

**2008**  
**Woman of the Year**  
*in Agriculture*



*Patsy Nathe*



## 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 2008 to Patricia “Patsy” Nathe of Dade City, co-owner of R.J. Nathe and Sons logging company and Tall Timber Cattle and Grove.

Patsy Nathe is a respected leader in her community and a tireless champion of Florida agriculture.

Despite the demands of two thriving businesses, she has given selflessly of her time to educate the public about the importance of agriculture to Florida’s economy and to our daily lives. Whether she’s talking to her congressman or to a class of fifth-graders, her energy, first-hand knowledge, and enthusiasm make her one of the industry’s most persuasive advocates.

By receiving this award, Patsy joins 24 other women who have earned the respect and admiration of their peers by making outstanding contributions to Florida agriculture. This booklet summarizes her many accomplishments.

Again, it is my great honor to congratulate Patsy Nathe on being named Woman of the Year in Agriculture for 2008.

Sincerely,

Charles H. Bronson  
Commissioner of Agriculture





*Nathe Family Photos*

## **Patsy Nathe**

Patsy Nathe's agriculture roots run deep. The Pasco County native was born and raised in St. Joseph, a tiny town just outside Dade City. Her father was in the citrus-harvesting business and made sure Patsy learned at a young age how to tend the garden, milk the cows, and feed the chickens.





She married R.J. Nathe in 1959. R.J. also comes from a farming family, and when he and Patsy married they moved to his grandfather's old homestead in rural Pasco County. Patsy and R.J. raised five sons and a daughter while building a logging and land-clearing business, Nathe and Gude, Inc. For years Patsy's days were filled with the demands of raising six kids and helping out with the business however she could. But when the youngest started school she was able to spread her wings a little. She started taking business and modeling classes, and landed a job as a model and taught at a promotional modeling agency in Tampa.

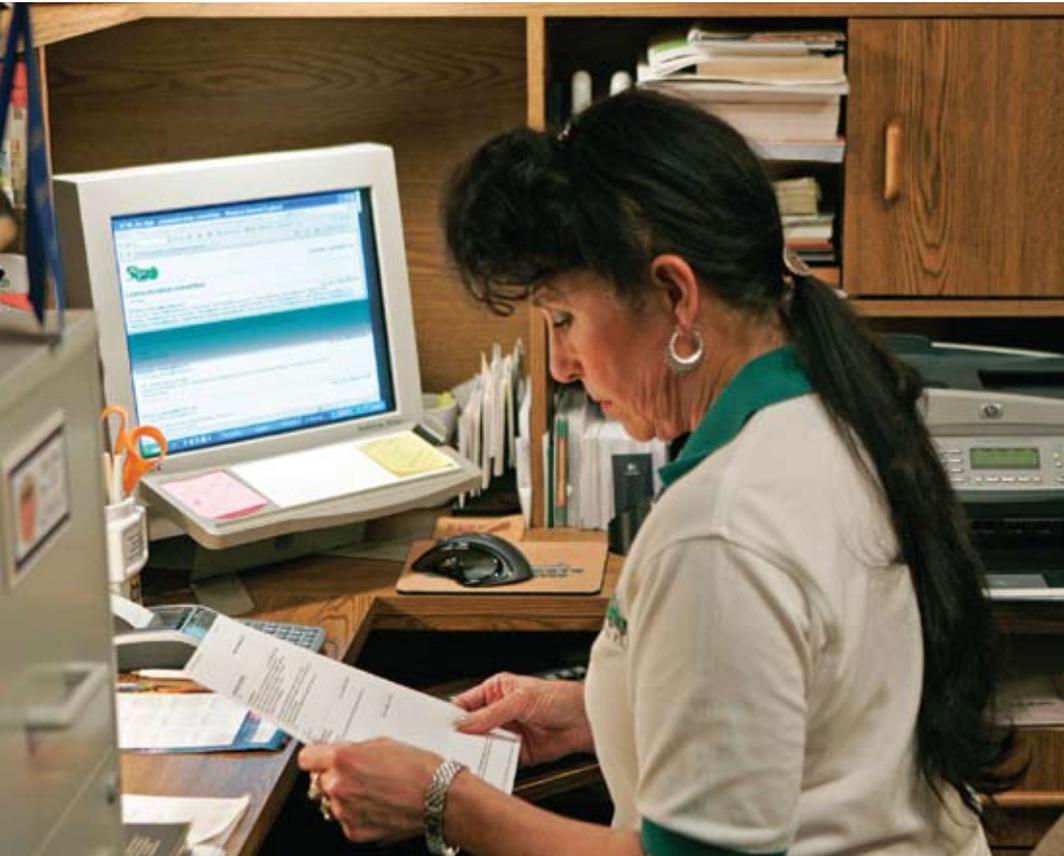


Meanwhile, the family business was prospering. As the years passed it grew to include not only timber and land-clearing but also cattle and citrus. When R.J. and Patsy's partner, Walter Gude, retired, their five sons became part owners of the logging company, which they renamed R.J. Nathe and Sons, Inc. Their sons also became part owners of Tall Timber Cattle and Grove, the cattle and citrus business. In 1993 Patsy became business manager for both companies, taking charge of accounting, permitting and other legal matters, safety, advertising, and public relations. From the beginning she enjoyed the sheer variety of her responsibilities and the challenge of keeping pace with the timber industry's ever-changing rules and regulations.

Patsy was always a passionate volunteer, and as time went on she increased her involvement in industry and civic groups. She attended shortcourses on beef marketing and promotion at the University of Florida Meat Lab, and earned her Master Logger certification. She devoted herself to the cause of agriculture education and became known as one of Florida agriculture's most effective ambassadors.

She first joined the Cowbelles, now known as Florida Cattlewomen, Inc., in the 1970s. Patsy was one of her local chapter's most active members, organizing the annual Country Comes to Town fashion show luncheon and Harvest Moon dance, managing educational booths at fairs and other events, and chairing the food concession at the high school rodeo. She regularly spoke to school groups about nutrition and the health benefits of beef.

As president of the Pasco County Cattlewomen, she presided over the largest membership the club had ever seen. She was extremely energetic during her tenure, helping to record radio spots promoting beef, hosting farm and ranch tours, and doing beef cooking demos in supermarkets and grocery stores around the state. Four times she was recognized as Pasco County's Outstanding Cattlewoman of the Year.





Patsy has been active in the Florida Forestry Association for many years and currently serves on its board of directors. She was instrumental in the development of the association's "Work in the Woods" logger exhibit and video to promote logging careers to rural Florida students. She also helped develop the Forest Discovery Center, an 8,000-square-foot forestry display at the Florida State

Fairgrounds in Tampa. During the Florida State Fair each February, the center invites visitors to discover the value of Florida's forests through interactive displays.

Teaching school kids and the public about agriculture is one way Patsy works to protect and promote the industry. Another is by getting involved politically. She has traveled to Tallahassee and Washington, D.C., on many occasions to speak with elected officials on important issues. She attends town hall meetings and raises money for candidates. She has organized farm and ranch tours for local officials to educate them about the importance of agriculture, Florida's second largest industry.

In 2001 Patsy was selected by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association to represent the cattle industry at a small business owners' meeting at the White House. President Bush had invited 200 small business owners to hear him deliver a speech pertaining to his tax-cut plan. Much to her surprise Patsy was one of three people picked to stand with the President on stage as he addressed the nation. She was there to help personify the small business owners the President said would benefit from lower taxes in general and permanent repeal of the estate tax.

*Nathe Family Photo*



Patsy was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush and Governor Charlie Crist to serve on the Withlacoochee River Basin Board. She is currently vice-chair of the board and serves on the education committee. She represents the Florida Forestry Association on the Agriculture Advisory Committee of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. She is a member of the Southeastern Wood Producers Association and serves on the board of the Florida Loggers Council, the Florida Agricultural Hall of Fame Association, and the Future Farmers of America Foundation.

In 1996 R.J. Nathe and Sons, Inc., was chosen as Florida's Outstanding Logger of the Year by the Florida Forestry Association. In 1997 the company was named Southeastern Regional Logger of the Year by the American Pulpwood Association. In 2004 the Florida Forestry Association honored Patsy with its Above and Beyond Award. She also won a national Farm-City Award for her efforts to improve rural-urban relations.





## Previous Winners

- 2007** Colleen H. Boggs of Homestead  
**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**