Dear Friend in Agriculture:

It is my great pleasure to present the winner of the 1997 Agricultural-Environmental Leadership Award. This award highlights the environmentally innovative agricultural practices implemented by Florida growers and ranchers.

The original environmentalists - the true stewards of our land - have always been our growers and ranchers who depend on the land to produce our food. The modern farmer produces quality food in unsurpassed quantities to meet the demands of our nation and the world. And they do this on less land than ever before. Today’s farmer is constantly pioneering ways to ensure a continuing supply of food without degrading the land and water that produced it.

This program provides a brief overview of this year’s winner. The selection was a difficult task, made by an independent committee that included representatives from major agricultural groups, environmental groups and government agencies. There were many excellent applications which illustrated the great lengths to which our growers and ranchers are progressing.

Sincerely,

BOB CRAWFORD
Commissioner of Agriculture
Commissioner’s Ag-Environmental Leadership Awards
The Anclote River Ranch, located in Odessa, embraces much of the Anclote river head waters and features a diverse terrain comprised of sand pine ridges, turkey oak uplands, flatwoods, cypress heads, riverine hammocks and swamp. The property was purchased in 1937 and consolidated into 16,000 acres of contiguous property. In 1966, ownership of the cattle operation was assumed by J.B. Starkey Jr., son of the original owner and a graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in animal science.

A long-term systematic program of gradual development was implemented, with approximately 100 acres being cleared and improved pastures established yearly, topping out at 2,900 acres. Those tracts containing dramatic stands of large oaks and long leaf pine were left in their natural state. Wetlands and sand
ridges were preserved as diverse habitat for game and water fowl.

The original 16,000 acres was reduced by two environmentally related divestitures. Initially, the Southwest Florida Water Management district (SWFWMD) purchased 8,000 acres of pristine forest and wetlands, which were used for Starkey Well Field and a county park. In 1996, the Florida Department of Transportation purchased 3,500 acres for mitigation purposes to offset other wetlands being destroyed in the construction of the Suncoast Parkway. A small portion of the ranch has been divested for real estate development. As a result, the Anclote River Ranch is now 3,500 acres, with the base cattle herd set at approximately 600 head.

In addition to being known as a producer of high-quality feeder calves, the Anclote River Ranch has a long reputation for its environmental stewardship practices.
The ranch has been a leader in reforestation of long leaf pine and increasing the diversity of natural plant populations. Its "super tree" protection program - in which the largest and highest quality tree stands provide a tree seed/seedling natural selection reserve from which to propagate quality varieties of native trees - has been recognized by the Florida Division of Forestry. The use of native plants in landscaping is also encouraged through participation in the Native Plant Society.

Wildlife management programs provide for enhanced wildlife food supply, cover, roosting sites, population and health control, state biological surveys, and introduction of imported deer. The programs have led to increases in animal and bird wildlife diversity and populations. Game populations are managed and directed by the Florida Fresh Water Fish and Game Commission.

Water impoundment and stream flow restrictions have conserved water resources and improved pasture productivity. Over-drainage of surface water has been reversed and water quality protected. Two 60-acres lakes were created and now provide major water impoundment and are stocked with...
grass carp and game fish. Additionally, these impoundments are used as a nursery area for wetland plant propagation.

Practices of rotational grazing, controlled burning, and elimination of over-grazing have increased overall carrying capacity and resulting profitability.

In addition, Mr. Starkey has been a leader in educational programs promoting stewardship programs by conducting ranch tours for diverse groups such as school children, business leaders, the Florida Trail Association and the Audubon Society, as well as speaking at numerous public forums. In addition, he participated in the Division of Forestry’s range burning classes. An Outdoor Nature Classroom for the Pasco County School System is being pursued at the Anclote River Ranch.

Mr. Starkey has served on the Pasco County School Board, has served two terms as president of the Pasco County Cattlemen’s Association, and as a director of the Pinellas/Anclote River Basin Board of SWFWMD. He also received the St. Petersburg Kiwanis Club’s State Conservation Committee Award, and is active in the Presbyterian Church.
Previous Winners

1996

Edward “Jack” Campbell • South Dade Soil and Water Conservation District
Suite S-402 • 15600 S.W. 288th St. • Homestead, Florida 33033

Citrus World, Inc.
P.O. Box 1111 • Lake Wales, Florida 33853

Ekkwill Waterlife Resources
7502 Symmes Road • Gibsonton, Florida 33534

1995

Clive Morris • Schroeder-Manatee Ranch
7550 Lorraine Road • Bradenton, Florida 34202
Overall Winner, Grower

Burt McKee • United AgriProducts, Inc.
3804 Coconut Palm Dr. • Suite 170 • Tampa, Florida 33619
Overall Winner, Non-Grower

William Berman • Davie Dairy, Inc.
3105 N.E. 128th Avenue • Okeechobee, Florida 34974
Waste Management

Mark Nelson • O.F. Nelson and Sons Nursery
2300 Sheeler Road • Apopka, Florida 32703
Pesticide/Nutrient Management

Calvin Houghland • Bright Hour Ranch
Route 1, Box 146 • Arcadia, Florida 33821
Wildlife Protection
Previous Winners

Paul Genho • Deseret Cattle and Citrus Deseret Ranches of Florida
13754 Deseret Lane • St. Cloud, Florida 34773-9381
Water Quality

C.A. Fulford and Sons • Fulford Farms, Inc.
Route 2, Box 172 • Monticello, Florida 32344
Soil Conservation

1994

James Wohl • Rafter T Cattle Company
1800 State Road 17, South • Avon Park, Florida 33825
Overall Winner

Ferdinand S. Duda • A. Duda and Sons, Inc.
P.O. Box 257 • Oviedo, Florida 32765
Nutrient/Pesticide Management

Fred C. Babcock • Babcock Florida Company
8000 State Road 31 • Punta Gorda, Florida 33982
Soil Conservation

Edwin S. Gustafson Sr. • Gustafson’s Dairy Farm
P.O. Box 338 • Green Cove Springs, Florida 32043
Waste Management/Recycling

Jon Rackley • Jon’s Nursery, Inc.
24546 Nursery Way • Eustis, Florida 32726-8818
Water Quality/Quantity

Alto “Bud” Adams • Adams Ranch, Inc.
P.O. Box 12909 • Fort Pierce, Florida 34979-2909
Wildlife Protection