

Northeast News

A District Newsletter

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From the **District Director**



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Enjoying Faculty Appraisal Season

Do you like having a root canal? Or paying taxes? Or writing reports? Don't even mention the annual face-to-face meeting with the CED and DED. These are things that most people (including County faculty) just don't like doing. At first glance, the pain to endure, the dollars lost from the entertainment budget, and the time spent in front of the computer are not pleasing experiences. But after a second thought, is there a long term-benefit in all of those?

As mid April was approaching and the 2010 faculty appraisal cycle was coming to an end, several faculty members candidly commented "aren't you happy you are finished with our office for another year?" Well, I never thought about appraisals in this way. Actually, I like the appraisal season; I meet everyone, get to spend time with everyone

in person, listen, and I learn so much. Of course, reading 65+ packets, visiting 16 Extension offices, driving hundreds of miles and writing 65+ pages of comments afterwards are quite an endeavor. It is worth it! But what I like the most about the face-to-face meetings with County faculty in the NE District is discussing successes, improving program delivery, witnessing the passion for service to communities, sharing the permanent quest for excellence, and identifying obstacles to further progress. Even if Florida Statutes require "annual evaluation of state employees" (FL Statute 110.224, (2)), I find "state of the program address" a better descriptor of annual evaluation for County faculty: what are the needs of the clients? What are the strengths of the program? What are the parts that can be improved? What new tools and tricks do you need? For new Faculty, the first face-to-face meeting is an opportunity to ask questions, discuss IFAS Extension philosophy and values, and put the logical model into action.

Last week, I completed my third "appraisal cycle" and noticed that an increasing number of County Faculty are regarding the "appraisal process" as a moment of reflection and analysis about

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ALACHUA, BAKER, BRADFORD, CLAY, COLUMBIA, DIXIE, DUVAL, GILCHRIST, HAMILTON, LAFAYETTE, LEVY, MADISON, NASSAU, SUWANNEE, TAYLOR, AND UNION COUNTIES

their program. I am amazed this year again by the variety and relevance of the programs offered throughout the NE District. Keep up the good work, y'all! One of my goals is to have all the faculty in the NE District approach "appraisals"

in such a manner. Next, I'll try to convince you that reports, POW and ROA are nothing but tools for inspiring reflection and analysis. I'll also try to show your CED that there are ways to transform the endless reports to the County

and the University into live documents that eloquently show what Extension does in each community. But this may look too much like a root canal or paying taxes right now....

District Life

Baker County Arboretum Grand Opening

By **Alicia Lamborn**
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The Baker County Extension Office has just completed the installation of an arboretum covering approximately two acres. The arboretum is now home to 57 trees, featuring 38 different tree species and tree cultivars. All trees have been selected to demonstrate the use of Florida native and Florida-Friendly trees that promote low maintenance landscapes.

This property was originally forested, but was cleared in the early 1980s for use as the county fair midway. Since that time, the property was donated to 4-H, the County Extension Office was built, and the field was left empty and largely unused until now. The goal of this project was to reforest and repurpose this area by creating an arboretum that can be used as a teaching garden and outdoor classroom, where adults and youth can learn plant identification, plant selection, and Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ practices.



The grand opening of the Baker County Arboretum was held on Friday, April 29th (National Arbor Day) and featured a ribbon cutting ceremony (above), tours given by Baker County Master Gardeners (right), and a tree giveaway.



Success Stories



Andy Toelle

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4-H in the Bahamas: A New International Partnership

A team of 4-H Agents, consisting of Andy Toelle, Marcus Boston, Norma Samuel, Geralyn Sachs, and Suzanne Wilson, were invited by a nongovernmental organization and the Bahamian Government to travel to New Providence, Bahamas and teach after-school workers and volunteers how to start and sustain a 4-H program. The team developed and conducted a pre-assessment to determine the needs and strengths of the local groups that would be implementing the program. A training strategy was developed based on this assessment. In the Bahamas, Urban Renewal Centers, similar to American community centers, offer after-school homework help and other programs to youth. 4-H programming will initially be offered through the Urban Renewal Centers.

Four days of intensive in-class workshops on how to organize, sustain, and



Andy and Marcus at an Urban Renewal Center

implement a 4-H program were conducted. In addition to the intensive classroom work, the team conducted on-site clinics for staff with youth at the centers to demonstrate and teach how 4-H could be implemented. Fifty-five staff, including Ministry of Labor and Services (under which the Urban Renewal Centers fall) officials and local youth center staff and volunteers were trained. Preliminary evaluations indicated an increase in knowledge in how to implement a 4-H program.

As a result of this initial work, the team of Agents and the State 4-H council implemented a book drive to collect and deliver books to the Urban Renewal Centers in the Bahamas. Team members Andy and Geralyn will again travel to the Bahamas, along with four 4-H youth, to deliver the books and continue the training. Further, the Minister of Agriculture



Andy teaches youth the Llama song

of the Bahamas has appointed his #3 person to work directly with 4-H on their gardening projects. He in-turn has invited the local 4-H contact, Shelagh Farrington-Pritchard, to submit a proposal to support the 4-H program. The request will include land, construction, salaries, and training monies.

This international opportunity has increased the UF/IFAS Faculty team's understanding of the culture of people from the Caribbean region, reinforced the importance of adapting every activity to meet the needs of local clients, and most importantly enhanced our abilities to work with more diverse audiences in our local programs. We are excited about this ongoing partnership and look forward to supporting the Bahamian 4-H program to provide positive youth development opportunities for youth in the Bahamas.

Teaching Tips



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New Study Reveals Insights Into Consumer Perceptions of Agricultural Messages

Words and phrases like “farmer,” “food safety,” and “best management practices,” are all terms commonly used to describe Florida’s agriculture industry, but how are these terms understood by members of the general public?

A recent study completed by the Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) in partnership with the Agriculture Institute of Florida reveals surprising information regarding how Florida residents perceive messages designed to communicate about agriculture.

This is exciting research that provides an important look inside the minds of Florida consumers. With the results from this study, agriculture communicators will be able to tailor their messages in a more effective manner.

To gather data for the study, a series of four focus groups with 36 participants was conducted in mid-October in Orlando and Sarasota. Participants provided their feedback and responses to more than 20 commonly used agricultural words and phrases and eight photographic images representing typical communication messages.

Overall, participants expressed both positive and negative reactions to many of the terms and phrases tested, along with some confusion and skepticism.

For example, the word “farmer” was perceived by a majority of the study participants to be a positive word. “Farm worker” was also considered positive as long as it was not connected to the term “migrant worker.”

“When you...attach illegal migratory words to farm worker then you get negativity,” said one study participant.

The terms “animal welfare” and “animal rights” were also discussed with study participants. Overall, the participants were unsure of the meaning of these phrases. Specific groups such as PETA and SPCA were referred to in relation to animal rights. “I think that the reason they have come to these terms is because there was abuse,” said a study participant. “Locally grown” was perceived as a positive word. However, participants had no definition for local. Local simply meant “not from somewhere else,” as one participant stated.

One phrase that was seen as negative was “food safety.”

“Food safety is a misleading term because of large corporations who have powerful lobbies. Even if the meat you’re purchasing has grade A on it, it’s meaningless,” said one participant.

Other words that caused skepticism among participants were “green industry” and “organic.” Green industry was not associated with the agriculture industry. Participants felt any industry

could be “green” as long as sustainable practices were in use.

Participants felt “organic” was being overused. “When I see organic, it’s being used everywhere, in a week or so there will be organic coca cola. Who is monitoring these crops to make sure they are really organic?” said one participant.

Also met with some perceived mistrust in this study was the phrase “best management practices.” Participants gave examples of how BMPs had failed in other economic sectors such as business and health care, and were doubtful of their success in the agriculture industry.

“I’m really biased about best management practices. I guess I’ve been around best management practices for so long that I’ve come to totally distrust them. If it comes from that high up in the tower, it probably doesn’t work,” stated one participant.

Participants were also asked about the phrase “farmers were the first environmentalists.” A large majority of the participants in the study did not believe the first environmentalists were farmers. Consistently, participants referred to Native Americans as the original environmentalists.

While there was some confusion among participants about the meaning of “sustainable agriculture,” several participants did feel agriculture was a sustainable industry. “Agriculture by definition is self sustaining. You plant you harvest, you can’t be more sustainable than that,” stated one participant.

Based on the results from the research, the PIE Center put together five tips to

help agriculture communicators connect with consumers better.

1. Use actual people in any photograph relating to agriculture; consumers/members of the general public are more likely to respond favorably to images of real people they can relate to.
2. Shift communication to external audiences from corporate/technical terms such as best management practices, environmental stewardship to more personal terms such as local, family, and farmer.
3. Engage the public through agritourism efforts. Consumers appreciate seeing where their food comes from.
4. When showing images of animals, have an easily identifiable natural action or behavior such as grazing. Uninformed audiences may read negative associations into animal practices that are different than the very basic ones they have come to associate with good animal practice.
5. Use discernment when using words such as “organic,” “sustainable,” and “green” as consumers can be skeptical of these terms and confused as to what they mean.

The mission of the University of Florida’s Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources is to enhance the understanding of agriculture, natural resources, and the environment by providing research-based solutions that address societal issues and raise public and policy maker awareness. The PIE Center is housed in UF’s Department of Agricultural Education and Communication. More information about the PIE Center may be found at www.thepiececenter.com.

Featured County **Extension Office**

Share Our Good Nature – Taylor County

By **Clay Olson**
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Taylor County’s 50 miles of coastline has some of the finest coastal saltwater grass flats to be found in the Gulf of Mexico; some of which are several miles wide. The State DEP has designated them a Sea Grass preserve due to their expanse and pristine nature. This rich natural resource has been a basis for civilization from the earliest recorded history. Existing Indian mounds and ancient relics are still pulled from local rivers and coastal areas today and serve as an archeological tourist attraction. The county was established in 1856 by



The Aucilla River

General Zachary Taylor who established several garrisons in the county from Steinhatchee in the south to the Aucilla River outflow in the North. The county has been a haven for generations of Indian tribes and settlers from before the Civil War to the present migration of South Floridians and retirees from all

over the nation. The local economy is natural resource-based as well as being centered in the timber, pulp and paper industries. In 1915 Taylor County was one of the first counties in the state to establish Extension faculty, known then as “County Agents”.

Hog Cholera and Screw worms were at the time a major threat to the livestock industry in the county and statewide. With those problems out of the way others have emerged that continue to be addressed by developing issues-based educational programming in Agriculture, Marine and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science and 4-H Youth development programs.

For more information, visit our web site at <http://taylor.ifas.ufl.edu/>

How Does the **University of Florida** Work?

Everyone Wins With Florida's 5% 4-H Rule

By **Carolyn Saft** and **Jim DeValerio**
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What do you think of when you hear the term, 4-H? You may be surprised that it is much bigger than just one of many categories like agriculture, horticulture and family and consumer sciences. In fact 4-H programming is a foundational core responsibility shared by all Agents. It has been stated that it takes a village to raise a child – well 4-H and Extension Administrators practiced the concept long before the phrase became popular.

According to the official 4-H Commitment document, the official definition of 4-H for over 30 years has been **“4-H: The youth development education program of the Cooperative Extension Service.”** Not “A” youth development program. Not “part of” the youth development program. But the **sum total** of the youth development education provided by the Cooperative Extension

Service. The rule mandates that each Extension Agent is expected to devote a minimum 5% of total days (11 days) in proactive 4-H/Youth program activities. “see *Section 24: Impact and Evaluation on Self Appraisal Form*”.

County Faculty can fulfill their 4-H obligation individually or as a team member as long as a focused planned program occurs over a period of time and they are responsible for one or more educational activities/events. Faculty may work with youth that are not registered 4-H'ers like foster care, incarcerated youth, Junior Master Gardeners, and others.

The 5% rule enriches the entire 4-H program. Judy Butterfield, Central District Regional Specialized 4-H Agent stated that Agents contribute expertise for youth programs in specific areas such as livestock, horticulture or food and nutrition. This can help with day camps, workshops, judging teams and support to club leaders who are looking for a variety of topics to share with their kids. Brian Estevez, 4-H Agent in Suwannee

County, has a meat science and leadership background but is able to offer a variety of day camps including cooking, sewing, money management, dairy, wildlife, water science and horticulture with the help of fellow Agents. In Taylor County, Fred Vose offers a marine/fishing camp that might not be available if he didn't have a 4-H commitment.

The 5% policy also develops teamwork and camaraderie within and amongst program areas since everybody has the same goal of helping youth develop life skills. At the same time the 4-H Agent learns new concepts and activities that they may be able to tweak and use in their areas of expertise.

Ask your District Director for a copy of the entire 5% Rule document and consider discussing the document during advisory board meetings, county commission and stakeholder panels and office staff meetings. It might be a good idea to have it on hand during planning sessions. After all – we can only win from the effort!

Roaming **Interview** Section

By **Larry Figart**
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Who are your co-workers? Good question! Although we might work with individuals for years, many times we don't know much about them – because we are always working! Each quarter the newsletter team would like to interview a different person from the district so that we can become more familiar with each other. I interviewed **Basil Bactawar**,

Union County CED and Agricultural Agent for this issue.

Where are you from/where did you grow up? Guyana, South America

How and when did you decide you wanted to work in Extension? My first job after graduating with a degree in Agriculture was in Extension. I continue to work in this field because I like it.

What are your hobbies? Fishing and music.

State something about yourself that most people don't know about you. I like watching cricket, not mole crickets!

If you won the lottery tomorrow, what would you do/how would you spend your time? Depending on the size of the win, probably quit my job, and do volunteer work overseas.

Where did you go on your last vacation?
Kenya.

What was the last book you read?
Mirage: written by Cynthia Barnett. It describes the problem with water in Florida.

What is the weirdest question you had to answer as an Extension Agent? There is some mushroom growing in my bathroom, can I eat it?

Do you play a musical instrument? No, but I play the fool sometimes.

What is the most exciting place you have ever visited? Inside a pyramid in Egypt.

Information Technologies



Jim DeValerio

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Dave Palmer's Extension Toolbox

Technology is great, isn't it? But, who has time to learn all that stuff? Let alone keep up with new applications. Fortunately, there are some people who not only keep up with emerging technological tricks, they also share the information! Dave Palmer is one such person. He recently assumed a Horticultural Extension position in Manatee County. Before that he was an Instructional Media Agent in the South Central Extension District and, while there, he maintained a technology resource webpage: <http://TechTeachtoo.com>. You can still access his webpage even though he has changed positions but you may want to download information you are interested in now.

I have used resource materials from Dave's site and they sure come in handy. One tool I downloaded through a link he posted was a crossword puzzle creator. The software is easy to use and I use it to create activities for youth and Master Gardener activities.

Here is a list of resources Dave has posted in his April 2011 Extension Toolbox:

- Password Strength Checker From Microsoft
<http://techteachtoo.com/internet-security/password-strength-checker-microsoft/>
- Cool FREE TOOL Reviews
<http://techteachtoo.com/cool-tools/cool-free-tool-reviews/>
- Extension Technology – Screenr – A Useful Tool for Extension
<http://techteachtoo.com/cool-tools/extension-technologyscreenr-useful-extension-tool/>
- Extension Technology – iPhone App Delivers Soil Data to the Field
<http://techteachtoo.com/extension/iphone-app-delivers-soil-data-field/>
- How to Use a Flip Video Camera and PowerPoint to Create Flash Videos
<http://techteachtoo.com/cool-tools/flip-video-camera-powerpoint-create-flash-videos/>
- Make Crossword Puzzles for Your Website
<http://techteachtoo.com/cool-tools/make-crossword-puzzles-for-youput-website/>
- Strange Image or Important Trend? QR Code Basics
<http://techteachtoo.com/technology-basics/strange-image-important-trend-qr-code-basics/>
- Cool and Free Google Tools
<http://techteachtoo.com/cool-tools/cool-free-nonssearch-google-tools/>
- Email Lists on Steroids – Auto-responders
<http://techteachtoo.com/cool-tools/email-lists-steroids-autoresponders/>
- The Evolution of Blogs
<http://techteachtoo.com/technology-basics/evolution-blogs/>
- Technology Toolbox – Colorado State University Extension
<http://technotoolbox.blogspot.com/>

Quiz Question

By **Cathy Rogers**

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Last issue question: In the early 20th century, this nut producing tree was planted on over 10,000 acres in NE Florida and had the potential to become more important to the state than citrus. After WWII, the industry was crushed by freezes, foreign competition, and the development of synthetic substitutes. The tree is now listed as a FLEPPC Category II exotic pest plant. What was the tree?

Answer: The first tung tree seed reportedly was brought to America from Hankow, China in 1905 by Dr. David

Fairchild, then senior agricultural explorer for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). By 1927, there were some 400 growers and more than 10,000 acres of tung oil trees in Alachua and adjoining counties alone. Between 1934 and 1940, frost almost totally ruined the tung nut crop. In the 1950s and 1960s, freezes wiped out commercial tung activities in much of the southeast. The climatic hazards, increasing production costs, competition from substitute synthetic products and more productive uses of land spelled the end for commercial tung oil production in the U.S. Tung orchards were abandoned or bulldozed and used for other crops, pasture or timber. (Taken from: The History of Tung Oil, by Karen Brown and William Keeler, <http://www.se-eppc.org/wildlandweeds/pdf/Winter2005-Brown-pp4-6.pdf>)

Florida's number one agricultural cash crop is:

- A) Honey
- B) Horticulture products
- C) Strawberries
- D) Oranges

Northeast District **County Extension Offices** – Find your local office at <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/map/>

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2800 NE 39th Avenue
Gainesville, FL 32609
Phone: 352.955.2402

Baker

1025 W Macclenny Avenue
Macclenny, FL 32063
Phone: 904.259.3520

Bradford

2266 N Temple Avenue
Starke, FL 32091
Phone: 904.966.6224

Clay

2463 SR 16 West
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043
Phone: 904.284.6355

Columbia

164 SW Mary Ethel Lane
Lake City, FL 32025
Phone: 386.752.5384

Dixie

99 NE 121st Street
Cross City, FL 32628
Phone: 352.498.1237

Duval

1010 N McDuff Avenue
Jacksonville, FL 32254
Phone: 904.387.8850

Gilchrist

125 E Wade Street
Trenton, FL 32693
Phone: 352.463.3174

Hamilton

1143 NW US HWY 41
Jasper, FL 32052
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176 SW Community Circle, Suite D
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