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## 2003 Family Picnic Set for September 13

### Farm Bureau Building To Be Dedicated to Jerry L. Underwood

Please join your fellow Farm Bureau members on Saturday, September 13 for the 2003 Family Picnic and Jerry L. Underwood Memorial Dedication. The festivities will begin at 11 a.m. with fun and food for the entire family. This year's picnic will be held in the Dade County Farm Bureau "Backyard," which is located at 1850 Old Dixie Highway in Homestead.

The event is free to all Farm Bureau members, regardless of their membership classification. "This membership event is our way of showing our appreciation to our members who support our efforts year-round," said event co-chairman David Kaplan, president of The Plant Doctor, Inc.

In addition to barbecued hamburgers and hot dogs, we will have an old-fashioned watermelon-eating contest. Prizes will be awarded for the winner in each of the following categories: children ages 3-9, youth ages 10-17 and adults ages 18 and up.

Musical entertainment will be provided, along with activities for the entire family, including pony rides, petting zoo, climbing wall and face painting.

At 1 p.m., the Dade County Farm Bureau building will be dedicated in the name of Jerry L. Underwood, who was the insurance agency manager. Underwood passed away on November 13, 2002.

Inside this month's *Voice of Agriculture*, you will find your admission ticket. Admission is limited to Farm Bureau

members and their immediate families, and you must present your ticket at the event.

For additional information, please contact Katie Edwards, director of communications, at (305) 246-5514.

## Annual Membership Meeting Planned for October 7

The Dade County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 7 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. at the Redland Golf and Country Club, located at 24451 Krome Avenue in Homestead.

Many of our legislators and their aides will be present. This is a great opportunity to talk to our legislators one-on-one, letting them know how vital the economic engine of agriculture is to both the local and state economy.

All active and associate business members are strongly encouraged to attend this year's annual meeting. "This year's annual membership meeting will inform our members of the important issues facing our industry, and together we can implement a plan of action to address such issues," said Mark Wilson, president of the Dade County Farm Bureau.

For additional information, please contact Katie Edwards, director of communications, at (305) 246-5514.

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## Evaluation of an Automatic Soil Moisture-Based Drip Irrigation System for Row Tomatoes

A low-volume/high frequency (LVHF) soil moisture-based drip irrigation system was tested on a commercial tomato farm in South Florida.

Seven irrigation treatments were compared. In the first six treatments, the system was pressurized by means of an electrical pump and a pressure tank, and controlled by an irrigation timer (controller) set to irrigate five times per day.

The last treatment consisted of the farm's standard commercial practice, where a portable pump was used on a bi-weekly manual irrigation schedule. Four of the six LVHF treatments resulted from interfacing in a closed control loop with the irrigation controller, two types of soil moisture sensors (switching tensiometers and granular matrix sensors) set at two moisture points (wet: 10 cbar, optimal:15 cbar).

The other two LVHF resulted from the same system with no sensors with two timer schedules, one to supply 100% of the maximum recommended crop

water needs and the other to supply 150% of those needs.

Results showed that the six LVHF treatments conserved water, and did not diminish tomato yields below that of the commercial field. Switching tensiometers at 15 cbar set point performed the best (up to 73% reduction in water use when compared to commercial farm, 50% with respect to the 100% recommended crop water needs treatment.)

Routine maintenance was critical for reliable operation of switching tensiometers. Granular matrix sensors behaved erratically, and did not improve water savings compared to the 100% recommended crop water needs treatment.

Please contact Dr. Rafael Muñoz-Carpena, University of Florida, Tropical Research and Education Center at 305-246-7001 ext. 288 or [carpena@ufl.edu](mailto:carpena@ufl.edu) for questions or comments.

### IN MEMORIAM

#### Karen Hillyer, Daughter of Local Artist

Connie Hillyer, who was the 4-H program assistant for the Miami-Dade County Cooperative Extension Service for thirteen years, recently lost her oldest daughter, Karen Hillyer to a brief illness.

Karen Hillyer, 42, was the oldest daughter of four children. Karen graduated from the University of Miami, and was employed with E Universe. She resided in California.

Connie Hillyer has been a dear friend to the agricultural community. While she was employed with the extension service, she served on the Dade County AgriCouncil and worked closely with the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition. "Friends know Connie for her creativity and willingness to pitch in whenever help is needed," said Mary Lamberts, Vegetable Agent and County Trainer.

A fund has been established to assist Connie with funeral expenses. Contributions would be greatly appreciated and can be sent to:

Community Bank  
Attn: Denise Tarafa  
28801 S.W. 157 Avenue  
Homestead, FL 33033

#### Dennis Emerson, Director of Field Services



DENNIS EMERSON

The agriculture industry lost a beloved friend on August 14 with passing of Dennis Emerson. Dennis was the director of field services for the Florida Farm Bureau Federation.

Referred to as "Mr. Farm Bureau," Dennis was well-known to all of the Farm Bureau members who regularly attended Florida Farm Bureau events.

"Dennis was the type of person who would spot you, and go out of his way to say hello. He was a very personable and likeable person," said Dave Friedrichs, executive director of the Dade County Farm Bureau.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to:  
Hospice of North Central Florida  
4200 N.W. 90 Blvd.  
Gainesville, FL 32606