

# CARES Recipient Profile

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## 2017 CARES Recipient

**Farm:** Southern Hill Farms

**Location:** Clermont, Florida

**Date of Origination:** 1999

**Commodities:** Blueberries, Landscaping  
Trees



David Hill, Owner of Southern Hill Farms in Clermont, Florida has been farming his entire life growing fresh market vegetables on his family's farm until 1999 when he transitioned Southern Hill Farms to start growing 40 acres of blueberries and 80 acres of landscaping trees. What is extra special about this farm family is that they have opened their doors to the general public by making their operation a u-pick blueberry farm with a plethora of activities for families!

Hill desires to preserve his 120 acres of land so that his children can confidently continue to farm on it. Hill utilizes Best Management Practices to help reduce water use and also maintain and improve water quality on and around the property. BMPs are practical, cost-effective actions that agricultural producers can take to conserve water and reduce the amount of pesticides, fertilizers, animal waste and other pollutants entering our water resources. BMPs are designed to benefit water quality and water conservation while maintaining or even enhancing agricultural production.

Hill uses BMPs such as drip irrigation to deliver water and fertilizer exactly where is needed and through the controlled pressure flow is able to prevent runoff from occurring. Over-head wobblers also assist with watering and frost protection. On-site weather stations monitor soil moisture through in-ground sensors which provide real time data to meet water needs in specific areas of the farm. On the tree side of the farm 100% of the water used for irrigation is reclaimed water. With 2/3 of

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Southern Hill Farms operating solely on reclaimed water effectively preserves the local groundwater supply. Soil and tissue samples are also taken regularly to analyze nutrient needs and ensure the farm does not over-fertilize the blueberry bushes and landscaping trees.

With an intricate BMP Program, Hill and his family farm are able to produce high quality products while protecting local natural resources. Florida Farm Bureau is proud to recognize Mr. David Hill, the Hill family and Southern Hill Farms with a 2017 CARES Award for working diligently to provide fresh market blueberries to Floridians using innovative practices while protecting and preserving your local natural resources.