



Fresh  
from  
Florida®

# Ag-UPDATE

## Organic Producers See Bright Future

**F**lorida's organic industry is thriving, with over 100 operations and 12,500 acres in the state certified as organic. Production extends to all corners of the state and includes everything from lettuce to sugar. Rising consumer demand for organics is helping farmers boost production and profits. Nationally, the organic industry accounted for \$13.8 billion in consumer sales in 2005.

**Organic producers received more good news** when the University of Florida recently announced the addition of a major in organic farming, making it one of the first universities in the nation to offer this course of study to students. The major will increase research and provide trained professionals for the industry.

**Organic refers to a specific method** of growing and processing foods, and is defined as produce that is grown, packaged and stored without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or irradiation. Instead, organic farmers use a blend of old and new technologies and scientific research to balance the Earth's natural ecosystem. They work with nature to build and replenish the nutrients in the soil through crop rotation, composting and cultivation. This encourages healthy soil which produces healthy plants that are naturally more resistant to pests and diseases.

**Organic symbolizes a commitment** to the land and the ecosystem. In order to be certified organic, producers must follow the National Organic Program rules and regulations. These strict standards maintain consumer confidence and the integrity of the organic label.

**Buying Florida organics supports** local food production and is good for the environment. Look for locally grown organics in grocery stores, specialty stores, roadside stands, farmers' markets and restaurants as well as online.



[www.Florida-Agriculture.com](http://www.Florida-Agriculture.com)



### Dear Florida Agribusiness Leader:

The Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign (FAPC), also known as "Fresh from Florida," promotes more than 280 agricultural commodities grown in the Sunshine State. I urge you to join this campaign; it is good for business and it is good for Florida agriculture. For more information or to apply for FAPC membership, call (850) 488-9948, visit [www.Florida-Agriculture.com](http://www.Florida-Agriculture.com), email [fapc@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:fapc@doacs.state.fl.us), or write to FAPC Program, 407 South Calhoun Street, Mayo Building Room 425, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0800.

Sincerely,

*Charles H. Bronson*

Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture

