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**2.5 Million Dollar Grant Awarded to Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' & Owners' Association and MaxWest Environmental Systems Partnership**

**New Technology Converts Horse Waste into Green Energy**

**Ocala, Fla.** (February 23, 2009) – The Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association (FTBOA) is pleased to announce that it, along with partner MaxWest Environmental Systems, has received a grant award in the amount of \$2,500,000 from the Florida Energy and Climate Commission for a green energy project. The project will design, build and operate a renewable energy facility, using the grant funding to help purchase waste handling and processing equipment. The facility is expected to process approximately 50,000 tons per year of stall waste and 50,000 tons per year of wood and organic waste, while producing approximately 10.5 megawatts of renewable energy. In addition to the positive environmental impact, the project will stimulate Florida's economy by creating at least 24 permanent employment opportunities as well as help retain the area's \$3.5 billion horse industry.

According to David Moore, Special Projects Marketing Director for MaxWest, this project has created important partnerships. "We certainly appreciate the Florida Department of Agriculture's consideration of this grant," said Moore. "We are excited about how this will affect the progress of the project."

The Florida Energy & Climate Commission is housed within the Executive Office of Governor Charlie Crist and is the primary organization for state energy and climate change programs and policies. The FTBOA / MaxWest grant proposal was evaluated based on a number of different criterion, including cost share percentage, economic development potential, energy efficiency and how the project fosters public awareness of renewable energy technologies.

"We are so excited to be a recipient of this grant," said Richard Hancock, Executive Vice President of FTBOA. "Governor Crist and Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson have done a phenomenal job promoting green technologies in our state. We are thankful for the support we have received locally from Marion County, the City of Ocala, and now from the state. The grant will be used to purchase waste handling and processing equipment for the gasification project."

With more than 35,000 Thoroughbred horses in the county, the disposal of stall waste is a concern. Animal waste contains pollutants that can contaminate surface and ground water supplies when disposed improperly. Currently, individual farms are responsible for stall waste disposal.

"We have spent a number of years trying to settle this issue for the thoroughbred farms. We appreciate the hard work from Bill Baker and David Moore of MaxWest and the dedication of the FTBOA partnership that has been put into this project," said Richard Hancock, executive vice president of FTBOA.

The collaborative efforts of MaxWest and FTBOA will provide horse owners with a convenient, environmentally friendly method of stall waste disposal that will also generate renewable green energy for the Ocala/Marion County community.

Known as the "Horse Capital of the World," Ocala/Marion County is home to 431 Thoroughbred breeding and training farms covering more than 70,000 acres of Florida's mineral-rich pastures. Since 1945 FTBOA has represented the Thoroughbred industry by administering awards programs for Florida-bred racehorses, promoting the industry to the country and the world, and is very active in issues facing the Thoroughbred industry.