



PALM BEACH COUNTY EXTENSION AGRICULTURE NEWSLETTER



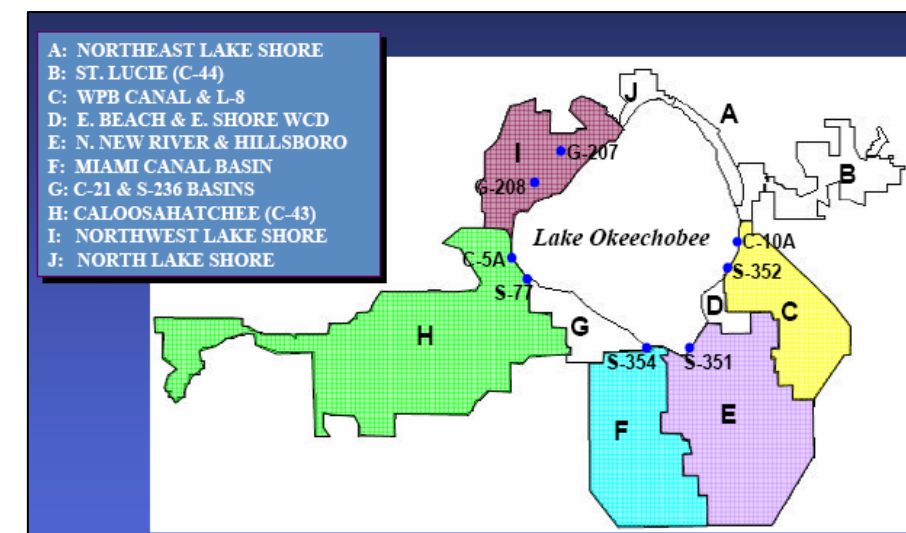
January - February 2007

LAKE OKEECHOBEE AREA WATER SHORTAGE

As of mid-November, the water level of Lake Okeechobee was more than 3.5 feet – or 22 percent – below its historical average for this time of year and rainfall through the first 10 months of 2006 was among the lowest on record. In response, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) declared a **mandatory water shortage order for the Lake Okeechobee Service Area (LOSA)**.

The moderate water shortage declaration (Classified as a *Phase 1*) became effective Friday, November 17. The order predominantly impacts agricultural, industrial and commercial water users as well as public water supply utilities around the Lake; withdrawals from the Caloosahatchee River; and residential users whose water source is Lake Okeechobee or any of the surface water canals recharged by the Lake. Groundwater sources are not restricted by this order, and users are allowed to utilize groundwater in accordance with their permits.

Agricultural water users in the LOSA are required to reduce their consumption of surface water by 15 percent and are encouraged to voluntarily exercise additional water conservation measures as practicable. Users will be notified personally by the District on the specific nature of restrictions.



Above: A map of the Lake Okeechobee Service Area basins A through J (Source: SFWMD).

Residential water users in the LOSA are required to limit outdoor irrigation and vehicle washing times and observe normal water conservation practices within the home.

- * Residents with odd home addresses are allowed to water between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. EST on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- * Residents with even home addresses are allowed to water between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. EST on Tuesdays,

Thursdays and Sundays.

- * No domestic water use for outdoor irrigation is allowed on Fridays.

Approximately 50 growers and residents attended a SFWMD public meeting on November 15th at the UF/IFAS Research and Education Center in Belle Glade. If you missed the meeting, visit the District's web site at <http://www.sfwmd.gov/newsr/> to find useful resources such as "Just the Facts: Lake Okeechobee Service Area (LOSA) Water Shortage

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UPCOMING EVENTS

West Palm Beach
559 N. Military Trail
(561) 233-1725

Cesar Asuaje
Hispanic Farm Labor
CRAsuaje@ifas.ufl.edu

Darrin Parmenter
Vegetables
DMParmenter@ifas.ufl.edu

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Ag & Natural Resources
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Belle Glade
2976 State Road 15
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Ron Rice
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Kiley Harper
Agricultural Safety
Kiley@ifas.ufl.edu

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2007 EVENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>December 21
11:30 am - 1 pm</p> <p>December 22
11:30 am - 1 pm</p> <p>January 8
8 am - noon
1 pm - 3 pm</p> <p>January 10
8 am - noon
1 pm - 3 pm</p> <p>January 29
10 am - 5 pm</p> <p>February 5
8 am - 10 am
10 am - noon
1 pm - 3 pm</p> <p>February 7
8 am - 10 am
1 pm - 3 pm</p> | <p>UF/IFAS & United Agri Products (UAP) Vegetable Growers Meeting, UF/IFAS EREC, Belle Glade. Update on surfactants.</p> <p>UF/IFAS & United Agri Products (UAP) Vegetable Growers Meeting, Duffy's Sports Grill, Boynton Beach. Update on surfactants.</p> <p>Pesticide Applicator Training, West Palm Beach
4-Hour General Standards / Core Test Review (4 CEUs)
Ornamental & Turf Test Review (2 CEUs)</p> <p>Pesticide Applicator Training, Belle Glade
4-Hour General Standards / Core Test Review (4 CEUs)
Private Applicator Test Review (2 CEUs)</p> <p>Florida Agricultural Aviators Association Annual Fly-In, Belle Glade. Equipment calibration, WPS, applicator health and much more, CEUs available.</p> <p>Pesticide Applicator Training, West Palm Beach
2-Hour General Standards / Core Test Review (2 CEUs)
Private Applicator Test Review (2 CEUs)
Natural Areas Weed Management Test Review (2 CEUs)</p> <p>Pesticide Applicator Training, Belle Glade
2-Hour General Standards / Core Test Review (2 CEUs)
Agricultural Row Crop Test Review (2 CEUs)</p> |
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Order” and “Frequently Asked Questions: Lake Okeechobee Service Area Water Shortage Order and Lower East Coast Water Shortage Warning.”

For additional information, agricultural users and area residents are encouraged to call the SFWMD’s toll-free **Water Conservation Hotline** at **1-800-662-8876** or contact the SFWMD’s Palm Beach County Service Center, 3301 Gun Club Road, Building B-2, West Palm Beach, Phone: (561) 682 - 2283; Toll Free in Florida: (800) 432 - 2045, extension 6794.

Source: SFWMD

NEWS AND NOTES

Based on a request by Syngenta, tolerances are approved for the fungicide propiconazole (Tilt®/Orbit®). Tolerances of importance to our area include banana, field/sweet corn, pineapple, rice, rye, sorghum, and strawberry. (*Federal Register*, 9/22/06).

Recently published research suggests that historic use of Chilean nitrate fertilizer has contributed to background perchlorate levels in certain agricultural areas. This molecule

was detected in several types of foods grown in the U.S. The lead researcher was quoted as saying “Many people, including myself, have focused on military-industrial sources of perchlorate. But the numbers don’t support it. Stepping back, the best way to get something into the food chain is fertilizer.” These fertilizers were imported into the U.S. by the hundreds of tons in the 1800s.

(*Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News*, 10/2/06).

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR?

“Huh?” “What?” “Come again?” Do you find that you say these words more than you did in the past? Or, possibly, you find that you can only understand a phone conversation when you turn your cell phone to its loudest setting? If you answered “yes” to these questions, you may have hearing loss.

Hearing loss is a serious concern for agricultural operations because of excessive noise exposure to equipment. With continued exposure to high levels of noise, your farm, nursery or landscaping business can lose profits because of decreased employee effectiveness and accidents.

Workplace noise exposure is regulated by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) under federal register number 1910.95. Agriculture has typically been exempt from these regulations, but several states, including Florida, are in the process of discontinuing this exemption.

In addition to regulation

exemption changes, Florida workman’s compensation claims are on the rise. According to the Florida Department of Financial Services, state agribusinesses have paid over \$22 million in workman’s compensation claims related to hearing loss since 1990. Protective methods, like hearing loss prevention and conservation programs, are important for business survival. Programs are relatively inexpensive to implement and maintain.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) says hearing loss is 100 percent preventable. A plan published by The University of Florida outlines specific steps that agribusinesses should take to prevent and/or minimize hearing loss. This publication can be obtained by calling the Belle Glade Extension Office at (561) 996-1655 or accessed on the Web at:

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/OA021>.



Inexpensive base-line hearing testing sessions are planned for February 2007 at the Belle Glade Extension Office. Noted audiological group Miami Hearing will be administering these tests.

If your business is interested in participating in this event or other safety programs, please contact Agricultural Safety Training Agent Kiley Harper at (561) 996-1655.

THE RETURN OF El Niño

The National Weather Service recently indicated that El Niño may have returned for the first time since a weak event of 2002-03. El Niño is the name for the warming of the ocean’s surface, and tends to occur every 2 to 7 years along the equator. During a strong El Niño, surface temperatures can rise as much as 15 °F greater than normal, greatly disrupting weather and climate patterns around the world.

Forecasts call for the current El Niño to be a weak event again. However, even with a weak El Niño pattern our growing conditions could be significantly affected. Now that the colder months have arrived, the classic El Niño climate patterns that we are familiar with should establish themselves and control our weather over that time.

El Niño is known to bring more frequent storms, excessive rainfall, and cooler temperatures to

El Niño Impacts Across the Southeast U.S.					
Phase	Region	Seasons			
		Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
El Niño	Peninsular Florida	Wet & cool	Very wet & cool	Slightly dry	Slightly dry to no impact
	Tri-State Region	Wet	Wet	Slightly wet	No impact
	Western Panhandle	No impact	Wet	Slightly dry	No impact
	Central and North Ala. & Ga.	No impact	No impact	No impact	Slightly dry

Florida and coastal Alabama and Georgia. During a typical weak El Niño, Florida can expect 40% - 60% more rainfall than normal in the winter months. It is believed that the increase in rain and cloudiness associated with El Niño causes average temperatures to be cooler than normal during the winter months. These cooler temperatures result in greater chill accumulations over

the course of the season.

While average temperatures are often cooler, El Niño actually reduces the risk of severe cold outbreaks in Florida and the Southeast. The strong subtropical jet stream that is typical of El Niño acts to “block” the intrusions of cold arctic air masses. If the weather pattern holds through the summer, we could also see a relatively

VISIT US AT THE SOUTH FLORIDA FAIR

The 2007 South Florida Fair will take place January 12 through January 28, 2007. Palm Beach County Extension will have several educational displays in



Exhibit Building #5. For this year’s center display, titled *We Have Answers: From Our House to Yours*, we will be visually creating a house. Questions and answers displayed throughout the house will increase awareness of everyday actions that can be taken at home to live a more “sustainable” Florida lifestyle. For example, in the dining room we are highlighting locally grown and

produced agricultural products.

The Palm Beach County agriculture team exhibit, also located in Exhibit Building #5, will once again showcase our area’s crops, inform the public of the importance of agriculture in Palm Beach County, and display hydroponic growing systems that can be built and used by homeowners. Plus, don’t forget to visit the Sunday Feed Store where you will see the latest in research from the University of Florida, and have the opportunity to buy locally grown produce – straight from the growers!

**Thank You
Florida Crystals**



**For sponsoring this
newsletter issue!**