<u>**Marion County Agriculture Information**</u>

Marion county agriculture supports 27,515 full and part-time jobs and generates $1.20 billion in annual revenues.[i] More broadly, our 3,500 farms[ii] and 377,000 acres[iii] under production contribute as much as 15% of the county's economic output[iv] and up to 20% of its employment.[v] The county's largest contributing sectors are equine, cattle, peanuts and hay.

- Nearly 50,000 horses including Thoroughbreds, Paso Fino, Missouri Foxtrotter, Arabian, Morgan and quarter horses during peak season[vi]
- 12th largest cattle producer[vii] in the state with 47,000 head[viii]
- Over 9,300 acres[ix] planted in peanuts worth about $6 million annually[x]
- 300 plus hay farms[xi] with 32,000 acres[xii] in production
- $11 million in sales from approximately 95 commercial nurseries[xiii]
- 1,600 acres[xiv] in planted citrus producing 355,000 boxes of fruit annually[xv]
- An additional 137,000 acres in mixed woodlands (13% of total County land)[xvi]

<u>**Equine**</u>

Known by many as the "Horse Capital of the World," Marion County's equine sector began to flourish in the 1950's because of Florida's advantageous winter breeding season weather. Today, the favorable climate combined with Marion County's exceptional training & breeding facilities, leading veterinary research, mineral rich soils and excellent pastures draw breeders, owners, buyers, and trainers alike. Ranked 2nd in the nation for foal production[xvii], 75%[xviii] of Florida's Thoroughbred industry is located in Marion County. In recent years, other segments of the industry have been growing and currently there are numerous other equine operations in addition to the 600 Thoroughbred farms[xix] located in the county.

<u>**Cattle**</u>

Marion County has one of the largest chapters in the Florida Cattlemen's Association and its volunteers organize and operate the annual Ocala Bull Sale. Started in 1957 by Doug Oswald, this historic auction is the oldest graded bull sale in the United States and helped transform Florida into a primary market for top southeast bull producers. The county also produces some 21,000 calves annually[xx] which are shipped to feedlots across the country especially in Texas and Oklahoma. This requires sizeable herds of brood cows and intensive management by ranchers to consistently produce a large number of live births and early weight gain in calves.

<u>**Peanuts**</u>

Peanuts have always been a successful crop for Marion County farmers and we remain one of the leading producing counties in the state. Marion County is the 5th largest producer[xxi] in the state planting approximately 9,300 acres[xxii] of peanuts annually. Well adapted to sandy Coastal Plain soils, it is one of the few crops that do well when grown on deep sands and responds to rotation more than most agronomic crops. Recent successful breeding programs have led to more disease resistant peanut varieties that are lower in fat content.

<u>**Hay**</u>

Hay is produced for cattle feed, horse feed and bedding. Bahia grass is the most common hay produced, followed by costal Bermuda and a small percentage of perennial peanut hay. With its high humidity and frequent rainfall, Florida is not the easiest place to

dry a hay crop and yet hay remains one of the best choices as a means of conserving winter forage. Largely mechanized, Marion County dries and stores 50 tons of this good nutritional value annually.[xxiii]

Nursery
Nursery crops are one of Florida's largest agricultural segments and the state is ranked second only to California in terms of value.[xxiv] Considered environmentally friendly and welcomed in most counties, Marion County remains a leader in the industry with 95 nurseries[xxv] and nearly 1,900 acres in production.[xxvi] Nursery products add value to individual properties and create landscapes that add to the overall beauty of the county.

Forestry / Silviculture
Administering the composition, health and quality of our woodlands to meet the community's long-term needs is the science of Silviculture. With more than 114,000 acres in planted pines and an additional 137,000 in mixed timber, [xxvii] Marion County uses an integrated approach by combining agricultural and forestry technologies to create a more diverse and sustainable land-use system.

Other
Rounding out Marion County's agriculture portfolio are 76 farms[xxviii] with 7,400 acres[xxix] in vegetable and melon production generating some $80 million[xxx] in annual sales and another $9 million in sales from the fruits, nuts and berries category[xxxi]. The county also boasts 350 acres of planted blueberries and 1,600 acres of citrus.[xxxii]

[i] IFAS University of Florida Plant Science Research and Education Unit *1) Marion County IFAS Summary* http://ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/reports/economic-impact/2012/marion.pdf

ii USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data* *2) Table 8 Farms, Land in Farms*, Value of Land and Buildings, and Land Use: 2007 and 2002 pg 323 http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

iii *3) Land Use in Marion County* Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE

iv *4) Economic Contributions of Agriculture*, Natural Resources, and Related Industries in Florida for 2010 pg 13, figure 11
 http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FE/FE90600.pdf

v IFAS University of Florida Plant Science Research and Education Unit *1) Marion County IFAS Summary* http://ifas.ufl.edu/docs/pdf/reports/economic-impact/2012/marion.pdf

vi **This is everyone's collective sense, NO HARD REFERENCE FOR THIS NUMBER**
        [USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data*
        6) Table 15. Horses and Ponies - Inventory and Number Sold: 2007 and 2002 pg 399
        http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

vii *7) Florida Agriculture by the Numbers* 2012 - Statistical Report pg 54, http://www.florida-agriculture.com/brochures/category_genag.html

viii USDA NASS (2012). **8) Livestock, county estimates** (lvce0512.pdf). http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/County_Estimates/index.asp

ix USDA FSA Service Center Office, Marion County rosa.humphrey@fl.usda.gov *9) FSA Participation Data – County Summary*

x 10) Florida Crop/Pest *Management Profiles: Peanuts* pg 1 http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pi044; *11) Florida Peanut Producers Association* http://www.flpeanuts.com/

xi USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data* *12) Table 25. Selected Crops Harvested*: 2007 pg 421 http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

xii *3) Land Use in Marion County* Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE

xiii USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data* *13) Table 2. Market Value of Agricultural* Products Sold Including Direct Sales: 2007 and 2002 pg 281 http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

xiv *3) Land Use in Marion County* Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE

xv USDA NASS (2011). *14) Citrus County Estimates* (cice1011.pdf) pg 2 http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/County_Estimates/cntyestph.htm

xvi *3) Land Use in Marion County* Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE

xvii *15) Tammy Gantt email* tgantt@ftboa.com FTBOA, Sources: 1) Jockey Club Annual Mares Bred Reports (2008-2012) & 2) FTBOA membership

xviii *16) 2005 American Horse Council Impact Study – Florida* Becky, Robinson FTBOA Becky Robinson becky@ftboa.com

xix *15) Tammy Gantt email* tgantt@ftboa.com FTBOA, Source: FTBOA 2007

xx USDA NASS (2012). **8) Livestock, county estimates** (lvce0512.pdf). http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Florida/Publications/County_Estimates/index.asp and *17) Mark Shuffitt email* MAg, BS; Livestock Agent UF/IFAS Marion County Extension

xxi 18) Production of Biofuel Crops in *Florida – Peanut* pg 1, figure 1 http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ag300

xxii USDA FSA Service Center Office, Marion County rosa.humphrey@fl.usda.gov *9) FSA Participation Data – County Summary*

xxiii USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data **12) Table 25. Selected Crops Harvested***: 2007 pg 421
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

xxiv ***19) The Nursery and Landscape Industry's*** Impact on Florida's Economy FNGLA pg 2
http://www.fngla.org/resources/economic-impact-study/

xxv USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data **13) Table 2. Market Value of Agricultural*** Products Sold Including Direct Sales: 2007 and 2002 pg 281
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

xxvi ***3) Land Use in Marion County*** Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE

xxvii ***3) Land Use in Marion County*** Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE

xxviii USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data **13) Table 2. Market Value of Agricultural*** Products Sold Including Direct Sales: 2007 and 2002 pg 281
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

xxix ***3) Land Use in Marion County*** Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE

xxx Economic Profiles of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Industries in Florida Counties, 2010 ***20) Florida County Profiles 2010*** pg 81 http://www.fred.ifas.ufl.edu/economic-impact-analysis/Florida-county-profiles-2010.pdf

xxxi USDA NASS (2007). *2007 Census of Agriculture Volume 1, Chapter 2: County Level Data **13) Table 2. Market Value of Agricultural*** Products Sold Including Direct Sales: 2007 and 2002 pg 281
http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level/Florida/

xxxii ***3) Land Use in Marion County*** Marion County Agricultural Appraiser Lee Ulsberger, CFE