

# UF/IFAS EXTENSION SEMINOLE COUNTY BCC AG ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Nov 2022 Meeting

Wednesday, Nov 2, 2022

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM



**Meeting called by** Morgan Pinkerton, Sustainable Ag and Food Systems Agent

**Attendees:** Clay Archey, Jim Hunter, Dennis Langlois, Shelley Nelson, Jesse Krok

**Location:** 250 W County Home Rd, Sanford, FL 32773

## Welcome and Introductions

- Members of the UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County Sustainable Food Systems Advisory Committee were invited to attend the meeting. Introductions were made.

## COVID-19 Updates

- Members shared some of the continued challenges since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion mainly surrounded supply chain disruptions and rising inflation costs. One reported challenge for nurseries has been limited availability of certain plants including fruit trees, palms, and some slower growing ornamental plants. For beekeeping, the wood prices have significantly increased making beekeeping supplies pricier and BPA free honey bottles have been more expensive and harder to find in bulk. There was also discussion on increased delivery fees and predicted diesel shortages increases these costs in the near future. Credit card fees being added by suppliers has also increased the cost of local production and the committee members mentioned that this is a cost that they cannot shift to the customer without problems.

## Hurricane Ian Discussion

- During Hurricane Ian, Morgan and other extension agents were tasked with operating the citizens information phone lines to help residents prepare and recover from Hurricane Ian.
- The committee discussed some of the local impacts of Hurricane Ian. The majority of identified damages were related to unprecedented flooding in the area. Nursery and landscape damage has been delayed and is continuing to show up as a result of plant health issues from standing water and flooding. Honey production for the bees has also been low compared to production last year at the same time.
- UF/IFAS has been working to assess the agricultural damages from Hurricane Ian in the state. A preliminary assessment was released and results can be found here: <https://fred.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/economic-impact-analysis-program/disaster-impact-analysis/hurricane-ian-damage-assessments-2022/>. It is estimated that Hurricane Ian had a potential impact on 5 million acres of FL agriculture land with 60% of that land being used for grazing. UF/IFAS researchers are studying the agricultural losses and damages resulting from Hurricane Ian. Click on the link below to share information about impacts experienced at your farm, ranch, or aquaculture operation. Thank you for your cooperation. <https://go.ufl.edu/ianagimpacts>.
- Morgan shared some resources available to farmers and the community for disaster assistance.
  - USDA Disaster Assistance Recovery Tool, <https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/disaster-tool>
  - US Small Business Administration Disaster loans, <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance/hurricane-ian>. Seminole County was added as an area

eligible. Physical damages can be submitted up to November 28, 2022 and economic injury up to June 29, 2023.

- On October 24<sup>th</sup>, FDOT issued an emergency order to extend the alternate weight and size restrictions for certain agriculture commodities until at least November 22, 2022.

## Updates from Extension

### 2021-22 Awards

- Morgan was selected as the 2022 Florida Farm Bureau Volunteer Communicator of the Year. She will also be receiving the Early Career Professional Extension Award from the Entomological Society of America in two weeks in Vancouver, Canada.

### Recent/Ongoing Programs

- Pest/pathogen diagnostics and site visits. Morgan continues to offer diagnostics and site visits to local producers.
- Florida First Detector – Invasive Species Webinar Series. UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County received a grant to offer free, monthly CEU classes online on various topics within invasive species. The committee was excited to hear about this opportunity.
- Cottage Food Webinars. In collaboration with UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County's new Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, we have started to offer webinars on cottage food regulation in Florida. The committee indicated this is a great opportunity to connect the urban and rural communities. One member suggested developing a short, shareable video that provides an overview of FL cottage food law.

### Upcoming

- Farm Tour 2023. The planning for Farm Tour 2023 is currently underway. We are working to have 2 buses for this year's tour. The lunch stop will be at Yarborough Ranch but it will likely be the last year that they will be able to host the lunch. Alternative ideas and options were discussed for future Farm Tours including Oviedo Brewery, Big Daddy's Farm, and Seminole County Parks. Morgan is in the process of building the rest of the 2023 Farm Tour schedule and reaching out to producers that might be willing to be a stop on the tour. She plans to rotate the farms annually to give everyone an opportunity to participate. This limits us to five farms per year so there will likely be a 1-2 year rotation to revisit the farms that have previously been on the tour. A suggestion was made to have some kind of tabling at the lunch to allow for farmers not on the tour to participate by setting up booths.
- Butterfly Explorers Project with local schools. UF/IFAS Extension Seminole County received a small grant to continue an educational program in local elementary schools. Last year was the first year of the Butterfly Explorers Project which was a multi-week program with lesson plans and hands on activities to integrate entomology into classrooms. This program is also utilized to teach youth on how insects impact the environment and agriculture as pests, pollinators, and more.
- Beginning farmers and urban agriculture. A discussion was brought up about resources to help beginning and urban farmers. One member brought up that many new farm businesses fail within the first several years and it can be overwhelming to start an agricultural operation. While UF/IFAS Extension has some statewide resources, some of the nuisances of starting a farm are highly specific to local regulations. A point was also made about the ambiguity of some of the statewide regulation on what is considered bonafide agriculture and what is eligible for agricultural tax exemptions. It is particularly challenging to understand all of the regulations and requirements that go into starting farm and following all requirements. The committee suggested the development of a FAQ resource for new and beginning farmers. This would be useful in connect individuals with farming dreams to some of the many resources available to help them. The concept of urban farming also presents unique challenges and questions about various regulations. Morgan has been involved in statewide discussions on how to best help beginning farmers, especially in urban areas. A committee member suggested that Morgan look at the FL

Farm Bureau Resources for beginning farmers to see how those compare to the existing UF/IFAS statewide resources.

### **Current News in Agriculture & Food Systems**

- Effective July 1, 2022, new products were added to the list of tax exemptions for commercial agricultural producers specifically for fencing and trailers. More information can be found here: [https://floridarevenue.com/taxes/tips/Documents/TIP\\_22A01-15.pdf](https://floridarevenue.com/taxes/tips/Documents/TIP_22A01-15.pdf)
- In July, avian influenza was detected in Seminole County in a domestic flock. Prior to this, it was only found in wild birds. If you have questions, please reach out to JK Yarborough, our Livestock and Natural Resources agent.
- The USDA has announced assistance for On-farm Food Safety Expenses for Specialty Crop Growers. The 2022 application period is open until January 31, 2023. Program details can be found here: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2022/06/17/usda-announces-assistance-farm-food-safety-expenses-specialty-crop#:~:text=HOLLIS%2C%20NEW%20HAMPSHIRE%2C%20JUNE%2017,a%20food%20safety%20certification%20in.>
- Stress assistance is now available for farmers and farm workers. This is a result of increased awareness on mental health, especially in the agricultural industry. Individuals can call 211 for assistance. More information can be found here: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Farmer-Stress-Assistance#:~:text=If%20you%20or%20someone%20you,to%20get%20through%20tough%20times.&text=Calls%20to%20211%20are%20confidential,are%20also%20welcome%20to%20call.>

### **Any other business**

- All BCC Ag Advisory Committee Members were invited to participate in the Annual Ethics Training on Dec 6<sup>th</sup> 9AM-1PM at the BCC Chambers.
- The three-year terms for all BCC Ad Advisory Committee members are ending in December 2022. The commissioners will be appointing individuals for three-year terms over the next few months. More updates will be provided when possible.
- Meeting conclusions
- Next meeting date, May 2, 2023, 12PM-2PM
- Adjourn