

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Source:
U.S. Sugar Corporation
Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida
Florida Crystals Corporation

South Florida Farmers' Commitment to Everglades Restoration Has Achieved Record Results

Everglades Foundation's recent study is flawed and pointless

Clewiston/Belle Glade/West Palm Beach, Fla. – As South Florida farmers, we are proud of our scientifically proven record of success and investment in Everglades restoration.

While farmers are putting our money to work cleaning water and achieving real restoration results, the Everglades Foundation continues to waste valuable dollars on useless studies, which are voided by grossly flawed assumptions, resulting in hocus pocus economic conclusions.

South Florida farmers have shown record achievements removing phosphorus from water with 79 percent reductions in the EAA last year. EAA farmers have also paid more than \$200 million in special taxes for restoration. In its annual review of restoration results, the South Florida Water Management District, the government agency tasked with Everglades restoration, affirmed that the EAA's on-farm Best Management Practices (BMPs), which were developed by university scientists in collaboration with farmers, are a resounding success. The District praised EAA farmers for being proactive and often implementing more BMPs than what is required.

The Everglades Foundation's report is riddled with so many erroneous assumptions, then hedges the conclusions with an equal number of caveats and uncertainties, that it serves no purpose except to throw mud on productive restoration efforts. In one instance, the Foundation's "study" even goes as far as to incorrectly assign 64 percent – a whopping \$87 million – of the initial cost of BMP implementation in South Florida to government agencies. The truth is EAA farmers do not receive any funds – zero dollars – from the government to offset BMP costs. The report also grossly and incorrectly assigns \$6.4 million or 17 percent of the \$37.4 million annual cost of BMP implementation to the government. EAA farmers independently invest the full cost of implementation of BMPs. What the report conveniently does not share is the fact that South Florida farmers have contributed more to restoration than any other private group.

What the report does confirm is that sugar cane is the most beneficial crop for Florida and that our EAA BMPs are a resounding success. According to the report, in the Southern Everglades Basin, sugar cane has reduced 52 percent of the total phosphorus load from

pretreatment levels and its BMPs make up 81 percent of the phosphorus reduction from BMPs for all crops in the basin.

The report also acknowledges that CERP projects are successful and that the scheduled CERP projects will produce positive results when completed. The completion of projects is the right step toward Everglades restoration.

While the Everglades Foundation continues to invest their time, money and energy on useless, flawed studies, farmers will continue our successful partnership in providing real results for the Everglades.

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Florida Agriculture Fast Facts:

- Supports 1.4 million jobs
- Generates \$100 billion annual economic impact in Florida
- Responsible for \$3.5 billion in tax revenue for local and state government
- Florida Sugar Industry provides 7,000 direct jobs and 23,500 indirect jobs
- Florida Sugar Industry generates \$2 billion economic impact