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THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA'S DOCTOR OF PLANT MEDICINE PROGRAM: TRAINING THE IPM PRACTITIONERS OF TOMORROW

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The University of Florida has taken a bold step in teaching the intricacies of crop management with the creation of the Plant Medicine Program. Although other universities offer degree programs in IPM and plant protection, no other is as comprehensive as U. F.'s, leading to a Doctor of Plant Medicine (D.P.M.) degree. The innovative Plant Medicine Program offers students a multidisciplinary approach to developing solutions to the challenges of crop production. Extensive coursework in the Plant Sciences, Entomology, Plant Pathology, Nematology, and Pest Management prepares students to be successful problem solvers and decision makers. During multiple internships, students exchange ideas with academic and industry professionals, and apply their skills to practical situations. Interns have worked with private corporations, public institutions, and government agencies, in research, regulatory, and extension capacities. Florida's agricultural diversity is complemented by internships in other states and abroad. Students pursue a variety of interests, ranging from traditional agronomic crops, to ornamentals, turfgrass, vegetables, and temperate and tropical fruit crops. Each student may tailor the program to reflect specific interests, while maintaining a strong foundation in the core courses. Since its inception in 1999, enrollment in the D.P.M. program has grown to over 40 students. Beginning in 2004, graduates will become valued members of the global agricultural community.