

February 27, 2008

Dr. J. Bernard Machen
University of Florida
Office of the President
226 Tigert Hall
PO Box 113150
Gainesville, FL 32611

RE: Institute of Food and Agriculture (IFAS) Funding

Dear Dr. Machen:

The Lakeland Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes that agriculture is the second largest industry in our state providing a stable, reliable boost to our economy of nearly \$100 billion annually. Polk County is still the top citrus producing county in Florida, is third in cattle with more than 100,000 head and has the highest membership in the state in the Florida Cattlemen's Association. While Lakeland has diversified its economic base and variety of businesses, the ancillary economic benefits from the range of agribusinesses in Polk County are extremely important to the City of Lakeland. Polk County is also the home of the largest citrus research facility in the world in Lake Alfred.

With more than 600,000 acres of agricultural land in Polk County, we are aware of the value added dimension of providing green space, and recharge areas to replenish the Floridan Aquifer. For every dollar agricultural operations pay in taxes, they require only \$.22 of services in return, generating a revenue surplus of \$.78.

We are concerned there seems to be belief that agriculture is dying in Florida. That is certainly not the case in Polk County. Agriculture remains a viable contributor to the County's economy and of utmost importance. We certainly understand the need to make budget cuts, but strongly oppose any effort to cause the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) at the University of Florida to bear a disproportionate share of the burden.

IFAS is the research and development arm of agriculture and has earned an international reputation for its accomplishments in teaching, research and extension. It is already committed to being a driving force behind bringing Florida closer to energy independence through the production of ethanol. Through the study of new biotechnology and genetic initiatives, IFAS will be at the forefront of creating new food products, and biofuels.

Dr. J. Bernard Machen
February 27, 2008
Page Two—

Here in Lakeland, we benefit directly from the ripple effect of agricultural operations through related business in processing, packaging, marketing, transportation, wholesaling, retailing and financing. We hope you share our enthusiasm for promoting the continued health of our citizens and one of Florida's most important industries.

Sincerely,

Timothy F. Campbell,
Chairman of the Board

TFC:acl

cc: Board of Directors
Government Affairs Committee

P.S. Go Gators!!!