

Testimony to the House Agriculture Specialty Crop Subcommittee on 10201 Funding
Dan Richey – Riverfront Groves Vero Beach Florida
July 21, 2010

First I would like to thank chairman Cardoza and ranking member Schmidt and fellow Committee members for the opportunity to testify in front of you today on behalf of the Florida citrus industry.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Congressman Tom Rooney who is a member of the Agriculture Committee and represents a large portion of Florida's agricultural production including some of my groves for his steadfast support of citrus.

In addition, I would like to thank a former member of this Committee, Congressman Adam Putnam. Adam is a great friend to Florida Agriculture and a personal friend of mine. I want to honor him for his outstanding representation of our industry through all the issues we've faced over the last ten years.

Finally, I want to recognize my Congressman Bill Posey for his service on behalf of my neighbors in the Indian River citrus region.

Florida citrus represents a \$9 billion economic engine that supports 76,000 good jobs in my home state. Many families are third, fourth and even fifth generation citrus farmers. Unfortunately, right now our great industry is locked in a fight for its long term viability.

As many of you may know, Florida citrus faced the infestation of citrus canker disease and the hurricanes that spread it across the entire growing region of our state. That situation caused untold harm to our industry.

But now an even more devastating disease is threatening Florida citrus. It is called Huanglongbing (HLB) or citrus greening disease, and it is one of the most serious citrus diseases in the world.

Citrus greening is a bacterial disease that greatly reduces production, destroys the economic value of fruit, and kills trees. Once infected, there is no cure. Currently, citrus greening can be found in all 32 citrus producing counties in Florida.

Furthermore, yet another pest and disease was confirmed in April of this year with the discovery of citrus black spot in South Florida. This fungal disease is marked by dark, speckled spots or blotches on the rinds of fruit, which is a very economically significant disease for a fresh citrus packer such as myself. I expect subsequent regulations to control the spread of black spot to affect my business.

Here is the frustrating part. NOT ONE of these diseases is native to the United States. They came across the border from foreign lands. This clearly highlights the immense

importance of pest interdiction. We in the Florida citrus industry are living the nightmare that is caused when regulators fail to keep non-native diseases out of our country.

I acknowledge it is a tough job, especially in my home state. Florida is ranked #2 in the nation for pest and disease risk behind only California. Our state is very agriculturally diverse with a variety of specialty crops from tropical fruit to nursery stock to a variety of berry crops. This is made possible by our favorable climate. We are able to produce food crops during the winter when most of the US is too cold to do so. This is an important function and one that needs to be protected.

But the Florida agriculture industry has a target on its collective back. With 21 international seaports, airports and 1200 miles of coastline, Florida is a gateway state for cargo and passengers. Obviously, this creates considerable risk of agricultural pest and disease entry.

And believe me we are scared of the next citrus disease to reach our state. They are out there. Diseases such as CVC, Sudden Death and leprosis can be found in Brazil and Central America, two major trading partners with the United States. We have got to do everything we can to keep these diseases out of the United States!

Part of this can be achieved through the Section 10201 program. And we believe the USDA can improve the implementation of the program in high risk sentinel areas such as Florida. As you recall, a key foundational component of Section 10201 was to increase resources to high risk areas of the United States to assist with the early detection of new pest and disease introductions.

There are many Florida pest detection projects that are of value, including citrus pest and disease mitigation and the need for better fruit fly early detection and mitigation tools and techniques that could be added. There is certainly a need to support Florida citrus research and suppression programs.

The purpose of Section 10201 is clear that high risk states and pathways were to be the primary areas of consideration to which to apply Section 10201. Florida has received over \$3 million in projects over the last two years designed to mitigate the impact of invasive species on Florida's specialty crops and agricultural in general. Key projects include added resources at our agricultural interdiction stations located at our borders. This has resulted in several key agricultural pest interceptions on foreign agricultural products including potato psyllids carrying zebra chip virus, plant feeding snails not established in Florida, exotic aphids and leafminer insects.

The Florida Department of Agriculture also established a surveillance program for marinas, rivers and canals in Florida that harbor boats capable of international travel as this is a pathway that does not get enough attention in the agricultural safeguarding continuum. They have mapped all the marinas and stopping points along our rivers and

canals, have set up survey points, and are also conducting outreach to help assure that parties who live and work in these areas are aware of the risk associated with invasive species introductions.

Another project that the Florida Department of Ag is working on is an outreach project that will increase electronic signage and messaging at key Florida ports of entry. In addition, FDACS is producing a video that they plan to introduce to cruise ships and to international air flights that will educate incoming passengers about the need to declare any agricultural products they may be carrying.

New projects they are proposing for 2011 include the use of agricultural detection dogs to sniff out agricultural contraband in incoming mail and parcels at the mail / package hubs in Florida as well as our interdiction stations. They have also requested funding for increased inspector resources to run additional pest detection traps as an early warning system for exotic fruit flies like the Medfly, a pest we are currently battling in an eradication program in Palm Beach County. They are also requesting continued funding to help protect our avocado industry from the Red Bay Ambrosia Beetle and Laurel Wilt, a pest disease complex with the potential to wipe out the multi-million dollar avocado industry in South Florida.

Right now, the Florida citrus industry is setting up Citrus Health Management Areas where growers will partner together to form regional pest management programs to control the Asian citrus psyllid, the small bug that vectors citrus greening. These management areas are essential to the survival of the Florida citrus industry and would be a perfect fit for support from the Section 10201 program.

Again, as a citrus grower I appreciate the efforts of APHIS, Customs and Border Protection and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer services to protect my livelihood. We must continue to be vigilant to ensure our domestic sources of food are safe from the threat of pests and diseases.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

Daniel R. Richey
BIO

**Testifying Before the House Committee on Agriculture
Subcommittee on Horticulture and Organic Agriculture**

**July 21, 2010
10:00 am**

Daniel R. Richey is President/CEO of Riverfront Packing Company, President of Riverfront Groves, Inc. and President of Gulfstream Harvesting Company.

Dan was appointed by Governor 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 United States Trade Representative at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meetings in Cancun, Mexico. He currently serves on a select committee of advisors to the U. S. Secretary of Agriculture. Dan is a Past President of the Florida Citrus Packers and Indian River Citrus League and currently serves on the Board of Directors for both organizations.

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

**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, 2007.

Name: Daniel R. Richey

Address: 4889 US 1, Vero Beach, FL 32967; P. O. Box 1148, Vero Beach, FL 32961

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Organization you represent (if any): _____

- 1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants and subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2007, 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: None **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, 2007, 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: N/A

Signature: 
Daniel R. Richey

** 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.