



Volume 5 - Issue 3  
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Tallahassee

# EMERGING TIMES

*... growing toward the future*

## FFVA leaders travel to Tallahassee for a closer look at ag issues



Members of FFVA's Emerging Leader Development Program met with House Speaker Steve Crisafulli alongside members of FFVA's Board of Directors and Advocacy Committee.

Members of Class 5 of the Emerging Leader Development Program, the Board of Directors and the Advocacy Committee made the trek to Tallahassee in January to meet with lawmakers and discuss agriculture bills.

The group met with Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, several other legislators who have championed agriculture, and Jon Stevenson, secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection.

Butch Calhoun, FFVA's director of government affairs, lined up a full slate of meetings with legislators. The group talked with Rep. Halsey Beshears (R-Monticello), Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby), Sen. Tom Goodson (R-Titusville), Rep. Matt Hudson (R-Naples) who is speaker pro tem, Rep. Ben Albritton (R-Bartow), Sen. Dwight Bullard, (D-Cutler Bay), Rep. Jake Raburn (R-Valrico), and Rep. Matt Caldwell (R-Lehigh Acres). Many of these lawmakers hold key committee or subcommittee posi-

tions. Lobbyist Mary Ann Gosa-Hooks also discussed progress in getting funding for the UF/IFAS budget.

The group used the time with lawmakers to urge support of several bills that are priorities for producers. FFVA President Mike Stuart thanked Crisafulli for his leadership in passing the sales tax exemption package last year and the comprehensive water bill this year. For his part, Crisafulli emphasized the importance of the FFVA members' visits to see their legislators.

"I appreciate you all taking the time out to be here. Spending a day or two up here is a sacrifice you have to make away from businesses and being back at home," he said. "It's important to make sure members understand what's going on in this state. They need to understand the decisions made in this building can have an impact both negatively and positively. Nobody in this building will understand those things unless you tell them about it."





## Understanding the legislative process



by Lauren Graham  
The Andersons, Inc.

To set the stage for our Tallahassee session, FFVA Director of Government Relations Butch Calhoun provided an overview of the lawmaking process.

What begins as an idea is drafted on paper as a bill. After it comes from both sides of the Legislature, two references must sponsor the bill. It must be identical in both houses, which creates a continual fight to keep the bills the same. They can bounce back and forth between the chambers with amendments. It is a tedious and grueling process, but well worth it when a bill has been passed, which overall is a very low rate.

Lobbying is much like a game. By understanding the process, lobbyists can become better educated on their tactics and who to befriend. It is very challenging to push a bill through to become law, so it is important to understand the process and develop priorities each session. Class 5 had the opportunity to sit in the gallery and watch a session. As future leaders, we must remain educated on the importance of agriculture in politics and continue to understand how to keep agriculture issues at the forefront.

Agriculture is a leader in the Legislature, Calhoun said. The industry took it upon itself to be like the federal government and drafted a bill to reflect the federal vehicle law, an initiative that has not been a priority for the state. Unfortunately, Calhoun said it's unlikely the transportation committee will hear this bill because of a previous disagreement on a piece of legislation.

## Bullard follows family's footsteps



by Ashley Layson  
Farm Credit of Florida

At 38, state Sen. Dwight Bullard (D-Cutler Bay) may be younger than many of his state House colleagues, but he is no stranger to a life committed to public service. Following in the footsteps of his father, former state Rep. Edward Bullard, and his mother, former Sen. Larcenia Bullard, he devotes his time to the people of the District 39 in South Florida. Bullard says it is time for the younger people to step up and speak out concerning the future of Florida.

"The young people of Florida have an opportunity to decide what Florida is known for. Our ground is fertile and we don't talk about it enough. I want to make sure people with new ideas have a forum to express those ideas," he said.

Bullard is not wasting time in his elected seat. For this 60-day session he filed 25 bills, one of which has the attention of producers. SB 6 would raise the minimum wage of workers in Florida from \$8.05 to \$15 an hour. When pressed by FFVA board members about how this would affect agriculture, Bullard was quick to admit it is not a "one size fits all" idea.

"This bill allows me the platform to create conversation about the possibility. I am open to discussing carve-outs for certain industries such as agriculture," Bullard said. "What we currently have isn't working and you can't condemn me for getting the conversation started. I believe that the government is in a position to protect the local grower."

It isn't the first time Bullard has introduced a minimum wage bill, and he says he doesn't expect this one to pass this session.

## Simpson sponsors key sales tax bill



by Josh Temple  
DuPont Crop Protection

Sen. Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby) of District 18 (Hernando, Pasco and Sumter counties) discussed with our group legislation he is sponsoring for the 2016 session. Two Senate bills (SB 1264 and SB 1270) that he authored are very important for Florida agriculture. SB 1264 deals with sales tax exemptions of farm equipment, parts and repairs. One of the most important aspects of this bill is the exemption for parts and repairs for packing-houses that are not located on farm sites. The bill also would exempt fencing materials and would revise the maximum sales price of certain farm trailers that are exempt from sales tax.

Simpson also sponsored SB 1270, which is known as the Pesticide Fee Repealer Bill. This bill will end the fees for supplemental pesticide registrations, giving back \$1.8 million a year to Florida growers. The senator also discussed important issues in state transportation that affect agriculture. He recognizes the importance of continued funding for repairing and maintaining highways in rural areas. Simpson also is working on legislation to incentivize the use of natural gas in the long-haul trucking industry through a rebate program.

He also touched on the widening of the Panama Canal, which will increase the amount of port traffic in Miami and Tampa Bay. The ports of Miami and Tampa Bay are undergoing construction and improvements to accommodate larger deep-water transport vessels that will now be able to pass through the canal. With additional cargo coming through Florida ports, the state Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will have to be diligent in early detection of invasive species that may be significant threats to Florida crops.



## Leadership in policymaking



by Kevin Yue  
Lipman Produce

Members of the FFVA Board of Directors and Class 5 of the Emerging Leader Development Program shared a breakfast with Rep. Tom Goodson (R-Titusville), chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee, during the trip to Tallahassee. Goodson is one of the recipients of the 2015 FFVA Legislator of the Year for his work in promoting agricultural interests in Florida.

Goodson discussed his role as chair and the bills that are referred to the subcommittee, such as the GMO bill and a bill to allocate money to research the potential for hemp derivatives to be used in commercial products. He also shared his perspective on the atmosphere this session. Most everyone was "playing nicely" right now, he said. Although budget discussions have been moving along well, it is still early in the session, and Goodson cautioned that things can change at a drop of a hat. He said he is working with his Senate counterpart to pass common-sense policies that will help agriculture.

Goodson reiterated three points the class heard throughout the visit in Tallahassee:

"Speak loudly for what you want." He encouraged us to continue engaging with FFVA and other organizations that lobby our state Legislature and to let them know the issues that affect our industry.

"Be aware of who you elect and what they think." Goodson urged everyone to truly consider if the person who is running for office is a fit for the interests of Florida.

"Hold your representatives and senators accountable." To be leaders in our fields, we need to hold those who are legislating responsible for their decisions and make changes if they are not following through.



Rep. Tom Goodson addressed the group during breakfast. He reassured everyone of his commitment to working with his Senate counterparts to pass common-sense policies that will help agriculture.

## A capital time in Tallahassee



by Ben Lahr  
Driscoll's

Rep. Halsey Beshears (R-Monticello) spoke with our class about representing House District 7 in Florida's Panhandle. He was first elected to the House in 2012 and after his re-election currently serves on several committees, including as chair of the Business and Professions Subcommittee. Outside of the Legislature, Beshears clearly has a passion for agriculture as he is involved with the nursery industry in North Florida as the chief financial officer of Simpson Nurseries and president of Total Landscape Supply. He spoke to us about agriculture as an important compo-

nent for small communities as most of the jobs in those communities are tied to farming. After we spent much time listening to legislators, something Beshears said resonated loudly for me. He said that the world is run by those who show up. I believe he was referring to people in the state capital, but this also applies to pretty much anyone, anywhere. He went on to say that legislators aren't experts, so they need business and industry people to show up and help advise them. I have not felt compelled to speak or write to my legislators in the past, but after hearing Beshears speak, I now feel that to do so would help get issues across to those who can make a big difference. It would at least allow our lawmakers in Tallahassee to have another point of view as they try to create a better future for all of Florida. A contact email for Rep. Beshears is [halsey@halseybeshears.com](mailto:halsey@halseybeshears.com)



## Targeted marketing by Fresh From Florida



by John Evans  
Maury L. Carter & Associates, Inc.

Jackie Moalli and Darica Smith of Fresh From Florida gave our class an outstanding presentation regarding Fresh From Florida activities. They gave us an update on current marketing campaigns, how they have been successful and how these campaigns will continue to evolve to meet the needs of marketing and promotion for the future. There has been a large emphasis placed on digital media, specifically commodity-specific videos. Additionally, based upon demographics, Fresh From Florida has made a great effort to reach women between 30 and 50, because they typically do the shopping for their families. Therefore, Fresh From Florida has targeted this demographic, particularly through social media campaigns, chefs and recipes, retailers and other outlets of promotion. Fresh From Florida has championed Florida agricultural products in a big way. More can be found at [www.freshfromflorida.com](http://www.freshfromflorida.com).

## Recognizing the importance of ag



by Lauren Graham  
The Andersons, Inc.

Rep. Ben Albritton (R-Bartow) told the group that our industry is beginning to get its due. "Agriculture has a very special place in the Legislature," he said. "People are recognizing its importance."

Albritton manages multiple budgets, which he was in the process of finalizing to deliver to the governor while the class was in Tallahassee. He discussed a few issues in detail, including investment in water policy, investing in

natural resources, investing in the Everglades.

He also emphasized the serious problem of invasive plant pests. On average, a new pest is discovered every month in the state. The state may begin looking into educating travelers of the financial implications to the economy and to food in regard to souvenirs being smuggled into the United States from cruise ships.

Albritton touted the success of Best Management Practices. They show the important strides that have been made in water quality, he said.

"We are in a better position to grow agriculture in Florida over California and the rest of the world," he concluded. "We are creating more jobs, more revenue and seeing the return on investment."

## Raburn sponsors important ag bills



by Amanda McClure  
West Coast Tomato/  
Building Cleaning Solutions

Rep. Jake Raburn spoke passionately about HB 749, the general agriculture industry bill he is sponsoring that includes several provisions that will affect our industry. The bill would create penalties for people who introduce pests

and diseases into the state that could harm agriculture production. Under the bill, penalties could rise to the felony level if someone knowingly introduces a pest that results in the declaration of an agricultural emergency.

Additionally, Raburn spoke about the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services bill, HB 7007, which he also is sponsoring. It would establish a cost-sharing program for the removal or destruction of abandoned citrus groves to eliminate material that harbors citrus greening. Raburn made it clear that the point of this program is to save surrounding groves that are still in use. Cost-sharing would be based on the length of time a grove has been abandoned, whether the grove is in a Citrus Health Management Area, and how close it is to other groves currently in production. An owner may submit multiple applications for the program but would be eligible only for a maximum of \$125,000 in program cost-share funding in a given fiscal year. The department may award to each funded application a cost-share of up to 80 percent of eligible costs.



Darica Smith, director of the Division of Marketing and Development for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services spoke with the group and solicited ideas surrounding social media and television advertising campaigns.



## Getting a glimpse of the whirlwind action



by Casey Simmons Runkles  
Simmons Farms, Inc.

Class 5's trip to Tallahassee was a very busy one! FFVA Government Relations Director Butch Calhoun did an excellent job coordinating representatives and senators to meet with both the leadership group and FFVA's Board of Directors. We were able to get a glimpse of how busy it is when the Legislature is in session. On Day 1 some of the group had the opportunity to watch the House of Representatives in session. The Capitol was very busy this day, and we patiently waited to get a seat in the balcony area. A few of us were able to observe the House members discussing amendments. The floor was extremely busy with multiple conversations and activities going on consecutively. It was overwhelming to watch.

Calhoun explained the process of how an idea becomes a law. After an idea has been drafted into a bill it has to be approved by the sponsor; then it moves to a first reading. The House speaker will refer the bill to one or more committees to consider it. At any point in time the bill can be killed, and it goes no further. More than half of the ideas never make it into a bill and are dead on arrival, Calhoun said.

About the time we started understanding what was going on we had to leave. I am very thankful for this opportunity to get a firsthand look at how our association is supporting and lobbying for the continued advancement of agriculture.

## Great work for our natural resources



by Ashley Layson  
Farm Credit of Florida

Very seldom do you see Republicans and Democrats reach across the aisle in nearly unanimous support of anything, especially when it has to do with the state's greatest natural resource – water. Chalk one up for Rep. Matt Caldwell (R-LeHigh Acres). "Success has many fathers; failure has none," Caldwell said, "and this bill had many fathers. I was glad to work with Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli after four years to get this one passed."

With only two "no" votes, SB 552 is getting loud applause from not only FFVA members but also the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, the Florida Realtors, Florida Farm Bureau, the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association and many others.

Now with this one signed by Gov. Rick Scott, Caldwell is gearing up for a fight over another of Florida's greatest natural resources – land. State conservation lands bill (SB 1290 / HB 1075) focuses on better managing state lands for conservation and recreation, including the state's 174 state parks. At this writing, SB 1290 passed the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee and has two remaining committee hearings. HB 1075 has one remaining committee hearing.

## A clear vision and strategy for DEP



by Bradley Ferguson  
Driscoll's

Jon Steverson, secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection, discussed the vision and strategy of the DEP under his new leadership. "The vision of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is to create strong community partnerships, safeguard Florida's natural resources and enhance its ecosystems," he said.

He outlined the six strategic goals of the department:

1) Focus taxpayer resources on projects that provide a direct benefit to the environment and local communities. The division of water restoration assistance is charged with improving water quality and quantity through 24 BMAPs statewide.

2) Establish and consistently use clear metrics to evaluate and strengthen the department's programs, activities and services. He said statewide compliance is at 97 percent. A performance dashboard is available on the DEP website (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us>).

3) Partner with communities and businesses to protect natural resources and promote economic growth. During Steverson's tenure the average turnaround time for a DEP permit has dropped from 40 days to 14.

4) Improve the quality of natural resources through long-term planning, restoration and maintenance. The DEP oversees 800,000 acres of state parks.

5) Empower employees to solve problems through innovation and efficiency.

6) Proactively communicate a clear and consistent message internally and externally.



Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam joined the group for lunch on their final day in Tallahassee. Putnam highlighted the passage of the landmark water bill.

## Lunch with Putnam tops off Tallahassee trip



by Josh Temple  
DuPont Crop Protection

The final stop of the legislative trip to Tallahassee was lunch with Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam on Wednesday. We were very thankful that he took the time to address us on several issues important to Florida agriculture. Putnam thanked us for coming to Tallahassee to advocate for our industry and discussed the recently passed water bill, Best Management Practices, water issues in the Everglades Agricultural Area, the Fresh From Florida program and invasive pests.

Putnam praised the passage of the landmark water bill, which was years in the making and will benefit agriculture. The bill was just the first step, he said, adding that now we need to make sure funding is available

to provide the infrastructure and resources needed to fully implement it.

Pointing out that agriculture is constantly under attack in Florida -- especially in the EAA, the commissioner said it is important to communicate the message that farmers are the original stewards of the land and are using BMPs to mitigate environmental concerns. Regarding water and flood control in the EAA, Putnam said he has put in a considerable amount of time fostering a good relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has helped with some of the recent floods in South Florida.

Members of commodity exchanges, FFVA, and Putnam continue to advocate for the Fresh From Florida program, which is important for Florida producers. This advocacy ensures the continued funding of the program through the Legislature. Putnam also discussed the invasive pests that have been found recently near the ports of Miami and Tampa Bay. Invasive species will become more of a concern with the ports of Miami and Tampa Bay undergoing changes to accommodate larger deep-water transport vessels that will now be able to pass through the Panama Canal.

## Hudson: Media don't focus on positive work



by John Evans  
Maury L. Carter & Associates, Inc.

Rep. Matt Hudson (R-Naples), whose district spans both Collier and Hendry counties, made some brief remarks to our group on Wednesday. Hudson is a strong advocate for agriculturalists and their needs. Apart from his commitment to agriculture, he chairs the Health Care Appropriations subcommittee, which is a major part of his duties in Tallahassee. Hudson discussed the sometimes false negative perception of the inability of representatives and senators to accomplish legislative issues. However, he pointed out that 90 percent of the bills that come across the House floor are passed with ease. He pointed out that state legislators are working hard and progressing for the people of Florida, but the media only like to focus on the negative aspects of politics.



## Gosa-Hooks works to secure UF/IFAS funding



by Marshal Sewell  
Seminis Vegetable Seed

Florida agriculturalists are very fortunate to have a strong network of supporters throughout our state. The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an example of one major entity within this network. Through research, education and extension, IFAS strives to cultivate knowledge within the fields of agricultural, human and natural resources and then make this information accessible to members of our industry.

During this particular session of our Tallahassee visit, our group was fortunate to meet with Mary Ann Gosa-Hooks. She is a great supporter of Florida agriculture who represents IFAS to the Legislature. Gosa-Hooks is tasked with securing funding for IFAS programs during state budget allocations. While meeting with us, she discussed the budgeting process and her role in lobbying for IFAS projects. She spoke about the current political climate, noted significant differences from that of last year, and discussed the factors that would be affecting this year's budget allocations. Priorities this year are such IFAS projects as renovations to the Beef Research Unit and development of early detection and response programs for invasive species. We are very fortunate to have Gosa-Hooks in this role representing IFAS and these research programs that support the longevity of our industry.



ELDP member Leigh Ann Wynn and FFVA board member Rick Roth talk politics between sessions with legislators.

## Successful efforts on water legislation



by Ben Lahr  
Driscoll's

House Speaker Steve Crisafulli representing House District 51, which is most of Florida's Space Coast, addressed our group in his office and we were all inspired by his talk. He discussed his recent work with many other legislators to help get the water bill (SB 552) passed.

In a time when the state budget, Medicaid and taxes are hotly debated in Tallahassee, lawmakers have tried several times to pass a comprehensive water bill. After 20 amend-

ments and several votes, this bill passed overwhelmingly in the House as well as the Senate. The law will look at water use in Florida and review best management practices for state water. It was no easy task getting so many people to agree and work together on a common bill, but after several attempts Florida now has a law that will help protect one of its most precious natural resources for future generations.

Crisafulli, like Rep. Halsey Beshears, spoke about how important it is for people to educate and visit with our legislators. We need to do so because the people who make laws have a huge impact on Florida's economy. By having their constituents communicate with them, they are able to take a more well-rounded approach to the laws that will affect the future. Essentially, legislators need input from the right people and places to help educate them as our lawmakers. A contact email for Speaker Crisafulli is [stevecrisafulli.com](mailto:stevecrisafulli.com)

*Class 5 was recently joined by Class III of the Western Growers' Future Volunteer Leaders Program for production tours in South Florida. Look for those stories in the next issue.*



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# ELDP NEWS



**Amber Maloney** (Class 2) with Wish Farms was recently named President of the Agriculture Insitute of Florida, Inc. and is excited to announce that the 3rd Annual Strawberry Picking Challenge raised \$77,000 for the kids of RCMA.



**1: Meghan Pasken** (Class 4) and her husband, Nick, welcomed Annabelle Grace on November 18, 2015.

**2: Kevin Yue** (Class 5) and his wife, Andrea, welcomed Zoe Katherine on December 21, 2015.