



Georgia Crop

Improvement Association

2016 Annual Report

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I've Been Thinking - Year in Review - Terry Hollifield, Executive Director

Another year has come and gone. Seems like just a few weeks back that I wrote a brief article commenting on 2015. Now we are in 2017 and I need to say a few words about 2016. Time is moving way too fast!

The good part is that 2016 was another very good year for GCIA. The certification of peanut seed remains our largest acreage crop by far. Whereas peanut acres were down from 2015, they remained at a very respectable 131,400 acres inspected. Turfgrass, our second largest crop to be inspected, continues to creep steadily upward to approximately 8,894 acres. When we add miscellaneous crops, soybeans, pasture grasses and small grains, we finished the year inspecting 148,453 acres.

Approximately 139,559 acres of peanuts, small grains, soybeans and bahiagrass produced 2,340,143 fifty pound units of certified seed marketed to Southeastern producers of these crops. This is a real accomplishment for the "Georgia Certified" seed industry.

All Certified seed must be conditioned in an "Approved Plant." These are facilities that store, clean, size and package seed for sale to producers. Due to consolidation of the seed industry, the number of approved plants has slowly declined over the years. However, recently a few new, independently owned facilities have emerged and provide custom conditioning and sell specialty crop seed. We now have 40 facilities on our approved plant list.

The association not only provides field inspections for traditional seed certification, but we provide Organic Certification to verify compliance with the USDA National Organic Program. In cooperation with the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Association, we provide food safety inspections for produce packing facilities and we administer the only International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance program in the world.

Last but not least, we provide administrative services for Georgia /Florida Soybean Association and the Georgia Soybean Commodity Commission.

One last point to make: An association is only as strong as the leadership provided by a board of directors and a dedicated staff. I am proud to say that the Georgia Crop Improvement Association is fortunate to have both.

I thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to attend our membership meeting and hope you enjoy reading our annual report.

Seed Certification Program - Field Inspections

Inspection of the growing crop is made by official inspectors under the direction of the Seed Certification Program Manager. Certified seed may be defined as seed certified by the Georgia Crop Improvement Association as to origin, adaptation, breeding, seed condition, purity of variety, freedom from disease and noxious weed seed.

Through its certification service, the Georgia Crop Improvement Association makes available the best seed possible for Georgia farmers. Seed certification encourages farmers to purchase seed of approved varieties; it also protects the buyers of crop seed in that only high quality, superior performing seed are approved for certification.

Certified seed grown in Georgia can be readily identified by the official tag or certificate of the Georgia Crop Improvement Association attached to the container of seed. Certified seed bags must bear the official GCIA emblem or be in branded bags. Certified seed standards of the Association meet or exceed the minimum standards approved by the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies and the Georgia State Seed Law. Billy Skaggs serves as the Seed Certification Program Manager.

In 2016, GCIA inspected 148,453 acres of cropland & turfgrass - of which 144,806 acres were approved. In addition, GCIA printed 2,340,143 certified seed tags. In addition to certified crop inspections, GCIA performed contract inspections of an additional 5,400 acres of soybeans.

Commodity:	Inspected Acres:
Peanuts	131,444
Turfgrass	8,894
Small Grains	4,814
Pasture Grasses	1,400
Soybeans	1,382
Other	519
TOTAL	148,453



Turfgrass Certification Program

GCIA's turfgrass certification program is the only quality control offered for protection of the sod buyer, as state and federal laws do not address vegetatively-produced crops. GCIA turfgrass members produce "blue tag" certified sod which is field inspected at least three times each year by experienced inspectors.

Inspectors are trained to recognize off-type plants, other species, noxious and objectionable weeds, which can create unsightly, costly problems in turf. GCIA's inspection program ensures that turfgrass is grown under a rigorous set of guidelines designed to promote high quality, true to variety, and weed free turfgrass.

In 2016, GCIA inspected 8,894 acres of turfgrass sod of which 7,984 acres were certified at season's end. In the last two years, turfgrass acres are up 1,668 acres (23% increase). As in the previous year, turf acres were again bolstered in 2016 with additional plantings of TifTuf bermudagrass which was developed by UGA Turfgrass Breeder, Dr. Brian Schwartz.

GCIA took advantage of several opportunities to promote the certified turfgrass program in 2016, including the 70th Annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference, the Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association Summer Field Day at Precision Farms, and Urban Ag Council's EDGE Expo. In addition, Billy Skaggs, Certification Program Manager, authored an article "Select for Success - When only the best will do, ask for certified sod" which was featured in the May/June UAC Magazine.

Dr. Brian Schwartz recognized Dr. Paul Raymer, UGA Turf Breeder; Aaron McWhorter, NG Turf; Terry Hollifield, GCIA; Ben Copeland, Jr. Super-Sod; and Ken Morrow, The Turfgrass Group for their support of the UGA Turfgrass Program during the 2016 SE Turfgrass Field Day in Tifton. (See picture on right)



Attendees at STMA Summer Field Day at Precision Farms.



Approved Seed Conditioning Plants

All certified seed must be conditioned in a GCIA approved facility. The facilities are inspected annually to determine if equipment is properly installed and maintained to prevent contamination between varieties. Approved plant representatives are knowledgeable in plant operations and record keeping. Representatives must also attend a GCIA supported training session. Many of these plants are available for custom seed cleaning as well. In 2016, GCIA had 40 approved facilities with several conditioning more than one kind of certified seed; see the breakdown below.

Kinds of Certified Seed Conditioned:	Plants
Peanuts	22
Small Grains / Soybeans	18
Grass Seed / Forages	4
Foundation Seed	2



Agricultural Audits, LLC

As a subsidiary of GCIA, Agricultural Audits (AA) utilizes the expertise and experience of GCIA staff (many of whom are ISO approved auditors) in the auditing and inspecting for the USDA National Organic Program as well as conducting food safety inspections for the produce industry. In addition, Ag Audits performs royalty assessment audits in coordination with Georgia Seed Development and the University of Florida. AA's management and inspectors have an extensive agricultural knowledge base including production and marketing.



Good Agricultural Practices Program:

The Good Agricultural Practices Program (GAPP) in an inspection/auditing program conducted by Agricultural Audits in conjunction with the Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association and PrimusLabs to verify that good agricultural practices are followed during production, packing and shipping. In today's marketplace, food safety verification and confidence are critical. Terry Crane serves as the Food Safety Program Manager for GCIA.

The Good Agricultural Practices Program:

- Requires the use of environmentally safe practices
- Requires the use of laboratory tested water
- Requires a safe & healthy environment for workers
- Requires sanitary handling and packing practices
- Promotes the use of food security precautions.

2016 Food Safety Audits:	# Performed
Packing House	35
Ranch	94
Harvest Crew	38
Cooling & Cold Storage	6
Storage & Distribution	2
Processing / HAACP	4
Greenhouse	2
GAPP	10
TOTAL	191

For more information, visit www.georgiacrop.com/food-safety.

Organic Certification Program:

The Georgia Crop Improvement Association is a USDA National Organic Program accredited agency. GCIA's Organic Certification Program is committed to environmentally sound and economically viable food production. Additionally, the program encourages the preservation of natural resources, the improvement of soil quality through organic, sustainable farming practices and seeks to foster the production of healthy livestock as well as poultry.

Johnny Luke serves as the Organic Program Manager for GCIA. In 2016, two other staff members, Sean Cunard and Billy Skaggs, attended a week long organic crop inspection training hosted by the International Organic Inspectors Association in St. Paul, Minnesota.

For more information, visit www.georgiacrop.com/organic.



2016 Organic Clients:	By Category
Farm (crop & livestock)	46
Greenhouse	3
Handler	21
Poultry	5
Processor	47
GRAND TOTAL	122



International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program

Administered by GCIA, the largest certifier of U.S. grown turfgrasses, the International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program (ITGAP) ensures that certified grasses are grown, inspected and sold under a set of rigorous protocols that promote ongoing purity and uniformity.

ITGAP is a proven, quality assurance program that monitors production sites worldwide to ensure that turfgrasses are produced under a rigorous set of rules and guidelines. Certified turfgrasses are proven performers, and ITGAP protects the purity of those grasses against contamination, weeds and other species during production. The result is high quality, consistent performance and confidence in the end result.

In addition, the program offers a mechanism for monitoring and collecting royalties that may be due to the variety developer. ITGAP is utilized by US golf course builders and architects who work for international clients and recognize the need for high quality turfgrass.

ITGAP was created by Dr. Earl Elsner, Mr. John Hope, and Mr. Terry Hollifield and instituted in 2000 by the Georgia Crop Improvement Association. Mr. Don Roberts serves as the ITGAP Managing Director. Dr. Earl Elsner, Dr. Antonio Orlando Di Maura, Mr. Steve Batten and Mr. Lee Sellars serve as ITGAP inspectors.

Current ITGAP participants are found in the following countries: Australia, Costa Rica, Italy, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Thailand, Japan (2), Mexico (2), Brazil (3), and China (4).

In May 2016, the Georgia Crop Improvement Association hosted the first International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program (ITGAP) Conference for international growers and inspectors of fine-leaf Bermuda, Paspalum and Zoysia grasses. The two day event covered inspection and reporting protocols, turfgrass identification and a field exercise. Growers and inspectors from Australia, Singapore, South Africa, Brazil, Spain and the US were in attendance. GCIA extends a special thank you to Pike Creek Turf in Adel, Georgia for the use of their farm for the field exercise. The photo below is from a tour of the turf plots at the UGA Tifton Campus managed by Dr. Brian Schwartz, UGA Turfgrass Breeder.



For more information on ITGAP, visit www.itgapturf.org.

Peanut Industry Events & Activities

As peanuts make up a significant portion of the certification program (88% of all inspected acres), GCIA office staff and inspectors spend a considerable amount of time and effort in serving the peanut industry - processing applications, field inspections, visiting buying points, printing seed tags and inspecting shelling & treating facilities. While these activities are important, GCIA staff also make every effort to engage with our peanut clients at industry events throughout the year. The list below includes a number of events and activities GCIA staff participated in during 2016:

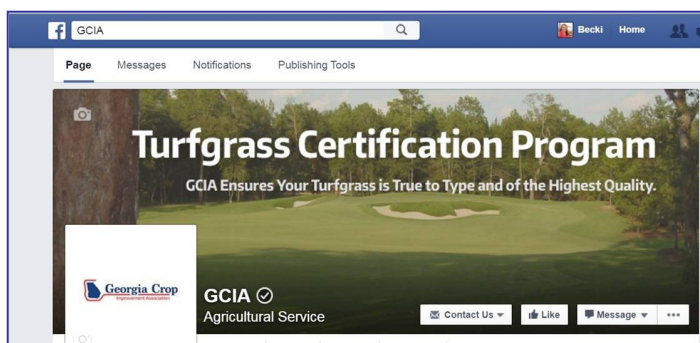
American Peanut Shellers Seed Committee & Research Update
 Georgia Peanut Commission's Peanut Farm Show & APSA Peanut Seed Seminar
 National Peanut Buying Points Association Winter Conference
 American Peanut Shellers Association Industry Spring Conference
 Joint Pre-Harvest Meeting hosted by APSA, NPBPA & GPC
 GCIA Annual Peanut Seed Short Course & Buying Point Training



Georgia
Peanut
Commission



GCIA Website & Facebook Update:



Launched in 2016, the GCIA Turfgrass Facebook page is used to promote the Certified turfgrass program to consumers, landscape contractors, athletic field builders and the golf course industry. Posts have included turf management articles, promotion of industry events, photos from GCIA member farms, and links to the turf buyers guide and other resources. Since launch, the page has been viewed by over 18,000 visitors.

Effective April 1, 2017, the GCIA members section will go live on www.georgiacrop.com. The member section includes numerous forms and resources used by our seed and turfgrass certification members. These include:

- Application forms
- Membership forms
- Fee schedules
- Application instructions
- Seed tag order forms
- Seed transcript forms
- Declaration of conditioned seed
- Bulk shipping & receiving report

We hope this will be a valuable resource to the membership, and we welcome your input.



About Seed Certification Turfgrass Organic / Food Safety

Seed Certification (Members Only)

Application Packets by Seed Type:

Peanuts (includes all forms below)

1. Application Form
2. Membership Form
3. Fee Schedule
4. Instructions
5. Buying Point Contact Form

Rye, Canola, Triticale, Lupine (includes all forms below)

1. Application Form
2. Membership Form
3. Fee Schedule
4. Instructions

Related Publications

- Seed Tag Order Form
- Seed Transcript Form
- Declaration of Conditioned Seed Form
- Bulk Seed Shipping & Receiving Report
- Breeder Affidavit
- Pre-printed Bag Requirements



Georgia/Florida Soybean Association

2425 South Milledge Avenue, Athens Georgia 30605
Phone: 706 542-3793 Fax: 706 542-9397

GCIA continued to provide administrative services to the Georgia/Florida Soybean Association, including membership, annual meeting coordination and correspondence with the American Soybean Association. On February 21, GCIA once again coordinated the annual Georgia/Florida Soybean & Small Grain Expo at the Georgia National Fairgrounds in Perry, Georgia. Over 100 growers, researchers, and industry personnel attended, and the program included the following presentations: Dr. Christina Cowger - Fusarium Head Blight Control; Rome Ethredge - Ultra-late Soybean Production; Dr. Adam Rabinowitz - World Outlook for Southern Ag Commodities; Tas Smith - 2018 Farm Bill Update; and Jack Spruill - Overview of Grain Bonding & Warehouse Laws.

Georgia Soybean Commodity Commission

Since March 2014, GCIA has provided administrative support to the Georgia Soybean Commodity Commission. Services provided to the Commission include:



- Edited and distributed quarterly GA Soybean News to 350+ Georgia soybean growers
- Distributed soybean education and promotional materials to schools and other groups
- Exhibited at Georgia Farm Bureau Convention and Georgia Ag Day at the Capitol
- Assisted with planning and coordination of the annual Soybean & Small Grain Expo
- Served on UGA soybean variety recommendations committee
- Wrote and submitted articles to Farmers & Consumers Market Bulletin, Farm Bureau News, and Georgia Agribusiness Council re: Commission funded research
- Worked with United Soybean Board compliance auditor and GDA staff re: audit and provided all requested documentation; prepared annual budget
- Distributed call for grant requests; planned & coordinated meeting to review grant proposals; in 2016, over \$188,000 awarded for soybean research & promotional efforts (see below).

Project Title	Amount
Developing Irrigation Management Strategies for Soybean Production in Southern US	20,000
Support of UGA Georgia Weather Network, 2016	5,000
Modified greenhouse screening for frogeye leaf spot on soybean	10,000
Funding to Support the Georgia Soybean Sentinel Plot Monitoring Program	30,000
Development of High Yielding RR2Y/LL Soybean Varieties for Georgia Growers	45,899
Identifying Superior High Yielding Soybean Varieties (non-irrigated & ultra-late)	19,597
Soybean Improvement via Insect Resistance	25,000
Support of Georgia Farm Monitor Television Show	8,000
Support of the World Soybean Research Conference (WSRC2017) - payment 2 of 2	10,000
Evaluating Practices of High Soybean Yield & Ultra-Late Planted Soybeans	15,000
	\$ 188,496.00



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Improvement Association

2425 South Milledge Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30605

Phone: 706-542-2351
www.georgiacrop.com

OFFICERS

Lane Morrell, Plantation Seed Conditioners, Inc.
President

Ernie Purcell, John B. Sanfilippo & Son, Inc.
Past President

Kevin Calhoun, Birdsong Peanuts, Inc.
1st Vice-President

Ken Morrow, The Turfgrass Group, Inc.
2nd Vice-President

DIRECTORS

John Bowen, John Bowen Turf Company

Mitchell Burke, American Peanut Growers Group, LLC

Ben Copeland, Jr., Super Sod / Patten Seed

Larry Cunningham, R.L. Cunningham & Sons, Inc.

Blake Fleeman, Georgia Seed Development

Scott Grimsley, Birdsong Peanuts, Inc.

Ricky Hartley, Golden Peanut Company, LLC

Bill Marshall, McCleskey Mills, Inc.

John Raley, R&R Seed Farms, Inc.

STAFF

Terry Hollifield, Executive Director

Joy Cooper, Seed Certification Administrative Assistant

Terry Crane, Food Safety Program Manager

Chase Crawford, Field & Conditioning Plant Inspector

Sean Cunard, Field & Conditioning Plant Inspector

Billie Dunn, Agricultural Audits Administrative Assistant

Jeanne Gonzales, Organic Certification Administrative Assistant

Becki Hicks, Turfgrass Administrative Assistant

Thomas Kessler, Field & Conditioning Plant Inspector

Johnny Luke, Organic Certification Program Manager

Marie Sidwell, Director of Operations

Billy Skaggs, Seed Certification Program Manager