



Georgia Crop

Improvement Association



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GCIA News Briefs

SUMMER 2022

I've Been Thinking

- Terry Hollifield, Executive Director

If you haven't notice, this is the midterm election year. Periodically, we have the privilege of voting for someone to represent us at the local, state and national levels of government. In this country we have a wonderful, yet not perfect, political system. This system produces some good things and some things that are not so good. I resent the government taxing my income, telling educators what to teach our children, and managing my health care. However, I love the interstate highway system and... my mind went blank. I am sure there are other things my tax money provides me but I can't remember any right now!

Never the less, we have elections. I participate and recognize the need for the election of a representative but I particularly dislike the time between candidates offering themselves for office and the election(s). The radio (I don't watch TV) is full of political ads, the mail is full of request for donations, and there are a million little signs on the side of every road. When I grow up, I want to own a business that makes those little signs. There has to be a great profit margin in making plastic signs, and one only has to work every two years. Do you ever wonder what happens to all those signs after the election? I digress.

I am convinced that decisions made by politicians determine a farmer's success just as much as the weather. Elected officials control or influence the cost of borrowed money, fuel, taxation, zoning, environmental regulations, labor laws, agricultural research, water rights, etc.

The current Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture is retiring and we are in the process of electing a new Commissioner. Each of the 11 million people living in Georgia has the opportunity to vote for a person to represent the state's largest industry, Agriculture.

Per the last census, there are 42,000 farmers in Georgia. Obviously there are more of them, (consumers), than there are us, (farmers). Most of the voting age people in Georgia are two generations removed from the farm and have only recently been inconvenienced by empty shelves at the grocery store. Most voters are not aware that the Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture is responsible for food safety, weights and measures, seed and fertilizer testing, etc.

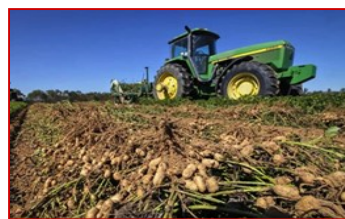
As voters we have to get informed and know what a candidate stands for. What is his or her past record on issues we care about? What are their morals and beliefs?

For those of you who are not Georgians, you likely have the same issue in your state. Not only do we have to get informed but we have to convey what we know to other voters. Agriculture cannot be meek; we need a loud voice. We have to support farm organizations that are politically savvy, develop well funded Political Action Committees, and personally, financially support the candidate that will be an advocate for agriculture.

In closing, farmer or consumer, become an informed voter and vote.

GCIA Buying Point Training - August 23

All GCIA buying point representatives are invited to join us on Tuesday, August 23, 2022 for our annual Peanut Buying Point Training Session. Again this year, we are meeting at the **Georgia Federal-State Inspection Service Offices in Albany**. The address is 951 Pecan Grove Drive, Albany, Georgia. Thanks in advance to Mr. T.E. Moye and Ms. Teresa Cox for hosting us.



Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m., and the training will begin at 9:30 a.m. We will be discussing requirements for handling certified seed as well as the application process. We have also invited Dr. Jack Davis, JLA International; Don Koehler, Georgia Peanut Commission; and Tyron Spearman, National Peanut Buying Points Association to speak to the group. The program will conclude around noon.



Buying Points: A buying point must appoint a representative knowledgeable of GCIA rules to be responsible for the buying point's compliance with the published rules governing certified seed production, handling and storage. The GCIA representative(s) must attend a training session offered by GCIA no less than once every two years. A peanut buying point is any facility that receives and/or stores certified peanut seed. Each approved buying point location must have an onsite representative. A representative may not be responsible for overseeing more than one location.

Please register by Friday, August 19, 2022 via email: becki.hicks@georgiacrop.com

GCIA Sponsors FFA Turf Proficiency Award

GCIA sponsors the FFA Turfgrass Management Proficiency Award in an effort to expose high school students to the green industry and, specifically, turfgrass management. The 2022 award was presented to Jace Shirah at the 2022 Georgia FFA convention. Jace is a rising senior at Eastside High School in Newton County. He became interested in turfgrass while working with his father at the Rockdale Youth Soccer Association in Conyers, Georgia. As is expected, his first responsibilities were running errands, refueling equipment, and other needed jobs.



In 2019, the Newton County High School Athletic Department approached the agricultural department seeking help in making the athletic fields more appealing. Jace was put in charge of the project that resulted in the development of his "Supervised Agricultural Experience" (SAE). This is a student learning project that is conducted outside the classroom under the supervision of the agricultural education teacher. Jace's FFA advisors are Ms. Sarah Beth Hammond and Dr. Catrina Pollard.

Jace's SAE included taking soil samples of all Newton County athletic fields. Based on the soil analysis, he made recommendations to the coaches and assisted with applying fertilizer as needed. He participated in maintenance of the fields which included mowing and striping of fields.

In 2021, Jace expanded his knowledge base of turfgrasses by working at a local golf course.

2022 GCIA Small Grain Inspector Training

The GCIA small grain inspector training was held on April 21st at the UGA Southwest Georgia Research & Education Center near Plains. We had thirteen in attendance, including Georgia Seed Development staff from Athens and Plains. Dr. Mohamed Mergoum, UGA Professor in Wheat Breeding & Genetics, provided an overview of his breeding program and highlighted his latest releases. Following Dr. Mergoum's presentation, we reviewed the wheat seed certification standards and compared the variety descriptions with the characteristics of the varieties planted on the station.



Upcoming Ag Industry Events



August 11
GFB Commodity Conference
Stone Mountain, Georgia



AMERICAN
PEANUT SHELLERS ASSOCIATION
— SINCE 1919 —

August 8-10
Preharvest Meeting
Albany, Georgia

Georgia Seed Development and Georgia Crop Improvement Association



2022 Summer Interns

For many years, GCIA and Georgia Seed Development have provided internship opportunities to students studying agriculture and related fields. While we were forced to take a couple of years off due to COVID-19, we were happy to welcome two outstanding young people on their first day, May 16th.

Dalton Beasley is a rising senior from Screven, GA majoring in Applied Biotechnology at UGA. His family owns and operates a crop consulting business in southeastern Georgia. He has worked the last five summers scouting row crops for disease, insects, and weed pressure. He is excited to learn more about how GSD operates and interacts with our university breeders. Dalton is interested in continuing his education in graduate school.



Victoria Clendenning is a rising senior from Gainesville, GA majoring in Agriscience and Environmental systems at UGA. Victoria has experience in horticultural nursery settings as well as row crops. She has worked for almost 2 years at Cofer's Home and Garden Showcase in Athens. In addition, during the summer of 2021 Victoria interned with the Vellidis Research Laboratory in Tifton, Georgia. Last fall, Victoria participated in a UGA Capstone Project located at Premium Peanut in Douglas, GA.



The goal of the internship is to provide students an opportunity to learn about plant breeding programs and activities, cultivar development and commercialization, seed and turfgrass production, ornamental plant propagation, certification, and foundation seed and plant programs. Students will visit and be exposed to UGA plant breeders, regional seed companies, seed conditioning facilities, turfgrass farms, plant nurseries, and the Georgia State Seed Lab. Students will work alongside GSD and GCIA staff to observe the entire process of taking a new cultivar to market and the certification activities required to ensure a high-quality product is available to the seed company, the farmer, and ultimately, the consumer.

ITGAP Visits Australia

By: AusGAP; May 26, 2022

AusGAP has provided a warm welcome to the International Turfgrass Genetic Assurance Program (ITGAP) administered by the Georgia Crop Improvement Association (GCIA). GCIA Certification Program Manager Billy Skaggs is ecstatic to be touring Australia for most of May this year. Two years of travel restrictions has limited the international turfgrass program's ability to visit Australia and Billy is keen to visit AusGAP certified turf producers again as one of the primary reasons for his trip.

"When I last visited Australia in January of 2020, I had no idea it would be two-plus years before I could return. I thoroughly enjoyed my previous visits and cannot wait to make up for lost time by visiting as many certified turf farms as possible."

Despite ITGAP's long absence during COVID-19, AusGAP has been able to continue its exclusive arrangement with ITGAP and ensure AusGAP certified producers meet all areas of compliance under ITGAP and AusGAP guidelines. During Mr. Skaggs' visit he intends to ensure genetic purity has been maintained for AusGAP certified paddocks and that producers understand the means to remain compliant.

"ITGAP and AusGAP expect certified growers to produce the best, highest quality turf possible – meaning it's genetically pure and is free of noxious and objectionable weeds. This is accomplished by holding growers accountable via inspections and by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to make good management decisions."

AusGAP program manager Michael Sutton will be travelling with Mr. Skaggs as part of his AusGAP bi-annual inspections that provides staff continued training on the AusGAP program and to inspect certified paddocks to ensure genetic purity and to ensure turf is true to type. Mr. Sutton has also used this time to strengthen his knowledge of ITGAP and how it relates to the AusGAP program.

"I know we all will benefit considerably from Billy's visit, and it will also see independent audits of the visited growers and the whole AusGAP program. This visit is a chance to further educate on ITGAP practices and procedures for AusGAP staff, which will intern benefit our clients and the end users with even greater turf purity and quality."

Mr. Skaggs has been inspecting AusGAP turf production facilities in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia taking time to share his extensive experience inspecting certified turf in the US and how producers here can benefit from his knowledge.





Georgia Crop

Improvement Association

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