An Industry Perspective and Use of Climate Information and Predictions

June 11, 2008

William P. “Pat” Cockrell
Assistant to the President
Florida Farm Bureau Federation
A Farmers View – Or
A dirt under the fingernails view of weather and climate

- We Don’t Want or Expect Much ….
  JUST……
- 60 inches of rain evenly divided each month
- Freezes only north of Ocala
- No hurricanes, tornadoes, hail or high wind
Climate is what you expect-
Weather is what you get!

- Drought
- Flood
- Freezes
- Hurricanes
- Hail
Agriculture is Dynamic

- Florida Agriculture is continually changing
- Change has occurred for over 3 centuries
- A major driver of that change has been Climate/Weather
- Takes a BIG umbrella to cover agriculture
“The times they are a-changing”

Bob Dylan

- Freezes of the 1980’s – Florida was the largest agricultural freeze laboratory
- 2004-2005 Hurricanes made Florida another grand scale laboratory
- Periodic droughts also brought to focus grower concern about Climate/Weather and how to manage that risk
Farmers are Problem Solvers

- Growers want “Good” news
- Turning “Bad” news into “Good” news
- FAWN
- Production Decision Models
- Other Risk Management Tools
“As long as old men sit and talk about the weather and old women sit and talk about old men”… Randy Travis

- Technology allows us to make decisions based on climate predictions
- Decision based tools will facilitate the decision making process
- Growers look at both weather and climate as they make production decisions for their specific operations
Questions & Comments

Please contact Pat Cockrell
Phone: 352-374-1545
Email: pat.cockrell@ffbf.org

"To increase the net income of farmers and ranchers, and to improve the quality of rural life."