



**GEORGIA SEED**  
DEVELOPMENT

Athens Seed Facility  
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November 2023 Update  
[www.gsdc.com](http://www.gsdc.com)

Plains Peanut Facility  
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## **Seed for Thought**

### **Caleb Warrington, Senior Director of Operations**

This year Georgia Seed Development is processing twenty-five individual peanut varieties and experimental lines. This equates to about ten million pounds of foundation peanuts, which would be the largest amount in GSD's history. Over the summer, GSD made two significant structural upgrades to our peanut processing facility in Plains with this record-breaking volume in mind. The first is a new building to house Federal/State Inspection Service (FSIS) employees during the peanut grading process. The second is a transfer station consisting of a concrete dump pit and a large conveyer which transfers farmer stock peanuts to and from semi-trucks, dump trucks, or drying wagons. These projects are increasing productivity and efficiency in Plains and will be important parts of our growth as a foundation seed organization.

The Federal/State Inspection Service samples and grades each lot of field-run peanuts coming into GSD. This requires FSIS employees to be on-site and have dedicated area for all shelling and grading equipment. Prior to this fall, all FSIS equipment and employees resided in a portion of our GSD office. This setup worked but was not ideal as FSIS and GSD employees spent multiple months sharing the same space. In addition, the peanut sampler was too far away for FSIS employees to retrieve samples efficiently and peanut grading created both a noisy and dusty environment in the office. In the new building, FSIS employees have a larger grading area plus their own restrooms and break area. The sampler is only a few steps away from the door of the building, making the entire process more streamlined. The feedback received from FSIS employees about their new base of operation has been overwhelmingly positive and in year one this improvement project is proving to be mutually beneficial for FSIS and GSD.

Until this fall, the most common way to move substantial amounts of seed between trailers and/or dump trucks was through our air gap seed cleaner. This was an inefficient handling of the seed and required additional time cleaning the air gap between varieties. The new transfer station has taken the place of this method. The cleaning step, which typically took hours for the air gap cleaner, now only requires about 30 minutes between varieties. Additionally, with each semi-trailer load bringing in three wagons worth of peanuts at a time, we have increased our throughput and reduced time and personnel necessary for clean-up.

Until last fall, Foundation peanuts arrived at GSD on 21-ft. drying wagons. For the first time, semi-trailers delivered a portion of our peanuts from regions of Georgia too far away for wagon hauling. It became clear that we lacked an efficient way to receive peanuts from semi-trucks  
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with hopper-bottom trailers. With the new transfer station in place, not only are we receiving shipments of dried, cleaned, and graded peanuts, but local growers are using their semi-trailers to deliver Foundation peanuts to GSD directly from the field. There is now greater potential to expand our local grower base and branch out into other parts of the state for Foundation peanut production. Also, fewer wagons are waiting in the field or on the road and instead are drying seed at the plant. GSD has increased the safety of its employees and growers by having fewer trailers on the road hauling peanuts. An even more dangerous task is repairing broken down trailers on the roadside. In 2022 our team serviced off-site peanut wagons around fifty times, but this year have only been on four service calls.

At Georgia Seed Development our mission is to provide growers and licensees with high quality and genetically pure foundation material each year. We appreciate the support for these projects as they are already making huge impacts on our productivity, efficiency, and safety.

## **A BRIEFING FROM BLAKE**

**Blake Fleeman, Licensing/Marketing Manager**

### **Licensing**

UGARF and GSD have recently sent out Announcements of Licensing Opportunities for new wheat and soybean lines to prospected licensees. If you happened to have missed these announcements, please let Brent Marable at UGARF or me know. If the varieties are still available, we will get you the information. We have recently completed two new pecan licenses and a couple of turfgrass amendments.

### **Marketing/Meetings**

It is time to develop plans for the upcoming trade show season. I have been working with the different trade show organizations to reserve booth spaces for GSD and GICRS. GSD is planning to attend various industry meetings the first part of the year. Erin and I will be updating existing brochures and developing new ones as needed for these shows.

### **Education**

For the first time in history, the 75th Southeastern Turfgrass Conference was held in Athens GA. The conference has traditionally been in held in Tifton GA. The conference program was at the UGA Center For Continuing Education. The morning session was packed with speakers from all over the Southeast. After lunch, the conference concluded with a tour of the UGA Sanford Stadium football locker rooms and field. The meeting and tour of the stadium were both well attended.

## GSD Staff Update

Mr. Hunter Pearce joined GSD as a Foundation Seed Technician in September of 2023. Hunter worked as a part-time employee at GSD for the past year. Previously, he gained valuable experience operating farm equipment while working at the UGA Southwest Research and Education Center. He lives in Preston, Georgia.



## Processing/Production

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

#### FOUNDATION PEANUT

In 2023 GSD grew 25 peanut varieties/experimental lines on 2,154 acres. This was a 13% increase in acres from last year. One variety, Tif Jumbo, was kept in our cold storage facility since there was a suitable amount of Foundation seed available. Two varieties, GA-SP/RKN and GA-VAL/HO, were grown as 1-acre Breeder increases by the UGA Southwest Research and Education Center due to previous contamination issues. GA SP-RKN was planted, rouged, and harvested by Dr. Nino Brown and his staff with assistance from GSD. The GA VAL HO increase was abandoned due to extreme levels of TWSV.

Foundation peanut harvest began around the same time as last year with the first peanuts arriving at GSD on 23 September. Harvest started at a quick pace but soon hit a lull, which is uncommon, especially with the dry weather and no extreme weather threats. Initially peanut grades and yields were lower than usual, but they picked up toward the end of the season. This year we installed a transfer station which has allowed GSD to bring peanuts in green from the field on semi-trailers and transfer them onto our 21-ft. drying trailers. The transfer station has also allowed us to move graded peanuts from 21-ft. trailers onto dump trucks to shuttle into warehouses further improving efficiency. We were also able to use Warehouse W7's elevator and holding bin to transfer GA 06G from semi-trailers to 21-ft. trailers.

As of 3 November, approximately 90% of the Foundation peanuts have been delivered to GSD. We still lack approximately 239 acres of GA 06G and 15 acres of CB7. To date, 4,170 tons of farmer stock peanuts have been graded and stored or are on the yard ready to be graded and stored.

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## Processing/Production Continued

### **FOUNDATION SOYBEAN**

Four Foundation soybean increases, and one new Breeder soybean increase were produced at the UGA Southwest Research and Education Center in Plains. It has been a dry September, so we have been using a lot of supplemental irrigation to maintain adequate yields. All five of these increases were harvest the last week of October. The Breeder increase of the Round Up Ready 2 Xtend soybean line was grown at UGA JPC Farm in Watkinsville. We plan to harvest this line on November 6. We expect to harvest a total of 3,100 bushels of the six varieties. They will all be trucked back to the Athens plant for conditioning and bagging.

### **FOUNDATION SMALL GRAINS**

All the Foundation small grain conditioning has been completed and most of the seed has been shipped to licensees. The remaining wheat and rye seed will be shipped in the next 2 weeks. Seed quality was excellent this year. The seed that is carried over in cold storage should maintain excellent quality as well.

Foundation wheat acreage will be reduced next year as a couple of the licensees begin to phase out older varieties. This fall we plan to grow one Foundation rye increase and six Foundation wheat increases on a total of 65 acres. The increases will range from 3 to 20 acres. We will also be producing a total of five Breeder increases from Dr. Mergoum's UGA breeding program as well as two Breeder increases from Dr. Harrison's program at LSU

### **FOUNDATION TURFGRASS**

It has been a busy end of the summer for Foundation turfgrass sales. Since our update in August, we have completed two domestic TifTuf, two domestic TifEagle, and five domestic Tif3D orders. One of the Tif3D orders was washed and sent to California. Additionally, we washed and shipped an order of TifGrand to China to a new licensee. We still have outstanding orders of Tifway, TifEagle, and TifDwarf with most of these licensees opting to wait until next spring to take delivery.



*Tif3D harvest destined for California*



*TifGrand harvest destined for China*



## Sights around Georgia Seed



*AGS 6777C Foundation Field in Plains, GA*



*G17PR-1207HOLL Foundation Field in Plains, GA*



*2023 Georgia Peanut Farm Tour, Bainbridge, GA*



*GSD Staff members at 75th Southeastern Turfgrass Conference, Athens, GA*

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference  
January 11-14, 2024 Savannah, GA

Georgia Peanut Farm Show and Conference  
January 18, 2024 Tifton, GA

Golf Course Industry Show  
January 29- February 1, 2024 Phoenix, AZ

