



Florida Agriculture
in the Classroom, Inc.
AGRICULTURE KEEPS
FLORIDA GREEN

PO Box 110015, Gainesville FL 32611 (352)846-1391 FAX (352)846-1390
www.agtag.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 4, 2009**

**FLORIDA AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM HONORS
OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER FOR 2009**

GAINESVILLE – Florida Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. has named a Dade County Farm Bureau member and a Hillsborough County program for special needs students its Outstanding Volunteer and Outstanding Volunteer Program of the Year for 2009, respectively.

The Gainesville-based non-profit organization named Dade County Farm Bureau member Jessica Borek its Outstanding Volunteer of the Year and Hillsborough County special education program “Ag-Abilities” its Outstanding Volunteer Program of the Year.

“We depend on individuals and programs around the state to help educate teachers and students about the importance of Florida agriculture and Jessica Borek and Ag-Abilities are prime examples of how successful volunteers can be in their efforts to reach out,” said Vina Jean Banks, Chairman and Florida Beef Council Representative for Florida Agriculture in the Classroom and Director of Agribusiness for the Florida State Fair in Tampa.

Borek and Ag-Abilities coordinator, Judi Whitson of Hillsborough County Farm Bureau, were honored for their efforts at Florida Agriculture in the Classroom’s 2009 State Teacher and Volunteer Workshop “Catching the Wave of Florida Agriculture Education” earlier this summer in Daytona Beach.

Borek donates time at the Dade County Farm Bureau's Annual Barbecue and "Fun" Raiser for the Kids Corral area, and distributes agriculture information and conducts Florida Agriculture in the Classroom activities at the Miami-Dade International Agriculture and Cattle Show. She also volunteers to read for Florida Agriculture Literacy Day and participate in Farm City Week each year.

She served as the Dade Agri-Council president for two years, and continues to help the organization with fund raising. Borek and her family farm in the Miami-Dade County area and grow corn, tomatoes, beans, eggplant and okra.

Hillsborough County's "Ag-Abilities" program reaches dozens of special needs students who are unable to compete in traditional FFA and agriculture events because of their disabilities. About 70 students participated in Ag-Abilities in 2009, taking part in competitions such as agriculture tools identification, plant identification and food identification. They also drove a tractor through an obstacle course during the event.

About 40 volunteers help make Ag-Abilities possible each year. Participating organizations include Hillsborough County Farm Bureau, Hillsborough County Parks Department, the Hillsborough County Extension Office and the Hillsborough County School Board.

Florida Agriculture in the Classroom is funded by sales of the agriculture specialty license plate called the "Ag Tag." Its mission is to educate Florida teachers and students in kindergarten through 12th grade about the importance of Florida agriculture by providing them with curricula, materials, grant money and other programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PHOTOS, CONTACT LISA GASKALLA BY EMAILING gaskalla@ufl.edu OR CALLING (352) 846-1391.