

CARES Recipient Profile



THIS FARM
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Farm: Jones Potato Farm, Inc.

Location: Parrish, Manatee County

Date of Origination: 1986

Commodities: Potatoes, Green Beans, Citrus



Alan and Leslie Jones own and operate Jones Potato Farm in Parrish, Florida. Chip potatoes are the primary commodity they grow. They also produce other varieties of potatoes, green beans and citrus.

Jones and his father started farming in Parrish in 1986 and since that time Jones has grown his operation to over 4,000 acres all of which utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs).

With the challenges of growing potatoes in south Florida's sandy soil, Jones has spent over two decades studying how effective BMPs are on his farm in order to optimize the use of both water and fertilizer nutrients. Jones has created a soil and water management plan unique to his property allowing him to maximize the land's potential while preserving it for future use at the same time.

While seepage irrigation is typically used on south Florida farms, Jones also utilizes center pivot irrigation as part of his hybrid water management plan. This utilizes GPS and ensures the potatoes are not over-watered and water is not wasted. To accomplish the task of doing more with less, Jones has built and installed flood wells to monitor the surficial water table on different portions of his property. The use of these BMPs ensures crops receive enough water based on their soil type. These BMPs all work together to reduce nutrient runoff, soil erosion and reduce water use by over 50%.

In regards to fertilizer use, Jones is highly involved in the 4R nutrient stewardship practices. Together he uses GPS and mapping to apply fertilizers using the "right source, right rate, right time, and right place". In addition, natural wetlands are located throughout his farm which absorb and filter nutrients out of water trying to leave the farm. In 2013, Jones and his family received the 4R Advocate Award for his best use of this concept and was the first farm in Florida to be recognized for this award.

In 2016, Jones and his family received the Commissioner's Ag Environmental Leadership Award and just this year, 2017, they received the American Vegetable Grower of the Year Award. These awards are like the crop able to be harvested a long season of hard labor. The Jones' are not only committed to their farm but also to their community. Both Alan and Leslie are extensively involved

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in the Farm- to- School programs in Sarasota and Manatee County. They also donate over 10,000 lbs. of potatoes to local schools and programs each year.

In regards to what environmental stewardship means to Jones, he feels that as a farmer it is his responsibility to carry the torch of caring for the land so that it doesn't impose on the increasing population. Jones believes precision agriculture is truly helping reduce water use, runoff and erosion. Lastly, he feels grateful to have dedicated employees and family members who work alongside him each day to help feed the world.