



Florida Olive Report

June 2011

All,

Just wanted to follow up with you after meetings at the Florida Citrus Mutual annual conference in Naples, FL last week. Thinking how best to develop a wider interest in Florida Olives; I thought it prudent to understand the challenges faced by the citrus industry - and the growers in particular. I was lucky enough to chat with several growers and quite a few other interests (insurance, chemicals, research, politics, etc.).

HLB (fatal citrus greening disease) is the number one topic. Everyone wants to stop it. The government and industry are investing perhaps \$20 million next year trying to find a cure for HLB. According to UF-IFAS, Floridians have lost \$4B and 6 thousand jobs to HLB since 2006. Some say in order to stop the disease you must push up infected groves and perhaps even destroy a band of healthy trees on the perimeter of the infected part (like cancer surgery). Others say, the groves can be treated with chemicals to retard or

perhaps prevent advance of the disease. No one knows for sure what will work but the threat is great.

It seems I learned in a basic Ag class that [mono cultures](#) are prone to catastrophic crop failure from disease. That is why we invest in research for chemical solutions to maintain some production until new chemical-free crop varieties can be developed to defeat disease at the genetic level; and brought on line for market. People in modern industrial nations benefit from the diet diversity offered by efficient farming operations connected to efficient communications and transportation systems. That is why cultures benefitting from a balanced diet of nutritional diversity tend to live longer and have less disease. The olive oil rich [Mediterranean Diet](#) is a prominent example as is the rice, fish and raw vegetable diet of the long-lived Japanese. It is in our human interest to promote cultivation of plants that will provide healthy diet diversity in Florida and an opportunity for Florida farmers to take the lead in providing another healthy choice to the world. Florida olive oil can become a household word - and the availability of good quality olive oil can transform the health of Floridians. What if Burger King started using Florida olive oil in their fryers?