

University of Florida/IFAS Sarasota County Extension 2008 Annual Report

FINANCIAL

County share of budget	\$1,189,827
University of Florida research and salary support	\$ 663,906
Total grant funding	\$ 571,770
Total fees for service	\$ 28,200
Total donations	\$ 12,600
Value of volunteer hours	\$ 591,244

Cost of service per capita: \$ 2.29

2008 Focus Areas: sustainable living, natural resources, residential and commercial horticulture, sustainable agriculture, nutrition, youth leadership development, climate change and web-based education.



2008 FOCUS AREAS

The Sarasota County Overall Extension Advisory Committee recommended the following programming focus areas for 2008: regional water conservation and fertilizer use, child and adult obesity, irrigation in subdivisions, partnerships with retail garden centers, education to builders and contractors, indoor water conservation to condo owners, and alternative funding. Each area was addressed in 2008 Extension programming. (See below.)

2008 BUDGET STRATEGIES

In addition, Sarasota County Extension chose two budget strategies for 2008:

1. Public/private partnerships to support and deliver UF/IFAS education programs
The first two public/private partnerships with area professionals were
 - a. Financial Planning for Retirement - a Certified Financial Educator taught 24 classes for 329 participants
 - b. Wills, Trusts and Estates - an Estate Attorney taught 3 classes for 25 participants.

While these efforts brought only \$4000 income for Sarasota County in FY08, they paved the way for more partnering efforts and helped establish a protocol for Extension's new emphasis on facilitation of local resources and talents and stronger community engagement.

2. Increased web-based delivery of research-based information and education
Examples of 2008 Sarasota County Extension web downloads:
 - Integrated Pest Management - 1,039,512
 - Florida Food Fare – 219,402
 - 4 different Extension newsletters - 51,070
 - 4-H Record Books – 40,192, which represent a particular success because 2008 was the first year the record books were available online.

PROGRAM IMPACT

In 2008, 18 full-time Sarasota County Extension faculty and staff, assisted by 9 full-time grant-funded employees and 301 volunteers, provided 6,257 educational classes to 76,572 participants and provided educational assistance to 89,629 Sarasota County residents at the Horticulture Help Desk, Libraries, Parks, and community events and fairs. Of 1,902 program participants evaluated, 98% stated they intended to make a practice change based on the information they received. In addition, 838 landscape professionals achieved BMP Certification and 150 pesticide applicators received Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) required for recertification.



4-H Youth Leadership Program

Activities of the 4-H Youth Leadership Program include the following:

- Recruit, train and coordinate 150 Community 4-H Club adult and youth volunteer leaders. Total number of 2008 reported adult volunteer hours = 17,725, (increase of 3,491 from '07). Value of volunteer hours = \$345,815
- Provide youth leadership opportunities for 546 youth in 38 Community 4-H Clubs and 4,358 4-H school enrichment members. Provide leadership for 4-H County and District Councils, Club Officer Training, District, State, and National Leadership programs, community service projects, 4-H Tropicana Public Speaking, and 4-H Radish Growing program
- Provide coordination for 400 4-H members to participate in County Fair in Livestock, Mini Building, Small Animal, Equine, Consumer Education, Sustainable Agriculture, Horticulture, and Share the Fun
- Work with Sarasota County 4-H Foundation, which donates \$24,000 dollars annually to programming and youth activities in Sarasota County. Provide summer camp opportunities to 105 4-H members

2008 Achievements include:

- Sarasota County 4-H Council received Community Pride Grant and was named as one of the top five Community Pride programs in Florida 2008
- Green Team 4-H Club received Community Pride grant to conduct Beautification at Bee Ridge Park and Monofilament Recycling Program
- Clubs participated in State Livestock Judging and Marine Ecology Judging Contests
- Two Sarasota Youth won trips to National 4-H Congress 2008
- One youth selected to National 4-H Congress Leadership Design Team 2008
- One youth selected to attend National 4-H Conference 2008
- One youth appointed as State 4-H Council officer 2008-2009
- 4-H Youth donated 2,660 hours of Community Service to Sarasota.
- 9 Clubs conducted Community Service projects in Sarasota County



4-H Marine Science, Environmental Science and Coastal Eco-Systems Protection Education for Youth

Activities of this 4-H program area include:

- Taught over 6000 youth who participated in research-based classroom and field trip hands-on education focused on awareness of and protection of our coastal systems
- Coastal habitat awareness classes for grades K-12
- Water conservation summer classes with libraries

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- Coastal field trips for summer Parks & Recreation youth focused on awareness of and protection of our coastal systems
- A new statewide Entomology curriculum designed for elementary school students debuted in Sarasota County



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Education Programs

The education programs of the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension of Sarasota County include the following areas:

Sustainable Agriculture

- Agriculture policy
- Diversified small farm and ranch management
- Local food system development

- Farm to School Program
- Organic farming

Natural Resources

- Florida Master Naturalist
- Backyard Landscapes for Wildlife
- Wildland-Urban Interface
- Master Wildlifer
- Monitoring of ESLPP Conservation Easements

The achievements of the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension programs can be summarized as follows:

Sustainable Agriculture

- Leadership of the Sarasota Agriculture Policy Council to formulate recommendations for implementation of 2006 agriculture policies of Comprehensive Plan (30 volunteers)
- Leadership of the Southwest Florida Small Farmers Network to support regional producers for sustainable local food system development (120 attendees)
- Leadership in direct marketing development for locally-raised, grass-fed beef by 7 ranches to Whole Foods Market, Florida Region
- Development of a training center in diversified small farming & ranching in partnership with Crowley Museum & Nature Center, Florida A&M University, and UF/IFAS/FAMU Small Farm & Alternative Enterprise Program
- Coordination of 2008 South Central Small Farm Workshop in partnership with Manatee and Hillsborough County Extension (35 attendees)
- Supervision of Sarasota Farm to School Program for initiation of regular deliveries of seasonal, locally-grown citrus and potatoes for school lunch program (37 schools). Program includes teaching classes at the model edible school garden at Booker Middle School (600 students).
- Conducted market gardening class series (110 attendees)

Natural Resources

Leadership in organizing multiple county host locations for the Jan 31, 2008 Focus the Nation on Global Warming Solutions event (100 attendees)

- Co-coordinated annual Gardening for Wildlife Tour in Sarasota County and conducted a follow-up Backyard Landscapes for Wildlife workshop (40 attendees)



**Commercial Horticulture
Education Programs**

In 2008, program emphasis was placed on implementing a new Fertilizer and Landscape Management Code enacted by the Sarasota County Government in late 2007 and made mandatory in March of 2008. The new law requires certification of professionals engaged in landscaping and related businesses through the conduct of a Best Management Practices (BMPs) educational program.

A considerable amount of time was also spent in identifying new palm tree diseases recently found in Southwest Florida and informing applicable organizations on how to best combat them.

2008 Program Objectives, Outcomes and Impacts

- 953 Green Industries professionals participated in 25 BMP classes during 2008, which included three classes conducted in Spanish
- 88% of the 953 (838) participants achieved certification status
- The knowledge gain averaged 15% based on the pre/post test score difference. Of particular importance was the average pre-exam grade of 72% vs. the average grade of 87% achieved by those taking the post-exam. Participants went from failing the pre-exam to passing the post-exam with an average grade increase of 15%

Response to the new Code has been positive, and certification of additional professionals will continue. The program has had a positive impact on the landscape and fertilizer businesses within Sarasota County. Through 2008, 228 different companies and 10 governmental organizations participated in the BMP program. Continued certification of these professionals will help reduce fertilizer runoff from lawns and landscapes thereby improving local water quality.

Overall 2008 Event / Topic	Number of Events	Number of Participants
BMPs Best Management Practices	25	953
Continuing Education Units/Pesticide Training	12	383
Commercial Updates/Seminars	3	205
Speaking Engagements/Professional Memberships	7	912



Integrated Pest Management Education

During FY 2007 Sarasota County mandated that a “Policy and IPM Procedures Guide” be developed for use in all application of pesticides applied on county property. Development is continuing on the guide as it requires additional research, training and recommendations for improving accountability and work quality. In 2008, focus was redirected to educating homeowners and school children in the

proper use and role of pesticides in the lawn and landscapes, insect identification and least toxic control methods that reduce negative impacts on the environment.

Objective, Outcomes and Impacts 2008

- Approximately 15 landscape maintenance employees took the appropriate Limited Certification Exam for the first time and 75% received pesticide licenses
- 150 pesticide applicators received their required CEU’s for recertification
- During 2008, 41 IPM Programs were provided for 948 participants

Recognition

In December 2008, Sarasota County Government was awarded an Environmental Protection Agency’s Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP) Champion Award as part of an effort to recognize the efforts of PESP’s most dedicated environmental stewards. A number of factors were considered in the selection process. PESP Champions were chosen based on their current PESP Member Strategy, along with their efforts to improve the economic benefits associated with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) adoption, reduce the risk to human health through integrated pest and pest management practices, reduce the risk to the environment through best management practices, and participate in education and outreach activities.



Environmental Horticulture Education Programs

These programs promoted environmental sustainability through the use of Environmental Landscape Management (ELM) principles and practices by providing educational assistance to community associations, neighborhoods, and associated property management and landscape maintenance contractors, and include the Florida-

friendly landscaping program for homeowners and builders and developers. These programs provide educational support for the county fertilizer and water conservation ordinances, and the county Land Development Regulations (LDR).

- 241 educational programs were provided to 4,773 participants
- 556 community associations have been reached since 2000, and potential future water savings is estimated at over 1,411,800,000 gallons yearly

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- 42 community associations removed invasive plants and/or restored natural areas or stormwater retention areas. This should greatly improve the quality of stormwater runoff
- 16 Master Gardener Yard Advisors provided 968 volunteer hours. Staff and volunteers provided *Florida-friendly Yard* recognition to 88 residents and to the landscapes of 6 City of Sarasota and 13 Sarasota County public buildings
- The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods “Nine Landscape Principles” and “Creating Your Florida Yard” DVDs produced in partnership with Sarasota Bay Estuary Program to teach sustainable landscape principles and aired over 60 times on Access Sarasota
- The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods “Nine Landscape Principles” DVD received the Silver Image Awards from the University of Florida. In addition, the “Guide to the Mangroves of Florida” received the First Place “Short Publication” Award from the Florida Association of Natural Resource Extension Professionals



**Urban Horticulture Education
Programs, including
Master Gardener Program and
Horticulture Help Desk**

The Urban Horticulture Program provided the following:

Training and coordination for 118 Master Gardener volunteers and trainees who donated 13,200 volunteer hours (value \$257,532) to promote best horticulture practices for Sarasota County homeowners.

- 35 classes to 610 residents
- 12 articles for one newspaper, one website, and one newsletter
- Master Gardeners, along with local nurseries’ donations, sold over 3,000 plants at their 4th Annual Master Gardener Plant Sale, raising \$8,600 for gardening education and nearly equaling their sale gross from 2007
- Partnership with Home Depot to provide composting classes in libraries
- 18 new Master Gardeners trained in 2008 (90 hours of training)

Management of the Horticulture Help Desk and Satellite Services staffed by Master Gardeners.

- Landscape and garden information and education, including identification of plants, pests, diseases and wildlife, to 12,545 walk-in, telephone and email customers in 2008
- 3,811 walk-in clients served at Horticulture Help Desk despite being temporarily relocated for four months
- Satellite Service at Sarasota Farmers Market reaching approximately 60 residents at each event and in partnership with the Herald Tribune at their crape myrtle event reaching approximately 100 residents

Coordination of the Sarasota Community Gardens Program.

- Successful relocation of the Rosemary Community Garden, including initiating monthly educational Programs there and at the South County Community Gardens

Family and Consumer Sciences Education Programs



The Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) Education Programs provide information and education on nutrition, financial management, consumer issues, energy and indoor water conservation, housing and home environment, successful aging, sustainable living and hurricane preparation. FCS also manages the large Family Nutrition Program and partners with 40 community agencies, including the County Health Departments, All Faiths Food Bank, Sarasota County Public Schools, Sarasota County Libraries and Parks and Recreation, Children First and First Step.

- Hurricane preparation information was made available to residents at five hurricane fairs and classes: provided 8000 handouts. In addition, hurricane preparation PSAs were aired on the County Education Channel June through September to 150,000 residents
- 9 programs on nutrition, obesity prevention and healthy living were provided to 201 community residents and 5 classes on Closing Up Your Home to 341 residents
- FCS partnered with All Faiths Food Bank for the third year using the Growing Healthy Kids curriculum: trained 167 teachers in 39 daycare centers serving 1,512 children
- As part of the County's Sustainability Month, FCS partnered with the libraries and presented 8 classes on "Stretching Your Food Dollar"
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Family Nutrition Program

The Family Nutrition Program is a federal grant program that provided nutrition, food safety and food resources management education to over 67,000 Food Stamp clients for 2008 in Sarasota County, three-fourths of whom are from minority populations. The 2008 federal grant (starting October 2007) was a record \$452,523 and provided a Program Coordinator in addition to 8

Program Assistants to teach nutrition, food safety and food resource management in community locations. Educational information is provided in English, Brazilian, Haitian Creole, Spanish, Russian and Ukrainian. The Sarasota County FNP Program, started in June 2001, is now one of the largest in the state and is used as a model for seven other Florida counties. With the addition of the 2008 grant, this program will have brought \$2,436,523 in federal money to Sarasota County, which was leveraged to bring in additional grants.



Florida House Learning Center and Sustainable Living Education

While decisions of the new Florida House Strategic Planning Board are in progress, the Learning Center's mission and message continue to be delivered to the community through outreach presentations and programs. In addition to horticulture and agriculture classes, Extension educators are currently teaching the following

courses at local businesses and organizations:

- Living Green – Energy
- Living Green – Water
- Universal Design – Aging In Place
- Durability Through Storm Protection
- The Green Home
- Energy Tax Credits

2008 accomplishments:

- Provided 69 classes for 1111 participants
 - 97.7% satisfied
 - 99.4% gained knowledge
 - 98.5% intend to change practice
- Mentored one University of Florida Summer Intern who created 1 climate change brochure, 1 carbon emissions pledge, and a new web section on climate change
- Distributed 500 climate change brochures and 800 carbon reduction pledges at the libraries during Sustainable September and at eFest 2008
- Participated in 2008 Focus the Nation teach-in for climate change



eLearning and Web-based Education Delivery

Provided weekly website updates with current research-based information, especially alerts and warnings about emerging and new plant diseases and pests, and food safety recalls.

- Increased web-based learning opportunities by 11
- Adopted web-hits data tracking on Google Analytics
- Completed successful transition to online registration for BMP classes
- Made 189 separate 4-H record books available online, averaging 25 pages each
- Converted 4 web applications to flash presentations
- Added 4 new web galleries
- Expanded and refined all content areas of web pages
- Began the process of transitioning PowerPoint presentations to flash-based web presentations for on-demand web classes