Economic Contribution of EREC Research

In October 2001, the Food and Resource Economics Department at UF/IFAS published the results of a study conducted by Edward A. Evans, Max R. Langham and Leo C. Polopulos titled "Historical Analysis of the Economic Contributions of the Everglades Research and Education Center (EREK)."

These are some of its conclusions:

- Plant breeding research has been an important part of the EREC since the early times. The sugarcane program started in 1935 in conjunction with the USDA-ARS at Canal Point; it has continued to this day and its releases are not only grown in the area but also in other parts of the United States and other countries. Winter vegetable breeding also had an early start, and many of the current varieties have lineages to those early releases. Variety trials on sweet corn were initiated in the 1940s and led to the release of Florida Stay-Sweet in 1978. This variety was responsible for the thriving sweet corn industry in the United States and other countries. During 1942-63, a joint EREC-USDA program worked on the successful selection and release of fiber crops. Finally, many of the grasses currently grown commercially by the soil industry are linked to those selected and released by the Center.

- The economic impact of the early releases of those varieties is hard to estimate. In terms of the early impact, the multiplier effect from the breeding material used in subsequent crosses, and the secondary impacts on other areas such as employment, would probably add to several billion dollars.

- Developed by UF/IFAS & FAMU, a new website is available that provides an invaluable tool for small farmers: http://smallfarms.ifas.ufl.edu

- Did you know that small farms represent over 90% of the farms in Florida? A copy of the Field Day program is also available at: http://erec.ifas.ufl.edu

- If you would like to be placed on the mailing list, the EREC email notification list; or should you no longer wish to receive this publication, please email Kathy at kkl@ifas.ufl.edu, or phone her at 561-993-1517.

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A Great Day To Be In The Glades!

Photos by Josh Wickham and Gary Hartman