

# IMPROVING FLORIDA'S POTATO INDUSTRY

**UF/IFAS Extension provides research and science-based educational programs to potato growers and farm managers in Florida to help increase the industry's sustainability, profitability, and competitiveness. Since 2012, researchers and Extension faculty have been working with a three-generation, commercial potato farm in Manatee County to test water-saving irrigation methods, with impressive results.**

## Less Water, Big Savings

**1 million**

gallons of water saved per day by switching to center-pivot (overhead) irrigation

**58%**

less irrigation over 6-year period

**2 billion**

gallons saved between 2012 and 2017, valued at

**\$19.8 million**

in savings\*

## Less Fertilizer, Higher Yields

UF/IFAS faculty have educated potato growers to apply fertilizer through center-pivot irrigation systems, known as “fertigation,” resulting in:

**20%**

increase in potato tuber yield in Manatee County

**30-40 lbs**

per acre reduction in nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium fertilizer by each of the Manatee County commercial potato producers surveyed, valued at

**\$369,460**

annually\*\*

**\$1.8 million**

savings since 2012

One recent test on the three-generation farm reported:

**30% less**

fertilizer used due to fertigation resulted in

**6% more**

potatoes.

## Potential Statewide Savings

**29,300 acres** of potatoes grown in Florida

**8.9 billion** gallons of water saved per year if all converted to overhead irrigation



\*In Manatee County, water price ranges between 0.99 to 1.11 cents/gallon. Savings based on the more conservative 0.99 cents.

\*\*Savings based on fertilizer costs of \$543/ton nitrogen, \$540/ton phosphorus pentoxide, and \$425/ton potassium oxide.