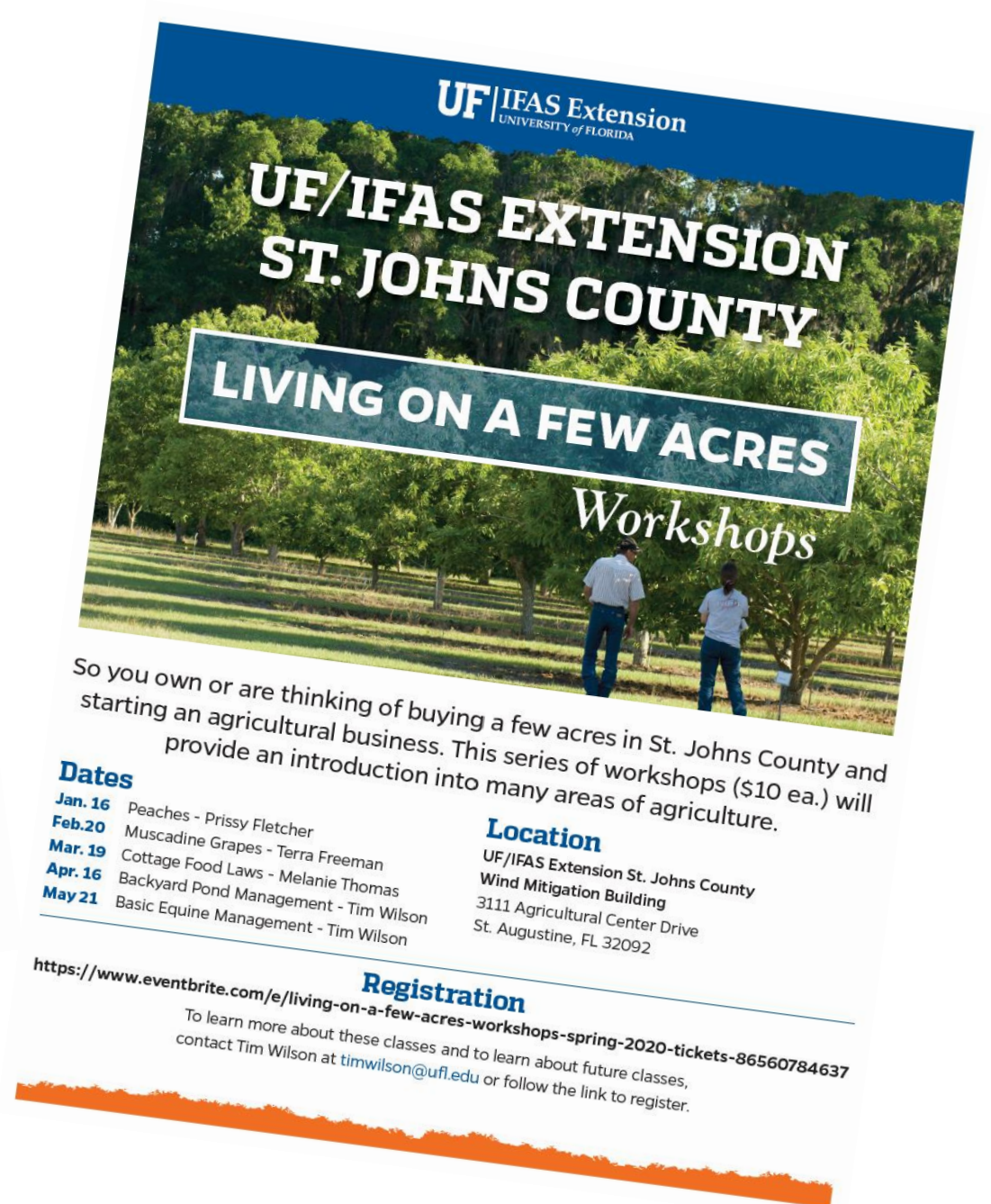
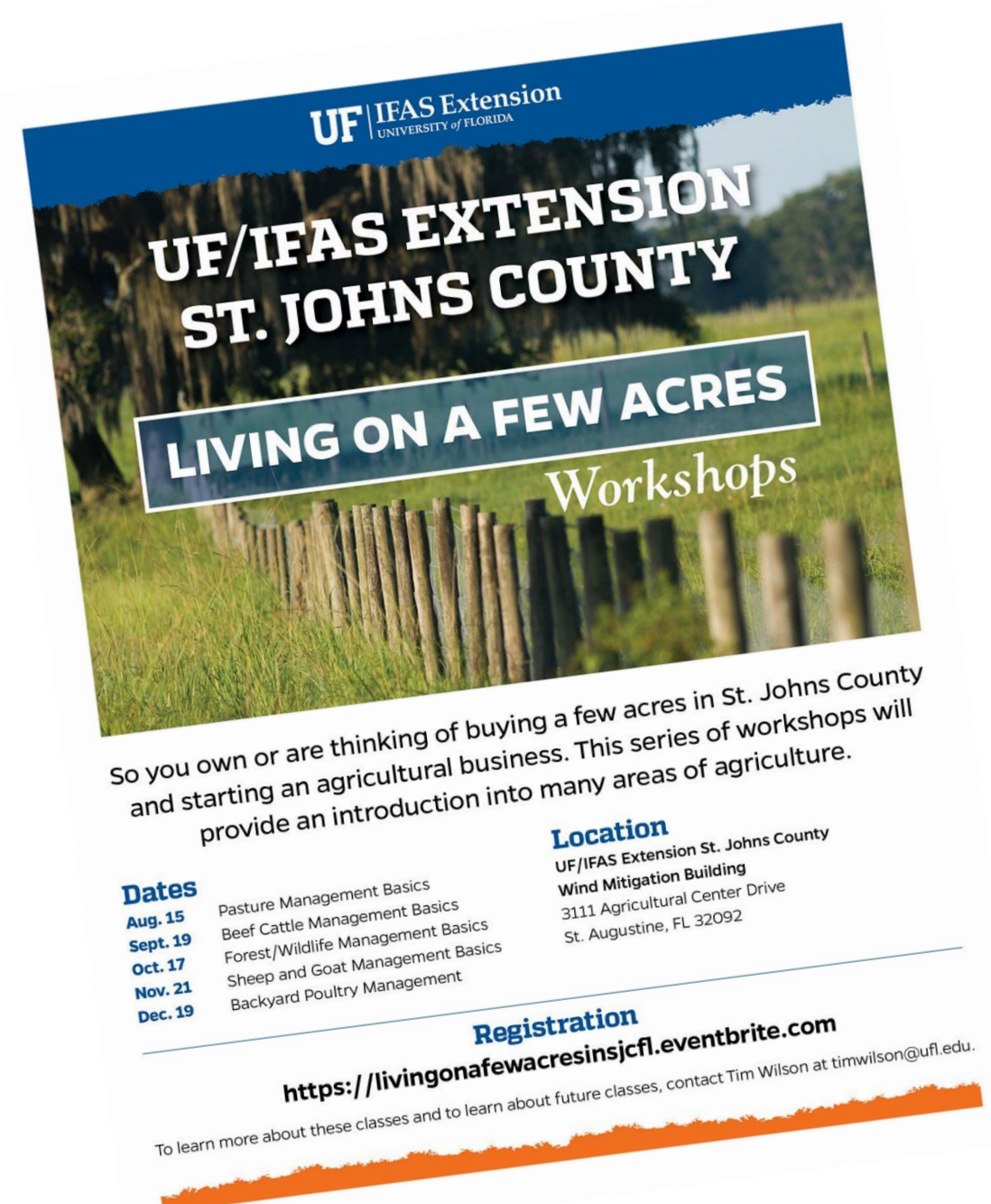


# “Living on a Few Acres” in St. Johns County, FL – Developing Agriculture Extension Programming to Meet the Needs of Small Landowners

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## Introduction

Historically, St. Johns County Florida has been an agricultural hub that produced vegetables, beef cattle and citrus. From 2010 through 2019, the population of St. Johns County increased 25% and is expected to continue increasing over the next 10 years. This growth has reduced the amount of land used for agriculture in the County. However, as this transition occurs, residents who own or are thinking of purchasing smaller tracts of land may be interested in starting a production agriculture enterprise.



## Objectives

1. Provide extension office awareness to the public.
2. Reach new or existing small acreage landowners and provide extension, educational programming to meet their needs.
3. Utilize subject-matter expertise that exists within UF/IFAS and our partners.
4. Help our clientele make sound decisions related to their situations.

## Material and Methods

The “Living on a Few Acres” in St. Johns County workshop series was developed to provide introductory agricultural production classes on various topics each month to help clientele make decisions on whether to develop an agricultural business on their land. One-hour classes were offered on the third Thursday of each month to address topics of interest. In-person programming was used from August 2019 till March 2020. Topics ranged from livestock production to berry production. To promote these workshops to new clientele, YouTube videos were developed by the SJC Communications Department and sent to multiple media outlets in addition to traditional marketing efforts. Once COVID-19 became an issue in mid-March, this program was adjusted from an in-person format (that met at our office) to a virtual program.



## Results and Discussion

1. In-person participation ranged from 2 – 17, with most classes having small numbers. Although participation seemed low, it was apparent that those in attendance were serious about developing an agricultural enterprise with their small acreage.
2. Virtual programming has ranged from 15 – 33, with participants from multiple states and Counties from South Florida to the Panhandle.
3. **Our outreach efforts have increased based on the adjustment from in-person to virtual programming.**
4. Due to the variety of classes we’ve offered, and the expertise we’ve utilized, **Extension awareness has increased**
5. We note that our programming is for Florida residents since we provide recommendations based on UF guidance.
6. Several participants have attended multiple classes to integrate various production systems on their farms.
7. Some participants have even used these classes as a networking venue to meet other small farm operations in the area.



Scan for accessing our educational videos.

## Conclusion

Overall, participants indicated the classes provided the information they expected related to each topic. Small landowners seem to prefer virtual learning opportunities. Several participants who have indicated they want to move forward with their enterprise will need additional information.

