

AGRICULTURAL WATER GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

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Recent changes to Florida laws have impacted the way in which the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Best Management Practices program is administered. These changes also impact producers enrolled in the program. Until 2016, enrollment in the BMP program was considered voluntary, and implementation of BMPs was evaluated based on site visits and self-reporting by producers. In 2016, the Florida Legislature amended laws to require FDACS to develop procedures to verify implementation of best management practices and enforcement and requiring FDACS to conduct onsite inspections every 2 years during at which time certain nutrient records will be collected.

OAWP has been working continuously since adoption of these new law to develop the required procedures, forms, data management systems, mapping components, evaluation and tracking tools, and data collection tools to meet the intent of the legislation. New products and procedures also require significant staff training, and education and outreach efforts to those producers and industry stakeholders impacted by the changes. This presentation will provide an overview of the current state of BMP governance in Florida and highlight some of the technical challenges and ongoing collaborative research efforts between the University of Florida (as mandated by statute) and OAWP.

PRESENTER BIO: Director Christopher Pettit gained extensive experience with Florida water management, policy, and law serving in the offices of counsel for SFWMD and SWFWMD, and as a Policy and Legislation Manager for Palm Beach county. He has a law degree from UF and an LLM from the University of Cape Town.