From the Center Director

Spring heralds a new beginning with regard to most things including farm production. I’m hopeful as the new season unfolds and happy that 2018 is in the rear-view mirror. Last season’s wet harvest conditions prevented us and area producers from realizing a timely harvest. What I hear from most farmers in the area is we raised a good crop but couldn’t get it out of the field. Even if they got it out of the field, commodity quality often suffered owing to delayed harvest. The result was lost revenues. At this writing we are planting corn at the Jay Research Facility and, again, I’m hoping for favorable weather that allows us and area producers to plant, manage and harvest good crops in a timely manner.

To help raise crops and conduct research at the Jay Research Facility in a well-timed fashion, we have added a brand-new 210 horsepower tractor to our fleet of mostly old ones that have much less horsepower. The UF-IFAS Research Dean’s office recognized our long-standing need for a large farm tractor and provided the money for the purchase – I’m grateful for that. With a new, powerful tractor comes the need for larger equipment to pull behind it. So, with other funds, we obtained a used 28-foot disk-harrow that’s in good shape. Moreover, one of our local producers, Ricky Hendricks, generously donated an 8-row ripple/bedder to the WFREC – I’m very thankful and appreciative of Ricky’s donation. The new tractor and the larger equipment we’ve acquired so far will certainly help us prepare and manage our research farm operations in a more timely and efficient manner.

Mark Long, our Student Recruiter, tells me that our undergraduate teaching program is growing. As of today, we have 53 active students – 44 and nine in our natural resource and plant science programs, respectively. Ten students will graduate from our programs this May. In Fall 2019 we are projected to welcome 25 new students to our programs. If these numbers hold, our undergraduate teaching program student numbers will increase by 28% to a total of 68 students in Fall 2019. Our human and physical resources will be stretched to accommodate this increase, but it’s a good problem to have.

Our Spring Festival of Flowers begins next Friday (5 April) and runs through Sunday, 7 April at the UF Milton location. This is one of our premier events that attracts thousands owing to the wide variety of plant materials and crafts available for purchase. Our student club sells plants they grow in our greenhouses. The club uses the money raised to support their activities and to fund scholarships – this is reason enough for folks to come out and support this event. Plenty of good food is available at the event and it’s an overall good time. I hope you’ll take time to come to our festival.

Continued on Page 2
From the Center Director—continued from page 1

I wish all our area producers well as we start another cropping season and want them to know I’m thankful for the support they and the overall agricultural community provides the WFREC. I also give my best to our students as they finish the spring semester. Last, but certainly not least, I wish our wonderful faculty and staff a safe and productive spring season.

Go Gators!

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**Plant Sale Preparations**

**UF Milton Student Club Prepares for Their Annual Plant Sale at the Spring Festival of Flowers**

Written by Gabriel Campbell and Anna Dicks

A dedicated team of student volunteers has been propagating and producing plants for the past year. This year the production team has been coordinated by undergraduate student Anna Dicks with the assistance of graduate student Gabriel Campbell. In the fall, stem cuttings were clipped and underground structures (such as bulbs) were dug up and propagated, and seeds were sown at the UF PSC Milton greenhouse. Throughout the winter and early spring students moved small, propagated plants into larger sale-ready containers, all the while irrigating, fertilizing, pruning, and managing disease and pest pressures, and greenhouse operations. In addition to ornamental plants, Gabriel has been busy introducing a large selection of native plants species to this year’s production. This plant sale provides valuable “hands-on” work experience for students and profits generated from the sale are used to support UF Milton Student Club scholarship funds and educational activities.

Congratulations to Dr. Mulvaney. He was awarded the 2019 Early Career Research Award by the Southern Branch of the American Society of Agronomy in February.

Visit us online at:  
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University of Florida - Jay Research Facility

UF/IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center  
Milton: 5988 Highway 90, Bldg 4900, Milton FL 32583  
Jay: 4253 Experiment Road, Jay FL 32565  
Phone: 850.983.7125
Spring Festival of Flowers

UF/IFAS and Pensacola State College Milton Campus

ABOUT THE SPRING FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS

UF/IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center in conjunction with the Pensacola State College Milton Campus invite you to join them for one of the largest festivals of the season. This is a popular event that draws plant enthusiasts from near and far. This festival features plant nurseries, University of Florida student club plant sale, arts & crafts, great food and educational opportunities.

The goal of the event is to raise money for UF & PSC scholarships, student field trips, and other student needs.

APRIL 5, 6 & 7, 2019

Festival is FREE to the public and handicapped accessible

Times: Friday 9-5 p.m. • Saturday & Sunday 9-4 p.m.

Location: UF/IFAS West Florida Research and Education Center and Pensacola State College Milton Campus

Want to be a vendor? Register at 2019miltonspringfestivalofflowers.eventbrite.com or contact Robin Vickers at rvickers@ufl.edu or by calling 850-983-7134

The University of Florida at Milton would like to thank John Davy and Panhandle Growers for their generous donation of trees. Their continued support of the UF Milton Student Club’s annual Plant Sale allows further funding of student scholarships, field trips, and other student needs.

Thank You PANHANDLE GROWERS!
New Grants & Publications

Dr. Pratap Devkota
Assistant Professor, Weed Science

GRANTS:

EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS:

ABSTRACTS:
Dr. Mike Mulvaney
Assistant Professor, Agronomy

Peer reviewed publications

Extension publications

Continued on page 7
Dr. Silvana Paula-Moraes  
Assistant Professor, Crop Pest Management

Publications:
Abstracts and proceedings

Referred Journals
Dr. Pratap Devkota Assistant Professor, Weed Science

NEWSLETTER PUBLICATIONS:

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:
- Florida Weed Science Society, Board of Directors Government.

Dr. Mike Mulvaney Assistant Professor, Agronomy

Grants
$15,000. UF/IFAS TARGET Award. Machine learning within agrobiology. 2019.

Conference presentations & Abstracts
**New Grants & Publications**

(Continued from page 6)

**Dr. Silvana Paula-Moraes** Assistant Professor, Entomology

**Participation in meetings**

**Employee Spotlight**

Hired at the UF/IFAS WFREC by Dr. Michael Mulvaney, an assistant professor of Agronomy, in October 2016, Porcha Phillips has been an integral part of the Cropping Systems program. She works with Dr. Mulvaney on his projects and assists graduate students in set-up and maintenance of research trials and data collection.

Recently, graduate student Joseph Iboyi started a crop rotation project. One aspect of the project looks at what depth a given crop’s root system will absorb soil moisture. Gathering data on soil moisture at certain depths became the challenge.

Joseph found an ideal soil moisture sensor, but it didn’t quite meet the needs of the project. Porcha started to redesign the sensor, so it would better fit the needs of the project. After a bit of trial and error, the final unit came into being.

One prototype has been completed, installed in the field, and is already collecting soil moisture data to make sure the data are good. Soon there will be multiple sensors in the field for the duration of the project. The units will be removed for plowing and planting and then redeployed in the field next spring.

Data collection can sometimes be less than straightforward. Sometimes the instruments to collect data either do not exist or are more expensive than is feasible. Thankfully, with Porcha on the WFREC team, working through the difficulties of data collection is easier.

Visit us online at: wfre.ifas.ufl.edu

Find us on Facebook: University of Florida, at Milton.

University of Florida - Jay Research Facility
Turfgrass Happenings

Dr. Unruh Hosts the South Florida Turfgrass Field Day and Expo at the Ft. Lauderdale Research and Education Center.

The FLREC is in the final stages of hiring a new turf specialist. In the meantime, Dr. Unruh has been traveling to Ft. Lauderdale – sometimes a couple times a month – to keep the active research projects moving forward. Additionally, he hosted the 31st running of the field day where the UF/IFAS Turfgrass Science Team provided attendees, including golf course superintendents, athletic field managers, sod farmers, and landscape maintenance crews, with the latest information, research and technology available that is needed to manage turfgrasses most effectively, efficiently and environmentally friendly. Additionally, he, along with Jason Bailey, President of the South Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, presenting Karen Williams, with a plaque honoring her for her 32 years of service to UF/IFAS and the South Florida Turf Industry. For more information on the field day - http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/brevardco/2019/03/22/highlights-from-the-31st-annual-south-florida-turfgrass-field-day-and-expo/

Dr. Bryan Unruh Part of National Team to Tackle One of the Most Troublesome Weeds

A team of 16 university scientists will be involved in a four-year, $5.7 million project funded by the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture, Specialty Crop Research Initiative to limit the impact of annual bluegrass, the most troublesome weed of athletic, golf, lawn and sod turf. The team’s multifaceted approach will be to characterize the distribution of herbicide-resistant populations, seek weaknesses in the weed’s seed biology and growth characteristics, and develop alternatives to herbicides to supplement current control measures, with a robust extension and education program.
Student Scholarships & Awards

Two students of our Entomology team working with Dr. Silvana Paula-Moraes won awards at the 2019 Entomology Society of America – Southeastern Branch meeting, in Mobile, Alabama March 6, 2019
Marcelo Mendes Rabelo Mendes won the first place in the PhD Student Oral Presentation Competition
Chris Hemphill (Plant Science major) won second place in the Undergraduate Student Poster Competition

Congratulations to Marcelo and Chris! Keep up the good work!

Spring 2019 Scholarships

Congratulations to our Spring 2019 Scholarship recipients:

Graduate Assistants: Mahesh Bashyal
Ashlynn Smith
Daniel Brethauer
Gabriel Campbell

Undergraduates: Cheyenne Brodie-McAleister
Barbara Cory
Jordan Dumas
Latisa Ledbetter-Kish
Ashton Shell
Dallas Brooks
Anna Dicks
Matthew Fineout
Elizabeth Miller
Welcome to Our New Employees

Graham McInnes began working with Dr. Michael Mulvaney in March. He will be collecting data and assisting as needed on various projects. Graham is a Natural Resources Conservation student, and intends to continue his education and get a masters in soil conservation.

Chase McKeithen, a Milton local and former UF Milton undergraduate, joins the UF/IFAS Turfgrass Science program as a biological scientist. He is working under Dr. Bryan Unruh. Chase hopes to make a difference in the local community through continuous learning and service.

Ashton Shell is a Natural Resource Conservation student working with Dr. Ajay Sharma and masters student Jesse Frazier on their Tate's Hell State Forest project on special analysis of slash pine. When he has finished his bachelor's degree, Ashton plans to attend graduate school.
2019 Upcoming Events

Spring Festival of Flowers
April 5, 6 & 7, 2019

WFREC Quarterly Staff Meeting
April 12, 2019

Gulf Coast Turfgrass Expo & Field Day
June 19, 2019

Santa Rosa Leadership Agribusiness Day
October 17, 2019

UF/WFREC Holidays & Academic Program Calendar

Classes End - April 24th

Final Exams - April 27th to May 3rd

Graduation - May 9th

Memorial Day (Closed) - May 27th

Independence Day (Closed) - July 4th

Labor Day (Closed) - September 2nd

UF Homecoming (Closed) - October 4th

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