

AGRICULTURE

Challenges and Perceptions



Traffic

- Farm equipment must use the same roads going from field to field as very fast moving cars.
- As more development occurs and more roads are widened, more vehicles are on the road making it more dangerous for farm equipment.
- Large tractor trailer trucks are challenged to maneuver in and out of packing facilities, farms and nurseries.



Spraying

- Necessary to farm and nursery operations.
- Some residents/organizations are complaining.
- The Right to Farm Bill protects the growers right to reasonable agricultural activities, including the spraying of agricultural chemicals, as part of their farm or nursery operation.



Animals

- Wild animals are a challenge to agriculture – rabbits, coyotes, foxes, etc.
- Domesticated animals, including the neighborhood dog or favorite horse that may get in or nearby a field, are a serious issue to agricultural operations and a threat to food safety. These situations create a “fail criteria” to food safety audits whereby a portion of the product is required to be destroyed.



Refuse

- County owned land was used to construct a transfer station in the Ag. Reserve.
- Plastic, including that used for covering raised beds for vegetables is not accepted at that transfer station, thereby costing growers additional transport fees to take it to a different facility.



Leasing Land

- Palm Beach County and GL Homes are currently the largest agricultural land owners in the Agricultural Reserve.
- All of GL held land in the Ag. Reserve is currently leased to growers.
- Leasing land from any enterprise that may change the lease agreement makes it challenging for a grower to make long term business decisions.



Perceptions

- Not all growers had the opportunity to participate in county purchased land as part of the Ag. Reserve Master Plan.
 - *Because the decision was made to preserve larger parcels of land, minimum acreage was established. Those smaller parcels were not purchased.*
- Ag. Reserve Master Plan has not benefitted growers.
 - *It has benefitted some, but not all.*
- Value of the land is diminished because of the rules imposed by the Master Plan.
 - *This may vary in a case by case basis.*



More Perceptions

- The ability to leverage privately held land for borrowing to expand or improve the operation is diminished.
 - *Farmers depend on leveraging their land for borrowing in order to stay in business, buy equipment, seed, fertilizer, additional land, or other business necessities. Some growers and nurserymen perceive that farming in the Ag. Reserve has diminished their capacity for borrowing.*
- Growers of privately held land are paying more in taxes per acre than lease rates paid by others.
 - *This perception has not been found to be true.*



Agriculture Enhancement

- Signs designating the Agricultural Reserve.
 - *Indicating designated Agricultural Reserve area*
 - *Cautioning motorists about slow moving farm equipment and agricultural activities*
- Seek public/private support for commodity centered festivals and events.
- Encourage and support agritourism where practical.
- Consider traffic flow more conducive to farming operations.