



Spring 2013



## GCGA Leaders Plan “Gulf CHMA” Enhancement

Following the 3rd International HLB Research Conference and related “Grower Day” workshop, held at the Citrus Research and Education Center at Lake Alfred, highlighting the progress that scientists/researchers are making in battling the disease, many “Gulf” growers are intensifying their “short term” strategy in renewed efforts to fight the “greening” bacterial disease.

Dr. Harold Browning, chief operations officer at the Citrus Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), reported that he is very encouraged by many CRDF-funded researchers’ reports presented at the HLB Research Conference, particularly the nine antimicrobial chemicals that show promise to counteract the HLB bacteria in a tree without toxic effects to the plant. However, the “realistic” scientific consensus seems to be that use of these materials is still years away, although CRDF will be working to make them available as quickly as possible.

Reports presented by UF/IFAS scientists at the “Grower Day” session March 6th were brief summaries of the reports presented by the HLB conference researchers. The UF/IFAS scientists concluded...that in the next few years...growers have two key “tools” to use together to slow and

control HLB in their groves: 1) an enhanced nutritional program; and 2) coordinated, regular insecticide spraying to reduce Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) populations.

Based on this current information and focused on “short term” HLB “battle strategy,” the Gulf Citrus Growers Association’s “Gulf CHMA” leaders held a planning session on April 9th to re-evaluate efforts to fight HLB in the region. Participants in the planning session included: from USDA/APHIS Tim Riley, David Munyon, Sharon Hayes and David Petendree; from FDACS/DPI Greg Carlton and Paul Mears; from UF/IFAS’ Drs. Jackie Burns, Phil Stansly, Moneen Jones, Mongi Zekri and Brandon Page; and from GCGA Wayne Simmons, Mark Colbert, Paul Meador, Tom Kirschner and Jerry Newlin.

Participants focused intensely on data collection logistics and methodology, data reporting and analysis, data accessibility to growers and how best to engage growers in data use to improve their coordinated spraying effectiveness against ACP populations, especially in the areas deemed “hot spots” in their groves.

Brandon Page, UF/IFAS program assistant for the  
**continued on page six**

# President's Message

This spring has been a joy for growing citrus due to the timely rains that we have been getting this month. Trees are finished or almost finished blooming and tree health is finally improving!

As we look back to fall and winter...the optimism that we had this past summer quickly disappeared...as growers everywhere experienced rapid and intensive fruit drop. Without doubt, the realization that citrus "greening" is severely impacting growers throughout the "Sunshine State" has become very apparent. As we moved into the winter months, growers also experienced tree health decline, with leaf drop and limb die back. Needless to say...the situation during the past few months has created much consternation in our industry.

In spite of our current situation in dealing with HLB, please remember that the GCGA, along with key grower leaders, our multi-county citrus agent and researchers from UF/IFAS' Southwest Florida Research and Education Center, organized Florida's first effort in our fight against the psyllid and HLB! Even before the U.S. Academy of Sciences recommended that growers establish "Citrus Health Management Areas" (CHMAs), growers and scientists in the "Gulf" region were coordinating area wide spray programs to reduce citrus psyllids and slow the spread of HLB. Interestingly, the key recommendations being promoted by scientists to growers following the 3rd International HLB Conference held this past February in Orlando...is to vigorously spray for psyllids and enhance tree health to the maximum. We are five years removed from the first HLB find in our state, and we are in a fight for our survival!

In addition to working to coordinate our "regional" attack on HLB, your association



**Wayne Simmons**

has been actively engaged in the process to secure research funding for the HLB fight! We have been to Tallahassee to tell our story, and the "Gulf" area legislators have been very supportive. I would like to thank each Senator and Representative who has supported our citrus industry in the battle against citrus "greening." Your GCGA leaders have also been telling the HLB story to our Congressional delegation, and I feel confident that we will see more support from Washington.

As you are keenly aware, water rights and issues are present regardless if we are facing a drought. Water is the life blood of our industry...and we are actively engaged in the political process to maintain it. Your association continues to be involved with the South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, and the Florida Department of Agriculture/Office of AG Water Policy in its efforts to keep water flowing into our groves. GCGA has also held numerous meetings with the US Army Corps

of Engineers regarding the process to repair the Herbert Hoover Dike which surrounds Lake Okeechobee. There is no easy solution to the Hoover Dike repairs issue...it is going to take time and money for the Corps to complete its work to shore up the dike so that the lake can hold more water.

As the only "regional" organization representing an AG commodity, GCGA is leading the effort to establish a new SW Florida agricultural organization, whose membership will be comprised of all commodities produced in the region. It is the "vision" of the leaders involved...that the new group will serve as "THE voice" of agriculture in the region. Our goal is to educate urban opinion leaders about the importance of AG in SW Florida, as well as what it needs to be economically viable.

As we wind up our year and plan for our county board elections and annual meetings...please become involved in your association's affairs and activities. We can always use some good talent and leadership. It has been a pleasure to serve as your GCGA president. Thank you for your support!



## **Gulf Citrus Growers Association 2012-2013 Board of Directors**

**Wayne Simmons, President**  
**Mark Colbert, Vice President**  
**Bob Newsome, Secretary**  
**Callie Walker, Treasurer**

**JD Alexander**  
**Don Barwick**  
**Emmett Evans III**

**Joe Hilliard II**  
**Tom Kirschner**

**Paul Meador**  
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**Aaron Troyer**  
**David Wheeler**  
**Ron Hamel**

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### **Publisher's Statement**

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## **GCGA Schedules 27th Annual Meeting**

The board of directors of the Gulf Citrus Growers Association has scheduled the organization's 27th annual meeting for Wednesday, June 5th. The annual meeting and member luncheon will be held at the Townsend Agricultural Center in LaBelle.

The annual "business session" will begin at 10:30 a.m. and will feature updates from GCGA's leaders on the association's programs and activities that were implemented throughout the 2012-2013 year.

Association members will be receiving invitation letters to the 27th annual meeting along with RSVP cards for the annual luncheon. There is no charge for the luncheon. **Members must register by RSVP**

**card, calling the office (239) 690-0281 or sending an e-mail reservation message by May 28th.**

As part of the annual meeting, GCGA will officially seat its board of directors and officers for the 2013-2014 season, based on the results of the annual county elections that will be held on May 16th and 17th.

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's Scholarship Foundation will also hold its annual meeting on June 5th in conjunction with GCGA's session. Reports from the foundation's officers will be presented, and other business conducted.

Please post these meetings to your calendar and register to participate.



# Elections Scheduled for 2013-14 GCGA Board of Directors

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's board of directors has scheduled the annual series of "county elections" for citrus grower representatives to serve on the 2013-2014 association board. The board reports that this year's elections will be held on May 16th and 17th as governed by GCGA's by-laws.

Bob Newsome, GCGA Secretary and chairman of the association's nominating committee, notes that each of the organization's five counties is entitled to at least one director to serve on the board. GCGA directors will be elected by grower mem-

bers at each county's "annual meeting" as outlined in the association's by-laws.

All communications, including the schedules and logistical details concerning this year's individual county elections, along with the necessary participation forms and ballots, will be sent to each GCGA grower member at least two (2) weeks prior to the county elections. Based on the association's current "grower" membership, Charlotte, Glades and Lee counties will each vote to elect one director. Collier will elect three (3), and Hendry five (5) directors.

The dates, times and locations for each "county" annual meeting to elect directors and conduct business are listed below. Ballots to elect the two (2) "At Large" directors will also be mailed to GCGA's grower members along with the voting schedules and related information.

**The GCGA board has recommended that the association's two "At Large" directors be elected by ballot. So please make sure to vote for these directors with the "official" ballot labeled "At Large" that will be included in your "elections" information packet.**



**2012-2013 Gulf Citrus Growers Association Board of Directors**

Back, left to right: Don Barwick, Carey Soud, Emmett Evans III, Tom Kirschner, Paul Meador, JD Alexander and Ron Hamel. Front, left to right: Mark Colbert, Callie Walker, Wayne Simmons and Bob Newsome. Board members absent from photograph are Joe Hilliard II, Aaron Troyer and David Wheeler.

## 2013-2014 Directors' Elections

### Thursday, May 16th

**Charlotte County** (One director)  
8:30 a.m. Evans Properties, Inc.  
Punta Gorda

**Hendry County** (Five directors)  
2:00 p.m. Southern Heritage Real Estate  
LaBelle

### Friday, May 17th

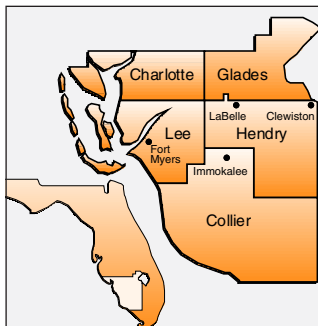
**Glades County** (One director)  
9:00 a.m. Gulf Citrus Offices; Riverdale

**Lee County** (One director)  
9:15 a.m. Gulf Citrus Offices; Riverdale

**Collier County** (Three directors)  
11:30 a.m. UF/IFAS SWFREC  
Immokalee

### Friday, May 24th

At Large Ballots Due (Two Directors)



## Florida's Gulf Citrus Production Region

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association represents thousands of acres of citrus groves in Southwest Florida's "Gulf" region, which is officially noted as a production region in state statutes. The "Gulf" region accounts for about 25% of the Sunshine State's total citrus crop production. The region's citrus industry generates nearly \$1-billion of economic impact.

## GCGA 2012-2013 Board of Directors

### Charlotte County

Emmett Evans III  
Evans Properties, Inc.

### Collier County

Tom Kirschner  
Cooperative Producers, Inc.  
Paul Meador  
Gulf Citrus Partners LP  
Bob Newsome  
Barron Collier Partnership

### Hendry County

JD Alexander  
Alico, Inc.  
Mark Colbert  
Duda Products, Inc.  
Joe Hilliard II  
Hilliard Brothers, Inc.  
Wayne Simmons  
LaBelle Fruit Co. LLC  
Carey Soud  
Soud Family Partnership

### Glades County

David Wheeler  
Wheeler Farms, Inc.

### Lee County

Callie Walker  
English Brothers

### At-Large Seats

Don Barwick  
Heller Brothers  
Packing Corp.  
Aaron Troyer  
Troyer Brothers, Inc.

# "Gulf Citrus" Hosts 13th Annual "Country GALA"



## Celebrating the "Gulf Citrus" 2013 "Country Gala"!

**Top Row (L to R):** Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart and Callie Walker; Lee County Commissioner Larry Kiker and wife Paula (center) and Ruth Rodrigues; Cindy and Wayne Simmons with Florida Highwayman Artist Kelvin Hair (center) and Lee County Clerk of the Court Linda Doggett with State Representative Matt Caldwell.

**Middle Row:** Ashley Timpner and George Walker; Over 300 folks enjoy the GALA and Auctioneer/Emcee Jack Burges keeps the auction "lively"!

**Bottom Row:** Hats off to the Hendry County Cattlemen's Association; Sandy Taylor and Kate English; The popular UF/Gator "Gameday" Boots and "Those GREAT steaks"!

**Bottom Left:** The \$1000 GCGA "Country GALA" check winner Julie Stacey (left) receives her \$\$\$ from Shelby Rashford and Ron Hamel.

The 13th Annual Gulf Citrus Growers Association "Country GALA" will be remembered as a "fun" and "festive" evening...bringing together over 300 folks from throughout the state and region.

Held this year at the LaBelle Civic Center on Saturday, April 13th, the "Country GALA" has grown to become the association's most successful "fund-raising" event. Funds from the "GALA" go to support the organization's community and governmental outreach programs which are primarily focused on Southwest Florida. "It is gratifying that year after year, our sponsors and supporters continue to make this event successful and fun-filled," said Ron Hamel, GCGA's executive vice president. "Because of the high level of support....

many attractive auction and raffle prizes are offered during the event, adding intrigue and friendly competition as entertainment throughout the evening," said Hamel.

This year's GALA was supported by a **record** 84 sponsors, representing companies and individuals from throughout the industry. There were 11 Platinum, 29 Gold and 44 Silver Sponsors. In addition, over 70 resorts, restaurants and businesses donated raffle and auction items for the event.

**Please review and thank ALL our GALA sponsors and supporters published on page five (5). GCGA would also like to thank ALL the volunteers who made its 13th "Country GALA" a real success!**

Although the "socializing" and "strat-

egizing" play an important part in creating the GALA's spirited atmosphere...the thick, juicy STEAKS, prepared to perfection by the Hendry County Cattlemen's Association are the "talk of the town"! The Gulf Citrus Growers Association has "partnered" with the Hendry cattlemen since the first "Country GALA" back in 2001! **GCGA thanks the Hendry County Cattlemen's Association for their continual support of the GALA.**

In addition to the great steaks...the "fix-ins," including the salads and desserts were prepared by Peggy Hampton, who has also been an important part of the event since its beginning. And, this year, Troyer Brothers, Inc. donated their locally-grown potatoes to our hearty meal!





# THANKS

## COUNTRY GALA SPONSORS!

### Platinum Sponsors

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Wallace International Trucks, Inc. ♦ Wedgworth's, Inc. ♦  
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Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort ♦ Key West Express  
LaPlaya Beach & Golf Resort (Katie Sproul, Barron Collier Companies)  
Tim Lewis ♦ Jack Lloyd ♦ Lykes Insurance (Chris Tritt)  
Morgan Stanley (Dick Johnson / Michael Tamney) ♦ Pink Shell Resort & Marina  
Port of the Islands Resort ♦ Prawn Broker  
Rabo Agri Finance (Denise Stenbridge) ♦ Robert "Bob" Richardson  
Congressman Tom Rooney ♦ Ruth's Chris Steak House  
Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort & Spa ♦ Sun Harvest Citrus ♦ The Turtle Club  
The Twin Eagles Club ♦ The Verandah Restaurant ♦ Tween Waters Inn  
Valent USA Corporation (Sarah Markle) ♦ Verandah Club

# GCGA Leaders Plan “Gulf CHMA” Enhancement

continued from page one

statewide CHMA program, presented an overview of the newly created **CHMA Sectional Mapping Program**. He explained that this **new** tool is intended to provide growers and industry leaders with an interactive perspective of ACP “pressure” throughout the state. The innovative **CHMA Sectional Mapping Program** uses the ACP data collected through the joint USDA/FDACS surveys up to **6,000** citrus blocks at three week intervals. The data is displayed by Township, Range and Section (TRS) of scouted grove blocks. There can be numerous multi-blocks in a TRS and of course the number of psyllids probably would not be unique. ACP counts are sorted and averaged according to TRS. **Then, the average ACP count is plotted on the interactive TRS map.**

Growers and industry leaders can use the **CHMA Sectional Mapping Program** to identify areas/blocks within each CHMA that are facing ACP “pressure,” and can take corrective action accordingly. Page encourages growers to access the program by going to the CHMA website, [www.flchma.org](http://www.flchma.org), and clicking on the **CHMA Sectional Mapping Program** banner. Growers are asked to sign up for the program by providing their name, email, and entering a username and password. He explains that once the grower is logged into the program, he/she has two options to choose...the cycle data page and/or the pre-

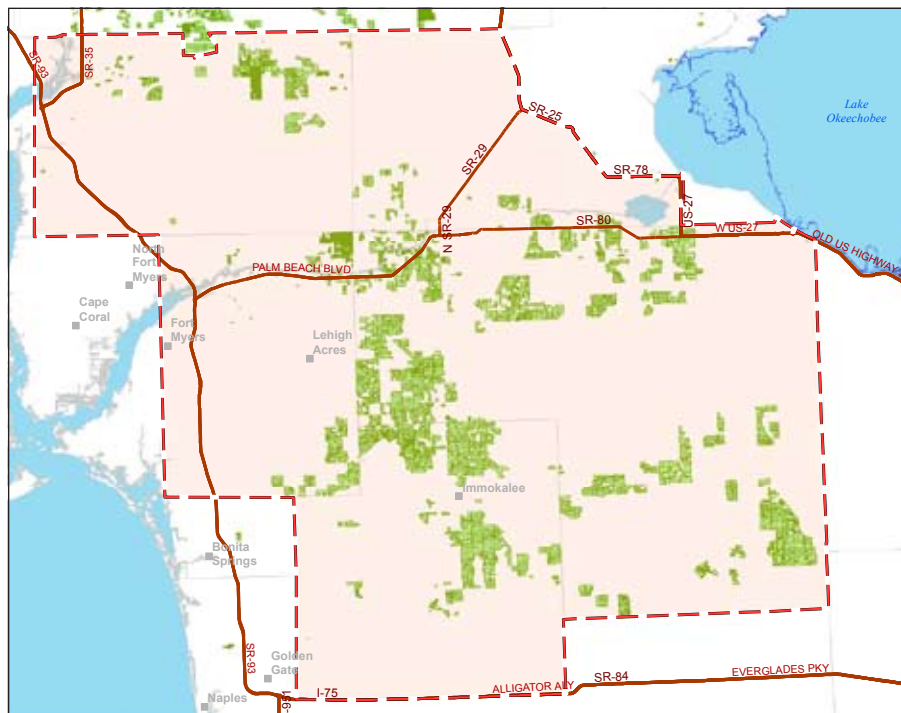


sentation page. Brandon Page is available to assist and/or answer any questions regarding the new program. He can be reached at (863) 956-8653 or email: [bp@ufl.edu](mailto:bp@ufl.edu).

CHMA leaders also suggested that growers obtain their respective “multi-block” identification numbers from USDA/FDACS representatives. The “multi-block” IDs (MB ID #s) are used by USDA/FDACS grove block surveyors as the location name for each block being monitored for psyllids. By acquiring their “multi-block” IDs, growers can retrieve block specific data from the CHMA website, including a bar graph showing ACP counts over a number of survey cycles. Paul Mears, environmental supervisor, DPI/FDACS, who covers the “Gulf CHMA” acreage, reports that the MB ID #s also allow growers to retrieve their block specific data on the **CHMA Sectional Mapping Program** for each survey cycle. From the [www.flchma.org](http://www.flchma.org) home page go to “Active CHMA websites” click on “Gulf CHMA” (2nd from the bottom), then “Psyllid Scouting Reports” and finally “ACP block specific report spreadsheet.” This will bring up an Excel file which includes a “Data” sheet with all the counts for specific blocks and scouting cycles. **“Gulf” growers can request their MB IDs from the local CHRP office in Immokalee. Paul Mears’ telephone number is (239) 658-3684. His email: [Paul.Mears@FreshFromFlorida.com](mailto:Paul.Mears@FreshFromFlorida.com).**

**“Please remember that the GCGA, along with key grower leaders, our multi-county citrus agent and researchers from UF/IFAS’ Southwest Florida Research and Education Center, organized Florida’s first effort in our fight against the psyllid and HLB!”**

**Wayne Simmons  
GCGA President and  
CRDF Board Member**



**“Gulf CHMA” to be sub-divided next season**

The group also discussed the size of the “Gulf CHMA,” since it encompasses the largest number of acres among Florida’s 38-plus CHMAs. The consensus of the group was that more intensive focus on smaller acreages within the “Gulf CHMA” should enhance the overall effectiveness of the psyllid spraying efforts. The leaders felt that although past efforts within the “Gulf CHMA” have been successful in reducing ACP populations...more can be done to “fine tune” the effort. Discussions on how best to “sub-divide” the “Gulf CHMA,” while maintaining its geographical strength and integrity will be held in the coming weeks. GCGA will also be re-recruiting the CHMAs “team captains.”



# FDEP Advances Caloosahatchee TMDL Plans

As anticipated, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has initiated its program to address total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) east of S-79 (Franklin Locks) to Lake Okeechobee. The FDEP held its first public workshop on March 13th in Ft. Myers to outline its plans to set TMDLs and develop Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) to address water quality in the Caloosahatchee River from Lake Okeechobee to S-79.

The March 13th session on the Caloosahatchee, followed several workshops to set TMDLs and establish a BMAP for the western part of the river from S-79 to the estuary. The recent session focused on what FDEP staff called “nutrient impairments.” FDEP listed as “impaired” water bodies initially scheduled to receive TMDLs (from west to east): Jack’s Branch; Townsend Canal; Cypress Branch; Long

Hammock Creek, Lake Hicpochee; Nine Mile Canal and the S-4 Basin.

Identified by FDEP as “causative pollutants” in the named WBIDs were total nitrogen and total phosphorus.

According to the FDEP, the 2013 TMDLs will address the nutrient impairments assessed for multiple tributaries within the Caloosahatchee watershed.

Farmers, growers and ranchers whose properties are within these geographical areas are strongly encouraged to become engaged in the process as the FDEP moves forward with its TMDL setting efforts, followed by its establishment of BMAPs or management plans for these areas.

GCGA, along with the Florida Farm Bureau Federation and other agricultural organizations will continue to monitor the situation and work to engage its members in the process.



## GCGA Sponsors “Water Farming” Pilot Project

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association has been selected by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to sponsor its “water farming” pilot project(s) within the Caloosahatchee River basin.

GCGA is working through Tommy Perry and Sommer Foster of Johnson-Prewitt & Associates, Inc. on this innovative pilot project which will use fallow/out-of-production citrus land to store stormwater, reduce nutrients and serve as an alternative water supply sources.

Two private GCGA representative sites and one “public” site are included in the pilot project. The Medusa Groves and Soud Family Groves have been selected, along with the Berry Grove site, which is under public ownership.

The GCGA and SFWMD staffs have been holding planning sessions to advance this pilot project.

## Agricultural BMPs Address Water Management

The Florida Department of Agriculture’s Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) has recently confirmed that the “statewide” Citrus Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual is now “officially” adopted in state rule.

Gulf citrus growers who have previously filed “notices of intent” (NOIs) with FDACS, and are implementing the applicable BMPs on the “checklists” they

**‘presumption of compliance’ with state water quality standards.”**

“Although over 100,000 acres of citrus in the ‘Gulf’ region have been enrolled in BMPs, there are still growers who have not yet filed NOIs to participate in the program,” says Ron Hamel, GCGA’s executive director. “Now is the time to sign up and protect your operation,” he urged.

In order to facilitate participation of the



submitted under the original **Gulf Citrus BMP Manual**, are “grandfathered in” and do not need to re-file an NOI, according to FDACS. However, FDACS/OAWP staff added, that in addition to doing the BMPs, growers must follow the guidelines in UF/IFAS publication SL 253 (January 2011), “Nutrition of Florida Citrus Trees, 2nd Edition.”

According to FDACS/OAWP staff, **“Following these protocols will assure citrus growers with filed NOIs, who are implementing the BMPs as noted and following the UF/IFAS “nutrition” guidelines...will be operating under a**

remaining citrus acreage and other agricultural operations in Southwest Florida, the FDACS/OAWP has hired Caroline “Callie” Walker to serve the region. Walker’s title is Environmental Specialist II, FDACS - Office of Ag Water Policy. She has opened an office at 483 Cowboy Way, LaBelle, FL 33935. Her office telephone number is (863) 674-4160, and her email address is Callie.Walker@freshfromflorida.com.

In addition to supporting the BMP program, Walker will be coordinating FDACS/OAWP “cost/share” programs, as well as other initiatives administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture.



# News



**Gulf Citrus  
Growers**  
Assn. Inc.

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Ft. Myers, FL 33905

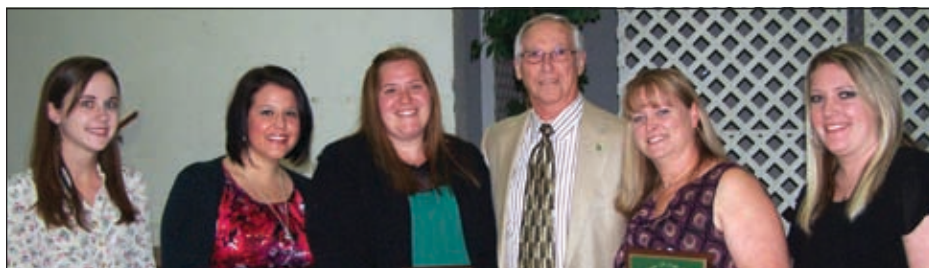
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## Gulf Citrus Presents “Brilliant Orange” Awards in Hendry

Five Hendry County “first year” teachers were recently recognized with “Brilliant Orange” Awards by the Gulf Citrus Growers Association. The teachers received the association’s awards at the 2013 Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Dinner held at the LaBelle Civic Center.

The five teachers were selected by their peers for their outstanding classroom performances during their first year of teaching in Hendry County public schools.

Recognized by GCGA were Brooke Barnes, a 3rd grade teacher from Central Elementary School in Clewiston; Charlene Bowen, a 4th grade teacher from Upthegrove Elementary in LaBelle; Kristen Mann, a



### GCGA Recognizes Hendry County’s “First Year” Teachers!

GCGA’s Ron Hamel (center) presents “Brilliant Orange” Awards to five of Hendry County’s outstanding teachers at the 2013 Golden Apple Teacher Recognition Dinner in LaBelle.

4th grade teacher from Eastside Elementary in Clewiston; Shannon Springs, a media specialist from Westside Elementary in

Clewiston and Katie Wilson, a band director at Clewiston High School.

The association, in conjunction with the Foundation For Hendry County Public Schools, Inc., selects the “Brilliant Orange” teachers based on nominations from each of the schools’ administrators.

## GCGA Supports Casa San Juan Bosco Project

Through its GCGA Scholarship Foundation, “Gulf Citrus” continued to support the development of the Catholic Charities Housing initiative called the Casa San Juan Bosco Farm Worker Community.

The facilities officially opened January 23rd with a “blessing” and “celebration” at which GCGA’s Ron Hamel presented a

check to Sister Cathy Buster before over 300 invited guests, including church and community leaders. Hamel joined federal, state, county and church officials at the podium.

The farm worker housing community is located in Arcadia. The first phase consists of 53 three and four bedroom homes, a community center and recreation facilities.

**Gulf Citrus appreciates  
the support of**



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