ag engineer Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis presented “**Cloud-based Applications for Citrus Precision Agriculture Using Artificial Intelligence,**” weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery presented “**Citrus Weed Control: Current Options and New Options,**” and entomologist Dr. Jawwad Qureshi presented “**Monitoring and Management of Pests in Protected Structures.**”

## Students Celebrate Graduation

Three SWFREC graduate students participated in a UF/IFAS graduation ceremony in early May to accept their master’s degrees in horticultural science/plant physiology: Susmita Gaire, Sudip Kunwar, and Sameer Pokhrel. Plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht and citrus horticulturist Dr. Fernando Alferez have served as their committee chairs.

**Congratulations!**



## Entomologist Invited to LEAD IFAS

SWFREC entomologist Dr. Jawwad Qureshi has been added to the LEAD IFAS Cohort 13 roster for 2021. LEAD IFAS is a three-session professional development program for IFAS faculty and staff focused on developing the leadership skills of current and future IFAS leaders.

## Economist Pens Guest Column

Ag and natural resource economist Dr. Tara Wade wrote a column titled “**Guest Opinion: How Agriculture Helps Southwest Florida’s Ecology**” that appeared in both the Naples Daily News and the Fort Myers News-Press earlier this month. To read the article, click here: [https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/nat-res-econ/2021-05-11-Wade-Naples-Daily\\_News.pdf](https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/nat-res-econ/2021-05-11-Wade-Naples-Daily_News.pdf)

## Refereed Journal Article

“**The Effect of Foliar and Ground-applied Essential Nutrients on Huanglongbing-affected Mature Citrus Trees**” appears in the Plants journal special issue titled “Plant-soil Interactions: From Soil Fertility to Crop Growth” (volume 10, number 5). Postdoctoral research associate Dr. Ali Atta, center director and soil and water scientist Dr. Kelly Morgan, and research coordinator Dr. Kamal Mahmoud are first, second, and fourth authors, respectively. To read the article, click here and scroll down to download the PDF version:

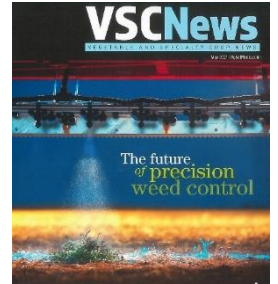
[https://www.mdpi.com/journal/plants/special\\_issues/Soil\\_Fertility\\_Crop\\_Growth](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/plants/special_issues/Soil_Fertility_Crop_Growth).

## Trade Journal Articles

“**How Artificial Intelligence Can Enhance the Citrus Industry**” appears in the May issue of Citrus Industry magazine. Precision ag engineer Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis is the author. To read the article, click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/precision-ag-eng/2021-05-Ampatzidis-Citrus-Industry.pdf>.

“**Principles and Risks of Trunk Injection for Delivery of Crop Protection Materials**” appears in the May issue of Citrus Industry magazine. Plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht and Ph.D. student Leigh Archer are first and second authors. To read the article, click here: [https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/plant-physiology/2021-05-Albrecht\\_CitrusIndustry.pdf](https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/plant-physiology/2021-05-Albrecht_CitrusIndustry.pdf).

“**The Future of Precision Weed Control**” appears in the May issue of Vegetable and Specialty Crop News. Precision ag engineer Dr. Yiannis Ampatzidis is the author. To read the article, click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/precision-ag-eng/2021-05-Ampatzidis-VegetableSpecialtyCropsNews.pdf>.



“**Cutleaf Evening Primrose Management in Vegetable Production**” appears in the May issue of Vegetable and Specialty Crop News. Master’s student Ruby Tiwari and weed scientist Dr. Ramdas Kanissery are first and second authors. To read the article, click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/weed-science/2021-05-Kanissery-VegetableSpecialtyCropNews.pdf>.

“**Pest of the Month: Bean Rust**” appears in the May issue of Florida Grower magazine. Associate director for stakeholder relations Gene McAvoy is the author. To read the article, click here: <https://swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/mcavoy/2021-05-McAvoy-Pest-of-the-month-FL-Growers.pdf>.

## Handbooks Available

The 2020–2021 Vegetable Production Handbook of Florida and the 2020-2021 Florida Citrus Production Guide are now available!

To pick up a copy, visit SWFREC and the UF/IFAS Hendry County Extension office, 1085 Pratt Blvd., LaBelle, FL 33935, Office: (863) 674-4092. The books will also be available at any future in-person meetings and workshops.



In addition to the hard copies, the handbooks are available online (with printable sections): vegetable <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cv292> and citrus <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/cg101>.

## SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh

SWFL Direct to Market Producers can now list their business profile on the SWFL Fresh web site. “SWFL Fresh: Choose Local, Choose Fresh” is a brand created by UF/IFAS Extension and the SWFL Regional Planning Council to connect consumers with local producers. If you are a producer selling any direct to market or local sold products, create your profile by clicking the website and scrolling down to “Producers Register Now!": [www.swflfresh.com](http://www.swflfresh.com). For more information or to be involved in future development of this brand, contact Jessica Ryals, food systems agent, UF/IFAS Collier County Extension, Naples, at [jessicaryals@ufl.edu](mailto:jessicaryals@ufl.edu).



## Extension Publications Provide Virus Info

To read articles written by UF/IFAS faculty and staff about the Coronavirus, you can visit the Electronic Data Information Source here: [https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic\\_covid19](https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/topic_covid19).

## Upcoming Events

**June 3, 4-6pm (via Zoom)**

**Vegetable Growers Meeting**

See agenda info and registration instructions above in “Vegetable Growers Meeting Set for June 3”  
CEU and CCA credits offered

**June 22, 10-11am (Via Zoom)**

**Citrus Squeezer Seminar**

SWFREC plant physiologist Dr. Ute Albrecht will present “Citrus Rootstocks in Florida: A Brief History and Updates on Ongoing Field and Nursery Studies.”

1 CEU each for pesticide license renewal and certified crop advisors.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcode2urjMuGtNGA5QIAk8RDqBsQjvpj-HV>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**July 13, 10am-12pm—In person**

**SWFREC Foundation Board Meeting**

SWFREC

**July 27, 10am-12pm—In person**

**SWFREC Citrus Advisory Committee Meeting**

SWFREC

**August 10, 10am-12pm—In person**

**SWFREC Vegetable Advisory Committee Meeting**

SWFREC

**August 18**

**Citrus Expo**

Lee Civic Center, North Fort Myers

More Info to Come

**August 19**

**Specialty Crop Expo**

Lee Civic Center, North Fort Myers

More Info to Come

**September 8, 9am-5pm**

**UF/IFAS Florida Tomato Institute and Food Safety Workshop**

Location and Program Info to Come

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