

the

VOICE

of the American Agri-Woman



August/September 2006, Volume 33, Issue 5

We can do it together!

Five women nominated for American Agri-Women positions

This year American Agri-Women has five positions to fill, two officers and three directors for the Resource Center board.

Pat Yaegle, Illinois Agri-Women member from Winslow, Illinois, and chair of the Rural Health/Insurance Committee, has been nominated for Vice President of Education. She is interested in furthering education for youth and adults across the nation and learning more and adding enthusiasm for agriculture education in the future.

Pat has been a member of AAW since 1993 and is a past president of Illinois Agri-Women and currently chair of the Illinois Science Fair Project. She attended the Syngenta Leadership Conference in 1999. She's a very dynamic 4-H leader, leading the Snappy Snazzers 4-H club for 28 years. Other interests include her church where she is a trustee and on the pastor/parish committee, and singing with the Monroe Swiss Singers.

Pat has been secretary of the Jo Davies County Fair since 1998 and on the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs Board since 2002. Her hobbies are gardening, antiques, and reading.

Pat is an independent insurance agent and owns a stateline farm (did

dairy for 25 years), which she now farms with her two sons, Chris & Rob.

Lynn Figone-Gallagher, California Women for Agriculture member from Middletown, California, and president of the Lake County Chapter, has been nominated for AAW Secretary.

Lynn's interest in agriculture began very early on when at four years old, she announced to family she was going to marry a farmer or live on a farm! It was time spent on her Cousin Ken Mazzetta's dairy farm in Petaluma, California, also where she was born and raised, that she developed her interest in local agriculture. Lynn credits her deep interest in agriculture to her high school Ag teacher and FFA advisor, John DeJong, and one of her early mentors and employers, Sondra Wallace the owner of Barn Tours for which Lynn worked as an Ag Ed Specialist/Tour Guide for many years.

Lynn is the daughter of John and Terry Figone and the mother of two small children, Baillie who is 6 years old and Brady who is 5. They too, share their mothers love for agriculture. Lynn jokes that her children knew their breeds of cattle before their ABCs!

A member of AAW for only a few years, she was first introduced to the organization many years ago while working at the Oregon State Fair and came across the AAW booth.

Currently, Lynn, along with fellow CWA member Pam Shaw, is working on the "Helping Hand Farm and Ranch Relief Fund." This fund will help those who have suffered loss due to natural disasters.

Ina Pluid has been nominated to be a director on the Resource Center. She is a member of Idaho Women in Timber from Bonners Ferry, Idaho, and has been a member of AAW since 1991.

She grew up on a small rural family farm and has been married 50 years to a self-employed logging contractor.

Ina is currently serving her fourth term as the Timber Commodity chair and is also on the ESA and Water committees. She has also been president and vice president of her local IWIT chapter and has been state president, 1st vice president, and 2nd vice president and has been on the IWIT board of directors for 18 years. She's attended Washington, DC, with Federated Women in Timber six times.

Continued on page 3.



Pat Yaegle



Mary Ann Graff



Ina Pluid



Julie Tesch

President's Column



By Yvonne Erickson
AAW President

O beautiful for spacious skies,
for amber waves of grain. . . The
lyrics played through my mind many
times as I was operating the combine
in previous years. How could I not
feel the majesty with a bright blue
sky, fields of golden grain, and trees
and lakes in the background?

By now many of you have
reaped all or part of your harvest for
this year in production agriculture or
agri-business. Hopefully it has been
a productive year for all entities. If
earlier goals weren't reached, the
progressive thinker in us already
started to tweak next year's plans.

Does the general public realize
the abundant agricultural products
are produced by a minute amount
of farmers? We are the one percent
of the population who chose to work
in ag, allowing the other 99% to
enjoy our bounty. There are some
days, however, I wish they would put
the face of the farmer responsible
for the product on the label. These
things just don't appear on the
shelves by magic. Our AAW goal of
communicating and educating can
"put the face" on these foods and
fibers.

Commercials tote the benefits of
sales, bargains and great deals. The
best buy in our country is often taken
for granted – FOOD. Americans
(excluding the low-income levels)
spend about 9% of their disposable
income on food. This allows them
more purchasing power than any
other nation can provide. They
are not burdened with spending
it on food and shelter but can buy
technology, vacations, an extra
vehicle, and others items that would
be a luxury in other countries.

Harvest time for AAW

culminates in our November annual
meeting and convention. We will
look at the year's accomplishments
in meeting our goals and strategies.
Please identify these accomplishments
for those writing annual reports that
are due October 1.

Registration is still available
for the annual convention. Check
a VOICE or go online to the AAW
website and join your fellow members
in Miami. Come Thursday afternoon
to attend the afternoon issues
workshops, and then move into the
annual meeting, agricultural tours
and end with the Saturday evening
Awards Banquet. A Key Largo
(beginning of the Florida Keys) Day of
Fun is a Sunday option.

Let's celebrate the bounty of
AAW: shared passion for agriculture,
friendships and enjoyment of our
hard work. See you in Miami!

Yvonne

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER DEADLINE 10/15

Unknown to most AAW affiliates,
the *Voice* has a schedule of when your
group is supposed to have a report in
to the editor for printing. Here are
the organizations scheduled for the
next issue. Please send your articles to
Arlene Kovash at akovash@earthlink.
net.

Affiliates:

- American Angus Auxiliary
- Am. Sheep Industry Women
- Salers Belles
- Georgia Cotton Women
- Illinois Agri-Women
- Nebraska Agri-Women
- Montana Agri-Women
- Maine Agri-Women
- Ohio Agri-Women
- Texas Agri-Women

Committees:

- Public Understanding & Awareness
- Ag Chemicals/Food Safety
- Ag Research/Biotechnology
- Agricultural Labor
- Religion

American Agri-Women Executive Committee

President	Yvonne Erickson 34115 County Hwy 74 Battle Lake, MN 56515 Phone: 218-495-2867 Fax: 218-495-2659 president@americanagriwomen.org
1st Vice President Resolutions, Vital Issues	Marcie Williams 11404 Appleton Rd Croton, OH 43013 Phone: 740-893-4300 Fax: 740-893-4003 resolutions@americanagriwomen.org
Vice Pres. Communi- cations	Chris Wilson 4210 Wam-Teau Drive Wamego, KS 66547 Phone: 785-456-7899 communications@ americanagriwomen.org
Vice Pres. Education	Doris Mold P.O. Box 8192 St. Paul, MN 55108 Cell Phone: 612-414-7574 Fax: 715-822-6341 education@americanagriwomen.org
Secretary	Katie Edwards 1850 Old Dixie Hwy Homestead, FL 33033 Cell Phone: 305-281-7323 secretary@americanagriwomen.org
Treasurer	Kathy Rhoads 26669 Kingston Pike Circleville, OH 43113 Home: (740) 474-4649 Office: (740) 474-2028 Fax: (740) 474-3939 treasurer@americanagriwomen.org
Past Pres.	Carol Marx 4150 Oak Grove Rd. Rickreall, OR 97371 (503) 362-6225 Fax: (503) 362-2253 pastpresident@ americanagriwomen.org

AAW Web Site:

www.americanagriwomen.org

E-mail Address:

info@americanagriwomen.org

The VOICE is published in February, April,
June, August, October, and December by
American Agri-Women as a service to members.
Deadline is the 15th of the month before each
issue is published.

Articles and suggestions are always welcomed
by the editor:

Arlene Kovash, Page Craft
11425 Pedee Creek Rd
Monmouth, OR 97361
Ph: (503) 838-3512 • Fax (503) 838-6851
E-mail: akovash@earthlink.net

Please send address changes to:

Carolyn Kleiber, Membership Chair
PO Box 111
Hillsboro, KS 67063
Ph: (620) 947-3094 • Fax: (620) 947-2476
carolyn@agpowerinc.net

Nominees, continued from page 1.

Ina has also been a 4-H leader ten years, is active in her church, and has participated in rewriting their County Land Plan. She attends most AAW meetings, including the convention, mid-year, and fly-in, and is an expert resource for timber issues.

Mary Ann Graff is a current member of the Resource Center and has served as president, scholarship chair, secretary, and in public relations. She is a member of California Women for Agriculture and lives in Visalia.

Mary Ann has attended almost all conventions, mid-year meetings, and fly-ins since she joined AAW in 2000, plus has attended the Syngenta Leadership Conference. In addition she is currently president of CWA, past 1st, 2nd, and 3rd vice president, and has held several offices in her local chapter. She is also on the Buy California Marketing Agreement Board and is a member of the California Farm Bureau.

Mary Ann grew up on the family farm but is no longer involved in production agriculture. She states, "I guess you can take the girl off the farm but can't farming out of the girl!"

Julie Tesch has been nominated to be a director on the Resource Center. She is from St. Paul, Minnesota and is AAW's National College Project co-chair.

Julie is executive director of Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC), past 2nd vice president of Minnesota Agri-Women, a Helen Whitmore scholarship recipient, attended Syngenta training in 2002, and is co-chair of the 2007 AAW national convention.

A native of Waldorf, MN she received both her master's degree in agricultural education and her bachelor of science degree in applied economics from the University of Minnesota * Twin Cities and also just completed her tenure of being a Hubert H. Humphrey Policy Fellow.

As a volunteer, she devotes much of her time to FFA and 4-H activities across the state

Letter to the Editor:

Logo needs updating to make it relevant

Oregon Women for Agriculture would like to thank the convention delegates for considering our resolution to update the AAW logo. As members of AAW, we are proud of our achievements and the difference our commitment has made to agriculture these past 30 plus years.

Times have changed, years have passed. Members have come and gone. It is time to update the AAW logo. Please consider the following questions when making your decision:

1. Is it relevant to the times?
2. Is it recognizable to the public?
3. Is it representative of our purpose?

We believe the above questions cannot all be answered with a "yes" using the existing logo. We are in a new century with evolving issues that need to be symbolized in our logo. By updating the logo, we have an opportunity to create an image that is truly in line with the current times, recognizable by both urban and rural communities, and accurately reflecting our mission statement.

We understand the many concerns that our organization is addressing at this time. Nevertheless, our logo needs to be clearly defined and without misrepresentation. An updated AAW logo is a proactive move to symbolize our mission statement in a fresh way.

Please consider our resolution:

AAW Logo Resolution

WHEREAS, we, members of Oregon Women for Agriculture, are recommending an update to the American Agri-Women logo; and

WHEREAS, we are in a new century with evolving issues that need to be symbolized in our logo; and

WHEREAS, the logo of American

Agri-Women should be relevant to the times, recognizable to the public and representative of our purpose; and,

WHEREAS, our logo needs to be clearly defined and without misrepresentation; and

WHEREAS, American Agri-Women are active participants in agriculture as individuals, business partners, wives, mothers and friends; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that we are proactive in creating an image that is truly in line with the current times, recognizable by both urban and rural communities, and accurately reflecting our mission statement.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Oregon Women for Agriculture**

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please Print – This membership application form will be used for direct computer input to produce your newsletter mailing labels.

Dues may be paid through your commodity/state affiliate or mailed to: American Agri-Women, PO Box 111, Hillsboro, KS 67063.

Please check one: New Renew

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone () _____

Fax () _____

E-Mail _____

AAW Affiliation _____

AAW National Dues (\$20 for both affiliate and at-large or single member), or \$10 if a collegiate member) is enclosed:

Yes No

YES! We take Visa or Mastercard!

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Convention Registration

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

A block of rooms has been reserved under American Agri-Women at the Sheraton Miami-Mart Hotel. Reservations must be made prior to October 8, 2006. Call the hotel directly at (305) 261-3800 to book your room.

Room Rates:

\$125 per night for single/double occupancy

\$155 per night for Club Level Suite

\$185 per night for Junior Suite

Room tax is 13% per night. Self-parking is \$4.00 overnight, \$3.00 daily

SILENT AUCTION DONOR FORM

Donor: _____

Contact(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Please specify how you wish to be recognized on the bid sheet:

Please give a brief description of the item(s) you are donating:

Estimated or known value(s) of item(s) donated:

Fax your completed form to Doris Mold at (715) 822-6351.

For shipping of your item, please ship to American Agri-Women, 1850 Old Dixie Hwy, Homestead, FL 33033. Please keep a copy of this form for your tax records.

American Agri-Women is a 505 c (5) organization; contributions are not deductible as a charitable expense, but may be deducted as a business expense.

AMERICAN AGRI-WOMEN 31ST ANNUAL MEETING

Registration form also available at www.americanagriwomen.org

Registration Fees

Registration fee is \$300. Collegiate members' registration fee is \$200. Registration fee includes meals, breaks, sessions with speakers, Friday tours and all conference materials. Meal functions must be registered for in advance using the registration form below. Kindly let us know which meal function you will be attending so that we may have an accurate count.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations made in writing before September 10, 2006 will receive a full refund. No refund will be given to cancellations made after September 10.

Optional Tours

Registration and payment for tours can be included with your registration.

Name: _____ Affiliate: _____

Guest: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____ Voting member of AAW? _____

	Per Person	Number	Amt
Registration	\$300	_____	_____
Collegiate Registration	\$200	_____	_____

Please check which events you plan to attend:

Thursday, Nov. 9 RC Board Breakfast _____

Board of Directors Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Friday, Nov. 10 Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Saturday, Nov. 11 Affiliate Presidents Breakfast _____

Breakfast _____

Collegiate Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Optional Tour Registration

Friday, November 10, 2006

"Discovering Diversity: Miami-Dade Ag" Included _____

Saturday, November 11, 2006

"Everglades Ag Area Farm Tours" – spouse/guests only _____

Sunday, November 12, 2006

"A Day in Key Largo" \$ 50 _____

Total Enclosed

Payment – Make checks payable to AAW 2006 Convention and mail with registration form to: Debbie Brady, 1850 Old Dixie Highway, Homestead, FL 33033. You can also register and pay online by credit card at www.americanagriwomen.org.

Inquiries – Contact Katie Edwards at (305) 246-5514, ext. 226, or secretary@americanagriwomen.org.

The Continuing Saga of Estate Tax (“Death Tax”) Repeal

Trenna R Grabowski, CPA, Tax Chair

On June 22 the House passed H.R. 5638, the “Permanent Estate Tax Relief Act of 2006” with a 269 to 156 margin. The legislation was then sent on to the Senate where it was to consider the “compromise” legislation sometime after the Independence Day break.

This bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to:

- (1) increase the estate and gift tax exemption to \$5 million beginning in 2010;
- (2) lower to 15% the estate tax rate for estates up to \$25 million and 30% for estates of \$25 million or more; This ties the estate tax rate to the capital gains rate for the lower tier and to twice the capital gains rate for the upper tier.
- (3) repeal after 2009 the estate tax deduction for estate, inheritance, legacy, or succession taxes paid to states;
- (4) allow a surviving spouse to claim any unused portion of a deceased spouse’s estate or gift tax unified credit, which means that if a couple has made no estate planning provisions and just passes all of the estate of the first spouse to die to the surviving spouse (remember, no transfer tax on assets passing from one spouse to another), that surviving spouse will have available \$10 million in exemptions (the surviving spouse’s own \$5 million exemption plus the unused portion of the deceased spouse’s \$5 million exemption).
- (5) allow a taxpayer election to deduct from gross income the lesser of 60% of qualified timber gain or net capital gain.

It also repeals the provision in the 2001 legislation that related to carryover basis of estate property to allow recipients of such property after 2009 to use date-of-death fair market values. That means that any property you inherit will automatically have a “basis” (what you use as your cost if

you should sell it) of “date of death value.” When or if you sell inherited property, your gain will be the difference between what it was worth when your benefactor died and what you sell it for.

This version would relieve most farmers of estate tax and keep the stepped up basis in effect (the loss of full stepped up basis was a major problem with the original repeal). Under this compromise, a married couple would have \$10 million in exemptions (\$5 million each) and whatever portion the first to die did not use would be added on to the surviving spouse’s exemption.

The provision dealing with the timber was a surprise to me when they put it in—obviously it is not related to the estate tax issue. My interpretation of this provision is that if you sell timber, not only will it be taxed at a lower tax rate if it is eligible for long term capital gains treatment (a maximum of 15%), but only 40% of the gain will be subject to tax at all.

When the Congress came back after the Independence Day break, the House considered a different bill (H.R. 5970) with most of the same provisions, but with a 40% minimum wage increase (from \$5.15 to \$7.25 over three years). The House passed the measure on July 29 with a 230 to 180 vote and sent it on to the Senate.

The Senate failed to pass the combined estate tax cut and minimum wage increase before recessing until September 5. With a scheduled adjournment target of October 6, that leaves precious little time for Senate approval and reconciliation should the Senate-passed version not match the House-passed version.

I have quit trying to second-guess Congress on the Estate Tax issue. I had thought there would be a compromise long before this. Don’t be confused—“estate tax” is the same as “death tax.” The use of the term “death tax” was a masterful marketing move designed

to garner popular opinion for repeal of the tax—and it worked. Most Americans, if asked, favor repeal, even though the tax actually applies to a small percentage of estates. As the law currently stands with full repeal in 2010 and a restoration to pre-2001 law in 2011, estate planning, retirement planning and general transition planning is very difficult.

Federal land sales on hold

From Ina Pluid, Timber Chair

Mark Rey, Agriculture Undersecretary has agreed to support a one-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools & Communities Self-determination Act (Craig-Wyden Bill) which was scheduled to expire the end of September. The SRSCS Act has provided \$2 billion to 700 rural counties in 41 states over the past six years.

The proposed selling of 300,000 acres of national forest land parcels around the country to raise money for the continued payments has met strong opposition from both parties and is now on hold.

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) said the deal came after he agreed to stop blocking five Bush appointments to the departments of Agriculture and Interior. Wyden is searching for a long-term solution that would maintain help for rural counties that are unlikely to see a resumption of extensive logging on national forests.

Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) considers the payments a transition until national forests produce more timber. Smith was quoted as saying, “I wish our forest industries were healthy enough that we never needed a county payment program. But the fact is that we do need one, and while I’d prefer a long-term solution, we have to make sure our communities get by in the here and now.”

Wisconsin Women for Agriculture loses two voices for agriculture this year

By Rosemary Eckardt, President, Wisconsin Women for Agriculture

We have had the loss of two outstanding members this year, most recently, **Audrey Sickinger** of Reedsville, Wisconsin.

Audrey was a true pioneer woman who dedicated her life to agriculture in the modern world. Her energy and work focused on involvement in policy-making, not in serving coffee and doughnuts to the men in the organizations she and her husband Jerome belonged to.

Audrey was recognized as a national leader in the dairy industry. She was first appointed to the USDA Agriculture Trade Advisory Committee and later served on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board. She was recognized as Wisconsin's Farm Wife of the Year by the Colby Chamber of Commerce, National Dairy Woman of the Year, and was presented the President's Volunteer Action Award by President Ronald Reagan.

Audrey was the current president of Bay Lakes Chapter of WWA and has served as vice president of AAW. She has also served as AAW's secretary, Dairy Committee chairperson and co-chair, and received the prestigious Leaven Award in 1979, as well as the President's Award in 2006.

Audrey inspired many by her accomplishments on the farm, in her community, the state of Wisconsin, nationally and internationally. She was a dynamic woman who will be greatly missed by Wisconsin Women for Agriculture and American Agri-Women.

Sally Tadda of Owen, Wisconsin, passed away April 12th. She was involved in the Aquaculture industry with her family's fish farm and the Wisconsin Aquaculture Association. She and her husband Terry were awarded the Winton Aquaculture Hall of Fame for distinguished service to the industry. She learned of this honor shortly before her death.

Both women died of cancer.

Agriculture has lost two whose passions were to speak for agriculture.

WWA members have been responding to legislators on vital issues in Wisconsin and nationally affecting agriculture and in some instances issues directly related to members' businesses. Two issues are the immigration guest worker program for a Christmas tree grower and rules for manure handling and spreading for some of our small and large dairy farmers that would create further financial difficulties.

We held a luncheon at our state capitol for legislators and their staff in March where we presented our major concerns about our being in favor of the discontinuation of the Wisconsin Farm Land Preservation Program, the study of a Wisconsin Health Plan, extending senior care, support of the Taxpayer Protection Amendment, limits on Eminent Domain, ethanol legislation, nuisance lawsuit protection and updating the Endangered Species Act.

Michigan Agri-Women gain visibility

By Sharon Schmuhl, President

Michigan Agri-Women has been busy the past few months. We had the "Information Booth" for the Glad- Peach Festival the first weekend in August that ran 24 hours. We sold gladiolus and peaches and this endeavor has become a good source of revenue for our organization. It also gives our organization visibility. We have a new sign and an easel board this year and it was a great addition to our tent.

We are using the web more as an organization, and individually, with the website, congress.org. to contact our legislators. They respond quickly to this site.

As an agriculture organization, we have been invited to sit on the Paw Paw River Watershed Steering Committee. And of course, those of us

actively engaged in farming, are doing just that right now as we work with the weather conditions and the migrant labor situation. Michigan Agri-Women is looking forward to having a group at the AAW Convention in Miami in November.

Pesticides reduce reliance on oil & labor

Pesticide use significantly reduces U.S. agriculture's reliance on foreign oil and use of migrant labor, according to an updated CropLife Foundation (CFL) study.

For weed control in 2005, herbicides saved farmers 337 million gallons of diesel fuel that would have been needed for mechanical tillage. An additional 7 million migrant workers would also have been needed to pull weeds, the study says.

Other positives about herbicide use included 356 billion pounds of soil saved from erosion as the result of less soil planting preparation and reduced mechanical weed control, as well as, an estimated 20-percent increase in crop yield (296 billion pounds of additional food and fiber for the year) from reduced weed competition.

"If farmers relied on tillage rather than herbicides, they would have to make twice as many trips through each field, and *every tillage trip requires four times the fuel of a herbicide application*," said Nathan Reigner, co-author of the CLF study.

AAW members attend listening sessions

By Carol Marx, AAW Immediate Past President

The first of 24 listening sessions have been held across the country to solicit and exchange ideas on "cooperative conservation" and environmental partnerships, and have provided an opportunity speak to ways to improve the Endangered Species Act. (Not sure they were expecting that!)

In addition to Interior and EPA, the Agriculture Department, the Commerce Department and the White
Continued on next page.

Listening sessions, continued.

House Council on Environmental Quality sponsor the sessions. Agency personnel, including Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne and Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey attend as schedules permit.

AAW members that attended sessions include Eleanor Kiner who attended the Spokane sessions but did not speak, ESA Chairman Arlene Kovash and I who spoke at the Redmond, Oregon, session, and AAW 1st Vice President Marcie Williams who spoke at the Columbus, Ohio session.

Arlene submitted the AAW ESA positions and noted that the ESA needs the equivalent of a Grand Jury to evaluate lawsuits for merit.

Natural resource people were out in force in Redmond and eloquent in their ESA frustrations and the urgent need to reform the ESA now to be more consistent, fair to property owners, and less driven by lawsuits.

Marcie Williams said that in Columbus there was a very mixed crowd with home builders, realtors, forestry, cattlemen, Ohio EPA, Sierra Club, Ohio Environmental Council, Eagle Watchers, Ohio Farm Bureau and two farmers, including her. Besides her own AAW policy comments the only other mention of ESA came from the realtors who wanted to improve and reform ESA.

Panel members there reported they were impressed with the comments and speakers. The message that impressed one panel member the most came from the Cattlemen's representative who told of the problems with the black headed vultures killing calves. Hopefully they learned to not want this animal put on the endangered species list.

For further information on the Cooperative Conservation initiative, including a summary of proposed legislation, visit <http://cooperativeconservation.gov>.

When government policy pits environment against agriculture

By Katie A. Edwards, Florida

The opening scene of Francis Ford Coppola's film *Apocalypse Now* shows a field of palm trees basking in the hot sun. The sight, a familiar one, is characteristic of the hundreds of tree farms in southern Miami-Dade County. I wondered if anyone else watching the film for the first time would think of it as a tree farm or a wetland.

Strangely enough, there seems to be some confusion about agriculture and wetlands. Tree farms, primarily located in the region known as the East Glade of Miami-Dade, have been targeted by the county's Department of Environmental Resources Management, better known as DERM. Scores of tree farmers have received notices of violation for not applying for a permit. The farmers must now retroactively apply for permit to farm on what DERM claims are wetlands. But, the farmers must also pay hefty mitigation fees for impacting the wetland by tree farming.

The very notion of these lands being wetlands has many long-time residents and growers scratching their heads. Miami-Dade County boasts itself as the nation's most subtropical farming region. The unusually high water table, exacerbated by Everglades Restoration projects and fluctuating seasonal water flows in and out of Everglades National Park, has led to increased subterranean flooding.

"That area has been farmed for as long as I can remember, first in potatoes and corn, then later in trees," recounted an elder grower at a Farm Bureau meeting in July.

Tree farm owners like Frances Salazar and Mercedes Cantillo, who own Two Sisters Nursery with their Cuban-born parents, were stunned to receive a "cease and desist" letter from DERM on their 10-acre nursery. Since 2003, the family has been trying to reach an amicable agreement that would allow them to continue farming.

Unfortunately, for these small farmers, the mitigation is as much as

\$60,000 per credit which means that the family would end up paying up to \$168,000.

"In trying to resolve the situation, we realized that DERM is pitting agriculture against the environment. One DERM officer told me that my tree farm has the same impact on the environment as a condo," said Frances Salazar. "On one hand, the county wants to keep agriculture, but on the other their actions are driving us off our farms."

It is becoming alarmingly apparent that all of the growers bought land without knowing it was a wetland since it was currently in agricultural production; the previous owners had also farmed it without knowing it was a wetland.

Many farmers are convinced that DERM's actions are based not so much on science but on an agenda to devalue private property by classifying them as wetlands so the county can purchase more "environmentally endangered lands." The Salazar's neighbor, who was also cited for failure to operate without a wetlands impact permit, opted to sell her land to the county at a devalued rate rather than pay costly mitigation and attorney's fees.

Miami-Dade County implemented the Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program using tax revenues. The EEL Program has acquired more than 21,000 acres of Environmentally Endangered Lands since 1990. According to DERM, "The purchase and conservation of these lands ensure that they are shielded from development and will continue to thrive as natural habitats."

Of the 21,000 acres of private lands taken off the tax rolls and placed in government ownership are over 15,000 acres of lands deemed freshwater wetlands.

Farmers will remember that actions speak louder than words when deciding whether or not to continue farming in Miami-Dade County.



American Agri-Women
11425 Pedee Creek Rd
Monmouth OR 97361

**FIRST-CLASS MAIL
AUTO**
U.S. Postage Paid
SALEM OR
Permit No. 526



See AAW's web site or look inside for the 2006 Convention registration form.

If you would like to receive the Voice via e-mail instead of by mail send your request to Carolyn Kleiber at Carolyn@agpowerinc.net

There's still time to register for the convention and go on these tours!

Friday, November 10, 2006

Farm Tours in the Afternoon

Saturday, November 11, 2006

Tour of the Everglades Agricultural Area

Roth Farms (Sugar, Sod, Horticulture)

R.C. Hatton Farms (Vegetable Row Crops, Sugar)

Airboat Ride

Lunch at Hacienda Okeelanta

Sunday, November 12, 2006

Day of Fun in Key Largo

Boat Tour and Shark-Feeding Show
at Capt. Slate's Atlantic Dive Center

Sightseeing at Pennekamp State Park

Sunset Prayer Service on the Beach

Dinner at Sundowners' Restaurant



8 The VOICE of the American Agri-Woman

American Agri-Women

Calendar of Events

November 8-11, 2006

AAW Convention, Miami

March 30-April 1

AAW Mid-Year

June 10-13 (tentative)

AAW Fly-In & Symposium

[AAW Web site](http://www.americanagriwomen.org)

www.americanagriwomen.org

[AAW Phone & Fax Numbers](http://www.americanagriwomen.org)

Phone: 218-495-2867

Fax: 218-495-2659

American Agri-Women is a national coalition of women's farm, ranch, and agri-business organizations and individuals formed in 1974. We, as women's agricultural organizations and individuals, unite together to communicate with one another and with other consumers to promote agriculture for the benefit of the American people and the world.

To contact AAW about our positions go to our web site at www.americanagriwomen.org.