

Newsletter

May 2006



Dates to Remember

May

- 2 43rd Florida Dairy Production Conference - Gainesville, FL
- 3-5 55th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course - Gainesville, FL
- 4 ServSafe™ - Gainesville, FL
- 11 Forage and Nutrition Workshop for Small Ruminants - Green Cove Springs, FL
- 18-21 NCBA Region II Meeting - Pigeon Forge, TN
- 20 Heart of Florida Annual Club Calf Sale - Alachua, FL
- 25 2006 Corn Silage/Forage Field Day - Citra, FL

June

- 1 ServSafe™ - Gainesville, FL
- 4 Horsemanship School - Welaka, FL
- 11 Horsemanship School - Welaka, FL
- 18 Horsemanship School - Welaka, FL
- 19 Florida Cattlemen's College - Marco Island, FL
- 20 Heart of Florida Annual Club Calf Sale - Alachua, FL
- 20-22 FCA Annual Convention & Allied Trade Show - Marco Island, FL
- 23 State 4-H Horse Events - Gainesville, FL
- 25 Horsemanship School - Welaka, FL
- 27-29 4-H Hog & Ham - Gainesville, FL



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North Florida Properties Recognized as Century Pioneer Family Farms

Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson announced that two more families have qualified for recognition as a Century Pioneer Family Farm. They include properties in Madison and Suwannee Counties. Recognition in this program means the families have maintained continuous ownership of the property for at least 100 years.

The families who qualify are Steve and Susan Wood in Suwannee County and Dewayne Leslie in Madison County.

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55th Annual Beef Cattle Short Course



May 3-5, 2006
Hilton UF Conference Center
Gainesville, FL

Visit <http://www.animal.ufl.edu/> for more information.

Century Pioneer Family Farms

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“These families have been able to retain ownership of their land through the depression, diseases, droughts, freezes and the urbanization of Florida,” Bronson said. “That is a great tribute to the many generations of these families.

Agricultural products that have been produced on these properties ranged from cattle, corn, cotton and tobacco on the Wood property, to beef cattle on the Leslie property.

Since the program began 25 years ago, 87 family farms have received the Century Pioneer Farm designation. The program is administered by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services with assistance of the Florida Agricultural Museum.

For more information about the program or to apply for membership into the program contact Richard Gunnels at gunnelr@doacs.state.fl.us or call 850/488-3022.

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 FDACS, Tallahassee, FL
 Release - April 13, 2006

Genetic Tests Beef Up Cattle Breeding

Geneticists with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in Clay Center, Neb., are improving traditional cattle breeding methods with marker-assisted selection, a process that incorporates DNA tests into traditional genetic evaluation systems.

Traditionally, breeders have used visual appraisal to estimate cows’ genetic merit. By carefully recording the characteristics of herd members and their

descendents, animal breeders can calculate an animal’s Expected Progeny Difference, or EPD. This is a figure estimating the average performance of specific traits for an individual’s offspring.

More recently, geneticists have developed DNA tests associated with important traits in cattle. These tests might someday be incorporated into the established selection process.

According to ARS geneticist R. Mark Thallman, incorporating DNA tests in breeders’ calculations could improve the accuracy of their EPDs and place the appropriate degree of emphasis on the DNA tests.

With geneticist Mark F. Allan, he is testing that theory, using a herd selected for producing twins as a prototypical population. Previous research located three genetic regions linked to the twinning trait. This information has been incorporated into the scientists’ calculations since 1998, enabling them to make more accurate genetic predictions, or “marker-adjusted EPDs.”

The twinning experiment is simply one example of marker-assisted selection’s potential. In similar work, researchers from Cornell University, ARS and Iowa State University incorporated DNA test results into a genetic evaluation of Simmental cattle for tenderness, allowing Simmental breeders to use marker-assisted selection for tenderness.



*Angus cattle on pasture.
 Photo by Scott Bauer*

In the future the technique could be used to improve other desirable traits, such as efficiency, fertility and growth rate.

Marker-assisted selection will allow breeders to increase the speed and accuracy of traditional assessment methods, but its advantages extend beyond the seedstock industry. Commercial cattle producers would be able to purchase bulls with superior genetics. The desirable characteristics in the livestock would ultimately translate into better products for consumers.

ARS is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientific research agency.

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 USDA/ARS, Washington, D.C.
 Release - March 22, 2006

Agreement With China Signed on Food Safety and Plant and Animal Health

Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Minister Li Changjiang of China's General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine to improve bilateral cooperation on animal and plant health and food safety.

"China is an increasingly important market for U.S. food and agricultural products," said Johanns. "In 2005, U.S. farmers and ranchers sold more than \$6 billion in agricultural products to China, making it our fifth largest export market. This memorandum of understanding will create a structure to enable us to address sanitary, phytosanitary and food safety issues before they become barriers to the thriving agricultural trade between our two countries."

Under this MOU the two countries will exchange

information on food regulations and standards, inspection and quarantine procedures, and other issues such as pests and disease, harmful residues, and food certification.

The MOU was signed in conjunction with the 17th meeting of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) plenary held in Washington, D.C. The JCCT provides the United States and China with an opportunity for high-level discussions on bilateral trade issues, and a means to strengthen commercial relationships. The JCCT last met in China in July 2005.

Johanns participated in the 17th U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) meeting held in Washington. The forum was co-chaired by Vice Premier Wu Yi for China and on the U.S. side by U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez.

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SOURCE: Ed Loyd
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 USDA/ARS, Washington, D.C.
 Release - April 11, 2006

Expanded Marketing Programs Have Increased Sales of Florida Products by Over \$1 Billion

Four-year expansion effort benefits Florida's farmers and economy, Bronson announces

Marketing programs conducted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services have increased sales of Florida-grown products by more than \$1 billion during the past four years.

“In partnership with Florida’s agricultural producers, our department has drastically expanded the scope of marketing promotions throughout the United States and abroad,” Florida Agriculture Commissioner Charles H. Bronson said. “During the last four years, our marketing initiatives have helped increase sales of Florida agricultural products by \$1.13 billion. That’s good news for our state’s economic health and for our growers.”

Bronson’s Division of Marketing and Development continually conducts trade missions and events to develop and enhance business relationships that benefit Florida agricultural producers. In addition to these ongoing initiatives, the division has also dramatically expanded its premier annual produce marketing campaigns that promote fresh Florida fruits and vegetables harvested during the winter and spring months when Florida is the dominant U.S. supplier.

These campaigns — with names such as “Northern Exposure” I and II, “Greetings From Your Florida Farmer,” “PowerGrid,” and “Storming Across North America” — capitalize on the division’s partnerships with produce buyers for large grocery chains throughout the United States and Canada. Participating chains increase their orders of Florida produce and include the “Fresh from Florida” logo in their advertising, ultimately leading to increased sales.

Bronson said that the billion-dollar increase in sales has helped fuel impressive growth throughout Florida’s entire agriculture industry. He cited a recently released report by the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences that shows the agriculture and natural resource industries’ overall impact on the state’s economy grew from \$62 billion in 2000 to \$87.6 billion in 2003. The UF report also shows that direct employment by the agriculture and natural resource industries rose 15 percent from 338,253 jobs to 388,916 jobs, while the total employment impacts grew by 16.7 percent from 648,550 jobs to 756,993 jobs.

Bronson’s Division of Marketing and Development routinely partners with government agencies, grower associations and agricultural

companies to help finance the division’s marketing initiatives and promotions through funding assistance and in-kind contributions. Major partners include: Florida Farm Bureau, Florida Tomato Committee, Florida Strawberry Association, Florida Department of Citrus, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, Florida Watermelon Association, Florida Forestry Association, Noble Tangerines, SealdSweet Corporation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Livestock and Genetics Export Inc.

From fiscal year 2001 through 2005, the division received \$2.46 million in outside funding and \$3.8 million in in-kind contributions from partners. During the same period, the division’s marketing initiatives generated \$1.13 billion in sales and 34.7 billion consumer impressions. In addition, retailers provided \$19.4 million in free advertising to promote the “Fresh from Florida” logo and Florida-grown products.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is statutorily mandated to provide professional marketing services to Florida’s agricultural community through its Division of Marketing and Development. These marketing promotions are part of the ongoing “Fresh from Florida” campaign, an identification and promotional program designed to boost the image of Florida agriculture and increase sales by helping consumers to identify Florida-grown agricultural products at retail stores. The “Fresh from Florida” campaign also helps increase public awareness of the importance of Florida’s agriculture industry.

Marketing Promotion Results, fiscal year 2001 to 2005

Sales generated: \$1.13 billion
 Consumer impressions generated: 34.757 billion
 Outside funding received: \$2.461 million
 In-kind contributions received: \$3.8 million
 Ad value obtained free: \$19.386 million

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 FDACS, Tallahassee, FL
 Release - March 29, 2006