

**Regional Water Supply Plan Presentation Focusing on Agriculture
Public Meeting/Webex
February 25, 2015
Tampa Service Office 2:00 p.m.**

Online Participants:

Charles Shinn
John Burnett
Linda Clemens
Ray Scott
Tracy Straub
Cori Hermle
Kim Dinkins/Jacob Arnette
Joan LeBeau
Carolyn Voyles
Terry Clark
Janet Llewellyn

District Staff:

Jonathan Bilby
Randy Emberg
Estella Gray
Mary Margaret Hull
Danny Kushmer
Amy Poxson
George Schlutermann
Jay Yingling
Chris Zajac

Board Meeting Room Attendees:

Will post at later date

Below is a list of questions and answers from the workshop.

Audience Questions and Answers:

Kerry Casey, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association

Q: In regards to the methodology, was the Florida Department of Agriculture's (FDAC) new FSAD GIS Model investigated, and if it was, was there a good correlation between the numbers?

A: The District's numbers were lower for 2010 but then got closer and closer with FSAID data. There was a 2.5 percent difference in 2035. In the end, the numbers were close and fairly comparable on a large scale like this.

Q: Why is it that blueberries do not have their own category (*presumably in the FSAID data*) or was it captured with another crop category?

A: It is uncertain whether it is included with another crop category. At the time the 2010 was done, there was very little data on blueberries. It is specifically a crop category now in our 2015 RWSP. Under the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) crop roll-up or the FSAD roll-up it may not show up as a separate crop and may get rolled up in one of the larger crop categories.

Online Questions and Answers:

Charles Shinn

Q.: What sort of coordination was done with FDACS when projecting both acreage as well as irrigation use?

A: Staff has been talking to FDACS staff and their consultant throughout the whole period and even prior to starting. Staff has also been assisting them in categorizing the crops in a way that would also be beneficial to the District. Also, staff has supplied them with pumpage records, estimated pumpage records, acreage associated with the permitted quantities, and permitted quantities used. Staff has reviewed drafts of their methodology and requested their advice on certain things.

Ray Scott

Q: Was the Florida Agricultural Statistical Services (FASS) data (crop by County) used for the years it was available?

A: No, because that data is very old. Other than citrus, it has not been reported by County since 2003/2004. The only crop that is reported by each County each year now is citrus.

Q: And was the FASS acreage data compared to acreage estimates based on reported water usage?

A: No as it could not be done in the cases of non-citrus. Since FASS data was used, a comparison was not needed for citrus.

Phone Questions:

Ray Scott Question:

Q: Curious of how citrus was done. Charlotte County acreage differs from other agencies data. The FASS 2014 acreage for Charlotte County is already above any of your projections

A: Staff can look into this but one thing that was taken into consideration was that prior to the hurricanes, acreage in this area was declining. Due to this, staff did not feel it was appropriate for it to increase the numbers above what it was before 2004. Staff will look into the discrepancies for 2013-2014.

Upon subsequent review of the data provided by Mr. Scott, staff provided the following response by email to Mr. Scott (FDACS) the day after the presentation: Charlotte County is split between us and the SFWMD. When we were putting our projections together using FASS data for citrus, we obtained the percent of citrus acreage in split counties from Balmoral. The percentage for Charlotte is 60.85% so you need to multiply the county total acreage by the percent in our District. When you do that, the 2014 estimate is $13,273 \times .6085 = 8,077$. So FASS's estimate for 2014 is 236 acres above our 2015 projection of 7,481 acres. I ran through all of the counties in which we used FASS acres and when you apply the county splits in Table 4 of the Tech Memo to all the counties, the FASS 2014 total is 183,286 and our 2015 projection is 186,045. So the numbers are still pretty close and it may be a little premature to abandon averaging the growth rates.

Additional Questions and Answers:

Q: Please explain the jump in acreage in “other fruit trees” category from 61 to 908 acres noted in Slide 17?

A: During our initial internal permit evaluator review of the projections, several evaluators mentioned that peaches were an emerging crop. We did some on-line investigations and that appeared to be the case even though they were not showing up in permit data. There had been some informal surveys of peach acreage by IFAS staff but they were not comprehensive. We researched the 2007 and 2012 Census of Agriculture. As peaches are a relatively new crop, the data on peaches was sketchy but were included in the fruit trees other than citrus category. We compared the Census 2012 data to our projections for “other fruit trees.” Where the Census acreage in 2012 was larger than our projections, we used the Census acreage for 2015 and subsequent years. If our projections for other fruit trees were higher than the 2012 Census data, we used ours. In short, we picked the higher of the two. As there was only one data point, we did not have enough data to use trend analysis. The short answer is that we tried to reflect the presence of peach acreage that was not showing up in permit data.

Q: In slide 18 Charlotte County is showing the largest increase in irrigation demand at 51%, please explain?

A: Charlotte County is one of those counties in the southern part of the District that is showing some significant recent increases in citrus acreage. We projected about a 2000 acre increase between 2010 and 2035. We believe that these increases are related to replacing acreage lost in the hurricanes of 2004. There was a distinct drop in acreage around 2004 and then an increasing trend afterwards. In addition, there trends show significant increase in tomatoes, sod and melons.

Q: What significant differences do you see between the 2010 RWSP agricultural projections and the 2015 RWSP agricultural projections?

A: I think that there was much anticipation in the development of the 2010 RWSP that the predicted rapid population growth would continue and that there would be little room for expansion of agricultural production. What we have seen is that those late 2000s population projections due to the housing boom were not realized and that same period population projections are significantly lower today. So the large conversions of agricultural lands to urban lands did not occur to the extent expected. Furthermore, while permitted irrigation agricultural land has been declining, overall use is projected to increase likely due to a switch from lower valued and less water intensive crops to higher valued and generally more water use intensive crops, and more intensive use of existing permitted land (such as double cropping). Also, we saw a recent leveling or increasing trend in citrus acreage in some southern counties, running counter to the long term and short term declining trends in the rest of the District. This may be the result of replanting after the hurricanes of 2004 and perhaps some replanting of acres lost to greening.