



# AGRICULTURE

Suwannee River Water Management District | MySuwanneeRiver.com



## DISTRICT AG PROGRAMS

Agriculture is an important industry in the Suwannee River Water Management District (District). In fact, our area generates \$1.172 billion in agricultural receipts annually<sup>2</sup>. This brings about unique challenges for water usage and public perception. In addition to being a large part of the economy in the District, agriculture and forestry lands provide critical water recharge and other environmental benefits.

The District's agricultural team is available to help agricultural operations needing assistance with water use (WUPs) and environmental resource (ERPs) permits, compliance issues, best management practices, cost share and other programs. Our goal is to help simplify and streamline the permit process, help ensure that growers can meet regulatory goals, and help the farm conserve and protect water while being a successful farming operation. The District is committed to the protection of our water resources while maintaining a strong economy in North Florida. We believe there are solutions that can achieve both.



### Did You Know SRWMD...

- ▶ contains **8,411 farms** (18% of the farms in the state).<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ contains about **800,000 acres of farmland**.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ contains about **150,000 acres of irrigated farmland**.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ generates **farm receipts of \$1.172 billion** (14% of statewide farm receipts).<sup>3</sup>

#### References

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 2017 Census of Agriculture – County Data.  
<sup>2</sup>Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Florida Statewide Agricultural Irrigation Demand Estimated Agricultural Water Demand, 2019-2045  
<sup>3</sup>U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), Local Area Personal Income and Employment tables. Data for 2014.

# AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

## AGRICULTURE COST-SHARE

Since 2015, the District has partnered with the Suwannee River Partnership to provide cost-share funds to agricultural producers to help implement best management practices that serve to protect and conserve north Florida's water resources. These projects have resulted in reduced nutrient loading and water resource conservation through improved irrigation system efficiency and fertilizer management within the District.

## ACCELERATING SUWANNEE RIVER RESTORATION AND SILVICULTURE MANAGEMENT

The District, along with the Suwannee River Partnership, has developed "Public-Private Partnerships." This pilot program serves as a continuation of these partnerships with private landowners by funding projects in the Santa Fe and Suwannee river BMAP areas that help reduce water use and nutrient loads through perpetual Conservation Easements (CE) or time limited Land Conservation Incentives (LCI). Agricultural operations within the project areas may participate in the program with the intent of changing land use, management practices or crop types and rotations to a land use that will reduce nutrient loads and/or water use. Examples include the conversion to grass, sod-based rotation, peanuts and other legumes, silviculture or other low intensity agricultural land uses.



## PIVOT RETROFIT PROGRAM

The District has teamed with FDEP to provide cost-share funding to retrofit agricultural irrigation center pivots with systems that provide more efficient irrigation, resulting in a significant water savings. Pivot irrigation upgrades include installing uniform drop nozzles, more efficient sprinkler packages and pressure regulators for center pivots. Annually, the program allows for cost-share for approximately 60 pivot irrigation retrofits to be performed as determined by a mobile irrigation lab evaluation. This project alone is estimated to conserve over one million gallons per day of groundwater.

## PRECISION AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

### NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

FDEP Springs Restoration funding is available to provide cost-share to agricultural producers who wish to incorporate precision agricultural practices on their farms. Implementation can come in the form of various technologies and services which includes the use of liquid and dry side-dressing equipment, Veris mapping, aerial imagery, precision soil sampling, variable rate lime and fertilizer application and plant tissue sampling. Farms participating in this program significantly reduce total nitrogen inputs on their farm operations through efficient application of nutrients in managing crop nutrient needs.

