

**Prepared Statement**  
by  
**Dan Richey, President / CEO**  
**Riverfront Packing Company**  
**Riverfront Groves, Inc.**

*Formulation of the 2012 Farm Bill: Nutrition and Specialty Crop Programs*

**House Agriculture Subcommittee on  
Nutrition and Horticulture**

**May 8, 2011  
11 a.m.**

Good afternoon. I would like to thank Chairwoman Schmidt, Ranking Member Baca and the subcommittee for the opportunity to speak with you today on behalf of the Florida specialty crop industry.

I also would like to thank Congressman Tom Rooney and Congressman Steve Southerland, who are both members of the subcommittee and represent a sizable portion of Florida's agriculture production, for their strong support of our industry.

My name is Dan Richey, and I'm president and CEO of Riverfront Packing Company in Vero Beach, Florida. I'm testifying today on behalf of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association as a veteran citrus grower and shipper. FFVA's members represent the vast majority of fresh fruit and vegetable production in my home state. The association's president, Mike Stuart, co-chairs the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance, a national coalition of more than 120 organizations representing growers of fruits, vegetables, dried fruit, tree nuts, nursery plants and other products. The alliance was established to bolster the competitiveness of specialty crop agriculture and improve the health of Americans by broadening the scope of U.S. agricultural public policy.

I'd like to talk to you about two issues that are of vital concern to growers in my state and specifically the industry I represent, Florida citrus. First is the serious problem of invasive plant pests and diseases, which pose a dire threat to the future of our industry. I also would like to discuss some very positive developments taking place in Florida with regard to nutrition and increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Our hope is that the next Farm Bill will continue the investments in the specialty crop industry that Congress first made in the 2008 Farm Bill.

**Pests and Disease**

Florida agriculture is the second largest industry in the nation's fourth largest state. In 2010, Florida had agriculture exports of more than \$3.1 billion, ranking seventh in the

United States. Fresh fruits and vegetables accounted for almost \$700 million of those exports. Florida citrus alone is a \$9 billion industry that fuels our state's economy by providing 76,000 jobs.

Today, citrus growers and shippers are dealing with citrus canker, greening, and black spot -- a triple threat of diseases that have caused severe economic harm. These diseases are a direct result of our state's porous borders. After 9/11, the focus of border inspections shifted from agriculture to homeland security, leaving our crops vulnerable to myriad invasive pests and diseases. Now we are paying a very high price.

I'll focus on what has happened to our industry since canker was first discovered. Initially, we were prevented from shipping any fruit with lesions that indicated the disease. Fortunately, over time a global consortium of researchers determined that fruit is not a pathway for the disease. We eventually regained access to other citrus-producing states in the U.S. and other countries such as Japan and Korea, which acknowledge the science.

However, Europe remains in "lockdown" mode -- a clear example of a non-tariff trade barrier imposed on us. Now, at additional cost, we must have USDA or a state-designated agency certify any grove with fruit that may be destined for Europe as canker-free. We also must inspect it at the packinghouse to ensure no fruit has lesions. As a result, in the past year our shipments to the EU have declined by a million cartons, or about 10 percent.

But this trade barrier has wider implications. With fewer shipments going to Europe, there is an oversupply for citrus destined for another significant export market: Japan. Prices have dropped off, and our revenues are down 21 percent. In short, canker has caused a significant decline in our market prices due to a non-tariff trade barrier imposed on us by the Europeans.

These plant pests and diseases came into our state because our borders are unprotected. We desperately need dedicated research funding and assistance to be able to fight canker, black spot, greening and whatever else is right around the corner. We can't do it on our own.

As you can see, the challenges we face on the ground have a broad impact on our industry. That is why we were extremely pleased that the 2008 Farm Bill established a number of tools that can help producers in our industry address these important impediments that impact us both domestically and internationally.

In particular, Technical Assistance to Specialty Crops (TASC), which was established in 2002 Farm Bill and enhanced in the 2008 Farm Bill, is a critical and effective mechanism for reducing technical barriers to trade that limit specialty crop grower's access to many markets overseas. TASC's major focus is to address sanitary, phytosanitary, and technical barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops.

In addition, the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) was established as a competitive grant program for specialty crops that incorporates the prevention, detection, monitoring, control, and response to food safety hazards in the production and processing of specialty crops, including fresh products. The 2008 Farm Bill was the first federal legislation to provide the significant funding required to begin to address the considerable research and extension needs of the country's specialty crop producers and processors. Its emphasis on stakeholder involvement, a competitive funding process, and a matching funding requirement was a welcome shift in federal policy. The SCRI explicitly sought to address short-, mid-, and long-term stakeholder needs. Nationwide, specialty crop industries are grateful for this unprecedented initiative and are already benefiting from significant research outcomes.

Finally, Section 10201 of the 2008 Farm Bill has provided critical funding and direction for innovative initiatives to identify and mitigate offshore threats, and improve pest detection and rapid response in the U.S., thereby also improving domestic growers' ability to export product to other countries.

The pest prevention mission of public agricultural agencies in the United States is to protect agriculture, the environment, and its citizens from the economic and environmental harm that injurious plant pests can cause. Satisfying this mission while, at the same time, providing for equitable and orderly domestic and international trade, is a major challenge. It is vital that the United States maintains its responsibility for the protection of the nation's food supply, our agricultural economy, and plant health. Therefore, policies established under the 2008 Farm Bill provide the greatest opportunities for the reduction in risks, establish a consistent and clear communication structure, and provide for problem resolution with built-in accountability. We believe Congress should continue these important programs and build on their successes over the last four years.

### **Nutrition**

On a much brighter note, specialty crop growers in my state have a unique market opportunity. Under the direction of Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services now oversees the school food and nutrition programs. The Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act, which became effective January 1, gave the department the responsibility to educate students on nutrition and to ensure they have access to the healthful products provided by fresh fruit and vegetable producers throughout the state.

From a big-picture standpoint, children benefit because the quality of their school meals will improve, and they will learn healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. Diseases attributed to obesity and poor eating habits — high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease -- are a major contributor to soaring health-care costs.

The good news for growers is that it creates powerful possibilities for new markets. We now can have a presence in the lunchroom in the schools of Florida 180 days a year to tell our story and build it into lesson plans. Specialty crop producers have the opportunity to develop a loyal customer base among school districts, which feed 2.5 million children every day, and in many cases twice a day, in addition to summer feeding programs.

The timing couldn't be better. The federal government's new dietary guidelines call for half of the plate to be vegetables and fruits. The administration has taken aim at child obesity with the Let's Move program, which focuses on healthy eating and physical activity. There is significant interest by consumers in eating food that is produced domestically, regionally or locally. The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, which provides school children a snack each day, has been a great success. It introduces children to a variety of fresh produce they may have never tried. In addition, this highly effective program provides young students with a fresh fruit or vegetable snack every day at school and increases their overall consumption of a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Nationally, the program will reach more than 4 million low-income elementary school children nation-wide this coming school year. My state of Florida will receive \$6.2 million this school year to implement the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program; this will allow 22 of our elementary schools to participate and approximately 70,000 students to benefit.

In addition, new rules from the U.S. Department of Agriculture require more fruits and vegetables to be served in school breakfasts and lunches. School districts that meet the guidelines receive an additional 6 cents of federal reimbursement for each meal. All of those factors provide the perfect backdrop for the specialty crop industry to connect with consumers and increase consumption of healthful fresh produce.

To do that, though, we need a Farm Bill that expands access and availability of safe, wholesome and affordable fruits and vegetables. Although I'm representing the grower community today, support for nutrition programs is important in every Congressional district, not just those in which producers operate.

### **Conclusion**

We look forward to working with the Committee on the development of the next Farm Bill. Many of the pressures that specialty crop producers and my family farm face are similar to those of producers of other commodities — increased regulation, high energy costs, transportation costs and input costs. However, the perishability of our crops result in different marketing strategies, market requirements and the need to move our products to market quickly. We hope these unique characteristics can be addressed through agricultural policies that drive domestic consumption, and expand foreign market access while investing in research, food safety, conservation and pest exclusion policies that benefit the members of the specialty crops industry.

Like producers of program crops, fruit and vegetable growers face significant challenges in the production and marketing of their commodities that must be addressed if they are

to be competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. We ask that the Committee continue to build on the foundation and investment of the 2008 Farm Bill and ensure that our important issues are appropriately addressed as you move forward in the development of the 2012 Farm Bill. We certainly recognize the fiscal constraints facing the Congress; however, the many challenges facing our industry will only worsen if real and adequate policy reforms are not provided through a farm bill that appropriately meets the needs of the broad U.S. agriculture community.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association and the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance look forward to working with you on a Farm Bill that will continue to invest in specialty crop agriculture, keeping our industry strong and competitive in the global marketplace.

**Daniel R. Richey  
BIO**

**Testifying before the House Committee on Agriculture  
Subcommittee on Nutrition and Horticulture**

**May 8, 2012  
11 a.m.**

Daniel R. Richey is president and chief executive officer of Riverfront Packing Company, president of Riverfront Groves, Inc., and president of Gulfstream Harvesting Company.

Dan was appointed by Gov. Jeb Bush to serve as a member of the Florida Citrus Commission from 1999 to 2004 and served as the chairman of the commission from 2000 to 2002. In 2003, Dan served as a credentialed advisor to the U.S. Trade Representative at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meetings in Cancun, Mexico. He also has served on a select committee of advisors to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Dan serves on the Board of Directors of the Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association, is a past president of the Florida Citrus Packers and Indian River Citrus League, and currently serves on the boards of directors for both organizations.

A graduate of Florida Southern College, Dan resides in Vero Beach, Fla.

Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Information Required From Nongovernmental Witnesses

House rules require nongovernmental witnesses to provide their resume or biographical sketch prior to testifying. If you do not have a resume or biographical sketch available, please complete this form.

1. Name: Daniel R. Richey
  
2. Organization you represent: Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association
  
3. Please list any occupational, employment, or work-related experience you have which add to your qualification to provide testimony before the Committee: \_\_\_\_\_  
see bio
  
4. Please list any special training, education, or professional experience you have which add to your qualifications to provide testimony before the Committee: \_\_\_\_\_  
see bio
  
5. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list the capacity in which you are representing that organization, including any offices or elected positions you hold: Serves on the Board of Directors of the  
Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM OR YOUR BIOGRAPHY TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.

Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Required Witness Disclosure Form

House Rules\* require nongovernmental witnesses to disclose the amount and source of Federal grants received since October 1, 2008.

Name: Daniel R. Richey

Organization you represent (if any): Florida Fruit & Vegetable Assoc.

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2008, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract. House Rules do NOT require disclosure of federal payments to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicare benefits, farm program payments, or assistance to agricultural producers:

Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

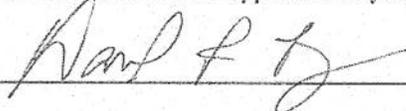
Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you are appearing on behalf of an organization, please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) the organization has received since October 1, 2008, as well as the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check here if this form is NOT applicable to you:

Signature: 

\* Rule XI, clause 2(g)(4) of the U.S. House of Representatives provides: *Each committee shall, to the greatest extent practicable, require witnesses who appear before it to submit in advance written statements of proposed testimony and to limit their initial presentations to the committee to brief summaries thereof. In the case of a witness appearing in a nongovernmental capacity, a written statement of proposed testimony shall include a curriculum vitae and a disclosure of the amount and source (by agency and program) of each Federal grant (or subgrant thereof) or contract (or subcontract thereof) received during the current fiscal year or either of the two previous fiscal years by the witness or by any entity represented by the witness.*

PLEASE ATTACH DISCLOSURE FORM TO EACH COPY OF TESTIMONY.