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## Under the Citrus Tree

*Highlands County Extension Service*

4509 George Boulevard, Sebring, Florida 33875

### January 2017 Newsletter

Greetings from the Extension Office!

Happy New Year! I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying a new year. We moved quietly through the holiday season and man it seems like on January 2nd the world went crazy (in a good way). Your Extension office is running about 90 miles an hour with gusts to 110. 4-H is gearing up for the Highlands County Fair and our Livestock agent is working with the group putting on the Florida Cattlemen's Institute and Allied Trade Show tomorrow in Arcadia. If you want to check it out head on down to the Turner Center in Arcadia tomorrow from 8 am to 4 pm. There will be some good talks and a nice trade show. Our Horticulture program is looking for a few good volunteers for the upcoming Master Gardener course and the citrus program continues to hold OJ Breaks and Grower Forums for the grower community.

As we move this week into a new administration we will be watching closely for any changes at the Federal Level especially at the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture. We will keep you posted as quickly as we hear things especially regarding the Worker Protection Standard changes.

Please do not hesitate to give me a call if I can be of assistance to you as you continue to be a part of the the greatest industry on earth!



Laurie Hurner

Highlands County Extension

Director & Citrus Agent

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<http://highlands.ifas.ufl.edu>



Regards

**Laurie**

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- 2017 Grower Forum Dates Reminder
  - Spring OJ Breaks
  - Post Fruit Drop (PFD) and Disease Management Seminar
  - **Produce Safety Rule**
  - **UF/IFAS Range Cattle Station News**
  - **Highlands Soil & Water Offering Class**
  - **FCM Area Meetings & Elections**
  - **FSA Now Offering Text Message Alerts**
  - **Farewell and Thank You - Rick Dantzler**
  - **UF IPM Website Updated**
  - **A Big Thank You - Pam Fentress**
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## **2017 Grower Forum Dates Reminder**

There are two Grower Forums left in the 2016-2017 Citrus Production Season.

These forums are a good idea to talk about issues among our group, ask questions of each other and talk about what may be working and what may not. We will be circulating a "TOPIC OF THE DAY" for the remaining two forums which will kick off the discussion. Mark your calendar today and I hope to see you at our next Grower Forum.

***Thursday, March 9, 2017***

***Noon - [Please click here to RSVP for lunch](#)***

***Ag Center Auditorium***

**Thursday, May 11, 2017**

**8 am**

**Ag Center Auditorium**

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## **Spring OJ Breaks**

Mark your calendar for the following OJ Breaks. Flyer's will come out to announce each OJ Break but I thought this would be a good way to get them on your calendar.

All OJ Breaks will begin at 10:00 am and end at noon with a sponsored lunch. Click on the link before to RSVP for lunch

Thursday, January 19, 2017 10:00 am to Noon -

**Precision Agriculture and the Citrus Industry** [Click here to RSVP For lunch if you haven't](#)

Thursday, February 16, 2017 10:00 am to Noon

Thursday, April 20, 2017 10:00 am to Noon

Thursday, May 18, 2017 10:00 am to Noon

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## **Post Fruit Drop (PFD) and Disease Management Seminar**

## Postbloom Fruit Drop (PFD) and Disease Management Seminar



Wednesday, February 8, 2017  
Family Service Center  
310 West Whidden Street, Arcadia, Florida



### SCHEDULE

- 8:30 AM Registration & Coffee/Juice
- 9:00 AM Lessons of PFD control in Brazil and their new forecast system; and an update on citrus black spot control in Sao Paulo.  
Dr. Geraldo Silva, FundeCitrus, Araraquara, SP, Brazil
- 10:00 AM University of Florida's PFD model.  
Dr. Natalia Peres, UF/IFAS Gulf Coast REC, Balm
- 10:30 AM Break
- 10:45 AM PFD management in Florida.  
Dr. Megan Dewdney, UF/IFAS Citrus REC, Lake Alfred
- 11:15 AM Tree row volume based sprays for control of citrus diseases and pests; and an update on optimizing citrus canker management.  
Dr. Franklin Behlau, FundeCitrus, Araraquara, SP, Brazil
- 12:30 PM Sponsored Lunch

### PROGRAM SPONSORS



**REGISTRATION**  
Complete registration form below and mail to  
Steve Futch, CREC  
700 Experiment Station Road, Lake Alfred, FL 33850  
--OR--  
Register online at <https://pfdmanagement2017.eventbrite.com>  
For more information, call 863-956-8644 or email, [shf@ufl.edu](mailto:shf@ufl.edu)  
**Registration required prior to February 1, 2017**

*Program is free to attend but preregistration is required.*

Registration is limited to the first 125 participants.



### REGISTRATION FORM

Postbloom Fruit Drop (PFD) and Disease Management Seminar  
February 8, 2017

Mail registration form to Steve Futch, CREC, 700 Experiment Station Road, Lake Alfred, FL 33850  
For more information, call 863-956-8644 or email, [shf@ufl.edu](mailto:shf@ufl.edu)

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule

**EDITORS NOTE:** Please take the time to read this very important article. I recently participated in one of the **Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Courses** offered at Lake Alfred. This course was very informative and nicely done. If you do not grow fresh fruit you may not think that this course or this regulation has anything to do with you. You may want to rethink this. It may not have anything to do with process fruit at this time but I can easily see this regulation expanding in the future. This grower certification course will be offered again several times in the coming year and if we have enough interest I can put one together right here in Highlands County. Let me know if you are interested and we will get it done!

The last thing you want to hear about is another regulation, but this one is very important if you want to have any chance of selling your fruit as fresh. Simply put, the chances are that if you are **not** in compliance with this new rule, you may find yourself **unable** to sell or even run your fruit through a citrus packinghouse. If you plan to **not pack** any of your crop fresh (in any given year) and it will go to the processing plant, then you can skip the following, but you are not likely going to have the luxury of changing your mind immediately prior to harvest. Additional, even fruit that doesn't go into the fresh market will require that you still need to meet certain record keeping requirements that document a commercial processing exemption. Travis Chapin, UF/IFAS, State Specialized Extension Agent for Food Safety, provided a summary of the rule areas fresh fruit citrus growers will need to comply with:

### **What a Fresh-Market Citrus Grower Needs to Know About FSMA's Produce Safety Rule**

The Produce Safety Rule (PSR), under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), is the first mandatory federal standard for the production of fruits and vegetables, including citrus, in the United States. Compliance for the largest farms (those averaging >\$500,000 in annual total food sales over the previous 3 years) begins on January 26, 2018. Find the rule and more information, including information about exemptions and compliance dates, at <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm334114.htm>. If you open the PSR in the federal register, you'll find the full 216-page document that includes the preamble and public comments; the actual regulatory requirements are in the last 21 pages (pp. 74547-74568).

All requirements of the PSR apply to "covered activities". A covered activity is defined as "growing, harvesting, packing, or holding covered produce on a farm." If you're a fresh-market citrus grower and sell your crop to a buyer prior to harvest, you are responsible for implementing the applicable PSR requirements before ownership of the crop is transferred to the buyer/harvest company. Because harvesting is within the scope of the farm definition, the harvesting company will be considered a farm that harvests, but does not grow, the citrus and will be responsible for the PSR requirements during and after harvest until the fruit is delivered to the packinghouse. The Food and Drug Administrations (FDA's) draft guidance regarding classification of activities is available online. <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/ucm517567.htm>.

For a fresh-market citrus grower who transfers ownership of the crop prior to harvest, the PSR requirements associated with growing the crop fall under the categories of

- health and hygiene;
- personnel qualifications and training;
- equipment, tools, buildings, and sanitation;
- biological soil amendments of animal origin and human waste;
- domesticated and wild animals; and
- agricultural water.

Some important considerations are highlighted below, but growers should reference the PSR and future FDA guidance for comprehensive compliance requirements. Requirements are covered in much more detail during Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) training courses. Find a list of PSA courses offered by IFAS at [sc.ifas.ufl.edu](http://sc.ifas.ufl.edu).

#### **Health and hygiene**

Everyone working for the covered farm, even those that don't handle fruit, needs to follow basic health and hygiene practices which include things like handwashing, maintaining personal cleanliness, not eating in the field, and not working while sick.

## **Personnel qualifications and training**

Each farm must identify at least one supervisor or other responsible party (e.g., consultant) tasked with ensuring compliance with the PSR. This person must also complete food safety training that is acknowledged by FDA. Currently, the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) curriculum is the only training material that meets this requirement. All other employees must receive food safety training relevant to their jobs which includes principles of food safety, personal hygiene, and certain PSR standards.

## **Equipment, tools, buildings, and sanitation**

Any equipment, tools, and buildings used for growing activities (including stored equipment and buildings or sheds used to store equipment) need to be checked, cleaned and maintained to ensure food safety.

## **Biological soil amendments of animal origin and human waste:**

This section doesn't apply if you don't use any biological soil amendments (BSAs) of animal origin (e.g., manure, compost, manure/compost teas, blood meal, bone meal, fish meal, feather meal). The use of Class A biosolids is allowed without any additional restrictions beyond the EPA and state requirements already in place.

If you purchase a treated BSA of animal origin from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, you need to obtain a Certificate of Conformance or other documentation annually demonstrating that a scientifically valid, and monitored, process was used and that the risk of cross-contamination with untreated products was minimized. If you treat your own BSA of animal origin, you need to use a scientifically valid treatment process and keep monitoring records of the process controls (e.g., time, temperature, turnings). There are also specific application methods and application-to-harvest intervals allowed depending on whether the BSA of animal origin is considered treated or untreated.

## **Animals and wildlife:**

Growing areas need to be monitored for intrusion and contamination by domestic or wild animals. Contamination should be removed before harvest and/or any findings should be shared with the harvest crew.

## **Production agricultural water:**

Production agricultural water means any water that comes in contact with fruit on the tree and could include water used to irrigate (if it contacts the fruit), to make crop sprays, or for cold protection. If the water does not contact fruit, it is not considered agricultural water. The sources and distribution systems of all production agricultural water need to be reviewed at least annually. All production agricultural water must meet specific microbial criteria which is detailed in the PSA course. If production agricultural water does not meet the microbial criteria, you can still use the water if you do at least one of the following:

- apply a time interval between last application of water and harvest (which meets specific requirements),
- apply a postharvest time interval or treatment (like commercial washing), or
- treat the water (and meet specific requirements).

While some important considerations were highlighted here, these topics are covered in much more depth in the PSA training courses. Find a list of PSA courses offered by IFAS at [sc.ifas.ufl.edu](https://sc.ifas.ufl.edu).

# Center News & Upcoming Events

Interested in what goes on at the Range Cattle Research and Education Center (Ona)? Andrea Dunlap, the Educational Media & Communications Coordinator for the station has announced a new monthly "News and Upcoming Events" document that will come out. This document will announce new articles available from the RCREC faculty, upcoming events and information from the station. To see January's version click here:

[http://rcrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/in-focus/News\\_and\\_upcoming\\_events\\_RCREC\\_01062017.pdf](http://rcrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/in-focus/News_and_upcoming_events_RCREC_01062017.pdf)

## Highlands Soil & Water Offering Class



**Calling All Ag Producers...**

Join us to learn:

- Basics of Soil Science
- Techniques for collecting soil, tissue and water for testing and analysis
- Interpretation of Test Results
- Benefits of Soil Sensors
- How soil sampling can benefit your production and aid in BMP compliance

**Bert J. Harris Ag Center  
Polston Auditorium  
4509 George Blvd Sebring,  
Florida 33875**

**RSVP to:**  
sbishop@highlandsswcd.org  
863-402-7020

**By:**  
February 17, 2017 to  
assure we have lunch  
for all attendees.

**Workshop and  
Lunch Provided By:**



**Do you know if you are collecting soil samples properly?  
Are you having trouble interpreting your results?**

**We can help!**

# SAVE THE DATE! Florida Citrus Mutual Area Meetings & Elections

Attention Florida Citrus Mutual Members and Potential Members: Area meetings and elections are right around the corner! Call FCM at 863.682.1111 to register for your area meeting and contact Rusty Wiygul at 352.266.2426 to make sure all of your grove is signed up so that you can cast the right number of votes. If you have been on the fence or not previously been a member I would encourage you to consider membership, "Together we make a difference". New members contact Rusty at the number above as well.

**April 7th (Friday)** - Districts 8, 9 & 10 Jay Clark's Ranch "The Linda Lou", Zolfo Springs Current Directors: District 8 - Fran Becker, Steve Sorrells District 9 - John Barben, Michael Prescott, Andrew Russell District 10 - Charlie Lucas, Paul Meador, Mark Wheeler

**April 19th (Wednesday)** - Districts 5 & 6 W H Stuart AG Center, Bartow Current Directors: District 5 - Daniel Skousen District 6 - Dennis Broadaway, Larry Black, Kenny DeVane, Kyle Story

**April 27th (Thursday)** - District 7 USDA Lab, Fort Pierce Current Directors: Kevin Koppelman, Mike Monroe, Tom Mitchell

**April 28th (Friday)** - Districts 1, 2, 3 & 4 Lake County AG Center, Tavares Current Directors: District 1 - David Evans, Sr. District 2 - Tim Philmon District 3 - Glenn Beck District 4 - Bob Battaglia, Ric Freeman

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## No office? No problem! FSA Now Offers Text Message Alerts

Receive text message alerts from FSA while on-the-go, in the field, on the tractor or even on horseback.

Contact your local FSA office to subscribe to receive text message alerts on your cell phone and stay updated on:

- deadline reminders
- program notifications
- reporting requirements
- local outreach events

Standard text messaging rate apply. Expect to receive no more than two text messages from FSA each month, on average. Participants may **unsubscribe** at any time. Contact your local FSA office to subscribe to the text message alerts service. To find your local FSA office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

The office for Highlands County is in Okeechobee:

**OKEECHOBEE SERVICE CENTER**  
**450 US HIGHWAY 98 N**  
**OKEECHOBEE, FL 34972-2303**



(800) 243-9912  
(863) 763-3345 ext 2  
(855) 563-2110 fax

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## Farewell and Thank You!

With the conclusion of the Obama Administration we must say goodbye to a friend and colleague at the Florida Farm Service Agency. Mr. Rick Dantzler, Florida and Virgin Island State Executive Director, has served in this position as a political appointee so his tenure will now come to an end. Every citrus grower in Florida should take the time to thank Rick for all of his hard work at Florida FSA and his role as a true friend to the Florida Citrus Industry.

Until such time as the Trump Administration selects a new appointee Ms. Debby Folsom will serve as acting State Executive Director.

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## UF IPM Website Updated

Over the holidays, Dr. Norman Leppla and Joyce Merritt updated the ***IPM Florida*** website, you can check it out at <http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu>. The homepage has an enlarged menu of IPM information based primarily on pest management problem solving, new and improved photographs, direct links to important topics, and an all new IPM information box. The box has links to national, regional, state, and UF/IFAS centers and programs involved in IPM. The website now is a portal to most IPM activities in the nation.

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## A Big Thank You!

Every day we come across people in this fine industry who go above and beyond! One of those very special people resides right here in Highlands County. Ms. Pam Fentress is everywhere making sure that not only her family but yours is protected in the continuing fight to grow citrus in the state of Florida. Many times we look up to the folks who serve on the Area Citrus Association Boards or the boards of FCM or the FDOC but we really need to look further to our silent warriors who serve on our water management boards, soil and water boards and our farm service agency boards. Miss Pam has served in all of the later positions mentioned above and some of the former ones.

Recently Pam received a Certificate of Appreciation from the United States Department of Agriculture in appreciation for her dedication and loyal commitment to the USDA Farm Service Agency during her 5-years of service with the Okeechobee/Highlands County Farm Service Agency committee. It takes thick skin and a ton of time to keep up with those folks among the millions of other jobs she has.

A huge shout out to all who continue to serve and next time you see Pam tell her thanks for all she

does for us! Hats off from the UF/IFAS Extension Highlands County Team!



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