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**FFVA Names Participants for Inaugural  
Emerging Leader Development Program**

**MAITLAND, Fla. (Oct. 1, 2011)** – The Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association (FFVA) has selected the participants for its inaugural class of the Emerging Leader Development Program. The new program aims to develop younger leaders within the organization.

“For Florida agriculture to continue to persevere into the future, a new generation of leaders has to be cultivated. We must recognize, nurture and empower these selected individuals through leadership development opportunities.” said Board of Directors Chairman Drew Duda.

The program has three objectives: to develop leaders who are prepared with a depth of knowledge of the many issues facing agriculture and provide them with the education and tools to deal with these issues; to better prepare younger leaders so they can improve the sustainability and economic viability of specialty crop agriculture; and to improve the grassroots engagement and involvement in FFVA and other industry organizations.

“The FFVA Emerging Leader Development Program’s mission would be to identify young people who are pursuing careers in agriculture and have the desire to broaden their understanding of our industry,” said board member Paul Orsenigo. “FFVA would benefit from the service of the graduates through their future involvement in the association and beyond.”

Both grower and trade members of FFVA nominated individuals ages 25 to 35 from within their organizations or families to participate in the program. Participants are working in or pursuing a career in Florida’s specialty crop industry. Over the next year the class will travel to Tallahassee to meet with legislators, to seminars provided by FFVA staff members and other experts on current issues, venues to study environmental issues and water management, and specialty crop production areas.

The Emerging Leader Development Program has secured \$10,000 in seed money from a grant administered through the Farm Credit System Foundation, Inc.’s Douglas Sims Fund for Rural Leadership, \$ from the annual auction held at FFVA’s convention, as well as numerous FFVA member donations.

The Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association ([www.ffva.com](http://www.ffva.com)) is an agricultural trade organization representing Florida's producers of fruits, vegetables and other crops.