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For Immediate Release

Current research from the Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources makes an effort to present the public with facts to promote a positive outlook on the agriculture and natural resources industry.

“The PIE center does something that doesn’t really exist anywhere else... trying to bridge the gap between the public and agriculture and natural resources,” Laura Bernheim media coordinator for the center said.

Organizations contact the PIE center to find out how well their communications methods are being perceived by the public. Research is conducted by piloting focus groups, communications audits, content analysis and general surveys to find out how the public views current and emerging issues, Bernheim said.

“We provide trusted communications research on current and emerging issues in agriculture and natural resources,” she said.

Currently, the center works with a variety of organizations including Fresh from Florida, the Florida Forestry Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Florida Farm Bureau. The center uses the trusted communications research on public views to give advice on how organizations should reorganize their

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communications methods to convey the correct message to the public, Bernheim said.

“Communicating is important, but how you do it makes the most difference,” Bernheim said.

Focus group research has suggested that words and phrases are key in identifying what consumers view as positive. Therefore, it is necessary to communicate messages using consumer friendly images and phrases that give a clear mental image, she said.

The PIE center advises clients to use words and phrases such as farmer instead of farm-worker to promote a positive message with the same meaning. The word farmer gives an image of a happy, smiling farmer; whereas, the word farm-worker gives the impression of a migrant worker. Ultimately, the consumer will lean towards the positive image over the negative image, Bernheim said.

The Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) finds tested, research-based solutions to key agricultural and natural resources issues by conducting practical research on perceptions of public policy, resulting in effective communication and proactive education strategies.

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