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AUCTION BENEFITS FLORIDA AGRICULTURE'S FUTURE
Proceeds will go to FFVA's new Emerging Leader Development Program

MAITLAND, Fla. (Sept. 28, 2011) – The 13th annual Benefit Auction sponsored by the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation raised \$15,440 for FFVA's new Emerging Leader Development Program.

The program, which launched this month with a class of 10 members, is designed to equip up-and-coming leaders with knowledge of the issues facing agriculture and equip them to advocate for the industry. It also aims to prepare young leaders so they can improve the sustainability and economic viability of specialty crop agriculture and become involved in grower organizations such as FFVA.

The 86 items donated to the auction at FFVA's 68th annual convention ranged from a Georgia vacation to an antique FFVA thermometer to a home-cooked Italian dinner with Dr. and Mrs. Jack Payne of the University of Florida.

"I especially want to thank both the donors to the auction as well as the lively bidders who helped us raise over \$15,000 to benefit our new Emerging Leader Development Program," said Sonia Tighe, foundation executive director, who oversees the leadership program. "We have 10 exceptional participants in this inaugural class, and we will use the money raised from the auction to cover travel and other operational costs. We sincerely appreciate the support has shown for this auction and our beneficiaries."

To learn more about the FFVA Emerging Leader Development Program, visit the program's [website](http://www.ffva.com/imispublic/Content/NavigationMenu2/BecomeaMember/EmergingLeaderDevelopmentProgram/default.htm) (www.ffva.com/imispublic/Content/NavigationMenu2/BecomeaMember/EmergingLeaderDevelopmentProgram/default.htm).

The Benefit Auction is held each year during FFVA's annual convention, which took place this year on Sept. 18-21 at The Ritz-Carlton in Palm Beach. Past auctions and donations have helped to support causes important to Florida agriculture and the people who make it possible, including the Redlands Christian Migrant Association, the George F. Sorn Scholarship and the Hurricane Farmworker Relief Fund.

The Florida Specialty Crop Foundation was established in 1991 to address specialty crop growers' scientific and knowledge needs in the production, marketing, transportation and consumption of fruits and vegetables. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, the foundation operates to benefit the Florida specialty crops industry and society as a whole. Specialty crop producers provide oversight to the foundation.

Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association is an agricultural organization representing Florida's producers of fruits, vegetables and other crops.
