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**AGRICULTURE FOUNDATION RENAMED TO REFLECT
SPECIALTY CROP FOCUS**

Organization poised to meet tough industry challenges

MAITLAND, Fla. (June 19, 2007) – The Florida Fruit & Vegetable Research & Education Foundation has been renamed the **Florida Specialty Crop Foundation**, Executive Director Mike Carlton announced today. The name change is part of a reorganization that began when Carlton was named as the foundation’s first full-time executive director in January.

“Our mission is to be the leading organization for specialty crop research, education and philanthropy programs in Florida,” he said. “The new name clearly and succinctly focuses on the scope of the foundation’s mission and membership.”

The changes were prompted by the board of directors’ goal of expanding the foundation’s role in research, education and philanthropic support of the farm worker community, said Tony DiMare, board chairman. “Continuing to build the foundation will help all facets of the specialty crop industry meet the challenges we face,” he added.

The foundation also unveiled a new logo, and it soon will launch a new Web site at www.floridaspecialtycropfoundation.org.

Carlton said the foundation will step up its research efforts with funding through a new annual giving campaign. “We intend to specifically address those issues that are most significant for research, including greening in citrus and food safety in lettuce and leafy greens,” he said.

In recent years, the foundation has led a number of important initiatives involving research and education. It administered three federal/state block grants totaling almost \$2.5 million for methyl bromide alternatives, food safety and specialty crop production.

It also regularly holds educational programs to benefit producers of Florida’s specialty crops. The annual Florida Agriculture Labor Forum educates employers and employees on various labor laws and best practices in labor relations. The foundation’s periodic environmental seminars provide information and instruction on compliance with existing and proposed environmental regulations.

In addition to annual scholarships to benefit children of Florida's farm workers, the foundation also has played a major role in fundraising to benefit the workers and their families. In 2004 after hurricanes Charley, Frances and Jeanne, it partnered with the Florida Department of Citrus and Florida Citrus Packers to raise money for hurricane relief, primarily for permanent worker housing. More than \$200,000 was raised from retailers of fresh Florida citrus and distributed in conjunction with Catholic Charities and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association.

The Florida Specialty Crop Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity whose mission is to benefit the general public through initiatives that provide solutions to the challenges facing specialty crop producers and their stakeholders.