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Florida Turfgrass Industry Evaluates Research Needs with State and National Researchers

ORLANDO, Fla. (*May 21, 2008*): The Florida turfgrass industry recently met with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to prioritize the industry's research needs. The two-day meeting, held in Orlando, brought the industry together to brainstorm critical issues in the areas of golf, sod and seed, athletic turf/parks and recreation, and lawn care/grounds maintenance.

"The Florida Turfgrass Research Needs Workshop was a starting point to discuss a coordinated effort in the area of turfgrass research on a state and national level," said Florida Turfgrass Association (FTGA) Board Member Greg Pheneger. "We addressed the industry's challenges by segment and region with the intention of finding long-term solutions."

The meeting was organized by the USDA and the FTGA. Attendees included industry professionals, as well as representatives from USDA, the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), and the National Turfgrass Federation.

"As the primary scientific research agency of USDA, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) was pleased to receive excellent input from the Florida turfgrass industry concerning priority research needs," said Dr. Calvin Arnold, director of the USDA-ARS Horticulture Lab in Ft. Pierce. "We look forward to the workshop written report including the summary of critical issues facing the industry."

The USDA is drafting a post-meeting report that will examine areas of concerns and establish priorities. The report is expected to be released in the fall of 2008.

The Florida turfgrass industry has a \$5 billion economic impact in the state and provides about 84,000 jobs. FTGA, founded in 1952, advocates for and promotes the turfgrass industry with research, continuing education, and networking opportunities for turfgrass professionals. For more information, visit www.ftga.org.