

The Pecan Grower

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GEORGIA PECAN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

**GPGA
Fall Field Day
Announcement**

**GPGA: On The
Road Again;
Conference Recap**

**Late Season
Problems You
May Encounter**

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CALENDAR OF *events...*

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Baxley, GA (See Flyer Below for Details)

AUGUST 25-26

National Pecan Shellers Annual Meeting
Brown Palace Hotel, Denver, CO
See more info at www.ilovepecans.org

SEPTEMBER 9

Georgia Pecan Growers Fall Field Day
See Details below:

SEPTEMBER 16

Alabama Pecan Growers Annual Conference
More info. at www.alabamapecangrowers.com

SEPTEMBER 19

Oklahoma Field Day
More info. at www.okpecangrowers.com

GPGA *Fall Field Day*

DATE:

September 9, 2021

LOCATION:

Nut Tree Pecan Nursery
8505 Old Bainbridge Road
Baconton, GA
31716

TIME:

Registration 8:00-9:00 AM
Program Starts 9:00 AM
Lunch @ 12:00 PM

TOPICS:

- High Density Planting
- Hedging
- New Varieties & Production Expectations
- Crop Nutrition
- Orchard Conversion
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 - E-mail - info@georgiapecan.org
- GPGA Members: **Free** admission
Non-Members: \$20.00
(Registration Required)

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ON THE COVER

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MARCOS RIVER AT SWIFT
RIVER PECAN ON THE
OUTSKIRTS OF SAN MARCOS,
TEXAS.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ANDREW MCBRAYER, GPGA

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The McLeod Family

Greetings!

With the summer months slipping by as we speak, we are excited about future opportunities still in store for the pecan industry in 2021.

With a successful conference in June and several other workshops and courses throughout the state completed, we are looking forward to an even better Fall Field Day on September 9. This year, the event will be hosted by Putt Wetherbee of Schermer Pecans/Nut Tree Pecan Nursery located in the heart of Georgia's pecan capital, Albany.

As harvest approaches, we want to once again thank our members and our industry for seeing us through another successful year — even amidst a global pandemic. At GPGA, our staff will continue to plow ahead with trade events and marketing opportunities for our growers, so please continue to keep an eye on our E-newsletters and social media for these events. Our office is always just a phone call or email away when you need us and we wish everyone a successful and happy harvest! See you all soon at Fall Field Day! 🍂

Sincerely,

Samantha

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EXPERT ADVICE

with Dr. Lenny Wells

Extension Horticulturist, University of Georgia

Late Season Pecan Problems You May Encounter

Each growing season seems to bring in it's own set of maladies. The most concerning often rear their heads late in the growing season. With that in mind, I've compiled a list of common problems that tend to crop up from August onward and tried to provide some context for the level of concern you should have about these and what steps to take in order to manage them.

Leaf scorching

Aside from black aphids and mites, there is a seemingly endless list of things that lead to leaf scorch on pecan, from a poor root:shoot ratio to bacterial leaf scorch. Discerning the difference between the many causes of leaf scorch can be challenging. Late season marks a time when many of these problems show up. From August through September the trees have a lot going on and can be easily stressed, which can open the door for these issues. Here are synopses of a few:

Nutrient Imbalance: Imbalances between both Nitrogen (N) and Potassium (K) and N and Phosphorus (P) can lead to leaf scorch. N:K imbalances normally occur in June and early July and are characterized by scorching along the base of the leaflets and usually begins at the base of the compound leaf. N:P scorch looks very similar but occurs later in the season-as late as 7-10 days before shuck split. Once you see the symptoms of this type of scorching there is little you can do about it for that year. The best course of action is to lower N rates and make a concentrated band application of whichever nutrient (K or P) is of concern to get it into the tree as quickly as possible. Broadcast applications will provide no quick solution. The most recent (2013) work on this problem by Mike Smith in Oklahoma showed that banded phosphorus application alleviated leaf scorch symptoms, increased leaf P concentration, and improved flowering. Band-applied K did not alleviate leaf symptoms but did increase leaf K.

Continued on Page 10, See Problems



Problems, Continued from Page 9

Secondary Diseases: Less conspicuous minor foliar diseases can creep into pecan trees late in the season. These include fungal pathogens like anthracnose and *Neofusicoccum* among others, which can ride in on the back of prolonged rainy weather and tropical storms as we saw in late June-early July. These diseases have a long latent period and their symptoms don't appear until several weeks after infection, which is why they can show up in August and September. Anthracnose can appear as leaf scorching with random lesions appearing on the leaf in no consistent pattern. If the disease progresses far enough, leaf drop and defoliation can occur.

Neofusicoccum appears as necrosis of the leaf beginning at the tip of the compound leaf and working back toward the base. When you stand back and look at trees infected with this pathogen, it can look like brown patches scattered through the canopy where compound leaf terminals have died back, often with a shepherd's crook forming from the leaf rachis or stem. *Neofusicoccum* looks bad but we have never



seen economic damage resulting from this disease.

Both these diseases are one reason we recommend phosphite applications early season. An additional application timed during the nut sizing stage in June or July can help ward off these late-season problems. The group 3 + group 11 fungicides also help in this regard. Still, these diseases can creep in when you rotate to our primary nut scab materials like Elast and

Continued on Page 11, See Problems



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Problems, Continued from Page 10

Tin. We have to use these materials to combat our most serious disease, scab but they offer less help with some of the secondary diseases.

Bacterial Leaf Scorch: This bacterial pathogen clogs the vascular system of pecan trees impairing water transport in the tree, and as a result leads to leaf scorching, defoliation, and limb die-back. Scorched lesions first appear along the margins of the leaflet and advance toward the midrib of the leaf. These lesions are typically well defined with a dark line between healthy and necrotic tissue. Though most commonly seen on Cape Fear, BLS can occur in other cultivars. Recent research points to the likelihood that not only is this pathogen probably in almost every tree of most cultivars out there, it is also in most plants in the landscape and countryside around you. Cape Fear simply expresses symptoms more easily than most cultivars. Symptoms are most likely to be expressed when trees are stressed for any reason but most commonly, heavy crop loads and drought can trigger symptom expression. It is likely



that hedge-pruning of trees may alleviate development of symptoms to some extent by improving the root:shoot ratio, which helps to improve the water status of the tree and manage crop load.

Leaf Drop

Leaf drop from black aphids is easy enough to diagnose. You will have yellow spots on the fallen leaves that turn necrotic and seem to be confined to the leaf area between the leaf veins and they are usually covered in black aphid nymphs. Defoliation from

Continued on Page 12, See Problems



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Problems, Continued from Page 11

mites will be characterized by scorching of the fallen leaves along the midrib of the leaflets and of course, the presence of mites on the leaves. Even more common causes of leaf drop than aphids and mites late in the season is leaf senescence and drought.

Leaf senescence is simply the aging of leaves to the point that they start to decline. This is most commonly observed in shaded leaves low in the canopy. They often will develop mottled yellow blotches on the leaf that are sometimes mistaken for black aphid damage. If you are seeing a lot of this the trees are either too crowded and not getting enough sunlight or they are under stress usually from drought/crop load.

Compound leaves can also drop simply from drought. Leaf drop or abscission is controlled by a plant hormone called auxin. Auxin is formed in the leaves and transported to other areas of the plant for various processes. As long as the flow continues, the cells that will eventually form the abscission layer remain active and the leaf remains firmly attached to the tree. As the leaf begins to shut down, auxin production dwindles



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Problems, Continued from Page 12

and the water and sugar conducting tubes in the vessels stop working. A reduction in the flow of auxin can be caused by a number of things-including drought stress. This reduction tells the cells that it is time to begin to form the abscission layer. Drop from hot conditions usually occurs when you get a rain or heavy irrigation following hot, dry weather.

Nut Drop

Nut drop is common in August and can be caused by a number of issues. Prior to shell hardening in mid August, shuckworm and weevil will both cause nut drop. When shuckworm is the culprit you will see a white residue on the shuck's outer surface. This pest needs to be sprayed with Intrepid or Intrepid Edge prior to shell-hardening so that shuckworm larvae do not get into the shuck itself and begin feeding. If this happens the nuts will remain on the tree and cause stick-tights or will be picked up with harvest and will hurt marketability and price. Weevil-damaged nuts will fall from the tree during the water stage and will rarely show external signs of injury ex-

cept for a small puncture penetrating through the shuck and unhardened shell, which can be hard to see. Weevils are usually only a problem in older pecan orchards. Orchards with weevil history should be sprayed with a pyrethroid like Bifenthrin during the August and September emergence period. Weevils commonly emerge following rain events when the soft dirt makes emergence easier.

Nut drop is also caused by drought anytime during the nut development period and by water stage fruit split following heavy rain events or heavy irrigation as shell hardening approaches. Water stage fruit-split of pecan is often a major problem exhibited by thin-shelled pecan varieties (e.g., Schley, Caddo, Oconee, Sumner, Wichita, Frotscher, and Farley) and, to a lesser degree, by certain relatively thick-shelled cultivars (e.g., 'Cape Fear' and 'Elliott'). The problem occurs when water pressure builds up rapidly inside the nut, causing the shell, seed coat, and sometimes the shuck to split about the time of the initiation of kernel filling and shell hard-

Continued on Page 14, See Problems

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Problems, Continued from Page 13

ening, resulting in abortion and drop of damaged fruit about 7 days after splitting.

There are usually 2 episodes to water split. The major episode is usually triggered by rainfall (or potentially irrigation) and a relatively minor event triggered by “high humidity/low light”. Irrigation schedule, shading, and crop load also factor in. Often, the split is inside the nut and you will simply see green nuts on the ground, which will stain a few days later. Other times when the incident is particularly violent you will see an actual longitudinal split in the shuck itself.

By the time you see water split, there’s little that can be done. Crop loss to water split is minimized, but not totally prevented, by managing soil moisture to minimize the severity and duration of water stress during the last two weeks of fruit sizing, and by crop-load thinning. Certain varieties will always have a potential for this problem under the right conditions. It seems to be worse when there’s been a dry spell and you suddenly get a heavy rainfall or



crank up the irrigation all of a sudden. Water split also appears worse when the trees are bearing a heavy crop load. This is another reason to maintain good soil moisture and minimize water stress through the entire season. Foliar sprays of B and Ni in the spring have also led to reductions in water split.

Continued on Page 15, See Problems



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Problems, Continued from Page 14

Shuck Decline/Stick-Tights/Vivipary

If you see the shucks of nuts or clusters of nuts turn brown/black suddenly, you have shuck decline. Shuck Decline is not a disease! This is a condition of crop stress brought on by heavy crop load coupled with inadequate water. You may see some white fungi growing on the shucks but this is a secondary pathogen and not the cause of the problem.

Stick-Tights occur when the tree does not get adequate water following kernel filling to fulfill the requirements of the shuck dehiscence process so the shucks do not open properly. As mentioned earlier, shuckworms can also lead to this problem.

Vivipary (premature germination) and embryo rot (both of which are different stages of the same problem) occur in higher percentages under conditions of high temperatures and high moisture inside the shuck in August/September. Under these conditions the embryo will begin development. If it has enough energy it will sprout and die. If it does not have enough energy the embryo will try to sprout but dies before the sprout can fully form. Self-pollination also results in higher vivipary and embryo rot.

Shuck decline, vivipary, and stick-tights often occur together and are all influenced by the same environmental conditions. It is especially critical to continue irrigating trees bearing a crop during and following kernel-filling. If you turn off the water too soon after kernel filling is complete you will likely see significant shuck decline, stick-tights, and loss of quality, especially if conditions turn hot and dry. This problem will be worse on trees with a heavy crop load.

The nuts are still maturing following kernel filling and the process of shuck dehiscence (opening of the shucks) requires good soil moisture.



Late season problems have a variety of sources both biotic and abiotic. In the absence of disease or insects, the majority of these problems originate from inadequate irrigation combined with crop load. You should be at 100% of full capacity from mid-August through kernel filling on most cultivars. Following kernel filling, continue irrigation at 50-60% of full capacity on bearing trees until about 1 week before you expect to shake trees for harvest. If you get a 1" rain you can turn the system off for 3 days and then resume irrigation. 🌰

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Updated Pollination Charts

By Dr. Patrick Conner, Horticulture Department, University of Georgia, Tifton

Ensuring the likelihood of proper pollination is a key step in the design of new pecan orchards. Lack of pollen during receptivity can result in reduced fruit set and lower yields, and increases the chance of self-pollination which results in smaller, less-filled nuts.

Most orchards are designed to have a main cultivar and then individual trees, or rows of trees, of a pollinizer variety. The pollinizer is typically chosen through the use of a pollination bar chart. These charts provide estimations of the stigma receptivity and pollen shed of each cultivar. (If you are wondering about the difference between a pollinizer and a pollinator, a pollinizer is a plant that provides pollen, whereas a pollinator is an animal that moves the pollen, such as bees, moths, bats, and birds. I was informed of this difference recently when I had a paper

reviewed and the correct term noted. Since in pecan the pollen is generally moved by the wind we have not needed to talk about pollinators and so the difference between a pollinator and a pollinizer is often overlooked.)

In our cultivar evaluations we observe the stigma receptivity and pollen shed of all new selections. This data is then combined with previous observations of older cultivars to predict which cultivars can be used as pollinizers.

As you can imagine, combining new and old data into a single chart is difficult. One challenge is that flowering periods vary between years due to the weather, so it doesn't make sense to anchor the charts on particular calendar days. Instead, our charts are based on day of bloom. I have rated "day 1" as the first day that any cultivar was either receptive to pollen or shedding pollen, and then the end of the bloom period was the last day anything was receptive to pollen or shedding pollen.

Over the 11 years the most recent cultivars were
Continued on Page 18, See Charts

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Charts, Continued from Page 17

evaluated, bloom season varied from 17 to 26 days in length. Since the average bloom season was 23 days long, I divided the chart into 23 “days” along the top. By looking at bloom period instead of calendar days it doesn’t matter whether “day 1” was April 10th as it was in 2015, or April 29th, like it was in 2008. I have found that as long as you have a relatively large number of cultivars in your pool (minimum of 12) so you are seeing the full length of the bloom period, shed and receptivity periods within the bloom season for a cultivar are fairly consistent from year to year.

Let’s take a quick look at the pollination chart. Down the left side of the chart are all the cultivars in alphabetical order. I have included those cultivars that I think might reasonably be planted or existing in most Georgia orchards. In order to cut down on the size of the chart, I have removed some very old or rare cultivars. If there is a something for which you need data that isn’t included, contact me and I may be able to provide it to you. To the right of the cultivar name is the bloom type. Type I cultivars release pollen first and are receptive to pollen later. Type II cultivars are

receptive to pollen first and then later release their pollen. On the right side of the chart are two bars indicating when the cultivar releases pollen or is receptive to pollen. The yellow bar on top indicates the period of pollen release, and the black bar on the bottom indicates the period of receptivity to pollen. An ideal pollinizer will be shedding pollen during the majority of the receptive period of the main cultivar. The greater the overlap the better the chance that pollen will be provided at the right time even in odd years when one or the other cultivar blooms at a slightly different time.

Typically, several cultivars may shed pollen at the correct time to be used as a pollinizer, so how do you know which one to use? There are a couple of other factors to consider to narrow down your choices. Will your pollinizer cultivar be pollinated by your main cultivar? Often cultivars will pollinate each other, but this is not always the case. For example, looking at the pollination chart we can see that ‘Schley’ sheds pollen at the correct time to pollinate ‘Avalon’, but the reciprocal is not true, ‘Avalon’ sheds pollen far to late

Continued on Page 19, See Charts

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Charts, Continued from Page 18

to pollinate 'Schley'. This is generally a problem when the pollinizer is the same bloom type as the main cultivar. In this case both 'Schley' and 'Avalon' are type II cultivars. When bloom type is the same, the pollination will only work one way. I prefer to select a pollinizer of the opposite bloom type to the main cultivar if possible to avoid this problem. Other than bloom periods, consider matching cultivars with sim-

Pollination bar chart for pecan cultivars in Georgia.



Continued on Page 20, See Charts



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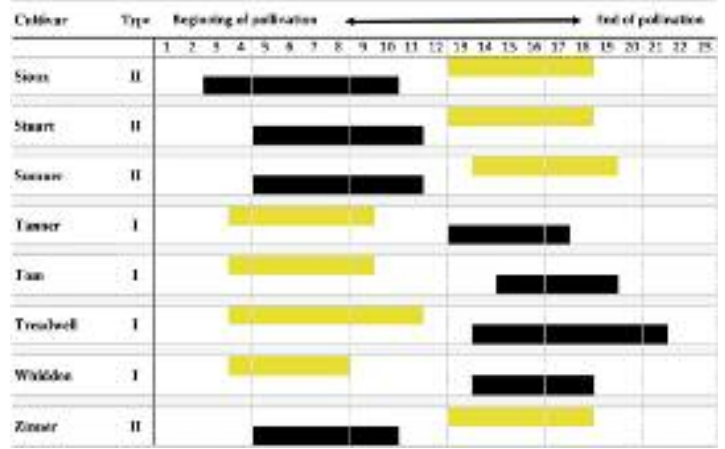
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Charts, Continued from Page 19

ilar cultural requirements for ease of management. If you are planting a scab resistant cultivar will you want a very scab susceptible pollinizer that would require frequent fungicide applications just on the pollinizer rows? Similarly, if the main cultivar is very stable bearing, do you want to mix in a pollinizer which will require extensive crop thinning? These considerations are even more of a factor if you are mixing in pollinizers as individual trees rather than



whole rows.

Keep in mind that these charts are best estimates only. There is some amount to variation year to year and even tree to tree. For this reason, I don't get too hung up on having absolute perfect match in pollinizer and instead focus on getting as much overlap as possible while making the orchard easy to maintain and having a nut you want to produce. This chart is available in pdf format on our website at: <https://pecanbreeding.uga.edu/pollination-charts.html>.



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Jack Thompson Scholarship Winners Selected

By Amy Howell, Copy Editor, *The Pecan Grower Magazine*

GPGA's Board of Directors is pleased to announce 4 winners of the 6th Annual Jack Thompson Memorial Scholarship: **John Aultman**, **Josie Bullington** and **Karoline Ponder**, who are all graduating seniors from Tift County High School, and our own GPGA staff member, **Andrew McBrayer**, who is returning to college this fall. Together, these recipients join with the 12 other students who have been served by the Jack Thompson fund since its inception, which was established by GPGA to recognize his family's contribution to the pecan industry while Jack was alive. A committee of our GPGA Board has the difficult task and privilege each year to select winners based on an impressive pool of applicants and this year was no different. This year marks the first time that 4 winners were selected as opposed to the usual 2 or 3, due to the volume and quality of applications received. Congratulations to our recipients:

John Aultman plans to become a Plant Pathologist and will continue his education at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, with the intention to transfer to the University of Georgia.

In his application, he wrote, "I want to become a Principal Investigator and conduct studies into the pathological diseases and parasites that affect plants around the Southeast while working with a nonprofit experiment station such as the University of Georgia's Tifton Campus."

While in high school, Aultman held down his current job with the Experiment Station, while also tak-



Continued on Page 24, See Winners



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Winners, Continued from Page 23

ing honors courses, dual college enrollment, and was involved in Tift County FFA. He credits the latter with developing his experience and wrote extensively about the research to which he has been involved with UGA-Tifton as a Nematology lab assistant.

Josie Bullington plans to attend Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College with the intention to transfer



to Auburn University to focus on Large Animal Nutrition. For over 5 years, Josie has assisted at her family farm, D&S Farms in Sycamore, Georgia, working with cattle and row crop production. She has been heavily involved in Tift County FFA,

while holding down AP classes and dual enrollment. Josie also was a Varsity track and softball player at Tift County High.

Bullington wrote, "I have developed a passion specifically for Animal Science and Livestock Produc-

tion. I would love to see the managerial techniques for mainstream livestock production change for the better due to my influence, allowing farmers and producers to be more efficient and profitable while encouraging better health and treatment of animals."

Karoline Ponder will be attending the University of Georgia this fall. She comes from a long line of

farmers and has assisted with crops ranging from pecans to cotton, peanuts, blueberries, watermelon and corn. Ponder graduated in the top 10 of her Tift County High School class while also competing on the Varsity swim team for 6 years as a decorated swimmer.



Ponder has interests in pursuing agricultural engineering as well as law and agribusiness. She wrote, "As I worked through an unpaid internship with Congressman Austin Scott's Tifton office, I had the oppor-

Continued on Page 26, See Winners

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19 **N** 68

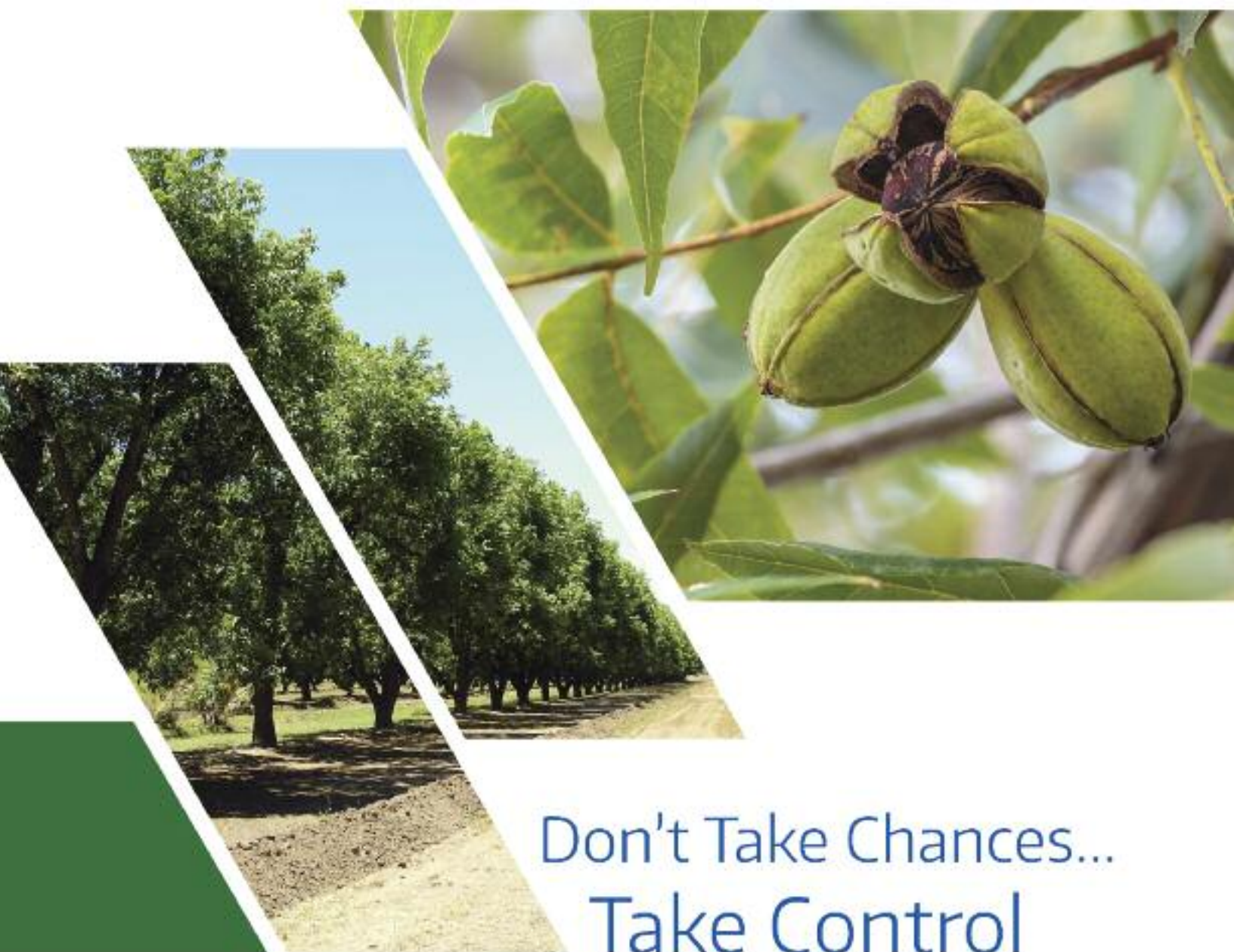
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Winners, Continued from Page 24

tunity to hear firsthand the issues and concerns of Georgia's residents and farmers. My eyes are open to the farming and family struggles under the current laws and economic impact of competing with other countries and labor laws. I want to better the industry in some capacity and ultimately help the farmers including the pecan industry."

Andrew McBrayer began working for GPGA when he was 16 as an office assistant while in high school. After graduating, he continued on in our office and progressed to our in-house graphic designer and



photographer. McBrayer has been instrumental in developing content and writing for *The Pecan Grower*, as well as improving all of GPGA's advertising, marketing and publications. As a tech whiz, he is always helpful in updating the staff and our systems with the lat-

est advancements to help us all work more efficiently.

McBrayer wrote in his application, "Some of my favorite work to date has been capturing photos in the field and orchard, as well as interviewing growers about the highs and lows through different crop seasons and sharing this valuable information with consumers and other growers through social media and our magazine. I have grown a deep passion for photographing pecans and sharing the beauty of the nut growth process, whether that be in the nursery, bud break, or the harvest season."

McBrayer plans to attend Southern Regional Technical College to complete his core requirements before transferring to the University of Georgia to pursue graphic design.

Congratulations to John, Josie, Karoline and Andrew!

Do you have a rising high school senior or current college student interested in our scholarship? We accept applications each fall semester through the end of January that year. For more information about applying for this scholarship or to contribute to the scholarship fund, please contact our office. 🌰

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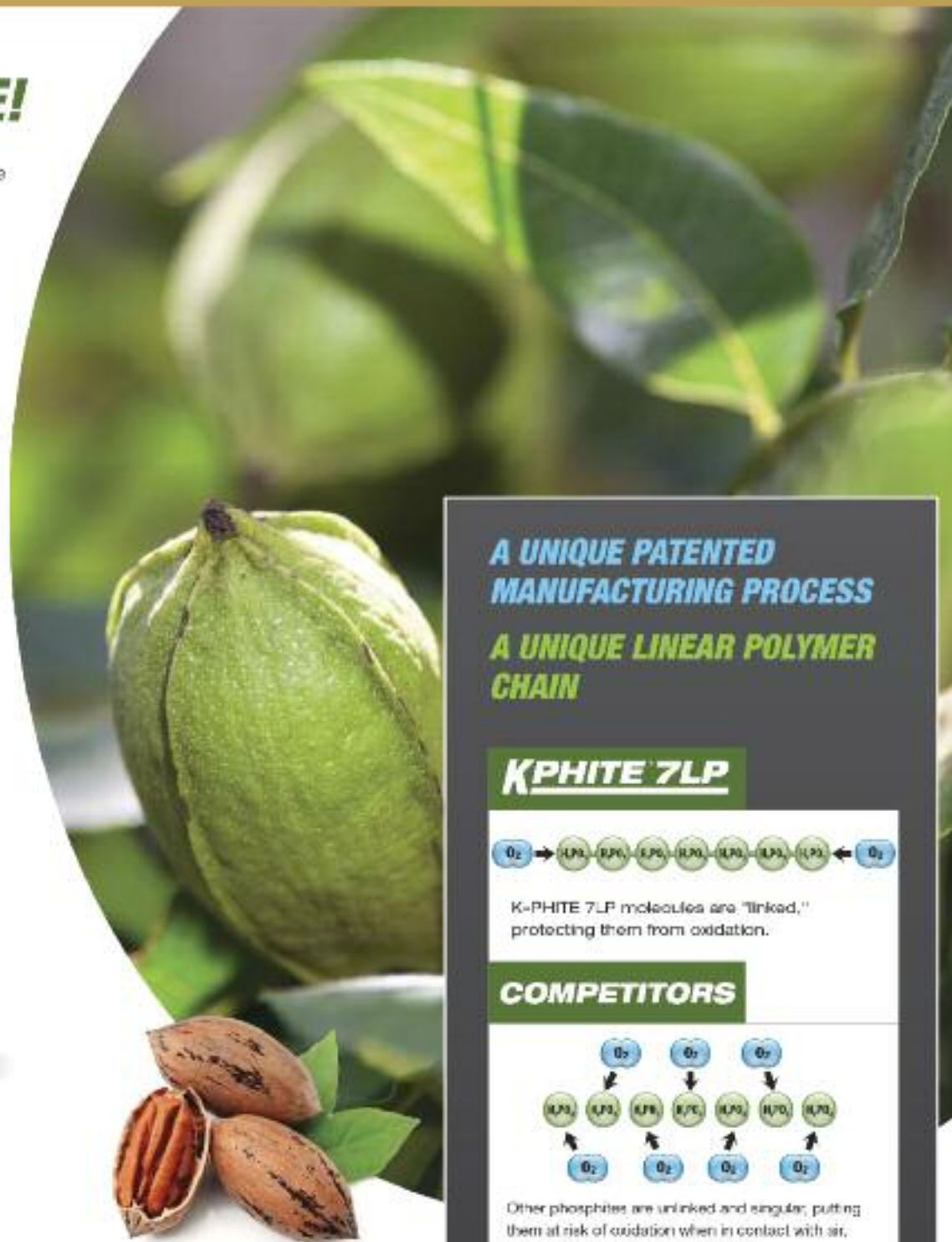


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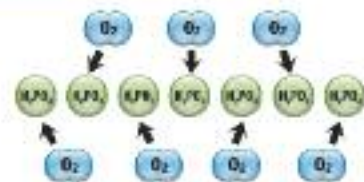
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Best Wishes To Dr. Acebes

By Amy Howell, Copy Editor, *The Pecan Grower Magazine*

Just when we were getting to know our beloved researcher, Dr. Angel Acebes, she is leaving Georgia and headed for the beauty that is Hawaii to study Macadamia nut issues. Dr. Acebes leaves behind a wealth of entomology research for Georgia pecan farmers in managing pecan pests.

When Dr. Acebes started working as the Cooperative Extension Pecan Entomologist for the University of Georgia Tifton Campus in 2018, her goal was to find effective and sustainable solutions for pecan pest insects. Acebes worked on pressing pest problems for pecan growers, including black and yellow pecan aphids, hickory shuckworms, pecan weevils and ambrosia beetles. Acebes researched pest-control methods used by pecan farmers. Agricultural companies continuously develop new chemical applications for certain pests and she wanted to assess the effectiveness of these products against those pests.



Continued on Page 30, See Wishes

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Wishes, Continued from Page 28

Acebes also worked to promote and enhance the use of integrated pest management (IPM) strategies against pecan pests. (IPM suggests administering pesticides only when the pest reaches a damaging threshold.)

Understanding the behavior of insect pests and their interactions with the environment is a vital part of Acebes' research. It affects the development of new trapping methods and the improvement of methods already in place. For example, prionus root borers spend between five and seven years in the soil and feed on roots. Aphids feed on foliage and produce several generations per year. Pecan weevils spend between two and three years in the soil as pupae, emerge as adults and feed on the nuts.

"These insects have different roles and occupy different habitats within one cropping system. Their developmental cycles, feeding habits and behaviors are very different from each other," she said.

A native of the Philippines, Acebes developed an interest in entomology at a young age, when she helped her father manage the family's small banana field. She learned about rice production by studying the neighboring rice fields and her interest in agriculture influenced her collegiate studies.

Acebes earned a bachelor's degree from the University of the Philippines Los Banos. She came to the U.S. to attend the University of Hawaii at Manoa

(UH), where she studied biological control of aphids, soft-bodied insects that feed on plant sap, that attack important crops in Hawaii. She earned a master's degree in entomology from UH in 2008. She continued her education at Virginia Tech (VT), where she worked closely with an invasive species, the brown marmorated stink bug. Acebes earned a doctorate in entomology from VT in 2016.

"At the time, there wasn't much known about this pest, and I was lucky enough to be a part of the research program that studied this pest's biology, be-

Continued on Page 31, See Wishes

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Wishes, Continued from Page 30

havior and management. I focused on how they fed, how they could survive on different host plants and move among plants, particularly on peaches and apples,” Acebes said.

She also worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service’s Appalachian Fruit Research Station in Kearneysville, West Virginia. There, she focused on refining the traps and trapping protocol used for stink bug monitoring.

Dr. Acebes attended GPGA’s Annual Conference in Perry this year as one of her last visits in Georgia before joining her husband in Hawaii. At GPGA, she was always checking in with us over the last three years to show her support and share her research and we are truly sad to see her go! We are excited about the opportunity she has to continue her entomology work for Macadamia nuts and wish her the best of luck! 🌰



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Small Pecan Production In Lincoln County, GA

By Robyn Stewart, Lincoln County ANR Agent
and Andrew Sawyer, Southeast Area Pecan Agent

The state of Georgia is responsible for producing approximately a third of all pecans produced in the U.S. each year. While the majority of that crop is produced in larger operations, there are a significant number of small pecan producers who are interested in renovating old orchards for production. Common pecan questions in the Lincoln County UGA Extension office cover topics like fertilization, disease/pest concerns, and marketing/selling nuts. This year, Lincoln County ANR Agent Robyn Stewart set out to provide educational programs targeting small pecan producers.

The first Small Pecan Producers Workshop was held on February 2nd, 2021. This half day virtual workshop featured guest speakers from UGA Cooperative Extension, the UGA Small Business Development Center, Georgia Department of Agriculture: Georgia Grown, and the Georgia Pecan Grower's Association. Andrew Sawyer, Southeast Georgia Area Pecan Agent and Lucy Ray, Morgan County ANR Agent discussed production topics including variety selection, orchard design and layout, fertilization, irrigation, and common disease and pest issues. Representatives from Georgia Grown and the Georgia Pecan Grower's Association gave introductions to their programs and the resources they can offer to small producers. The day was rounded out with a

presentation by the UGA Small Business Development Center on developing a marketing strategy for selling pecans at a local and regional level. The webinar had 109 participants from 7 states and 3 countries in attendance. One attendee commented "This was extremely useful and very appreciated. The topics covered are pertinent and I really like that resources provided. Very, very helpful!"

Following the success of the virtual workshop, plans were made to offer a field day on July 14, 2021 in Lincoln County, Georgia at Heritage Farm and Forest, owned by Matt and Lindsey Ellington. Heritage has approximately 50 mature pecan trees on 3 acres, and the Ellington's hope to more than double their orchard size in the future, which made them an ideal host for a small producer's program. The pro-

Continued on Page 33, See Lincoln



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Orchard host, Matt Ellington, answers questions during lunch.

gram opened with an introduction to the UGA Small Business Development Center and the Georgia Pecan Growers Association, then UGA Pecan Specialist Andrew Sawyer took the floor. He discussed traditional renovation methods, including variety identification and tree thinning. Because of recent shifts with in-shell marketing that benefit Southeast producers, Andrew discussed the long-term process to ‘whisp’, remove and replace trees to more desirable varieties with better nut count and higher percentage kernel. Andrew displayed his top low-input varieties, discussed differences between irrigation and fertilization needs for young and mature trees, and the most common disease and pest issues producers can expect to see.

After our formal presentations, producers were served lunch and invited to visit with Andrew and the Ellington’s to get all of their production questions answered. The field day had 24 attendees from 4 states in attendance. Final comments included “great event and information” and “thank you for a great program and helpful information!”

The reception of the pecan community to these programs has been exceptional. As a result, our team is considering how we might continue to offer expanded educational opportunities in Lincoln County and beyond. If you have suggestions on topics or field days, please let us know at uge3181@uga.edu or 706-359-3233. 🌰



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GPGA CONFER

Hilton Segler Lifetime Achievement Award

On June 2-3, 2021, pecan growers from across the nation came together in Perry, GA for the first pecan conference held in more than a year for the Georgia Pecan Growers Conference and Trade Show. The overall support and attendance was overwhelmingly outstanding. Thank you!



This award will focus on an individual who have through many years of service, exemplified truly outstanding leadership through unselfish dedication to the GPGA and the pecan industry.

2020: Jeb & Patty Barrow
2021: Mike Horne, Sr. (pictured left, presented by GPGA President Miley Adams)

The Georgia Pecan Growers Association hosted its 56th Annual Conference and Trade Show June 2-3, 2021. After 3 years in Tifton, the conference made its way back to Perry at the Georgia National Fairgrounds for a larger and safer venue with Covid-19 still looming. We are so happy to report another successful show!

This year we had a few new additions to conference activities including a self-guided, virtual orchard tour and new golf venue. The orchard tour was held at Jaros Farms and hosted by Mike Jaros. Thank you, Mike!

Vendors and large equipment moved into the fairgrounds for an early set-up on Tuesday, June 1st. The next day, GPGA's 10th Annual golf tournament kicked off on Wednesday June 2nd at a brand-new location, the Southern Landings Golf Club in Warner



Robins. After a year off due to Covid-19 restrictions, the tournament fared great with 34 teams and 136 players! Initial feedback from the golfers was that they enjoyed the new course and venue. Clough Pecans sponsored members of the Pierce County High School Golf team, who ended up winning the entire tournament! Picture above includes team members Carson Lock, Nathaniel Choate, Jake Wolf and Kaleb Jones.

That evening, a Welcome Reception was held at Southern Landings Golf Club with a bar and appetizers serving guests while a silent auction was held, along with a reverse raffle. Nearly 300 attendees packed into the reception event and enjoyed catching up after the year-long absence caused by Covid.

Conference educational sessions began bright and early on Thursday, June 3rd at the Georgia National Fairgrounds, with breaks to allow for vendors and attendees to network. Our Annual Awards Luncheon at noon that day served over 800 people safely while Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture,



CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW

Pecan Grower of the Year Award

Will be given to an individual grower who has shown a devoted and sustaining commitment and exerted a positive influence by promoting the Pecan Industry. They stand out for their leadership, hard work, support and involvement with the GPGA and the industry. They have devoted a major portion of their career to other growers by sharing their knowledge of their overall farm operation to improve the industry.

2020: Lenny Wells (pictured right) presented by Exec. Director Samantha McLeod
2021: Jeb Barrow (Jake and Alicia Kite pictured left receiving award on his behalf)



Gary Black, delivered the keynote speech.

After all that the Georgia Pecan Industry has endured over the last 5 years, we were thrilled with the participation and outcome of our conference and look forward to hosting it again next year! Thank you to all our attendees, vendors, volunteers, and session lecturers! We could not have pulled this conference off without your support and energy!

Annual Award Winners

UGA's Dr. Angelita Acebes-Doria (below) receives a farewell **appreciation** for all her hard work and dedication to the Georgia pecan industry from Executive Director of GPGA, Samantha McLeod. We are excited for her move to Hawaii, where she will be working with Macadamia nut growers and the pests that hinder their production.



GPGA President's Award

This award is a special recognition selected at the president's discretion. This award recognizes someone who has truly gone above and beyond for our industry and plays an integral part to the success of our industry.

For 2020, Georgia's Commissioner of Agriculture, Gary Black, was selected by then-President Brent Brinkley for Black's tireless efforts in aiding Georgia's Pecan Growers after Hurricane Michael (pictured right).



Continued on Page 38, See Show

Show, Continued from Page 37

For 2021's President Award, Robert L. Redding of The Redding Firm was recognized by current GPGA President Miley Adams for Redding's efforts in aiding Georgia's Pecan Growers (picture not available.)

Jack Thompson Award

This award is given to a family that exemplifies all the basic morals and values of a good neighbor, friend and pecan grower and serves as a model for what a pecan family can achieve. They show our industry how important family farming continues to be as a foundation for the future and organizations like GPGA. They deserve recognition for what they contribute to the pecan industry and to GPGA by instilling family values and a sense of agricultural foresight for the next generation.



For 2020, this award was given to the Lynn Jones Family (l-r: William Moses, Trey Jones, Jesse Thompson and Lyndy Jones).

For 2021, the Jack Thompson Award was presented to the James Lee Adams Family (not pictured).



Orchard Tour Hosts Receive Recognition

Mike Jaros of Jaros Farms, along with daughter Kelly, were presented with a plaque in appreciation for their willingness to host the GPGA's Conference Orchard Tour. Jaros' farm manager, Phillip Doles, was instrumental to the success of the tour.



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Bidding Farewell...



By Amy Howell, Copy Editor

Finding the perfect employee fit for a small office team is not an easy task. However, for almost 3 years now, GPGA has been truly blessed with the addition of Nicole Taylor Smith as our Education and Events Coordinator. Now, we are both excited and saddened to bid farewell to Nicole as she pursues her Masters degree in Ag and Environmental Sciences with a focus in Agricultural Leadership at the University of Georgia this Fall on a full-time basis.

Nicole joined GPGA as an intern while studying at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in 2018, after receiving one of our Jack Thompson Scholarships in 2017. She had extensive knowledge and experience far beyond her 18 years of life from participation in FFA and 4-H in Tift county, as well as an enthusiasm for pecans that was instilled in her by her father, Dell Taylor. She impressed us from the start and jumped right in with planning and executing GPGA events, fall field

days, annual conference and orchard tour, and promoting Georgia Pecans at school, community and outreach events state-wide.

Nicole progressed into a full-time position with GPGA in 2020 following completion of her Bachelors degree from UGA and traveled on behalf of GPGA to conferences and events out of state, among her other duties. She is a true team player and pecan advocate — even ensuring that Georgia pecans were a featured part of her wedding reception in October 2020 when she married Tristan Smith. (Tristan himself was always willing to help out our GPGA team whenever we needed some heavy lifting and will also be missed!)

Seeing Nicole blossom and continue her Ag education is bittersweet and we expect great things from her in the future for our state. Hopefully, we will see her again someday promoting our beloved Georgia Pecans.

Best Wishes, Nicole!



GPGA on the road

OKLAHOMA PECAN GROWERS ASSOCIATION *Annual Conference & Trade Show*

TEXAS PECAN GROWERS ASSOCIATION *Celebrating 100 Years*

Oklahoma Growers Association welcomed their members and families to their annual conference June 10-12 in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. During the conference sessions, attendees were educated on topics including Frost Damage from the winter storm, market updates and beginning grower courses.

Vendors and equipment sales were available for attendees to discuss and observe throughout the conference. A baking contest and pecan quality contest were also held. The winners from the baking contest donated their dishes to be auctioned off at the awards banquet with the auction proceeds going back to the Oklahoma Pecan Growers Association.

Joe Ihle (right) who celebrated his 99th birthday this year, hosted members at his orchard in Bristow, Oklahoma and was awarded "Grove of the Year." Attendees studied the effects of the freeze earlier this year on the trees in his orchard.

Thank you for the warm welcome and great event, Oklahoma!



Texas Pecan Growers Association celebrated their 100th Annual Conference and Trade Show in San Marcos, Texas during four days of conference activities in mid-July. GPGA Staff Members Nicole Taylor Smith and Andrew McBrayer traveled to Texas to celebrate this remarkable event.

Conference activities began Sunday, July 18th with the Trade Show grand opening and evening reception. At this event attendees were provided dinner and drinks and had the opportunity to enter in a fundraising raffle drawing and bid on silent auction

items. Monday's activities kicked off bright and early with a 7:00 AM self-guided Orchard Walk at Swift River Pecan. While walking around the orchard visitors had the opportunity to observe 7-8 year old Pawnees as well as Native pecan trees that nature planted along the beautiful San Marcos river. Following the Orchard Walk, attendees traveled back to the San Marcos Conference Center for the Trade Show kick off at 8:00 AM. On this first day of the trade show there were educational sessions including a Pecan Short Course and Market and Association updates. A new and engaging addition to this

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See Road**

Road, Continued from Page 40

year's conference were vendor breakout sessions. At an allotted time throughout the conference, specific vendors held sessions to answer questions and educate attendees about their product/equipment. Monday evening's activities included dinner and a casino night at AquaBrew in downtown San Marcos where attendees and exhibitors mingled and enjoyed a fun night of poker. On Tuesday July 20th, more educational sessions were offered including the 100th Year

Celebration and Research Updates. The following day, on Wednesday July 21, attendees visited Comal Farm for an orchard tour in New Braunfels, Texas. Mark Friesenhahn, owner of this fifth generation farm, gave event-goers the opportunity to see the farm faces challenges with residential and industrial growth on their 110 acres. TPGA invites you to join them in 2022 for their 101st Conference and Trade Show on July 10th-13th, 2022 back in San Marcos, Texas! 🍪



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Pecan Production Management Tips

August

- Make 2nd or 3rd N application if needed during “on” year (not needed with short crop)
- Irrigate as needed
- *Be sure to maintain adequate soil moisture beginning in mid August as nuts begin to fill*
- Keep orchard mowed
- Patch bud
- Apply fungicides at 14 day intervals
- Apply herbicide as needed
- Monitor for pecan weevil and hickory shuckworm
- *Keep leaves free of aphids and mites*
- Scout & spray as needed for insect pests
- Order trees for new planting
- Prepare for Pawnee harvest by mowing orchard, remove debris, service equipment

September

- Prepare for harvest by mowing orchard, remove debris, service equipment
- Harvest Pawnee
- *Be sure to maintain adequate soil moisture as nuts fill*
- Patch bud
- *Keep leaves free of aphids and mites*
- Scout for pecan weevil and hickory shuckworm
- Scout and spray as needed for insect pests
- Fungicide sprays may be needed under heavy disease pressure

October

- Prepare for harvest by mowing orchard, remove debris, service equipment
- Make fall nickel application to severely deficient trees
- Early harvesting may begin
- Nuts may need mechanical drying
- Market crop
- Continue irrigation as needed
- Prepare site for new planting
- Apply herbicide as needed
- Be aware of pre-harvest intervals for all chemicals applied

This information, taken from the Southeastern Pecan Growers Handbook, contains general common practices and tips for pecan production management for the state of Georgia, provided by Dr. Lenny Wells, Associate Professor, University of Georgia.



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Reaching Consumers Through Registered Dietitians And Nutritionists

By the American Pecan Council



A key audience the American Pecan Council has identified and been pleased to gain inroads into is the world of credentialed health and wellness professionals (registered dietitian nutritionists, physicians, nurses, fitness professionals, etc.). This community of highly engaged and influential individuals are passionate about promoting holistic, healthy living and educating those who look to them to make informed food choices that will nourish and fuel one's body. Naturally, we wanted to put pecans in front of these professionals!

In 2020, we hired Eat Well Global, a strategic communication consultancy that specializes in reaching change agents in food and nutrition, to develop and amplify APC's engagement with this important group. Since then, we have conducted qualitative and quantitative health influencer research and have relied on Eat Well Global's expertise in this sphere to gain an understanding of dietitians' pecan perceptions and behaviors. This has enabled us to tailor our outreach strategy, messaging, and engagement to make strides in reaching this community.

Our topline objective is to increase consumption of, recommendation and positive sentiment for pecans among targeted health professionals. Our three strategic approaches for doing so are:

1) Position pecans' heritage story as an interest

hook and key differentiator

2) Leverage pecans' unique trifecta encompassing taste, satisfaction and nutritional value

3) Elevate the experience of pecans as the "foodie" nut for all

Developing a Network of Pecan Proponents

To keep the American Pecan Council and pecans top of mind for health professionals that engage directly with consumers, we launched a Health Professional (HP) Influencer Network called the Pecan Powerhouses Network in March of 2020. We updated our current website with a hub for Health Professionals, including a dedicated HP Resources page. Through engaging directly with Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) at in-person and virtual events, like FNCE and Today's Dietitian, sharing APC key

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Reaching, Continued from Page 45

messaging through sponsoring dietetic practice groups (DPGs), and partnering with high-profile influencers, we've promoted the Pecan Powerhouses Network, and membership has taken off! We are now reaching nearly 600 enthusiastic, credentialed health and wellness professionals on a regular basis.

Our Pecan Powerhouses receive quarterly newsletters featuring our innovative recipes, cutting-edge research, and engaging educational resources to help them foster their professional growth and spread the word about the power of the Original Supernut. Open and click-through rates for these emails are well above industry standards. RDNs are more likely to recommend foods they are familiar with and consume themselves, so our goal is to meet our Pecan Powerhouse members right where they're at and turn them into enthusiastic and educated fans who are keen on sharing their unique health benefits and culinary applications with their communities, patients, and clients.

American Pecan Council | 2021 Webinar Series at a Glance

- January 2021: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the American Pecan Council
- April 2021: Behind the Crop
- July 2021: Nutrition Powerhouses
- September 2021: Pecans in the Kitchen

Pecan Powerhouses Quarterly Webinar Series

This year we've invested in increasing our touchpoints with our Pecan Powerhouse members, launching a quarterly webinar series open to all health and wellness professionals. To date, we've hosted three out of four of these engaging, 30-minute webinars, which we'll give you a peak into, below.

Q1: "A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the American Pecan Council"

In this inaugural webinar, we highlighted the APC's role in telling the unique story of pecans—America's native nut—and its commitment to pro-

Selected attendee commentary

"I didn't know about the generational history behind pecans and pecan trees. That was very interesting."

"The story behind the pecan is very compelling, and one that would make me as a consumer more likely to support growers and shellers across the country more frequently."

"Thank you for hosting the webinar! It was interesting and I learned a lot. I appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the American Pecan Council this way."

"Keep up the work!!!"

"Great webinar! Looking forward to the series during 2021."

viding education around pecans' heritage. Executive Director Alex Ott was the main speaker and engaged the audience with a portion of Q&A at the end. There was terrific interest in our first event with 62 individuals tuning in live. According to a post-webinar survey, the event introduced nearly half of all registrants to APC's role as a health information source. 77% of respondents shared that they learned some-

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Reaching, Continued from Page 46

thing from the event, and 81% would use at least some of the information presented with their clients/patients/audience. Specifically, respondents learned about pecans' heritage and were most likely to use APC's nutrition and culinary resources. Last, but not least, after attending the webinar, a majority of respondents said they were more likely to recommend pecans to patients and/or other individuals.

Q2: "Behind the Crop: A Day in the Life of a Second-Generation Pecan Farmer"

Building on the success of the inaugural webinar, the second webinar in the Pecan Powerhouses Network 2021 Quarterly Webinar Series dove deeper into pecans' heritage story through the day-in-the-life of a pecan grower. We had the pleasure of having industry member, Laura Harper of Del Valle Pecans, provide the health professional community with a unique perspective on being a second-generation pecan farmer and her experience running a successful family pecan business. There were 53 attendees, 91% of which were registered dietitians. According to our post-webinar survey, 94% of respondents shared that they learned about pecan growing practices, and 74% would incorporate at least some of the information presented into their practice as a healthcare professional. After attending the webinar, 62% of respondents said they were more likely to recommend pecans.

Q3: "Personalize Your Practice: Solutions for Collaborative and Effective Nutrition Coaching"

The penultimate webinar in the Pecan Powerhouses Network 2021 Quarterly Webinar Series recently took place on July 28 and involved teaming up with Vanessa Risetto, MS, RD, co-founder of Culina Health, a personalized nutrition coaching and online education platform. During the webinar she shared three practical solutions for common

challenges dietitians may face in providing individualized, inclusive, and accessible care to patients and clients in everyday practice, and highlighted pecans as a nutrition powerhouse. We are still gathering results and insights from this event, but be on the lookout for a full recap in an upcoming newsletter!

Looking Forward

Building off the momentum of the first three webinars, we're looking forward to rounding out this educational series with our Q4 webinar this September, highlighting the culinary uses of pecans in "Pecans in the Kitchen." It is so fun getting to engage with the health professional community through these virtual events and receive positive feedback as they learn more about pecans and become inspired to use and recommend them. If you know a health professional who would be interested in attending, encourage them to *apply to become a Pecan Powerhouse Network member* by visiting AmericanPecan.com today! 🌰



LOVIN' THIS PECAN-FILLED SUMMER

IN THE NEWS

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF JUNE, ARTICLES NATIONWIDE FEATURED PECAN RECIPES, NUTRITION INFO AND USAGE TIPS. IN FACT, AMERICAN PECANS GENERATED 83 MILLION CONSUMER VIEWS AND TOUCHPOINTS!

Coverage included TODAY.com, Eating Well, PureWow (women's lifestyle site), The Beet (go-to site for plant-based recipes) and Food Processing Magazine, a trade magazine that serves the food and beverage industry.

In addition, nearly **1,200 local outlets** shared our summer recipe article featuring popular sweet and savory snacks. The content exceeded expectations for media placements — our ROI was 23% higher than average for our article-distribution partner.

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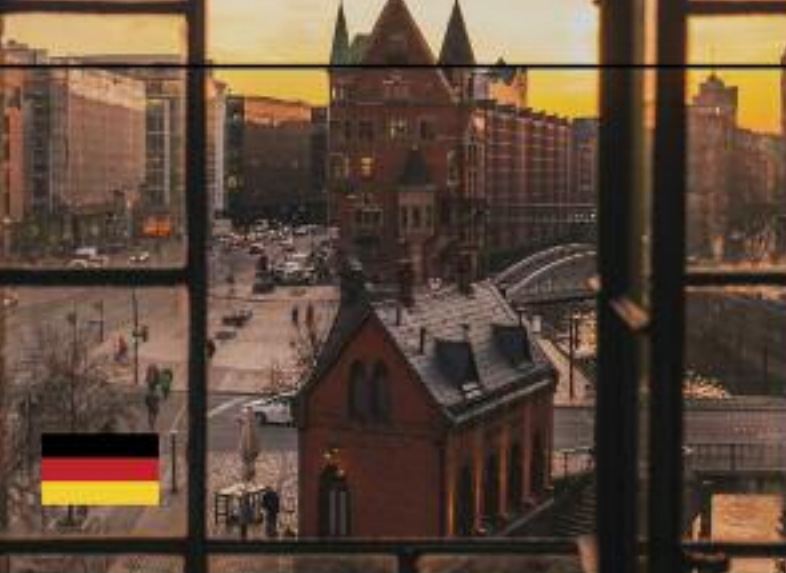
EatingWell.com

FOOD PROCESSING

MORE PEOPLE ARE SEARCHING FOR PECANS

When it comes to searching the web for everything from pecan nutrition facts to pecan recipes, more consumers are turning to AmericanPecan.com.

American Pecans' website had a **64% year-over-year increase in clicks** due to our continued research and optimization based on trends, recipes and keywords. Cost per click is trending in the right direction as well — we're **down nearly 20% in cost** due to continued refinements to our ad word bidding.



AMERICAN PECANS IS OFFICIALLY HEADING TO GERMANY

The American Pecan Council is proud to announce we're launching a marketing program in Germany. Our international committee is excited to be working with a local team to develop and roll out an in-market program. Stay tuned for more details!

CHINA TEAM HOSTS PECAN

PAIRING PARTY



American Pecans co-hosted a lunch party in China with Uncle Life, a creative director with a large social media following on WeChat (960,000 followers) and Weibo (1.4 million followers). To demonstrate how to incorporate pecans into popular dishes, attendees tried a variety of flavor pairings, from steak tartare with pecan crunch to chocolate mousse with caramelized pecans.

Since the event, American Pecans recipes have been shared with attendees, leading to positive feedback and continued engagement as they make them at home.

Additionally, the event's success was promoted across news outlets and social media platforms, including a post to Uncle Life's WeChat page and his Weibo account.

We all know pecans are used for more than just pecan pie, and we continue to promote pecans as a no-compromise snack of choice. In a year-over-year comparison of data from FYQ3, consumers are searching for more snack options — AmericanPecan.com saw a 38% increase in snack-recipe visitors compared to 2020.

What are they searching for? The top snack recipes are Roasted Pecans with Sea Salt, Pecan Energy Bars, and Garlic Herb Pecans. YUM.

MORE CONSUMERS SEEK PECANS AS SNACKS



How Pecan-Centric Consumer Research And Trends Inform Our Marketing Strategy



By the American Pecan Council

The American Pecan Council exists to drive awareness, and ultimately demand, for American Pecans. To successfully raise the bar each year, we must ensure we're addressing the right people, in the right places, with the most impactful and effective messages. That's where consumer research comes in.

Why Research Matters

For marketing dollars to reach the right people efficiently and with an increased return on investment (ROI), marketers must understand the shifting priorities of their audience and follow consumer trends. The insights gained from this data informs a marketing strategy, and in turn, allows marketers to serve content that's relevant to the needs of those who are primed to purchase.

American Pecans' History of Consumer Research

Over the past four years, American Pecans has executed multiple consumer research studies, including evaluating the perception of pecans in 2017 before the brand's conception, and again in partnership with Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in 2019.

BCG's findings highlighted key focal areas for the American Pecans brand, with an emphasis on the need to expand consumption occasions and use pecans' nutritional value and taste to differentiate from other nuts. We also learned consumers were less

aware of pecans and their health benefits compared to peanuts, almonds, cashews, and walnuts. With this data, we were able to create a high-level roadmap

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Strategy, Continued from Page 50

and marketing strategy, outlining our short- and long-term goals.

We also conducted two Facebook Brand Lift Studies (November 2018 and April 2020), which measured the effectiveness of our ads based on customer feedback of our campaign. Instead of solely measuring an ad's interactions – or number of clicks, comments, and shares – Facebook measured the direct impact of the ad based on the customers' behaviors. When conducting these studies, we focused on driving category awareness and purchase of pecans rather than recognition of the American Pecans logo and branding, which is best practice for a commodity.

Tools in our Toolbox

To better reach and engage potential pecan lovers, we employ targeting and retargeting methods as part of our paid social media strategy. This means consumers who have previously engaged with past American Pecans content – either on our website or social media platforms – are targeted with more American Pecans ads, as they are seen as primed for purchase intent. We also reach new people who have similar behaviors to those who engage with our content, thereby pulling more potential consumers into our purchase funnel.

In addition to engaging with potential pecan lovers, we also focus our efforts on reaching relevant audiences who are not yet engaging with our content. To maximize our reach of consumers with the potential for purchasing pecans regularly, we target those with relevant profiles (such as those interested in nutrition and recipes), as opposed to those already searching for our product.

To achieve this, we deploy tactics such as paid search advertising, using Google ads. For example, we target people searching for salmon recipes with an ad for our pecan-crusting salmon recipe to influence them to consider pecans, while highlighting their versatility. We also create partnerships with registered dietitians and influencers who have dedicated social media followings to share nutrition and health information. Ul-

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timately, our goal is to drive consideration and demand among new audiences, particularly those whose profiles reflect higher likelihood of purchase.

Putting Our Research to Work

Since our inception, American Pecans' dedication to consumer research has led to tremendous insights about our consumer, potential buyers, and the nut-loving world. These key findings from our pecan-centric consumer research are critical to informing our overarching strategy each year, as well as the specific tactics we employ to support it.

We continually refine our approach based on data-fueled insights, and the results speak for themselves. For example, this fiscal year, we optimized our marketing program by expanding our target audience from Generation X/Y Moms to Healthy Snackers, allowing us to reach more adults who are primed to invest in nutritious foods as part of their snacking routine.

A variety of insights informed this decision, including a continued increase in consumer snacking and focus on health during and after the pandemic. Additionally, data showed that American Pecans' content received a higher-than-expected engagement rate from men and a slightly older age group. Specifically, 45% of consumer views and touchpoints on our paid social advertisements were generated by men. Additionally, 18.87 million consumer views and touchpoints on our paid social advertisements were generated by those aged 55-64, the highest proportion of any age group.

Using these insights, we refined our social content to be more gender neutral for our expanded audience, and since doing so, consumer

views and touchpoints have increased 39%. Additionally, link clicks to our website increased 58%, driving an increased ROI on audience-targeted content and greater reach among consumers who are motivated to purchase pecans.

In fact, our numbers for consumer awareness and purchase intent for this fiscal year to date have already surpassed those of the entire last fiscal year.

Continued on Page 54, See Strategy



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Strategy, Continued from Page 53

Within news media alone, consumer views and touchpoints have seen a 39% increase as compared to the entirety of last year. Our recipe page views are nearly at 550,000, already well beyond last year's 400,000.

Consumer Trends Matter

On top of understanding the shifting priorities of our audience, we also keep a close watch on trends, related to both consumption and digital/social platforms. When analyzing consumption, we look at macro consumer trends and continually adjust based on changes we see. For example:

- With a steady national increase in healthy snacking, pecans are well-positioned to continue joining the conversation by emphasizing their nutritional benefits and addressing the need for on-the-go convenience.

- Research by the Plant Based Foods Association shows that in the U.S., retail sales of plant-based foods grew by more than 11% in the past year, which is five times faster than total food sales. We have leaned into this trend and broken into the plant-based recipe space by partnering with influential health professionals who help to share our nutritional messaging on social media platforms and showcase pecans as a great plant-based option.

- 78% of Registered Dietitian Nutritionists believe consumer eating habits are shifting away from the traditional three meals a day to more frequent snacking because of the pandemic, according to a survey by Pollock Communications and Today's Dietitian. Pecans are primed for this trend as the perfect snack, either in easy recipes or straight from the bag!

We tap into the snacking trend in our upcoming

No Snackrifice Summer campaign that highlights pecans as an easy, nutritious, and delicious snack. You'll find a variety of marketing resources in our on-line toolkit!

Looking Ahead to 2022

With our consumer views and touchpoints and recipe page views to-date already surpassing FY20 totals, and our current audience expansion having paid off in broader consumer awareness and increased engagement, we're on track for a best-ever year – and are eager for what's to come next year.

We know our “no-compromise nut” strategy is perfectly aligned with the movement of today's market. Throughout FY22, you'll see a continued focus on healthy snacking, creative campaigns to reach and engage our broader target audience, enhanced earned media and paid digital content engines, and a B2B pilot program.

Next year's successes will be based on a marketing strategy that's built on the solid foundation of our continued pecan-centric consumer research. We're excited to continue making your dollars work hard to support American Pecans. 🌰



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Washington Report

U.S. House Appropriations Committee Approves NPF Federal Research Initiatives

By Robert L. Redding, Jr., The Redding Firm

The National Pecan Federation (NPF) submitted two congressional appropriations requests for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY 2022). These included a Pecan Processing Research project addressing pecan cracking and pasteurization and a Pecan Genetic Research project. Each of these projects received \$1.5 million

in Fiscal Year 2021.

The U.S. House Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations continued funding for these two projects in the FY 2022 appropriations mark-up. The Pecan Processing project was approved for \$3 million for FY 2022. The Pecan Genetic Research project was also approved for \$3 million in the FY 2022 legislation. The bill is expected to go to the House floor before the August congressional break. U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop (D-GA) is Chairman of the Agriculture Subcommittee.

The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee is finalizing their draft FY 2022 appropriations legislation.

Disaster Legislation Update

U.S. House and Senate Agriculture Committee members are discussing two tracks for agricultural disaster assistance. In the short-term, legislation that would assist growers that have sustained losses in 2020 and 2021. Committee members are also work-

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ing on long-term authorization legislation that would replace ad hoc disaster programs of the past. The NPF has met with the House Agriculture Committee to discuss the issues faced by pecan growers after Hurricane Michael. This included problems with the WHIP+ program, WHIP+ Tree Loss program, Emergency Conservation Program, Tree Assistance Program, state block grant disaster program and others.

Bishop Meets With Indian Ambassador on Pecan Tariffs

U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop met with India's Ambassador to the U.S. on the tariffs placed on U.S. pecans imported in India. Congressman Bishop issued the following statement about the meeting:

Last week, I was able to meet with India's Ambassador to the United States when he visited Georgia. While we discussed a range of issues that are important to the bilateral relationship between our countries, I emphasized the need to reduce the prohibitive tariff India places on our pecans. Over the years, I have made it a top priority to urge U.S. and

Indian officials to solve this problem. Pecans are an integral part of Georgia's economy, valued at more than \$250 million, and the Indian market is ripe for our (Georgia) pecans. I look forward to an amicable resolution to this issue, knowing that it can pave the way for better and broader collaboration between our great nations.

2023 Farm Bill News

U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) has indicated that 2023 Farm Bill hearings could start as early as this fall. The U.S. House Agriculture Committee's General Farm Commodities and Risk Management Subcommittee has already held a listening session for agricultural organizations to discuss the state of 2018 Farm Bill programs that are under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction. The NPF has started talking to state and regional pecan association members about the next farm bill.

APPB Watch

Now that the American Pecan Promotion Board (APPB) has been approved by the U.S. Department

Continued on Page 59, See Report



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Report, Continued from Page 58

of Agriculture (USDA), the American Pecan Council and importers have submitted names for USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack to consider as members of the board of the APPB. Secretary Vilsack will make the final selection of Board members for the APPB.

NPF Chairman Jeb Barrow Steps Down

NPF Chairman Jeb Barrow resigned as of the July NPF Board of Directors meeting as Chairman and member of the Board of Directors. Jeb was the first chairman of the NPF and worked diligently on key pecan policy issues including the establishment of the APPB, crop insurance reform, disaster assistance post-Hurricane Michael, pecan research and other major issues. Jeb also worked to establish PEGAN PAC, the pecan industry's political action committee. Jeb will be sorely missed by the NPF.

Larry Don Womack of Texas is the new Chairman of the NPF. Marianne Brown, a Georgia Pecan Growers Association Board Member, has replaced Jeb on the NPF Board of Directors and the NPF Executive Committee. Congratulations to both Larry Don and Marianne! 🥜



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Roadside Revival

**By Stephanie Stuckey,
Chief Executive Officer at Stuckey's Corporation**

Note: This is Part Three of a three-part series on the history of Stuckey's. Parts One & Two explored the company's founding as a pecan stand, expansion to a roadside chain, and downfall as the company fell out of family hands.

At its peak, Stuckey's boasted more than 350 stores in forty states. But after being sold to Pet, Incorporated and the death of its visionary founder, W.S. Stuckey, Sr., in 1977, the Stuckey's brand declined. This was a dark period that lasted until 1985, when W.S. ("Billy") Stuckey, Jr. and his partners bought the company back into family hands. Billy Stuckey had served ten years in the U.S. Congress, representing the 8th District of Georgia that stretched from Macon to the St. Simons Island. He left office to found Interstate Dairy Queen Corporation ("IDQC"), a company that held the right to franchise the popular soft serve ice cream restaurants on the nation's highway system.



Billy's acquisition of Stuckey's, which at that time included only the trademark, the franchise system, and the few remaining company-owned stores, ended a 17-year period during which the company was not run by family members. The candy division was acquired by Nashville-based Standard Candy, makers of Goo Goo Clusters and King Leo candy sticks, and an arrangement was made for Standard to produce the pecan log roll and other Stuckey's candy products. As the Stuckey's stores were not performing well, Billy reflected that it was a move based 80% on emotions

Continued on Page 61, See Stuckey's

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Stuckey's, Continued from Page 60

and 20% on valid financial reasons. But he built upon his expertise to align Stuckey's locations with his Dairy Queen Stores, and launched the Stuckey's Express franchise. This was a store-within-a-store concept that would complement existing travel-stop operators' businesses. The model created a turnkey operation for c-store locations, acting as a direct vendor for the Stuckey's signature candy but also hundreds of gifts, souvenirs, and novelties.

Stuckey's continued to be managed by Billy and his team until 2014 when they sold IDQC to Warren Buffet / Berkshire Hathaway, owner of American Dairy Queen. Largely retired after that point, the company was run by a skeleton crew with Billy remaining as Chairman of the Board and advisor.

In November of 2019, Ethel "Stephanie" Stuckey, Billy's daughter, bought the company and became the third Stuckey to lead the company as CEO. An attorney by trade, Stephanie had a 30-year career as a lawyer, state legislator, and director of sustainability for the City of Atlanta. Although the company had been losing money since 2015, they began to report positive earnings by June of 2020, thanks to Stephanie's rebranding and marketing efforts. Stuckey's merged with Front Porch Pecans in September of 2020 and its president, R.G. Lamar, Jr., Hawkinsville-based pecan farmer, became co-owner and President of Stuckey's.



Continued on Page 62, See Stuckey's

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Stuckey's, Continued from Page 61

While some twenty standalone stores still remain, mostly in the Southeastern U.S., the stores are independently owned and operated and offer limited opportunity for expansion under the current structure. Stephanie and RG thus decided to focus primarily on rebuilding the Stuckey's brand by driving sales of branded candies, snacks, and merchandise, with distribution through the company warehouse based in Eastman, Georgia.

Under their joint leadership, Stuckey's acquired Atwell Pecan Company, based in Wrens, Georgia, in



January of 2021. Founded by Royce Atwell in 1935 who ran it for almost fifty years, the pecan shelling business was bought by Hugh Oliver and his son-in-law, Jerry Dowdy in 1981. They expanded to a new facility in 1989 with the construction of a shelling plant and cold storage facility and the acquisition of Thames Pecan Company, a fundraising company that wholesales pecans and other nuts under the Azalea Brand label. Atwell Pecan Co., Inc. handled between three and five million pounds of inshell pecans annually, plus offered a variety of other fine nuts including cashews, almonds, walnuts, and pistachios. In 2007, they added a candy making facility and retail showroom, The Orchards Gourmet, which produces a full

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Stuckey's, Continued from Page 62

line of Southern confections, as well as a catalog business built through the acquisition of two mail order companies, Fran's Gifts To Go and Harrell Farms. Stuckey's is now transitioning to making its famous pecan log rolls, candies, and snacks in-house for the first time since 1964 when the Stuckey's original candy plant was sold to PET.

This acquisition not only made sense for financial and business reasons, there's a strong emotional connection with Atwell as well. W.S. Stuckey, Sr. bought pecans from Royce Atwell, who also owned a Stuckey's store across the street from his shelling plant. That store is still standing today and, although operated as the Dutch House restaurant, remains in Atwell family hands.

Stuckey's is returning to its roots as a pecan stand on the side of the road by recognizing the importance of Georgia's native nut to its business. The pecan has always been the main ingredient in all of its products – from snack nuts to pecan log rolls to brittles. As part of the Georgia Grown program with the Georgia Department of Agriculture, Stuckey's is committed to working with other pecan growers and food producers in our state to promote home grown goods. Partnerships like custom shelling, private labelling, and co-branded products like a Stuckey's Pecan Log Roll beer made by Wild Heaven Brewery, are just some examples of how the company is focused on expansion through collaborations. Organizations like the Georgia Pecan Commission offer great opportunities to coordinate with other growers and producers to promote and expand markets.

The road looks promising for Stuckey's, some eighty plus years after W.S. Stuckey, Sr. and Ethel first started as a humble pecan stand. We look forward to not only building our business but continuing to grow and support the pecan as America's native nut. 🌰

Stuckey's

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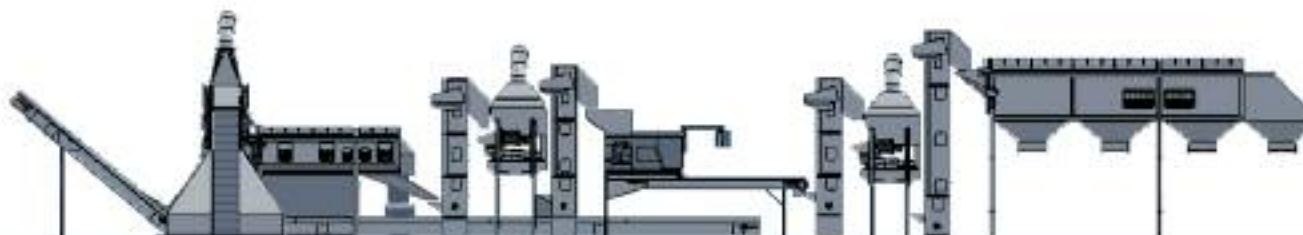


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