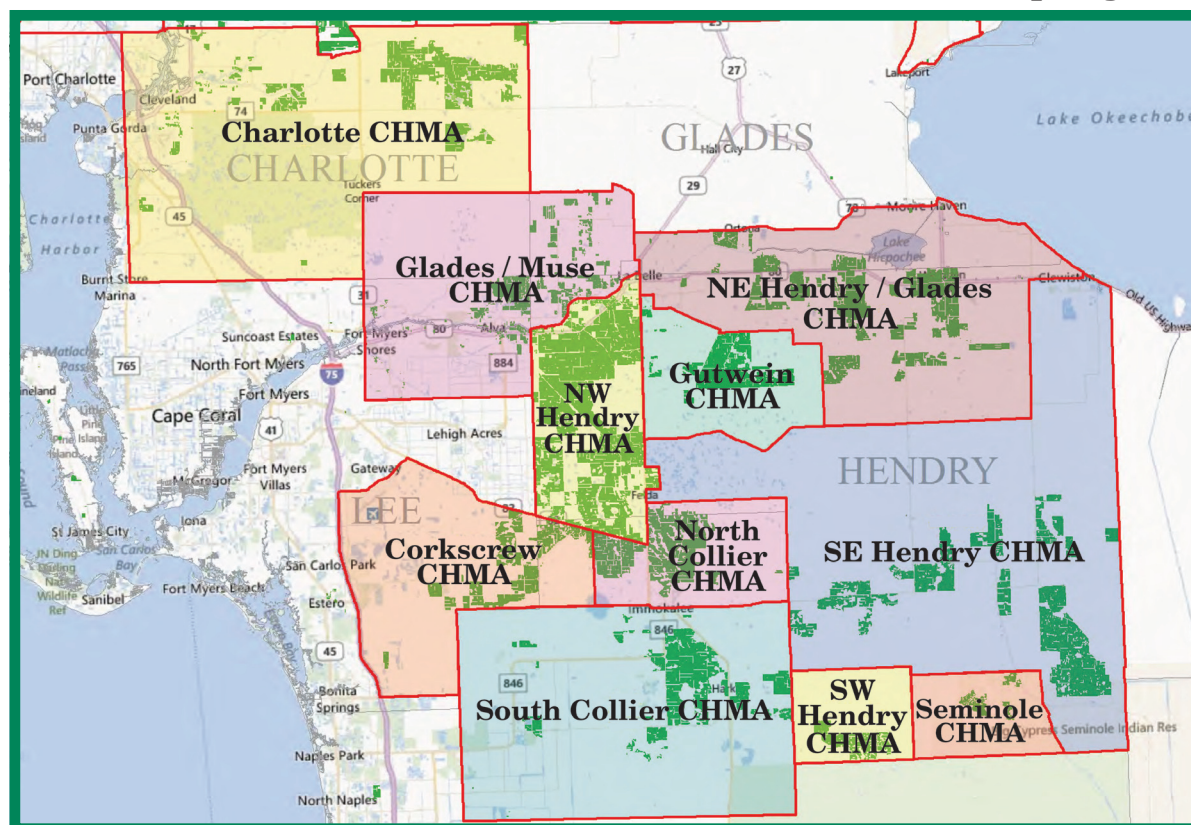


News



Spring 2014



Gulf Growers Launch 11 CHMAs Action Plan

Last fall, the Gulf Citrus Growers Association's Citrus Health Management Area (CHMA) "team" reorganized the five-county "Gulf" production region into 11 CHMAs. And, the "team" launched a more intensive and aggressive strategy to reduce Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) populations throughout Southwest Florida. The decision to divide the "Gulf" region into smaller, more compact CHMAs was based on the recommendations of UF/IFAS scientists and FDACS/DPI regulators who have been engaged in psyllid population control as a key tactic from the beginning of the industry's "battle" against the deadly "greening" bacterial disease. These scientists and regulators have been monitoring growers' efforts to reduce ACP populations throughout the state, and taking note of the most effective, "grower-led" CHMAs. Armed with the latest USDA/FDACS grove surveys and data collection, and the UF/IFAS website/data reporting on ACP counts...they found that the key to greater CHMA success and psyllid control is dedicated grower leadership in coordinating area-wide

sprays within more compact, contiguous citrus growing areas.

In November 2013, as preparation of the region's first "dormant" area-wide spray, GCGA Production and Research Committee Chairman Tom Kirschner convened GCGA's "CHMA Team," and recruited "Team Captains" for each of the "Gulf's" 11 new CHMAs. Utilizing the latest data that Brandon Page, UF/IFAS, CHMA program assistant, provided, along with grove maps and grower lists of the 11 newly created CHMAs, the "Team Captains" agreed to "reach out" to the citrus growers in their respective new CHMAs in efforts to coordinate two "dormant," area-wide sprays (preferably aerial).

Dr. Phil Stansly promoted the two "dormant" sprays... one before Christmas and the other right after Christmas... as the most important sprays of the year! Dr. Stansly also urged aerial spraying for more timely and wider coverage, but noted that ground spraying during the same time

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President's Message

The 2013-2014 season has certainly had its peaks and valleys for the "Gulf Citrus" production region, as well as for the entire Florida citrus industry! I am sure that you will agree...that GCGA has been engaged in representing the interests of "Gulf" growers on many battle fronts.

As we are all aware, HLB/citrus greening has continued to take its toll. It is sad to see once pristine, healthy citrus groves now reduced to rows of sparsely covered trees, with yellow-shaded leaves, across the countryside. And, this disease has been the culprit in the premature fruit drop during the last two seasons.

Our industry is truly in a "tailspin"! Florida's citrus production has gone from a high of 250-million boxes a few years ago... to 110-million boxes to date this season. This unprecedented crop reduction has awakened all segments of our industry, and to use nautical jargon..."all hands are now on deck" to battle this devastating disease.

I am proud to say that from the beginning of the HLB battle..."Gulf" growers have banded together! Recognizing early on that area wide spraying to reduce psyllid populations was "the" most effective weapon, GCGA formed a "leadership team" to promote the tactic. Your association continues to place the highest priority on fighting the disease. Our leaders organized the state's first successful Citrus Health Management Area (CHMA) to keep psyllid populations down to slow the disease's spread. Recently, realizing that the management of more compact CHMAs would produce even better results...we have sub-divided the "Gulf" CHMA into eleven CHMAs, each with a "team captain" for more intensive ACP control. It is through these dedicated

efforts that USDA/FDACS grove surveys show that the "Gulf" region continues to have some of the state's lowest psyllid populations. I would like to thank GCGA's leaders for stepping-up in the battle, as well as the growers who are participating.

Through the aggressive communications of our grower organizations, particularly Florida Citrus Mutual, our industry efforts in fighting "citrus greening" have also garnered support from our state and federal leaders! With **Wayne Simmons** Congresses' passage of the Farm Bill, and other legislation, over \$125-million, will be invested in research aimed at HLB. This funding could not have come at a better time, and will enable some of our dwindling "grower dollars" to go back into marketing to promote orange juice.

I would like to thank Florida's Congressional Delegation...and most personally, Congressman Tom Rooney...for the effort to secure funding to fight "greening."

At the state level, I would like to thank Governor Rick Scott and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam for their efforts to secure funding for HLB research. The \$7.5-million received through the state's 2013-14 budget has already made an impact on our "short term" research! In my travels to Tallahassee during the past two years, I have also noted the strong support of our local legislative delegation regarding our industry's funding requests for "greening" research. They, too, deserve thanks!

All of these positive actions make me



more optimistic about the future! We certainly are a resilient bunch...and have been through many battles. Somehow, with God's grace...we will defeat HLB and/or find ways to live with it!

Another "tool" we have to help us is the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee. We all know that the SWFREC has been struggling due to funding and leadership challenges! I am happy to report that through the efforts of a unified southwest Florida AG industry...efforts are underway to "revitalize" the center. We are pleased to welcome back Dr. Calvin Arnold, who on April 1st began his stint as the SWFREC's director. We look forward to working with him to rebuild the center as a premier facility in the "Gulf" growing area.

Our association continues to be financially sound in spite of declining citrus acreage. We will continue to run a "lean" organization, and be accountable to your grower dollars. Through our fundraising efforts, such as our "Country GALA" and "Gulf Classic," we have met our budget demands.

In closing, I would like to thank ALL our members for allowing me to serve as your president! We can always use more help in dealing with the issues that impact "Gulf" growers! On behalf of your leadership... thanks for your interest and support!

28th GCGA Annual Meeting Scheduled

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's board of directors has scheduled the organization's 28th annual meeting for Wednesday, June 4, 2014. The annual meeting and member luncheon will be held at the Verandah Golf and Country Club in Ft. Myers.

The annual "business session" will begin at 10:30 a.m. and will feature updates from the association's leaders focused on the issues and activities in which "Gulf Citrus" engaged during the 2013-14 year.

Association members will be receiving invitation letters to the 28th annual meeting, along with RSVP cards for the annual luncheon. There is no charge for the luncheon, but **members must register** by RSVP card, by calling (239) 690-0281 or

by e-mail **prior to May 30th.**

The 2014-2015 GCGA board of directors and officers will be "officially seated" at the annual meeting, and the association will recognize leaders and members for their support.

Dr. Calvin Arnold, UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center Director, will present his vision for "revitalizing" the SWFREC as keynote luncheon speaker.

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's Scholarship Foundation will also hold its annual meeting on June 4th in conjunction with GCGA's session. Reports from the foundation's officers will be presented to the membership.



Gulf Citrus Growers Association 2013-2014 Board of Directors

Wayne Simmons, President
Paul Meador, Vice President
Bob Newsome, Secretary
Callie Walker, Treasurer
Emmett Evans III
Joe Hilliard II
Sam Jones
Mike Murphy
Carey Soud
Danny Sutton
Hunter Teal
Aaron Troyer
David Wheeler

www.gulfcitrus.org

Publisher's Statement

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GCGA Schedules Elections for 2014-15 Board Members

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 2014-2015 association board. The board reports that this year's elections will be held on May 15th and 16th as governed by GCGA's by-laws.

Bob Newsome, GCGA Secretary and chairman of the association's nominating committee, notes that each of the counties within the organization's five-county service area is entitled to at least one director to serve on the board. GCGA's 2014-15 directors will be elected by grower mem-

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

The details of this year's elections, including the schedules and logistical information for each of the individual county meetings, along with the necessary participation forms and ballots, will be sent to each GCGA "grower" member 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) directors. Hendry will elect five (5) directors.

The dates, times and locations of each

"county" annual meeting to elect directors and conduct business are listed below.

Ballots to elect two (2) "At Large" directors will also be mailed to GCGA's "grower" members along with the voting schedules and election details.

The board has recommended that the association's two "At Large" directors be elected by ballot. So please vote for these directors with the "official" ballot labeled "At Large" that will be included in the "elections" information which will be mailed to members. The "At Large" director ballots are due in the GCGA offices May 23rd.



2013-2014 Gulf Citrus Growers Association Board of Directors

Back, left to right: Ron Hamel, Aaron Troyer, Bob Newsome, Sam Jones, JD Alexander and Joe Hilliard II. Front, left to right: Wayne Simmons, Carey Soud, Callie Walker and Paul Meador. Board members absent from (September 2013) photograph are Emmett Evans III, Mike Murphy, Hunter Teal, and David Wheeler.

2014-2015 Directors' Elections

Thursday, May 15th

Charlotte County (One director)
8:30 a.m. Charlotte Extension Office
Port Charlotte

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

Friday, May 16th

Glades County (One director)
9:00 a.m. GCGA Offices; Ft. Myers

Lee County (One director)
9:15 a.m. GCGA Offices; Ft. Myers

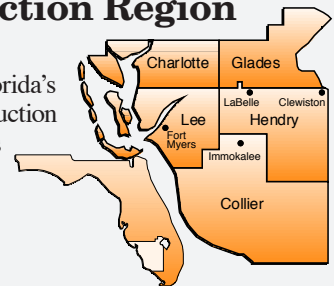
Collier County (Three directors)
11:00 a.m. UF/IFAS SWFREC
Immokalee

Friday, May 23rd

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 denoted 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 2013-2014 Board of Directors

Charlotte County

Emmett Evans III
Evans Properties, Inc.

Collier County

Mike Murphy
Cooperative Producers, Inc.

Paul Meador
Gulf Citrus Partners LP

Bob Newsome
Barron Collier Partnership

Hendry County

Sam Jones
Duda Products, Inc.

Joe Hilliard II
Hilliard Brothers, Inc.

Wayne Simmons
LaBelle Fruit Co. LLC

Carey Soud
Soud Family Partnership

Danny Sutton
Alico, Inc.

Glades County

David Wheeler
Wheeler Farms, Inc.

Lee County

Callie Walker
English Brothers

At-Large Seats

Hunter Teal
Heller Brothers
Packing Corp.

Aaron Troyer
Troyer Brothers, Inc.

14th Annual GCGA “Country GALA” Sets Record



SMILE! You're On “Country GALA” Camera!

Top Left: The Troyers share the evening's festivities! **Top Right:** Angela & Mark White and Saralyn & James Bryan enjoying the evening. **Center Left:** Rain was a “non-issue” for Dr. and Mrs. Stansly. **Center:** Auctioneer Jack Burges urges record crowd to bid higher! **Center Right:** State Representative and Mrs. Ray Rodrigues enjoy the GALA. **Bottom Left:** The Bowens show off their prize original paintings by Kelvin Hair. **Bottom Center:** Andrea Doggett draws Fynn Taylor's lucky number for the fishin' pole! **Bottom Center:** GCGA Treasurer Callie Walker (left) presents the GALA's \$1000 grand prize check to Ron and Connie Edenfield. **Bottom Right:** Scherrie Davis was the winner of the ever-popular, traditional COACH purse!

Three hundred and fifty (350) folks from throughout the state and region will long remember the 14th Annual Gulf Citrus Growers Association “Country GALA”! The strong winds and pounding rains did not dampen the spirits of the festive folks who enjoyed a fun, action-packed Saturday evening at the LaBelle Civic Center on March 29th!

This year's GALA was supported by a **record 89 sponsors** including 12 Platinum (\$1000), 29 Gold (\$500) and 48 Silver (\$250).

The GCGA “Country GALA” has become the association's most successful fundraising event. Funds raised from the GALA go to support the organization's many community and governmental outreach programs, focused primarily in Southwest Florida.

Please review and thank ALL our GALA sponsors and supporters. GCGA would also like to thank ALL the volunteers who made the 14th “Country GALA” a real BIG success!

“Our association has been very blessed with the level of support that has been raised through this “fun-tastic” event,” said Ron Hamel, GCGA's executive vice president. “For 14 years...our members and allied trades have generously supported the “GALA”, as has the entire SWFL community. The region's top resorts, restaurants and retailers have truly embraced this event...which speaks highly of the level of community outreach and recognition that ‘Gulf Citrus’ has built in our 5-county area over many years,” Hamel added.

This year's event was even visited by “Mother Nature”! As “Murphy's Law”

would have it...the strongest blast of rain came when the Hendry County Cattle-men's Association's “chefs” were beginning to serve their prized steaks! But, the hearty group of dedicated cattlemen were prepared with “Plan B”, and hustled their “hot-off-the-grille” steaks inside to the hungry awaiting folks...not missing a beat! GCGA thanks the Hendry County Cattle-men's Association for its 14-years of outstanding service at the “Country GALA”!

Also, as part of tradition, Peggy Hampton and her “team” prepared the fantastic “fixins,” including the salads and desserts. She, too, has provided her good services for 14 years. Troyer Brothers, Inc. donated their locally-grown tasty potatoes to our menu.

This year's “County GALA” will go down in the “record books” as one of GCGA's best!



THANKS!

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Gulf Harbour Golf and Country Club ♦ Kelvin Hair ♦ Ron & Kathryn Hamel
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Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort ♦ Inn on 5th Avenue in Naples
LaPlaya Beach & Golf Resort (Katie Sproul, Barron Collier Companies)
Tim Lewis ♦ Morgan Stanley (Dick Johnson / Michael Tamney)
Pink Shell Resort & Spa ♦ Port of the Islands Resort ♦ Prawn Broker
Quail Creek Preserve ♦ Rabo Agri Finance (Denise Stenbridge)
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The Firestone ♦ The Turtle Club Restaurant ♦ The Veranda Restaurant
Troyer Brothers ♦ 'Tween Waters Inn ♦ Verandah Club

Gulf Growers Launch 11 CHMAs Action Plan

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frame would also do. He suggested the use of an organo-phosphate for the first spray and a pyrethroid for the second, but noted the two could be reversed if necessary.

Dr. Mongi Zekri, multi-county citrus extension agent, and the Gulf Citrus Growers Association staff circulated detailed information regarding the reorganization of the "Gulf" CHMAs, the "Team Captains" and the two "dormant" spraying plans to citrus growers throughout Southwest Florida. In addition, reminder notices and contacts with "Team Captains" were made during the "dormant" time period to promote grower participation.

"Team Captains" April 14th Session

The "Gulf Citrus" CHMAs team met April 14th at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC) to review the results of the reorganization and revitalization efforts in the region. The group reviewed the latest five cycles of ACP population data for each of the 11 "Gulf" CHMAs and discussed groves showing high psyllid counts per block.

Data provided by Dr. Stansly and Brandon Page indicated that overall, the plan to intensify efforts to reduce psyllid counts is working successfully. Within the 11 "Gulf"

CHMAs most grove blocks reflected average ACP counts to be categorized as in the low range. However, the latest data shows that some groves within the CHMAs include "hotspots" for psyllids, which need greater attention.



The "Team Captains" agreed that efforts should be made to schedule a post-harvest coordinated spray during the first two weeks of June throughout the 11 "Gulf" CHMAs.

In regards to this area-wide spray, Dr. Phil Stansly reports that there are many good materials to choose from depending

upon budget, the secondary pests to be targeted, and what might have already been sprayed this season. His suggestions for the June spray include Delegate or Exiril, both effective for citrus leafminer (CLM); Movento, also effective against scales and rustmite (CRM); and Apta or Portal, with activity on mites. Dr. Stansly's additional options include Agri-Mek and MicroMite, both effective against CLM and CRM with the later also having activity on weevils; and Closer, with excellent aphid activity. "So, pick your poison...with the idea of rotating to something different later in the season," Stansly says.

Citrus Black Spot Discussed

The "Gulf" CHMA captains also discussed spraying for Citrus Black Spot during the post-harvest spraying period. Noting that CBS is rapidly spreading in the Southwest Florida region, growers should act now to prevent the disease from spreading further. Scientists and grower leaders recommend that a copper or strobilurin be included in with post-bloom spray applications, followed by another copper or strobilurin application with the first summer spray (alternating chemistry). Growers in the "Gulf" region should be proactive in dealing with CBS.

UF/IFAS PIE Center Conducts SW Florida AG Research

The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center) recently conducted a two-level public opinion research study of Southwest Florida's leaders' and consumers' perceptions of AGRICULTURE in the region. The research study was sponsored by the Gulf Citrus Growers Association, and included an electronic survey of over 500 respondents and six focus group sessions all targeted at the urban demographic sector of the five-county region.

Respondents in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties shared a positive outlook for the region's agriculture, but more than 75% said that their opinions would improve if they had more information. Dr. Tracy Irani, PIE Center's director, noted that the research results, particularly from the focus groups, mirrors the results of other PIE Center surveys.

"Our research continually shows a

widening gap between those who produce food and those who consume it," says Dr. Irani. "This study (SW Florida AG) shows, however, that people are truly invested and interested in agriculture,

and really want to support the industry at the local and regional level."

The electronic survey of over 500 indicated that 94% of the SW Florida respondents believe that agriculture is very important to the region. Eighty-two (82) percent indicated that they had a positive outlook for AG. And 87% feeling that agriculture is "good."

Participants in the six focus groups said they value the region's agriculture's economic, nutritional and historical contributions...but would like more information to address concerns on environmental and labor-related issues.

Based on the results of the research, UF/IFAS' PIE Center has made recommendations to GCGA for moving forward with a public relations/communications campaign representative of ALL agriculture in the region. The association's leadership is actively following-up on the PIE Center's suggestions.



Commissioner Putnam Makes Water a Priority

Florida Commissioner of Agriculture, Adam Putnam, continues to emphasize water policy as the most important long-range issue facing Florida, and to caution that it must be flexible, comprehensive, and provide long-term solutions.

While Florida is surrounded by seas and receives abundant rainfall, in some regions during certain times of the year, we are using water faster than “Mother Nature” can provide it. We also face significant water quality issues. As our population continues to grow, pressure on our fragile water supplies will increase.

The Florida agriculture industry and Florida’s future in general, depend on access to a reliable supply of fresh water. Florida’s environment, economy, and quality of life all depend on water. If we want to continue to support a strong agriculture industry and other businesses, draw tourists, and protect our environment, we must ensure we have the water supply to meet our needs, not just for today, but for our future.

As part of the state’s long-term water pol-

icy, the Florida Legislature established a non-regulatory program of agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs), and gave the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) the responsibility of implementing the program. BMPs are designed, through research, to manage fertilization and irrigation more efficiently, in order to improve water quality and protect water supply.

Water resource protection and conservation are not new concepts to Florida’s ranchers and growers. Many follow BMPs, and have continued to become more efficient by embracing modern technology. More than nine million acres of Florida farms and ranches are enrolled in the FDACS BMP program, including more than 590,000 acres of citrus lands. Through these efforts, Florida agriculture is using less water and



fertilizer, while at the same time increasing productivity and efficiency. In fact, the agriculture industry has been able to save more than 11 billion gallons of water each year by implementing improved irrigation practices. With the ongoing support of the Legislature, FDACS and Florida’s growers and ranchers can continue to conserve and improve our water supply.

Commissioner Putnam has submitted a \$26 million funding request to the 2014 Legislature and the Governor to support FDACS’ BMP programs. The majority of funding will provide needed cost share to growers to implement BMPs, including water control structures, improved irrigation system efficiency, advanced irrigation management, and crop management tools. Some of it will support research to evaluate existing BMPs and explore new or enhanced practices.

As Florida’s population and water use continue to grow, increased efficiency and conservation will be integral to meeting Florida’s diverse water needs – and the agriculture industry continues to do its part.

GCGA Joins AIF’s Florida H2O Coalition

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association has joined the Associated Industries of Florida (AIF) newly created Florida H2O Coalition. This newly formed organization brings together stakeholders – including agriculture, businesses and utilities – to focus on the “Sunshine State’s” water quality and supply issues more comprehensively.

GCGA was one of the first agricultural organizations to participate in the collective effort by the business, utility and agricultural communities to address EPA’s proposed numeric nutrient criteria (NNCs). The EPA/NNC issue unified Florida’s business, agriculture and utility organizations in efforts to retain Florida’s regulatory author-

ity over the state’s water quality. Recently, rulings by the federal courts have upheld FDEP’s proposed water quality standards.

Florida



Coalition

AIF’s Florida H2O Coalition will focus on significant state and federal water issues of interest and advocate for science-based recommendations. It will advocate for

addressing Florida’s major water problems in a more comprehensive way. Doug Mann, a veteran leader in land and water related issues in business and agriculture for many years, will provide AIF’s leadership.

Florida Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam said, “Water is the biggest long-term issue facing the State of Florida, but there is no easy solution for a state of such diverse water resources. Florida’s water policy must be flexible, comprehensive and long term. I am thrilled to see Florida businesses coming together, under the leadership of AIF to address Florida’s water crisis with sound principles and a science-based approach.”

Gulf Citrus Serves on “Water Woes” Panel

Representing the region’s agriculture, the Gulf Citrus Growers Association recently participated as a panelist at the Chamber of Southwest Florida’s “Water Woes” discussion event. Under the title, “Understanding Southwest Florida’s Water Woes,” the program centered on the region’s most contentious issues, including water quality and supply. Other panelists represented the South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Legislature, the City of Sanibel and the Lee County Commission.

Ron Hamel, GCGA’s executive vice president, highlighted agriculture’s continuous and dedicated interaction with local, regional, state and federal agencies in addressing the water management issues in the region. He discussed the progressive management techniques being implemented by growers, farmers and ranchers including low volume irrigation, fertigation and precision agriculture. In addition, Hamel showcased the seven BMP Manuals, including the “Florida Citrus” Manual,

and discussed how the Florida Department of Agriculture (FDACS) and Florida Department of Environment Protection (FDEP) are providing leadership and support to implement the practices outlined in the BMP Manuals.

Hamel also discussed the region’s AG community engagement in FDEP’s initiatives to set Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for the Caloosahatchee River Basins and establish Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs).



News



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Growers**
Assn. Inc.

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Congressman Diaz-Balart Visits FCM & GCGA

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association and Florida Citrus Mutual recently hosted Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart at the Dallas Townsend Agricultural Center in LaBelle. The Congressman represents Florida's 25th District, which includes Hendry and Collier counties.

The "town-hall" style luncheon provided both associations' leaders with an opportunity to discuss some of the key issues facing the citrus industry, as well as all of agriculture.

As a member of the House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee, Congressman Diaz-Balart offered his latest perspective on funding for the industry's battle with HLB/greening; the Farm Bill and the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) Bill, which includes



critical funding for the C-43 Reservoir along the Caloosahatchee River in Hendry County. He reported that he was optimistic that these important legislative initiatives would be funded.

In addition, the Congressman discussed his tenacious efforts to help broker "immigration reform", particularly changes that would assist the agricultural community develop and maintain a viable work force, including an effective "guest worker" program.

Dr. Calvin Arnold Returns as SWFREC Director

As of April 1, 2014, Dr. Calvin Arnold has returned to the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC) in Immokalee, Florida as its new center director, a position he held for 10 years...from 1985 to 1995. Dr. Jack M. Payne, UF/IFAS Senior Vice President of Agriculture & Natural Resources, made the announcement Tuesday, March 11th stating, "He (Dr. Arnold) is well-versed in the issues that are most critical for agricultural produc-



ers in that region, which is a huge advantage, and he is a great leader as well."

"Each of the agricultural commodities have their own problems, pests and water issues, but I don't think any of the groups face as big of a gorilla as citrus greening is to the citrus industry," said Dr. Arnold in a news article in the Ft. Myers *News-Press*. He reported that his overriding goal for the Southwest Florida REC will be to foster collaboration and coordination between the center's stakeholders, faculty, staff and administrators. "All groups want the center to be productive and to generate new technologies and extend them to the users," he said.

He earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural education from the University of Florida, and a master's in fruit crops and doctorate in horticulture from Michigan State.

Dr. Arnold will be the featured speaker at GCGA's annual meeting luncheon on June 4th.

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