

UF IFAS Southeast Agricultural Exposition
October 14-16, 2008
Final Report

The theme for the UF IFAS 2008 Ag Expo was 'Solutions for a Changing World: New Crops and New Methods'. The Planning Committee was named by Dr. Jimmy Cheek on July 1, 2008 and included;

Richard Sprenkel, NFREC Quincy, Chair
Bob Hochmuth, Suwannee Valley REC
Pete Vergot, NW Extension District Director
Bruce Ward, CED Walton County
Mickie Swisher, Family Youth and Community Sciences
Paul Lyrene, Horticultural Sciences
Bielinski Santos, Gulf Coast REC

In addition to those named by Dr. Cheek the following were asked to serve on the Planning Committee and provide some experience from past Expos.

Elizabeth Felter, Orange County Extension Office
Charlotte Emerson, CALS
Kevin Heinicka, Facilities Planning and Operation
A.D. Walker, NFREC IT Support
Ben Beach, NE Extension District IT Support
Louise Ryan, NE Extension District IT Support

Initial planning was carried out through emails and telephone calls. In preparation for the final planning activities a Polycom Conference was set up for September 5, 2008. At this time the final budget was discussed, specific activities were assigned and the UF IFAS exhibitors were named. The budget is presented in Appendix A. Flexibility in the budget was limited because of the need to order gator-head fans with a minimum order of 15,000 fans.

The final list of exhibitors is presented in Appendix B. Their location in the building is shown in Appendix C. This layout (not to scale) follows the recommendation in the Final Report of the 2007 Ag Expo Planning Committee to avoid right angles in traffic flow through the building. This layout worked very well accommodating up to 100 visitors per 10 minutes during periods of peak traffic. Not shown in Appendix C is the Oil Press and Biodiesel Engine Exhibit which was located on the right side of the 'Front Porch'. Four "Florida" rocking chairs were located on the left side of the 'Front Porch'. Two of these were new and added on the recommendation of the 2007 Final Report. Another addition

to the building was the Polar Cool Unit to provide cool air in the afternoon. This unit was provided on loan from Facilities Planning and Operation and made a noticeable difference in the afternoon temperature in the building.

The list of volunteers assisting at the 2008 Southeast Agricultural Exposition is presented in Appendix D. These individuals were scheduled so that there were four volunteers available at all times. These individuals performed a variety of duties including serving as greeters at both entrances to the building, assisting visitors with questions on gardening, pests and general information and, on occasion, filling in for exhibitors. With the number of visitors recorded in 2008 this is the minimum number of volunteers that are needed. Ideally there should be 5-6 volunteers present at any one time.

Attendance

A total count of attendees at the 2008 Expo was not made. However, as a measure of the number of visitors to the Florida exhibits there were approximately 7,800 fans distributed during the three day event. As another estimate, head counts were made of all visitors entering the building during a 10 minute period every 1- 1½ hours throughout each of the three days. If extrapolated to total number of visitor there were 11,300 individuals who toured the Florida Building. As a point of interest the highest one-hour visitor count occurred between 10:30 and 11:30 AM on Wednesday when 1,110 individuals were welcomed to the Florida exhibits.

Recommendations for 2009

1. Start planning process for Expo earlier. See Appendix E for suggested planning time line.
2. Consider retaining open arrangement (see Appendix C) for exhibits. This arrangement allowed for up to 1000 visitors per hour to pass through the building in 2008. This arrangement would allow for up to 15-16 exhibits.
3. *Theme.* Consider a theme that has wider application allowing for participation by more Departments e.g. Family and Consumer Sciences.
4. *Handouts.* Plastic carry bags with UF-IFAS logo and gator head fans (with URLs for CALS, Research and Extension) were very popular in 2008. The Planning Committee for 2009 should consider using the same handouts as there are approximately 5,400 plastic bags and 7,200 fans remaining from this year. If the budget allows the 2009 Committee may wish to consider providing bottled water (with UF-IFAS logo). The University of Kentucky provided bottled water this year and this was a popular handout particularly in the afternoon.
5. *Building and equipment.*
 - a. Committee should consider purchasing additional 'Florida' rockers. In the afternoon the four that we currently have were occupied by visitors most of the time.

- b. Consider adding a 'mural' or permanent banners to the side walls just below the roofline. CALS, Research or Extension programs or Department or REC's activities could be highlighted. See the examples below from the University of Georgia building.



- c. Consider adding a 'sales area' where UF-IFAS shirts, hats, books, etc. could be sold. The University of Georgia had a corner of their building set aside for this purpose and it appeared to be a popular stop. In addition, several visitors inquired about purchasing items with the UF-IFAS logo.
- d. Landscaping around the building is minimal at the present time. Small ornamental plants are probably not feasible because of the heavy traffic flow during the Expo. However, the 2009 Planning Committee may consider installing one of the turf grasses developed and released by the University of Florida. This would enhance the appearance of the building and highlight the turf grass breeding program at UF-IFAS.
6. Consider an award (or awards in several categories) for best exhibit. Award could be a plaque or certificate (if budget limitations dictate) acknowledging the creativity and quality of the exhibit.
7. The 2009 Expo Planning Committee may wish to reevaluate the use of the Webcams. In 2008, the Webcams worked well but appeared to have limited application. Family members and co-workers could access the site and see if they could catch a glimpse of their husband, wife, etc. or co-worker at the Expo, but that was about it. As set up in 2008, they definitely did not pass the "What did I learn about growing shiitake mushrooms?" (or any of the other exhibits) test.
8. If possible the Polar Cool unit should be used at future Expos. It provided a noticeably cooler building and generated considerable interest.

Appendix A: 2008 Ag Expo Budget (Last Updated 10/02/2008)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Shipping</u>	<u>Total</u>
Skirts for Tables	\$275.00		\$275.00
15,000 Gator Head Fans	\$4,935.00	\$660.00	\$5,595.00
Two Rocking Chairs	\$318.73		\$318.73
Theme Banner	\$195.00		\$195.00
Travel for County Exhibitors (5 at \$400)	\$2,000.00		\$2,000.00
Travel for IT Support	\$300.00		\$300.00
Plants for Decoration (Estimate)	\$250.00		\$250.00
TOTAL			\$8,933.73

County faculty approved for travel: Bruce Ward, Liz Felter, Lester Muralles, Roy Carter and Bob Hochmuth.

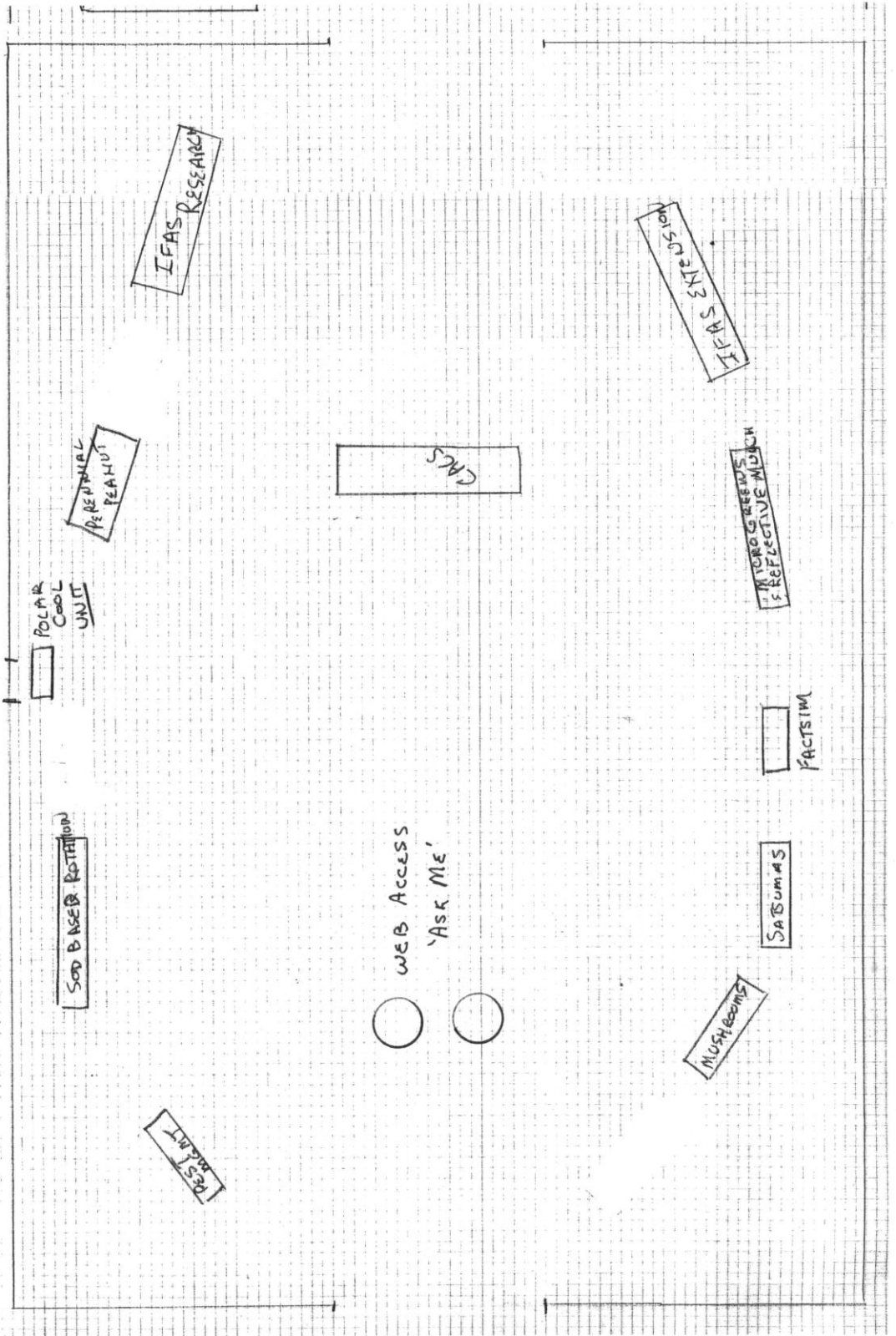
IT Travel: Ben Beach and Chris Leopold

Appendix B: Exhibitors for 2008 Southeastern Ag Expo (October 14-16, 2008)

<u>Title</u>	<u>Exhibitor</u>	<u>Email</u>
Shiitake Mushrooms	Clay Olson	cbolson@ufl.edu
Perennial Peanut for Turf	Ann Blount	paspalum@ufl.edu
Oil Press and Bio Diesel Engine	Bruce Ward	warbruce@ufl.edu
Microgreens and Reflective Mulch	Bob Hochmuth	bobhoch@ufl.edu
Satsumas	Lester Muralles	lesterm@ufl.edu
Sodbased Rotation for Sustainable Production	David Wright	wright@ufl.edu
New Approaches in Pest Management	Russ Mizell Holly Ober	rfmizell@ufl.edu holly.ober@ufl.edu
FACTSim	John Vansickle	sickle@ufl.edu
CALS	Charlotte Emerson	cemer@ufl.edu
Research Highlights (New Varieties from the Experiment Station)	John Beuttenmuller	beutt@ufl.edu
Solutions for Your Life	Liz Felter	lfelter@ufl.edu

Appendix C: Exhibit Layout for 2008 Ag Expo

LAYOUT FOR FLORIDA EXHIBIT AT 2008 AG EXPO



Appendix D. Volunteers for 2008 Southeast Agricultural Exposition.

<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>County</u>
Andreasen, Andy	Washington
Boston, Marcus	Leon
Brasher, Charles	Jackson
Copeland, Heidi	Jefferson
Douglas, Diane	Madison
Fennenan, Dan	Madison
Gaul, Steve	Nassau
Goodchild, Mike	Walton
Grant, Henry	Gadsden
Halsey, Larry	Jefferson
Harrison, Les	Leon
Jackson, Scott	Wakulla
Jowers, Ed	Jackson
Ludlow, Judy	Calhoun
Mayo, Doug	Jackson
Miller, Betty	Leon
Murales, Lester	Gadsden
Rudisill, Ken	Bay
Smith, Clyde	Jackson
Tesdall, Tracy	Leon
Ward, Bruce	Walton

Appendix E: Suggested timeline for Planning Committee of the Southeast Agricultural Exposition in Moultrie, Georgia.

<u>Month</u>	<u>Activity</u>
March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify Planning Committee and Chairman. Verify willingness of potential members to participate on committee before they are named to the Planning Committee. 2. Planning Committee holds first meeting to assess the makeup of the Committee and identify additional members that may be needed, establish theme of the exhibits and to assign tasks to individual Committee members (order supplies, contacts for Department Chairs, District Directors and Center Directors, etc.). Prioritize budget needs and assess limitations of budget.
April	Send out announcement/invitation to Department Chairs, District Directors and Center Directors soliciting participation of faculty as exhibitors.
May-June	Follow-up with Department Chairs, District Directors and Center Directors and begin to identify tentative exhibitors.
July	<p>Planning Committee meets to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finalize list of exhibitors. 2. Assign Committee members to work with individual exhibitors to be sure exhibits are staffed throughout the period the Expo is underway, that the exhibits tie into the theme and that the exhibits are interactive and educational. 3. Develop a preliminary layout of exhibits in the building. 4. Determine how many volunteers are needed and begin working with the Coordinator of Volunteers to meet the need.
August	Begin promotional efforts with Department Chairs, District Directors and Center Directors. These activities should continue until the Expo in October.
September	Continue working with exhibitors. Finalize layout of exhibits in the building. Contact volunteers and provide list of duties and responsibilities at Expo.
October	Setup for Expo and participate at Expo.
November	Send out letters of appreciation, announce exhibit awards (if appropriate) and submit final report.