



# Blueberry Breeding Program Updates

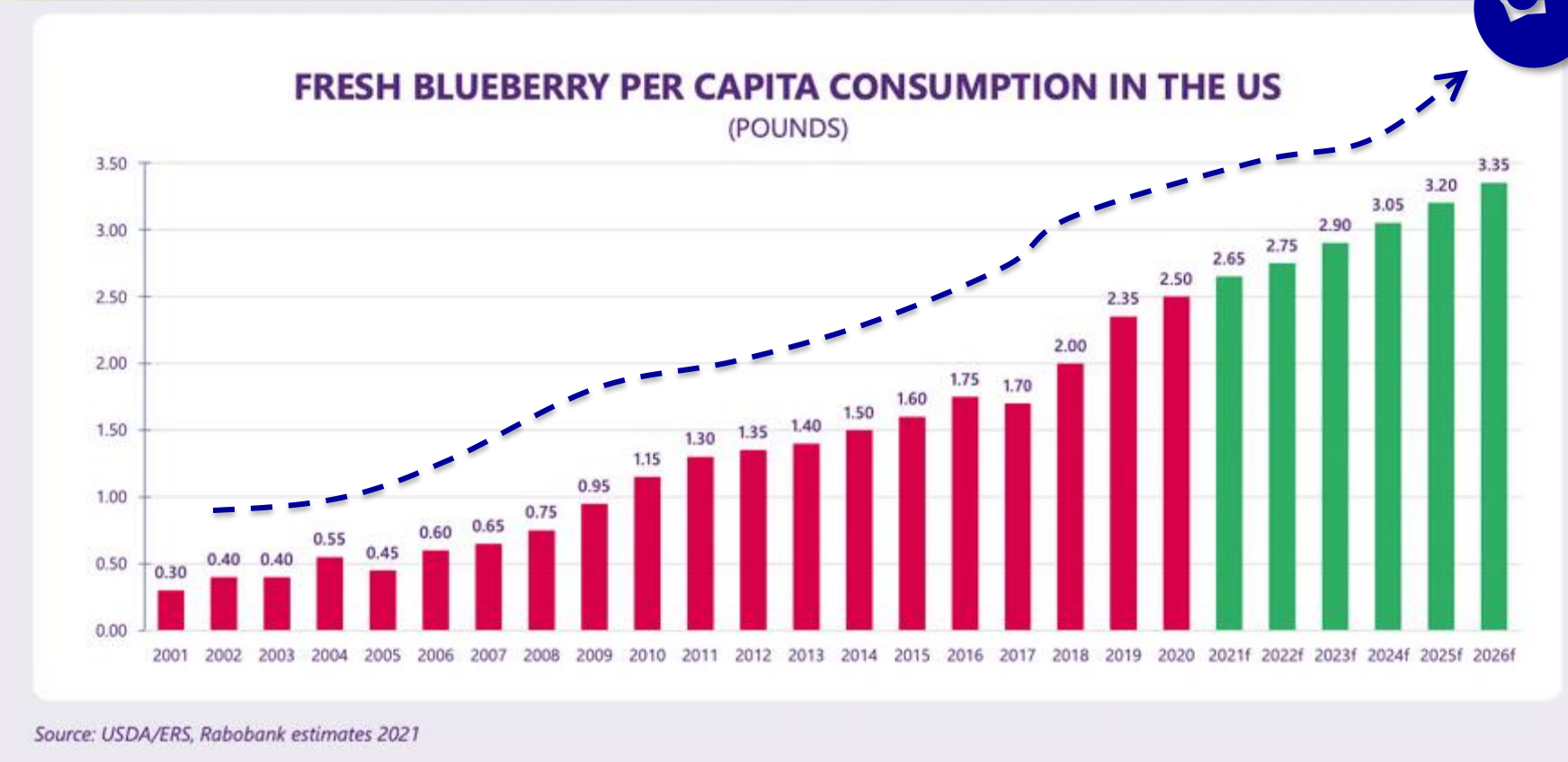
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Oct 2025



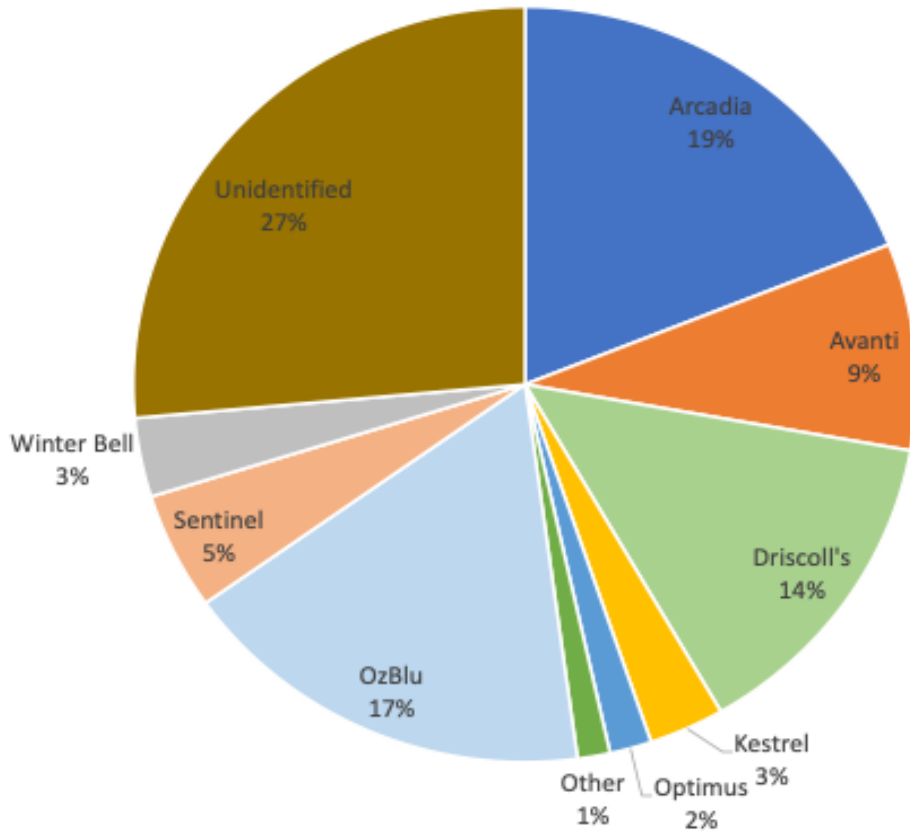
# US blueberry consumption growth



# **State of the cultivars in Florida**

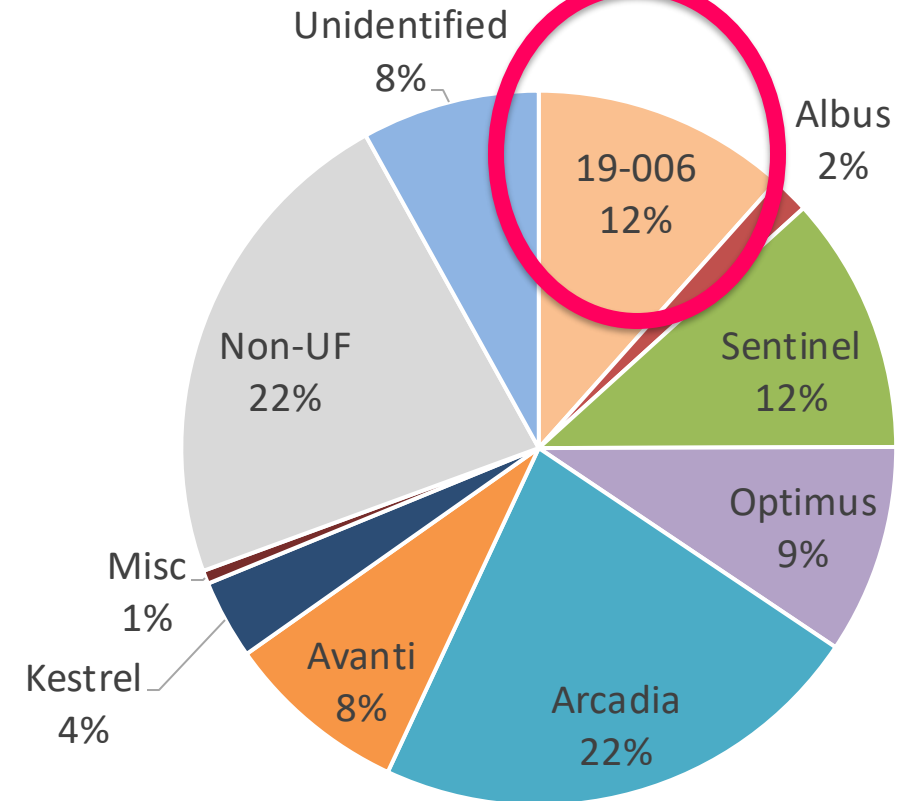
# 2024

South-Central FL.  
Percentage Acreage by Cultivars



# 2025

South-Central Florida Acreage By Date of  
Release



87% of Florida is planted with UF varieties

57% of FL blueberry area planted with varieties released within the last 10 years



# UF Blueberry Breeding Program



## Breeding + Extension

1. Develop cultivars with superior traits  
“Local focus and global impact”
2. Support FL Stakeholder stay competitive

## Research + Teaching

3. Research and implement advanced tools for breeding: faster, cheaper and more accurate
4. Training the next generation of breeders



# **Developing Cultivars with Superior Traits “Local Focus and Global Impact”**



# Falcon 'FL17-141'

## Yield Jumbo

New

Size ✓  
Firm ✓  
Yield ✓  
Flavor ✓





# ‘FL19-006’

## Premium

Size ✓  
Firm ✓  
Yield ✓  
Aroma ✓  
Crunchy ✓





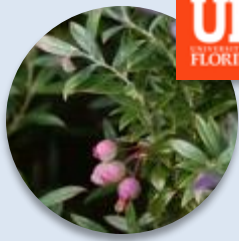
# History and Impact of University of Florida

## The birth of Southern Highbush Blueberries



Domestication  
(NHB, New Jersey)

1911



Crossings with  
*V. darrowii*

1950's



'Sharpblue'

1970's



'Star'  
'Emerald'  
'Jewel'

1990's



'Snowchaser'  
'Kestrel'  
'Sweetcrisp'

2000's



'Colossus'  
'Keecrisp'  
'Optimus'

2010's



'Sentinel'  
'Albus'  
'Pink'

2020's

Ralph Sharp  
Wayne Sherman

3 releases

Paul Lyrene

11 releases

23 releases

13 releases

5 releases and  
counting

~68 releases from UF

PLUS ~80 releases in collaboration or directly from our crosses



**49 years ago, a new varietal  
type was born!!**

**Dr. Ralph Sharpe**

**2026 Celebrating**

**Innovation  
Vision  
Industry**



# Sharper 'FL19-006'

Premium



50 YEARS OF  
**SHARPBLUE**

— 1976 —

INTRODUCING  
**SHARPER**

IMPACT • VISION • INNOVATION

Size ✓  
Firm ✓  
Yield ✓  
Aroma ✓  
Crunchy ✓



# Varieties; constant and continuous change

## South-Central Florida

	Then	Now
	Chickadee	<b>FL19-006</b>
	Kestrel	<b>Falcon</b>
	Avanti	<b>Sentinel</b>
	Endura	<b>Arcadia</b>
	Arcadia	<b>Optimus</b>
	Emerald	<b>Albus</b>
	Jewel	

## North Florida

	Then	Now
	Farthing	<b>Sentinel</b>
	Meadowlark	<b>Optimus</b>
	Springhigh	<b>Falcon</b>
	Emerald	<b>Farthing</b>
	Jewel	<b>Patrecia</b>
	Star	

What we have added: Yield, Size, Consistency, Firmness, Mechanical harvest, Flavor, etc.



# Future

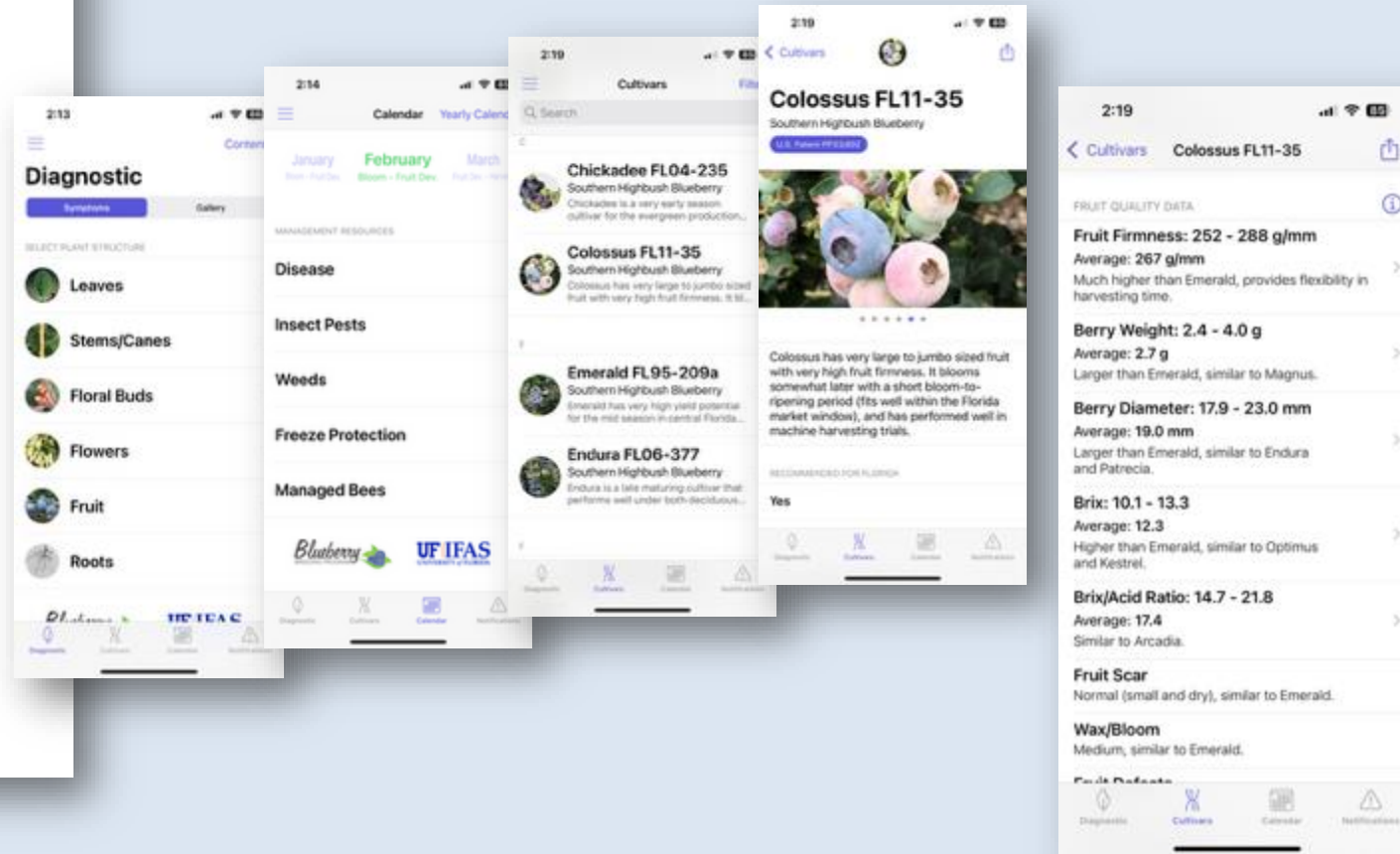
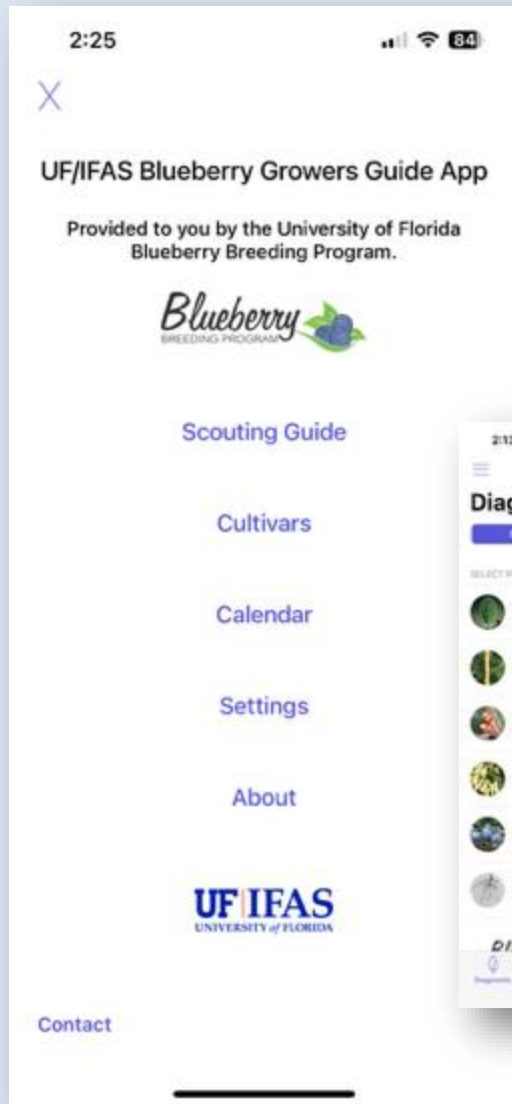
- Disease resistant
- Chilli thrips resistance
- Ripening concentration
- Varieties with differentiating traits

# **Support Stakeholder Maintain Competitiveness**



# Outreach Tools

## Phone App



**UF | IFAS**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA  
**teamwork**



# Extension

Point of contact for growers

Farm visits

End of the season survey

EDIS extension publications

Breeding program website

Monthly newsletter, blog and  
management calendar

FBGA fall, spring, and summer meetings

Articles in specialty crop magazines

Member of the FBGA

Social media (~10,000)

Diego Cabezas, M.Sc.



Dough Phillips, M.Sc.



# **Research and Implementation of advance tools for breeding**



# Chilli Thrips Management

- Collect damage ratings on all trial selections, use this data to select genotypes to advance
- Share grower end of season survey data, grower feedback on controls, other data with UF entomologist
- Collaborate on publications

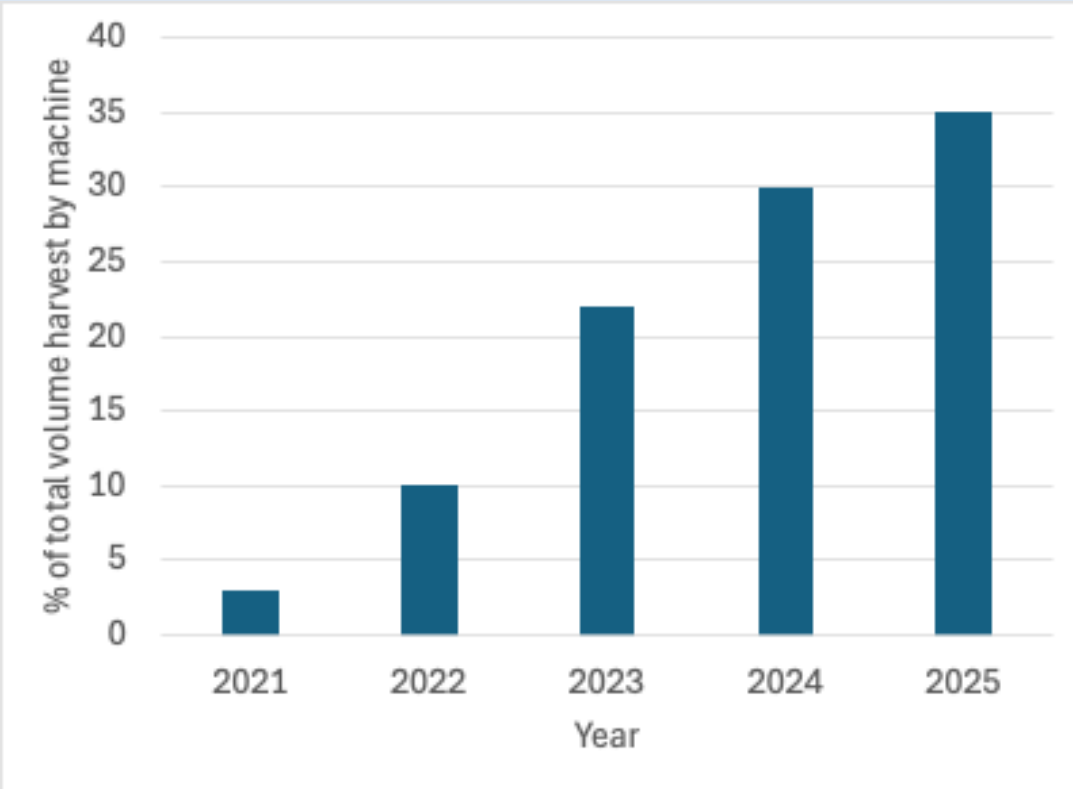


# Rust Management in Evergreen System

- Collect damage ratings on all trial selections, use this data to select genotypes to advance
- Help fund research, identify potential resistance markers and traits
- Collaborate with UF pathologist on grower visits, publications
- Share grower end of season survey data, grower feedback on controls



# Machine harvesting



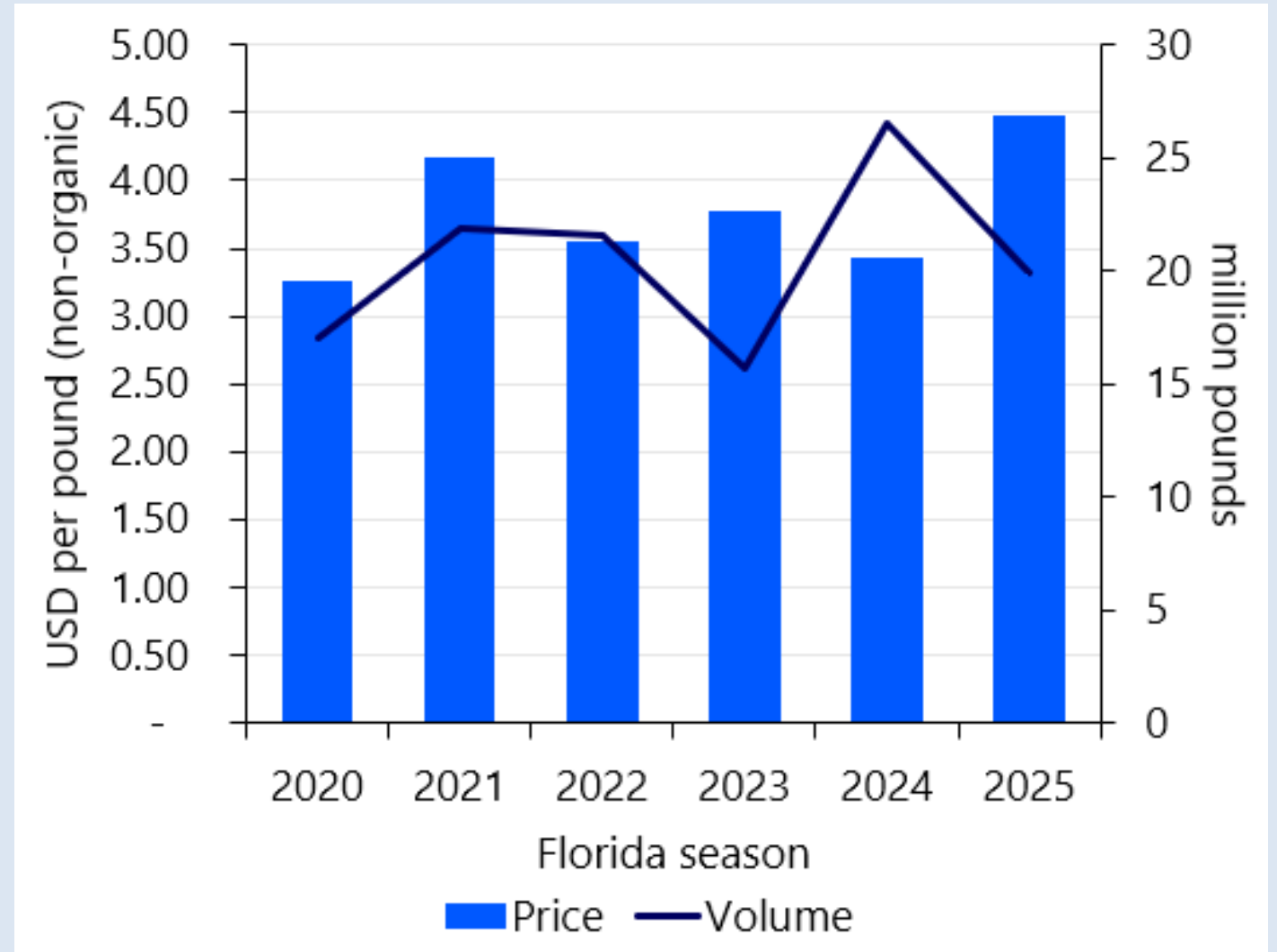
Varieties  
Technology  
Management





# How do we compete?

- High yield
- High quality
- Consistency
- Lower cost



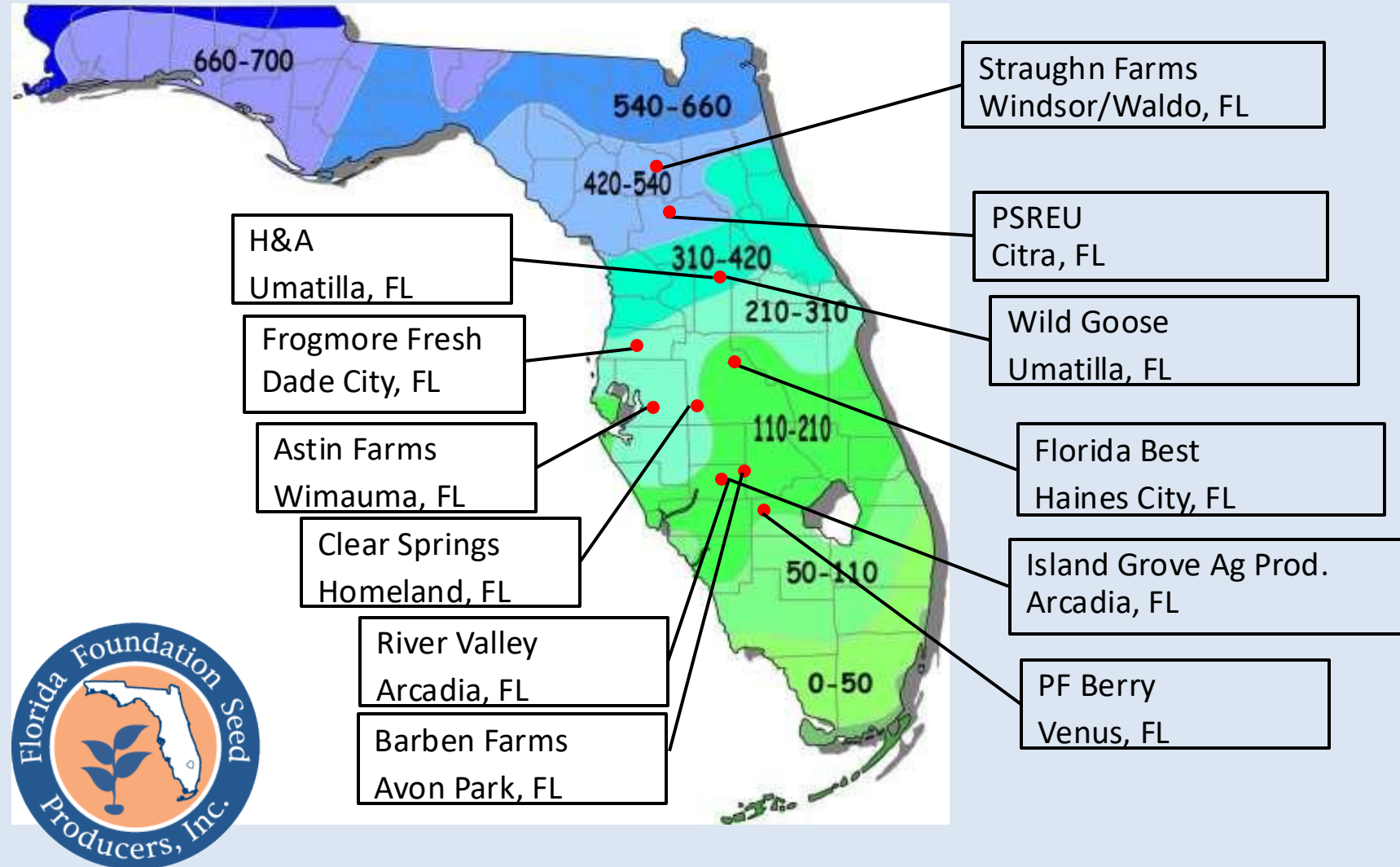


Blueberry  
BREEDING PROGRAM 

# Thanks to our collaborators!!

UF/IFAS  
FFSP

Dr. Phill Harmon  
Dr. Oscar Liburd  
Dr. Gerardo Nunez







**UF | IFAS**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

**Thank you!**  
**Questions?**

[www.blueberrybreeding.com](http://www.blueberrybreeding.com)

