

## Land is Florida's Woman of the Year in Ag

Annette Land of Branford has been awarded the Florida's Woman of the Year in Agriculture award, highlighting her accomplishments as an outstanding female in Florida's agricultural industry.

Land is a partner in a watermelon growing and shipping business and a cattle operation, as well as owner of Land Brokerage Realtor and shareholder and secretary/treasurer of Land Truck Brokerage Inc.

Land has worked in agriculture both on a state and national level for more than 50 years. She has managed all aspects of the family's watermelon business. In addition, Land worked in the National Watermelon Association for about 35 years. Land has served on the NWPB board of directors since 2000.



## Mechanical Fasteners Boost Uptime in Conveyor Applications

One way to improve uptime in conveyors using vulcanized (endless) belts is to switch to mechanical fasteners. Mechanical fasteners install quicker without dismantling the conveyor. Wear or damage becomes visible early enough to plan repairs. Five basic types suit different operations:

- Wire hook fasteners offer an economical, low-profile splice of wire hinge loops for belt thicknesses up to 25/64" (10 mm) and pulley diameters as small as 15/16" (24 mm). Optional welded assembly joins hooks to a crosswire for easier handling.

- Hinged-plate fasteners provide a strong, abrasion-resistant splice that grips the belt between upper and lower plates, compressed with staple attachments. One-piece fastener strips with pre-inserted staples install with a hammer and portable tool. These accommodate belt thicknesses from 1/16" to 1/4" (1.5–6.4 mm) and pulley diameters down to 2" (50 mm).

- Stamped metal tooth fasteners are preferred where users want a low-profile, hinged splice with no investment in installation tooling. Open-hinge loops formed in strips with pointed teeth are hammer-driven through the belt end. These accommodate belt thicknesses up to 1/2" (13 mm) and minimum pulley diameter of 1" (25 mm).

- Non-metallic fasteners won't trip x-ray scanners and metal detectors, or mar packaging. The plastic rivet, hinged-plate design uses a portable machine to compress the plates while spin-setting their molded-in "rivets". It suits low-tension belts up to 1/8" (3.2 mm) thick and minimum pulley diameters of 1-1/2" (38 mm).

- The plastic spiral fastener, a hook-like, low-profile alternative, negotiates pulleys or nosebars with diameters as small as 1/2" (13 mm), accommodates low-tension belts up to 1/4" (6 mm) thick.

*This information was submitted by H&D Public Relations on behalf of Flexco. CVM*



## USDA Will Purchase Blueberries

The USDA announced that it will purchase up to 10 million pounds of wild blueberries for donation to schools, neighborhood shelters and other institutions.

USDA purchased 13.8 million pounds of wild blueberries in fiscal year 2001. Very few other federal purchases of wild blueberries have been made in prior years.

## Arney Joins NWPB as Executive Director

Mark Arney, a 27-year veteran of the produce commodity business, has joined the National Watermelon Promotion Board (NWPB) as executive director.

Arney most recently served as the chief executive officer of the Michigan Apple Committee.

Arney also served in key merchandising positions for the Washington Apple Commission and USA Pears.



## Ground Broken on New Bio-Security Lab

Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner Charles Bronson broke ground in Kissimmee on a bio-safety lab that will enable his department to test for and detect potential bio-terrorist materials to protect state residents and their food supply.

The 1,650 square foot lab is known as a Level 3 Bio-Safety Laboratory – the only animal-testing facility of its kind in Florida. It is being constructed at the department's existing lab complex in Kissimmee and will expand the department's ability to diagnose foreign animal diseases.

Because of Florida's semi-tropical climate, its proximity to Latin and Central American and its huge tourism industry, the U.S. Department of Agriculture for years has regarded Florida as the single most vulnerable state in the country to the introduction of both animal and plant pest and diseases.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANS