



PIE CENTER TEAM

- Ricky Telg **DIRECTOR**
- Alexa Lamm **ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**
- Angie B. Lindsey, Joy Rumble **FACULTY**
- Kacie Pounds **OUTREACH LIAISON**
- Sandra Anderson, Erica Odera **RESEARCH COORDINATORS**
- Laura Bernheim **MEDIA SPECIALIST**
- Sonia Coleman **PROGRAM ASSISTANT**
- Nicole Dodds **OUTREACH & TRAINING COORDINATOR**
- Emmett Martin, Mary Hannah Miller, Melissa Taylor **RESEARCH ASSISTANTS**
- Becky Raulerson **INTERIM OUTREACH COORDINATOR**

STUDENTS: Nadia Bahadori, Morgan Edwards, Keegan Gay, Jessica Holt, Pei-wen Huang, Collin Kane, Arthur Leal, Yiqian Ma, Ashley McLeod, Claire Mitchell, Courtney Owens, Shuyang Qu, Mary Rodriguez, Caroline Roper, Taylor Ruth, Madeline Tourine.



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CENTER FOR PUBLIC ISSUES EDUCATION

IN AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

ANNUAL REPORT

2014-2015



Center for
Public Issues Education

2014 - 2015 BY THE NUMBERS

\$17 MILLION

AWARDED TO RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

\$1.5 MILLION

AWARDED TO PIE CENTER RESEARCH

172

FOCUS GROUPS, SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

101

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

7,937

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

30

GRAD STUDENTS SUPPORTED & PART-TIME JOBS CREATED

16

REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AWARDS WON

\$45,458

SAVED WITH WEBINARS

290

WEBINAR ATTENDEES

429

VIEWS OF RECORDED WEBINARS

3,632

TOTAL EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

1,388

FACEBOOK FANS

592

TWITTER FOLLOWERS

277

ENTRIES TO THE PHOTO CONTEST

2,363

VOTES SUBMITTED TO PHOTO CONTEST



FROM THE DIRECTOR

THE PIE CENTER'S CONTINUED QUEST TO PROVIDE RELEVANT RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS HAS TAKEN A RENEWED FOCUS WITH AN EYE TOWARD THE FUTURE.

As my first year as director comes to a close, many wonderful developments and accomplishments ensure the PIE Center's unrelenting growth and success.

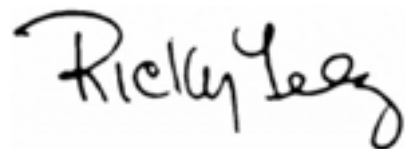
This report illustrates the impacts PIE Center efforts have on transforming public opinions and perceptions of agricultural and natural resources issues into actionable steps our stakeholders can use to inform and engage consumers and constituents alike.

To begin with, the PIE Center team is now fully staffed to the levels called for by the successful legislative budget request with the hiring of assistant professor Angie B. Lindsey in August. I further supported our faculty and staff by hiring eight part-time or time-limited employees to assist in conducting our myriad research projects and outreach. With this growth, our team is perfectly positioned to seek out even more research and educational opportunities.

With valued input and guidance from our advisory board, the PIE Center completed a yearlong strategic planning process. Goals established in the three-year plan provide the theme for many pages in this report, along with the refined mission and vision statements.

Among the several objectives already met includes the formulation of a Scientific and Extension Advisory Council. By bringing UF/IFAS researchers and extension specialists around the same table, the PIE Center hopes to partner on pivotal research and outreach programs addressing emerging agricultural and natural resources issues.

Warm regards,



PIE CENTER DIRECTOR

RICKY

TELG



MISSION

The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education conducts and disseminates objective interdisciplinary research and educational programs to increase public understanding of and engagement in agricultural and natural resources issues.

VISION

The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education will be the preeminent research and education organization on the social science perspectives of agricultural and natural resources issues to promote a more informed and engaged public.

OUR PHOTOS

The PIE Center's Facebook fans submitted almost 300 photos of agriculture, natural resources and the people who live and work in them. Many of this year's entries are featured throughout the annual report.

 Christina Moreau · PIE CENTER

GATHERING

PUBLIC INPUT

FLORIDIANS ARE LOOKING FOR LOCAL FOOD AND WAYS TO CONSERVE WATER .

PIE Center research aims to use these public opinions to promote effective communication and informed decision making.

For example, Floridians are largely unaware of the genetically modified ingredients found in many of the foods they eat. Although many consumers say they would prefer to not purchase genetically modified food, PIE Center survey results show many residents are interested in learning more about genetically modified foods.

The PIE Center's statewide public opinion surveys will soon expand to explore national attitudes, knowledge and behaviors related to water, food, the environment and communities.

For three years, PIE Center researchers have gauged public opinions on topics such as water supply and quality, undocumented immigration, food safety, genetically modified food and endangered and invasive species. Assistant professor Angie B. Lindsey will introduce a survey related to community resiliency and preparedness later this year.

Assistant professor Joy Rumble translates knowledge and understanding of consumer perceptions into the confidence to communicate and educate others about agricultural and natural resources issues.

Recent PIE Center projects have measured how much Floridians spend on local food, identified branding messages that appeal to consumers and helped connect K-12 schools with nearby farmers. Results are shared through online publications, webinars, videos, information advertising in trade magazines, farm tours and in-person meetings.

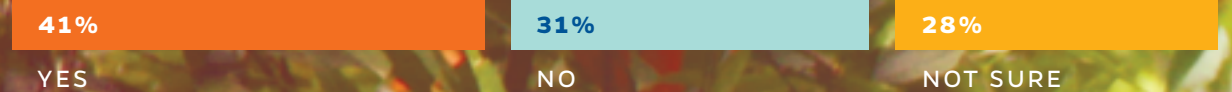
By understanding and acknowledging the public's interest in having locally grown fruits and vegetables available to children in school lunches, farms such as Ryder Laramore's Bar L Ranch can capitalize on new opportunities.

Originally, Laramore could not sell his crop of satsumas before the citrus spoiled. Now, with single deliveries of 22,000 satsumas to Leon County schools, he's even planning on doubling his involvement in Farm to School partnerships.

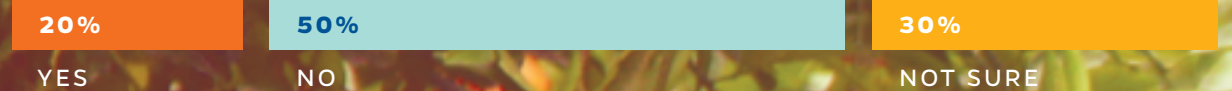
I WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS



I UNDERSTAND THE SCIENCE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD



I KNOW WHAT FOODS CONTAIN GENETICALLY MODIFIED INGREDIENTS



WE'RE SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL FARMERS. THE LETTUCE IS COMING STRAIGHT FROM THE FARMER WITH NO MIDDLE MAN.

Sarah Stancel | Branford High School Cafeteria Manager

WOULD I SPEND A NICKEL MORE BECAUSE FOOD WAS PRODUCED HERE AND NOT IN GEORGIA? IF IT TASTES JUST AS GOOD, YES.

Focus Group Participant



ASSESSING TRENDS

& IMPACTS

LIVING IN A STATE SURROUNDED BY WATER, FLORIDIANS PRIORITIZE WATER ISSUES OVER PUBLIC EDUCATION AND TAXES.

State residents, who rated the issue behind only health care and the economy on a list of ten major topics, are very likely to support local water restrictions and vote for both water conservation programs and candidates who support them.

But while the public is thirsty for knowledge, Floridians sometimes leave conservationists high and dry. From several years of research, assistant professor Alexa Lamm has found that the public is less likely to save water if conservation impacts their wallet or personal time.

72 percent of Floridians are willing to pay for slightly higher water bills to protect the future water supply, but only 19 percent are willing to spend a significantly higher rate.

Similarly, about two-thirds of residents would conserve water even if their lawns would be less green, but that number drops to 42 percent if it means their lawn might die and would need to be replaced.

Lamm presents this information at numerous county water schools, webinars and other regional workshops. In addition to serving on the UF/IFAS Extension Water Initiative Leadership Team, she is helping develop a Watershed Stewards Academy.

Even though Floridians would like to conserve water, existing policies and regulations do not always make that possible. For example, most people are willing to use reclaimed water for irrigation, but the alternative water resource is not readily available statewide. Homeowners associations can have tremendous influence on how green a lawn should be and how frequently the property is watered.

Public perceptions identified by the PIE Center are impacting policy development at the local, regional and state levels. The PIE Center has found that understanding Floridians' opinions, beliefs and even misconceptions enable decision makers to create policies and practices that lead to the best outcomes.



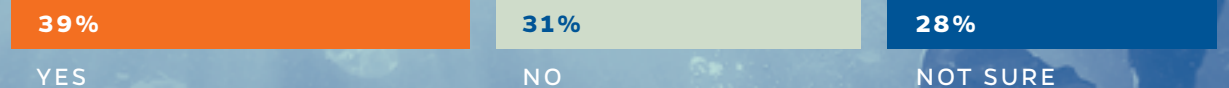
DR. LAMM BROUGHT ME BACK DOWN TO THE BOTTOM LINE OF HOW BEST TO SHARE ALL THE INFORMATION WITH MY COLLEAGUES ON THE CRYSTAL RIVER WATERFRONT ADVISORY BOARD, AS WELL AS WAYS TO BETTER EDUCATE OUR CITIZENS.

Joan Luebbe | Citrus County Water School attendee

I WOULD PAY ATTENTION TO NEWS COVERAGE OF WATER ISSUES



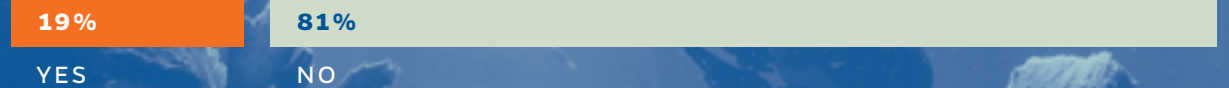
I AM CONFIDENT IN THE SAFETY OF MY TAP WATER



I AM WILLING TO SPEND 10% MORE ON WATER BILLS TO PROTECT FUTURE WATER SUPPLY



I AM WILLING TO SPEND 50% MORE ON WATER BILLS TO PROTECT FUTURE WATER SUPPLY



INCREASING

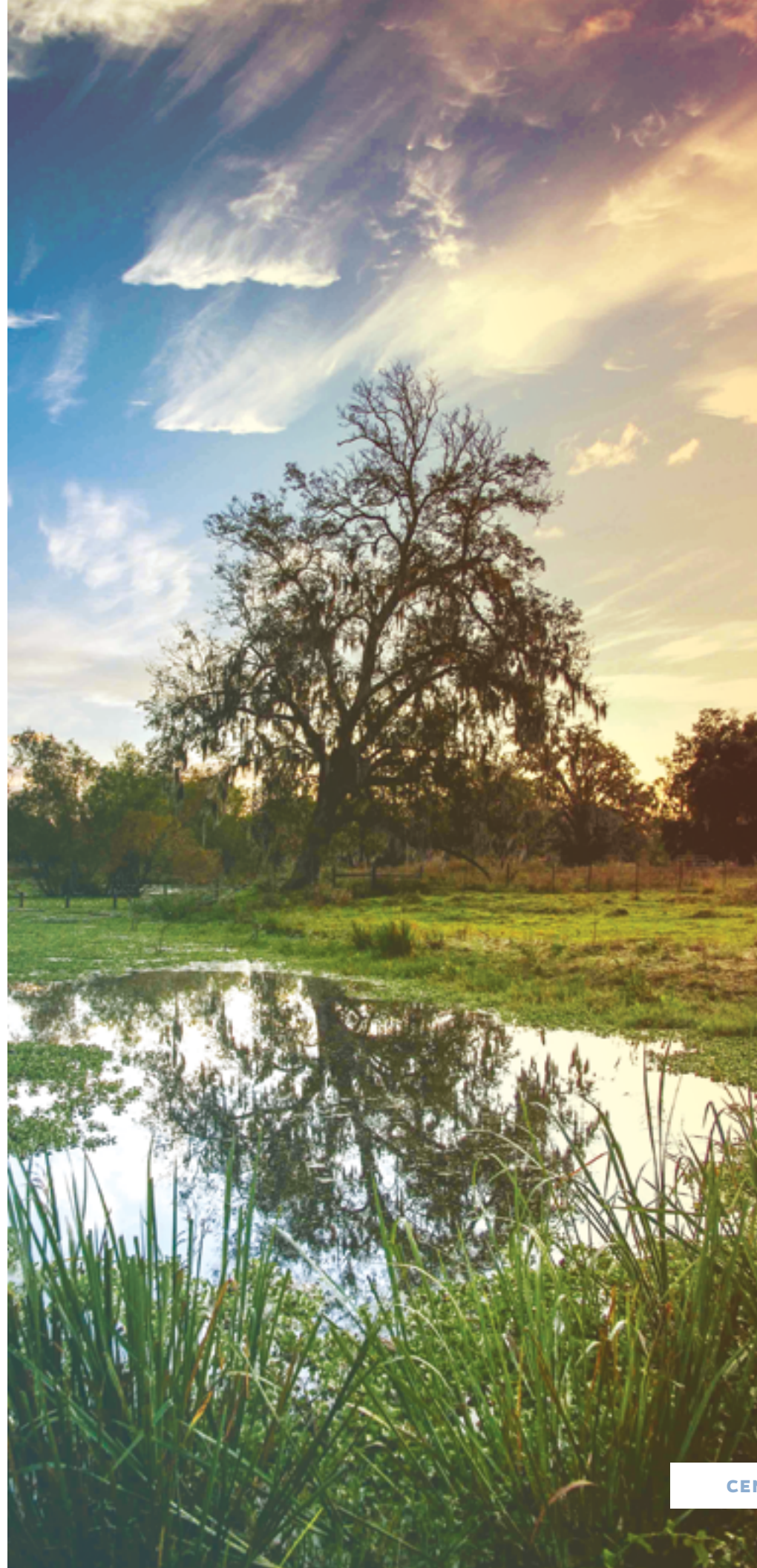
VISIBILITY

FROM GRADUATE AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL AWARDS AND TIMELY DISCUSSIONS, THE PIE CENTER IS QUICKLY ESTABLISHING ITSELF AS A TRUSTED RESOURCE FOR RELEVANT INFORMATION.

Graduate students who worked for the PIE Center have taken faculty roles at the University of Georgia, Mississippi State University, Ohio State University and the University of Florida, while current students, staff and faculty rack up awards.

“Current students and graduates who have worked on our projects are tremendous ambassadors for the PIE Center,” said director Ricky Telg, who himself received recognition in marketing and leadership, teaching and advising. “As we try to equip students with important skills, we hope they go out in the world and instill the same principles with their students, coworkers and audiences.”

Highlighted awards include more than five outstanding research papers and abstracts, as well as assistant professor Joy Rumble’s journal article of the year in the *Journal of Applied Communications*. Associate director Alexa Lamm was named one of Vance Publishing’s 40 Under 40 in Agriculture to watch, and media specialist Laura Bernheim won two awards for the PIE Center’s redesigned website. Doctoral student Pei-Wen Huang earned international student of the year honors from the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.



NATIONAL RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

A new slate of projects have begun taking PIE Center researchers beyond state lines. Faculty members were awarded grants to measure the preferences and behaviors of consumers in different states when purchasing strawberries, as well as identifying barriers for nursery growers’ use of alternative water resources to help water conservation efforts across the country.

HOT TOPIC WEBINARS

Quickly arranged webinars related to changes in major federal policies became some of the year’s most popular installments of the Easy as PIE webinar series. Outreach and training coordinator Nicole Dodds coordinated with respected experts to discuss how lifted trade restrictions in Cuba and revised immigration guidelines might affect agriculture and natural resources in Florida.

PUBLIC EVENTS ON CAMPUS

The PIE Center collaborated with organizations such as the Bob Graham Center for Public Service and Alpha Tau Alpha to help organize and host events and workshops on the University of Florida campus. The events, open to the public, covered topics such as agricultural issues, biotechnology communication and the fifth-anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.



FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS

By bringing UF/IFAS researchers and extension specialists around the same table, the PIE Center hopes to partner on pivotal research and outreach programs addressing emerging agricultural and natural resources issues.

The recently formed Scientific and Extension Advisory Council will help PIE Center faculty and staff identify emerging issues and create strategies to address current issues impacting Florida's agriculture and natural resources.

The 13-member council boasts experts from across UF/IFAS, which director Ricky Telg said illustrates the eagerness to collaborate and coordinate.

"We intentionally sought members with very little overlap in their areas of expertise," he said. "We hope this council will become a catalyst for dialogue between UF/IFAS faculty representing research and extension interests."

AFFILIATE FACULTY & PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

A reengineered web tool enables the PIE Center to foster partnerships and collaboration among all faculty members and industry professionals interested in enhancing public understanding and informed decision making. By registering at piecenter.com/affiliates, faculty and professionals will have access to interdisciplinary networking opportunities for new research teams as well as expertise and knowledge about issues analysis, communication and education.

"Most importantly, affiliates will join a community of researchers, educators and scientists that will encourage others to learn, take action and promote the effective communication and resolution of agricultural and natural resources issues," Telg said.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOSTER GULF COAST RESILIENCE

As the PIE Center's involvement in the Healthy Gulf, Healthy Communities collaboration nears an end in 2016, assistant professor Angie B. Lindsey organized regional forums and a panel of experts to share research results with those who live in communities affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and beyond. Lindsey works with a team of biologists, psychologists, social scientists, governmental agencies, county Extension faculty and non-profit organizations to address the environmental, economic and emotional health concerns following the spill.

LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY RESOURCES DATABASE

The PIE Center is actively involved in a group of university communicators exploring issues management. The PIE Center will develop an archive of land-grant university resources from across the country that people can search for information about major issues facing agriculture and natural resources.



PLANNING FOR

THE FUTURE

MEASURING CRITICAL THINKING STYLES

By understanding how people think, associate director Alexa Lamm hopes to improve how communicators and educators prepare the public to approach challenging issues. The UF Critical Thinking Inventory, scheduled to launch later this year, measures critical thinking styles. Although critical thinking is largely considered an important attribute for success, it is not easily defined.

The questionnaire places respondents on a continuum ranging between an engagement style or seeking information style of critical thinking. Engagers use reason and logic to reach decisions, while those who seek information are more likely to put their opinions aside in favor of consulting with others. In addition to the questionnaire, the UFCTI includes a training program for people to interpret the results and understand how to apply the information to real-life situations. For more information, visit ufcti.com.

PROFITING FROM LOCAL PRODUCE

Consumers don't have a standard definition of local food, but Floridians spend about \$8 billion each year for fresh produce grown in their area. To help growers take advantage of the local food opportunity, assistant professor Joy Rumble is packaging more than five years of research into educational materials for UF/IFAS Extension. With the information, Extension professionals across the state will show producers how to best connect with audiences and build a personal brand.

When vying for consumers' attention and business, personal communication and customer service can be farmers' best tools. With the training, producers will craft messages that appeal to consumers looking to support local growers and economies.

