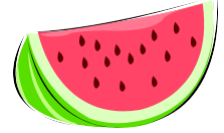


2025



Suwannee Valley Watermelon Institute



Thursday, December 4, 2025

Suwannee River Fair

17851 90 Avenue Fanning Springs, FL 32693

AGENDA (Session Details Below on Page 2)

8:00am—9:00 am

Exhibitor Set-Up Time

(11:30 am, lunch available for exhibitors)

9:00 am

Attendee Registration, Event Begins

9:00am—2:00pm

Visit Exhibitors

10:20am—12:00pm

Session 1

12:00pm

(Lunch for attendees)

1:15pm—3:00pm

Session 2

3:00pm

Adjourn

This institute is organized and provided to you by the Suwannee River Partnership and the UF/IFAS County Extension offices in the following counties: Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, and Union. Funding support is provided by allied industry representatives serving the watermelon industry in Florida.

DETAILED AGENDA

- 8:00am** Exhibitor Set-Up Time (Exhibit area Coordinators: Mark Warren and Beth Cannon, UF/IFAS Levy County Extension)
(Lunch provided to exhibitors at 11:30am)
- 9:00am - 2:00pm** Visit Exhibitors
- 10:20am- 11:00am** Morning Session 1
Moderator: Emily Beach, UF/IFAS Lafayette County Extension
Pesticide Private Applicator or Ag Row (CEUs requested), Certified Crop Advisors (CEUs requested)
Panel discussion: Nutrient management insights for grafted watermelon
Panel leader: Tyler Pittman, UF/IFAS Gilchrist County Extension
- 11:00-11:30am** Cost and Value Considerations for Grafted Watermelons
Kevin Athearn, RSA, NFREC-Suwannee Valley
- 11:30am-11:50am** Partnering for Success: UF/IFAS programs and field projects for 2026
Emily Beach, UF/IFAS Lafayette County Extension
- 12:00pm-1:15pm** Industry Sponsored Lunch provided to attendees
Moderator: Tyler Pittman, UF/IFAS Gilchrist County Extension
Welcome: Jessica Cooper, Chair, Gilchrist County Extension Director
Greetings: Florida Watermelon Association President, Carrie Thomas, Diamond 99
2025 Florida Watermelon Queen: Reagan Hudson
National Watermelon Promotion Board Update: Mark Arney
- 1:15pm-1:55pm** Afternoon Session 2
Moderator: Raymond Balaguer, UF/IFAS Suwannee County Extension Agent
Pesticide Private Applicator or Ag Row (CEUs requested), Certified Crop Advisors (CEUs requested)
Smart Strategies to Help Reduce Costs in 2026 Without Impacting Yield or Quality
Mark Warren, UF/IFAS Levy County Extension Director
Bob Hochmuth, RSA, NFREC-Suwannee Valley
- 1:55pm-2:20pm** BMPs for honeybees and other pollinators
Derrick Conover, UF/IFAS Columbia County Extension
- 2:20pm-2:40pm** The New Certified Pesticide Applicator Testing and Other Procedures
Raymond Balaguer, UF/IFAS Suwannee County Extension
- 2:40pm-3:00pm** Department of Labor, Wage Hour Division, H-2A updates
Robert Vaden, USDOL, Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist
- 3:00pm** Adjourn: Receive Your UF/IFAS Vegetable Production Handbook, Pesticide Applicator CEUs and Certified Crop Advisors
CEU Coordinators: Dan Fenneman, UF/IFAS Madison County Extension Director
Raymond Balaguer, UF/IFAS Suwannee County Extension
Jay Capasso, RSA, NFREC-Suwannee Valley