



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 24-00673

Agenda Date: 8/13/2024

Agenda Item Name:

2024 County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES) Recipient Recognition of Hodge Farms, Newberry, FL

Presenter:

Dr. Cindy Sanders – Director - UF/IFAS Extension – Alachua County

Description:

2024 CARES Recipient Recognition of Hodge Farms, Newberry, FL

Recommended Action:

Recognize Hodge Farms, Newberry, FL as the 2024 CARES Recipient

Prior Board Motions:

N/A

Fiscal Note:

N/A

Strategic Guide:

Environment

Background:

Hodge Farms, Newberry, FL was selected as the 2024 County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES) recipient. This is a statewide award presented by Florida Farm Bureau & UF/IFAS. The CARES program publicly recognizes Florida Farmers and ranchers who demonstrate exemplary efforts to protect Florida's natural resource by implementing Best Management Practices. Recipients are awarded yearly to ag producers and families that are fully committed to protecting Florida's environment.

The Hodge family in Newberry was the only winner this year statewide. The Hodge family is one of our multi generational farming families in the county; they farm blueberries, cattle, watermelons, and other crops.

Hodge Farms has a rich history dating back to the 1800s. Growing tobacco, blueberries, and raising cattle, David Hodge knows the importance of being a dedicated steward of the land. He has implemented technology like drip irrigation since 1989. Along with drip irrigation, Mr. Hodge also places an emphasis on enhancing soil health and reducing erosion through soil

testing, cover crops, and conservation tillage. Mr. Hodge places an emphasis on best management practices on his farm because he wants to pass it on to his sons, and protecting the land is how he can ensure they will be able to farm the land for years to come.