



GEORGIA SEED
DEVELOPMENT

Athens Seed Facility
2420 S. Milledge Avenue
Athens, GA 30605
706-552-4525

March 2024 Update
www.gsdc.com

Plains Peanut Facility
1547 US Hwy 280 W
Plains, GA 31780
229-824-7881

Seed for Thought

Roger Boerma, Executive Director

Prior to my current job, I spent 40 years as a professor of soybean breeding at the University of Georgia. When I was selected for the role as Executive Director at GSD, I was concerned, as was the GSD Board of Directors, what additional skills I would need to succeed in the new job. The first thing I learned was that a business changes rapidly and unpredictably. When the Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020, our plan needed immediate revision. The sales of Foundation seed and turfgrass did not change, but Covid-19 required reorganizing work schedules, including back-filling positions at Plains with employees from Athens and dealing with the increases in cost of supplies, equipment, and part-time labor.

A second thing I learned was that success is about people; our employees, contract growers, and licensees. When you spend the time and effort to identify employees that fit into the existing team, the opportunity for operational success is enhanced. Achieving this requires including existing employees in selecting the new hires. To produce excellent quality Foundation seed and plant material, you need productive contract growers that understand the GSD mission and expectations. GSD employees and growers work as a team to provide our licensees with a quality product at a competitive price.

Another learning experience was when you change a well-honed production system it results in change in other parts of the system. For example, GSD built a new transfer station at our Plains facility to transfer the peanut seed produced outside the Sumter County area from semi-trailers to 21-ft. trailers. Immediately, our local Sumter County growers started using their grain semi-trailers to haul in peanuts. In 2023, over 60% of our local peanut production was delivered to the plant on growers' semi-trailers. This allowed our employees to focus on tasks at the plant rather than hauling in peanuts.

An important thing that I learned was to keep your eye on the prize. There were good intentioned individuals that wanted GSD to provide them a service that is outside our stated mission of providing genetically pure Foundation plant material, providing quality services that support cultivar commercialization, and serving as a catalyst to enhance plant breeding. The reason we were able to double the amount of our seed sales the past 12 years was that that we remained focused on our mission.

After considering what I have learned at GSD, I realized that success as a university plant breeder and success as an executive director is not that different. It is my belief that success results from setting achievable goals, a strong work ethic, and determination.

A BRIEFING FROM BLAKE

Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manager

Licensing

The licensing activity has begun to pick up a little with people starting to think about spring and which peanut varieties they want to plant this year. We have had several requests for license agreements for some of the newer peanuts (Georgia-21GR and TifNV-HG) and some of the older ones also. We are working to get these licenses out and signed before seed pick-up begins on April 17th.

Marketing/Meetings

January was the start of another busy time for GSD as trade show and industry meetings kicked into high gear. Caleb and Doug attended the Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference in Savannah, while I attended the Southern Seed Association meeting this year. The meeting was held in Nashville, TN and had exceptionally good attendance. I'm not sure if it was Nashville or the 8 inches of snow that everyone came for. While at the meeting, I was able to spend time with some of our licensees from the Southern region. The Peanut Farm show in Tifton was the next stop on the circuit and I was joined by Roger, JT, and Caleb. Many growers from the region asked about the new peanut varieties available this year. The last show of January was the Golf Course Superintendent Association Show in Phoenix, AZ. Here we had the GICRS booth along with booths from The Turfgrass Group, The TifEagle Growers Association, and the Tif3D Growers. The show had excellent attendance this year with over 11,000 participants. We had a lot of booth traffic with many attendees looking for information about two new turf grasses from UGA, Tif3D bermudagrass and SeaBreeze paspalum.



As we move into February the trade show and meeting schedule is beginning to slow down. The Turfgrass Producers International was the first meeting in February. Billy Skaggs and I traveled down to Orlando to attend the meeting and field day. We were able to see some of the current domestic and International turfgrass licensees at the show. Roger and I have just returned from the National Peanut Buying Points meeting in Savannah. The meeting was well attended, and they had an excellent program titled "New Technology In The Peanut World."

(continued from page 2)

Education

On February 15th GSD hosted Dr. Donglin Zhang’s HORT3620: Plant Propagation class. Dr. Zhang had a large group this year with 23 students in attendance. Roger started thing off with a presentation about GSD in the conference room (*pictured right*). The class was then split up into 2 small groups for presentations in the seed conditioning plant. Corey showed one group the seed cleaner and all the specialized parts of it. While Doug was showing the other group the Almaco combine and examples of the different seeds we currently or have worked with in the past at GSD.



REMINDERS: [GSDC/GCIA SUMMER INTERNSHIP APPLICATIONS](#) ARE DUE MARCH 15, 2024.

GSDC SAFETY UPDATE

Caleb Warrington, Senior Director of Operations

On February 15, 2024, three stations from the Athens-Clarke County Fire Department visited Georgia Seed Development in Athens to obtain a Fire Prevention Plan for their records. ACCFD conducted a walkthrough of GSD to assess potential hazards and located all safety shut offs in the seed cleaning facility and grain bin loading/unloading areas. ACCFD and GSD discussed a preparedness plan at the Athens facility including fire prevention and grain-bin safety.



Processing/Production

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

FOUNDATION PEANUT

Shelling began on November 10, 2023. Currently, we have shelled 75% of our farmer stock inventory (Total FS 9,783,273 lbs.) and have 32% of our inventory treated (Total Seed Stock 5,889,690 lbs.). We continue to maintain a split log for each lot and continually monitor splits going into our final product. Preliminary germination reports are excellent which provides the flexibility to shell and treat GA 06G simultaneously. Shelling and treating of GA 06G began on January 15, 2024. Seed quality is good despite the unfavorable weather conditions we experienced at planting and during the latter part of the 2023 growing season. GSD installed a new USC liquid treater in December and all foundation seed will be coated with liquid Rancona for the 2024 growing season.

The 2024 allocations for planting seed have been finalized and sent out to our licensees; it is expected that seed supply will be sufficient to fulfill all allocations. Pre-order forms for 2025 have been sent out and are expected back February 26, 2024. Once received, we will begin developing our 2024 production plan. In 2024, our goal is to maintain a 5,000-ton farmer-stock inventory and continue production with both our local and South Georgia growers.

FOUNDATION TURFGRASS

All of the turf plots here in Athens and at the Iron Horse Farm are doing well and lie dormant and weed free at this time. We've got to apply a round of spring pre-emergence weed control along with an application of lime on several of the varieties. All of Tifway, TifEagle, and TifDwarf were dug last fall and will need some time in the spring to recover before harvest. Domestic orders have already been placed for TifEagle (three) and Tifway (five) and there is additional international interest in TifEagle, Tifway, TifDwarf and SeaBreeze Paspalum. There have been some turf production changes. SeaStar seashore paspalum was removed from the sand pit and returned to the breeder as a "Legacy Plot". Plans are underway to establish a new seashore paspalum in its place in the sand pit. In addition, the release and license of SeaBreeze seashore paspalum led to the establishment of its Foundation block with the licensee in Florida.

SOYBEAN PROCESSING

We are processing four soybean varieties in Athens totaling 2,000 bushels that were grown in 2023: G17PR-1053HOLLR1, G17PR-1207HOLL conventional, G15PR-340 conventional, and AGS 6777C conventional. Adequate quantities of AGS Woodruff and AGS 738RR remain in cold storage for distribution this year. All soybean processing should be completed mid-March with final lab results coming in by then as well. The two new soybean increases that were grown last fall were not licensed and discarded.

(continued from page 4)

SMALL GRAINS PRODUCTION

Foundation small grain plantings for this year total 125 acres in Athens and Plains. Total acreage is a third less than last year as a few licensed varieties have been dropped. We are now down to three licensed varieties from seven last year. We are still producing the two public varieties (Ga Gore wheat and Wrens Abruzzi rye) of Foundation small grains. We are currently increasing five new wheat lines from UGA and Dr. Mergoum’s program as well as two from Dr. Harrison at LSU. We are hoping that some of these will get picked up in the next round of licensing. The remaining eight varieties of wheat and one oat are being maintained in cold storage and adequate quantities remain for distribution this fall. Fields across the state have more than adequate moisture at this time and we are scouting for insect, disease, fertility as well as any weed problems that may be happening.

SIGHTS AROUND GEORGIA SEED



GSD Plains Office Remodel Project



UGA students touring GSD Athens

UPCOMING EVENTS

Georgia Crop Improvement Annual Meeting
March 21, 2024, Athens, GA

Georgia Seed Development Semi-Annual Meeting
May 21, 2024 Americus, GA

Southern Peanut Growers Conference
July 27-29, 2024 Miramar Beach, FL

