

September/October 2015

1921 Kissimmee Valley Lane
Kissimmee, FL 34744
321-697-3000
<http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu>

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Jim Fletcher
Osceola County
Extension Director
jhfr@ufl.edu

Eleanor Foerste
Natural Resources
efoerste@ufl.edu

Gabriela Murza
Family & Consumer Science
gmurza@ufl.edu

Jessica Sullivan
Agriculture
sullivan@ufl.edu

Ashley Fluke
Livestock & Forage
afluke@ufl.edu

Grisel Negron
FNP Coordinator
gnegron@ufl.edu

Laura Valencia
4-H
lauraval@ufl.edu

Grantly Ricketts
Horticulture
gricketts@ufl.edu

Jessica Sprain
4-H
jsprain@ufl.edu

Johanna Ramirez
Family & Consumer Science
jgramirez@ufl.edu



Farmers Markets Offer Opportunities for Entrepreneurs Jessica Sullivan

Farmers Markets Offer Opportunities for Entrepreneurs

Are you interested in starting an agricultural business? Growing produce for farmers markets can be a practical way to get started with a farm venture. Compared to other types of farm businesses, market farming doesn't require a large initial investment, and allows flexibility as you grow your business. As a market farmer, you have the advantage of walking into a situation where you have a location to sell and people to buy your products - without having to pay expensive rent, find your own customers, or spend money on marketing!

Farmers that are new to growing in Florida might do well to start on a small scale and give themselves a few growing seasons to learn about the local soils, best crop varieties, and regional pests. Not only do farmers need to know about growing crops, but they also need to understand regulations, sales strategies and local markets.

Educational workshops, classes, field days, and consultations through the University of Florida IFAS Extension can help you learn what you need to build your business. Growing produce is hard work, and planning ahead is vital to the success of a farm operation. Start your farm business off on the right path and learn the basics of market farming at: Growing Produce for Farmers Markets, October 29, 2015, 9:00am-noon. Register at ocagriculture.eventbrite.com.

Did you know?...

- Osceola County, FL is in cold hardiness zone 9b –that means we can grow a wide variety of temperate and subtropical crops (pepper, pumpkin, papaya, peach, pigeon pea...)
- Our soil types in the County can vary from sandy and well-drained, to flood-prone, muck soils. Knowing your soil type, drainage and pH will help you understand what crops will do best on your land, and whether you need to add lime. (Hint: talk to your local Extension Agent.)
- Pollinators like honey bees are important for many of the crops grown here (i.e.-squash, blueberry, watermelon). Learning how to minimize pesticide use and protect beneficial insects is one of the most worthwhile actions that a farmer can take to protect their crop yields. Using cover crops, soil amendments, disease resistant varieties, and proper nutrient management are all part of an Integrated Pest Management Plan.



Photo by

Osceola County 4-H and STEM: A mission to expand STEM programming in Osceola County

Jessica Sprain

How often do you use STEM in your everyday life? Think about it. Science is the world around us, weather, plants, food. Technology is our lifeline, computers, phones, tablets, and communication. Engineering tackles problems facing our world, global warming, food deserts, and waste. And math is used everywhere. Today, only 16% of American high school seniors are proficient in mathematics, according to the US Department of Education. The STEM Education Coalition has seen that, only 30% of 12th graders who took the ACT test were cleared for college-level sciences. By 2020 there will be over 1 million new STEM jobs within the United States; however, with a limited

The Foundation for The Gator Nation

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number of qualified individuals to fill the positions. This is the issue facing our youth today. So, what is Osceola County 4-H youth development doing about it?

Osceola County 4-H has adopted the National 4-H Science mission mandate to “prepare youth for the challenges of the 21st century by engaging them in a process of discovery and exploration,” STEM programs. As a part of this mandate, Osceola County 4-H is implementing 4-H School Enrichment programs with an emphasis on STEM: embryology, plant science, etc. In our community club program, we are doing projects that will be focusing on robotics, marine science, and momentum. Also, we are creating afterschool programs that will work with hydroponics, animal science, and environmental science.

This summer we held our first annual Explore STEM Week, where youth got to experience STEM in Central Florida. We watched a rocket launch, attended a space museum in Titusville and explored physics through indoor skydiving. Youth learned a lot and had lots of fun!

We also, this summer took on the SeaPerch program. SeaPerch is program designed to teach youth about underwater robotics through lessons on buoyancy, electricity, engineering, marine science, and much more. At our first meeting youth were able to design and build their own underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV). Our next meeting we will begin to build and design the SeaPerch to get us ready and prepared to compete at our 4-H Marine Ecology Event in November.

There is a lot to learn about STEM in our community and we want youth to have STEM related experiences. We invite youth 5-18 to join us for our 4-H STEM programs. Please contact Jessica Sprain, jsprain@ufl.edu for more information.

Now is your chance to join us for STEM fun!

Lawn Equipment Calibration Saves Money **Grantly Ricketts**

The weather report shows that we will be having a beautiful day and the landscaper is happy and ready to apply both fertilizer and weed killer to his customers' yards. Did he calibrate his equipment? Calibration is the process of adjusting equipment to give the desired application rate with uniform coverage. If the equipment is not properly calibrated, it can result in too much or too little chemical being applied. Excess chemical will increase overhead cost, injury to turf, and pollution to our water. In my former life, way before becoming an extension agent, I started a lawn care business. I did not gain the basic knowledge needed on calibration which cost me a lot of money in both product and time, not to mention the environment. My sad story is that I was using a tank of herbicide that could treat thirty yards to treat only ten. After learning about calibration, I started making an average of \$900 more per tank compared to before calibrating. Calibration really saves time and money! It already cost me not to calibrate, so why not learn from my mistake?

Let's talk about steps in calibrating a rotary spreader:

- Step 1. Along with your fertilizer/pesticide product and spreader, gather the following materials: tape measure, scale, bucket, chalk or flags, calculator, pencil, and paper.
- Step 2. Measure your spreader's effective swath width.
- Step 3. Measure a 50 or 100 ft. strip in a turf area that is not being used or where no one will object to striping or burning from the product application. If a turf area is not available, you can mark off a strip on a paved area. Use chalk or flags to indicate the starting and end points of the strip.
- Step 4. With the hopper-opening lever in the closed position, fill the hopper to about one-third to one-half full with a known weight of the product. Make sure you write down the weight of the product.
- Step 5. Adjust the spreader to the recommended setting on the product label (if available) for the rate you desire.
- Step 6. Position the spreader several feet in front of the starting line and begin walking at the pace you will use to treat the lawn. Close the spreader holes as you pass over the finishing or end point.
- Step 7. Pour the product remaining in the spreader into a separate bucket, then weigh the product (be sure to subtract the weight of the bucket) The difference in weight between the original amount and the product left in the spreader after the calibration test run is the amount that was distributed.

Step 8. Now you must determine if the amount of product distributed in the first calibration test run equals the rate you want to apply to the turf.

For more information on calibration and other related horticulture topics, contact Grantly Ricketts with UF/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or email gricketts@ufl.edu

Be Prepared, Flood Protection Eleanor Foerste

September is National Preparedness Month and hurricane season continues until the end of November. Whether we have severe weather or not, it is time to be ready. “Don’t Wait. Communicate. Make your emergency plan today.” is the message shared by emergency officials across the nation. It is our responsibility to be prepared to be self-sufficient for a week in case of an emergency.

Climate scientists with NOAA are predicting a very strong El Niño fall and winter. Though El Niño weather years have tended to have fewer hurricanes, our part of Florida has typically had wetter fall weather and much wetter winter months than average. <http://agroclimate.org/climate/>

Regardless of the weather cycle, it is critical to consider flooding as a potential emergency. Much of Osceola County is very flat. Sometimes we have standing water called “ponding” which can cause puddles in the road after heavy thunder showers or during the advance of a cold front. Water flows across the flat land and fills roadside ditches and canals. Floodwaters in buildings are devastating whether they are short lived or last for days.

- What can you do to help your family be prepared?
- Plan to protect furniture and belongings if flood waters rise by stacking them on waterproof items such as blocks.
- Store important papers in a portable waterproof container or safe.
- Store canned food and dry goods, like cereal and flour, up off the floor.
- Clean out leaves and sticks from gutters and downspouts to prevent water damage to the roof and ceiling of your home or office.
- Keep storm drain inlets, grassy swales and ditches free of trash and yard debris so storm water can keep flowing.
- Blow grass clippings and leaves out of the street and into the yard to prevent them from clogging street storm grates.
- Know where the main shut off is for power and water coming to your home or business. You need to shut off these utilities if you evacuate.
- Pick up street litter and remove litter from nearby storm water ponds.
- Educate all household drivers and neighbors about the message “When Flooded, Turn Around, Don’t Drown.” If the road is covered in water, drive a different path. Do not drive around or through barriers.
- Find out the flood potential for your home, neighborhood and key roads. Contact your local floodplain department for more information (Osceola County – 407-742-0200, Kissimmee – 407-518-2170, or St. Cloud - 407-957-7344.)
- Contact your local homeowners’ insurance company for information about flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Most standard insurance policies do not cover flood damage from rising water so this federal program, administered by FEMA, was created. You can purchase flood insurance as protection whether your lender requires it or not. Our local governments have met criteria that qualify residents for discounts.
- Subscribe to weather alerts on your mobile device.
- Purchase a NOAA weather radio.



- Create a communication plan. <http://flgetaplan.com/> Send text messages during a disaster since they are more likely to get through than voice calls.
- Gather emergency supplies – whether you stay at home or evacuate.
- Create or update your Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1414082044066-be9af9c879906bce1d8e0e6852ebf739/2522_FEMA_EFFAK_v12_508V3_Enabled.pdf
- During a flood, do not walk or play in flowing water. It may be contaminated with germs and chemicals. Six inches of flowing water can knock you off your feet and one foot of water can float a car.
- Stay in a safe place, not in the water. Power lines can fall into the water and make it dangerous. Do not interfere with emergency workers.
- Additional resources are available on <http://ready.gov>. There are links for teachers and children as well as for family and businesses.
- Whatever the weather prediction, now is a good time to help your family plan for any emergency.

“Money Talk” with Your Children Johanna Ramírez



It's important to teach our children to be responsible and live a productive lifestyle. When we think about what to teach them we generally decide to talk about values, morals, education, eating well, and good habits. However, we also need to consider teaching them about money. “Money talk” with your children at an early age will allow them to obtain the knowledge they need to learn the value of money and apply skills when time comes for them to use it. Depending on the age of your child, there are different ways to involve them in learning about money. As they grow you will have enriched their foundation and development into their teen age years. As they transition to young adulthood they will be equipped to develop a plan to live a responsible financial life.

How do you start? During your day-to-day activities with your children, eating at the table, going to the store or even telling them a story it is important to find time to teach them important money lessons about saving, spending and sharing. The sooner you start the easier it will be to create a responsible money habit. A beneficial way to begin is to research interactive videos, games, and lesson plans that help your little ones to associate well known- characters (i.e. Sesame Street, Avengers, Cartoon Network) with topics such as:

- Understanding Currency -Exploring how money is used and where it comes from helps children develop the skills to be financially responsible.
- Earning Money - Talking about jobs and the value of work is a useful way to teach children the concept of earning money.
- Needs and Wants - The topic of needs versus wants helps children develop decision-making skills while learning about wise spending.
- Setting Goals - Setting goals can help your child learn how to make choices and develop positive decision-making habits. Even the littlest learners can begin identifying small short-term goals for themselves during everyday moments.
- Saving and Spending- Build your child understanding of how money is used by exploring saving and spending. Having these early conversations develops children’s critical thinking skills around choosing what to do with money.
- Borrowing and Lending- It’s important for children to understand how to take care of each other’s property and return something that is borrowed. Exploring strategies for sharing (lending) and caring (borrowing) builds problem-solving skills and responsible habits.

If you are interested in our “Money Talk” Class Series please contact us at UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County at 321-697-3000. For more information about our programs visit us at <http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu>

The State of Florida’s official source for standards information and course description includes grade-based goals for financial literacy (generally found in the categories of Social Studies and Math). Please visit <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/> to find the complete list of standards of education by grade.

Extension Services Calendar of Events

Registration for any class is required ! You can register at www.tinyurl.com/ufclass

SEPTEMBER 2015		
Thurs., Sept 10	9:00 am - 4:00 pm	Annie's Project: Ag risk management education series, Career Source Central Florida 1329 E Vine St. Kissimmee - Fee applies http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Sat., Sept. 19	9:00 am - 11:00 am	Build Your Own Beehive, Extension Services, OHP - Fee applies http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
OCTOBER 2015		
Thurs., Oct. 1	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Fall Lawn Care Maintenance, Extension Services, OHP http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Oct. 6, 13, 20 & 27	6:00 pm - 9:00 pm	First Time Homebuyer Class, Extension Services, OHP - Fee applies http://ocfcs.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Oct 8	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Ornamental and Truf/Private Applicator, Extension Services, OHP - Fee applies http://occeu.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Oct. 22	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices for Protection of Water Quality (GI-BMP) CEU's available - Fees apply. http://occeu.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Oct. 22	8:00 am - 4:00 pm	Mejores Prácticas de Manejo de las Industrias Verdes GI-BMP Programa de Certificación - Fees apply. http://occeu.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Oct. 29	9:00 am - noon	Growing Produce for Farmers Market, Extension Services, OHP - \$5 http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com
Thurs., Oct. 29	9:00 am - 4:30 pm	First Time Homebuyer Class, Extension Services, OHP - Fee applies http://ocfcs.eventbrite.com

Woods Walks Resume with Cooler Fall Weather

Woods Walks are free outdoor interpretive walks at local **natural** areas. Walks are moderate paced at a "saunter" on unpaved trails. Participants meet others interested in the outdoors and learn about plants and animals in our local parks and preserves.

Sign up online at <http://ocagriculture.eventbrite.com/>



Become a Certified Florida Upland Master Naturalist Eleanor Foerste

UF IFAS Extension offers the Florida Master Naturalist Program so students will increase their knowledge of Florida's natural systems, of the plants and animals that depend upon those systems, and of the role of humankind in shaping our past, of determining our future, and as stewards of the land. The objective of the Florida Master Naturalist Program is to prepare persons to share their knowledge with others, to act in a positive manner, to help others feel a greater connection to the land and to help others to develop their own personal land ethic. Information on the ecology of Florida's systems is an integral part of the program, but we do not attempt to create experts in botany, herpetology, or any other discipline. Rather, we hope to initiate what is for many a life-long process of learning, of observation, and of sharing with others. Teachers, agency biologists, environmental consultants, and interested residents are invited to participate.

The next module offered in Osceola County will focus on our Upland Ecosystems. Through classroom, field trip, and practical experience, this module provides instruction on the general ecology, habitats, vegetation types, wildlife, and conservation issues of Upland Systems in Florida - Hardwood Forests, Pinelands, Scrub, Dry Prairie, Rangelands and Urban Green Spaces. The program also addresses society's role in uplands, develops naturalist interpretation skills, and discusses environmental ethics.

The Uplands Ecosystem will be held on 6 consecutive Wednesdays from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm beginning January 13 through February 17, 2016 with an optional field trip on Feb. 24th. The only requirements of students are enthusiasm, attendance, participation, and completion of group final projects. There is no comprehensive examination required. Classroom learning includes four instructional videos and 12 presentations as well as field trips to local natural areas. Class size is limited to assure a quality experience. Kim Titterington of Swamp Girl Adventures will be team teaching with veteran UF IFAS Extension Natural Resources Agent, Eleanor Foerste. This is a fee based certification program and requires online registration at <http://masternaturalist.org>

October is National Bullying Prevention Month Gabriela Murza

Many of us can think of a time when we were bullied, either as kids or adults. Some of these incidents may have occurred one time, or had been on-going. Bullying takes various forms, including verbal (name-calling, teasing), physical (hitting, fighting), and a new form via the internet called cyber bullying.

Bullying is an overt or covert behavior that intentionally hurts or harms another physically or emotionally. It can be circumstantial or chronic, such as when a new child at school is teased. Whichever form of bullying is used, it has a negative effect on everyone. As parents, we may have seen it in our kids—they may be depressed, they don't talk much about their day, they don't want to go to school, and they may even have some physical signs.

As adults, we may have experienced it at work. A person makes fun of a co-worker behind his/her back, one intimidates another for a coveted position in the company, or one "badmouths" another after a poor performance review. It's become clearer that it is not merely "a part of growing up", but in fact can be a sign of something more serious.

The physical and emotional costs of being bullied are tremendous. 2010 statistics reveal that one in seven youth in kindergarten through 12th grade is either a bully or is a victim of bullying. Sometimes, the victim becomes the bully in retaliation. The top years of bullying seem to be from fourth through eighth grade with almost 90% reporting being victims of some kind of bullying. When youth are bullied, they miss school, are more depressed, and often don't seek help. A reported 15% of youth miss school because they are afraid of being bullied. In another study by Yale University, victims are two to nine times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims.

To add to this problem, this generation is battling a new form called cyber bullying. In this age of social media, people can write messages for the public to read instantly, whether on their own page or via hacking into someone else's page.

Bullying can continue into adulthood, with victims in the workplace experiencing depression, sleeping and eating problems, and family tension. According to a recent study, 41% reported experiencing psychological aggression in the past year, and 13% on a weekly basis. It affects their work performance and can affect the overall performance of the organization.

In response to this ongoing problem, October has been designated as National Bullying Prevention Month. Throughout the month, nation-wide events are held in order to bring awareness to this issue. PACER Center, a parent training and information center for families of youth with

disabilities, spearheads this campaign by holding events that all communities can participate in. You can unite against bullying by educating others and directing them to resources.

Another way to get involved and speak out about bullying is to watch, listen and take action at home, at work, and in your community. If your child is showing signs such as depression, loss of interest in school and other activities, or physical bruises, they may be a victim of bullying. You can speak to teachers, school administrators, and even take it to your community representatives. Signs of bullying should not be ignored at work, either. If you are not comfortable talking to the bully, speak to your supervisor. If your supervisor is the bully, you can contact your Human Resources department.

The worst thing anyone can do is stay quiet about this issue. It should not be cast off as a normal part of growing up meant to prepare us for the “real world”. There are better ways to prepare our youth for adulthood than subjecting them to bullying, and it starts with each of us. For more information about the campaign, visit www.pacer.org/bullying, or contact Osceola County Extension Services.

Ranching and the Environment Ashley Fluke

Conservation, utilization of rangeland, addressing water quality, and improved management overtime are some of the reasons cattle ranchers are often recognized as stewards of the land. Ranching goes far beyond feeding citizens of the world. Cattle producers have always managed their land with respect toward the environment. They understand the importance proper management has on the health of their livestock and overall success of their business. Healthy land makes healthy cows which provide a nutritious product for consumers. Ranching depends on a healthy environment. Cattlemen are taking great strides to ensure a positive impact on the natural resources they manage every day.

Grazing cattle allows for a huge portion of land to be utilized to produce food that is otherwise considered unsuitable for crop land. This land may be too rough a terrain or not the quality required for agricultural crops. The ability to graze the land allows for it to be conserved as open land. Cattle, through grazing, promote enhanced soil fertility and native forage growth. As they move through pastures and graze grasses they prevent overgrowth and spread seed of native plants. Through urine and feces cattle redistribute necessary minerals back into the soil. Also, their split hooves aerate the soil as they travel which increases soil quality by infiltrating nutrients and water into the soil and assisting seed development. Grazing through native Florida lands keeps brush and other plants from extreme overgrowth which helps to prevent wildfires. Having cattle on rangeland in Florida increases food production, promotes soil and forage quality, and prevents against wildfires due to overgrowth.

Cattle ranchers are constantly working with universities to stay informed on the latest practices to better water quality. Our producers in the state of Florida work closely with University of Florida extension agents and specialists. They follow the Best Management Practices developed by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services which provide guidelines for managing cattle and maintaining water quality. Ranchers build fences to keep cattle from grazing too close to water sources and do not keep herds in confined areas by water. They refrain from fertilization in close proximity to water ways and manage their cattle in ways that prevent erosion. Clean water is critical in cattle nutrition and also forage quality.

The environmental impact livestock producers have has improved over the years. This is in part due to the fact that they are now forced to produce more food on less land. This makes every acre they manage highly valuable to the success of their operation. A study by Washington State University showed that over a 30 year period (1977-2007) the beef industry had improved beef productivity and considerably reduced environmental impacts. A key point was that there has been an 18% decrease in total carbon emissions from beef production over the 30 year span. Also, more pounds of beef have been produced with a fewer number of cattle harvested. This demonstrates the extremely efficient management ranchers are implementing in modern operations. Through rotational grazing, genetic improvement, innovative management practices, and addressing water quality ranchers practice environmentally focused management strategies.

Cattle producers respect the environment and understand the challenges of feeding a large population with less land to do it on. Healthy pastures are vital to ranchers. While cattlemen have always been great stewards of the land and always valued the land they manage, they realize that now more than ever they must conserve the resources they have in order to be efficient and productive. Through proper land utilization, beneficial cattle management, water quality awareness, and enhanced production practices to adapt to modern society ranchers are still true stewards of the land. If you ever get the chance to ride through a cattle operation you'll find it also doubles as a nature tour. Wildlife flourishes on the native Florida swamps and flat woods. Cattle often graze with deer and drink water as an alligator suns on the bank. Bald Eagles sore over pastures and otters play in creeks. Cattlemen would tell you ranching in Florida is just another part of the environment.

UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County

Learn About Small Farm Fruit and Vegetable Production



Florida Small Farms and
Alternative Enterprises
CONFERENCE

The former statewide Florida Small Farms Conference held in Kissimmee has now been replaced by five regional conferences that will take place throughout the state in 2015-2016. Our closest conference will be held at the **Mid-Florida Research and Education Center in Apopka, November 6, 2015.**

The Central Florida Small Farms conference will be focused on fruit and vegetable production. Planned topics include greenhouse production, vegetable pest management, produce marketing, grape production, and farm food safety certification. Conference attendees will have opportunities to hear from fruit and vegetable specialists and growers, network, and see crop demonstrations. Agendas and registration for all of the Florida Small Farms Conferences will be posted at: <http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/>



Foundation for the Gator Nation
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2015-2016 4-H Enrollment Forms
Along with Payments are now done
Through Eventbrite/4-H Online

Please visit:

Information on how to:

http://osceola.ifas.ufl.edu/4h/4h_kh_enrollment.shtml

To Enroll for the 2015-2016 4-H Year:

<http://florida.4honline.com>

Registration Payment:

<http://oc4h.eventbrite.com/>

Registration Opened Thursday, August 20, 2015



Welcome to the 2015-2016 4-H year. Don't forget to enroll (new 4-H families) or re-enroll for the new 4-H year. Stay tuned as two new special interest clubs will be starting this coming year. In addition to our existing Shooting Sports Club, we will have a dog and rabbit club.

For more information about 4-H and for our calendar of events, please visit our website:

<http://florida4h.org/osceola>

Thank you,
Osceola County 4-H Office

Osceola County Extension Director

James Fletcher