



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**SUGAR FARMERS ACHIEVE ANOTHER
YEAR OF WATER QUALITY SUCCESS**

West Palm Beach, FL -- July 11, 2013— Sugar farmers in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), south of Lake Okeechobee, achieved another successful year of water quality results with a 41 percent reduction in phosphorus leaving the farming region for the 2012-13 water year—above the 25 percent goal established in the Everglades Forever Act..

The successful reduction achieved by EAA farmers' Best Management Practices follows back-to-back record-breaking success of 71 and 79 percent reductions and an overall long-term reduction of 55 percent for the past 17 years.

EAA farmers have consistently outperformed the required goals of the Everglades Forever Act, according to a presentation by Pam Wade, P.E. Bureau Chief of Everglades Restoration of the South Florida Water Management District at Thursday's Governing Board meeting. She said that this success was made despite Tropical Storm Isaac's impact in August and September 2012. She said that 70% of the load was caused by the storm, however, the EAA Basin was still able to outperform the mandated requirements.

The South Florida Water Management District, the agency tasked with Everglades restoration, announced the results today showing that the EAA's on-farm Best Management Practices (BMPs), developed by university scientists in collaboration with farmers, are a resounding success.

"The results of the phosphorus reduction achieved by sugar farmers this past year continues to cement our role as part of the solution for Everglades restoration," said Robert Coker, senior vice president of U.S. Sugar Corp. "Data from the first half of the year shows the region was on track for another record-breaking year if not for the effects of the tropical storm,

which wreaked havoc on South Florida. Notwithstanding the storm, the efficiency of our BMP program continued to yield extremely positive results for the environment.”

“By any measurement, the BMP program is a great success,” said Barbara Miedema, vice president of the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative. “Clearly, scientific data shows farmers are doing their fair share to improve water quality in South Florida.”

In addition to improving water quality through high-tech sustainable farming practices, more than \$200 million has been paid by farmers for the construction of Stormwater Treatment Area (STAs) to further clean water. Built on 60,000 acres of former farmland, the STAs have removed an additional 1,400 metric tons of phosphorus, on top of the 2,673 metric tons removed through BMPs.

“Along with being stable economic drivers and job providers for Florida, it’s clear sugar farmers have a long track record of being part of the solution in Everglades restoration,” said Gaston Cantens, vice president of Florida Crystals Corporation. “These water quality results demonstrate the significant role sugar farmers continue to play in protecting the Everglades, while also providing safe, stable and affordable food products for Americans.”

Florida Agriculture Fast Facts:

- Supports 1.4 million jobs
- Generates \$100 billion annual economic impact in Florida
- Responsible for more than \$3 billion in tax revenue for local and state government
- Florida Sugar Industry provides 7,000 direct jobs & 23,500 indirect jobs in the state
- Florida Sweetener Industry generates \$2 billion economic impact

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