

# Citrus Expo rebirth

**M**ore than 1,250 people packed seminars, had the trade show hall bustling and chowed down on a free Wild Beast Feast at the 2006 Citrus Expo.

“Reaction from attendees and exhibitors indicates that the 2006 Citrus Expo was one of the best Expos ever,” said Gary Cooper of Southeast AgNet-Citrus Industry Magazine, which owns Citrus Expo. “The 2004 Expo was cancelled because of Hurricane Charley and 2005 Expo attendance was curtailed when Hurricane Katrina threatened the second day. But the outstanding attendance at this year’s Expo proves this premier citrus event is reborn and strong as ever. We’re already making plans for next year’s Expo, scheduled for Aug. 22-23, again at the Lee Civic Center.”



## South Americans share canker and greening control methods

By Ernie Neff

**W**e were able to manage and control citrus canker,” Argentine citrus grower Cecilio Taylor told a large Citrus Expo crowd Aug. 23. “You will be able to do it.” After hearing additional speakers from Argentina and Brazil tell how they remain productive in the face of canker, Florida grower Rick Vachon shared their optimism. “Everything I heard this morning is fact,” said Vachon, who recently witnessed canker control methods in Argentina firsthand. “It’s amazing what they’ve done in Argentina ... We can control this.” Like the South American speakers, Vachon said windbreaks, copper sprays and leafminer control are the primary keys to canker management.

Taylor said he resisted the use of windbreaks at first,

but started using them at the end of the 1980s to control canker. “Now, I swear by windbreaks,” he said. He explained that proper windbreaks reduce the spread of canker infection by about 40 percent by slowing the speed of wind. There’s an added benefit for fresh fruit growers – slowing the speed of wind also reduces wind scar on fruit.

Beatriz Stein, a lemon grower and chief of the fruit section at Estacion Experimental Agroindustrial Obispo Colombes in Argentina, said copper sprays must be used in the proper dosage. “When you lower the dosage (of copper), you get much more canker,” she said. According to Stein, groves treated with copper had canker incidence of less than 40 percent, compared to more than 70 percent canker incidence in unsprayed control groves.

Brazilian citrus consultant Leandro Teixeira echoed other speakers in proclaiming the benefits of windbreaks, copper sprays and the use of pesticides for leafminer control in a canker management program. He also agreed with other speakers that controlling access to groves and sanitation of equipment and personnel is important in controlling canker.

### GREENING

Citrus greening disease “is worse than everything I have seen in my life,” said Fernando Tersio, citrus manager of Cambuhy Farms in Brazil. His company controls the spread of greening by inspecting for greening and remov-



Argentine grower Cecilio Taylor, center.

ing infected trees, and by controlling citrus psyllid with insecticide spray. The psyllid is the vector that spreads greening from tree to tree.

Without control of greening, there is “no economic productivity,” Tersio declared. “Greening inspection and eradication is really a normal job” in Cambuhy Farms groves, he said.

#### **CANKER LIKE A COLD; GREENING LIKE CANCER**

University of Florida soil microbiologist Jim Graham summed up the canker and greening seminar by comparing the plant diseases to human diseases.

Canker, he said, is like a human cold – contagious, but the symptoms can be treated.

Citrus greening, he added, is like liver cancer – not very contagious, but very aggressive and fatal.



Brazilian consultant Leandro Teixeira, left, and translator Julia Beretta, center.

### Browning on canker, greening

## **South American experience saved Florida “years to decades”**

**F**lorida growers and researchers have based many of their control measures for canker and greening on research and practical experience in Argentina and Brazil, according to UF-IFAS’s Harold Browning. “Years to decades of effort have been saved by learning not only what has worked in other areas, but also what has been tried and hasn’t been successful,” Browning said during Citrus Expo.

Browning, director of UF-IFAS’ Citrus Research and Education Center at Lake Alfred, made his comments in a Citrus Industry Magazine-Southeast AgNet interview with Gary Cooper.

“The focus this year on citrus canker and greening brought a lot of people in (to Citrus Expo),” Browning said. “Hearing experiences from South America ... really attracted a lot of attention.”

Asked if money can still be made in the citrus business, Browning said: “I believe it can, and it’ll be a combination of people digging in and taking the steps necessary to produce citrus in the presence of these new challenges.”

Browning said some of the biggest known additional production costs caused by the diseases will be additional psyllid sprays to curtail greening and additional copper sprays to slow canker’s spread. The largest unknown, he said, will be the cost of paying labor to survey for the diseases. “There are some labor aids that are being used in South America” that could help reduce costs, he said, referring to conveyance systems for scouts.

Browning said Florida growers attending the Expo seminars are definitely interested in using canker and greening lessons learned by their counterparts in South America. “One of the comments at the end of today’s seminar was, ‘I came here to hear what’s new ... so I can begin to put that in practice in my own business,’” Browning said.

## **‘Blessedly brief’ speakers address Expo Banquet**

**By Ernie Neff**

**B**lessed are the brief, for they shall be invited back,” Congressman Mark Foley quipped at the beginning of his Citrus Expo Banquet keynote address. If that philosophy is correct, his invitation to next year’s banquet is already in the mail. In an exceptionally short talk for a politician, the Southeast Florida representative praised the citrus industry’s positive attitude in the face of many obstacles, including hurricanes, canker and greening. “This group has maintained incredible optimism,” he said.

At Foley’s urging, citrus grower and Congressman Adam Putnam of Central Florida addressed the gathering even more briefly. “This industry, because of its unity, has been able to succeed where others around the country have failed,” Putnam said.

Other banquet speakers kept their remarks equally short. Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson noted that at the 2005 Expo Banquet, he said the canker eradication program must continue. But he said the program was halted after numerous hurricanes in 2004 and 2005 spread the bacterial disease around the state.

As he has done at numerous gatherings throughout 2006, Bronson pushed his “farms to fuel” program aimed at creating non-petroleum-based fuel from cellulose, including grass and storm-damaged trees. He said it was necessary to increase the use of ethanol and biodiesel because other countries, including China, are increasingly using non-renewable petroleum fuels. Without alternative fuels, Bronson said, U.S. farmers and others will pay much higher prices for diminishing amounts of fuel.

New Florida Department of Citrus (FDOC) Executive Director Ken Keck, a citrus grower himself, said the FDOC uses professional advertising agencies to devise its advertisements for orange juice and other citrus products. He said it isn’t important whether growers like the ads; what is important is that advertising prompts consumers to buy more Florida citrus products.

## **Visit the Citrus Expo blog!**



You may have noticed the reporters stationed in the Southeast AgNet/Citrus Industry Magazine exhibit at Expo, as they worked on “blogging” the event for website visitors. If you have not yet visited this special new website for ag news headlines and the new Citrus Expo blog, we invite you to go to [www.AgNetOnline.com](http://www.AgNetOnline.com) and find the Citrus Expo category among the many other categories of news items already archived there. Southeast AgNet is the first ag media in Florida and the southeast region to provide a working news blog for an agriculture news application. The Citrus Expo blog also contains what we believe is the first-ever ag-news ‘podcast’ in this region as well. Log on, and enjoy.

## **Higher returns projected for orange growers**

**By Ernie Neff**

**T**he Florida citrus industry this summer saw widely varying forecasts for the size of the 2006-07 season orange crop. At Citrus Expo, University of Florida-IFAS economist Tom Spreen projected delivered-in prices that growers might expect at various crop size levels.

Spreen, chair of the UF-IFAS Food and Resource Economics Department, expects that any of the projected orange crop sizes will give growers better returns than they earned in the recently-completed 2005-06 season. Last season, he said, the average preliminary combined return for Hamlins and Valencias was \$1.33 per pound solids (pps), delivered in.

For 2006-07, he projected combined returns of \$1.36 pps if the crop size is 180 million boxes; \$1.44 at 160 million boxes; \$1.52 at 140 million boxes; and \$1.59 at 123 million boxes.

The 123 million box forecast, by Orlando consultant Elizabeth Steger, was the most recent. Because it was so much lower than other projections, the Steger forecast was much discussed at Expo. Spreen said the \$1.59 pps average that growers would receive at the 123 million box level would include returns of \$1.50 pps for early-mid varieties and

\$1.70 for late-season Valencias.

The official U.S. Department of Agriculture crop forecast, will be released Oct. 12. (The forecast will be covered live by Southeast AgNet, see information on page 12.)

“I hope your buyer was in here” and heard Spreen, program moderator and Florida Department of Citrus Executive Director Ken Keck said. “I looked around and was glad to see my buyer.” Keck is a citrus grower.

Spreen also was optimistic about the long-term prospects for Florida citrus growers because of projected long-term crop reductions in both Florida and Brazil. He projected Brazilian orange production of about 300 million boxes and Florida orange production of about 150 million boxes by the 2020-2021 season. Brazil produced more than 400 million boxes in the mid-1990s, and Florida’s production record was 244 million boxes in 1997-98.

Spreen’s projections of long-term profitability for Florida growers came even as he acknowledged that growers will spend more to control canker and citrus greening and to buy nursery trees in the future. “Brazil, believe it or not, probably has more problems than we do,” Spreen said.

### **Citrus Expo seminar presentations online**

Seminar presentations made at Citrus Expo are available online at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center website:

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

### **NRCS offers cost share on windbreaks for citrus**

**T**he USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering a new cost share initiative under the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) for windbreaks to assist with control of windborne diseases. FL NRCS is working with the National Office to be able to provide up to 75 percent cost share for windbreaks. The following is a list of species that NRCS will assist with providing cost share on:

- Slash & Sand Pine
- Eucalyptus
- Red Cedar
- Bamboo
- Walter’s & Sweet Viburnum
- Saw Palmetto
- Crepe & Wax Myrtle
- Simpson’s Stopper

If interested, contact your local NRCS Office prior to December 15, 2006, the end of the batching period for Fiscal Year 2007.



### **International influence**

**A**mong attendees at Citrus Expo 2006 were citrus growers from a number of other countries, including Brazil, Argentina, Costa Rica, Belize, Guatemala and Israel. We enjoyed meeting our international readers and we

look forward to continuing to serve their informational needs, and to taking some of them up on their invitations to visit as soon as we can nail down an opportunity. In fact, we look forward to learning more about, and reporting more on, the citrus industries around the world, particularly as they may have impacts on our growers here at home.

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for their continued support of the Florida Citrus Industry.**

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# "Beast Feast" a hit with Expo crowd



Judging from attendee and exhibitor feedback, the new approach for the Expo lunch meal was very well received. The pork butt and ribs in particular got great reviews, as did the inclusion of swamp cabbage on the menu and the availability of a cold beer during lunch.

With comments like: "On-site lunch was more personable, keeps people at show!" and "Wild game lunch went over well" and "Thanks for the on-site lunch and exhibitor reception, they were great!" it sounds like we've set ourselves a high standard for next year's planning process.

Southeast AgNet's hats are off to Buddy Sullivan and his "Kuntry Katering" crew! As pre-registrations broke all

records in the days leading up to Expo, there were quite a few unknowns for the cooks and crew to consider. The most important – "just how many people should we be prepared to feed?!" This year's Citrus Expo attendance smashed all previous records and Buddy's Kuntry Katering fed them all with some left over. We just love it when a plan comes together!

Again, we greatly appreciate the sponsors who made lunch an 'event' of its own during Citrus Expo 2006. We hope attendees will help us thank Berner Oil Company of Clewiston, Everglades Farm Equipment, Stallings Crop Insurance, and Magna-Bon CS 2005.

By Gary Cooper 🍊

## Attendance smashes records; pre-registration prizes awarded

By Gary Cooper

On-line capabilities for pre-registration this year provided grower attendees the simplest way ever to register in advance for Citrus Expo.

Well over 400 utilized the on-line method to register in advance and 850-plus more registered at the door during the two days of the event. By all accounts, the 2006 Citrus Expo attracted the largest crowd of growers, grove-owners and production decision-makers in Citrus Expo's 15-year history.

Thanks to Everglades Farm Equipment and Captain Pat Fishing Charters, attendees pre-registering for Citrus Expo had the opportunity to win in a special prize drawing exclusively for those registering in advance. A very nice John Deere gun safe, compliments of Everglades Farm Equipment, was won by Florence Miller of Paradise Nursery Grove, Arcadia. Robert Taylor of Taylor Groves, Mims, was the winner of a full day of flats fishing with Captain Pat Brooke of Captain Pat Charters in Steinhatchee.



Fishing trip winner Robert Taylor with Southeast AgNet's Katherine Bush.

## Captain Pat flats fishing

Special thanks goes to Captain Pat Brooke of Captain Pat Charters of Steinhatchee, who donated a full day of flats fishing for the winner of one of our special pre-registration drawings. Captain Pat has been a favorite charter captain and good friend of Southeast AgNet President Gary Cooper for more than 25 years, and comes highly recommended for flats fishing this particular area of Florida's Big Bend. Congratulations to Robert Taylor of Taylor Groves in Mims, you're going to Steinhatchee!



August 23-24, 2006  
Lee Civic Center, Ft. Myers

CITRUS  
EXPO



"The training seminars were very informative and well worth attending. It was interesting to see how canker and greening issues are being addressed world wide. I was able to come away with a lot of applicable information."

- Mike Murphy,  
CEO of Cooperative Producers, Inc.  
in Immokalee.



"This was a great tradeshow, great quality prospects. Best yet!"

Mary Gotner,  
Raymond James



**Those of us here at Southeast AgNet and Citrus Industry Magazine extend a heartfelt thank you to the steering committee, the exhibitors, sponsors and volunteers who helped make the 15th annual Citrus Expo a great success. Sponsors are listed previously in this section, and below please note the volunteers who gave of their own time to help with Citrus Expo 2006.**

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