



Banner Center Key Facts:

The Banner Center is the bridge to connect and strengthen the agricultural industry and Agricultural Education.

We gain input and advice from both entities to create industry-driven and approved curriculum for our secondary agriscience courses.

Through our efforts, our students will be work-ready and our agriculturists will have a quality, highly-trained workforce

Agriscience Industry Advisory Council Update

By: Phoebe Raulerson, Advisory Council Chair

The Employ Florida Banner Center for Agriscience Industry Advisory Council held its first meeting on October 14, 2009 with many Industry Advisory Council members and partners present. For me this was a "red letter day" because it heralded the beginning of many more opportunities for Florida high school students and those seeking education beyond high school.

As a former member of Florida's State Board of Education, former Superintendent of Schools, former High School Principal, and former Teacher, I have been very concerned because most agriculture programs at the high school level have no state or national certifications available. Most other high school technical programs offer certifications to those schools that choose to meet the rigorous standards.

My family owns and operates a cattle ranch and a tractor repair

shop. The ability to hire trained, skilled agricultural workers has been a problem for many in our position. We hire by trial and error since there is no certification verifying their competencies. Farm Bureau will develop certifications to solve this problem, separate from the efforts of the Banner Center

The Partners working with the Employ Florida Banner Center for Agriscience Industry are Florida Farm Bureau Federation, the Florida Department of Education, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the University of Florida/IFAS, and the Florida FFA Association. There could be no better combination of partners to provide: marketing and outreach, a comprehensive rigorous curriculum and training in implementing curriculum for Agriscience teachers. Plans include focus group meetings to confirm the relevance of curricula. The curriculum developed will

rely heavily on industry input and will sustain the bridge our agriscience education and the industry it should reflect.

While a member of the Florida State Board of Education, I served on a national committee for vocational/technical education. Every state is looking for a way to accomplish what we are setting out to do. The model being used can be replicated by other states thus strengthening and improving the agricultural industry across the United States. We have an opportunity to standardize statewide relevant rigorous curricula that provide our youth and our industry with trained employees who will sustain the viability of Florida's agriculture and carry it into a very bright future.

I am very proud to be a part of this endeavor and sincerely thank Workforce Florida for the opportunity provided for us.

Industry Input: State-Wide Focus Groups

The Banner Center is charged with holding Focus Group meetings to gather input and advice from industry representatives. Three focus groups will be held in various areas across the state to survey a variety of industry representatives.

The first Focus Group was held in conjunction with the Florida Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Daytona, Florida. The meeting was held on the morning of October 28th and welcomed participants ranging from Escambia county to Palm Beach county.

The second Focus Group was held on December 14th at the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center in Quincy. Participants at this meeting were concentrated from Jackson county to Suwannee County.

Finally, the third Focus Group will be held on January 13th at the UF/IFAS Gulf Coast Research and Education Center in Balm.

The main concentration of these Focus Groups are to accurately survey two things. The first is to better understand current-day

hiring needs of the industry, and the second is to gather perspective on emerging occupations in the industry. By obtaining input in these two areas, we can determine that our curriculum is effectively training students for relevant and growing careers.

These Focus Groups are an essential piece of our industry-input to the Banner Center. Because of this, we would like to extend a special thank you to our agriculturists and partners at the University of Florida who are responsible for making this all happen.

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During the meeting, each Banner Center provided an update of their program to share best practices and helpful information.



Employ Florida Banner Center Collaboration

On December 3, 2009, representatives from 11 of the 12 Employ Florida Banner Centers gathered for a collaboration meeting at Santa Fe Community College in Gainesville.

Several Banner Center Directors planned the meeting with the hopes of gaining a better understanding of each individual Banner Center and a collaboration of experience. The Employ Florida Banner Center concept and initial Banner Centers have been established since 2006; however Banner Centers like the Banner Center for Agriscience and the Banner Center for Water and Natural Resources were just established this July. Therefore, this meeting served as an opportunity

for the experienced Banner Center staff to share best practices, while the new Banner Centers shared innovative ideas and questions.

The meeting began with presentations from each Banner Center to update on their status and progress. Afterwards, the group split so the Banner Center Coordinators could become more familiar with the data entry program, while the Banner Center Directors shared knowledge and best practices.

In addition to the December meeting, the Banner Center staffs and representatives from Workforce Florida, Inc. gathered at an "On Boarding" meeting in October. This meeting was led by Workforce

Florida and some of their partners with the intent of sharing resources and direction with all of the Banner Centers.

Furthermore, each month, Workforce Florida, Inc. holds conference calls that include Banner Center staff, Workforce Florida, Inc. staff, and other partnering institutions. The conference calls are used to disperse information and allow cooperation between all involved parties.

There are twelve Banner Centers across Florida serving needs of industries from energy to digital media. Links to all of the Banner Centers can be found on our website at agrsciencebannercenter.org.

Banner Center Outreach

As stated in the last E-Newsletter, the Banner Center for Agriscience is still in the foundational stages of operation. While we are on the fast track to meeting our grant contract deliverables, we are still promoting awareness of our organization across the state. It is because of this that we are reaching out to people and organizations across the state and asking you to do the same.

Florida is divided up into twenty-four Regional Workforce Boards hosted under Workforce Florida, Inc. These Regional Workforce boards offer employment services to help people find jobs and assist with workforce development.

We are asking that all of our part-

ners, advisory council members, agriculturalists and agricultural educators make an effort to be involved in their specific Regional Workforce Boards to keep them updated on the Banner Center and our industry.

In addition to making connections with our Regional Workforce Boards, it is also essential that we make strong local connections between agriculturalists and Agriculture Education. Even though we are making a state-wide effort to connect the agricultural industry with Agriculture Education through our curriculum, much can also be accomplished on the local level. Agriculturalists possess a wealth of

knowledge and information that can help prepare students of an Agriculture Education program for their future careers. Agriculture Educators can gain community support and resources by inviting agriculturalists to take an active role in their programs.

As part of our outreach effort, Banner Center staff and partners are available to meet with individuals and organizations to help increase awareness and strengthen partnerships.

Ultimately we want people to realize the benefits the Banner Center for Agriscience offers to our industry and Agriculture Education.

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The Banner Center and FFA Career Development Events

The Florida FFA Association believes strongly in the value of its Career Development Event (CDE) program. It is their goal to provide quality career exploration opportunities for all members and certainly could not do that without the guidance and support of the industry.

Florida FFA is pleased to be a part-

ner of the Banner Center for Agriscience. As a partner with the Banner Center for Agriscience, the Florida FFA Association hired a staff member, Erin Stoutamire, who contributes to the Banner Center by linking updated frameworks and curriculum to FFA Career Development Events. Florida FFA works to ensure that CDEs create meaningful con-

nections between the classroom and the real-world. With the continued commitment and dedication to career development programs, the Banner Center for Agriscience and the Florida FFA Association can ensure that students are prepared for a lifetime of informed choices.



2009 State Forestry Career Development Event

Agriculture Education: Program Spotlight, Riverview High School

“Agriculture class” often brings to mind thoughts of growing crops, raising hogs and cattle, and getting your hands dirty. However, one Sarasota high school is setting a different standard.

Riverview High School in Sarasota, Florida has a unique agriculture program. The students are diving into the aquaculture branch of the agriculture industry. One of the most impressive pieces of this program is that it is a school-wide effort, involving everyone from the principal, to career advisor, to marine and environmental sciences teachers.

Two classrooms are set up with glassed in wet labs in the back. Each room is separate and contains five large crypts, a filtration system and a holding tank. Interestingly, burial crypts are used throughout the aquaculture industry to grow fish. These crypts contain cichlids, coy and large and small tilapia. The students must sanitize their hands and feet before entering the room to ensure no harmful bacteria is brought into the environment. The

operation is student-run, so much so that last summer students voluntarily came up to school to assist in the set-up and development. Linda Nook, Riverview High principal, stated, “These students take ownership and pride in this program. It gives them something to look forward to at school.”

Riverview High School uses a Small Learning Communities structure that encourages students to make their course selections based on their future career interest. This program also creates a collaborative, closely-knit community that creates a sense of pride among teachers.

In addition to the activities on campus, students also have the chance to participate in Executive Internships during their senior year. This is a program that was started by Riverview High School that sets up qualifications for students and allows them to earn dual enrollment credit for a work experience program. Currently, the school has students completing Executive Internships at both the Mote Marine Laboratory and Mote Aquaculture

Park in Sarasota. Through this program and the Small Learning Communities, Riverview High School is helping students to make the connections between their current academic efforts and future careers.

However Riverview is not finished yet, there are plans for a greenhouse to be completed by summer of 2010. This greenhouse will house additional tanks and allow the program to expand by merging the aquaculture recycling and filtration system with a solar-powered hydroponics lab. The school property backs up to a canal, and plans are to build a dock to house a boat to take students out in the bay for more hands-on learning experiences.

Jada Thompson, the agriculture teacher, has observed countless cases where students with behavior issues in their other classes come into her class willing to work and ready to learn. This is a result of relevant curriculum, student leadership and caring teachers.



Agriculture teacher, Jada Thompson monitors a student feeding the properly measured food to the tank of coy fish.

Agriculture Industry: Career Spotlight, Equine Surgeon

As a child Leann Kuebelbeck dreamt of becoming a veterinarian. She fulfilled that dream when she received her veterinary degree from the highly competitive Kansas State University. As she became more involved in the industry, her dream became her passion and she set a new goal to become an equine surgeon. Today, Dr. K. Leann Kuebelbeck can look back on her accomplishments of not only becoming a board certified equine surgeon, but also of being the co-founder and current sole owner of Surgi-Care Center for Horses in Brandon FL.

Surgi-Care Center for Horses is an emergency equine hospital that also offers a full range of non-emergency medical services such as elective surgery, outpatient care, diagnostic imaging, and regenerative medicine. The practice has expanded since its opening in 1995 and now offers 24/7 ambulatory service covering seven

counties. Surgi-Care employs seven veterinarians, of which three are surgeons, and a highly trained team of technicians. In addition, Surgi-Care welcomes local high school students of veterinary assisting agriculture programs to complete weeklong rotations at the center.

It is surprising that even though the animal industry is experiencing a critical shortage of large animal veterinarians, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get into veterinary school. Dr. Kuebelbeck stresses the importance of work-experience when applying to veterinary school. Surgi-Care has helped students gain that experience and they often have students who begin working while in high school cleaning stalls and grooming horses. As they continue to work at the clinic, building upon their knowledge and skills, more duties are entrusted to them. Dr. Kuebelbeck also suggests

several programs that are available to encourage students to pursue specializing in large animals. One of those programs is the Opportunities and Equine Practice Seminar (OEPS) that is held in Lexington, Kentucky each year. OEPS brings veterinary students from across the United States to the heart of horse country on an all-expense paid trip where participants hear guest lecturers and tour thoroughbred racehorse farms. Additionally, there are government programs that help to obtain loan forgiveness for veterinary students who will relocate to rural areas to practice in the food animal industry.

Many students of all ages share in the dream of becoming a veterinarian. With hard work, perseverance and passion, those dreams can come true.

The animal industry is experiencing a critical shortage of large animal veterinarians.



Mission Statement

The Employ Florida Banner Center for Agriscience strengthens agriculture and Agriculture Education in Florida through rigorous and relevant curriculum, viable industry relationships and strong partnerships.

Vision Statement

Recognizing that agriculture is a driving force behind Florida's economy, the Employ Florida Banner Center for Agriscience ensures a strong partnership between the agricultural industry and Agriculture Education for a prosperous future.

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On the Web

Recently Kevin Kent, Education Specialist for Branding, Marketing and Development with the Florida FFA Association ,designed and developed the Employ Florida Banner Center for Agriscience website. Although in its initial phases, the website will serve as a source of information as well as a communication tool.

One of the most useful purposes of the website is to give more explanation and detail of the goals and objectives of the Banner Center for Agriscience. Since the Banner Center is still in the foundational phases of marketing development, this website will be a tool for educating others.

Another aspect of the website is that it will display the articles from our

current E-Newsletter and archive previous issues. Additionally, if people become interested in the Banner Center and are not currently on our E-Newsletter distribution list, they can sign up on the website to be added to our mailing list.

There is a special section of the website for our Advisory Council members or other interested parties. This section not only lists all of our Advisory Council members and their fields of occupation, it also lists our future meeting dates as a reminder. Furthermore, Advisory Council meeting minutes and presentations will be posted here for others to view.

Due to the fact that much of our efforts are focused on curricula development we have two sections

that are related to that. First, we have a section that lists agricultural careers so students can see the careers their agriculture classes are preparing them for. Secondly, once the curriculum is available in May 2010, teachers will be able to access it through a link under the "Curriculum" tab.

Finally, as a marketing piece for Florida agriculture, we have included a "Links" sections that provides hyperlinks to Florida agriculture commodity associations and organizations.

It is our hope that you will find the website useful and significant, and that you will share our efforts with others who may benefit as well.

