

# **Tri-county Potato Farmers' Crisis:** *The Profitability Challenge*



*Carolee Howe*

*Florida Farm Bureau Federation*

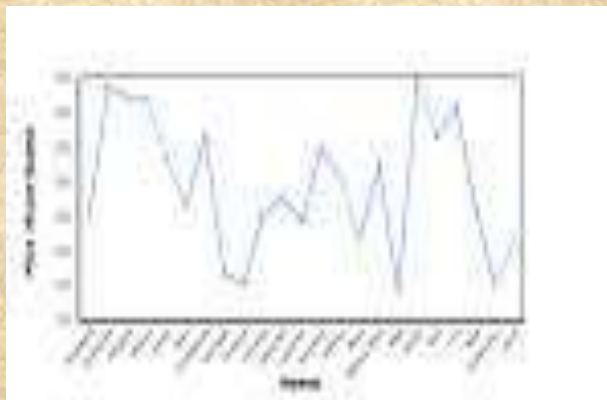


# Potatoes Get NO Respect!



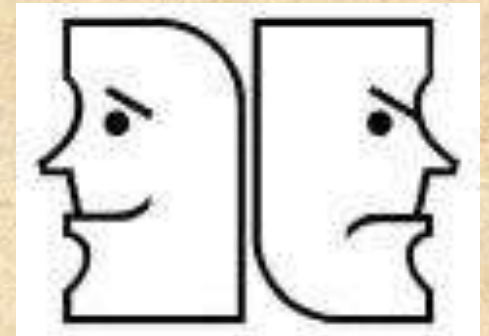
# The Leadership Challenge

- **Potato farmers have Lost Control of their Market**
- **Several Years of Bad Weather**



# Conflict

- **Between Growers**
- **Between Growers & the Markets**
- **Between the Grower & the Consumer**
- **Between Growers & the Government**



# The Leadership Strategy

- **Identify the Crisis**
- **Identify all of the Stakeholders who should Participate**
- **Have Brainstorming Session with Stakeholders**



# Stakeholders

- **Tri-county Potato Farmers**
- **UF/IFAS**
- **Congressional Representation**
- **Representatives from the Florida House**
- **Representatives from the Florida Senate**



# Problems Facing the Tri-county Potato Region

- **Monopolizing Market**
- **Information**
- **Research**
- **Crop Insurance**
- **Over Production**
- **Improved storage capability for potatoes**
- **Competition**

# Potential *Solutions* to the Problems Mentioned

- **Decrease Production**
- **Create Niche Markets/Grow Alternatives**
- **Ombudsman to assist Growers**
- **Encourage IFAS create a Matrix on Government Programs Available to Growers**
- **Easement Programs Available to Growers?**
- **Government Programs Available to Growers?**
- **Disaster Payments?**
- **Need a Standardized Contract**
- **Or a Value-added Contract**



# Tri-county Taskforce Expectations



- **Frustration with the Industry**
- **Initially, High Hopes-Great Anticipation**
- **Frustration Returned**
- **Skepticism**
- **Renewed Energy and Excitement-Rejuvenated Growers**

# Tri-county Taskforce Meetings

- **USDA/Florida Ag. Statistics Service**
- **UF/IFAS-Food and Resource Economics Dept**
- **Farm Service Agency**
- **USDA/NRCS**



# Opportunity & New Ideas



*(Lessons Learned)*



**“People are not Willing  
to Give up their Independence  
when They are Prosperous”-**

**Wayne Smith,  
Hastings Potato Farmer**



# *Opportunity*

- **The Skies the Limit!**
- **Control of their Market**
- **Farmers Determine their Future**



# *What's the Next Step?*

- **Created a New Co-op**
- **New Potato Variety**
- **Market Potatoes a Different Way**





*New Low Carb Potato  
Coming to a Store Near You in  
January 2005*

*Thank You!*