



# GEORGIA SEED DEVELOPMENT

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## *Seed for Thought*

*Roger Boerma, Executive Director*

Have you ever asked yourself, “Where do I go from here?” GSD became a not-for profit, public corporation in July 2008. Prior to that time GSD was administered by Georgia Department of Agriculture. GSD is rapidly approaching its 10-year anniversary as a stand-alone business. As you might imagine, a lot has changed at GSD since 2008. GSD has learned the critical importance of budgeting, personnel development and management, and strategic planning. GSD has had the opportunity to change its workplace culture which resulted in a more motivated and efficient staff and developed a much improved physical resource.

GSD is about to undertake a new planning exercise in April of this year. Our initial long-range plan was developed in 2012 and was updated in 2016. These previous plans have guided the organization in making decisions in five essential areas: i) increasing GSD’s impact (GSD, along with UGARF, GCIA, and UGA-CAES, development of the Georgia Integrated Cultivar Release System ,GICRS, marketing plan), ii) enhancing GSD’s financial stability (GSD now bases its annual budget on previous multiple-year average information; has developed and funded several UGA plant breeding endowments and funded the UGA Plant Breeding Enhancement Program), iii) expanding GSD involvement with horticultural species (GSD developed and funded a tissue culture position to reduce the time to market for new horticultural plants), iv) enhancing our human resources (GSD expanded its office/administrative staff and provided continuous staff training which resulted in improved staff efficiencies across the entire organization), and v) optimizing our physical resources (GSD upgraded its seed transport vehicles and trailers; installed new seed treaters at both Athens and Plains; built a new peanut receiving station with an air-gap cleaner; and expanded the GSD peanut drying capacity).

In a sense the 2012 and 2016 GSD plans were based on low hanging fruit. Prior to 2008 GSD did not possess the opportunity to effectively plan, or more importantly, finance its critical needs. That changed when GSD became a public corporation. Now that GSD has addressed many of the most obvious needs, it needs a blueprint that will prepare it for success in 2025 and beyond. It is hard to believe, but 2025 is only 8 years from now.



I mention all of this to make the point that GSD really needs your assistance. As GSD Board and Advisory Committee members, UGA or Georgia-based USDA plant breeders, or as someone interested in the success of Georgia agriculture, we need your ideas on how GSD should position itself to become the premier foundation seed organization in the United States. This was the stated goal of the GSD Commissioners for the organization in 2008 and it remains our focus. Please contact me (roger.boerma@gsdc.com or 706-552- 4525) with your thoughts and ideas on how we can improve GSD and continue to work to achieve the Commissioners’ original goal.

## Licensing



*Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manger*

The licensing activity has begun to pick up a little with seedsmen starting to think about spring planting and which peanut varieties they want in their seed programs. We have already had several requests for license agreements for the two newest peanuts (Georgia-16HO and TifNV-High O/L) and some of the older ones also. We continue to receive request for some of Dr. NeSmith's blueberry varieties. UGARF and GSD currently have some wheat agreements out to be signed by the licensee at this time.

## Marketing

*Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manger*

January was the start of another busy time for GSD with numerous trade shows and industry meetings. Roger and I attended the Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference in Savannah GA. As in the past the show was very well attended. Next, I attended the Southern Seed Association meeting which this year was in Texas. I was able to spend time with a number of our licensees from across the Southern region. The Georgia Peanut Farm show was the next stop on the circuit, but because of weather issues and the flu bug this year Roger and I were unable to attend. Ralph was able to attend and did an excellent job. The last show for January was the Soybean/Small Grain Expo in Perry GA. Again this year we displayed the GICRS booth at the show.

As we moved into February the trade show and meeting schedule has begun to slow down. The Golf Industry Show was in San Antonio TX and we displayed the GICRS booth. We were joined in the booth by UGARF, The Turfgrass Group, and ITGAP (International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program). We were able to visit with a number of the current domestic and international turfgrass licensees. We had several people asking about licensing TifTuf from outside the United States.

Erin has been creating inserts for the pecan and turfgrass brochures we use at the trade shows. This is a very efficient way to add the new varieties into our marketing portfolio without having to redesign an entirely new brochure.

## Education

*Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manger*

On 25 January GSD hosted Dr. Donglin Zhang's HORT3620 - Plant Propagation class. Dr. Zhang had a very large class this year with 31 students. Roger gave a presentation to the class on the mission and overall operation of GSD in the conference room. The class was then divided into 3 smaller groups for additional presentations and demonstrations. Paul demonstrated the seed cleaner and the other specialized seed cleaning and treating equipment in the plant. Corey discussed the necessity of maintaining the purity of Foundation seed and turfgrass with the students and explained to them the importance of the Almaco Purity combine for small grains and soybeans and the Koro sprig harvester for our turfgrass program. I talked with the class about proper storage conditions for seed and showed them examples of the different seeds we currently have in the program.

## Processing/Production

*Doug Batchelder, Athens, and Ralph Johnson, Plains; Production Managers*

### **FOUNDATION SOYBEAN PROCESSING**

We are currently processing two soybean varieties totaling a little more than 2600 bushels that were grown in 2017; a Roundup Ready 2 Yield® and a LibertyLink® variety. We expect to have them completed the first week of March with excellent seed purity and germination.

### **FOUNDATION PEANUT PROCESSING**

We are on a schedule that will have us completing shelling on 23 February 2018 and we will immediately begin treating seed. So far our seed quality looks excellent, but we have only received germination results from the State Seed Lab on about 60% of our lots. Based on the strength of our preliminary germinations I am not expecting any problems. Shell-outs have been good. We have produced the following amount of Foundation seed: GA 17SP- 3,000 lbs., GA 122540- 15,000 lbs., GA 11J- 60,000 lbs., GA 13M- 65,000 lbs., TIF NV- 145,000 lbs., GA 16HO- 300,000 lbs., and GA 14N- 435,000 lbs. We are still shelling GA 06G, but expect to have approximately 3,475,000 lbs. GA 122706 has not been shelled, but will have only about 500 lbs.

### **FOUNDATION TURFGRASS PRODUCTION**

All of the turf plots in Athens and at the UGA Iron Horse Farm are doing well and are weed free at this time. Some Foundation TifEagle was successfully harvested in early December for an existing licensee. We already have orders for TifTuf, Tifway, and TifEagle for later on in the spring/summer and it appears that our supply will be able to keep up with demand.



*GSD's Corey Booth and Paul Ford harvesting Foundation TifEagle at the UGA Iron Horse Farm*



*Foundation TifTuf field at SuperSod in Perry, Georgia*



*Processing/Production Continued*

**FOUNDATION PECAN HARVEST**

We have collected graftwood for our licensees from the Foundation trees at the UGA Horticulture farm and from Foundation trees in South Georgia.

**FOUNDATION SMALL GRAINS AND FORAGE GRASS PRODUCTION**

**Athens:** Foundation wheat plantings in North Georgia for this year are totalled a little more than 160 acres divided among nine different licensed varieties (14E19, 14E45, 14E53, L11544, AGS2035, AGS2038, AGS2024, Savoy, and 2010E2914). We have enough Wrens Abruzzi rye and GA Gore wheat in cold storage for 2018 planting needs. So far it has definitely been a challenging, wet winter in Georgia so getting equipment into the fields has been somewhat problematic. We will once again try to stay ahead of FHB (scab).

Athens has completed conditioning the Foundation TifQuik Bahiagrass from our Foundation field in Plains and both seed purity and germination are excellent. We are in the process of conditioning the Foundation Tifton 9 Bahiagrass seed and we anticipate similar results.

**Plains:** We have Foundation production of 12 different wheat varieties/breeding lines on a total of 137 acres at the Plains Facility. These varieties/breeding lines include: Baldwin, SH 5550, GA 13LE31, GA 13LE43, AGS 3000, GA 15LE3, GA 15LE29, LA 9225-C, LA 150-241, LA150-625, LA 8080-C, and GA 15E47.

Our non-irrigated wheat was very slow to emerge and struggled early on from a dry fall. That was followed by some really cold temperatures. Our irrigated wheat is also a little behind normal in growth and tillering. Our growers are in the process of applying nitrogen.



Buddy Parker harvesting Avalon graftwood



AGS 2024 Foundation Field near Milner, GA



GAJT141-14E45 Foundation Field near Fort Valley, GA

***Important Dates***

- \*Southern Seed Association Meeting, Auburn, AL February 25-26, 2018
- \*GSD/GCIA Retreat, Macon, GA, Feb 26-27, 2018
- \*GCIA Membership Meeting, Athens, GA, March 20, 2018
- \*Georgia Seed Development Semiannual Board Meeting, Americus, GA, May 23, 2018

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

