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Oxford University Word of the Year for 2007 - Locavore

By Richard Tyson

Local Florida farmers may benefit from a new movement or popular trend of using locally grown food. The term locavore was coined two years ago by a group of four women in San Francisco who proposed that local residents try to eat only food grown within a 100-mile radius. It was also called the 100-mile diet. This takes advantage of seasonally available food that can be bought and prepared without the need for extra preservatives. Another important reason for the trend, especially with environmentally conscious individuals, is the skyrocketing fuel costs necessary to transport food long distances. So - grow your own, U-pick or buy from local farmers to save the environment and reduce our carbon footprint. Florida grocery stores are required by law to post the country of origin of fresh food. Do you know where your food comes from and who grew it?



Local Harvest Website

[HTTP://WWW.LOCALHARVEST.ORG/](http://www.localharvest.org/)



Local Food Cooperative

<http://www.holisticlivingschool.org/coop/>

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CENTRAL FLORIDA <AG> CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer/Fall 2008

June 1-4 Florida State Horticultural Society Annual Meeting, Fort Lauderdale Marriott North. Concurrent educational sessions on vegetables, fruit crops and ornamentals. For more information go to the web at <http://www.fshs.org/>

June 7-10 Trees Florida 2008, Hyatt Regency Bonaventure, Weston, FL. For more information call 941-342-0153 or go to the FNGLA website at <http://www.fn gla.org/index.asp>

June 17-19 Florida Cattlemen's Association Annual Meeting, Marco Island Marriott, Marco Island, FL. For more information go to their website at <http://www.floridacattlemen.org/> or call 407-846-6221.

June 24 CEU Days and Worker Protection Standards, Lake County Extension, Tavares. Multiple CEU's available for pesticide license recertification. Contact Juanita Popenoe at 352-343-4101 or go to the web at <http://cfextension.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

July 21-24 American Society of Horticultural Science Annual Meeting, Rosen Plaza Hotel, Orlando. Educational and poster sessions on fruit, vegetable and ornamental plant topics. For more information go to their website at <http://www.ashs.org/>

July 26 Review and Exams for Limited Pesticide License Certification, Lake County Extension, Tavares. For more information call Juanita Popenoe at 352-343-4101.

August 21 Review and Exams for Ornamental and Turf and Private Ag Applicator Pesticide License Certification. For more information contact Celeste White at 407-254-9200.

September 16-19 Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Meeting, PGA National Resort, Palm Beach Gardens, FL. Educational sessions on multiple turfgrass topics. For more information go to their website at <http://www.ftga.org/>

November 5 2008 Florida Ag Expo, Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, Balm, FL. Educational sessions on vegetable and blueberry production, integrated pest management, with field tours including tomato and strawberry variety trials. Call Christine at 813-634-0000 #3101 or go to the web at <http://flagexpo.ifas.ufl.edu>

November 6 CEU Days and Worker Protection Standards, Orange County Extension, Orlando. Multiple CEU's available for pesticide license recertification. Contact Celeste White at 407-254-9200 or go to the web at <http://cfextension.ifas.ufl.edu/>.

Biofuels and Going Green Update

- Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles H. Bronson announced on January 22 that a \$5.9 million plant planned in Auburndale, Florida, will produce ethanol from citrus peels with the help of a \$500,000 grant as part of the state's "Farm to Fuel" initiative. In all, \$25 million in renewable energy grants were awarded, including the grant to Southeast Biofuels LLC, a subsidiary of Xethanol Corp., a New York-based publicly traded company, for the citrus peel project in Polk County. U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers in Winter Haven have worked for years on the technology. Larry Parsons, a professor at the University of Florida/IFAS Citrus Research and Education Center in Lake Alfred, was quoted as saying, "Florida is particularly interested in generating renewable fuels from biomass and cellulose. Florida has the climate and land to produce a great deal of biomass." The ethanol plant, which will lease space from Cutrale Citrus Juices USA Inc. in Polk County, will use a 10,000-gallon fermenter and about 67,000 pounds of citrus peels per batch. The goal is to have a plant that could make 8 million gallons of ethanol a year using 800,000 tons of citrus waste. (*Orlando Sentinel*, 1/24/08, Chemically Speaking Newsletter).
- A team of USDA researchers has found that switchgrass-derived ethanol produced 540 percent more energy than was required to manufacture the fuel. One acre of the grassland could, on average, deliver 320 gallons of bioethanol. The five-year study, involving 10 farms ranging in size from 6 to 20 acres, was described as the largest study of its kind by co-author Ken Vogel of the Agriculture Research Service based at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Previous energy analyses had been based on data from research plots and estimated inputs. (BBC News, 1/8/08, Chemically Speaking Newsletter).

Ethanol fuel production in the U.S.A. averaged 423,000 barrels per day in 2007, an increase of more than 34 percent over 2006 production, according to the Renewable Fuels Association (RFA). Ethanol fuel production totaled 6.48 billion gallons in 2007, far above the 4.7 billion gallons of renewable fuel required by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Ethanol production will have to continue to increase this year, as the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 includes a new Renewable Fuel Standard that requires 8 billion gallons of renewable fuels to be blended into the country's fuel supply in 2008. That's an annual growth rate of more than 23 percent, but the industry appears ready to meet that challenge. According to the RFA, there are currently 143 ethanol bio-refineries with the combined capacity to produce 13.4 billion gallons per year of ethanol fuel, well above that required by the new standard. The industry is also building another 57 bio-refineries and expanding seven existing bio-refineries in an effort that will boost ethanol production capacity by another 5.2 billion gallons. A new report concludes that the ethanol fuel industry created nearly 240,000 new jobs in 2007 and added \$47.6 billion to the nation's gross domestic product.

With U.S. gasoline consumption at about 9 million barrels per day, one question is how the U.S. fuel infrastructure will absorb a steadily increasing supply of ethanol. One answer is a greater use of flex-fuel vehicles, which can burn E85, but most cars are currently burning at most 10 percent ethanol blends, or E10. Fueling the entire nation with E10 would allow for a doubling of ethanol production from the 2007 production level, but the new fuel standard calls for ethanol consumption to more than double by 2012. The answer may come from states like Minnesota, which has found that current vehicles and fuel dispensing equipment can handle ethanol blends as high as 20

percent. The year-long research effort will lead the state and its partners to apply for a waiver from the EPA to allow E20 to be used for all of the state's gasoline. If approved, such a change could nearly double the ethanol demand in Minnesota, a state where much of the nation's ethanol is produced, and could serve as a model for other states. (Tech News Daily, 3/17/08, Chemically Speaking Newsletter).

Going Green To Make Green

Florida's farmers and foresters stand to reap hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue under proposed climate change legislation now pending in the U.S. Congress, according to a first-of-its-kind analysis from the University of Florida.

The analysis, "Opportunities for Greenhouse Gas Reduction through Forestry and Agriculture in Florida," found that agriculture producers can earn more than \$340 million – every year – by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and selling emission credits under a federal cap and trade program like the one created by S. 2191, the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act.

Biofuels, biomass, energy crops, and managed forestry are just some of the many sectors of Florida's agriculture and forest industry that could stand to benefit from a carbon market, according to the analysis, which was commissioned by Environmental Defense Fund.

"This is a huge incentive for Florida's agricultural sector – and another reason why Congress needs to take action now to address climate change and bolster Florida's economy," said Jerry Karnas, Florida climate project director at Environmental Defense Fund.

The U.S. Senate is poised to vote on the Climate Security Act in early June. The bill would put a mandatory cap on emissions, and allow companies that emit greenhouse gases to meet the cap in part by purchasing credits from farmers and foresters that make emissions reductions.

"Our report demonstrates that we can combine the ethical imperative of responding to climate change with power of the market, while protecting Florida's natural resources," said Dr. Stephen Mulkey, lead author of the report from the University of Florida School of Natural Resources and Environment. "There are a number of ways to reap the benefits of and this is very positive news for Florida's economy."

A few of the report's findings include:

- 7.36 million tons carbon dioxide emission reductions from increased use of wood, energy crops, crop residues, and ethanol as biofuels, for an offset value of \$147 million per year;
- Of the biofuels counted above, 3.23 million metric tons would come from crop and logging residue not currently utilized. If landowners can receive \$10 per dry ton of biomass (with most of the delivered price paying for collection and transport) landowners would receive \$49 million per year in new revenues;
- \$19.2 million in reducing current methane emissions from manure and reducing emissions by replacing natural gas with biogas from manure.

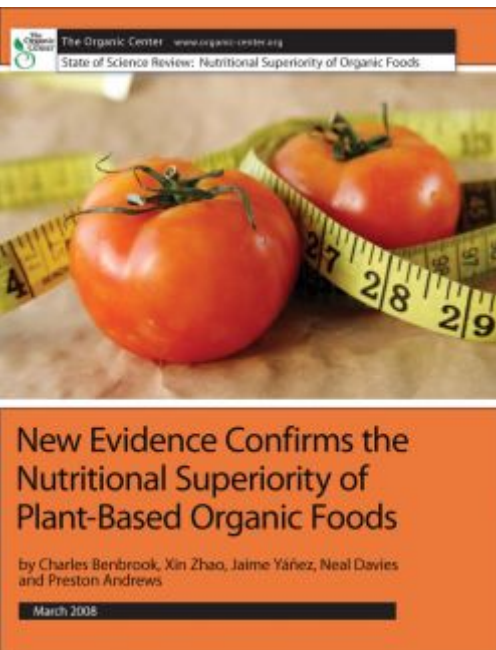
The full report can be found at: <http://snre.ufl.edu/research/greenhouse.htm> Frank Giles, Florida Grower Magazine



Organic Crops Update

"New Evidence Confirms the Nutritional Superiority of Plant-Based Organic Foods," State of Science Review, March 2008

This in depth review of the published scientific literature on the nutritional benefits of organic food indicates that organic fruits, vegetables and grains contain higher levels of eight of 11 nutrients studied and higher concentrations of health-promoting compounds like polyphenols and antioxidants. See website for complete details http://www.organic-center.org/science.latest.php?action=view&report_id=126



Organic agriculture can contribute to fighting hunger But chemical fertilizers needed to feed the world

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has no reason to believe that organic agriculture can substitute for conventional farming systems in ensuring the world's food security, Dr. Jacques Diouf, FAO Director-General, said here today. Dr. Diouf was commenting on recent press and media reports suggesting that FAO endorses organic agriculture (OA) as the solution to world hunger. "We should use organic agriculture and promote it," Dr. Diouf said. "It produces wholesome, nutritious food and represents a growing source of income for developed and developing countries. But you cannot feed six billion people today and nine billion in 2050 without judicious use of chemical fertilizers."

Organic farming generally bars the use of any chemical inputs. Nearly 31 million hectares, or roughly two percent of the world's farmland, was farmed organically in 2005, generating sales of some US\$ 24 billion in the EU, US, Canada and Asia in 2006. Organically-grown products generally attract higher prices than conventionally grown ones and therefore represent a good source of income for farmers. However, they must meet certain farming and quality standards and require capacity-building, large investments and efficient organization along the production and marketing chains, which puts them beyond the reach of most resource-poor farmers of developing countries. Much of African soil suffers from constraints such as acidity and lowered fertility and is greatly in need of soil amendments and nutrients.

In its annual World Development Report, the World Bank noted this year, that "low fertilizer use is one of the major constraints on increasing agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa". Malawi, for years a recipient of food aid, has recently boosted its maize production after adopting a policy of providing small-scale farmers with seeds and fertilizers. "However, chemical inputs must be used with care," Dr. Diouf said. "You have to choose the right inputs, right amounts, and apply them in the right way and at the right time." (Excerpt from FAO Newsroom 12/10/07)

New Home Lawn Turfgrass Released by the University of Florida

Imagine life with fewer Saturday afternoons stuck behind a noisy lawn mower. The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences has released a new slow-growing turfgrass called Captiva. The new St. Augustinegrass variety's finer leaf blade and dark green hue make for a prettier lawn and it's far more resistant to sap-sucking, lawn-killing chinch bugs than current varieties.

"We are quite pleasantly surprised by this grass," said Paul Grose, general manager of King Ranch, a company testing the grass in Belle Glade, Fla., and Texas. "It seems to have a lot of benefits. Besides being a chinch bug-resistant variety, it's got real good color, good density and a good root system. "And from what the consumer sees, we feel like it's going to be a kind of grass that's going to require less mowing," he said. The grass is being grown by 17 sod farmers.

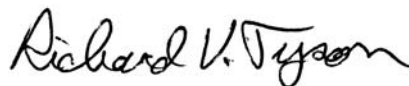
Finding Cpativa was part lucky break, part good observation, said Nagata, who began at UF in 1987 as a lettuce breeder. He began breeding turfgrass as well in 1997. He was evaluating more than 100 varieties of St. Augustinegrass for darker green and finer leaf blades when chinch bugs—destructive insects that suck the juice and life from grass—moved in. Nagata consulted fellow IFAS researcher Ron Cherry about treating the grass to get rid of the pests, but the entomologist persuaded Nagata to let the infestation run its course. After the chinch bugs were done, four grasses were intact, but only one of them had dark green, small leaves, Nagata said. "Everything around it was dead, but this one variety was still alive," he said. "So we did lab tests to be sure, and it was actually resistant."

"We can, with confidence, probably eliminate every other mowing," Nagata said. Nagata likes the reduced environmental impact of less water, gas and chemicals being used for lawn maintenance. "With more than 5 million acres of managed turfgrass around the state, if we can eliminate just one mowing per year, that could lead to substantial savings in fuel," he said. "And it's possible the darker green color will prevent some people from applying as much fertilizer."

Florida Agriculture Facts and Statistics

Florida has 42,500 commercial farms utilizing 10 million acres of land producing a variety of crops, fruit, livestock and ornamental plants. Four central Florida counties (Orange, Lake, Osceola and Seminole) have 3,594 farms on 1 million acres with annual sales of \$505 million. The latest information on Florida state or county agriculture statistics can be found at the following website:

<http://www.florida-agriculture.com/agfacts.htm> If you are interested in starting a farm in Florida, a good jumping off point is the University of Florida's Solutions for Your Life website for Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises - <http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu/> .



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Multi-County Extension Agent IV

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