

# Best Management Practices Video Series Highlighting Agricultural Producers in the Suwannee Valley

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## Background

The Suwannee Valley region comprises a significant portion of the total peanut, corn, and watermelon acreage grown in the state of Florida. Approximately 88,000 acres of peanuts (45% of state totals), 28,000 acres of grain and silage, corn (37% of state totals), and 8,500 acres of watermelon (33% of state totals) are grown in the Suwannee Valley Region. The range of agricultural products grown in this region of the state is very broad and its impact to the state's economy is paramount.

North Florida's unique climate, population growth, and sensitive environmental resources create challenges to the long-term sustainability of agriculture in this region. Row crop agriculture accounts for a significant portion of water usage and excessive inputs on crops can have a negative impact on water quality.

Agricultural producers have been tasked with incorporating Best Management Practices (BMPs) and conservation practices to offset negative impacts to the local environment and natural systems, for many years.

## Objectives

- Develop eight videos highlighting the historic changes and adoption of BMPs
- Feature a variety of farming practices in the Suwannee Valley
- Launch weekly on social media platforms
- Primary audience: general public, agency partners, regional community leaders, officials, and environmental groups
- Secondary audience: producers about the positive impacts that these practices have on the environment and agricultural sustainability in the area

## Videos

- Week 1: BMPs Defined
- Week 2: Jackson Farms, Cover Crops
- Week 3: Stonewall Farms, Rotational Grazing and Conservation Tillage
- Week 4: Lee Peanut, Soil Moisture Sensors, Controlled Release Fertilizer, and Y-drops on Fertilizer Applicators
- Week 5: Columbia County Hay, BMP MINI-Grant in Hay Production
- Week 6: 4R Nutrient Stewardship
- Week 7: Ronald Norris Farms, Controlled Release Fertilizer and Soil Moisture Sensors
- Week 8: BMP Highlight, Overview of all BMPs in series



## Video Metrics

| Video  | Lifetime Impressions | Facebook |       |          | YouTube |
|--------|----------------------|----------|-------|----------|---------|
|        |                      | Like     | Share | Comments | Views   |
| Week 1 | 4283                 | 130      | 31    | 12       | 246     |
| Week 2 | 2757                 | 73       | 19    | 3        | 179     |
| Week 3 | 1324                 | 39       | 7     | 0        | 375     |
| Week 4 | 2681                 | 76       | 19    | 1        | 225     |
| Week 5 | 2172                 | 93       | 20    | 9        | 59      |
| Week 6 | 1277                 | 44       | 8     | 1        | 50      |
| Week 7 | 789                  | 19       | 8     | 0        | 135     |
| Week 8 | 1073                 | 32       | 9     | 0        | 162     |

In addition to being shared on social media, the videos were shared weekly with approximately 600 email recipients. It is also being shown in stakeholder meetings and during Extension presentations.

## Conclusions

The development and release of the BMP video series had a greater success than anticipated. It fostered the building of relationships between producers, extension agents, and agency personnel. Farmers enjoyed vocalizing their experiences with BMPs, educating others on the positive aspects of tools they have adopted, and sharing the impact it has had on their operations. Many growers (non-participants) have mentioned the series and expressed thanks to the team for our efforts on the project. This was an unintended outcome as the primary target audience was for the general public that are unaware of BMP successes. As a result, more producers seemed engaged in BMPs and are curious on how to participate in future projects.

For our target audience, there has been a positive response to the videos. Many are surprised that farmers recognize they have an impact on Florida's water resources and that they are participating in maintaining a healthy water resource. In addition to the hundreds of viewers through email blasts and classroom training audiences, all social media metrics provided a total of 18,440 interactions of the videos.

We hope to maintain this momentum and continue to highlight the successes of producers in the region.