

Dear Colleagues:

It was good to connect today to share our local versions of the common challenge of communicating with private commodity group leaders about the costs of public university research from which they benefit.

It was suggested at the end of the conversation that I provide a briefing on my recent efforts in Florida for your consideration. A quick summary of outreach efforts:

- I made the case in a meeting of the so-called Big Six (Florida Farm Bureau; Florida Citrus Mutual; Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association; Florida Forestry Association, Florida Cattlemen's Association Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association)
 - Essential that the message come from the top of the organization (me) so that commodity leaders don't perceive there's room for appeal by going up the chain of command
 - In the course of the discussion, some leaders understand and came on board. We feel that this exerts positive pressure on the holdouts that hopefully offsets any pressure they feel from their boards and memberships to fight against IDC charges
- Continuous outreach through mass communications. I am a monthly columnist in many of these organizations' publications. I have recently been highlighting stories of how IDCs support the research that supports their industry.

- Direct letters to industry leaders such as the executive vice president of the Florida Citrus Packers and the CEO of Florida Citrus Mutual who have written letters of protest.
 - Gives them the due respect of a direct response.
 - Puts you on the record as not letting their misinformed position stand.
 - Crystallizes your thinking as you make the case for IDCs.
- Enlisted and received the full support of the university president. He will accompany me to the August board meeting of the Florida Farm Bureau and to the August Citrus Expo where he will keynote at a citrus gala.
 - Again, shows the university is backing ag.
 - Groundwork for strong relationship between IFAS and UF president established by helping boost president's standing in the ag community through a column of mine that ran in dozens of places hailing him as a land-grant president, and getting him on the cover of a major ag magazine in Florida.
- Numerous calls to each of the commodity leaders separately to listen and gain an appreciation for what each group's specific concerns are.
- Effective use of a couple of examples of IDC impact and IFAS investment in production agriculture. One example was investments that leveraged approximately \$1 million in our Suwannee Valley Agricultural Extension Center in the past two years -- effective in making our point to the Farm Bureau. Messaging about our six-figure investment in a greenhouse demonstrated IDC value to the nursery and growers association.

- Getting out of the office: Direct visit to an informal group of growers south of Orlando last week. Visits to key commodity groups' annual meetings. Plans to carry the message, accompanied by President Fuchs, to the Florida Citrus Expo and to the Farm Bureau next month.
- No exceptions by industry, even if it threatens to cost us industry funding in a single sector such as peanuts.
- Because industry leaders so often feel besieged by regulation themselves, it was effective to illustrate the rise of research funding regulations through a chart.