



Georgia Crop

Improvement Association

2017 Annual Report

I've Been Thinking - Year in Review

- Terry Hollifield, Executive Director

We finally got 2017 pulled to the top of the mountain and now we are falling head first off the mountain into the valley of 2018. No one knows what will happen in 2018 but changes in the farm bill, weather and markets will make sure that 2018 is nothing like 2017 or 2016 or any other year. Before we get too far into 2018 we need to take a moment to report on GCIA's activities in 2017. If acres inspected for certified seed is the gauge that we use to measure GCIA's performance, then 2017 was a banner year. Total acres inspected were 166,810. Certification tags issued totaled 3.1 million. I can't remember ever inspecting as many acres in one year.

Agricultural Audits, LLC, was authorized by the GCIA Board of Directors as a mechanism to provide needed services (outside of traditional seed certification) to agriculture and agribusiness. Through Agricultural Audits, the association continues to provide organic certification to 120 clients in GA, FL, and AL. We just completed our required five year renewal audit performed by the USDA National Organic Program and are pleased to report that we passed. The audit is over five days in length and includes review of records, shadow audits and daily meetings.

In cooperation with the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Association we are still actively inspecting fruit and vegetable producers/packers. In 2017, we made 190 food safety ranch, packing house, and harvest crew audits. GCIA has the only international turfgrass quality assurance program with 16 clients in 11 countries. We continue to provide administrative services to the GA/FL Soybean Association and the Georgia Soybean Commodity Commission. In addition, Ag Audits performs royalty assessment audits in coordination with Georgia Seed Development. Our staff is committed to providing cost effective services that meet our clients' expectations and needs.

Whereas these ancillary services allow us to maintain an experienced staff and help to minimize the cost of seed certification, we continue to focus on our core business, seed and sod certification. We attend numerous trade shows each year promoting the use of certified seed and turfgrass and provide staff and client training at various seed short courses and other training events.

The success of any association is dependent on adequate funding, a dedicated staff and an active board of directors who provide leadership and policy. I believe that you will agree with me, GCIA is indeed fortunate to have everything in place to make 2018 as good as 2017.

INSIDE:

Seed Certification Program	2
Turfgrass Certification	3
Approved Seed Conditioners	3
Ag Audits - Food Safety	4
Ag Audits - Organic	4
Peanut Industry Events	5
GA / FL Soybean Association	5
GA Soybean Commission	5
Officers, Directors & Staff	6

Seed Certification Program

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 Certification Program Manager.

In 2017, GCIA inspected 162,292 acres of cropland & turfgrass - of which approximately 96% were approved. In addition, GCIA printed 3,173,167 certified seed tags. In addition to certified crop inspections, GCIA performed contract inspections of an additional 4,518 acres of soybeans.

Commodity:	Inspected Acres:
Peanuts	146,944
Turfgrass	8,351
Small Grains	3,870
Pasture Grasses	1,500
Soybeans	1,180
Other	447
TOTAL	162,292



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.

In 2017, GCIA inspected 8,351 acres of turfgrass sod of which 7,449 acres were certified at season’s end. Over the last three years, turfgrass acres have increased 1,125 acres (16% increase). Turfgrass producers issued 25,359 turfgrass certificates in 2017 - the majority of which were created using GCIA’s Electronic Turfgrass Certificate Program (ETC).



GCIA took advantage of several opportunities to promote the certified turfgrass program in 2017, including the 71st Annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference, the Golf Industry Show in Orlando, Florida, and the multi-state Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) tour.

GCIA also administers the International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program (ITGAP). 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 ensures 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.

ITGAP



Approved Seed Conditioning Facilities

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 2017, 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, LLC (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. AA's management and inspectors have an extensive agricultural knowledge base including production, pest management, and processing.



Produce Food Safety Program:

The Produce Food Safety Program is 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. In 2017, 190 audits were conducted at 104 locations.

Produce Food Safety Program benefits:

- 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.

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 2017, two other staff members, Sean Cunard and Billy Skaggs completed witness and shadow audits as required by the International Organic Inspectors Association; they are now authorized to conduct organic farm audits independently.

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

2017 Food Safety Audits:	# Performed
Packing House	36
Ranch	93
Harvest Crew	39
Cooling & Cold Storage	7
Storage & Distribution	3
Processing / HAACP	3
Greenhouse	2
GAPP	7
TOTAL	190



2017 Organic Clients:	By Category
Farm (crop & livestock)	42
Greenhouse	2
Handler	21
Poultry	4
Processor	47
GRAND TOTAL	116

Peanut Industry Events & Activities

As peanuts make up a significant portion of the certification program (90% 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 2017:

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



Georgia / Florida Soybean Association

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, 2017, 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 topics: fusarium head blight control; ultra-late soybean production; outlook for southern commodities; farm bill update; and an 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
- 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 2017, over \$238,496 awarded for soybean research & promotional efforts.



Georgia Crop

Improvement Association

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OFFICERS

Kevin Calhoun, Birdsong Peanuts, Inc.
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Ken Morrow, The Turfgrass Group, Inc.
2nd Vice-President

DIRECTORS

John Bowen, John Bowen Turf Company

Mitchell Burke, American Peanut Growers Group, LLC

Chad Chandler, McCleskey Mills, Inc.

Ben Copeland, Jr., Super Sod / Patten Seed

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

Blake Fleeman, Georgia Seed Development

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

John Raley, R&R Seed Farms, Inc.

Blake Shepard, Plantation Seed Conditioners, 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

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Becki Hicks, Turfgrass Administrative Assistant

Thomas Kessler, Field & Conditioning Plant Inspector

Johnny Luke, Organic Certification Program Manager

Marie Sidwell, Director of Operations

Billy Skaggs, Certification Program Manager