



Georgia Crop Improvement Association

GCIA News Briefs

FALL 2018



MEMBER
Association of Official
Seed Certifying Agencies
<http://www.aosca.org>

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I've Been Thinking - Terry Hollifield, Executive Director

I recently read an article online that posed the question: How are you better than your competitors? I've been thinking about that article for some time. Seed and Turf Certification does give you a leg up on many of your competitors. Most competitors in this industry are reputable, honest, ethical, and just as conscientious about marketing a quality product as our Certified Seed and Turf producers. I think it is fair to say that we all realize there will be competition; we just want everyone to play by the rules.

However, we know of unscrupulous companies who pirate seed to avoid paying royalties that support new cultivar development, market products with questionable quality, misidentify a product to meet a sale, etc. Our Seed and Turf Certification program is the perfect way to identify your company and its products as superior and to differentiate yourself, in a good way, from the competition.

The GCIA staff makes a dedicated effort to promote high quality seed and sod by promoting the integrity of our growers. In 2018, the staff made eight presentations to various groups, manned four exhibits, wrote numerous articles for trade magazines and grew our Facebook page to over 7,800 views. We made available to our clients brochures supporting Seed and Turf Certification. In addition, we compiled and published seed buyer guides for use by the industry and consumers. If you know of other opportunities for us to get in front of industry groups, please let us know.

While we make every effort to do so, GCIA has a limited staff and funds for "telling the story" of certification. I encourage each of our clients and those of you in research, extension, sales, etc. to assist us. One way is the promotion of the Georgia Crop Improvement Association by using our logo on your website and printed material. We will certainly provide you with the GCIA logo in a form that can easily be incorporated into your advertisements and other marketing materials.



Be sure to visit our
Facebook page!



Georgia Crop
Improvement Association

Spotlight on GCIA's Organic Certification Program

What exactly is organic certification? Organic certification verifies that a farm or handling facility located anywhere in the world complies with the USDA organic regulations and allows the operator to sell, label, and represent their products as organic. The regulations ([7CFR Part 205 National Organic Program Final Rule](#)) describe the specific standards required for an operator to use the word "organic" or the USDA organic seal on food, feed, or fiber products. The USDA National Organic Program administers these regulations, with input from its citizen advisory board and the public.



While the USDA administers the National Organic Program (NOP), they do not routinely conduct the onsite inspections of these facilities. Instead, USDA NOP relies on agencies and organizations to conduct organic inspections. The Georgia Crop Improvement Association is a USDA NOP Accredited Certifying Agent (ACA). Once approved, organic certifiers are accredited for five years. To ensure compliance, every two and a half years USDA conducts an onsite assessment. Renewing ACA's will have onsite assessments prior to renewal around the five year mark. These assessments are performed by the NOP.

GCIA was among the first crop improvement organizations in the country to become an organic certifier back in the early 2000's. Our 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 crops, livestock and poultry.

Johnny Luke serves as the Organic Program Manager. In his role, Mr. Luke reviews client applications, makes inspection assignments and conducts many onsite inspections. Jeanne Gonzales is the Organic Program Assistant handling much of the administrative tasks associated with organic certification. Recently, Billie Dunn, Outside Services Program Assistant, has begun assisting with administrative duties for several organic clients. In 2017 and 2018, Sean Cunard and Billy Skaggs received training from the International Organic Inspectors Association and are now authorized to conduct inspections of organic farms as well as processors and handlers. Terry Crane, Food Safety Manager, is also a trained organic inspector and assists as needed.

Many new producers find the organic certification process challenging and often overwhelming. To aid these producers, GCIA developed the Organic Jump Start Program. By participating in Jump Start, a producer can begin the process of learning the organic certification program requirements and documenting production practices that are in compliance with the NOP.

The Jump Start Program will document the use of land and any soil fertility or pest management inputs that may be applied in preparation for meeting the three year land history requirements of the National Organic Program. Upon completion of the required three years without the application of prohibited materials and approval of a current Organic System Plan, the applicant may be approved to produce and market certified organic products.

Organic Clients by Scope:	
Farm (crop & livestock)	44
Greenhouse	2
Handler / Processor	72
Poultry	1
GRAND TOTAL	119

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

REGISTER NOW - GCIA Turfgrass Training

Please join us at **10:00 A.M.** on **Thursday, November 8, 2018** in Macon at Georgia Farm Bureau (1620 Bass Rd, Macon, GA 478-474-8411) for the GCIA Turfgrass Representative Training. **The class will be held in the 5th floor dining room.**

Topics to be discussed:

- Turfgrass Standards
- Application Instructions
- Certified Turfgrass Certificates
- Turfgrass Buyers Guide
- Documentation of Bulk Sales
- ETCertificate Program – Discussion & Onsite ETC Training**

NEW THIS YEAR – Dr. Clint Waltz, UGA Turf Specialist, will join us via webinar to provide his thoughts on the 2018 growing season and be available to answer growers' questions.

As stated in the GCIA Handbook, attendance at a training session is required prior to signing certificates. All Authorized Representatives must attend training no less than every four years.

Please RSVP via email (becki.hicks@georgiacrop.com) by November 1, 2018.



Former CAES Dean Appointed Head of USDA NIFA

Scott Angle, a former dean of the University of Georgia's College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, has been tapped to lead the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The agency was created in 2008 as an umbrella for federally funded agricultural research, a major source of research revenue for universities such as UGA that have strong agriculture programs. The institute's budget for the 2018 fiscal year is \$365 million, according to the USDA.

In the language of the institute's website, its mission is to "stimulate and fund the research and technological innovations that will enhance American agriculture and make it more productive and environmentally sustainable while ensuring the economic viability of agriculture and production."

The White House recently announced that President Trump had nominated Angle for a six-year appointment as the agency's head. Angle's appointment would give UGA another high-level USDA connection. Sonny Perdue, a UGA graduate and former Georgia governor, is U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

Angle was dean of the UGA College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences from 2005 to 2015, when he stepped down to take a job as president and CEO of Alabama's International Fertilizer Development Center. Angle was for 24 years a professor of soil science and administrator in the University of Maryland's Maryland Experiment Station and Maryland Cooperative Extension, according to the White House press release announcing his nomination.

UGA Hosts International Soybean Conference

On August 29-30, Georgia became the epicenter for international soybean science. More than 300 plant breeders, molecular biologists and commercial researchers converged on Athens, Georgia, for the 17th Biennial Conference on the Molecular and Cellular Biology of the Soybean.

The meeting showcased new research in gene characterization, genome editing, soybean engineering, and soybean biology and environmental interaction. Presenters came from around the globe and were hosted by University of Georgia soybean scientists and College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences professors Scott Jackson, Zenglu Li and Wayne Parrott.

“We really had some of the most cutting-edge concepts and ideas in soybean biology presented this week,” said Jackson, of the UGA Center for Applied Genetic Technologies. “From increasing yield to achieving insect and disease resistance, understanding the molecular biology of the soybean is going to help us build a more bountiful and sustainable food supply as the world’s population grows.”

“The soybean is a key crop for meeting the nutritional needs of the increasing global population,” Parrott said. “A thorough understanding of soybean genetics is important for the development of new soybean varieties to meet the nutritional, environmental and industrial requirements that soybeans could fulfill over the coming decades.”

In addition to the four-day molecular biology conference, UGA’s soybean scientists, led by Li, hosted the two-day 2018 Soybean Breeders Tour. The tour highlighted UGA’s soybean research and UGA Cooperative Extension work. It attracted about 160 soybean breeders and soybean specialists.

“We wanted to share the work we’re doing with soybeans at UGA,” Li said. “Researchers at UGA are focused on both the basic and applied sides of soybean research, and the Soybean Breeders Tour allowed us to showcase how basic and applied soybean research come together to benefit our soybean growers and to improve the security of our food system.”

For more information about soybean breeding and molecular biology at UGA, visit cropsoil.uga.edu.

Summarized from an article by Merritt Melancon, UGA CAES news editor.



GSD Peanut Facility Improvements

Roger Boerma, Executive Director & Ralph Johnson, Peanut Production Manager

In 2008 the Georgia General Assembly amended and then Governor Sony Perdue approved the changes to the Georgia Seed Development (GSD) enabling legislation. These changes resulted in GSD moving from a unit within the Georgia Department of Agriculture to a not-for-profit, public corporation. This level of independence from state government has allowed GSD to operate in a more business-like fashion and invest in its infrastructure. Since this change there have been numerous improvements to the GSD Foundation Peanut Plant at Plains, GA. In 2009 and 2010 GSD invested approximately \$2 million dollars in a new LMC peanut sheller with a capacity of 10 to 12 tons per hour replacing its nearly 40-year-old sheller with only a 1½ ton per hour capacity. This allowed GSD to shell all of its Foundation peanuts on-site resulting in both improved quality and purity of our Foundation peanut seed.

During this same time period, Georgia's peanut buying points were converting from 21 ft. drying trailers to the larger semi-truck drying trailers. Since the Foundation seed of the Georgia-developed peanut varieties is produced in limited quantities compared to commodity peanuts, GSD decided to maintain its 21 ft. drying trailers for peanut seed transport from our contract growers' fields to the Foundation Peanut Plant. At this same time most of our contract growers were upgrading their peanut harvest equipment by the purchase of new 6-row peanut combines. In order to efficiently haul the newly harvested peanuts to our plant and keep their 6-row combines running required GSD to expand its 21 ft. drying trailer fleet by 38%.

Another significant investment was GSD's installation of a new peanut receiving station with a LMC air-gap cleaner. This new facility allowed GSD to significantly reduce the inert matter in our stored in-shell peanuts resulting in improved air movement within the warehouse. The air gap cleaner has the capacity to clean the peanuts from one of our 21 ft. drying trailers (7 tons) in less than 10 minutes.

GSD has also expanded its peanut drying capacity. In 2016 we built a new 18-trailer drying shed. This facility increased our drying capacity by over 45%. As mentioned earlier, it is important for GSD to avoid becoming the bottleneck for our contract growers during their limited harvest period. Our enhanced hauling, drying, cleaning, and shelling capacities allows GSD to take peanuts from the field to our warehouses and produce high quality treated and bagged seed in a highly efficient manner.

These improved facilities also allowed GSD to expand its volume of Foundation peanut seed available to our customers. During the 2008 and 2009 growing seasons GSD handled an average of 2,629 tons of Foundation farmer stock peanuts compared to 3,506 tons for 2016 and 2017 seasons. This 33% increase in Foundation peanut production over this 8-year period would have been impossible without our equipment and facilities upgrades.



Peanut Receiving Station, GSD Plains



Peanut Sheller, GSD Plains



Georgia Crop

Improvement Association

2425 South Milledge Avenue
Athens, Georgia 30605

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

OFFICERS

Ricky Hartley, Golden Peanut & Tree Nuts
President

Kevin Calhoun, Birdsong Peanuts, Inc.
Past President

Ken Morrow, The Turfgrass Group, Inc.
1st Vice-President

John Raley, R&R Seed Farms, Inc.
2nd Vice-President

DIRECTORS

John Bowen, John Bowen Turf Company

Chad Chandler, McCleskey Mills, Inc.

Ben Copeland, Jr., Super Sod / Patten Seed

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

Blake Fleeman, Georgia Seed Development

Jutt Howard, North Georgia Turf

Reed Rogers, Golden Peanut & Tree Nuts

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, Outside Services Program Assistant

Jeanne Gonzales, Organic Program 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, Certification Program Manager