



News Release

From: Hillsborough County Fair
Harvest Awards Committee

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Roy Davis Family and Tony Ippolito Among Those To Be Honored At Harvest Luncheon

The Hillsborough County Fair will kick off this year's exposition with the Harvest Awards Luncheon on Thursday, October 20th in the new air-conditioned Exhibit Pavilion located on the fairgrounds at Highway 60 & Sydney Washer Road east of Brandon. The luncheon traditionally honors outstanding leaders and organizations serving the agriculture community. According to Mike McKinney, Harvest co-chair and former Extension Director, the awards program was created sixteen years ago to recognize the accomplishments of families, individuals, businesses, and organizations for their commitment and contributions to agriculture and to preserve the agricultural heritage of Hillsborough County.

The Roy Davis family is the 16th farm family to be honored with the distinction of Farm Family of the Year. The first family to receive this honor was the Roy Parke family of Plant City. On a 20 acre farm in Dover, Fl., where wife Leta and Roy lived with sons Steve and Michael, they incorporated family activities into their nursery operation. The family's impact stretched far beyond production agriculture, with Roy serving for years on the Boards of the Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers' Association, Hillsborough County Farm Bureau, and the Florida Nurserymen Growers and Landscapers Association.

Tony Ippolito served the agricultural community as manager of the Tampa Wholesale Produce Market for over 32 years. This market provided a meeting place for local farmers to sell their produce to buyers from all over the nation. He was also a civic leader and served on the advisory council of the Hillsborough County Cooperative Extension Service and was named Extension's Volunteer of the Year. Tony succeeds 25 men and women to have previously received the Harvest Lifetime Achievement Award.

This year's Agribusiness of the Year award goes to Wish Farms in Plant City. Gary Wishnatzki became the 3rd generation to lead his family's business that started in 1900 when Harris Wishnatzki, a Russian immigrant came to New York and owned a produce pushcart and sold fruits and vegetables on the streets of New York City. The family moved to Florida in 1929 and has become one of the largest produce brokers in the nation, distributing tons of strawberries and blueberries annually.

The Hillsborough County 4-H Foundation is being honored as the Outstanding Public & Community Service organization for their work in fostering 4-H in our community. The Foundation sponsors two major fund raisers each year to help over 30 deserving 4-H members to various camps and leadership opportunities throughout the state. This includes special financial support for 4-H members who are advancing on to regional, state and national competition. In addition, the Foundation sponsors the annual 4-H awards banquet for the youth and their parents.

Susan Dumke, owner of Blues Berry Farm in Plant City, is being honored as this year's Woman in Agriculture. Farming blueberries for the past nine years, has provided Susan an opportunity to be an advocate for small farmers as well as their workers. In order to continually expand the popularity of her blueberries, Susan provides samples of her blueberry cobbler and jellies for tasting events. Even U-pickers get in on the fun as Susan distributes recipes and ideas for everyone who visits her farm.

The first recipients of the Posthumous Memorial Tribute Award is given in the memory of Lee and Minnie Holcomb. Both Lee and Minnie were raised on family dairy farms in upstate New York. Upon moving to Florida they started their own dairy operation called LeeMin Premium. They were first located in Lutz and then moved to their farm in Riverview. Until their passing, Lee and Minnie were passionate about the agricultural industry and promoted 4-H and FFA youth dairy competitions.

Additional information on the Harvest Luncheon is available on the Fair's web-page at www.hillsboroughcountyfair.com . Dates for the upcoming County Fair are October 20 -23 and October 27-30. The Harvest Luncheon is the official kick-off for the fair and is complimentary with advanced reservations.

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