

IFAS Matters

Jack Payne

UF | IFAS
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

[IFAS Home](#) [About](#) [Contact Us](#)



Newsletter Home

- [August](#)
- [July](#)
- [May](#)
- [April](#)
- [March](#)
- [Newsletter Archive](#)

IFAS Events

[Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point \(HACCP\) Training Courses \[Basic Course\]](#)

[The 15th International Symposium on Trace Elements in Man and Animals \(TEMA15\)](#)

[Conference on Ecological and Ecosystem Restoration \(CEER 2014\)](#)

[Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference](#)

[The International Firefly Symposium](#)

[International Citrus & Beverage Conference \(ICBC\)](#)

[America's Watershed Initiative \(AWI\)](#)

[ACES: A Community on Ecosystem Services](#)

IFAS Matters - May 2014

Posted on May 1, 2014 by Jack Payne

[+ Share](#) |



Starving philosophy student grappling with the question of the Toast in the Machine.

Source: www.CartoonStock.com

Too hungry to learn?

By now, most of you have heard me pose this question, "How can we feed 9 plus billion people in the next 50 years while conserving the ecosystem services that make agriculture possible and then deliver that food in a safe and secure manner within a reliable and efficient world-wide food distribution system under an umbrella of dramatic climate change?" It's not only a mouthful; it's a question for the millennium. Food can be both a deterrent and an incentive. It is well-documented that many of the insurgencies in the Middle East and in Africa are fueled by, if not caused by, empty stomachs. The Arab Spring can be easily traced to crop failures, inflated prices, and other sources of food shortages. The deadly cycle plays out over and over in war-ravaged African countries, where famine leads to war and war leads to more famine. Although there are thousands of pundits promulgating solutions to this mayhem, there is also widespread agreement that, aside from providing sufficient food, education is

Multimedia

Extension Centennial



Video highlights from the 100 years of Florida Extension Celebration
[Watch video or view photos»](#)

Austin Cary



[Aerial video](#) of new Austin Cary Learning Center.
Learn more [about the center](#) or [view photos](#) .

eCycle



Do your part by eCycling old electronics.
[View video»](#)

Awards & Announcements

[Elaine Turner named dean of UF's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences](#)

[Joe Joyce to head the UF/IFAS Center for Leadership](#)

[UF/IFAS names Irani family, youth and community sciences chairwoman](#)

[UF's Unmanned Aviation Systems featured at the 2014 SUN 'n FUN International Fly-In & Expo](#)

[UF/IFAS announces Hall of Fame recipients](#)

[UF/IFAS team wins national horse-judging contest](#)

[University of Florida team wins first place in EPA's Campus RainWorks Challenge](#)

a big part of the remedy. In fact there are those who deem education as the panacea for both hunger and war.

But what if you are too hungry to learn? Recently I came across three, seemingly disparate articles, which have brought home the connection between food security, (a sanitized moniker for HUNGER) and education. And two of them were right here in Florida. One was a TV advert for the Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida, in which the announcer said, "1 out of 4 children in Alachua County are affected by poverty and live in food instable homes. They are at risk of experiencing chronic hunger and are going to bed hungry due to lack of resources in the home" (Food4Kids Backpack Program of North Florida, 2014). Upon further investigation, I learned that a vast majority of teachers and principals routinely see students who are "too hungry to learn," according to a report released by the No Kid Hungry organization.

A few days later, I heard a WUFT lead-in, "Florida's High School Graduation Rate among the Nation's Lowest" (WUFT, 2014). It followed with a dismal U.S. Department of Education report that Florida's high school graduation rate of 75 percent is about five percentage points lower than the nationwide average. I thought "How can that be?" Then I found a statement by Jaryn Emhof of the Foundation for Florida's Future, who said that Florida has more "challenging" student demographics than some other states. She also said that more than 57 percent of Florida students are eligible for free or a reduced price lunch. The third piece was a University Business article called, "Hunger Grows among College Students" (Goral, 2014). It profiled a George Mason University student, who was working two jobs, but still not knowing how he was going afford his next meal. He described how his predicament is disturbing his studies and said, "Almost as bad as the hunger itself is the stress that you're going to be hungry." The article went on to cite a University of Oregon survey this year that found 59 percent of students at Western Oregon University had recently experienced food insecurity. Attributed to college student hunger was rising tuition fees, low incomes, and a lack of food and social support systems, such as food stamps. Although there are no comprehensive nationwide surveys of student hunger, experts said there is evidence that it is rising and may be much higher than the national average for all age groups.

When it comes to students, hunger is not an obvious condition. It's not like a sprained ankle that prevents participating in gym class or a broken wrist that exempts a student from writing assignments. But it's just as destructive. Students, who are hungry, are more likely to be exhausted, aggressive, hyperactive, and anxious. But to a teacher unfamiliar with hunger's effects, these signs may just seem like bad behavior. A head down during class signals laziness and aggressive behavior and may garner a reprimand. Instead of being recognized as hungry, many food-insecure students are labeled as "undisciplined" or "unmotivated."

Proclamations



Several Florida counties have signed proclamations in honor of 100 years of Florida Extension.

[View photos»](#)

UF Flavors



IFAS feast showcases new foods. [Read article or view photos»](#)

Lawn and Garden Fest



UF/IFAS held its lawn and garden fest recently and had a great turnout despite the rain.

[View photos»](#)

Superior Accomplishment



Congratulations to the UF/IFAS Superior Accomplishment Award winners for 2014!

[View photos»](#)

So student hunger, especially at UF, looms large on my radar. I suspect that some of our students may be hungry, especially since UF enrolls a high percentage of students who are from low income families or are the first generation to attend college. And, as you may have noticed, IFAS never shies away from the big questions. So now we are looking at another Big Question, "How can we nourish the minds and bodies of Floridians so they will be ready and able to glean a good education and improve their quality of life?" To that end, we have a team of IFAS academic units, faculty, and students exploring an online survey/needs assessment of college students. From that research they will develop a plan for an on campus food bank that will address needs of our students, some of whom find themselves in situations where they may go hungry.

-Jack



Seagrass

A new University of Florida study shows how much sunlight seagrass needs to stay healthy.

[Read more...](#)



Nanotubes

Nanotubes made from plants could allow delivery of DNA into cells, improve chemotherapy treatment.

[Read more...](#)



Cedar Key

Forced to put its nets away, one Florida town clams up — literally.

[Read more...](#)

Join the Conversation on Facebook and Twitter.



UF/IFAS Solutions



EDIS – Florida Cooperative Extension Publications



UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

© 2012 | [Site Feedback](#) | [Privacy](#) | [SSN Privacy](#) | Last Modified: October 23, 2012

Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, P.O. Box 110180

Gainesville, FL 32611-0180 | Phone: (352) 392-1971

