



GEORGIA SEED
DEVELOPMENT

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March 2026 Update
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Seed for Thought

Roger Boerma, Executive Director

Are Land Grant University Colleges of Agriculture (LGUCA) abandoning their agricultural roots? To remain relevant, LGUCA are expanding into more fundamental research areas during a period where they continue to receive less support from their state governments.

In response to less state support, university administrators at LGUCA encourage agricultural faculty to apply for more private and Federal funding. Private funding may not be focused on direct benefits to the local stakeholders that provide the salaries of the faculty members. Federal funding is often focused on national needs rather than more specific local challenges.

An additional driver for more private and Federal funding is the generation of indirect costs. Indirect cost is an actual cost incurred by universities but is often not provided for the more applied "commodity" specific grants. As a result of these conditions administrators of LGUCA focus their annual state legislative requests on adding more fundamental faculty to their rosters rather than technical staff to assist applied in-the-field faculty (more faculty hunting for private and Federal funds and less technical personnel to conduct the actual applied research).

A goal of most LGUCA is to become #1. We all understand that we want our football, basketball, and other sports teams to win the national championship. These national championships are determined on athletic fields or in sports arenas. Who determines the LGUCA rankings, and what are the criteria? I suggest it is determined by the community of LGUCA administrators rather than the local stakeholders, farmers, turfgrass growers, landscapers, and ranchers, in their various states. The stakeholders do not get a ballot to vote on the LGUCA rankings. I guess we can surmise the actual stakeholder vote is cast when they decide how much of their time and effort is expended on encouraging their local state legislators to provide additional state funding for their LGUCA. As I mentioned earlier, state funding for LGUCA is declining. Is this an indication the stakeholders have already voted?



Licensing

Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manager

New licenses for peanuts are coming in to GSD as licensees are selecting peanut varieties for their future portfolios. UGARF and GSD have been working on some new turfgrass agreements and have completed several license amendments for other crops.

Education

Senior Director, Caleb Warrington

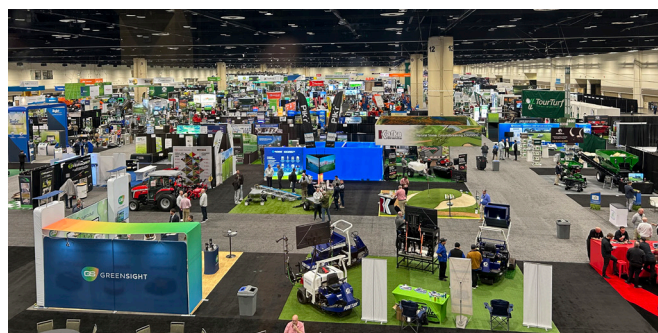
On February 10th, GSD in Athens hosted the Seed Technology class from UGA (CRSS 4310/6310) taught by Drs. Tim Grey and Phillip Vines. Additionally, GSD hosted Dr. Donglin Zhang's HORT3620: Plant Propagation class on February 26th. The Seed Tech class consisted of six graduate students while there were 25 undergraduate students in the Plant Propagation group. Caleb started things off with a presentation about Foundation seed and vegetative turfgrass production, seed conditioning basics, and how GSD works with UGA plant breeders. The classes then toured the seed plant as we were conditioning soybeans. Doug showed the Almaco purity combine and also seeds of crops we condition at GSD as well as common weed seed we see during conditioning. Roger and JT also hosted the Seed Tech class at the Peanut seed facility in Plains. Over the course of 2.5 hours, group was given a thorough tour of the facility and learned about peanut drying, grading, storage, and shelling. The Federal State Inspection service was on site and provided an in-depth presentation of the peanut grading process.

Marketing/Meetings

Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manager

January was the start of another busy year of trade shows and industry meetings for GSD. Caleb and I attended the Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference in Savannah, Georgia. The new addition to the Savannah Conference Center has been finished which allows for an increased number of exhibitors and attendees. The Georgia Peanut Farm Show was the next event for GSD. Roger, Caleb, JT, and I were able to attend the show this year. The peanut seed update is always an important part of the show as peanut breeders from around the Southeast present data about their existing and new varieties. In January, I attended the Southern Seed Association meeting in Charleston, South Carolina and was elected 2nd Vice President of the Association. Despite the pending ice storm in the Southeast, the meeting was well attended. I was also able to spend time with some of our licensee from the Southern region.

In February, the trade show and meeting schedule began to slow down. GSD exhibited at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), *pictured right*, and were joined by The Turfgrass Group, TifEagle for Greens, and Tif3D organizations as co-exhibitors. Doug and I attended the show and were also able to check our Foundation production fields in Florida during the trip. We visited with current domestic and International turfgrass licensees at the show as well. In mid- February, Billy Skaggs and



I traveled to the Turfgrass Producers International Education Conference and Field Day in Tucson, Arizona. The Conference was well attended and included excellent speakers. The last meeting in February was the Alabama Crop Improvement/Southern Seed Association meeting in Panama City, Florida. Caleb and I attended the meeting and were able to visit with licensees and hear from informative speakers at the meeting. Caleb was elected to serve on the Alabama Crop Improvement/Southern Seed Association board of directors during the meeting.

Processing/Production

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

FOUNDATION PEANUT

Shelling the 2025 Foundation peanut crop began on November 10, 2025. As of the second week of March, we have shelled 84% of our farmer stock inventory (total Foundation farmer stock inventory of 10,525,243 lbs.) and treated 68% of our inventory (projected total seed stock of 6,207,837 Lbs.) Our preliminary germination reports indicated that we could concurrently shell and treat our two largest varieties, GA 06G and Tif NV HG. We started shelling and treating GA 06G January 06, 2026, and shelling and treating Tif NV HG on February 27, 2026.

We have two varieties (GA 21 GR, 390,927 lbs., and GA 23RKN, 226,600 lbs.) at Georgia Cold Storage in Colquitt Georgia for additional seed drying. We plan to bring them back to the GSD Peanut Center by the middle of March to treat the seed.

In 2026 GSD will donate approximately 30,000 lbs. of Foundation peanut seed to peanut researchers in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and South Carolina. As of the second week in March our 2027 Pre-Orders indicate a need to plant 1,245 acres of Ga 06G, 10 acres of GA 18RU, 5 acres of GA 20VHO, 65 acres of GA 21GR, 60 acres of GA 22MPR, 137 acres of GA 23RKN, 100 acres of GA 24NHO, 6 acres of GA 25NV, and 720 acres of Tif NV HG.

FOUNDATION TURFGRASS

Several turfgrass fields are rotating out of production this season. Foundation TifSport and TifGrand bermudagrass are being returned to grower fields for production. Legacy plots for SeaIsle Supreme paspalum and TifDwarf bermudagrass are being established with the turfgrass breeders at the University of Georgia.

At our Foundation turfgrass plots at the UGA Iron Horse Farm, all TifEagle acreage and one-third of existing Tifway acreage has been taken out of production and will eventually be replanted as TifEagle. This consolidation will allow us to expand TifEagle production to better serve grower demand and ensure full compliance with Georgia Crop Improvement Association (GCIA) regulations.

Looking ahead, a Foundation increase of Dr. Schwartz's new zoysia grass variety is planned in Texas.

2026 SMALL GRAINS

Eight wheat varieties have been planted for the 2026 season across a total of 86 acres. Four of the eight are Breeder seed increases. In addition, one Foundation oat variety and one Foundation rye variety were planted. We will continue to monitor the weather as well as weed control, fertility, and scouting for insects and disease as the crops mature.

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2026 SOYBEAN

Processing of the 2026 soybean crop is complete, with six varieties successfully cleaned, bagged, and lab-tested. Four of the six are Breeder seed increases with a total cleaned volume across all varieties of approximately 800 bushels.

Laboratory results for all six varieties have been received and all have high germination. Vigor testing on carryover soybean seed has also returned good results. Seed tags are currently being ordered and Foundation seed is expected to be available for spring shipment in the coming weeks.

SPECIALTY CROPS

Processing of TifQuik bahiagrass seed has been completed. We are currently awaiting final laboratory results before bagging and tagging the seed for spring sale. We are also cleaning and bagging several varieties of Breeder sesame seed for a private company. In support of the University of Georgia breeding program, we have also cleaned several varieties of centipede seed this winter for Dr. Schwartz's program. We have also helped clean some ryegrass seed for Dr. Missaoui and 'Orange Bulldog' pumpkin seed for Dr. McGregor. This work reflects our ongoing partnership with UGA researchers to support early-stage varietal development.

MARKET OUTLOOK

The outlook for turfgrass this summer is strong. Many growers are continuing to expand their fields as demand for Certified material remains high. Foundation TifEagle and Tifway are already sold out for the season, and additional orders for Tif3D are being received. We will continue to collaborate closely with growers to manage availability and prioritize fulfillment as the season progresses.



Foundation Tif3D field at Pike Creek



Foundation Wheat field in Plains, GA

UPCOMING EVENT

Georgia Seed Development Semi-Annual Meeting
May 20, 2026 Americus, GA

