



TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR 1997 FLORIDA SEED ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

Sunday, June 1

Welcoming Reception 6 PM - 7:30 PM

Dinner on Your Own

Monday, June 2

Florida Aquarium Tour 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Lunch, Florida Aquarium 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Recreational Time 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Starlight Princess Dinner Dance Cruise 6:30 PM - 10 PM

Tuesday, June 3

General Business Meeting 9 AM - 11:30 AM

Awards Luncheon 12:00 - 1:30 PM

Board of Directors Meeting 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM

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Seed Technical Council Report

Dick Ellis, FSA Past-President

The February 19, 1997, Council Meeting was an important one for most persons involved in the seed business in Florida, in that a great amount of discussion and questions were placed to the staff and representatives of the Department of Agriculture. Many industry people attended because they had heard that some major changes were about to take place in the Seed Law and Regulatory process. These concerns were aired and discussed at length. A brief summary of the discussion is presented below:

- * The Department representatives indicated that the Commissioner had given them the task of coming up with a program that would pay its own way. In order to do this cuts would have to be made, reducing staff and personnel in both field and laboratory operations. Also, to properly fund these operations, additional fees would have to be assessed on present licensees.
- * The general concern of people attending, representing all phases of the seed business, was that the Seed Law is good and has done its job in the marketplace effectively and, therefore, should not be weakened or changed from its present standards.
- * Discussion centered around the number and effectiveness of samples both in the field and laboratory.
- * Department staff feel that a good job of both standards and regulation can be maintained if present numbers of personnel can be maintained in field and laboratory positions. With further cuts, however, the program's effectiveness and timeliness would be reduced, and it would not be able to maintain the expected levels of control and sampling most seed producers feel is necessary for Florida to maintain its "Tough Standards".
- * The industry representatives in attendance indicated that even if more money was required, they would favor additional funding from optional sources to protect these "Tough Standards" for consumers.
- * It was recommended that the Department re-instate the Agricultural Seed minimum germination standards, and that they be placed back into the Florida Seed Law information printing and notifications. These minimum standards were removed last year to conform with lessening regulatory concerns by Gubernatorial orders.
- * It was also proposed for the Technical Council and Department Staff to come up with alternative options to fund further laboratory functions and regulatory operations to keep Florida seed functions at high levels, instead of reduced and lesser effective levels. The majority felt that Florida could become a dumping place for lower quality seed items, if these more stringent measures were not at least kept strong and in place. The important place and role of the Seed Investigation and Conciliatory function of the present Seed Law was again given highest priority by the majority of seed people, as highly effective and irreplaceable, by its demonstrated effectiveness over these many years of functioning in seed complaints. This alone is reason enough not to significantly change the Seed Law or its functions in consumer perceptions.
- * It was pointed out that the present Legislative mood is for no new funds or taxes to support any program. Therefore, the charge is for the Technical Council and Department Staff to coordinate a workable way to fund these recommendations. Suggestions of a millage user fee structure, or other methods are being opened for input from the industry. These ideas should be brought forth to members of the Department and Seed Technical Council to make possible the implementation before the July 1 Legislative deadline.
- * It seems that all these perceptions and suggestions are being considered by the Department of Agriculture to facilitate the wishes of the industry and consumers, in order to maintain a strong and high quality program for all concerns within the State of Florida.

At the March 25 meeting of the Technical Seed Council, the Department of Agriculture Staff recommended the present field and laboratory inspection services be continued for another year to allow for orderly changes to be made. A committee was appointed to assist Department Staff in developing recommended changes to be brought before the council at a later meeting. If you have concerns, please contact members of this Committee: Kelsey Payne, D.A. Lewis, Dick Ellis, Paul Sawyer, Richard See.

USDA LIFTS KARNAL BUNT RESTRICTIONS IN SOUTHEAST

On March 17, 1997, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced it was lifting all Karnal bunt emergency action notifications currently in place in the Southeast.

In making this announcement, Terry Medley, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service said, "We've extensively studied the situation in the Southeast and have concluded that Karnal bunt is not present there."

USDA is basing its decision regarding Karnal bunt on the fact that bunted wheat kernels have not been found in any samples, whereas contamination with bunted ryegrass kernels was common. Researchers have shown that spores from ryegrass do not infect wheat.

Some wheat samples collected during the national Karnal bunt survey contained spores similar in size and shape to those of the agent that causes Karnal bunt. Such spores were recovered in samples from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Tennessee. Wheat seed contaminated with these spores also was planted in South Carolina.

"At this time we are no longer considering taking further regulatory action in the Southeast," said Michael V. Dunn, assistant secretary for marketing and regulatory programs.

In the near future, USDA will publish a standard for determining the presence of Karnal bunt that will apply to all parts of the country.

(<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/press/1997/03kbdecisi.txt>)

ROGERS SEED COMPANY EXPANDS ACTIVITIES IN FLORIDA

In a major expansion of its research investment in Florida, Rogers Seed Co. recently acquired an additional 174-acres of land. The purchase effectively triples the company's former land holdings and confirms its ongoing commitment to the vegetable seed business. Purchased from the Brown family, descendants of the agricultural pioneer David C. Brown, the new property is located adjacent to the company's research center Southeast of Naples.

Rogers' research center in Florida was established in 1986. Today it houses approximately 30 employees actively involved in breeding programs for watermelon, pepper, fresh market tomato, squash, and eggplant. The facility is also home to a comprehensive sweet corn breeding program testing varieties particularly suited to Southeast climatic conditions.

"The new land triples our previous area and greatly expands Rogers' research trialing efforts," says Rick Mitchell, market development manager. "This purchase is part of an overall expansion of research and sales activities at Rogers that includes the hiring of Dr. Tom Mueller as new product manager for fresh market tomatoes and peppers."

Mueller joined Rogers' Naples staff early in 1997. In addition to supporting sales and research efforts in tomatoes and peppers, he plans a number of activities to take advantage of the increased opportunities offered by the new land acquisition. In cooperation with research staff, Mueller is initiating a sequential trialing program. This will broaden field and harvest data and allow customers continuous access to on-site field trials of Rogers' newest varieties. Various cultural and agronomic tests including shipping, storage, and pruning studies are also planned.

"The expanded trialing capability that comes with the acquisition of this new land gives us an opportunity we've been looking for in Florida for a number of years," says Mitchell. "It allows us to test and showcase the newest varieties for our customers and underscores Rogers' ongoing commitment to the vegetable seed business."

Welcome to our newest members

Bernie Hamel
Asgrow Vegetable Seed
2300 Janice Avenue
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Asgrow Vegetable Seed
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Calendar of Events

1997

SMALL GRAIN MINI FIELD DAY

April	12-14	AOSCA Southern Region Annual Meeting Wakulla Springs Lodge Wakulla Springs, FL
April	25	North Florida Research & Education Center Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. Small Grain Mini Field Day 1:00 PM CST, Greenwood, FL
June	1-3	Florida Seed Association, 65th Annual Convention Wyndham Harbour Island Hotel, Tampa, FL

Tom Stadslev, manager Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc., will host a mini small grain tour of Dr. Ron Barnett's, wheat and oat variety nurseries at the Marianna Research Center on April 25. Major emphasis will be on variety adaptation and disease ratings of varieties for forage and grain production in Florida.

The tour will begin at 1:00 PM, CST at the Foundation's facility in Greenwood, Florida. Come and bring a friend.



**Florida Seed Association
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TO: