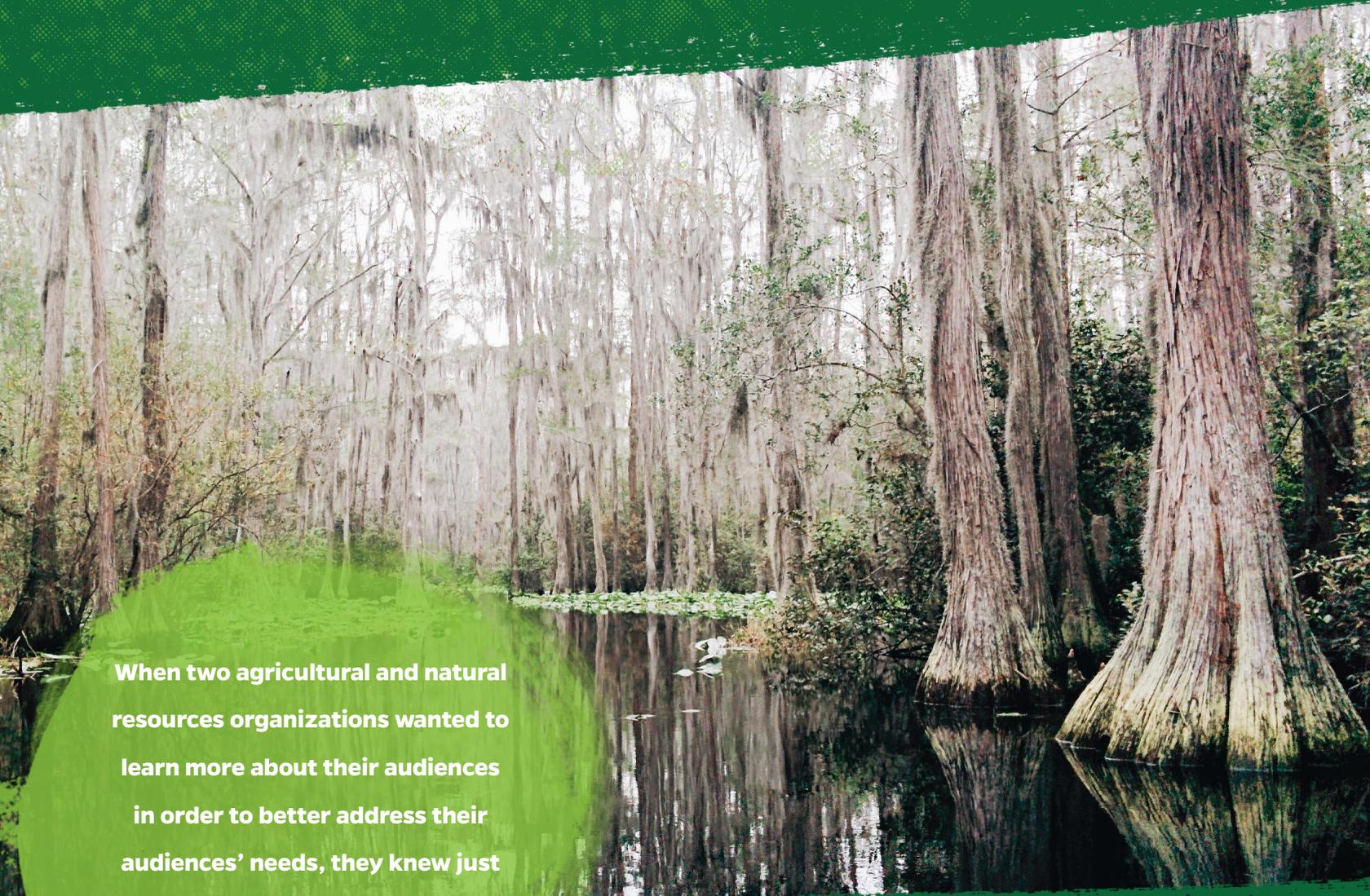


CENTER FOR PUBLIC ISSUES EDUCATION

IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES



When two agricultural and natural resources organizations wanted to learn more about their audiences in order to better address their audiences' needs, they knew just where to go: the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education.

IMPACT REPORT

FALL 2017

UF|IFAS
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA



Center for
Public Issues Education

PIE CENTER IMPACTS FLORIDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES SECTOR THROUGH INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

**THE UF/IFAS CENTER FOR PUBLIC
ISSUES EDUCATION (PIE CENTER)
ADVANCES THE RESPONSIBLE USE
OF WATER AND CONSERVATION OF
NATURAL RESOURCES.**

When two agricultural and natural resources organizations wanted to learn more about their audiences in order to better address their audiences' needs, they knew just where to go: the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education (PIE Center).

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission partnered with the PIE Center to learn resident turkey hunters' opinions and attitudes about Florida's wild turkey population status, management, and hunting regulations.

The PIE Center has also partnered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Don't Pack a Pest program to analyze the program's website communication.

WILD TURKEY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Wild Turkey Management Program, a division of the FWC, ensures a healthy and sustainable wild turkey population in Florida while promoting the responsible use of resources. The program wanted to better communicate to its audience of turkey hunters but needed information about the program's target audience.

"We're fortunate in Florida because wild turkeys occur in all 67 counties and are flourishing," said program coordinator Roger Shields. "But we are also really interested in the opinions of our hunters, and it had been a while since we gathered this broad-based type of information. By getting a better understanding of Florida turkey hunters' opinions and attitudes, we can continue our science-based work to manage wild turkeys while providing sustainable hunting opportunities."

The PIE Center's researchers used innovative methods to collect valuable information on what turkey hunters thought about mentoring other hunters, hunting regulations, and methods of communication.

"Our program conducts an annual turkey harvest survey, and our response has been decreasing over the past few years. (Joy) Rumble suggested methods that resulted in double the response rate I was expecting," Shields said.

Assistant professor of agricultural education and communication Joy Rumble was the lead researcher for the project and worked closely with Shields.

"Doing research that is of value and can be used by an organization is important to me," Rumble said.

The survey findings are informing many decisions the FWC is making regarding the wild turkey management program, and the FWC is using these findings as they update their wild turkey strategic management plan.

"The findings provided our team with specific information that we need to be responsive to," Shields said. "Now that we have a better understanding of our audience, we want to better market our program to those individuals."

In addition to providing the FWC program with the opinions of the survey respondents, the PIE Center also helped guide Shields and his team through the research

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**THE GUIDANCE OFFERED BY THE PIE
CENTER WAS EXTREMELY HELPFUL.
WE WILL BE ABLE TO USE THIS
INFORMATION THROUGHOUT THE NEXT
DECADE.**

**ROGER SHIELDS | WILD TURKEY
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

process and provided the information in a useful way.

“Joy was so accommodating and was sure to provide the information we needed,” Shields said. “The guidance offered by the PIE Center was extremely helpful. We will be able to use this information throughout the next decade.”

As leaders in Florida work to ensure the conservation of the state’s precious resources, the PIE Center is proving to be an invaluable asset. This value is evident through the PIE Center’s partnership with FWC, as well as its partnership with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Don’t Pack a Pest program.

DON’T PACK A PEST

Don’t Pack a Pest is a program that educates travelers of the risks associated with bringing undeclared agricultural items into the U.S. and neighboring Caribbean countries. The program is a partnership with FDACS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection. One main program component is a website that assists travelers in determining whether certain agricultural items are allowed or prohibited entry into the U.S.



WE WANTED TO INITIATE RESEARCH INTO OUR PROGRAM TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WEBSITE, AND THE PIE CENTER SEEMED LIKE THE PERFECT FIT.

DENISE FEIBER | FDACS DIVISION OF PLANT INDUSTRY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

In 2014, the Don’t Pack a Pest program redesigned its website to make the features and information more user-friendly.

“We wanted to initiate research into our program to determine the effectiveness of the website, and the PIE Center seemed like the perfect fit,” said FDACS Division of Plant Industry public information director Denise Feiber.

FDACS asked the PIE Center to develop surveys to determine if the site was providing useful information. Surveys were conducted in Florida (500 participants), the United States (1,000 participants), and the Caribbean (Puerto Rico in Spanish, Jamaica and the U.S. Virgin Islands in English).

“Where appropriate, enhancements were made to the website based on survey results,” Feiber said.

PIE Center associate director and associate professor of agricultural education and communication Alexa Lamm led the research for the Don’t Pack a Pest program.

“Helping FDACS keep the natural resources and agricultural

industry of our state and nation safe by communicating as effectively as possible with those potentially carrying items of concern was our top priority,” Lamm said.

The PIE Center also provided the program with information it could then share with its partners about how valuable the program is in protecting Florida and the United States against the introduction of harmful pests and diseases.

“The Caribbean is a major threat to the introduction of invasive pests and diseases in the United States, and we want to ensure we are communicating to this audience in an effective way,” Feiber said.

Through the information provided by the PIE Center, Don’t Pack a Pest can also demonstrate value to organizations that financially support the program.

“It is also important that we demonstrate to our funding source, the USDA, that we are effectively using research to accomplish program goals – and again this supports the value gained from partnering with the PIE Center,” Feiber said.

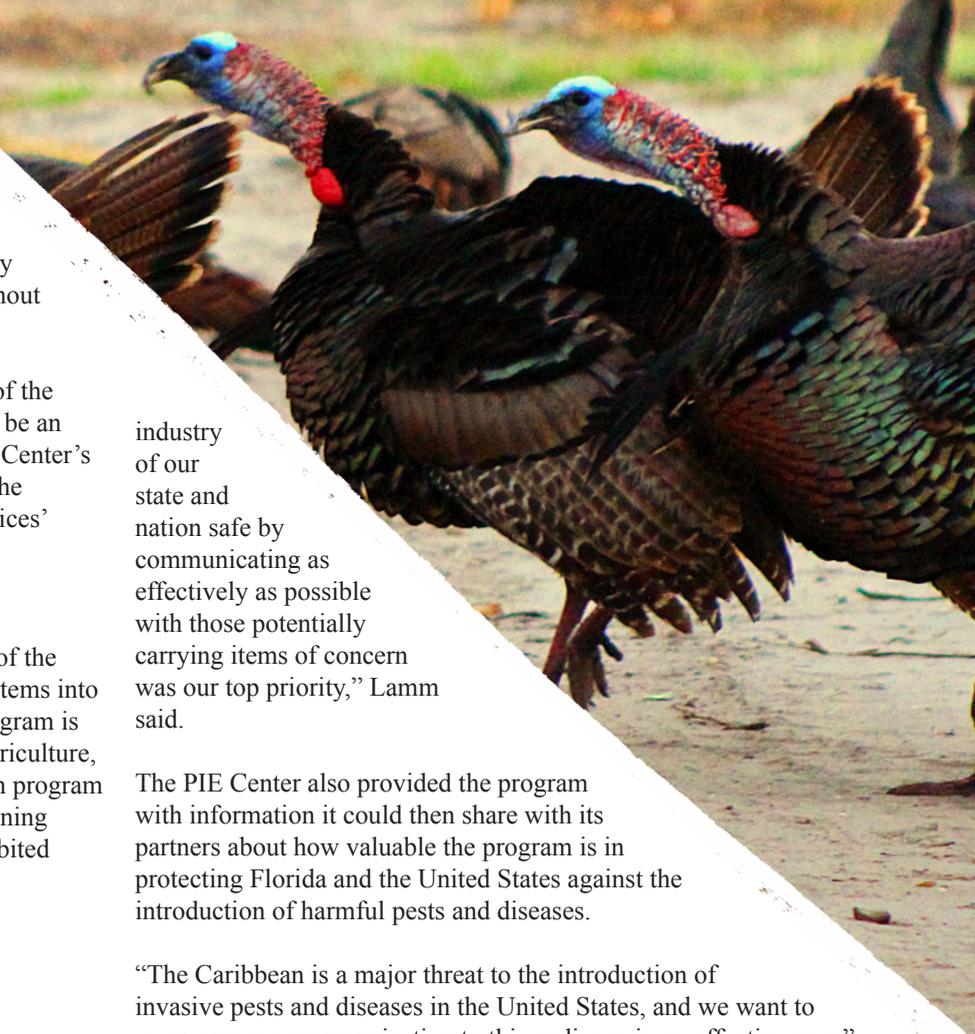
Overall, the PIE Center has been able to work with the Don’t Pack a Pest program to offer recommendations on how to better reach audiences more effectively through outreach and communication.

“The consultation and collaboration with the PIE Center has been a valuable program tool, and we highly value the input Alexa and the PIE Center have provided,” Feiber said.



THE CONSULTATION AND COLLABORATION WITH THE PIE CENTER HAS BEEN A VALUABLE PROGRAM TOOL, AND WE HIGHLY VALUE THE INPUT ALEXA AND THE PIE CENTER HAVE PROVIDED.

DENISE FEIBER | FDACS DIVISION OF PLANT INDUSTRY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER





The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) conducts research and educates on how people form and act on opinions regarding complex agricultural and natural resources issues. The PIE Center encourages informed decision-making in three important areas.

EXPLORING EMERGING ISSUES IMPACTING FOOD AND AGRICULTURE.

ADVANCING THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF WATER AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

HELPING COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS UNDERSTAND AND ADAPT TO CHANGING AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUES.

Learn more about how the PIE Center encourages informed decision-making at piecenter.com



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