



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
The Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399



July 1, 2011

**OPEN LETTER TO FLORIDA'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY:**

In December 2010, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took action to finalize the establishment of numeric nutrient criteria for Florida's lakes, rivers and streams. This action by the EPA has caused a good deal of concern among all affected interests in the state. Many have raised questions about the scientific basis for the criteria and the feasibility of meeting them. We too have concerns with the action that EPA has taken and are continuing our efforts to convince the EPA to repeal their numeric nutrient criteria and allow Florida to proceed with the development and adoption of its own water quality standards.

Because of the EPA's action, agricultural producers are asking whether they should implement the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)-adopted best management practices for water quality and quantity. The simple answer is **YES**.

Now is the time to enroll in the FDACS Best Management Practices (BMPs) program and implement BMPs. We urge you to do so. Regardless of what numeric nutrient water quality criteria are ultimately adopted, current state law gives a presumption of compliance with water quality standards to agricultural producers who enroll in and implement FDACS-adopted BMPs.

Agricultural producers who enroll in and implement FDACS BMPs demonstrate a commitment to water resource protection and help maintain support for this non-regulatory approach to meeting water quality and conservation goals. Implementing BMPs not only helps protect and conserve Florida's water resources, but may save you time and money through more efficient nutrient and irrigation management practices.

For additional information you can visit the FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy website [www.floridaagwaterpolicy.com](http://www.floridaagwaterpolicy.com) or contact them by phone (850) 617-1727, or e-mail [AgBmpHelp@FreshFromFlorida.com](mailto:AgBmpHelp@FreshFromFlorida.com).

Please participate. It is to your advantage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam H. Putnam".

Adam H. Putnam  
Commissioner of Agriculture

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Herschel T. Vinyard, Jr.".

Herschel T Vinyard, Jr.  
Secretary, Florida Department  
of Environmental Protection