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Retired Florida State Professor Gets \$2.33 Million Grant From USDA

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- The United States Department of Agriculture has announced a [A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#) \$2.33 million, one-year grant to Florida State University's James J. O'Brien to help farmers throughout the Southeast get the most from their crops.

O'Brien, Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of meteorology and oceanography, retired, is currently a part-time researcher in the Florida State Center for Ocean and Atmospheric Prediction Studies (COAPS).

Florida State is the prime contractor for the Cooperative Research, Education and Extension Service award, but will share it with the other universities that make up the Southeast Climate Consortium (SECC) -- The University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Alabama-Huntsville, Auburn University, North Carolina State University, University of Miami and Clemson University.

The SECC supplies seasonal climate forecasts tailored for farmers in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina and South Carolina. Users can make decisions on planting dates, crop choices, fertilizer treatments, irrigation and more to improve their crop production.

O'Brien praised U.S. Rep. Allen Boyd, who was instrumental in convincing the USDA to support the consortium for its knowledge delivery to farmers. He also cited the support of COAPS Director Eric Chassignet, who has applauded using the scientific data for such a practical application.

"The agricultural community in Florida, Georgia and Alabama use the research findings to change their planting practices with good results," O'Brien said, "thereby increasing their profits."

County-by-county information to help farmers make decisions can be found at www.agroclimate.org.

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