



# PESTICIDE SAFETY TRAINING

## in the Suwannee River Valley of North Florida

K. Wynn, UF/IFAS Extension Hamilton County, Jasper, FL 32052 kwynn@ufl.edu  
D. Broughton, UF/IFAS Extension Regional Specialized Agent-Agronomic Crops, Live Oak, FL 32060  
J. Capasso, UF/IFAS Extension Columbia County, Lake City, FL 32055  
D. Fenneman, UF/IFAS Extension Madison County, Madison, FL 32340  
K. Korus, UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County, Gainesville, FL 32609  
C. Vann, UF/IFAS Extension Lafayette County, Mayo, FL 32066



Each year in the North Florida area, agronomic production meetings are held to assist producers in adopting appropriate pesticide management and crop production strategies necessary to promote sustainability in the Suwannee River Valley. Exit evaluations at these meetings suggested the need to incorporate pesticide safety training to encourage personal safety and provide the continuing educational units, required by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), for producers to remain certified to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides. In 2012, pesticide safety trainings were incorporated into each of the production meetings offered in Hamilton and Lafayette Counties. Over the years this premeeting safety training model has been adopted at production meetings throughout the Suwannee River Valley.

**Program Objectives:** (1) To provide pesticide safety training to agronomic producers. (2) To provide mandatory continuing educational units (CEUs) to producers with a restricted use pesticide (RUP) license.

**Program Activities:** Pesticide safety trainings were offered as one-hour optional meetings prior to existing county production

meetings. Collaboration among Extension Specialists, Extension agents, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Agricultural Environmental Services Specialists, and local agricultural chemical companies created a venue for expertise and information exchange. Topics included appropriate pesticide selection and procedures to safely incorporate them into a producer's pest management system.

**Results and Impacts:** During each 4-year recertification period producers with a private RUP license were able to receive the required 4 core and 4 private CEUs by attending these meetings. Pesticide training offered during production meetings have impacted over 2,300 attendees during the past 8 years. In 2019 these trainings were attended by 319 RUP license holders in the Suwannee River Valley. A total of 7 core and 14 private CEUs were available to assist producers with recertification. Producers have attained information on relevant pesticide use policies, pesticide safety, and implementation. They have adopted record keeping systems, pesticide resistance management practices, created appropriate pesticide storage areas, are calibrating application equipment, practicing safe disposal of pesticide carryover, and have acquired all required personal protective equipment.