

Update for Members:

We had our latest Directors meeting on March 12, 2024.

Membership and Finances have improved with payments of renewal dues (40% in so far) and new member dues (5 new members) bringing us to cash on hand close to \$10,000.

Annual Meeting Planning - Peter Chaires was appointed to lead our effort in planning the Annual Meeting. We had been advised that with earlier planning we could improve the timing of the meeting, participation and potential sponsorships. Peter indicated he would meet shortly with Kevin Barley and Ambar Acevedo, our Marketing Specialist to get this started.

Research - Kevin Barley reviewed progress on planning related to the Key Project, focusing on which farms will be included, the fact that Cathy Atchley and her company OnPoint Ag have been hired to do the field work, the estimated cost and who will be responsible for the payments. See below the table that provides this information.

The approach to farm inclusion started with the expectation that most farms getting harvested will want data on their farm. Scaling the project up provides added integrity to the information but UF-IFAS is unlikely to be able to sustain providing the work for all of the industry. With that in mind we concluded that the farmers would need to pay \$25 per acre of the fieldwork cost to be included. The balance of the field work cost which totals \$85 per acre will be paid by UF-IFAS. Faith Farms will provide their own fieldwork in data collection. The data processing and design of \$125 per acre provided by FFGT (Don Rockwood) will be split by UF-IFAS and FBGA.

Don Rockwood will begin plot designation and initial baseline data collection in April.

Expected Farms to Sample in 2024

Farm	Acres	Year	City	Managed Farm and Parcel
Mixon	2.50	8	Bradenton	
Hi Hat	11.00	7	Sarasota	
Fatout	4.00	6	Frostproof	
Merrick 27	27.00	5	Sebring	
MFA	10.00	5	Lake Placid	
Ingram	20.00	5	Lake Wales	
Agri Citrus	10.00	4	Wauchula	Pioneer-3
SOS	10.00	4	Wauchula	Pioneer-5
Jacksonview	10.00	4	Wauchula	Pioneer-6
Bamboo Products	10.00	4	Wauchula	Pioneer-7
MacFarms	5.40	4	W. Frostproof	Eden-2
Windmill Farms	12.93	4	W. Frostproof	Eden-3
Bulow Farms	12.93	4	W. Frostproof	Eden-5
Browns	9.34	4	W. Frostproof	Eden-7
Faith Farms	13.00	4	Okeechobee	

165.60

	Cost / Acre	Acres	Total Cost	UF-IFAS	Members @ \$25/ac	FBGA
Cost of Planning / Processing - FFGT	125	165.60	20,700	10,350		10,350
Data Collection - AgPoint	85	152.60	12,971	9,156	3,815	

Marketing Planning - Kevin Barley provided some vision about our direction this year focused on developing markets and how we help our industry become known. Our main objective is that the Florida bamboo industry become known as the supply source in the US for bamboo shoots and wood.

Our plan is to use LinkedIn as a social media tool to connect with and attract new members from the companies that are potential users of our crops. We will write Member Spotlights, a nicely layed out introduction of certain members which should highlight how they might use our bamboo and when.

We know that as this is a developing new market, most of the market could benefit from knowing how much product we expect to have as supply. We plan to request a 5-year forecast of crop production (shoots and wood) for the Florida industry, as an output of the Key Project. This will be provided to our Members and LinkedIn.

From a proof of concept standpoint we know that it is meaningful to our growers to hear from companies that have a real interest in buying their crops. We are encouraging these companies to join the FBGA so we can connect them to you, our Members.

Connecting our Supply to the Markets has other benefits. As recently as this week I was contacted with a new bioplastics company that is exploring whether we can meet their needs with our supply. I realized that the pricing for this was well over the value we typically find of \$100/ton for our wood. My conclusion was that the value of our Wood crops could be significantly greater (several thousand dollars/acre more) than our typical projections.

I recommend that if you are on LinkedIn that you search for Florida Bamboo Growers Association and Follow us! This will better connect you to our marketing efforts. When you see a post from us please Like it and Repost it so we can tap into your own further network Reach.

Next Meeting - April 11th at 2:30pm