

**BMP success stories**

From **Justin Bryan**, Environmental Manager, Office of Agricultural Water Policy  
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Germanie Williams is a 3rd generation farmer here in Jackson County, FL. Each generation before him had a passion for farming and Germanie is no different. This year, Germanie has added to his family’s legacy and has become the first Black man in Jackson County, Florida, to own a center irrigation pivot system to supply water to his crops. After purchasing his new pivot, Germanie has gone above and beyond to make sure his irrigation system is as efficient as possible by upgrading the well supplying water to the pivot and has begun the process of upgrading the pivot itself to ensure minimal waste of this precious resource. Germanie’s comments on this historic and monumental accomplishment:



**The Dream**

*I have always dreamed of being a farmer, plowing the fields, planting crops, working with equipment, raising cattle, and yes dreaming of finishing a dream of my Granddad to having irrigation on the farm. No one even knew I was thinking of granddad's dream which became my dream. Having long hard days of totally, sweat dripping tears, lots of skinned knuckles and bruised body parts all to reach the dream. Finally, with hard work, dad's support and cheering me on, that journey, once envisioned, has now become a reality. With a generational dream, God's love, granddad's and dad's cheers I now can say "Dream accomplished". Now I must make it work with God's love and blessing.*

*Williams and Sons Farms, Germanie*

**Matthew VanWeelden**, Plant Systems working group  
Everglades REC, Palm Beach County (BMP Core Team Member)

Extension programs in Palm Beach County continue to improve sugarcane production in Florida by addressing issues relating to pest management, agronomy, and agricultural worker safety. While integrated pest management strategies are crucial for sugarcane production in South Florida, safety concerns to both applicators and the environment are priorities. Needs assessments conducted indicate that proper maintenance and calibration of equipment used for applying pesticides and fertilizer to sugarcane is important for BMPs and environmental preservation, in addition to maximizing profits. Thus, the need for organized spray calibration workshops is necessary prior to the growing season to ensure that spray rig and airplane operators have an opportunity to learn the methods for proper spray calibration and maintenance. Calibration techniques provided at Spray Rodeo Day events have successfully identified and calibrated large-boom spray rigs responsible for spraying a significant percentage of crop acreage in the EAA. One large-boom rig servicing 60,000 acres/season, spraying 10% over target rate, would over-apply roughly \$150,000 of unnecessary pesticide (grower data).

Based on survey data collected from the 2015-2020 Spray Rodeo Days, 23 large-boom spray rigs possessed at least 10% of nozzles spraying out of range, which could have amounted up to \$3,450,000 (\$150,000 x 23 rigs) in excess pesticides applied to cropping systems in the EAA. With this knowledge and hands-on training, operators will be able to calibrate spray nozzles which will result in more effective spray coverage, reducing the cost of pesticide application and limiting excess pesticides from entering waterways. In addition, revised Worker Protection Standards are now in place through the EPA, and extension programs are essential to disseminate this information to safety trainers within individual companies to ensure these companies are abiding by the law and maintaining safe work environments for their employees. Proper training and implementation of the revised Worker Protection Standard will ensure that agricultural workers maintain safe practices in order to reduce contact with restricted-use pesticides in the work environment. Because training every agricultural worker and handler is beyond the capacity of the extension faculty, training the employee trainers is the most effective strategy in disseminating the revised regulations. My programmatic efforts will ensure that agricultural managers are compliant with the new material, and that they can properly train their employees.



Rice variety assessment trials continue to evaluate new rice varieties from other state breeding programs. Because Florida does not have a dedicated rice breeder, the local industry relies on the influx of new varieties from other states which I secure. My rice variety trials A) ensure that new varieties are being introduced and made available to Florida rice growers, and B) that these varieties are being properly assessed to ensure that they are compatible with Florida’s climate, soils, and pest complexes. In previous years, the reliance on only two or three varieties has left the rice industry vulnerable to pest outbreaks. My rice extension program promotes and assists with the steady influx of new seed material into the State of Florida, with an effort to prevent one or two varieties from occupying a majority of the state’s rice acreage, which is a high-risk practice for growers.



Titan and Diamond continue to yield greater than previously adopted rice varieties Jupiter and Rex, respectively. Results from the 2016-2019 rice variety trials indicate an 11.1% increase in yield when comparing Titan with Jupiter. This increase in yield equates to roughly \$1.19 more per hundred weight (cwt), equivalent to an additional \$60 per acre in crop value. The 4.7% increase in yield when comparing Diamond with Rex is equivalent to approximately \$0.48 per cwt, or \$24 per acre in crop value. The adoption of high yielding varieties will continue to ensure that

rice remains a profitable rotational crop on muck soils. In addition, feedback from grower surveys indicated that they plan to gradually replace Jupiter with Titan, which encompasses approximately 1,500 acres.

**BMP Minigrant Announcement**

**Request for Proposals – Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
Best Management Practices Mini-Grant Program**

**Background:** The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) has a cooperative agreement with the University of Florida (UF) that provides state financial assistance in support of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) implementation required under the FDACS BMP program through minigrants.

**Purpose:** To enhance the ability of UF/IFAS Extension to provide science-based education and outreach that assists agricultural producers with the implementation of FDACS-adopted water quality and water conservation BMPs as required by the FDACS BMP program that help protect water resources and promote water conservation.

For information on requirements, eligibility, available funding, proposal format, and budgets, please contact: Dr. Lakesh Sharma, [lakesh.sharma@ufl.edu](mailto:lakesh.sharma@ufl.edu) or Dr. Michael Duker, [mddukes@ufl.edu](mailto:mddukes@ufl.edu)

**Important dates:**

Application deadline – Friday, May 28, 2021

Notification – Friday, July 23, 2021 (tentative)

Project End – Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Final Results Due – Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Reimbursements Due – Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Final Report Due – Wednesday, June 15, 2022

**CONTACT US:**

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