



# CENTER FOR **PUBLIC ISSUES** EDUCATION

IN AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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**2013–14 ANNUAL REPORT**



## BY THE NUMBERS

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**\$8+ MILLION**

TOTAL VALUE OF RESEARCH  
PROJECTS & PARTNERSHIPS

**24,978**

WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

**16**

REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND  
INTERNATIONAL AWARDS WON

**4 DAYS, 16 HRS**

TOTAL TIME VISITORS WATCHED  
PIE CENTER VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE

**107**

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

**1,505**

VOTES SUBMITTED TO PHOTO  
CONTEST

**443**

VIEWS OF RECORDED WEBINARS

**10,029**

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

**270**

WEBINAR ATTENDEES

**152**

FOCUS GROUPS, SURVEYS  
AND INTERVIEWS

**\$42,442**

SAVED WITH WEBINARS

### OUR PHOTOS

Lynn Scarborough's image showcases the scenery outside her home in Lake Placid, Fla. Facebook fans declared this the overall winner of the PIE Center's photo contest in March. Many of this year's entries are featured throughout the annual report alongside images by UF/IFAS photographers.





Photo by: Tyler Jones/IFAS

## NEW PIE CENTER DIRECTOR

Ricky Telg, interim associate dean in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, will become the PIE Center’s director in July.

Telg is already familiar with the PIE Center, having joined faculty and staff at the inaugural advisory board meeting as well as offering guidance on various research, communications and training programs.

“I have been fortunate to play a small role in the PIE Center throughout the years,” Telg said. “I’m eager to continue the impressive journey Tracy Irani and so many others have created and foster the high-quality work of our faculty, staff and graduate students.”

After six exciting years of growth and accomplishments, the PIE Center has transformed how we understand, react and respond to complex agricultural and natural resources issues. As the PIE Center continues to work toward its goal of a public that is informed and engaged in these issues, the momentum continues to build.

Just recently, the Office of the Provost approved the PIE Center to become an official and permanent center at the University of Florida. This achievement raises the PIE Center’s stature and visibility to a new level.

This incredible journey since our successful 2012 state legislative budget request would not have been possible without our tremendous team of faculty, staff, students, committed stakeholders and the support of UF and IFAS administrations.

Additional credit is owed to members of the PIE Center’s advisory board who provide a stabilizing and guiding force to usher the PIE Center into a new era of development and progress toward achieving our vision. The board offers invaluable insight and leadership as the PIE Center spends this year updating its strategic plan, mission and vision.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the initial vision and support of Department of Agricultural Education and Communication faculty and Chairman Ed Osborne. The department is where the idea of the PIE Center first took root.

Having witnessed many of the PIE Center’s milestones from the front row, it is bittersweet to know that I will be cheering

from the sidelines from now on. I know the PIE Center team of faculty, staff and graduate students will continue to do great things. As I step down from the PIE Center to lead the UF/IFAS College of Agricultural and Life Sciences’ Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences — which will house the PIE Center’s third faculty member — I am eager to see how the team’s energy and passion will continue to shape how we communicate and educate about agriculture and natural resources.

Sincerely,

Tracy Irani

“Every state has a land-grant university, but no one else has a PIE Center. The PIE Center brings great added value to what the University of Florida can provide the people of our state.”

—

**JACK PAYNE**  
UF/IFAS



“PIE Center research and outreach materials have strategic value beyond Florida’s borders. It’s gratifying to be part of such an impressive group of people who are united in supporting the PIE Center and its mission to share knowledge and expertise to key audiences around the country.”

—

**RAY GILMER**  
UNITED FRESH PRODUCE  
ASSOCIATION

As chairwoman of the PIE Center Advisory Board, I am honored to contribute to a group of people focused on extending the PIE Center’s research and outreach programs and providing the strategic insight needed to succeed in the challenging climate facing agriculture and natural resources.

Ultimately, policymakers should look to the PIE Center to make informed decisions about the difficult issues facing agriculture, natural resources and beyond. As the PIE Center grows to attain national and even global significance, the advisory board aims to provide a clear focus and the resources required to cement the PIE Center’s reputation for providing relevant, practical and unbiased information to preserve agricultural and natural assets.

Advisory board members representing private businesses, government agencies, public organizations and academia, gathered in Gainesville in mid-October for the board’s inaugural meeting. The ambitious and talented faculty, staff and students at the PIE Center inspire us to take an active role in shaping the PIE Center’s bright future. Tracy Irani did a tremendous job cultivating the PIE Center and its team — we wish her well in her new role as department chair and look forward to another strong partnership with her replacement.

Following a few conference calls, the advisory board assembled in Gainesville again in March to take the first steps in creating the framework for a new strategic plan, goals and objectives to guide and measure the PIE Center’s success throughout the next five years. Although we will not finalize these documents until October, the PIE Center team continues to be a reliable and treasured source of valuable, research-based solutions to some of the world’s most pressing agricultural and natural resources issues. We look forward to seeing the incredible future of the PIE Center and its role in providing the best information to develop good public policy and informed decisions.

Warm regards,

Jeanna Mastrodicasa



Photo by: Tyler Jones/IFAS



# RESEARCH

Research partnerships for 2013–14 neared the \$1 million mark as two faculty members and two post-doctoral associates embarked on their first full year at the PIE Center.

Through grants and other research partnerships, PIE Center researchers earned \$931,000, with PIE Center research components supporting projects worth more than \$8 million.

Assistant professors Alexa Lamm and Joy Rumble established their research programs, while Quisto Settle and Levy Odera joined Healthy Gulf, Healthy Communities Grant Coordinator Angie B. Lindsey as post-graduate associates. Lindsey, Former Director Tracy Irani was previously the only faculty member directing the PIE Center's accomplished team of staff and graduate student researchers.

PIE Center research helps communicators, educators, policymakers and community leaders understand how to address agricultural and natural resource issues by examining how people think, learn and act when faced with challenging issues.

## HIGHLIGHTED RESEARCH PROJECTS INCLUDE:

### AWARENESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

Using an online survey, PIE Center researchers will assess consumers' awareness of environmental stewardship programs in UF/IFAS Extension and the Florida Farm Bureau Federation. The programs promote the responsible use and protection of Florida's natural resources through sustainable practices and conservation.

### EXAMINING CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR STRAWBERRIES

To increase the demand for Florida-grown strawberries among state residents, the PIE Center conducted focus groups and an online survey to test specific marketing strategies. Results showed that while consumers prefer Florida-grown strawberries, they are unaware of the growing season and unlikely to look at the label for growing location.

### GOVERNANCE OF FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The PIE Center's first international grant will explore the interactions among southern African organizations that control the region's food security and land-use decisions. Researchers from South Africa, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands join researchers from the University of Florida. The PIE Center will lead the team's internal and external communications strategies by developing an online knowledge management platform that will connect team members worldwide.

“By partnering with the PIE Center, we have gathered key information on public perception of agricultural practices and tailored our messaging in a manner that resonates with our target audience. It is imperative that we ensure consumers understand where their food comes from, how it is produced and the environmental benefits of an industry that provides food, fiber and fuel for the world.”

—  
**STACI BRASWELL**  
FLORIDA FARM BUREAU  
FEDERATION

### CONNECTING FLORIDA PRODUCE AND K–12 SCHOOLS

Expanding on the popular research into the value and perceptions of local food, PIE Center researchers will examine the partnership among K–12 schools, food service distributors and local farms to provide Florida's schoolchildren with healthy food options. The research, funded by a Specialty Crop Block Grant, promotes school nutrition through greater reliance on locally grown fruits and vegetables.

### EXTENSION FACULTY, STAFF AS BRAND MANAGERS

PIE Center researchers conducted an online survey with UF/IFAS Extension faculty and staff to understand the perceptions and needs of the faculty and staff representing the UF/IFAS brand in counties across the state. Although Extension personnel believed that good communication and branding was important, they were generally not aware of available resources.

### EVALUATING UNDERGRADUATE SCIENCE EDUCATION

PIE Center researchers are evaluating a national effort to improve undergraduate science education with the goal of increasing the number of science, technology, engineering and mathematics graduates. Organizations involved in the Partnership for Undergraduate Life Science Education, or PULSE, include the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation.

# PROGRESS REPORT

## HEALTHY GULF, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Researchers hit the halfway mark of the five-year, \$6 million Healthy Gulf, Healthy Communities project that addresses concerns in Gulf communities following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To mark the occasion, UF researchers welcomed community partners to Gainesville to share research findings and to identify goals for the remaining two years of the grant.

The research examines the resiliency of communities and individuals, as well as the safety of the seafood harvested in areas impacted by the oil spill. Researchers found that Gulf Coast residents faced high levels of depression and anxiety and were concerned about conflicting and unreliable information from governments and BP. The project team works with affected communities to build networks and programs that help rebuild and prepare for future disasters.

## RESIDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AGRICULTURE

Focus group participants in a five-county region in southwest Florida said they valued agriculture's economic, nutritional and historical impacts on the area but were unsure about labor and environmental concerns. The two-part collaboration with the Gulf Citrus Growers Association included an online survey that showed more than three-fourths of respondents said their opinions of agriculture would improve if they had more information.

Participants discussed their desire to become more involved with agriculture, primarily by visiting farms and getting to know farmers. PIE Center researchers suggested that agricultural

organizations and leaders can build consumer trust and relationships by attending and sponsoring community events and hosting families or organizations at their property.

## COMMUNITY GARDENING EDUCATION

To help rural and urban children understand the importance of sustainability and nutrition, PIE Center researchers and Florida A&M University are evaluating the impacts of community-based gardening education programs near Tallahassee. Children, who in many cases are exposed to vegetables they would not otherwise eat, learn how to grow and prepare their own food. Students and staff give high praise for the programs, citing the hands-on learning experience as especially valuable.

## SCIENCE AND POLICY IN FISHERIES EDUCATION

The initial chapter of the recruitment, training and research program to incorporate public policy and stakeholder opinions into fisheries population dynamics education closed with positive student reviews and opportunities for future collaboration. The PIE Center teamed up with fishery experts from the National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the UF/IFAS Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences program to host the graduate-level summer program.

The two-week program focused on rehabilitating sturgeon populations in the Apalachicola Bay and Suwannee River basins and allowed the eight students to get hands-on research experience. The PIE Center then showed the students how to communicate about the research results and translate them into useable information for decision makers.

Photo by: Courtney Owens/PIE Center

“The PIE Center provided us specialized consultation and evaluation services and has become a critical resource for us. We view the PIE Center as an invaluable partner that helps us generate the desired impacts with our school gardening programs. The PIE Center was knowledgeable and responsive to our needs and provided feedback on how we might better engage our clientele.”

—  
**SANDRA THOMPSON**  
FLORIDA A&M UNIVERSITY



# PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS

With more than a year’s worth of gathered and analyzed data, the PIE Center’s quarterly public opinion surveys are uncovering a wide range of misconceptions when it comes to important agricultural and natural resources issues.

PIE Center researchers ask voting-age Floridians for their attitudes, knowledge and behaviors regarding water quality and quantity, undocumented immigration, endangered species and food production. The series began February 2013, and researchers will repeat the four surveys yearly to track changes in public opinion.

Of the four survey topics, Floridians rank water as the most important issue in the state, just ahead of food safety. Respondents consider water issues below only the economy and healthcare.

Although only 41 percent believe Florida will have enough water to support residents’ needs in the next decade, about half would not put a timer in the bathroom to remind them to take shorter showers. More than two-thirds of Floridians indicated a willingness to pay a slightly increased water bill in order to protect future water supply.

Floridians are similarly conflicted about undocumented immigration, according to the surveys. Eighty-nine percent of Floridians agree with allowing undocumented immigrants a path to citizenship but many deem undocumented immigrants a burden on the economy and believe they qualify for too many government benefits. Further, 30 percent of Floridians mistakenly believe that children born in the U.S. to undocumented immigrants are not U.S. citizens.

When it comes to protecting endangered species, residents strongly agreed that land development should be restricted to protect endangered species and that native species should be protected from invasive plants and animals. Overall, Floridians are more willing to avoid harmful activities than proactively engage in environmentally friendly behaviors.

PIE Center researchers will add questions exploring Floridians’ opinions of invasive plants and animals to this year’s endangered species survey, the results of which will be published in August.

The food production survey asked for residents’ opinions on food security, food safety and genetically modified organisms, commonly known as GMOs.

Floridians are largely unsure and wary about GMOs, with about half worrying about their safety and threat to the environment. Forty-five percent of Floridians believed that GMOs presented a greater risk for food allergies and food poisoning, but more than half would purchase clothes made from genetically modified fibers. More than half of state residents also agreed that genetic modification should be used to save citrus trees from disease, but only 42 percent indicated that they would purchase genetically modified citrus fruit or juice.

As far as food safety and security, Floridians are more worried about being able to afford food than having access to safe and nutritious food. Residents are slightly more worried about the safety of growth hormones, additives and preservatives in food than they are about bacteria in food. Results from the next food production practices survey will be released early December.

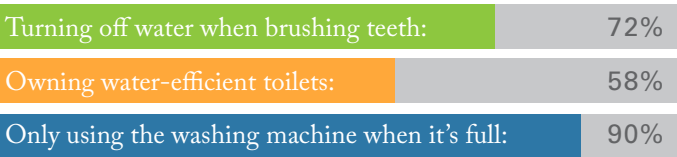
“The infographic based on the water issues public opinion survey has been a great tool for engaging people in the water issues conversation. This information, in graphic form, helps us understand what the knowledge gaps and concerns about water issues may be for the portion of the general population that we don’t reach through programming.”

—  
**SHANNON CARNEVALE**  
UF/IFAS EXTENSION POLK CO.

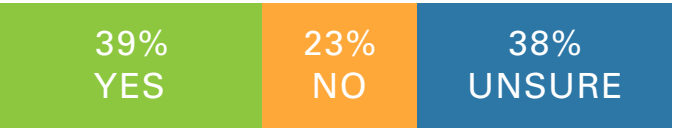
Photo by: Marisol Amador/IFAS

## 4 IMPORTANT ISSUES 2,022 FLORIDIANS SURVEYED 23 PLANNED REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

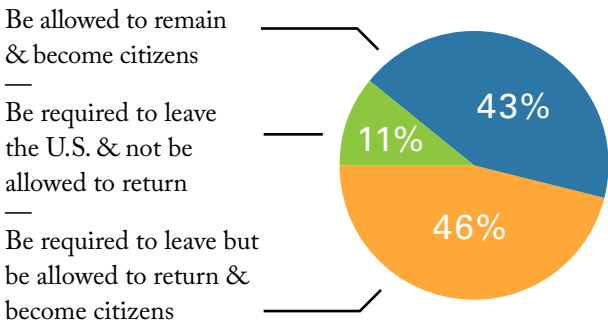
### FLORIDIANS’ WILLINGNESS TO CONSERVE WATER



### WOULD FLORIDIANS PURCHASE FOOD LABELED AS GENETICALLY MODIFIED?



### FLORIDIANS BELIEVE UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS SHOULD...



### FLORIDIANS’ WILLINGNESS TO PROTECT ENDANGERED SPECIES



## WHAT WE’RE DOING WITH THE RESULTS

### SPECIAL REPORT WEBPAGES

PIE Center communicators distill lengthy research reports into bite-sized chunks of important information that are displayed online in a visually appealing format. Writers compare survey results to third-party research to uncover knowledge gaps. The striking webpages, featured on [piecenter.com](http://piecenter.com), act as a hub for the PIE Center’s comprehensive approach to each issue.

### INFOGRAPHICS

Providing online visitors with a visual representation of each survey’s results, infographics serve as another way for the general public to access and understand the information. The infographic displaying important findings in the endangered species survey received a perfect score and Gold Award from the Association for Communication Excellence.

### EASY AS PIE WEBINARS

The PIE Center pairs its researchers with experts in each of the survey topics to explore the findings and misconceptions in an interactive, live webinar that anyone can join for free. More than 50 people attended the

webinar discussing the water survey, an all-time high for the webinar series. The webinar series received a Bronze Award from the Association for Communication Excellence.

### BRIDGING THE GREEN DIVIDE

PIE Center communicators further spotlight public misconceptions related to the survey topics. Simple graphics reveal the disconnect between Floridians’ understanding of the issues and what public policy or the best available science recommends. By pointing out these discrepancies, PIE Center communicators aim to narrow the knowledge gaps and raise awareness of the issues.



# LIFE OF PIE

By simply adding a letter, the PIE Center created its own holiday, celebrated it for a week and reached an important social media milestone.

Each year, March 14, or 3/14, is commonly known as Pi Day. Fans of the mathematical constant typically rejoice by eating creatively decorated pizzas and pies. PIE Center faculty and staff did that and then some.

PIE Center communicators, ever the fans of puns, added a letter and some capitalization to create PIE Day. Within striking distance of a yearlong internal goal to reach 1,000 Facebook fans, the PIE Center announced a weeklong social media celebration that culminated in PIE Day, a Friday. Those same pun-loving communicators dubbed the week “Life of PIE” in homage to the 2012 Oscar-winning movie.

Faculty, staff and graduate students wanted to connect more personally with the PIE Center’s social media followers and used the momentum to launch new products such as The Slice, a video series that aims to educate and motivate viewers on a useful topic in 15 minutes or less, and the UF Critical Thinking Inventory, an online instrument that measures how people think critically about important issues.

Earlier in the week, the PIE Center’s advisory board assembled in Gainesville for a strategic planning session. PIE Center communicators gave social media followers a seat at the table by sharing the discussion and asking for input along the way.

Although the PIE Center also hosted an Easy as PIE webinar and distributed its spring newsletter during Life of PIE, much attention focused on the second-annual PIE Center Photo Contest. Photographers from seven states entered 88 images into the contest, with Facebook fans casting more than 1,500 votes for the 17 finalists.

The PIE Center’s Facebook page gained 362 new fans during the photo contest, which ran for just shy of two months. For the year, the PIE Center nearly doubled its Facebook audience and cracked the 1,000-fan threshold during Life of PIE.

## TWITTER

After more than doubling the number of Twitter followers last year, the PIE Center account grew by 40 percent in 2013-14 to 440 followers.

## YOUTUBE

The PIE Center produced six videos in 2013-14. Viewers watched more than 50 total PIE Center videos 3,643 times in 2013-14 for an average of one minute and 43 seconds each. Cumulatively, viewers watched for an estimated four-and-a-half days.

## EMAILS

The PIE Center tripled its email listserv by taking a renewed focus at reaching UF/IFAS Extension professionals. The PIE Center now reaches more than 1,800 people with weekly Trends & Topics emails, announcements and newsletters.

### TOP PAGE VIEWS

Home — 3,929



Easy as PIE — 2,399



Water survey — 1,025



Contact — 884



Food production survey — 682



**TOTAL — 24,978 PAGE VIEWS**

### SOCIAL STATS

Facebook — 1,022 FANS

Twitter — 449 FOLLOWERS

YouTube — 3,643 VIEWS

Email — 1,807 SUBSCRIBERS

# WEBSITE’S NEW LOOK

After more than a year of planning, the PIE Center unveiled a new website designed to be more user-friendly and technically compliant.

The responsive design displays more effectively on tablets and smartphones while ensuring quicker page loads. Visitors can more easily find information about current and completed research, register for upcoming webinars and more. Every article, blog post and research summary is tagged with keywords to let visitors get a fuller understanding of everything the PIE Center does pertaining to a particular issue.

Web traffic grew by 44 percent in 2013-14, with nearly 25,000 page views from more than 8,000 unique visitors.

## UF CRITICAL THINKING INVENTORY

PIE Center communicators used the same web template to launch the UF Critical Thinking Inventory, an assessment that measures how people think critically about important issues. The new brand maintains a separate identity while staying consistent with the PIE Center’s web presence.

The UFCTI site features a training course that certifies university faculty, staff, students and private consultants to administer the instrument. The program features three self-paced lessons full of interactive features and animated avatars.

Photo by: Cassie Kendrick/Photo Contest

“The PIE Center is unique in that it is one of the only places that identifies and researches public opinion that is critical to agricultural and natural resource interest across the state. It provides the necessary analysis to inform strategic decision making for business, community, governmental and educational leaders. It provides great training in media and communications efforts that are relevant and timely.”

**RUTH BORGER**  
UF/IFAS COMMUNICATIONS

Photo by: Tyler Jones/IFAS



# LOCAL CHOICE

The culmination of the PIE Center’s first specialty crop block grant illustrates that the best research goes beyond technical reports.

In addition to four research reports, PIE Center faculty and staff produced an online tool, two trade magazine inserts and countless articles and presentations over the grant’s two-year span. The PIE Center originally partnered with the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation and UF/IFAS Food and Resource Economics Department three years ago to explore consumer and farmer attitudes and behaviors concerning local food.

Following the completion of the research, the PIE Center hosted an Easy as PIE webinar with the research partners last March. Since the session, the recording has been watched more than 470 times — twice as many viewings as all other webinars.

With the larger goal of helping farmers and consumers connect, PIE Center educators developed an online tool to package research results and suggestions in an useful and easy-to-understand format that producers and farmers can apply to their own businesses.

The tool, called “Selling local food: Your market next door,” features interactive case studies and quizzes. Users progress through the hour-long course by collecting local fruits and vegetables for each completed section, where they earn shopping bags and coupons before checking out with the cashier.

According to the PIE Center’s external evaluation, 76 percent of users were satisfied or very satisfied with the tool, making it the highest rated of the PIE Center’s five online tools. Find out more about the evaluation on page 14.

In addition to extensive media coverage, the local food partnership highlighted the results and recommendations with informational advertising in two issues of Florida Grower. Publishing the materials in a trade publication made sure the research got to the people who could use it the most.

The two-page spreads were distributed to more than 12,000 magazine subscribers and to UF/IFAS Extension agents across the state. The map and text inform readers that consumers value the social interaction with growers and are willing to pay slightly more for a locally grown product.

Consumers in the study revealed they don’t have a standard definition for local food. Depending on the product,

Floridians’ definitions of local food range from within 10 miles to within U.S. borders. Overall, most agreed that food grown within 100 miles or within the state was locally grown.

Florida sales of local food accounted for \$8.3 billion in economic activity for a one-year period, with nearly three-quarters of the total estimated revenue spent at retail grocery stores. Consumers also spent \$1.8 billion at farmers’ markets, roadside stands and U-pick businesses.

## WEBINAR VIEWERS BY TOPIC

Public perceptions of water | 55 \*



Media relations | 42



Food security, food safety & GMOs | 40 \*



Endangered species | 39 \*



\* = public opinion survey

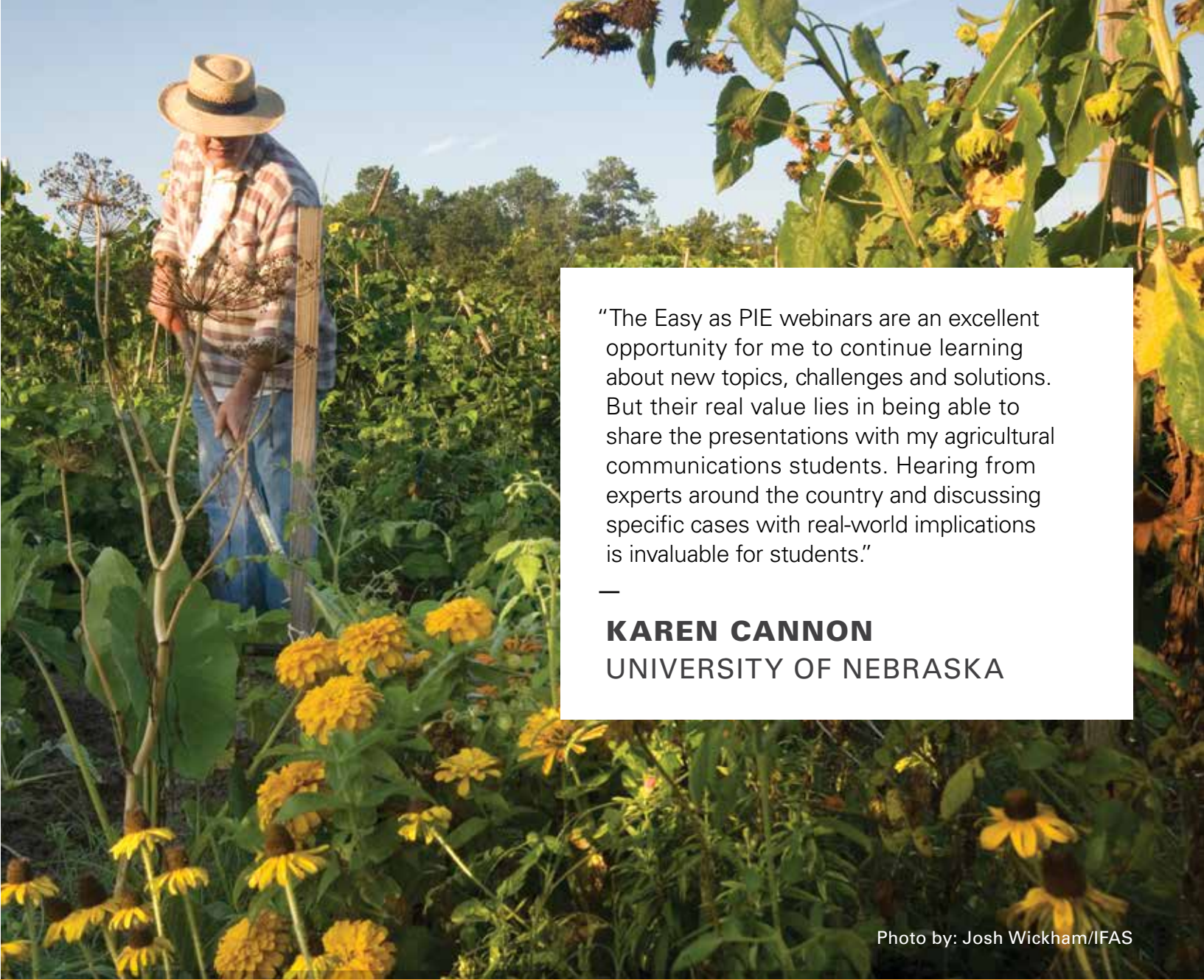


Photo by: Josh Wickham/IFAS

“The Easy as PIE webinars are an excellent opportunity for me to continue learning about new topics, challenges and solutions. But their real value lies in being able to share the presentations with my agricultural communications students. Hearing from experts around the country and discussing specific cases with real-world implications is invaluable for students.”

**KAREN CANNON**  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA



Photo by: Shuyang Qu/Photo Contest

“I really find value in the research and extension activities that the PIE Center is conducting. We made sure all 67 counties saw the outreach materials from the local food research because they help prepare our agents to have conversations with local clientele about how they can better market their produce.”

**JOAN DUSKY**  
UF/IFAS EXTENSION

# EASY AS PIE WEBINARS

The PIE Center webinar series continues to make learning about important agricultural and natural resources issues as Easy as PIE.

The PIE Center’s monthly webinar series provides a chance to learn about addressing critical agricultural and natural resources issues in an interactive online environment. Webinars provide a convenient and free professional development option for people who want to learn about new research, strategies and tools without taking time off work and paying travel expenses.

Through April, more than 270 people joined live Easy as PIE webinars in 2013-14. Since the series began in January 2013, Easy as PIE has reached 28 states and 450 people.

February’s webinar on the most recent water public opinion survey results attracted 55 live viewers, an all-time high for the series. July’s webinar about media relations gained 42 viewers, followed by the December webinar discussing the food production public opinion survey with 40 viewers.

Additionally, an internal PIE Center assessment found the webinars saved attendees more than \$42,000 in gas receipts and commuting time had they traveled to attend the professional development opportunities in person. The savings do not take into account those who view the recorded sessions, which are available online. Online visitors watched recorded webinars 443 times in 2013-14, adding up to more than 1,500 webinar views since the series began.





OVERALL QUALITY

(percent satisfied or very satisfied)

- Contracts Research — 83%
- Grants Research — 87%
- Training — 83%
- Communication — 73%

USEFULNESS

(percent satisfied or very satisfied)

- Contracts Research — 83%
- Grants Research — 85%
- Training — 78%
- Communication — 70%

WOULD RECOMMEND

(percent likely or very likely)

- Contracts Research — 97%
- Grants Research — 94%
- Training — 86%
- Communication — 74%

“I personally believe the PIE Center has done an incredible job with meeting the needs of the communities it supports. As I become more involved in these activities, I feel certain I will be able to utilize the resources provided by the PIE Center to enhance my skills and abilities.”

EVALUATION RESPONDENT

EVALUATION

An external evaluation shows the PIE Center’s research, communications and training programs strongly resonate with audiences.

Sebastian Galindo, a research assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, revamped last year’s evaluation to make it more user friendly. He distributed the survey to about 1,800 email addresses related to PIE Center research, training and communications efforts. Just shy of 300 respondents participated in the online evaluation and largely gave positive reviews of the PIE Center.

Eighty percent of respondents said they were aware of the PIE Center’s training programs in 2013, such as Easy as PIE webinars, tools and in-person presentations. More than half the respondents reported engaging with either a training program or some form of PIE Center communications, including social media, the website or printed materials.

Comparatively, 62 percent of respondents were aware of the PIE Center’s research activities and 20 percent partnered on research projects.

Respondents, however, reported the highest levels of satisfaction with the PIE Center’s research. At least 80 percent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the relevancy, usefulness and quality of the research, and 95 percent indicated they would recommend PIE Center research to a friend or colleague.

Respondents cited infrequent social media posts and trouble navigating the website as areas for PIE Center communicators to improve. Overall, 88 percent of respondents said they received the right amount of communication from the PIE Center.

PIE Center communicators hope to improve next year’s results with the launch of a redesigned website in May. The new site places more emphasis on social media channels and includes more navigation options for visitors to more easily access research summaries, news articles, trainings and more.

Despite the high levels of awareness, many respondents wanted even more in-person trainings and a better understanding of how PIE Center services could help or impact them.

WHAT WE DID WITH LAST YEAR’S RESULTS

AG VS. NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS

In addition to public opinion surveys on endangered species and water quantity and quality, PIE Center researchers are working on projects that help fisheries students communicate about science and policy, Apalachicola oystermen survive the collapse and farmers regulate their water usage with a mobile app.

NEW WAYS TO PROMOTE RESEARCH

PIE Center communicators repackaged research results from local food, endangered species and water research to create alternative, engaging content. Informational graphics and short booklets presented the findings in a more direct and visual manner.

SMALLER, SHORTER TRAINING MATERIALS

Several respondents to last year’s evaluation expressed an interest in a training program that was shorter than webinars or tools, which can last up to an hour. PIE Center communicators and educators responded by launching The Slice, a video series that aims to educate and motivate viewers on a useful topic in 15 minutes or less. Also, the new Green Divide series of graphics quickly highlights the knowledge gaps in the PIE Center’s public opinion surveys in two sentences. The Green Divide debuted with May’s survey about undocumented immigration.

MORE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

The first installment of The Slice explained eight tips to be successful in social media, a topic about which the PIE Center audience always seems to crave information. Between The Slice and the inaugural Life of PIE social media celebration, PIE Center communicators brought the already existing social media tool back into the spotlight.





# PIE CENTER FACULTY & STAFF

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QUISTO SETTLE, ERICA ODERA, ANGIE B. LINDSEY,  
ALEXA LAMM, JOY RUMBLE, LAURA BERNHEIM, DEIDRA SLOUGH,  
SONIA COLEMAN, LEVY ODERA AND NICOLE DODDS

**STUDENT COLLABORATORS:** Katie Belton, Natalie Belva, Tory Boyd, Keegan Gay, Laura Gorham, Jessica Holt, Pei-Wen Huang, Jayne Johnson, Arthur Leal, Chang Liu, Yiqian Ma, Courtney Owens, S. Janine Parker, Kacie Pounds, Mary Rodriguez, Sherezade Rodriguez, Caroline Roper, Taylor Ruth and Shuyang Qu.



Photo by: Marisol Amador/IFAS