

2007  
**Woman of the Year**  
*in Agriculture*



*Colleen H. Boggs*



## Dear Friends of Agriculture:

The Woman of the Year in Agriculture award ceremony is always a much-anticipated event, adding to the excitement of opening-day festivities at the Florida State Fair. Since 1985 the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has proudly sponsored this prestigious award in conjunction with the Florida State Fair Authority.

It is my pleasure to present the Woman of the Year in Agriculture award for 2007 to Colleen Boggs of Homestead. Colleen joins 23 other women who have earned the respect and admiration of their peers by making outstanding contributions to Florida agriculture.

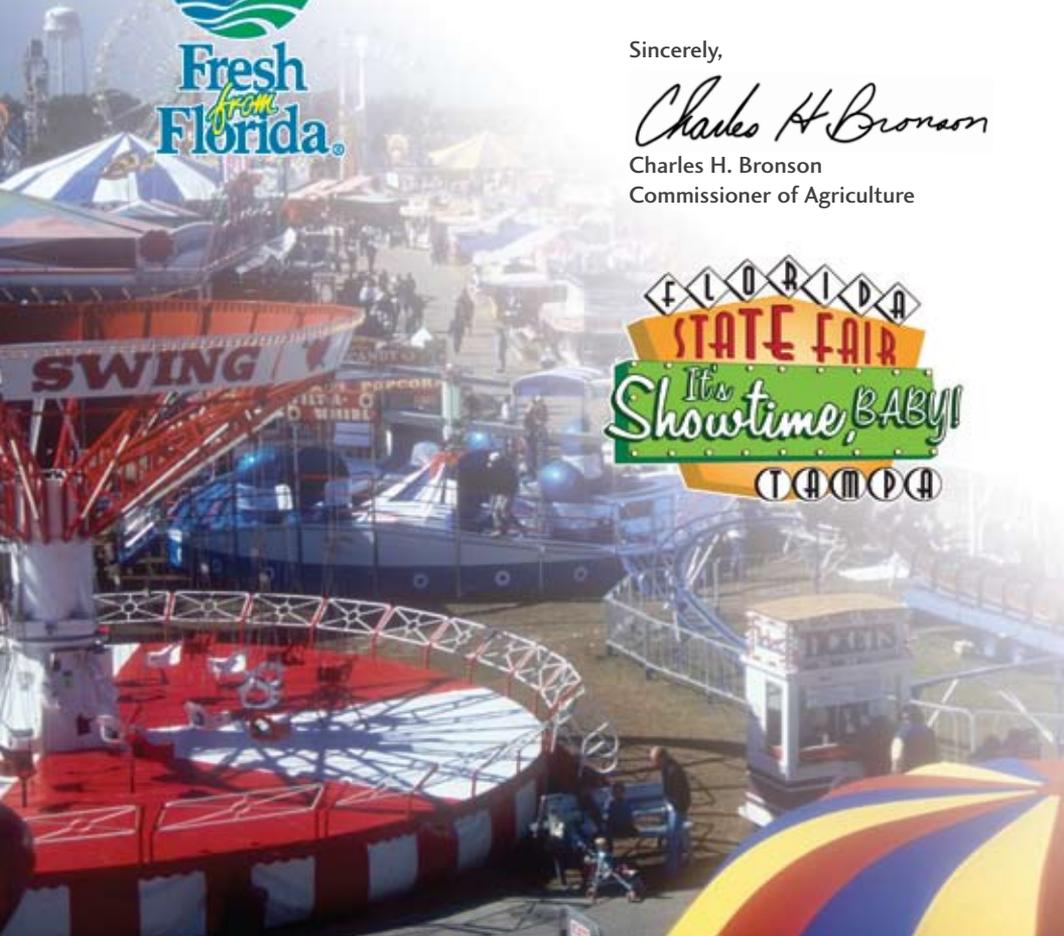
This booklet summarizes the many accomplishments of Colleen's career in agriculture as well as her commitment to family and community.

Again, it is my great honor to congratulate Colleen Boggs on being named Woman of the Year in Agriculture for 2007.

Sincerely,



Charles H. Bronson  
Commissioner of Agriculture





## Colleen H. Boggs

Colleen Hoy Boggs was born in Miami Beach in 1941 and grew up among the citrus groves of Lake Placid. Always interested in plants, she spent summers during high school and college working as an assistant taxonomist at the Archbold Biological Station in Lake Placid. A valedictorian at Lake Placid High School, Boggs later received a bachelor's degree in bioscience with specialization in botany from Florida State University. She continued her love for science through teaching biology at Coral Gables High School.



While she was teaching, Boggs also managed an apartment house in Miami. In 1965 Hurricane Betsy destroyed all the property's landscaping. Faced with the task of replanting, and finding few reliable sources for fruit trees in the area, Boggs was inspired to grow her own fruit trees. She started small, growing liners in an 18-by-24-foot greenhouse. In 1971 she purchased 40 acres in south Dade County and, in early 1972, established Pine Island Nursery in the Redlands.

The nursery business is not an easy one, and over the years Boggs endured three battles with citrus canker and more than a dozen hurricanes and major floods. As South Florida's farmland and citrus groves gave way to suburban development, she was also forced to adapt to changing markets.

The nursery's initial focus was citrus production, but that changed in the mid-1980s when Dade County was hit with its first citrus canker quarantine. The quarantine lasted two years, and the nursery was in trouble. When the quarantine was finally lifted, Boggs decided to shift the emphasis at Pine Island from citrus to tropical fruit trees. She began growing varieties of avocado, mango, lychee, carambola, annona, longan, jackfruit, sapodilla, guava, dragonfruit, and many others which are now exported to Central and South America, Asia and the Caribbean. Through her expert knowledge of the fruits and keen business sense, she has worked hard to make them known and affordable to the public.

For years, Pine Island Nursery catered primarily to commercial fruit growers in Florida, but in the face of rapid urbanization, the nursery has recently expanded its customer base, selling not only to groves but to retail nurseries, landscapers, and homeowners.



The mission is to provide growers with commercially viable fruit trees, while offering landscapers and homeowners selections of rare and unusual fruit trees suitable to more suburban environments.

Boggs' soft-spoken manner and caring reputation has earned her the nickname "Mom." But while Colleen Boggs speaks softly, she expresses herself in an effective and dynamic manner when it comes to furthering the interests of agriculture in this one-time rural farming community.

Since 1976 she has served on the board of directors for the Dade County Farm Bureau where she works to promote tropical fruit and row crop vegetables. In 1988, she became president of the Miami-Dade Farm Bureau. An active advocate in local, state and federal government on issues that affect agriculture, Colleen often travels with other farm leaders to Tallahassee to acquaint legislators with issues which affect the industry.

Knowing that a strong horticulture platform for the industry was important, she became actively involved in the Dade Chapter of the Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA). After serving on the board of directors she became the first woman to be the chapter president, ultimately becoming the association's second woman state president in 1986.

A well-known business leader, she has been on the board of directors of the agriculture-friendly Community Bank of Florida since 1989 and was the first and only woman to serve as chair.

Boggs recognizes the need to educate the public on the importance of Florida agriculture. She is also involved in Florida Ag in the Classroom, a program that provides teachers with special projects and activities for teaching agriculture to students.



She has been active at the University of Florida's Tropical Research and Education Center (TREC), served on its advisory committee from 1981 to 2005, and was instrumental in obtaining the Teaching Greenhouse for the facility in Homestead.

Her impact on Florida agriculture extends well beyond the state's borders. She invites students from many countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, France, Bulgaria and Russia to come to the United States for one to two years to study horticulture and marketing at her nursery. She introduces the students to the agricultural community, its events and projects, and guides their studies. She impressed one student from the Netherlands so much that he returned to help manage the nursery after he received his degree.

Boggs' notion of service goes beyond promoting the agricultural industry. As a member of the board of directors and former vice-chair, she has given her time to Centro Capesino, a non-profit organization committed to improving the living conditions and self-sufficiency of migrant farmworkers through homeownership and neighborhood improvement initiatives. She also served on the Miami-Dade Housing Finance Authority from 1990 to 1992.

No task is too small or too large for Colleen Boggs. Even while running a nursery and raising three boys, she's always been ready to serve her community. Acknowledging her keen insight and leadership skills, she was appointed by the governor to the Hazardous Waste Advisory Council. In 1998, Boggs was elected to the South Dade Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors. She chaired the Board of Professional Geologists from 1988 to 1990, and since 1999 she has been involved in the Miami-Dade Ag Practices Study Advisory Board.

Her efforts and accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. In 1982 she was honored with the prestigious FNGLA Wendell Butler Award for Nurseryman of the Year. In 2001 she was named Outstanding Agriculturist of the Year by the Miami-Dade County Chamber of Commerce. In 2004 she received the ATHENA Award, an international award that recognizes businesswomen who have helped other women achieve their full potential. Boggs was inducted into the FNGLA Hall of Fame in 2006.

These days, Colleen's greatest joy is spending time with her sons and their families. And though she has served in many offices and has held many leadership positions over the years, it is here where she holds her favorite title – Granny.





## Previous Winners

- 2006** Iris Pollock Wall of Indiantown  
**2005** Marlene Strickland of Sarasota  
**2004** Martina "Teena" Borek of Homestead  
**2003** Jennie Lee Zipperer of Fort Myers  
**2002** Annette Barnett Land of Branford  
**2001** Barbara Carlton of Sidell  
**2000** Helen Houck of Perry  
**1999** Vina Jean Banks of Balm  
**1998** Nancy Gurnett Hardy of Winter Haven  
**1997** Gertrude "Trudy" Carey of Hillsborough County  
**1996** Norma Stokes of Highlands County  
**1995** Louve "Vee" Frierson Platt of Clewiston,  
and Patricia Robbins of Miami  
**1994** Anne Wardlaw Dickinson of Frostproof  
**1993** Sarah W. Bailey of St. Johns County  
**1992** Carol C. Murphy of Volusia County  
**1991** Ruth M. Tucker of Brevard County  
**1990** Jeanette Barthle of Pasco County  
**1989** Belle Jeffords of Alachua County  
**1988** Carolyn Reed Kempfer of Osceola County  
**1987** Dorothy Conner Shipes of Lake County  
**1986** Ruth Wedgworth of Belle Glade  
**1985** Jo Ann Smith of Marion County



**Florida Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services**

**CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner**