**Dr. Jack Payne’s Visit**

TREC was honored on October 16th by a visit from Dr. Jack Payne, our Senior Vice President for IFAS. Jack was invited to Miami-Dade by the TREC Advisory committee to discuss TREC and IFAS priorities for the upcoming 2015 Legislative session. The Advisory committee included the whole Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation plus key members of the Miami-Dade County Agricultural Industry on their invite list and was honored by a great turnout. During this meet and greet at Schnebly’s Winery, a lively discussion of TREC’s needs were discussed by the impressive group of attendees with both Dr. Payne and IFAS Director of Governmental Affairs, Ms. Mary Ann Gosa Hooks. We are proud that Miami-Dade county ranks as the 2nd largest agriculture producing county in the state; this industry generates an annual impact of $2.7 billion and employs over 20,000 people. TREC’s Advisory Board has been working diligently to obtain two plant breeding/genetics faculty positions that are considered vital to the future of TREC. Members of this board have met with the legislative delegation of this county and explained the importance of these positions to the long-term benefit of TREC and its agricultural industry. Our current faculty need these plant breeders to pursue key breeding projects in tropical fruits, vegetables, ornamentals and biofuels. In addition to delivering much needed hybrid plants to the industry, TREC would benefit from the revenue flow that would be generated by the patented hybrids for TREC as well as IFAS. We are pleased to thank those who organized this event as well as to express our appreciation to those who attended. If you just look at the pictures you can tell that not only did people enjoy themselves but that key individuals were having serious talks with Dr. Payne about the needs. TREC thanks its Advisory Board, the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation and our industry members for taking the time to demonstrate their concern and support for the piece of IFAS that sits in their back yard, TREC.
Tropical Fruit Challenge

TREC is also happy to report that the Tropical Fruit challenge closed the year with a total of $40,000 being raised and then matched by Mr. Pal Brooks. It is pretty special to TREC to have a member of the community step forward and issue this 1 to 1 dollar match and many others were inspired to donate because of the opportunity. We thank all of you who provided these funds and in this way demonstrated your commitment to the mission and good work of the Tropical Research and Education Center. Mr. Brooks money went directly to support the tropical fruit program that Jonathan Crane has provided leadership to for many years and the match went to support the newly created TREC Fund for Excellence as well as the three Faculty endowments, Dr. Baranowski Excellence Fund, Dr. Klassen Excellence Fund, and Dr. McMillan Excellence Fund. These endowments are critical to keep the programs at TREC alive due to reduced support occurring from state and federal sources. It is not too late to make a contribution that will be matched! We are still 10,000 short of taking full advantage of Mr. Brooks’ generous pledge and he has graciously allowed TREC to continue this campaign. In addition to the match programs, we welcome donations to TREC. To continue the high quality and excellent programs at TREC. If you would like to contribute: Please mail your check payable to The University of Florida Share Foundation

ATTN. Melissa Stanton, 18905 SW 280th Street, Homestead, FL 33031

Honoring Graduate Students

We also honored two graduate students:

Siavash Taravati with Dr. Catharine Mannion. He is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Entomology and Nematology located at the Tropical REC. He is an excellent student and is graduating in May of this year. He has been studying one of the invasive whitefly pests, Rugose Spiraling Whitefly and a predatory beetle that feeds on it. This whitefly has been a serious pest in the landscape because of the extensive mess it makes and the plant damage it causes. His work gives us a better understanding on using biological control to manage this pest in an effort to reduce the amount of pesticides used.

Babu Panthi and his advisor is Dr. Dak Seal. He is an M.S. student in Entomology, Entomology and Nematology Department, UF. Mr. Panthi has been studying various biological parameters of melonworm, an important damaging insect of cucurbit crops in south Florida. His major focus is to develop an integrated pest management program against melonworm. His research information will be very valuable to our agriculture industries to manage other insect pests of vegetable crops.
Honoring Paul Gherke

Paul Gherke from Pure Beauty Farms have assisted TREC staff and faculty by providing plant material, pots, and chemicals. In fact, he's always been willing to provide plants for our social events such as poinsettias for the Christmas party. Paul is very supportive in allowing faculty to bring students and visiting scientist to tour the nursery. He's an advocate of Miami-Dade County Extension and currently serves on the advisory board for the commercial horticulture agent. Paul regularly attends extension programs and provides excellent feedback. He has been a valuable resource for the plant pathology program at TREC and the go to guy when it comes to bedding plant production. Over the past two years Paul and Pure Beauty Farms have grown all of the impatiens liners for research on downy mildew and currently serves on the advisory committee for Dr. Palmateer’s FDACS project. Thank you Paul and Pure Beauty Farms.

ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS

On March 27th we celebrated our 2nd annual One Night in the Tropics event. We could not have done this without the support of our sponsors, the agricultural community, the Miami-Dade Gator Club, the UF Association of Hispanic Alumni and our own faculty and staff. Everyone worked tirelessly to produce a successful event with wonderful silent auction items, great Schnebly wine and beer, and appetizers prepared by our own post-doctoral and graduate students. Dinner was exquisite and we had a live broadcast from Telemundo/NBC6 for the 6 ’o clock news who sponsored our event and showed how scientists can also have a good time. Miami-Dade County Commissioner Daniela Levine-Cava spoke at the event and emphasized the importance of agriculture in her district. We were honored to have Ms. Danita Nias Vice President of Alumni Affairs, and also Dr. Wil Del Pilar Senior Director for Development. Mr. Mark Trowbridge, former President of UF Alumni Board, Mr. Tony Medina, President of University of Florida Association of Hispanic Alumni were among those celebrating with us.

Costa Farm Attendees
ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS

Paul Scanziani and his wife Denise Scanziani with the Miami-Dade Gator Club attended the event. Mike Bier, President of the Keys Gator Club also celebrated with us. We also wanted to honor several friends that evening but a storm rolled in to try to ruin our affair, so via this newsletter we want to convey a special message of gratitude to the following collaborators of the year:

We recognized two groups of people, those from the community that contribute to the research mission at TREC and outstanding graduate students, which conduct research at TREC. The quality of applicants for these awards was outstanding and thus we awarded six collaborator and two graduate students.

Medora Krome and Michael Hunt. They own and manage commercial avocado orchards and have collaborated with UF scientists and extension faculty. The Krome family has a long history of collaboration with TREC and Medora more recently has contributed the use of groves, equipment, and staff on projects involving plant nutrition and control of laurel wilt and ambrosia beetles. Michael Hunt has a long history of collaboration with UF scientists, first when he was with the Brooks organization on lime rootstocks and more recently on control of laurel wilt and ambrosia beetles. Their contributions have benefited not only TREC research and extension faculty but the industry at large for which we are grateful. Michael Hunt also currently serves on TREC’s advisory board. Thank you Medora and Michael for your contributions.

Tony DiMare and Jim Husk from DiMare Farms. DiMare Farms plays an active role in promoting university research in horticulture, pest management, and soil science. UF TREC researchers conduct several studies each year in their commercial tomato fields to develop Integrated Pest Management practices for managing thrips and their transmitted tospovirus. DiMare is an instrumental cooperator of TREC and has recently assisted with in-kind donations on tomato research. DiMare in-kind contribution to TREC’s research exceeds $20,000. Thank you Tony and Jim for your contributions.
ONE NIGHT IN THE TROPICS

Alan Flinn is the Avocado Committee Administrator for Florida’s Avocado Committee. He manages the Federal-State Marketing Order which encompasses monitoring and enforcing quality and marketing regulations and standards for the industry. He has collaborated with TREC scientists and extension faculty through the past 10+ years through his written and verbal support for TREC research projects to the industry, Avocado Committee members, FDACS and many branches of USDA. His efforts have resulted in millions of dollars in research funds over the years. He has also facilitated the extension programs through mailings and in-kind donations. His support has been a key component of the UF/IFAS TREC research and extension efforts for the avocado industry. Thank you Alan for your contributions.

Kerry Herndon and Nancy Harter from Kerry’s Nurseries in Homestead and Apopka specializing in orchids, bromeliads, ornamental plants and microgreens. Kerry has been a contributor to TREC research for over 10 years and together with his wife, Nancy Harter share positions as members of TREC’s advisory board. In that capacity, Kerry and Nancy have been involved in providing TREC’s Center Director with valuable advice to ensure that TREC remains an important asset to the nursery industry in South Florida. They have both participated in legislative visits to support initiatives at TREC, such as the incubator project. Kerry has also partially funded different projects at TREC, which directly benefited the nursery industry and resulted in trade and scientific publications. Such projects involved orchid production, pest and disease control. He has made donations to Dr. Carrillo’s program in entomology, as well as diverse programs at TREC. Thank you Kerry and Nancy for your contributions.
Visit of Dr. Fuchs

TREC was flattered and honored to be the first IFAS facility outside of Gainesville to receive a visit from our new President. He and his lovely wife Linda stopped by and toured the Center via our IFAS-Gator golf cart with Drs. Chris Waddill and Jonathan Crane. They both asked many questions and were truly impressed with the variety of tropical fruits, veggies ornamental and the important research being conducted on these crops. Dr. Fuchs was really impressed by our breadfruit. After the tour the Fuchs came back to the TREC library where each and every member of the faculty discussed their research and education programs and the relevance of the work that they were doing. There was a nice exchange between the President and faculty about work being conducted here. The faculty came away very impressed by their new boss. We sent the Fuchs home with tomatoes (tastee), avocados, and a beautiful orchid arrangement from Kerry’s. The President expressed his interest in making another visit and we hope to see him soon.

TREC BOOKS

The Water Quality Concepts, Sampling, and Analyses book was edited by Drs. Yuncong Li and Kati Migliaccio who also contributed chapters to the book. The book offers applied information for those interested in water quality, including how to collect samples, analyze samples, and how to interpret the results statistically. The book has been used as a course text, a reference, and guide for those entering into the water quality profession. When published, it was the only applied water quality book available. Morning technology, analytical methods and instruments used at Dr. Yuncong Li’s Soil and Water Quality Laboratory at TREC are described in the book. Dr. Kati Migliaccio’s work with irrigation, best management practices, and linking land use and water quality provided information that is incorporated in the book. Their programs, which often overlap, address water quality issues and quantity on all land use types using science-based approaches.

Dr. Li is currently working on soil testing calibration for calcareous soils and development of new fertilizers and fertilizer management practices for improving fertilizer use efficiency, crop production, and water quality.

Dr. Migliaccio’s research is currently focused on irrigation and groundwater hydrology. She is actively involved in statewide irrigation programming and has been the lead investigator developing commodity based smartphone irrigation apps. Dr. Migliaccio has also received funding to conduct monitoring and modeling in the C111 basin to provide science-based information to address groundwater issues in the area.
During this spring break, the University of Florida (UF/IFAS) Undergraduate Club of Environmental Horticulture students and their advisor Dr. Jim Barrett had a chance to visit two main education and research centers in South Florida; we are talking about the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Miami-Dade County agricultural office and the UF/IFAS Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC) both located in Homestead.

Undergraduate students from UF in Gainesville spent all of their spring break traveling and visiting University of Florida/IFAS Extension and Research Centers across the state to learn about what UF/IFAS Extension agents do to provide research based solutions to citizens at a personal and professional level. They didn’t travel to the always sunny Miami-Dade for fun but for an education insight of research and extension work.

“We are very thrilled to share our unique job within the University of Florida Extension system to enthusiastic students” said the UF/IFAS Commercial Horticulture agent Vanessa Campoverde who welcomed them and shared with these future professionals what is the nature of her work as an UF/IFAS Extension agent in South Florida.

Students learned about the economic impact of the agriculture industries; tropical fruit experiments conducted by Dr. Jonathan Crane and Ms. Wanda Montes, research and diagnosis in the UF/IFAS Plant Diagnostic Center of plant diseases affecting ornamental plants conducted by Dr. Palmateer and Ms. Patricia Lopez and about the UF/IFAS Miami-Dade Extension industry training to professionals during Extension classes.