

FALL
2026



NEWSLETTER

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MEMBER



MEMBER

From the Director's desk

As I sat down to write this article on Monday, October 12th, I wondered, "What should I write? What would our members like to read about?"

After thinking about it and then getting sidetracked, I opened an email from an industry trade association reminding me October 12 is National Farmer's Day. I said to myself, "that's it!"

October 12th is National Farmer's Day, and it's a day for everyone to acknowledge the hard work that goes into feeding and supplying a nation. The day encourages everyone to thank the farmers and ranchers in their lives and to pay tribute in some way to the unknown individuals who plow, sow, raise, feed, and harvest to provide the food and materials that our country needs to succeed.

National Farmer's Day was once called Old Farmer's Day, and it has deep roots that go back to the 1800s when agriculture was much more common in everyday life. It was officially established as a federal holiday in 1970. The day was set on October 12th because it is after the traditional harvest times of many crops.

GCIA members and our partners are well aware agriculture drives the economy of much of our state and the nation. That said, here are a few Georgia stats that might surprise you:

- Economic Output: Contributes over \$91.4 billion in annual economic output, with a farm gate value of roughly \$15 billion to \$17.6 billion. [USDA]
- Farms & Acreage: Home to around 39,000 to 42,000 farms covering approximately 9.9 to 10 million acres, with an average farm size of about 235 to 253 acres. [USDA]
- Employment: Supports over 381,200 jobs across production, forestry, and food processing. [Georgia Farm Bureau]
- Food Processing: Features more than 1,500 food processing facilities, with roughly half of the top 100 U.S. food processors operating in the state. [Georgia Economic Development]
- Georgia is #1 in the nation for: peanuts, broilers (chickens raised for meat), pecans, blueberries, and spring onions. [USDA]
- Top Forestry State: Consistently ranked as the nation's leading forestry state, with over two-thirds of the state covered in private timberland. [Georgia Forestry Commission]
- Top 10 Commodities: Includes broilers, cotton, eggs, peanuts, beef, timber, greenhouse products, blueberries, corn, and dairy. [University of Georgia]

Thanks to all those who have dedicated their lives to supplying the food, fiber, feed and energy for the rest of us - American Farmers! GCIA is grateful for the certified seed and sod growers we have the good fortune to work with! Thanks for all you do!

Billy Skaggs
Executive Director
Georgia Crop Improvement Association
Ph: 706-542-2351
2425 South Milledge Ave
Athens, GA 30605
billy.skaggs@georgiacrop.com

2026 - 2027 UPCOMING AG EVENTS



**UAC Sporting Clays Tournament-
October 29th**

Click here for more info: [UAC Events](#)



GCIA Turfgrass Authorized Representative Training

November 12th starting at 10am and will
be conducted by ZOOM.

*Contact Becki Hicks for more info and to
register call 706-542-2351 or email
becki.hicks@georgiacrop.com.

Southeast FRUIT & **regional** VEGETABLE CONFERENCE

Southeast Regional

**Fruit & Vegetable Conference-
January 7-9, 2027**

Click here for more info: [SE Regional Events](#)



**50th Annual Georgia Peanut Farm Show-
January 21, 2027**

Click here for more info: [GA Peanut Farm Show](#)



**Georgia Agribusiness Council
Harvest Celebration-
November 20th**

Click here for more info: [GAC Events](#)



**UAC Landscape Pro University & Expo-
January 27, 2027**

Click here for more info: [UAC Events](#)

GCIA 2026 Peanut Inspector Training Briefing



On July 30th, the Georgia Crop Improvement Association held its annual peanut inspection training in Tifton, GA. We met up with Dr. Bill Branch, UGA Peanut Breeder, and he showed us the different phenotypic traits in peanut varieties that we would be inspecting statewide.

Georgia-06G and TifNV-HG still accounted for the majority of our acres this year, followed by 16 additional peanut varieties in certification. IPG 913 acreage really went up with over 15K acres this year. There are several new and upcoming varieties that we would be inspecting, so Dr. Branch informed us of the diverse growth habits associated with each one. These varieties have high yield potential with proven disease resistance packages associated with them.

Dr. Branch had each variety planted next to one another so we could see the differentiation of plant growth. We were able to pull peanut plants out of the ground and examine the peanut shell and seed characteristics. Some peanut varieties have distinct differences in physical shape, size, and density. The varieties also have different maturity days, and we were educated on which ones matured earlier and some that matured much later.

GCIA invited multiple people from out of state who were able to attend. These attendees were part of other Crop Improvement Associations or Universities. We appreciate the time and effort put into this training by the UGA peanut team.

2026 Peanut Acres Applied for

Variety	Acreage
Georgia-06G	66,902
TifNV-HG	29,171
IPG 913	15,370
52N	4,555
Georgia-18RU	2,994
Georgia-12Y	2,731
Georgia-16HO	1,820
725	848
Georgia-23RKN	824
Georgia-22MPR	589
Arnie	526
618	258
Georgia-21GR	238
Georgia-20VHO	184
Georgia-24NHO	86
Georgia-09B	65
Georgia-25NV	15
TifTB	15
TOTAL	127,191.00

The Annual Buying Point Training was held on August 25th in Albany, GA. Mr. Billy Skaggs spoke to buying point representatives on the importance of their role in seed certification by ensuring they had a quality management system in place. A key part to this system is to have an SOP for cleaning equipment [semi-trailers, wagons, dump pits, etc.]. This guarantees purity, identity, and quality for each variety. Guest speakers included an update from Ms. Teresa Cox, Georgia Federal-State Inspection service, Dr. Jack Davis, JLA Labs, and Mr. Tyron Spearman, National Peanut Buying Points Association. We would like to thank the Georgia Federal-State Inspection Service for allowing us to use their facility to host this meeting.



The GCIA Annual Membership Meeting is set for March 10, 2027 at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center. Formal details to be provided soon!

ITGAP visits Australia for third party quality inspections



From the 6th to 20th of September Mr. Alex Gilreath, GCIA Certification Program Associate & ITGAP Turfgrass Inspector, visited Australia to inspect 16 AusGAP certified farms in South Australia, Victoria, & New South Wales. This marked Alex's first trip to Australia, and he was certainly eager and excited to visit. He was especially appreciative of the AusGAP staff, Jyri Kaapro and Megan Ford. Jyri transported Alex from farm to farm during most inspections. Alex was able to inspect a few farms toward the end of his trip with Megan as well.

During Gilreath's visit, job one was to ensure genetic purity had been maintained for AusGAP certified paddocks and that producers understood what it takes to remain compliant. "ITGAP, and by extension 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 can only be accomplished when the growers and AusGAP work together collaboratively. ITGAP and AusGAP work hard to provide the farmers with the proper tools and resources to make good management decisions. From what was seen, the growers are putting in the necessary time and effort to scout their fields for potential problems," said Gilreath. Throughout inspections, Alex continued to be impressed by the farm representative's familiarity with each paddock. *[Continued on Pg. 7]*



ITGAP visits Australia for third party quality inspections



Gilreath also took the time to deliver varietal morphology differences and answer inspection questions to existing AusGAP clients, while emphasizing how ITGAP is the only internationally accepted and recognized verification program for turfgrass production. Around the world, golf and sports turf facility owners, architects and designers see ITGAP as a respected source for quality assurance. Working hand in hand, AusGAP has extended ITGAP's circle of influence by reaching new growers and, ultimately, new turfgrass consumers. In addition, the introduction of TifTuf Hybrid Bermuda grass and Sir Grange Zoysia grass has added value for growers. While performing inspections, Gilreath also inspected several new paddocks of Stampede Buffalo grass. Gilreath commented, "Stampede appears to be gaining market share, with consumers being pleased with it's performance and appearance."

When asked what he most enjoyed during his visit to Australia, Gilreath had several comments to make, stating that interaction with all growers was fantastic and very educational for him. "The growers definitely know what they're doing when it comes to producing genetically pure, quality turfgrass." Gilreath also commented on the scenery during his travel from farm to farm, stating, "Being able to see the rural parts of Australia had to be one key highlight and not just seeing the city." "While the city is beautiful, I really enjoy getting to see areas a lot of tourists never see."

"Gilreath expressed his appreciation to everyone who made his visit possible. "A big thank you to Megan Ford for making the arrangements and for spending a few days with me visiting farms. Also, big thanks goes out to Jyri Kaapro for hauling me around for almost two weeks. It was great to network with Jyri throughout my time there, very brilliant person. Thank you to Joe Rogers from LSA for inviting me to be on the Turf Talk Podcast and to Simon Adermann (LSA) for helping with logistics and planning as well. I am very grateful for the opportunity!"

Following his trip, Gilreath will be providing a full report on his findings to AusGAP, Lawn Solutions Australia and the University of Georgia Research Foundation.





Georgia Crop

Improvement Association

2425 South Milledge Ave.
Athens, GA 30605

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

Officers

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