

Directors Update - July 2023

We had our latest Directors meeting on July 7, 2023.

Membership and Finances are in good order. Our Membership is up 27% from last year and we have collected a large part of the dues renewals. We have enough funds to carry out our main priority this year which is the research project by Don Rockwood (FGT) and IFAS aimed at defining how much production we can expect.

We have concluded that the FGT project should be merged with the separate and similar project by IFAS and both parties are working to accomplish this. We think this is an important undertaking that will unlock how we understand production and growing of bamboo, and as such are renaming it the *Key Project*. The field work began on June 8th to define what culms were in the field from prior seasons, the baseline. Subsequent monthly observations will identify and measure the new production from the current season. We will provide monthly reporting to you on this so that we can all share in the journey of what we learn. The Key Project will be the prominent feature in our Annual Meeting in November. The expected outputs and questions that may be answered along the way include:

- Production - defined quantity per acre in sampled farms in pounds of shoots and tons of wood. We will learn the pace of production during the season.
- Variation amongst farms - we have many directions of analysis including the % of dead/weak plants, % mature plants, age, how maturity is defined, etc. We expect to be able to rank farms objectively.
- Harvest relationship to production - we will calculate the % of shoots less than 3" in diameter, the % shoots produced before harvest began and % of shoot production harvested.
- Plant growth rates - we will learn how much healthy farms increase in size and production from one year to the next, what to expect in the early years and how much this might increase in the future.

IFAS Team - Dr. Davie who leads our IFAS team, was awarded by the Florida State Horticultural Society, the Presidential Gold Medal Award for having the greatest impact and contributions during the last 6 years. We are blessed with a talented team!

Harvest Statistics Reporting - It is our intent to provide weekly reporting of harvest data with analytics and commentary. The harvest just began this week so we are awaiting data to be provided by the farmers being harvested.

New Marketing Assistant - We just hired Lynn Beha as a part time Marketing Assistant. Lynn is a US active duty military spouse and referred to us by VirtForce, an organization that connects these active duty military spouses with jobs. We are very fortunate to have Lynn on our team as she has the talent we can utilize to build community in our organization through our website, social media and blogs. She will begin work in late July.

Annual Meeting - Members of our Board volunteered for positions to help plan for our next Annual Meeting and Election. The meeting is expected to be in late November.
Thank you!