

Multiple Objectives Highlight Hill Trip

The 2005 Florida GCSA delegation of FGCSA officers Joe Pantaleo and Greg Pheneger, Coastal Plains GCSA director Shane Bass and



FGCSA's 2005 legislative delegation from left, Scott Sewell, Gulf Coast GCSA; Joe Pantaleo FGCSA president; Mike Goldie, FGCSA lobbyist; Greg Pheneger, FGCSA past president and Shane Bass, Coastal Plains GCSA. Photo by Joel Jackson.

Director of Communications Joel Jackson were joined by Gulf Coast GCSA director Scott Sewell and FGCSA lobbyist Mike Goldie on March 21, 2005 when they called on legislators to garner support for a matching funds proposal for statewide donations made for turfgrass research.

Lobbyist Mike Goldie has been working on language for the proposal that will be in an upcoming appropriations bill, and he has been working key leaders in both the house and senate to get their support for the proposal. Our mission was to put a face on the end users and talk about why it is important not only for our industry but for the Florida environment and economy.

We met with Senators David Aronberg, Michael Bennett, Rod Smith and Ken Pruitt and Representatives Don Davis, Ken Littlefield, and Chris Smith. Senator Smith may be running for governor and he is currently the chairman of the Agriculture Committee. All the rest have either key committee positions or have recognized golf's contributions to the state and are willing to support our matching-funds initiative.

On Tuesday morning, the group met with Dr. Dennis Howard and Dale Dubberly of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDOACS) to discuss the latest news from the regulatory agencies. The MSMA Groundwater Study negotiations are proceeding slowly while at the federal level, re-registration proceedings are moving along on schedule. There may be some label changes coming that will restrict use in some vulnerable soil locations.

FDOACS referred us to the Bayer

Environmental Sciences website for information on soils maps for Namacur use after May. We also asked about Curfew being reinstated in Dade County when Namacur runs out. They referred us to Dow AgroSciences since they voluntarily pulled Dade off the list in order to expedite the labeling for the rest of the state. They are continuing the Amnesty Milk Run program for the pickup of obso-

lete or expired chemicals and alerted us to possible concerns over the disposal of old containers.

We also met with Commissioner of Agriculture Charles Bronson, who expressed his support for the golf business saying it has more to do with agriculture than most people realize. But in a hopefully overly conservative warning, he gave us a heads-up on the pending litigation being brought by farm workers over a cluster of birth defects that they are claiming have been caused by pesticide exposure. The commissioner had concerns that this situation might escalate to all commodities using pesticides. So he just wanted to make sure all applicators were up to date on their safety and training programs.

During the trip we hosted Scott Sewell from the Emerald Bay Plantation Club in Destin. We wanted Scott to see that the FGCSA works for the benefit of all Florida superintendents. We hope the Gulf Coast GCSA will find a way to join the state's other 12 local chapters to unite all our efforts under one banner.

RISE Supports Nomination of EPA Administrator

RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) announced its pleasure with the nomination of Stephen Johnson to be the administrator of

the Environmental Protection Agency by President Bush on March 4.

"Over the years, we at RISE have found Steve Johnson to be a fair regulator who takes into consideration comments from all organizations, NGOs as well as industry, when making a decision," Allen James, president of RISE said. "We believe he makes balanced and responsible decisions for our industry."

"RISE looks forward to working with Steve on issues such as ESA counterpart regulations, pesticide rule-making, and maintaining FIFRA as the federal pesticide standard," James said.

According to the White House when confirmed, Johnson will become the first professional scientist to lead the EPA. During his 24-year career with the agency, he has advanced through many management positions to his most recent position of deputy administrator of the EPA.

RISE is the national association representing the manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders involved with pesticide products used in turf, ornamental, pest control, aquatic and terrestrial vegetation and other non-food/fiber applications. Visit the RISE website at www.pestfacts.org.



Stephen Johnson, EPA acting administrator

Editor's note: It will be interesting to finally have a science-based person leading the agency instead of political appointee. What a concept.

FGCSA Government Relations Notes and Comments

New EPA Administrator

It is refreshing to see a scientist who has seen a lot of history at EPA to be named to head the agency for a change instead of another politician. I have heard nothing but good things about Mr. Johnson from members of our allied associations who also deal with numerous pesticide issues and registrations.

When I saw the above news release I called Carrie Riordan, director of government relations at GCSAA. Carrie said that GCSAA also supports Johnson's appointment. She added that they have met with him personally in the past on issues

and found him to be very fair and open-minded.

It has also been my experience that once we establish contact and a sound working relationship with EPA officials and case workers, that they generally appreciate our honest and open communications on the issues. For the most part, the regulators who have science backgrounds can see through the hype and rhetoric and put the facts and issues into perspective. That is not to say that politics doesn't get involved in final decision making, but we have made tremendous advances with EPA and state agencies. I think our issues will get a fair hearing under Mr. Johnson's administration.

Lobbying Legislators

When I get to represent the FGCSA and various allied association meetings like the Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association, I always plan to attend the Legislative Breakfast Meetings to hear the guest legislator speak to ag-related issues and their positions. Last year I met Senator Nancy Argenziano, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and found out Sen. Argenziano came from a farming family in upstate New York. Her awareness of the needs of



While attending the 2005 Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association Winter Meeting in Sarasota, FGCSA's Joel Jackson found out Representative Bill Galvano comes from a family of golf professionals. Photo by Mary Hartney.

people who work the land is a good thing for the Ag and Green industries in Florida. She organizes farm tours for freshmen legislators who think that beef comes from Winn-Dixie and produce

comes from Publix.

This year in Sarasota I met Rep. Bill Galvano (R-68) from the Suncoast area. He is chairman of the Florida Families and Choice and Innovation Committees this year, but the clincher is that his siblings are all golf professionals and his late father was one of the first golf professionals to become a star as a teaching pro. We had a chance to chat and he is keenly aware of importance of the golf industry – it fed, housed, clothed and educated him. He also knows golf takes unfair shots in the media. Chalk up another ally in the Florida legislature if and when we need him on our side.

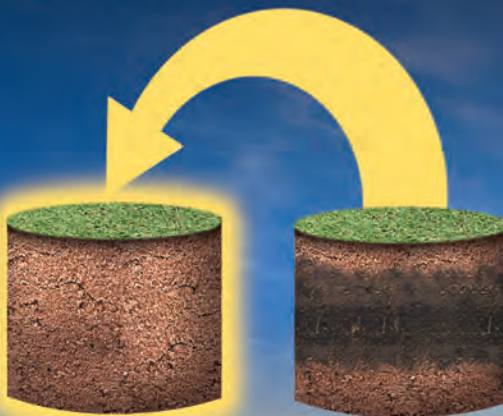
Every chapter external vice president recently received a 2005 Know Your Legislature directory. I encourage each chapter to make plans to invite your senators and representatives to speak at a monthly meeting when they are out of session. They say, "it's who you know" that counts; in our case it's, "Who knows you?" You pay their salaries. Let them know you're out there and what you do for the economy and the environment, and take the time to find out a little more about the person who represents your interests.

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