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February 20, 2025

In the News!

Welcome to SWFREC Update E-news!

Spotlight on . . .

SWFREC Staff Celebrate UF Anniversaries

Three SWFREC staff members participated in the University of Florida Service Recognition Reception last week at the Powell University House on the main campus in Gainesville!

[\(See more\)](#)

Congratulations, Kevin, Roger, and Julie!!!



Melissa Curry (left), UF VP of human resources, and UF President Dr. Kent Fuchs (far right) presented the service awards to Julie Carson, Roger McGill, and Kevin Hill.
Photo credit: Brianne Lehan

News . . .

Tours Foster Agricultural Education

SWFREC has hosted several tour groups over the last few weeks!

Leadership Collier County brought 52 up-and-coming leaders representing a cross section of companies and organizations throughout the Naples area. The group is sponsored by the Collier County Chamber of Commerce.

Following a welcome and brief SWFREC overview by communications specialist Julie Carson, participants were treated to an historical overview of ag in SW Florida by Dallas Townsend, former director of the UF/IFAS Hendry County Extension service in LaBelle.





A panel discussion focused on the state of ag in the region and included: Bob Newsome, retired manager of Barron Collier Partnership's ag division (moderator); SWFREC ag economist Dr. Kim Morgan; Wade Purvis of Purvis Farms; and Liz Jager of EFC Farms.



The Lead Collier group's final activity at SWFREC was a trolley tour of the farm, narrated by citrus pathologist Dr. Ozgur Batuman and vegetable horticulture biological scientist Jessie Watson.

Leadership Lee County brought a total of thirty-four participants to SWFREC, including adult members of the group as well as students from the Collegiate High School Program of Florida SouthWestern State College in Fort Myers.



Following a welcome and center overview by Carson, participants learned about agricultural policies and issues, as well as grower best management practices, from ag and natural resource economist Dr. Tara Wade. Ron Hamel, a consultant with the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) Center for Agribusiness, shared findings from his group's 25-year SW FL Ag Outlook Study. A trolley tour narrated by citrus horticulturist Dr. Fernando Alferez and soil microbiologist Dr. Sarah Strauss rounded out the SWFREC stop.



Carlene Thissen, a former employee who assisted with the UF/IFAS Farm Labor Supervisor Training Program, remains active with ag-related tours in the area. She brought two buses through the center property this month to teach a group of homeowners from Naples and members of FGCU's Lifelong Learning Academy about citrus and vegetable production in SW Florida. Both tours included a rolling tour of SWFREC courtesy of Carson.

