



## The “State of Ona” UF/IFAS Range Cattle Research and Education Center Update

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This past year has been a difficult one for us at the research center. We were saddened by the loss of one of our former students, Molly Jones, in late July. While many of us were still grieving this loss, Dr. Ellington’s biological scientist, Bethany Wight Penabade, passed away in mid-August. Bethany was not only a stellar employee for the wildlife program at the center, but she also provided the aerial imagery used in our promotional materials that we have been able to share over the past several years; she is missed by all of us. Then we had hurricane Ian followed by Nicole. Thankfully, Nicole wasn’t that bad for the center. Ian, on the other hand, brought us nearly 18 inches of rainfall that resulted in 6 to 24 inches of water in our offices and labs. I am thankful that all of our employees came out of both storms safe with most of us having limited structural damage at our personal properties. We were also fortunate to have suffered no cattle losses from either storm. Even through all of this, our faculty, staff, and students have shown their resilience through their productivity in 2022.

Student education continues to be a top priority of the research center. We hosted four undergraduate interns and advised 3 PhD and 6 MS students in 2022. Many of our graduate students received awards. Caetano Sales, a MS student in my program placed second in the student competition at the Florida Weed Science Society Annual Meeting for his work on DuraCor and DuraCor tankmixes. Leandro Vieira Filho, a PhD student in Dr. Maria Silveira’s program, continues his academic success by receiving the William C. and Bertha M. Cornett Fellowship CALS Award, the 2022 World Congress of Soil Science Fellowship Award, and three travel grants to help him travel to professional meetings. Vinicius de Souza Izquierdo, a PhD student in Dr. Philippe Moriel’s program, was awarded 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the PhD Poster Competition at the American Society of Animal Science annual meeting in Oklahoma City. Jaime Garzon, mentored by Dr. Vendramini, received his doctorate degree in December. Jaime actually completed the requirements for his degree in August and departed in September to begin his academic career at the University of Maine where he accepted a position as Assistant Extension Professor and Forage Educator.

The RCREC faculty have had another successful year. Dr. Vendramini was a co-author on one of ten publications that were selected as UF/IFAS High Impact Research Publications and the same publication received national recognition by the Crop Science Society of America

(CSSA) this past November. He was also selected as a CSSA Fellow, which is the highest recognition bestowed by the society for professional achievements and meritorious service. Philippe Moriel was the recipient of the Early Career Achievement Award from the American Society of Animal Science and was recognized by the Florida Cattlemen's Association as the 2022 Researcher of the Year. Dr. Golmar Golmohammadi, our newest faculty member as of January 2022, was the recipient of a Global Fellow Program Award, providing an opportunity for her to initiate collaborative activities with colleagues at an international level. In addition to these awards, all faculty have been able to obtain external funding from various sources to continue to fund various projects, but we are most excited that seven of our proposals were selected for funding by the Florida Cattle Enhancement Board. Our refereed research and extension publication numbers for 2022 have also remained strong, and I expect that the center will remain near the top of all UF/IFAS departments and research centers with regards to research publications per research appointment. In other faculty news, Chris Prevatt had the opportunity to be closer to his family, including his wife, and accepted a position as commodity director for beef, equine, hay & forage, and sheep & goat divisions for the Alabama Farmers Federation. We have advertised for a replacement for this position, and we will begin interviewing candidates this month. We hope to have this position filled by this summer.

The center is quickly recovering from hurricane Ian. At the time of writing this update, the Grazinglands Education Building restoration is nearly complete. Additionally, the cabinets that were destroyed by floodwaters in the soils and forage laboratory have been replaced and the lab should be functional by the end of December. Drywall and texture have been replaced in all the other buildings and labs, and some walls have even been painted. Even with all this progress, I suspect that it will still be the end of January before we are close to being fully functional. Although we have been inconvenienced since hurricane Ian, we are hopeful that we have been able to continue to meet your needs in 2022 and we hope to do the same in 2023. Please reach out to us if you need assistance at [ona@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:ona@ifas.ufl.edu) or through our Google number (863) 535-6090 – this is our temporary number while we are displaced from our offices. Also, make sure to mark your calendars for April 20, which is our next field day. Details will be available soon.

Questions, contact me at [sellersb@ufl.edu](mailto:sellersb@ufl.edu).

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UF/IFAS Range Cattle REC - 3401 Experiment Station Rd., Ona - <http://rcrec-ona.ifas.ufl.edu/>  
Visit our website calendar to view our upcoming events.



Current faculty of the UF/IFAS Range Cattle Research and Education Center. Pictured from left to right: Dr. Golmar Golmohammadi, Soil Hydrologist; Dr. Brent Sellers, Center Director; Dr. Maria Silveira, Soil and Water Scientist; Dr. Hance Ellington, Wildlife Ecology; Dr. Joe Vendramini, Forage Agronomist; and Dr. Philippe Moriel, Animal Scientist.



Flooding by the main office building the day after Hurricane Ian.



These 4 photos give an example of our flood recovery process, through photos of the soil and forage lab. Top left: 10/21, damaged drywall and insulation removed; top right: 10/27, dry out complete; bottom left: 11/17, drywall installed and cabinet work began; and bottom right: 12/2, walls painted and cabinets installed.