UF/IFAS BLOGGING
BEST PRACTICES

Welcome Bloggers & Future Bloggers!
Covered in this section:

Welcome to Blogs.IFAS  |  Why Blog with Blogs.IFAS?
Web Services Request Form  |  Becoming a Blogger
Your Author Profile
Blogs.IFAS 2.0: Launched!
Awards for Blogs.IFAS 2.0 Redesign

The Communicator Awards 2022 awards the Blogs.IFAS Website Redesign!

- Blogs.IFAS Website Redesign Features: Website Redesign Distinction Award
- Blogs.IFAS Website Redesign General: Blog - Cultural Distinction Award
Welcome to Blogs.IFAS.UFL.EDU

• 100+ Blogs
• 700+ Bloggers

2.4 MILLION+ PAGEVIEWS
4,000+ ORGANIC SUBSCRIBERS TO EMAIL DIGEST
190,000+ SOCIAL REFERRALS
Why Blog with Blogs.IFAS?

Elevate your voice: Expand the reach of your research and educational efforts

Ease of use: Easily host your dynamic virtual content

Quantify your reach: Blog visitor activity is quantifiable using Google Analytics

UF/IFAS Blogging Platform provides a unique level of reach

Blogs are a dynamic, personal way to interact with a global audience

Sometimes the media picks up content from Blogs.IFAS

Share your blog posts on social media platforms

Share your blog posts in e-newsletters

Share your blog posts as a feed to an IFAS website
Blogging Platform Support

Resources
- Blogging Resources Website: [https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/our-services/blogging/](https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/our-services/blogging/)

Submit a Question / Request
- Submit a Web Services Request Form: [https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/web-work-request/](https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/web-work-request/)
- Email webteam@ifas.ufl.edu

Tell us if you don’t find what you’re looking for!
webteam@ifas.ufl.edu
IFAS Web Services
Request Form

https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/web-work-request/

IFAS WEB SERVICES REQUEST FORM

Request Type*

- Bug Report
- Domain Name Approval
- Content Update
- Add Me To Blogs.IFAS
- Add Me To Google Analytics
- Add Me To TERMINALFOUR (T4)
- New Blog Project
- New Project (Website or Web Application)
Who Can Become a Blogger?

- We have blogs for Extension, RECs, Departments, Programs, Schools, Centers, Stations, etc...
- If you are unsure about what blog you would fit into, ask us!

ANYONE AT UF/IFAS!!!
How Do I Become a Blogger?

Easy as 1-2-3!

1) Fill out a web services request: 
   [https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/web-work-request/](https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/web-work-request/). The webteam will send you a link to complete a brief online training course.

2) E-mail us back to let us know you have completed the course, and we’ll add you to your blog.

3) Write your author profile, upload your profile image or avatar, and start blogging!
Having an author profile and photo can enhance readership and encourages readers to continue reading your blog posts.

Author profiles should:

- Be complete sentences
- Be in the third person
- End with preferred contact information
  - Email, formatted: name [at] ufl [dot] edu, or
  - social media handles
- Include a profile photo or avatar

Author Profile

Lara Milligan

Lara Milligan is the Natural Resources Agent for UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County. Her work focuses on wildlife, water, and general environmental education.
How to Edit Your Author Profile

1. Profile Image: Email
   danisadi@ufl.edu

2. Author Profile
   Howdy, danisadi!

3. Profile Image: Email
   webteam@ifas.ufl.edu
Highlight Your Blog Series On Your Author Profile Page

• Once you have a blog tag for your series, you can use it on posts in the series.
  • Reach out to WebTeam to have this series to appear on your Author Profile page.

• Promote this series with its dedicated tag feed page in your social media or email digests.

• Create a Blog Series and Add to Your Author Profile
Highlight Your Blog Series On Your Author Profile Page

2. Click on your username in the upper-right corner to access your user profile.
3. Scroll down to “Blog Series Tags (Slugs)”. Add the slug for any of your own blog series that you want to appear on your Author Profile page.
4. To find the “slug” for your series' tag, navigate to the series tag feed page, and copy the slug at the end.

blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/global/tag/voices-of-UF-IFAS/
Questions?
How to Publish a Post: Create a New Post

• Login to WordPress
• Go to Posts > Add New
How to Publish a Post: The WordPress Edit Post Page

Undergraduate Student Feature: Jennifer Jordan, Food Science

We're excited to welcome Jennifer Jordan to the Discover FSHN Series! Jennifer Jordan is a Food science student from Tampa, FL in her last semester at UF. Read about how she chose Food Science as her major, her unique virtual internship with PepsiCo, her fascination with history, and how crepes inspired her.

How would you share: How did you choose the Food Science program at UF?

I entered UF as an engineering student in my freshman year. Quickly, I realized that my professional goal was to work in the food industry. I wanted to create new and unique formulations or types of food and bring joy to people through the foods they eat. Food and meals create bonds between members of society. I want my creations and impact in the food industry to facilitate these bonds between people.

The unconventional virtual internship was an enlightening experience that helped me strengthen valuable skills including time management and knowledge transfer.
How to Publish a Post:
Ready to Publish

1. **Save** draft regularly
2. **Preview** post before Publishing
3. Click **Publish** when ready to post publicly
Adding Co-Authors and Guest Authors

• Authors:
  • Email webteam@ifas.ufl.edu to add another user as a co-author to a blog post

• Editors:
  • Directions on following slide.

• Note: Google Analytics only tracks pageviews for the first author listed.

Science Is Slow, But It Is Worth It

Science is responsible for many amazing discoveries. It allowed us to put people in space, cure diseases, and even manage unwanted plants with great precision. The UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants (CAIP) was established by the Florida legislature in 1975, and today it is internationally recognized for having the most relevant information on invasive plant management. All the Center's scientific work is exercised to co-conduct research that guides management while gaining a better understanding of these plants. This research can be frustrating because the science is slow, but it is worth it.

Using the Scientific Method

Depending on the topic, it can take months or even years for a scientist to deliver solutions. So why does the process take so much time?

To start, a researcher makes an observation that they want to better understand. From there, they read the published literature and speak to experts in order to learn more about this topic. Based on this background information, a hypothesis is developed. Establishing a hypothesis basically means that the researcher develops an idea about what they think is happening and why it occurred.

New Episode from Naturally Florida: “Coyotes are here to stay!”

You have probably seen headlines about coyote population explosions, or perhaps your Nextdoor app has informed you about recent coyote sightings in your neighborhood. Coyotes still feel like a relatively new species here in Florida, but they made their way here in the 1930s and can now be found in every county in Florida. Despite some people's efforts to remove this species, researchers and wildlife biologists have shown that eradication efforts are not effective for coyotes. Find out why and how we can learn to coexist with them in our latest Naturally Florida podcast episode.

In this episode, we explore the history of how coyotes made their way to Florida, some interesting facts about their biology, including their critical role in the ecosystem, and of course, ways we can learn to live alongside coyotes in rural and urban settings.

We hope this brief introduction to coyotes will help you feel more informed and excited about the presence of coyotes in the state. With your help, we have a much better chance of reducing people's fears about coyotes and learning to appreciate them.

New Episode from Naturally Florida

Naturally Florida is a podcast about Florida's natural areas and the wild things that live here. Recently released a new episode about coyotes in Florida.

Check it out, below on Spotify, or on your favorite podcast platform.
Editors Guide to Adding Co-Authors

1. Navigate to the **Edit Post** page in WordPress.
2. Verify that the **Authors** webpart is accessible: Click **Screen Options** in the upper-right corner. Ensure **Authors** is checked.
3. In the **Authors** webpart, you can add an author by typing into the **Search for an author** box. If needed, you can remove an author clicking **Remove** next to their name.
4. Click **Update** to save your changes.
Blogging Hack #1: Grammarly Browser Plugin

- The Grammarly plugin is free
- Installs on your browser
- Checks grammar and spelling on any applications running on your browser – including WordPress!
- To install Grammarly on your browser:
  1. Go to Grammarly.com, select “Add to <your browser>”
  2. Click “Add Extension”
  3. Sign up by creating a Grammarly account.
Writing a Great Blog Post

The Good

> Short, informal, conversational
> Identify and write for your target audience(s)
> Use high-resolution images from approved sources
> Proofread title & content for grammar and organization
> Use headings if content is long or covers multiple subjects
> Post regularly

300-500 words

Usually, the general public

Easier with a team. Highlight research / events / seasonal content.

The Bad

> Don’t plagiarize. Words or images!
> Don’t share press releases before they are officially released
> Avoid bias--Stick to scientific findings & recommendations
> Don’t post ads, promotions, or spam
### What Makes a Great Title?

**Do...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keep titles short, engaging, and informative</th>
<th>• Ex: “New Citrus Rootstocks Created by UF/IFAS Researchers”, “Birdwatching in Your Own Backyard”, “5 Salt Tolerant Native Plants for Coastal Florida”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use question words (who, what, where, why, when, and how) to set up your title or heading</td>
<td>• Ex: “How to Prepare for El Niño”; “What You Need to Know about Africanized Bees”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check for grammar &amp; use title case, ie,</td>
<td>• Capitalize all words except: a, an, and, at, but, by, for, in, nor, of, on, or, so, the, to, up, yet* (unless yet is acting as a verb).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include a “Part I” or subheadings if the post is part of a series</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Don’t...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use long cumbersome titles or headings</th>
<th>• Ex: “Five New Citrus Rootstocks Have Been Created by Citrus Researchers at Citrus Research and Education Center, Lake Alfred, Florida”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use charged or alarmist language.</td>
<td>• Ex: “Stop El Niño from Destroying Your Home”; “Keep Your Family Safe from Killer Bees”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59% of people will share an article without reading it first, or ever!
Writing for Your Target Audience

Who am I writing for?
• Who will benefit from this information?

For the topic I am writing about, what does my audience want to know?
• Do they need any background information?

How will they use this information?

How do I want to impact my audience?
• Do I want to inform my audience?
• Do I want to teach my audience how to do something?
• Do I want to change my audience’s behavior?

Creating a target audience profile can be a great pre-writing exercise. Helps to determine what to include, what to exclude, and helps determine the tone and style of the post.

People consume online information different from printed material... Online readers tend to scan for content looking for key pieces of information, then decide to read more or find other content.

Your target audience may shift depending on the topic and content of your posts.
Categories & Tags

Categories determine where you blog is organized within Blogs.IFAS
- Choose one or more categories from the list

Tags help search engines & readers find your content
- Type in tags manually. Find recommended tags in the Blog Tag Lexicon
Assigning Categories to your post on the WordPress Edit Post Page allows your posts to appear in the following places:

1. Post will be organized into the Blogs.IFAS “Browse by Category” pages.
2. Post will also appear in blog email digests based on categories selected in subscription sign-up.
3. (If applicable) Posts will appear on your County’s SFYL homepage: Select the Sort by Your Interest dropdown to see blog posts for that Category.

Assigning Categories to Elevate Content
How to Upload a Featured Image

- Size requirement: 1650x470 pixels OR 1338 x 357 pixels
- Editing tools—many options!
  - MS Paint, MS Paint 3D, Pixlr, Adobe Photoshop, GIMP, Canva

Remember to only use images you have permission to use!
• Optimized images are images with the ideal image size for best page load time and best image quality.
  • Optimized images will be between on average around 500 KB. Maximum size 2.2 MB.
• How to optimize my image for a blog?
  • Tiny PNG: a free website: https://tinypng.com/
  • Photoshop
  • Built-in WordPress image optimizing tool
  • Note: Do not use more than one image-optimizing tool.
FEATURED IMAGES
CROPPING, OPTIMIZING, AND SAVING

**IMAGE CROPPED**
1650x470 pixels
120 dpi/ppi

**JPEG**
- I SAVED AS AN OPTIMIZED JPG
  - USING PHOTOSHOP IMAGE SIZE 2.2M OR LESS
  - UPLOAD TO TERMINALFOUR (T4) WEBSITE

- I SAVED AS AN UNOPTIMIZED JPG
  - IMAGE SIZE 2.2M OR GREATER
  - UPLOAD TO BLOGS:IFAS
    - USE IMAGE COMPRESSION OPTIONS "Basic and then press the Compress button within the BLOGS:IFAS MEDIA LIBRARY"

**PNG**
- THE IMAGE BACKGROUND IS TRANSPARENT
  - NO CONSIDER USING A JPG
  - YES
    - SAVE AS AN UNOPTIMIZED/HIGH-QUALITY PNG
    - UPLOAD TO TERMINALFOUR (T4) WEBSITE

- OPTIMIZE IMAGE USING TINY PNG
  - DON'T OVER OPTIMIZE THE IMAGE
  - UPLOAD TO TERMINALFOUR (T4) WEBSITE

*Do not upload large image sizes to the web.*
Blogging Hack #2: Compress Photos using Built-In WordPress Image Compression Tool

1. After you upload your image, click on the image to view Attachment details.
2. On the right-hand side, click Compress.

Note: Do not Compress images with multiple tools. Optimized (compressed) images will be between on average around 500 KB. Maximum size 2.2 MB.
Blogging Hack #3
Center Content in Your Header Image

Center important information in your blog post header image

- Blog header images are formatted square-shaped in some UF/IFAS blog feeds

https://extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu/
Image Editing Guides & Tutorials

- Guide to Cropping Photos with Paint 3D

- Featured image editing using Photoshop, Pixlr, and MS Paint
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzvzmqR0DAA&t=2s

- Photo Editing using Canva
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmRmgsYhn2I&feature=youtu.be

- Photo editing using GIMP
  - https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/495bb506ea674fa093bf8309217d77f21d

- Formatting Images within Blog Posts
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqFzoc8GQLY&feature=youtu.be

- https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/our-services/blogging/ (under How Do I Crop Photos for My Blog Posts?)
Approved Photo Sources

• Photos you take yourself or from someone else in your department (be sure to verify the origin)
  • Request release forms if image includes people from a private event that were not UF/IFAS employees. Always use release forms if the photo includes a minor.
    • General Consent and Release Form: https://branding.ifas.ufl.edu/media/brandingifasufledu/UF-IFAS-Video-Photo-Release.pdf

• UF/IFAS Photo Archive
  • http://photos.ifas.ufl.edu/

• UF Stock Photos
  • http://identity.ufl.edu/resources/stock-photography/
  • Credit the University or a specific name if there is photo credit information

• UF/IFAS Entomology Photo Archive
  • http://entomology.ifas.ufl.edu/imgs/
Stock Featured Images on UF/IFAS Photos Database

New featured images available in UF/IFAS Photos Database

Search for tag / key word “featured image” or “blog”

Downloading Featured Images from UF/IFAS Photos Database
Heart Button – How to Use and Report

• Engaging
  • Readers on Blogs.IFAS posts can now interact by clicking the “heart” icon at the bottom of your post.

• Reporting
  • Navigate to the All Posts page, find your post in the listing. The Likes column shows the number of times the post has been “liked” or “hearted”.

Engaging

Readers on Blogs.IFAS posts can now interact by clicking the “heart” icon at the bottom of your post.

Reporting

Navigate to the All Posts page, find your post in the listing. The Likes column shows the number of times the post has been “liked” or “hearted”.

More From Blogs.IFAS

• Wild Weeds - Goldenrod
Blog Post Checklist

- Insert Text Body/Content
- Edit Content in Wordpress (Add Headings, Links, etc…)
- Insert Title
- Upload Featured Image
- Select Category/ies
- Add Tags
- Click Publish!

Blogger Tools

- Find this Checklist on the How to Post button on the Blogger Resources ICS Site: https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/media/brandingifasufledu/blog-pdfs/How-to-Post.pdf
Questions?
Covered in this section:

- How to Access Analytics
- Blog Feeds & SFYL Connectivity
- Publish → Promote
- Blog Accessibility Tips
- Video Resources for Bloggers
- Subscriptions / Blog Digests
Two ways to access analytics data

Both tools use the same Google Analytics blog data.

Google Data Studio
Shows Blog analytics only

Google Analytics
Also able to access SFYI data
Access Google Data Studio

- Navigate to https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/our-services/blogging/
- Under Blog Analytics / Pageviews > Google Data Studio, click on Google Data Studio Listings
Access Google Analytics

IFAS WEB SERVICES REQUEST FORM

Request Type*
○ Bug Report
○ Domain Name Approval
○ Content Update
○ Add Me To Blogs IFAS
○ Add Me To Google Analytics
○ Add Me To TERMINAL FOUR (T4)
○ New Blog Project
○ New Project (Website or Web Application)

Is this request for analytics for a county Extension web site?
○ Yes, this is for a county Extension office.
○ No, this is for a unit other than a county Extension office.

Name*
First
Last

https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/web-work-request/
Blog Feeds: SFYL Connectivity

Events pull from County’s Google Calendar

All other blog posts are pulled in based on the Category assigned related to this dropdown menu. The most recent posts appear first.

Call-Out Section for Featured Blog Posts

Call-out for Promoted Blog Posts (usually from the UF/IFAS Dean)

Call-Out Section for Event-Related Blog Posts
Blog Feeds: SFYL Connectivity

To show a Blog Post in the Featured Call-Out Area

Assign the blog post to the following:
- Add the “Featured” tag to the post.
- Assign blog post to the following Categories:
  One or more of the following (based on the “Sort by your interest” dropdown menu):
  Agriculture, Natural Resources, Home Landscapes, Work & Life, 4-H & Youth.

To show an Event Blog in the Event Call-Out Area

Assign Events-related blog post to the following Categories:
- Events
- One or more of the following (based on the “Sort by your interest” dropdown menu):
  Agriculture, Natural Resources, Home Landscapes, Work & Life, 4-H & Youth.

To feed blog posts into the SFYL County Homepage

Assign blog posts to the following Categories:
- One or more of the following (based on the “Sort by your interest” dropdown menu):
  Agriculture, Natural Resources, Home Landscapes, Work & Life, 4-H & Youth.
BLOGGING BEST PRACTICES | ANALYTICS, BLOG FEEDS, & OTHER TOOLS

Blog Feeds: IFAS Websites

T4

• Examples: IFAS.ufl.edu, SFYL.ifas.ufl.edu, extadmin.ifas.ufl.edu, program and department websites, etc.
• Platform: T4
• Who can update: T4 moderators (anyone who has taken T4 training)
• Support: ICS Web Team

Blogs

• Examples: All blogs at BLOGS.IFAS.ufl.edu
• Platform: WordPress
• Who can update: Bloggers (anyone who has taken blog training)
• Support: Blog Community Manager & ICS Web Team

https://water.ifas.ufl.edu/
Promoting Your Post

- **Add Categories to your post**: Allows your post to appear in subscription digest emails and SFYL Homepages (if applicable).
- **Add Tags to your post**: Helps search engines find your content and helps readers find your content on our site.
- **Include media (photos, video) on your post**: Media encourages readers to stay on your blog post longer, and video can increase your organic search views.

Check out this training on T4 & Blogs.IFAS Integration: [https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/eeae81f55134478d9ce7766dbe36e8381d](https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/eeae81f55134478d9ce7766dbe36e8381d)

- **Add a Blog Feed to your website**: A great way to add dynamic content to your site, encouraging more visits.
- **Promote your post on your social media accounts**: Plan your posts to go out around the same time you publish on your blog to notify followers of your new content.
- **Add a Blog Feed to your website**: A great way to add dynamic content to your site, encouraging more visits.
- **Tag UF/IFAS on your social media posts, as we may share/retweet**:
  - Facebook: @UFIFASNews
  - Twitter: @UF_IFAS
  - Instagram: @ufifas_solutions
  - YouTube: @IFASVideo

Check out this training on T4 & Blogs.IFAS Integration: [https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/eeae81f55134478d9ce7766dbe36e8381d](https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/eeae81f55134478d9ce7766dbe36e8381d)
Blog Accessibility: Image Tips

Inclusive Blog Writing
- Writing for the greatest number of blog readers.
- Consider tech literacy, physical ability, gender, age, language ability, and access to money, time, and social networks.

Do not use words on images*
- *Unless image is developed with the Graphics Department using UF-branded fonts and styles

Include “Alt” Text on All Images
- Screen readers will read this alt text to visually impaired users to communicate the content of the image.
- Alt text also helps search engines index your images.

Avoid uploading too-large images
- Use tinypng to optimize your image and shrink the file size

Use captions on photos and tables included within your blog post.
• Do not upload photos with text*
  • Google cannot read this text
  • Screenreaders / visually impaired users cannot read this text
  • The font on these images is not UF branded (unless developed by Graphics Dept).

*The exception is a featured image or header developed with the Graphics Department using UF-branded fonts and styles
Blog Accessibility:
Writing Tips

Focus on Accessibility

• 20 percent of the population estimated to have a disability

Accessibility: Lowering or eliminating barriers to participation.

Use Simple Language

Title Links Conscientiously

• Text such as “click here” or “read more” can make it difficult for people with screen readers to understand where a link will take them. Instead of these short phrases, hyperlink fully descriptive text so that users will know where they are going when they follow a link.

Utilize Headings

• Screen readers will use these headings to jump through the page to determine which section to read. (Another good reason to nest your headings correctly.)
• The first header is always Header 2 (the title of your blog is Header 1).
Video Resources for Bloggers

**Video Editing**
- Trimming Video Blog Post
- Trimming Videos with YouTube Studio Editor
- Video Captioning for Youtube
- Make Playlists in YouTube
- Basic Video Editing with Microsoft Photos App

**Embedding Video**
- Embedding Videos into a Blogs.IFAS Post

**Recording & Posting an iPhone Video**
- Using Mobile Devices for Video Production
- Vlogging with iPad

**Recording & Posting a Zoom Meeting**
- Using Zoom as an Online Tool (minute 21:00 reviews recording your meeting)

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Al Williamson, Production Manager, Video Department
- alwill@ufl.edu

Video Services Website
- [https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/our-services/video-services/](https://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/our-services/video-services/)
• If you embed a YouTube video in your blog post, you can now track play events and pause events in Google Analytics.
Tracking YouTube Video Plays in Google Analytics

To view video plays and pauses:
1. Log into Google Analytics, navigate to Behavior > Events > Top Events.
2. In the upper-right corner, select the desired date range for the data.
3. Click on Secondary Dimension. Type in Page and select Page. From here, you can either scroll down to find your page in the list. Alternatively, you can apply a filter for your blog’s page.
Agent Luis R. Rodriguez at rodriguezrosado@ufl.edu or call us at 863-519-1041. This program is a UF/IFAS Extension program which is "An Equal Opportunity Institution".

Authors: Luis R. Rodriguez | Small Farms Agent and Shreemoyee Ghosh | 4-H Agent at UF/IFAS Extension Polk County

Word count: 643
Blogging Hack #4: Delay Publish Date

• Blog posts publish immediately when you click Publish.
• You can set publication for a future date, if desired.

Delay Publish Tip:
• This is helpful if you have more than one post ready at the same time and you don’t want to post them on the same day.
Subscription / Blog Digest

Follow Our Blog

- Email Address
- First Name
- Last Name

Subscribe

Search By Date

Select Month

Subscribe for More Great Content

Email Address *
First Name
Last Name

IFAS Blogs Categories
- Agriculture
- Natural Resources
- Home Landscapes
- Work & Life
- 4-H & Youth
- All Categories

Yes, Subscribe Me!
Questions?

Danyel Boudreau
Blogs.IFAS Online
Community Manager
danisadi@ufl.edu
webteam@ifas.ufl.edu