



GEORGIA SEED
DEVELOPMENT

Athens Seed Facility
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August 2020 Update
www.gsdc.com

Plains Peanut Facility
1547 US Hwy 280 W
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Seed for Thought

Roger Boerma, Executive Director

As many of you may have heard, Ralph Johnson has retired as manager of the GSD Foundation Peanut Seed Facility in Plains, Georgia. For some reason his retirement reminds me of the movie "A Few Good Men" starring Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson. If you are wondering how the movie is related to his retirement, please keep reading.

Ralph has been a constant in our organization for 40 years. Those of us that worked with him were impressed with his even temperament and kind words. Throughout my 9 years at GSD I have learned to understand some of the traits that allowed him to achieve a high level of respect. He was always willing to do more than he expected of others. Ralph always treated everyone with dignity and strived to find the best in them. His passion, professional values, combined confidence and humility, and interpersonal skills propelled him to this level of excellence. He has clearly achieved the esteem of his colleagues at GSD and in the larger sphere of the entire peanut seed industry.



Ralph is an avid sports enthusiast, in particular, a Georgia Bulldog football fan. He enjoys a number of sports and outdoor activities such as a trip to Atlanta for a Braves baseball game and kayaking with a friend on a South Georgia river. Although you could tell he enjoyed his job, he couldn't wait to retire to avoid his annual fall conflict of bringing in a quality Foundation peanut crop while wanting to be in Athens at every University of Georgia football game. I have even heard him try to explain that it is a much shorter trip from his home near Lumpkin, Georgia to Athens to attend a Georgia football game than it is to attend a GSD function or Board meeting in Athens.

GSD was smart enough not to let Ralph get totally away. We have retained his services to oversee the completion of our new peanut warehouse and evaluate and provide GSD advice on how to improve the various processes in our peanut shelling and treating pipelines. His only stipulation in his consulting contract was that there would not be any consultations on football Saturdays.

All of us at GSD wish Ralph the very best as he begins this new phase in his life and we hope he gets to celebrate many victories on Dooley Field at Sanford Stadium. Go Dawgs!

Marketing

Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manager

As we continue to deal with Covid-19 issues, some of the winter trade shows are moving ahead with plans to hold in-person meetings. So far I have reserved booth space at two shows and waiting to hear from the other events regarding how they plan to move forward.



New and Familiar Faces



We are pleased to announce that Mr. William "Chad" Harris (*pictured left*) has joined the GSD team at Plains GA in the role of a Foundation Seed Production and Conditioning Specialist. Chad is from the Preston GA area and has considerable experience in research and growing peanuts, soybeans, cotton, corn, and vegetables. He obtained an Associate Degree in Applied Science of Agricultural Engineering from Abraham Baldwin College in Tifton GA.

We were fortunate this summer to bring back one of our former staff members, Mr. Dakota Fenton (*pictured right*), as an intern. Dakota worked at GSD for 3 years as a Seed Technician prior to going back to UGA to complete his B.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering. Dakota's internship responsibilities included creating schematic designs and optimizing our small grains/soybean conditioning line in Athens GA and our peanut shelling and treating lines in Plains GA.

Licensing

Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manager

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Licensing activity has remained steady for the past 2 months. We have had several amendments that were completed for various varieties. We are continuing to see requests for peanut and blueberry license agreements. International turfgrass licensing continues to move along with several new agreements and amendments. We are looking for the approval of release for several wheat varieties from Dr. Mergoum's program in the next few weeks. Once these varieties are released Brent and I will be working to get the Announcement of Licensing Opportunity out to prospective wheat licensees.

Processing/Production

Doug Batchelder, Athens, and Justin Tanner, Plains; Production Managers

SMALL GRAINS HARVEST AND CONDITIONING

Plains: All 10 Foundation wheat varieties were harvested at or below 12% moisture. Wheat conditioning was completed by the first week of August. A little more than 8,000 bushels were harvested, conditioned, and bagged by our Plains staff of the following wheat varieties: 13LE31, SH 5550, LA 754, 16LE18, and five new wheat increases for release this fall. We also harvested about 1000 lbs. of TifQuik Bahiagrass from 4.5 acres at our GSD farm. The Foundation Bahia field had a lower than expected yield due to the rainy conditions prior to maturity that resulted in a delayed harvest.

Athens: A total of 21,163 bushels of Foundation wheat seed were harvested from six varieties in North Georgia. After drying them, we were able to start processing and bagging wheat by the end of July. Preliminary germinations for Johnson, Go Wheat 2032, Riverland, AGS 3015, and Roberts were all in the 90s with the Blanton variety being in the 80s. The usual amounts of Foundation GA Gore and Wrens Abruzzi Rye were produced and will be available for sale this fall. At this time, we anticipate being finished with wheat conditioning by the first week of September.

SOYBEAN PRODUCTION

Foundation increases of AGS Woodruff and AGS 738RR were planted in Allendale SC with a Foundation increase of SH 7418LL planted at the UGA Southwest Research and Education Center near Plains GA. The increases of these varieties totaled a little over 60 acres. We are also growing four new experimental increases from Dr. Li's soybean breeding program at UGA that are expected to be released this fall. They include two conventional Group VI varieties (1 acre and 19 acres), a high oleic conventional Group VII variety (1 acre), and a high oleic RR1 Group VII variety (13 acres).

FOUNDATION TURFGRASS PRODUCTION

We have filled several domestic Foundation TifTuf turfgrass orders with one of them harvested from the Foundation field in California. We have also washed and shipped some Tifway for customers in Arizona and California. There is some international interest for TifTuf, TifEagle, and TifGrand with one of the TifTuf orders planned for shipment in the next several weeks. All of our established Foundation fields are looking good and have been harvested or are ready for harvest.

PEANUT PRODUCTION

Peanuts are off to a good start and we have an exceptional stand this year. Very little disease has been observed in our foundation fields. This year we will harvest a total of 10 varieties with four of them being breeder increases. A total of 1,778 acres were planted with a total of 4,123 tons contracted. UGA has added a chemigation system on our Plains irrigation pivot in order to apply the insecticide Bifenthrin to our Foundation peanuts. We are leaving some rows un-chemigated (check area) for Dr. Abney to observe and collect data on this method versus the traditional Losaban application. We are looking at beginning to harvest around the middle of September.

A Cause for Celebration

We celebrated Ralph Johnson's 40 years of service and commitment to GSD with a delicious prime rib luncheon and great fellowship at the Plains Foundation Peanut Facility on July 9, 2020. Ralph was joined by GSD staff and Board members and colleagues from Georgia Crop Improvement Association (GCIA), UGA Southwest Research and Education Center, and fellow peanut seed producers. Both the GSD and GCIA organizations presented Ralph with rocking chairs to commemorate his dedication to the production of high quality Foundation peanut seed. The meal was prepared by Chef Jimmy Clements and enjoyed by all.



*Mr. Jimmy Clements, Dr. Roger Boerma,
Mr. Ralph Johnson, and GSD Chairman Mr. Kent Fountain*



*GCIA Executive Director Mr. Terry Hollifield
and Mr. Ralph Johnson*

Sights around Georgia Seed



Foundation AGS Woodruff Field
in Allendale, GA



GSD Foundation 'Tifway'
growing in at the UGA Iron Horse Farm.



New peanut warehouse construction is
progressing at the Plains GSD Facility.



Georgia Seed Development is a proud member of Georgia Grown, a program of the Georgia Department of Agriculture.
<http://georgiagrown.com>