

Florida Agriculture and Natural Resources Awareness Project
An Action Plan for the Osceola County Extension Service Campaign

KEY MESSAGE:
“Solutions For Your Life:
Agriculture & Natural Resources In Osceola County”

Executive Summary

Because of a need for agriculture and natural resources awareness in Osceola County, the industry has recently been faced with various challenges. These challenges include negative attitudes toward the industry’s environmental and water conservation practices, an increase in urbanized areas and the urbanized use of land, and a lack of knowledge about the economic impact that the agriculture and natural resources industry has on Osceola County, in Central Florida, and in Florida in general. In order for the Osceola County Extension Service to address these challenges, an awareness campaign has been developed to specifically target key county policy decision makers. The University of Florida Extension Service has a key communications and marketing message established, which is “Solutions For Your Life.” This campaign remains consistent with that key message while expanding to address the specific challenges mentioned.

Section 1: Understanding ANR in Florida & Osceola County

Presence

In 1887, 964,904 acres was carved out of Orange and Brevard Counties to form Osceola County. With 652,673 acres being considered farmland, agriculture and natural resources has a 490.7 million dollar impact and creates approximately 4,563 jobs.

Economic Impact

Osceola County’s agriculture and natural resources industry has a combined output impact of 490.7 million dollars, provided more than 4,563 jobs, and provides a value-added impact of 214.7 M dollars. This economic impact can be broke down as follows:

- Nursery, Greenhouse, & Landscape Services – 104.3 M, 1,574 jobs
- Forestry, Wood & Paper Product Manufacturing – 59.0 M, 414 jobs
- Fruit and Vegetable Farming & Processing – 47.4 M, 441 jobs
- Agricultural Inputs & Services – 90.7 M, 905 jobs
- Other Food Product Manufacturing – 106.6 M, 458 jobs
- Livestock, Dairy, & Animal Products Manufacturing – 50.3 M, 462 jobs
- Other Agriculture – 32.5 M, 307 jobs
- **Data Source:** Economic Impacts of Agriculture and Natural Resource Industries in Lake, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties in Central Florida, 2004. Source: MIG, Inc., *Implan* data for Florida Counties, Compiled by Alan Hodges, University of Florida, Dec 6., 2006., 2002 Agricultural Census

Issues

Osceola County’s agriculture and natural resources industry is presently facing several challenging issues. These include:

- Showing the public and key political and community leaders that the industry is committed to environmental stewardship
- Showing the public and key political and community leaders that the industry is committed to water conservation and quality
- Urbanization and land use -- Housing developments being put in where ag areas were and where ag areas were looked down upon
- Proving the economic impact of the industry to the county

- For example, homeowners are not aware that they have to have significant income from their land to classify as agriculture land use for property tax purposes (i.e. one cow or goat will not classify them as agricultural land use)

Section II: Building A Plan for Awareness

Review of Current Programming

Osceola County Extension Service currently leads and participates in various awareness efforts including:

- Farm City Week which has a youth component
- County Ag Tour
- Handout thru the newspaper to advertise extension & ag through Osceola Heritage Park event
- Family Day with ag exhibits
- County Fair which has a youth component (including Farmer For The Day program)

Most of the previously listed projects are directed toward youth and the general public.

Developing the Campaign Plan

To develop the campaign plan, a non-formal focus group was done with Osceola County Extension Service agents and staff. After reviewing the economic impact of the agriculture and natural resources industry, the issues challenging the industry in Osceola County, and the extent of current awareness programming in the county, the group began to discuss target audiences for future agriculture and natural resources awareness programming, as well as some goals and objectives.

Needs Assessment

There are two groups of people to assess for finding out what the needs are for agriculture and natural resources programming in Osceola County. The first group is the agents and staff of the Osceola County Extension Service. The second group is key community leaders and public/elected officials in Osceola County. For these two groups, a formal needs assessment of extension agents and staff at a statewide level was completed, and a non-formal needs assessment of Osceola County extension agents and staff was completed via focus group. No needs assessment or survey was taken of Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials, which will be a factor in the continued development of this comprehensive plan. This needs assessment or survey will need to be completed to gain an accurate measure of campaign objectives vs. outcomes.

As for the formal needs assessment of extension agents and staff completed at a statewide level, the summary is as follows:

- The needs assessment was completed by 186 agents
- Key findings:
 - Development/population increase, water quality/use and land value are the top three issues facing counties across Florida
 - The top barriers to effectively communicating messages about agriculture and natural resources to the public, government, clientele, and media are:
 - access to information/materials/media/key stakeholders
 - consistency/clarity/impact in message delivery
 - competing interests/priorities
 - an overall lack of interest, knowledge, and awareness
 - Most agents (89.4%) would be either somewhat or very likely to use agricultural/natural resource programs designed to raise awareness among clientele and stakeholders.
 - Almost all (98%) would like to see information produced in a "fast fact" format (i.e. via brochures, Power Points, locally relevant and practical fact sheets)
 - Most (85.1%) would be either somewhat or very likely to use a Florida agricultural/natural resource awareness website that provides up-to-date information

As for the non-formal needs assessment, the following information was collected at the focus group of Osceola County extension agents and staff:

- Local government and press wants to see economic impact
- There was some concern and issues with how the current data (from Alan Hodges) was compiled and grouped as far as different aspects of different industries, as well as the age of the data
- When discussing the four issues that should be focused on for fact sheets:
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Emphasize BMPs, IMP programs, and other things that have had a positive impact on the environment
 - Conservation Easements – Show total acres in all 4 counties
 - Water Conservation & Quality
 - Urbanization & Land Use – Housing developments being put in where ag areas were and where ag areas were looked down upon
 - Would like to find data showing pollution from ag vs. pollution from residential
 - Would like to show green space value and mention conservation
 - Economic Impact Sheet
 - Taxes – Homeowners aren't aware that they have to have significant income from their land to classify as ag (i.e. one cow or goat won't do it)
 - Also show comparison of tax revenue vs. expenditures for ag classification vs. residential/commercial use
 - Said elected officials want source for data information
 - Basically, wanted the sheets to address what ag was doing for the environment
 - Overall theme – rural/urban interface
 - Mentioned that we needed to watch use of words on these sheets. There is a Language of Conservation that should be used. The words “Green Space” actually have a negative connotation with the public and should be avoided.
- County Extension Director facilitates all agriculture and natural resources awareness with government, business, and elected officials.
- Wanted to make sure Key Message was brought into all Fast Fact Sheets
- Wanted Key Message to stand out on all sheets with county name to be smaller underneath that. Wanted it to scream agriculture and not their county name.
- Wanted photos of citrus & cattle and turf & water on county sheet
- Group felt Fast Fact Sheets, a short 5-minute Power Point, and a short promotional video would be the most successful delivery methods

Campaign Goal

To raise the awareness of the following agriculture and natural resources issues among key community leaders and public/elected officials in Osceola County:

- Economic impact of agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County
- Economic impact of agriculture and natural resources in Central Florida
- Economic impact of agriculture and natural resources in Florida
- Environmental stewardship efforts of the agriculture and natural resources industry in Osceola County and Central Florida
- Water quality and conservation efforts of the agriculture and natural resources industry in Osceola County and Central Florida
- Urbanization and land use impacts on the agriculture and natural resources industry in Osceola County and Central Florida

Campaign Objectives

1. Survey Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials to measure their awareness of the economic impact of, the environmental stewardship efforts of, the water quality and conservation efforts of, and the urbanization and land use impacts on agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County.
2. Raise awareness of the economic impact of agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%
3. Raise awareness of the environmental stewardship efforts of agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%
4. Raise awareness of the water quality and conservation efforts of agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%
5. Raise awareness of urbanization and land use impacts on agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%

Campaign Audiences

- Primary:
 - Osceola County Board of County Commissioners
 - Respective city council members
 - Public/elected county and city officials, including tax collector, property appraiser, clerk of court, supervisor of elections, superintendent of schools, and city/town mayors
- Secondary:
 - Chamber of Commerce staff
 - Other key community decision makers including school principals, business leaders, etc.
- Tertiary:
 - Government or political office staff members
 - General public

Role of Agents, Staff & Volunteers During Campaign

- County Extension Director (CED) will be responsible for all contact with members of primary audience, and will coordinate and oversee contact with all audiences.
- Other agents and staff members will be responsible for making contact with members of the secondary audience, as well as assist the CED as directed with his/her responsibilities. Other agents and staff will also be responsible for coordinating contact between volunteers and the tertiary audience.
- Volunteers will make contact with tertiary audience and report to extension agents and staff members to assist them as directed with other audience contact.

Strategies

- Use "Solutions For Your Life" key message on all materials and resources
- One-on-one meetings, as time and monetary resources allow
- Small group meetings (i.e. board meetings, etc.)
- Use of the following materials and resources:
 - Fast fact sheets
 - Data to support information on fast fact sheets
 - Power Point presentation
 - Promotional Video

Tactics

Objective #1: Survey Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials to measure their awareness of the economic impact of, the environmental stewardship efforts of, the water quality and conservation efforts of, and the urbanization and land use impacts on agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County.

- Develop an electronic survey and send via e-mail.
- Compile results and adjust tactics for the other four objectives based on results.

Objective #2: Raise awareness of the economic impact of agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%

- Use the Osceola County fast fact sheet to show the dollar impact and jobs created by various agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County during one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience member to conclude that the agricultural and natural resources industry does have an economic impact on Osceola County.
- Use Power Point presentations and promotional video in small group meetings to show the dollar impact and jobs created by various agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County during one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience members to conclude that the agricultural and natural resources industry does have an economic impact on Osceola County.

Objective #3: Raise awareness of the environmental stewardship efforts of agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%

- Use the Environmental Stewardship fast fact sheet to show the steps being taken by agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County to take care of our environment and preserve it for future generations during one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience member to conclude that the Osceola County agricultural and natural resources industry does practice environmental stewardship.
- Use Power Point presentations and promotional video in small group meetings to show the steps being taken by agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County to take care of our environment and preserve it for future generations during one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience members to conclude that the Osceola County agricultural and natural resources industry does practice environmental stewardship.

Objective #4: Raise awareness of the water quality and conservation efforts of agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%

- Use the Water Quality & Conservation fast fact sheet to show the steps being taken by agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County to preserve water quality and to conserve water during one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience member to conclude that the Osceola County agricultural and natural resources industry does take steps to preserve water quality and to conserve it.
- Use Power Point presentations and promotional video in small group meetings to show the steps being taken by agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County to preserve water quality and to conserve water during one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience members to conclude that the Osceola County agricultural and natural resources industry does take steps to preserve water quality and conserve water.

Objective #5: Raise awareness of urbanization and land use impacts on agriculture and natural resources in Osceola County among Osceola County's key community leaders and public/elected officials by 5%

- Use the Urbanization & Land Use fast fact sheet to show the impact of urbanization and land use on agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County during one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience member to conclude that the Osceola County agricultural and natural resources industry is impacted by urbanization and land use.
- Use Power Point presentations and promotional video in small group meetings to show the steps being taken by agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County to who the impact of urbanization and land use on agriculture and natural resource industries in Osceola County during

one-on-one or small group meetings. Explain the data and ask questions leading the audience members to conclude that the Osceola County agricultural and natural resources industry is impacted by urbanization and land use.

Campaign Outcomes

- The five campaign objectives should be met.
- Decisions being made by key community leaders and elected/public officials will be well-thought out with any impact on Osceola County's agriculture and natural resources industry being considered.
- Decisions being made on policies affecting Osceola County agriculture and natural resources will have a positive implication for Osceola County's agriculture and natural resources industry

Campaign Implementation Plan

The materials and resources that will be used to carry out this campaign will need to be developed first, then they will need to be test marketed before being using with the target audience. A website with the resources attached and available for download will be available at www.FloridaAgInfo.com for extension agents and staff to access when they are ready to acquire these resources. Electronic resources will need to be printed as needed by county agents and staff. A communications plan summary for each of our three audiences has been developed below and will need to be carried out by campaign staff, extension agents, extension staff, and volunteers using a predetermined timeline. A follow-up evaluation will need to be conducted to measure objectives versus outcomes of the campaign.

Evaluation Plan

Once the Osceola County Extension Service has carried out the campaign using the materials and resources listed, an evaluation will need to be completed to measure the campaign objectives versus the campaign outcomes, thus measuring the effectiveness of this campaign. A follow-up survey will be sent out to the targeted audiences measuring their awareness of the agriculture and natural resources industry in Osceola County. Those results will be compared to results from the initial survey that was taken. This survey should measure the effectiveness of specific messages, delivery methods, and overall message in respect to the desired campaign outcomes.

Section III: The Communications Plan

Summary For Each Audience

- **Primary:** Osceola County Board of County Commissioners, Respective city council members, Public/elected county and city officials (including tax collector, property appraiser, clerk of court, supervisor of elections, superintendent of schools, and city/town mayors)
 - Refer to ***Tactics*** section above
- **Secondary:** Chamber of Commerce staff, Other key community decision makers including school principals, business leaders, etc.
 - Refer to ***Tactics*** section above
- **Tertiary:** Government or political office staff members, General public
 - Refer to ***Tactics*** section above

Timeline for Each Audience

- **Primary:** Osceola County Board of County Commissioners, Respective city council members, Public/elected county and city officials (including tax collector, property appraiser, clerk of court, supervisor of elections, superintendent of schools, and city/town mayors)
 - Complete Tactics for Objective #1 by December 2007
 - Complete Tactics for Objectives #2 - #5 by August 2008

- Complete Evaluation by December 2008
- **Secondary:** Chamber of Commerce staff, Other key community decision makers including school principals, business leaders, etc.
 - Complete Tactics for Objective #1 by December 2007
 - Complete Tactics for Objectives #2 - #5 by August 2008
 - Complete Evaluation by December 2008
- **Tertiary:** Government or political office staff members, General public
 - Complete Tactics for Objective #1 by December 2007
 - Complete Tactics for Objectives #2 - #5 by August 2008
 - Complete Evaluation by December 2008