

Citrus Industry Magazine- UF/IFAS SWFREC Citrus Mechanical Harvesting Program “What’s Shakin” column

February 2007

The FDOC Citrus Harvesting Research Advisory Council Meeting- Dec. 5

The FDOC Citrus Harvesting Research Advisory Council held their quarterly meeting on December 5th in Lakeland at the FDOC headquarters. Paul Meador, who has served as chairman of the Council for the past 5 years, stepped down from his leadership position. The Council voted Carson Futch, current Vice Chariman, as the next Council Chair. John Whitehead was voted to be the next Vice-Chairman.

Dan King reported that during the 2005/06 season 31,694 acres and 7,901,173 boxes were harvested mechanically, exceeding the goal of 25,000 acres. . As there was a discrepancy in the numbers obtained by FDOC and the UF/IFAS group, it was suggested that a survey be done at the end of the early-mid season and again after the ‘Valencia’ season. All those members who participated in the surveys readily accepted this idea.

Jackie Burns, UF program leader on abscission research, reported that the abscission late season harvest trials were reestablished in a grove outside Immokalee. Fruit losses from Hurricane Wilma prevent 2006 yield data from being utilized. Council discussed the possibilities of having UF acquire direct use of harvesting equipment.

Taw Richardson, of AgriSource, manages the EPA registration process of the abscission agent, CMNP. He reported that the timeline for CMNP registration was on track. Full registration is expected by the year 2011.

Dr. Gene Albrigo presented results from satellite imagery and software packages to estimate citrus tree counts and production. One software package is being used in Brazil and reported to be a 91-96% accuracy.

Dr. Harold Browning announced that through funding from the Citrus Initiative \$1.3 M had been allocated to research and education efforts toward mechanical harvesting.