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C O N T

CALENDAR OF *events...*

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Texas Pecan Growers 100th Conference
San Marcos, TX, more info. at www.tpga.org

AUGUST 3

Alabama Pecan Growers Summer Tour
alabamapecangrowers.com for more info.

AUGUST 18

Southeast GA Fall Field Day
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
Location TBD

SEPTEMBER 16

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

SEPTEMBER 19

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



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EVENTS

IN THIS *issue*...



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BRIAN KEMP SIGNS
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Association News

- 6 GPGA: A Letter from the Editor
- 7 Calendar Of Events
- 38 Georgia Pecan Becomes State Nut!
- 42 Georgia Pecans on the Big Screen?
- 44 Warnock and Bishop Visit with Growers

Expert Advice

- 9 Zinc Supplementation
- 17 Using Combination Fungicides To Combat Pecan Scab
- 28 How To Get The Most Out Of Current Irrigation Practices
- 57 Pecan Production Management Tips

Industry News

- 48 Washington Report
- 54 Marketing Dollars at Work: Mid-Year Campaign Recap
- 60 Resilience Lessons & The War Years
- 64 Lemieux Named NPSA Executive Director



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6 The Pecan Grower



The McLeod Family

Greetings!

By the time this magazine reaches you, Georgia Pecan Growers Association will have completed our 56th Annual Conference and Trade Show and our staff will be prepping for a Summer and Fall full of trade shows and events.

One year ago, as the Covid-19 pandemic raged and our office remained half-way closed and half-way staffed, we could never have imagined being able to pull this off! Thank you to our members, supporters, and researchers who continued to back our efforts during that time and who so willingly jumped right back into excitement that was our in-person Conference this year.

Our industry has certainly endured so many challenges since I began my tenure here in 2017. As I reflect on our recent past, I am overwhelmed with thanks for those of you who have continued to adamantly support GPGA. And as I plan for the future, I want to once again encourage our members to reach out to our office so that we may assist you with marketing opportunities available for Georgia Pecans. We are here to help and have resources available! Please keep an eye on our efforts by making sure you are receiving our e-Newsletters and also by watching our social media promotions. Fall Field Day in September is right around the corner now and will be yet another opportunity for education, networking and outreach for your businesses. Stay on the lookout for how to participate!

Wishing you all health and happiness for the Summer of 2021!

Samantha 🌰



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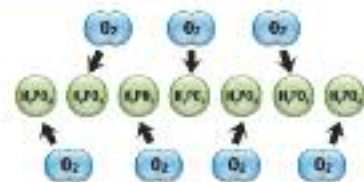
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EXPERT ADVICE

with Dr. Lenny Wells

Extension Horticulturist, University of Georgia

Zinc Supplementation:

The Best Way to Get Zinc Into Your Trees; Forms You Should You Use; and Why Zinc is Important?

Seasoned pecan growers know that Zinc (Zn) is one of the most important nutrients for pecan production. As with any plant uptake, pecan trees prefer to draw nutrients from the soil. The availability of Zn in soils depends on many factors, including soil type, soil pH, interactions with other nutrients, and soil temperature, as examples. Our soils here in Georgia are highly variable. We have pecans grown on deep sands and on heavy clay. Most of our pecan soils in the state, however, are on loamy, sand soils. In all cases, pH tends to be naturally low in almost all Georgia soils.

However, if plants prefer to take nutrients from the soil, why do we recommend 3 foliar applications of Zn in the Spring? This recommendation is because the trees have a hard time taking Zn up from the soil in Spring when soils are typically cool and can also be wet. Cool and wet soil conditions reduce the uptake of Zn. Spring is also a time when pecan trees need Zn the most for leaf elongation and expansion and for proper foliage development. When the leaves are tender in the Spring they readily take Zn up from most Zn sources (Zn sulfate, Zn nitrate, Chelated Zn products). After the leaves harden off, they take Zn up poorly from the leaves, which is why we only recommend 3 sprays.

When late summer growth flushes occur, the tender foliage of those newly flushing shoots can benefit from foliar sprays as well, but the trees are also better able to remove Zn from the soil at that time. All foliar sprays are essentially temporary fixes and the necessary early season foliar sprays here in the Southeast mainly help sustain the trees until they can better take Zn up from the soil as the soil temperatures warm. This situation is why it is important to keep soil Zn levels up in the orchard even though you are making foliar sprays.

Continued on Page 10, See Zinc



Zinc, Continued from Page 9

Yet, Zn is highly immobile in the soil. When it is present there, it may not be available to the tree. When you apply a zinc fertilizer like Zinc sulfate to the soil, it is dissolved to initially provide Zn ions for the soil solution. The soil solution is the water content of the soil and contains various gases, organic matter, and minerals like Zn. Micronutrients like Zn can be easily oxidized in the soil and become unavailable. Basically, when this oxidation occurs, the positively-charged Zn ions are grabbed up and held by negatively-charged oxygen or hydroxide in the soil to form a new compound that is not available to plants. The Zn in soil solution can also be used by micro-organisms in the soil or complexed by organic compounds in the soil, only some of which the plants can use.

The availability of Zn in the soil is largely dependent upon soil pH. Zn availability increases as the pH of the soil decreases. As such, pecan trees planted in the alkaline soils of the Western U.S. have a hard time with soil uptake for Zn. Here on the acidic soils of the Southeastern Coastal Plain, our trees can take Zn up from the soil much easier as long as growers do not over-lime and get the pH up too high. For this reason, I suggest a soil pH of 6.0-6.5.

Other nutrients in the soil can also interfere with Zn uptake when present at excessively high levels. Growers should be very careful about soil application of nutrients like Copper (Cu), Iron (Fe), and Manganese (Mn). If these nutrient levels are too high they may inhibit the uptake of Zn, so they should be blended into a fertilizer mix before application. High soil phosphorus availability will also induce a Zn deficiency. When plants are deficient in Zn, the regulation of uptake of phosphorus (P) within plant cells

is affected, allowing them to be flooded with P. Phosphorus is then

moved into the tops of plants, causing symptoms that resemble Zn deficiency, despite adequate Zn levels in the leaves.

Cultivars can also vary in their ability to take Zn from the soil. 'Pawnee' appears to be one of the most sensitive to low soil Zn levels or to conditions in which Zn is unavailable. Deficiency symptoms are common on young Pawnee trees, often until measures have been taken to increase soil Zn levels or to increase its availability. Desirable and Elliot are sensitive as well.

I have written and spoken about the value of high organic matter in pecan orchard soils in the past and greater Zn availability is one of the benefits of high soil organic matter. Most orchards have relatively high levels of organic matter compared to adjacent row crop fields and native soils of the Southeast due to the abundance of leaf litter and woody debris that reaches the orchard floor. The increased Zn availability is due to the chelation properties of organic matter that increase Zn concentrations in the soil solution.

Historically, Zn sulfate has been the most commonly applied Zn fertilizer source. This form has been used in both soil and foliar applications. One of the reasons for its popularity has been its inexpen-

Continued on Page 11, See Zinc



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Zinc, Continued from Page 10

sive cost compared to other forms of Zn fertilizer. Under most circumstances on the acid soils of the Southeastern U.S., most pecan trees can take Zn up adequately when Zn sulfate is used as the fertilizer source. However, that is not the case on the alkaline soils of the West nor upon orchard soils here in the Southeast that are limed too often or to pH levels above 7. If pH is kept at 6.0-6.5 and soil nutrient levels are within range, blending Zn sulfate with other fertilizer applications will help to improve soil Zn levels and, in most cases, will provide adequate soil Zn. This case is particularly true of young orchards.

Since most of the soils we plant young trees into are low in Zn, buildup of soil Zn in the orchard during the first 3-5 years is critical to the success of an orchard when it reaches bearing age. Young trees are particularly sensitive to Zn. Surface applications of Zinc sulfate generally take a while to become effective because Zn has such limited soil mobility for the reasons of oxidation explained above. However, if you are persistent in this buildup for the first few years, most of the time you will reach an adequate soil Zn level of 15 lbs/acre by the time the trees are bearing, and the trees will be able to take it up. I recommend foliar spraying of young trees of known sensitive cultivars like Pawnee once per month from May-August to account for the trees' early needs. However, it is easy to get too much on young trees with foliar sprays. Be sure to mix at 1/2 the recommended rate on the label when spraying young trees with a hand sprayer and do

not spray to runoff in an effort to reduce the risk of burn.

There are situations in which soil applications of Zinc sulfate will not be sufficient to meet the tree's warm season needs. As mentioned earlier, here in the acidic soils of the Southeast this situation occurs most often on soils with high pH from over-liming or when soils have excessive levels of Cu, Fe, Mn, or P. Excessively sandy soils may also be more prone to low Zn concentration and will be harder to elevate.

Continued on Page 12, See Zinc

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Zinc, Continued from Page 11

Chelated fertilizers are designed to increase micronutrient efficiency. The word chelate is derived from a Greek word meaning “lobster’s claw” and refers to the pincer-like grasp with which micronutrients like Zn are held in the grasp of another molecule to which they are “chelated.” These molecules may include EDDHA, DTPA, Citric acid, and EDTA among others. When micronutrients like Zn are chelated with one of these organic molecules, the micronutrients are protected from oxidation, precipitation, and immobilization under certain conditions, and their availability to the tree is enhanced.

When used as a foliar spray, chelated nutrients also facilitate the efficiency of nutrient uptake by leaves. Leaves are coated with a wax layer that repels water and charged substances like Zn ions. The organic molecules to which the Zn is attached in chelated fertilizers can penetrate the wax layer and release Zn. However, since we apply most of our foliar Zn sprays before the leaves “harden-off” and develop a fully formed waxy layer, inorganic sources of Zn like Zn sulfate or Zn nitrate are just as effective. If you choose to continue with foliar Zn sprays beyond leaf-hardening, a chelated Zn source would be a better choice.

As a soil-applied fertilizer, chelated materials are more likely to be of benefit than more traditional inorganic fertilizers under the following conditions:

- 1) When plants are under low micronutrient stress or
- 2) When plants are grown in soils with particular uptake com-

plications like a pH above 6.5 or

- 3) When plants are grown in soils with excessive levels of competing nutrients.

Furthermore, if a soil simply can’t meet standard crop nutrition requirements, even chelated sources are of limited use. The effectiveness of the chelated fertilizer selected for use depends on the pH of the

Continued on Page 13, See Zinc



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Zinc, Continued from Page 12

soil in which the plant is grown. The longer the molecules remain stable, the longer the micronutrients will remain available. EDDHA and DTPA are most stable at a soil pH above 7.0. At the target pH of our soils (6.0-6.5) in the Southeast, EDTA remains very stable, but as the pH increases above 7.0 its stability declines rapidly.

Based on work in Arizona by Jim Walworth and Richard Hereema and subsequent work I have conducted here, I have been recently begun recommending the use of Zn EDTA injections through the irrigation system to correct hard-to-solve Zn deficiency problems. Studies in both locations have demonstrated significant increases in leaf Zn concentration with soil-applied Zn EDTA in the absence of foliar sprays. The current recommended rate is 2 lbs of actual Zn per acre based on the Arizona work. I plan to investigate whether we can reduce these rates further in our acidic soils in Georgia. *I want to re-emphasize that I recommend Zn EDTA injection for Georgia pecan orchards only when there are problems with Zn deficiency that are due to problems with uptake and bioavailability.* Growers should continue to amend soils having low Zn concentrations (such as those for new orchards) with Zn sulfate to get those soil levels up to recommended standards (15 lbs/acre). In most cases this application will be sufficient. If a problem occurs beyond that, Zn EDTA may be warranted.

Zn EDTA is not without its problems. Soil application of EDTA is expensive (currently

around \$20/gal), which is one reason to only use it when there is a problem. If we can get similar results with lower rates, we will be able to get the cost down. Other concerns center on potential environmental issues like further chelation of free metals in the soil after it releases Zn to the plant and mobility of those metals via EDTA to ground and surface water and negative effects on beneficial soil bacteria. Most of

Continued on Page 14, See Zinc

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Zinc, Continued from Page 13

the studies are not entirely clarified and implication of these potential issues remain largely unknown. For such reasons, be judicious in the use of EDTA.

Zinc is one of the most vital nutrients to successful pecan production. One advantage of growing pecans in the acidic soils of Georgia and the Southeast is that we have options for how we manage Zn.

Our traditional methods of managing Zn are well-designed to serve as a base to provide the trees with what they need. Problems with Zn deficiencies are relatively rare on a percentage basis when managed this way. When they do occur, the additional measures described in this article can help. Take soil samples and keep up with your soil pH and nutrient levels. If you do encounter a problem with Zn deficiency, you can identify why it is occurring and be better equipped to take appropriate measures to correct it. 🌰



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Using Combination Fungicides To Combat Pecan Scab

By Logan Moore, UGA Ph. D. Candidate
 Dr. Emran Ali, UGA Plant Molecular Diagnostic Lab
 Dr. Tim Brenneman, UGA Plant Pathologist

Pecan scab caused by the fungus *Venturia effusa* can cause devastating yield loss in pecan production if not managed properly (Figure 1). Luckily, there are numerous effective fungicides labelled for use on pecan. Many of these fungicides are combination products, containing active ingredients belonging to multiple fungicide classes. For a variety of reasons, pecan scab has an extremely high risk for the development of fungicide resistance. The combination of different modes of action helps delay fungicide resistance development compared to repeated use of a single mode of action.

The current classes of fungicides labelled for use on pecan scab are the DMIs (Enable, Orbit, Orius, etc.), QoIs (Abound, Sovran etc), MBCs (Topsin), organotin (Super Tin, Agri Tin), phosphonates (Kphite, Phostrol, etc.), guanidines (Elast), dithiocarbamates (Ziram), and, most recently, the SDHIs (Miravis Top). Combination products are also available and usually contain somewhat reduced rates of two active ingredients. To be effective, it is important that both components are contributing to disease control.

The biggest threat to this is fungicide resistance,



Figure 1. Tandem air-blast sprayers applying fungicide for control of pecan scab, caused by the fungal pathogen *Venturia effusa*.)

Continued on Page 18, See Scab

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Scab, Continued from Page 17

which has been found in pecan scab in varying levels to the guanadines, MBCs, organotins, DMIs, and the QoIs. Two of the most effective combination fungicides available for use on pecan scab include Quadris Top (Amistar Top), which contains difenoconazole and azoxystrobin, and Miravis Top, which contains pydiflumetofen (Miravis) and difenoconazole. Our primary objective in this study was to investigate the relative contribution of each individual component of the combination fungicides for scab control in commercial orchards in Georgia.

In 2019 and 2020, we utilized 11 different pecan orchards across southern Georgia. Each grower was kind enough to leave 8 consecutive trees that were left unsprayed with fungicides for us to use in our trial. We selected individual terminals on the trees, and flagged them with different colored ribbons to indicate which fungicide treatment they would receive.

The different treatments were Quadris Top

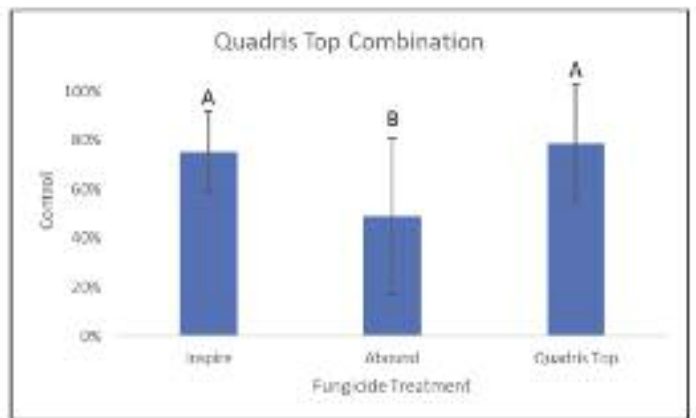


Figure 2. Fungicide efficacy of Inspire (difenoconazole) at 6.7 oz per acre, Abound (azoxystrobin) at 10.9 oz per acre, and Quadris Top (combination of difenoconazole and azoxystrobin) at 13.7 oz per acre in 11 commercial pecan orchards in south Georgia, 2019 and 2020. Different letters indicate statistical differences. A total of 7 and 8 treatment applications were made in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

(difenoconazole and azoxystrobin) at 13.7 fl oz per acre, Abound (azoxystrobin) at 10.9 fl oz per acre, Inspire (difenoconazole) at 6.7 fl oz per acre, Miravis Top (pydiflumetofen and difenoconazole) at 13.7 fl oz per acre, Miravis (pydiflumetofen) at 5.2 fl oz per

Continued on Page 20, See Scab

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Scab, Continued from Page 18

acre, and a nontreated control.

The rate of Abound, Inspire and Miravis are the exact amount that would be applied in the combination products. Note that Inspire and Miravis are not labeled for use on pecans as stand-alone products, but were included here to determine the activity of each individual component.

Tebuconazole (Orius, at 8 fl oz/A) was also included to document differences between earlier and more recently developed DMIs such as difenoconazole. The treatments were sprayed on a bi-weekly basis from nut onset until shell hardening. To compare the treatments, we rated nut scab severity data in August of both years, and the percent control was calculated based on the nontreated control in each orchard.

The application of Quadris Top led to an average control over all locations of 79%, while the application of Inspire and Abound led to 75% and 49%, respectively (Figure 2).

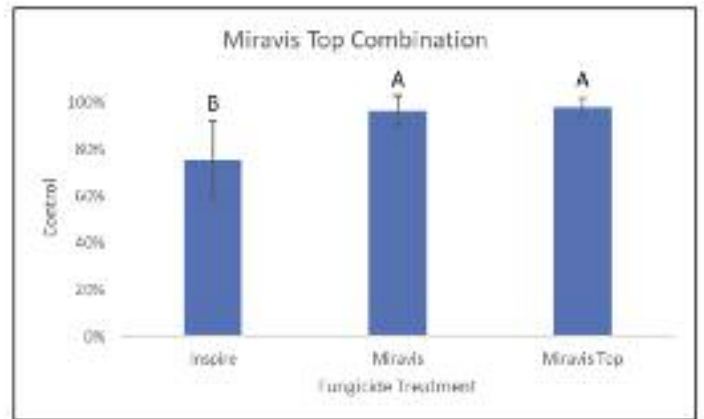


Figure 3. Fungicide efficacy of Inspire (difenoconazole) at 6.7 oz per acre, Miravis (pydiflumetofen) at 5.2 oz per acre, and Miravis Top (combination of difenoconazole and pydiflumetofen) at 13.7 oz per acre in 11 commercial pecan orchards in south Georgia, 2019 and 2020. Different letters indicate statistical differences. A total of 7 and 8 treatment applications were made in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

The Orius (tebuconazole alone) resulted in only 24% control. The difference between it and the Inspire (difenoconazole) illustrates well the different efficacy levels sometimes observed from two differ-

Continued on Page 22, See Scab

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Scab, Continued from Page 20

ent chemistries with the same mode of action, in this case FRAC group 3 (Figure 4).

It also needs to be stressed that the efficacy of Abound was highly variable from location to location (Figure 5). This is due to a single mutation in the genome of the pecan scab pathogen, known as the G137S mutation. This mutation leads to reduced sensitivity of the pecan scab pathogen to QoI fungicides, including azoxystrobin. These findings indicate that, in orchards where the mutation is present, difenoconazole provides the bulk of the disease control from Quadris Top.

If resistance to azoxystrobin is present, this component will contribute little to the disease control obtained from the combination product. Heavy reliance on Quadris Top may then lead to an eventual shift in sensitivity to difenoconazole as well. In order to maintain the efficacy of difenoconazole, we recommend using a strong fungicide rotation plan with other available products with different modes

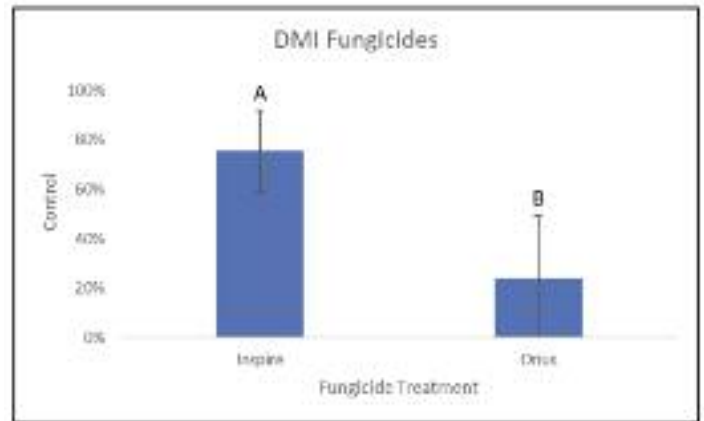


Figure 4. Fungicide efficacy of Inspire (difenoconazole) at 6.7 oz per acre and Orius (tebuconazole) at 8 oz per acre in 11 commercial pecan orchards in south Georgia, 2019 and 2020. Different letters indicate statistical differences. This is an efficacy comparison of older DMI fungicides (Orius) and newer DMI fungicides (Inspire). A total of 7 and 8 treatment applications were made in 2019 and 2020, respectively.

of action.

The application of Miravis Top led to an average control of 98%, while the application of Inspire and Miravis led to 75% and 97% control, respectively

Continued on Page 24, See Scab



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Scab, Continued from Page 22

(Figure 3). In Miravis Top, we found that the pydiflumetofen alone was highly effective against pecan scab, but it also carries a high risk of resistance.

Since this is a totally new mode of action for use in pecans, the sensitivity appears to be uniformly high across all locations. The good news is that difenoconazole alone is also very effective on pecan scab, so the mixture of pydiflumetofen and difenoconazole is extremely effective at controlling nut scab. This combination is a valuable tool in the continuing battle against pecan scab, especially with built-in resistance management.

Pecan growers are fortunate to have the arsenal of products with different modes of action available to them for scab management. This would include, among others, the phosphites (particularly pre-pollination) and the protectant fungicides triphenyltin and dodine for nut scab. The addition of a highly effective SDHI fungicide (pydiflumetofen) provides a great opportunity to diversify our fungicide pro-

Continued on Page 26, See Scab

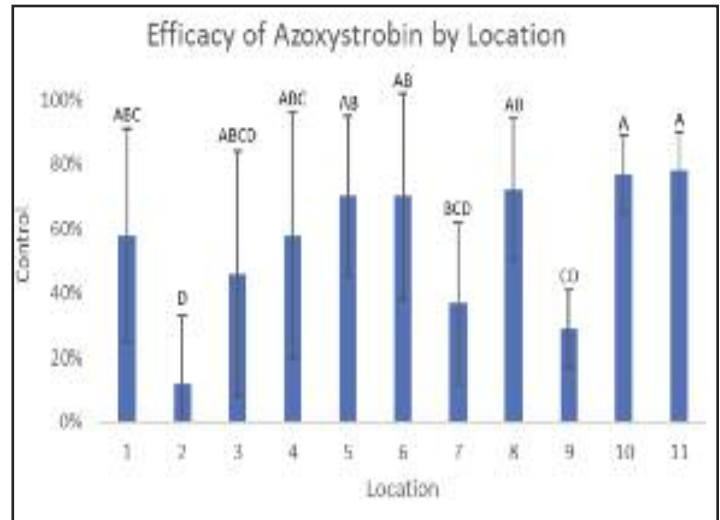


Figure 5. This graph shows the variability of control from Abound (azoxystrobin) applied at 10.9 oz per acre by location in 11 commercial pecan orchards in south Georgia, 2019 and 2020. The variability seen in this image is caused by the presence or absence of a known genetic mutation which leads to resistance of pecan scab to azoxystrobin and other QoI fungicides such as kresoxim methyl (Sovran). Different letters indicate differences that are statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). A total of 7 and 8 treatment applications were made in 2019 and 2020, respectively.



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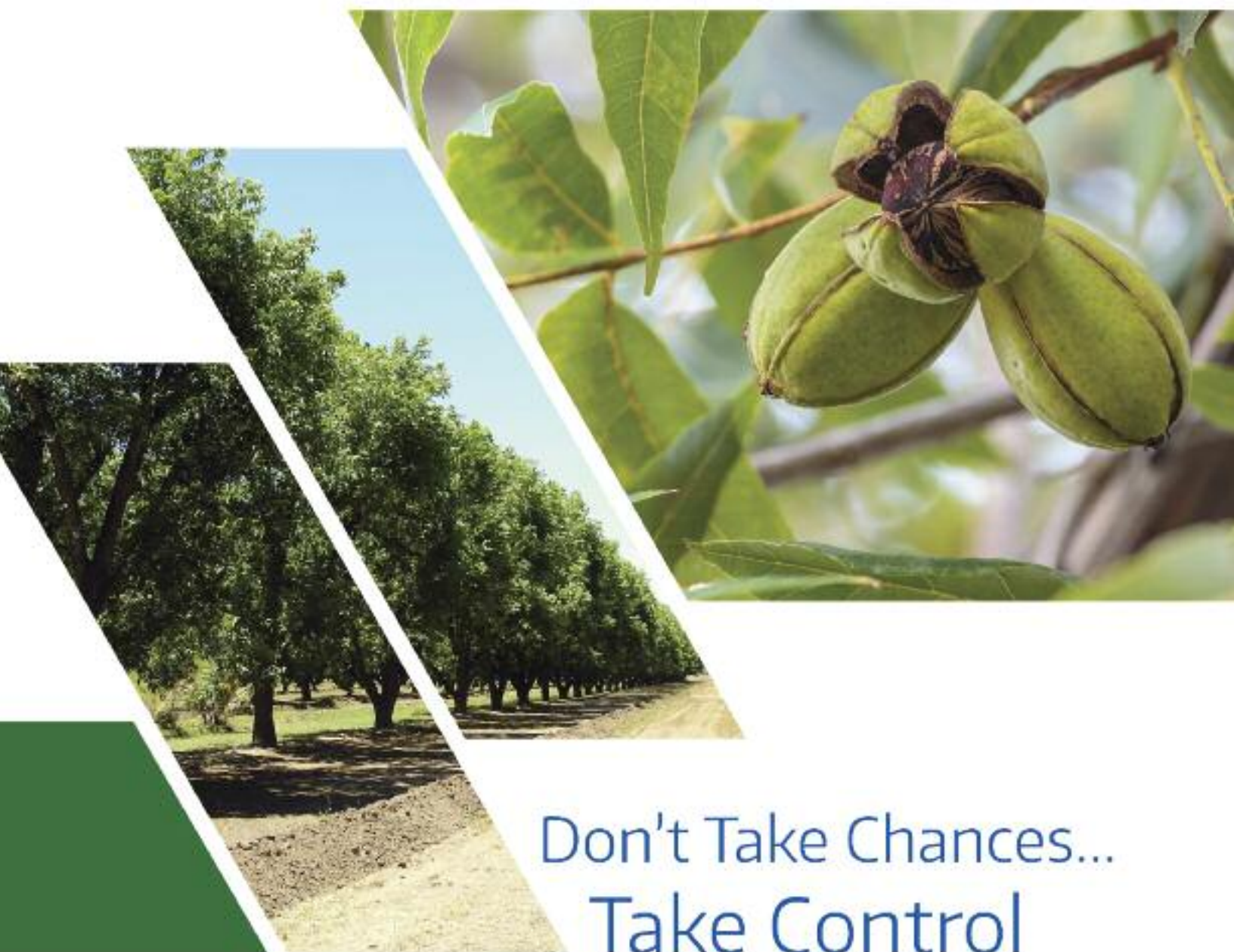
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Scab, Continued from Page 24

grams and take some selection pressure off the older chemistries.

The best approach is to not overuse any single class of chemistry, and use multiple fungicide classes within a season, taking advantage of the inherent strengths of each to obtain the maximum benefit. With good stewardship of these products, we should have the tools we need for scab management for years to come, especially as the industry transitions to more scab-resistant cultivars.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Pecans for their excellent support of this research, as well as the pecan growers who made their orchards available as research locations. This included Mitch Bulger, Garrett Jones, Buck Paulk, Juan Rangel, Jim Buchanan, Scott Hudson, Clint Ray, Jeff Dorsey and Judd Baker. 🌰



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How To Get The Most Out Of Current Irrigation Practices

S. Kaur, M.Y. Leclerc, G. Zhang, S. Bogati, N. Gaur and, L. Wells - The University of Georgia

As many of you know, Southeastern states contribute about 33% of the total pecan production. Amongst those, Georgia is one of the largest pecan producers in the United States. The rapid acreage increases under pecan production combined with intensive water requirements have led us to seek optimized water-use strategies.

Irrigation management is critical for growers to maximize the nut quality and yield. Even the slightest delay in this decision during the crucial nut growth stage can affect the quantity and quality of production. Compounding the high sensitivity of pecan nut quality and yield to even the lightest water stress, the climate in the Southeast has experienced an overall decrease in rainfall during critical periods in the pecan growing season. This trend, according to IPCC 2019, is likely to not only persist but also increase in the coming years. This suggests that to preserve the current nut yield, pecan irrigation scheduling needs should be better defined in the coming years. Our goal is to examine the irrigation needs of pecans throughout the growing season. We have been collecting data to this effect to develop, calibrate and test a predictive model of water management. Other than the work by Wells (2015), there have been virtually no published studies conducted in the Southeastern states guiding irrigation man-

agement to maximize nut size and yield.

Pecans require a large amount of water relative to other crops. According to The University of Georgia Extension Horticulture, pecan trees in Georgia generally require about 60 inches of total water including rainfall during the growing season. Therefore, irrigation is required to supplement additional water requirement of trees along with rainfall. In the Southeast, new orchards are increasingly equipped with micro-sprinklers which provide water only to the root zone of trees. This method uses three times less water than the solid set of sprinkler irrigation.

Researchers such as Ted Sammis, Lenny Wells, and Shuichi Miyamoto amongst others observed a reduction in quality and quantity of yield when trees

Continued on Page 29, See Practices



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Practices, Continued from Page 28

experience moisture stress at the nut filling stage (during August and September).

Here in this article, we would like to discuss how effective irrigation scheduling is based on a variable called the ‘crop coefficient’ or ‘crop stress factor’. The latter is a variable which identifies whether we are applying a sufficient amount of water (rainfall + irrigation). This is determined using the ratio of the actual amount of water lost (actual evapotranspiration) to the maximum evaporation possible given a set of climatic conditions (i.e. the amount of evaporation that would take place over a large saturated area).

We have recently begun a study at the King Spring Orchard in Hawkinsville to determine optimum tree water requirements as a function of the nut growing stage. In this study, we focus our attention on a micro-irrigated orchard near Hawkinsville where the grove is on loamy sand. We chose this soil since this is one of the most common orchard soils in the state. The cultivar used in this study is Desir-



Figure 1. Eddy-covariance tower installed at King Springs Pecan Orchard at Hawkinsville

able and the tree spacing is 30'x50'. Trees were planted in 2013. This site receives an average annual precipitation of 46 inches (or 1167mm). Our instru-
Continued on Page 30, See Orchards



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**Orchards, Continue
from Page 29**

mentation, (*Figure 1*) called the eddy-covariance flux system, was installed on a 50 ft tall tower placed in the orchard. It enables us to determine the net amount of moisture evaporated and photosynthesis continuously round the clock 24hours/7 days a week. Data collected from the system is used to measure the actual evapotranspiration from the orchard (including Bermuda grass) used to determine the crop coefficient throughout the growing season. We are now refining our methods to separate the tree water loss from the Bermuda grass.

The study depicts evapotranspiration data (*Figure 2*) continuously throughout the three growing

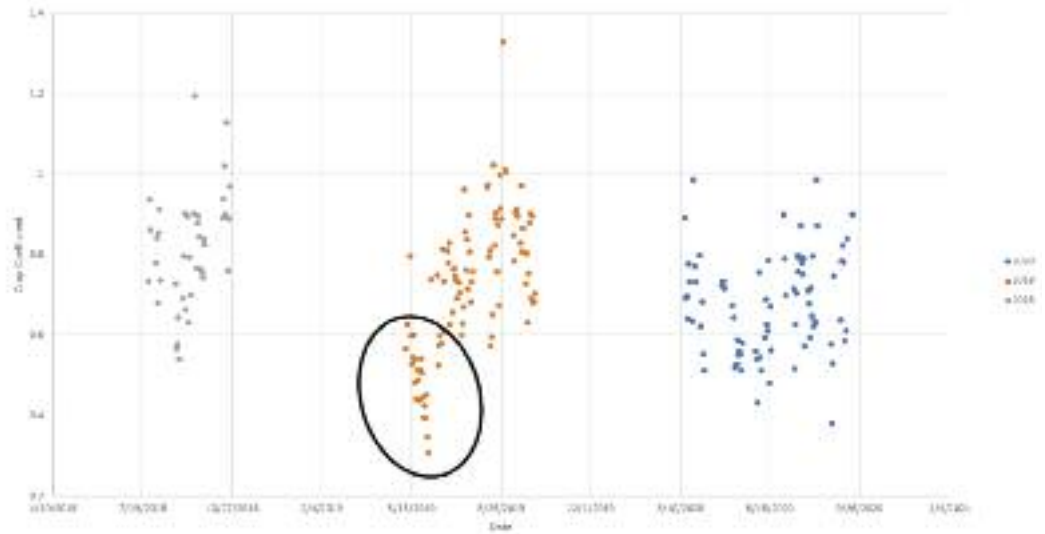


Figure 2. Crop coefficient measured during 2018, 2019 and 2020 (June 1- Aug 15: - Nut Sizing period, Aug 15 – First week of Oct :- Nut filling period)

seasons (2018 (last few months), 2019, and 2020). The ellipse shown in *Figure 2*, for instance, illustrates a low crop coefficient value at the onset of the 2019 season. This means that more water should have been applied at this stage. Given that water re-

Continued on Page 31, See Practices



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Practices, Continued from Page 30

quirements vary with different climatic conditions over a growing season year to year, we are now refining the irrigation schedule considering the effect of climate variability on crop coefficient.

This experiment with the erection of the tower was first built and instrumented in 2018. The initial infrastructure meant that the 2018 season has a limited amount of data, mostly focused on the latter part of the growing season. In 2020, a COVID year, the stem water potential was recorded at larger time intervals. Therefore, we used the 2019 dataset. The crop coefficient shown in Figure 2 is calculated using recorded evapotranspiration data over the orchard. The stem water potential is the direct measure of water tension in plants/trees.

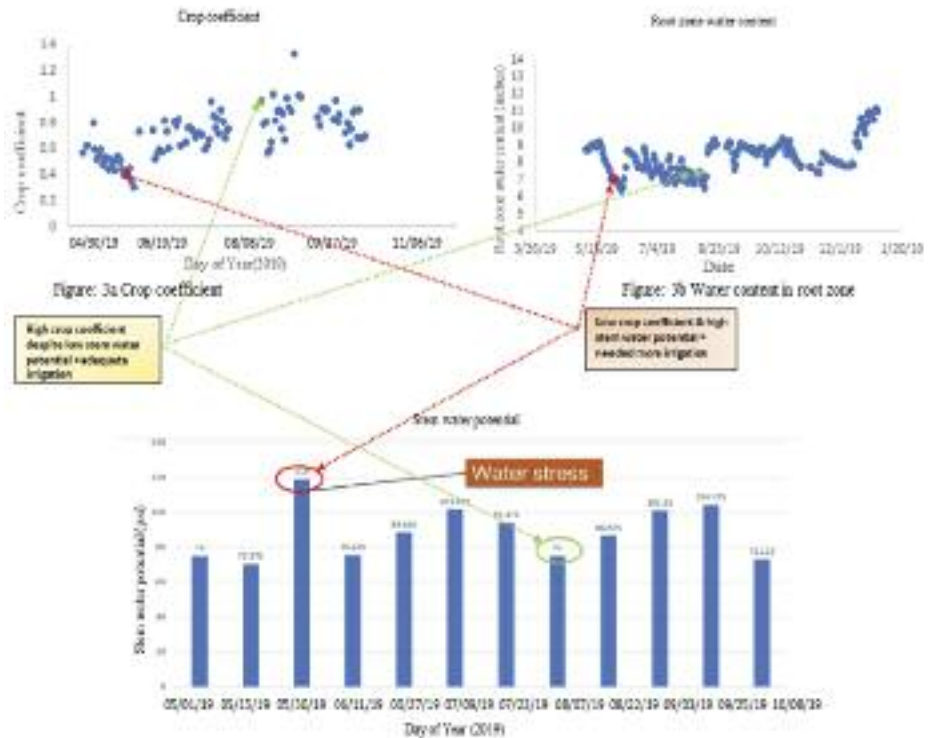


Figure 3. Relationship between Crop coefficient (Fig 3a), root zone water content (Fig 3b) and Stem water potential (Fig 3c) throughout growing season during 2019

Continued on Page 32, See Practices

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Practices, Continued from Page 31

The high stem water potential along with the low crop coefficient illustrated by the red arrows (*Figure 3*) suggests that the trees need additional irrigation during the growing stage whereas green arrows demonstrate sufficient water in a root zone on the basis of crop coefficient and stem water potential data. This is also validated with low water content in the root zone. This is further corroborated by the high stem water potential (more than 113 psi). On May 30, 2019, the stem water potential was 119 psi whereas the root water content and the crop coefficient were also low. The water content dropped again in the root zone during mid-August, a crucial nut filling stage although the orchard was fully irrigated at that time. We can thus see the need to optimize the irrigation schedule.

We suggest that, owing to the heavy nut load on the trees, irrigation management is critical for grow-

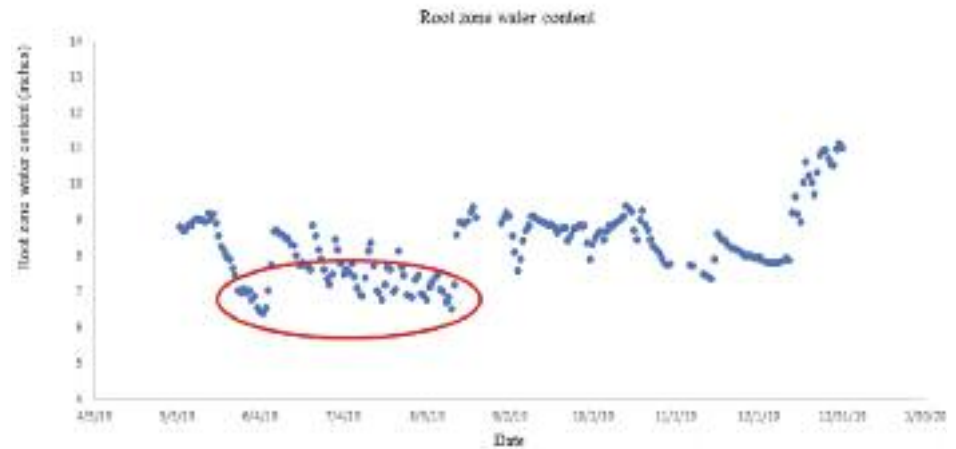


Figure 4. Root zone water content measured in 2019

ers to maximize their nut yield. Even the slightest delay in this decision during the crucial nut growth stage can dramatically jeopardize the quantity and quality of the production. The Wells' study (2015) suggests that there is no correlation between the stem water potential and soil moisture during later nut growing stages (August & September) as trees will be always stressed regardless of soil moisture content as during the nut filling stage water stress could be a function of crop load.

Continued on Page 33, See Orchards

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Orchards, Continued from Page 32

A low crop coefficient or a low root water zone at the beginning of the growing season may have only a modest impact on quality and yield given that the critical time for water stress occurs later in the season.

We observed a higher stem water potential and a lower water content in the root zone of trees at the same time. In both *Figures 3 & 4*, we can see inside the ellipse the water content in root zone is low during June, July, and August despite the current prescribed irrigation schedule. Therefore, there is a need to refine the given schedule considering these factors. The present study then is linking environmental conditions with the physiology of the tree physiology to examine the efficiency of the irrigation schedule developed by the UGA Extension Service (Lenny Wells) for Georgia. Our next step will be to further refine this schedule to enhance the irrigation efficiency of pecans in the Southeastern U.S. 🌰



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Georgia Pecan Becomes State Nut!

By The Pecan Grower Magazine Staff

The official process to recognize Georgia Pecan as Georgia's State Nut began in 2019 but was delayed due to mandatory shutdowns and quarantines for Covid beginning in March 2020. Yet, the idea of recognizing our nut had been a long-standing conversation. Once Covid restrictions were lifted, Senator Carden Summers jumped into action to se-

cure the recognition for Georgia Pecan with the assistance of a group of Senators and Representatives whose districts in middle and South Georgia were heavy pecan regions.

On April 9, 2021 Georgia's Governor Brian Kemp officially signed Georgia Senate Bill 222 es-
Continued on Page 39, See State Nut



Governor Kemp signs SB222 officiating the pecan as Georgia's Official State Nut.



Georgia pecan display

State Nut, Continued from Page 38

establishing the pecan as Georgia's Official State Nut while surrounded by pecan supporters.

At GPGA, we could not have been more thrilled with the unity and camaraderie displayed in the process of obtaining this recognition and express our sincere thanks to all those legislators who worked towards this goal. 🥜



Dignitaries gifted pecan portraits painted by Georgia Grown Artist Rhonda Griffin



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Georgia Pecans on the Big Screen?

By The Pecan Grower Magazine Staff

There is truly never a dull moment at the GPGA office and while we were working on our Conference preparation, a movie was being shot across the street on the steps of the Tift County Courthouse on May 13th. Actor Michael Rooker popped into our office during production and we were happy to be able to provide Georgia pecans for him and the crew. Rooker has an extensive television and film career, including *The Walking Dead* and Marvel Studios' *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

Tifton and several other South Georgia locations have been the sight of production events for four Hollywood movies over the last year, with another set to begin here in June. Big name stars who have been in our communities for production include Bruce Willis, Luke Wilson, Queen Latifah, and Dennis Quaid. GPGA has been able to provide Georgia pecans for all of these productions and the products

are always a hit with the cast and crew.

We were thrilled that Rooker took time out of his busy filming day to learn more about Georgia pecans. During his short visit he learned about the many positive health benefits, especially antioxidants, as well as the many varieties in which they are grown! 🥜



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Warnock and Bishop Visit with Growers

By The Pecan Grower Magazine Staff

At GPGA we are always excited about the opportunity to promote and advance Georgia Pecans and the hard work and dedication of our growers. On March 31, The Redding Firm pulled together a team of Pecan Representatives to meet with newly elected U.S. Senator from Georgia, Reverend Raphael Warnock, during his visit through the state's agricultural regions. Our veteran Congressman and avid pecan supporter, U.S Representative Sanford Bishop, led this mission and always has his staff available at our GPGA events. We are always proud to include Bishop as part of The Georgia Pecan Team and to welcome Warnock.

The tour started at Fort Valley State University in Fort Valley, GA, where they shared breakfast with Georgia Farm Bureau Leadership, among other regional agricultural leadership, such as Chairman of Georgia's Commodity Commission for Pecans, R.G. Lamar. The tour continued southward, visiting Minor Brothers farms, OLAM, Georgia Producers Alliance, Ricky Dollison Farms, and Century Pecan Groves. At Century Pecan Groves, GPGA Board member Marianne Brown provided a warm welcome to the legislatures, their staffs and a brief introduction to pecan production.

Following Brown's introduction, GPGA's Executive Director provided an overview of the Georgia pecan industry. Next, Dr. Lenny Wells informed the group about the hardships the nation's pecan growers have faced; from natural disasters, to production pressures, to international affairs. Next, Chairman of the National Pecan Federation, Jeb Barrow, discussed the top goals of the federation, including reducing tariffs in India. Barrow also thanked Congressman Bishop for his continued support to the pecan indus-

try and for aiding the pecan processing and pasteurization research funding through FY21 appropriations. Concluding the pecan leadership presentations was South Georgia Pecan Co.'s Jeff Worn, who thanked them for their support to the industry. Additional pecan industry representatives present were NPSA's Executive Director Russ Limeux, GPGA President Miley Adams, GPGA Vice President Chris Clough, GPGA Board Member Jim Buchanan, Georgia Pecan Grower Justin Jones, Georgia Pecan Grower Richard Grebel, Georgia Pecan Grower Thomas Brown, Georgia Pecan Grower Jess Jones, Georgia Pecan Grower Shirley Sherrod and Stephanie Stuckey of Stuckey's Corp.

Warnock began his tenure in the U.S. Senate in January and serves as the Chair of the Subcommittee on Commodities, Risk Management and Trade within the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the 117th United States Congress. He also serves on the Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics and Research. 🌰



L to R: GPGA Vice President Chris Clough, National Pecan Federation Chairman Jeb Barrow, GPGA Executive Director Samantha McLeod, U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock, U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop, GPGA Board Member Marianne Brown, GPGA President Miley Adams & UGA Horticulturalist Dr. Lenny Wells.



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Consumer Views & Touchpoints



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PECANS TRIPLE MEDIA PRESENCE THIS SEASON

American Pecans has generated **3X as many news-media views** from October 2020 through March 2021 compared to the same six months in FY20.

30+ TV and radio stations in 15 states covered National Pecan Month thanks to registered dietitian Dawn Jackson Blatner's segments about her favorite pecan snacks, which also led to coverage in online articles and social media.

The Original Supernut was even featured in the **Morning Brew**, a digital newsletter for today's modern business leaders with **2.5 million subscribers**.



\$1 INVESTED = \$9.90 IN PROFIT

YOUR DOLLARS AT WORK

YOUR FMO INVESTMENTS ARE QUITE LITERALLY PAYING OFF - ACCORDING TO A RECENT STUDY BY TEXAS A&M REQUIRED BY THE USDA, EVERY DOLLAR SPENT ON THE APC PROMOTION PROGRAM FROM 2016-2020 RETURNED \$9.90 IN PROFIT TO U.S. PECAN PRODUCERS.

THIS STUDY SHOWS THAT IN JUST FOUR SHORT YEARS, THE AMERICAN PECAN COUNCIL - INDUSTRY'S FIRST-EVER, INDUSTRYWIDE MARKETING EFFORT - HAS PROVIDED AN ALMOST TEN-FOLD RETURN, AND THIS DOESN'T INCLUDE FY21, WHICH HAS BEEN OUR MOST SUCCESSFUL MARKETING YEAR TO DATE.

RESEARCH DRIVES MARKETING CAMPAIGNS IN CHINA



Not only are we reaching millions of Chinese consumers through news media, social media and influencer campaigns, we also completed a robust analysis of opportunity in the region. The research - which informs our ongoing consumer marketing strategy - provided an in-depth look at the following areas:

- China wellness policies and health regulations
- Stakeholder mapping
- B2B market environment
- Consumer attitudes and habits



Washington Report National Pecan Federation

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

QLAP Falls Short for Pecans

As part of the post-Hurricane Michael assistance, the U.S. Congress established funding for the Quality Loss Adjustment Program (QLAP). USDA announced on January 5, 2021 that the “Quality Loss Adjustment Program will assist producers whose eligible crops suffered quality losses due to qualifying drought, excessive moisture, flooding, hurricanes, snowstorms, tornadoes, typhoons, volcanic activity, or

wildfires occurring in calendar years 2018 and/or 2019.”

After a significant delay in program implementation, growers struggled with limited information about how the program would apply to pecan. USDA, at the national and state levels, was clear that pecans did qualify for the program. However, this point was not always clear at the county level as to whether pecan qualified or how certain requirements of the program would be addressed.

The Georgia Pecan Growers Association (GPGA), Oklahoma Pecan Growers Association, University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Noble Research Institute and the National Pecan Federation (NPF) worked with a U.S. Department of Agriculture team on how issues relative to QLAP and pecan could be addressed. After much sharing of information, the program participation issues for pecan were not resolved.

If the program continues, NPF is encouraging members of Congress to review why the program was not more successful for pecan growers and hopefully

Continued on Page 50, See Report



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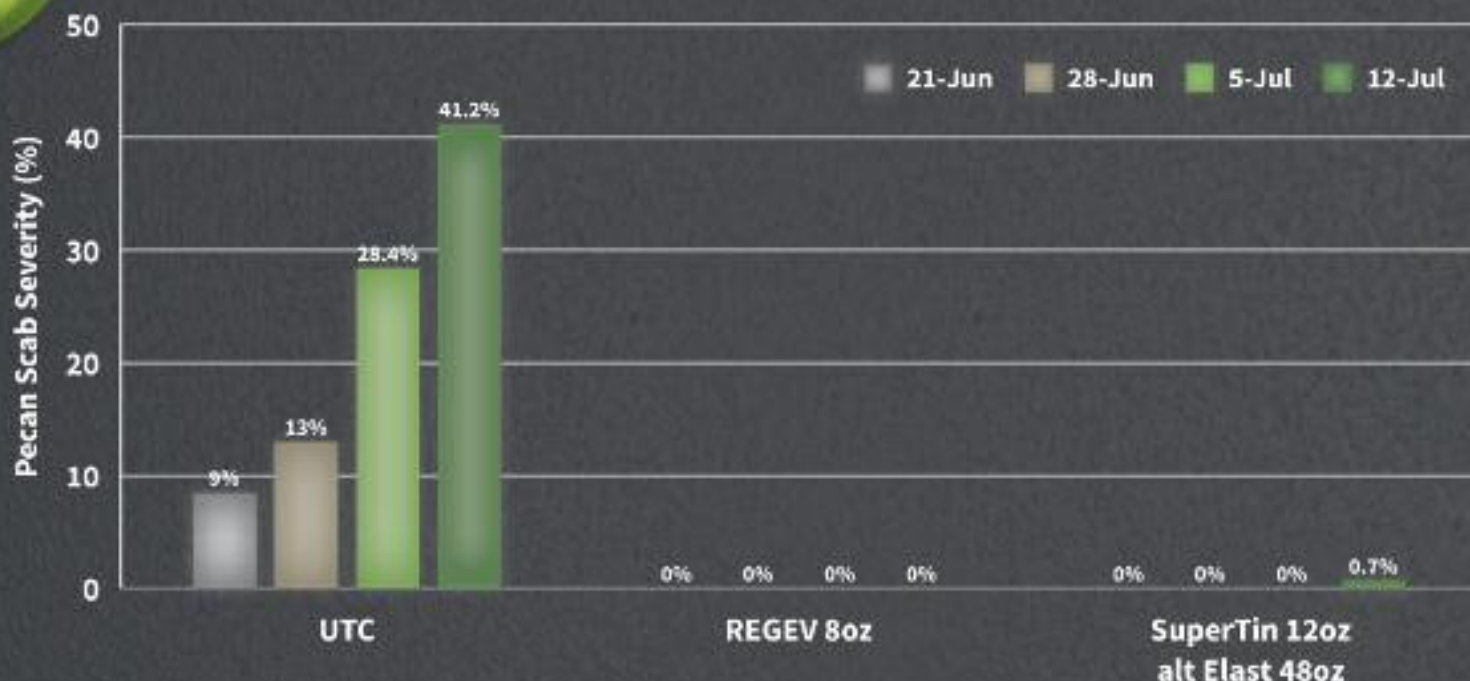
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Report, Continued from Page 48

cure these issues for future programs.

U.S. Trade Representative Testifies Before the U.S. House and Senate

U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee and the U.S. Senate Finance Committee to outline “President Biden’s 2021 Trade Policy Agenda”.

Comments important for pecan growers were relative to China trade policy. Ambassador Tai stated:

“We will not hesitate to call out China’s coercive and unfair trade practices that harm American workers, undermine the multilateral system, or violate basic human rights.

We are working towards a strong, strategic approach to our trade and economic relationship with China. We welcome the competition. But the competition must be fair, and if China cannot or will not adapt to international rules and norms, we must be bold and creative in taking steps to level the playing field and enhance our own capabilities and partnerships. I’ve been encouraged that our trading partners also recognize this challenge and they are willing to find a common approach to our shared concerns. Our security will depend on diversifying and securing the supply lines for the products. Improving our trade relations with trusted Allies and partners will not only improve our prosperity but our national security.” Separately, there has been some indication from USTR that trade discussions with India could occur later in the fall of 2021.

Climate Hearings Continue on Capitol Hill

The U.S. House Agriculture Committee’s Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry held a hearing on “*Title II Conservation Programs: Exploring Climate Smart Practices*”. Witnesses included:

➤ Mr. Charles Edwin “CJ” Isbell Jr., Farmer, Keenbell Farm, Rockville, VA

➤ Ms. Kimberly Ratcliff, Ranch Manager, Caney Creek Ranch, Oakwood, TX

➤ Dr. Keith Paustian, University Distinguished Professor, Department of Soil and Crop Sciences, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

Continued on Page 51, See Report

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Report, Continued from Page 50

➤ Mr. James D. Johansson, President, California Farm Bureau, Sacramento, CA

Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry Chair Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) stated at the hearing:

“As we look to scale the adoption of conservation practices, there is perhaps no greater tool available than the Farm Bill’s conservation programs. Title II programs provide much needed technical and financial assistance to encourage the adoption of cover crops, reduced and no-till management systems, and prescribed grazing systems — among many other climate smart practices. And we have seen firsthand these programs working in central Virginia.

Studies show that these programs are effective. Not only do they facilitate greater adoption of conservation practices, but they also make it more likely that farmers will keep implementing these practices in the long term to the benefit of our climate, clean water, and the health of our rural economies. What’s more, these investments are paying dividends to

farmer’s bottom lines. When farmers participate in these voluntary

conservation programs, they not only reduce carbon dioxide emissions in the environment by sequestering carbon through healthier soils, they can also improve crop quantity, yield, and profit margins. Put simply, any investment Congress makes in Title II Programs are not just an investment in the future of our planet, but also in the long-term economic success of rural America and America’s farmers.”

In the U.S. Senate, Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and Ranking Member John Boozman (R-AR) also held a hearing on climate, “Federal, State, and Private Forestlands: Opportunities for Addressing Climate Change.” Witnesses testifying were:

➤ Ms. Kedren Dillard, Forest Owner, Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Network; Board Member, American Forest Foundation, Washington, DC

➤ Mr. Troy Harris, Managing Director of Timberland, Jameston LP; Board Member, National Alliance of Forest Owners, Atlanta, GA

Continued on Page 52, See Report



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334-335-6313 Contact: Joe or Mary Johnson

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Report, Continued from Page 51

➤ Ms. Jessica Orrego, Director of Forestry, American Carbon Registry, Winrock International, Little Rock, AR

➤ Mr. Joe Fox, State Forester, Forestry Division, Arkansas Department of Agriculture; President, National Association of State Foresters; Little Rock, AR

➤ Dr. Tony Cheng, Director, Colorado Forest Restoration Institute; Professor, Forest & Rangeland Stewardship, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

NPF Proposes Federal Research Initiatives

The NPF has submitted two congressional appropriations requests for Fiscal Year 2022. These include a Pecan Processing project addressing pecan cracking and pasteurization. This project received \$1.5 million in Fiscal Year 2021. In addition, the Congress approved a Pecan Breeding project for \$1.5 million in Fiscal Year 2021. The NPF has requested additional funding for this project in Fiscal Year 2022.

U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop (D-GA) chairs

the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies. Texas Congressman Henry Cuellar (D-TX) also serves on the Subcommittee. In the U.S. Senate, pecan state Senators Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) serve on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies. Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL) is the Ranking Member of the Full Committee.

GPGA Hosts Bishop-Warnock Ag Tour

GPGA hosted Congressman Bishop and U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock (D-GA) at a pecan orchard in Leesburg, Georgia as part of their recent agricultural tour. Both Congressman Bishop and Senator Warnock serve on the Agriculture Committees.

GPGA and NPF briefed Congressman Bishop and Senator Warnock on the key issues for pecan growers. Most of the discussion involved the high tariffs in India for U.S. pecan imports. 🌰

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Marketing Dollars at Work: Mid-Year Campaign Recap

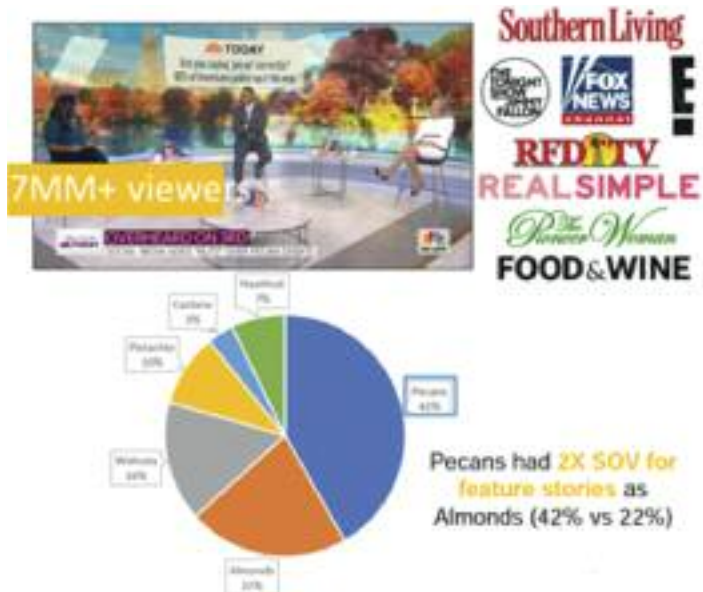
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On April 28th, The American Pecan Council had their biannual meeting to discuss mid fiscal year updates on activities approved in the 2020-2021 fiscal year budget. The topics of discussion included Grades and Standards, Industry Relations, and Domestic and International Marketing. During the marketing presentation, APC staff provided a recap of the first and second quarter activities for the 2021 Fiscal Year. In this article, we will delve into these updates and how the marketing is working hard for industry.

In the first two quarters of the 2021 fiscal year, we saw the strongest campaign performance in brand history! Consumer reach was at 447 million, exceeding the original goal set. During the 6-month period, snack and holiday recipes reached over 500,000 views which is an indicator for purchase intent.

First Quarter Campaign Activations & Results



Continued on Page 55, See Recap

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Recap, Continued from Page 54

The “Super Safe Pecan Debate” was a hardworking campaign garnering the best yet media results, going viral. This campaign helped American Pecans rank #1 amongst other leading nut commodities during the first quarter, which means more consumers were hearing and seeing pecans than other nuts. The “debate” around pecan pronunciation drove record-breaking online engagement. The buzz of the Debate continued into the rest of the quarter as we inspired consumers with “undebatably delicious” holiday snacks and seasonal recipes on the American Pecan site.

snacking habits with nutrition education and easy snack inspiration. Angela highlighted the snack reset movement to encourage consumers to clean up their snacks in Lifestyle magazine. On top of that, Angela took to social media and polled fans on how they eat pecans garnering close to 10,000 votes! American Pecans also had a sweepstakes for consumers where 3.3K consumers submitted photos showing off messy, snack-riddled desks for a chance to win Pecans and workplace swag. Social media advertisements showcased nutritious pecan snacks and drove visitors to featured recipes on the site and the Clean Up Your Snacks landing page, totaling 167K clicks, 65% more than estimated. 1 out of 4 visitors entered the sweepstakes to win a Pecans prize pack. Our website visitors were hungry for snacking ideas, consuming nearly 120K pageviews of snack recipes, exceeding our goal of 100K pageviews.



Website Landing Page

Holiday Hub Landing Page

Second Quarter Consumer Campaign Activations & Results

During the second quarter, American Pecans partnered with actress Angela Kinsey of “The Office” – who still enjoys fresh pecans from her grandparents' trees in north Texas – to help people clean up their



Clean Up Your Snacks Landing Page



Clean Up Prize Pack

Continued on Page 56, See Recap

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Recap, Continued from Page 55

Reaching The Target Audience with Omni-Channel Campaigns

We use the omni-channel campaigns to access multiple platforms to message via Power of Scale and Frequency. Hyper focusing on key markets for our industry in which we have engaged the core audience segment of Gen X Mothers with frequent messaging. There have been 16 major cities airing over 23,000 commercials to date through television, broadcast radio, podcasts, targeted social videos, and targeted geofencing. This campaign alone has delivered almost 350 million consumer reaches.

Strong results from the Influencer Led Marketing

Aspire IQ continues to allow us to reach our target audience efficiently and effectively by contracting directly with social media influencers who produce and share quality content showcasing pecans. From lifestyle and mommy bloggers to Olympians, RNs, chefs, and Bachelor stars, we've worked with 26 creators in FY21 who have produced 133 posts for us.

1,718,000 people have seen that content and our engagement rate is 12.3%, which is well above the average. By calculating a metric called the Total Media Value (TMV), we're able to see how much it would cost to generate the same amount of impressions, likes, and comments with paid advertising. In our case, the TMV would equate to a spend of \$95.6K, showing us our Return on Investment is 301%! Last, but not least, our owned @AmericanPecan Instagram account has grown over 13% with 1,400 new followers keeping up with pecans. Follow along @AmericanPecan and look under our tagged content to see and share the vast array of sponsored content our army of influencers is producing for the industry.

Reaching Nutritionist and Dietitians

Another very important and influential segment of our target audience is the health professional community. These highly motivated individuals are receptive to hearing about the health benefits, heritage, and versatility of pecans. Though activations have moved to the virtual stage, our education efforts have

Continued on Page 57, See Recap



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Recap, Continued from Page 56

successfully put pecans top of mind to enjoy and recommend, and our engagement with this audience remains strong and consistent. Read on to learn about some of our recent touchpoints with nutritionists and dietitians:

RDBA - Nutritious Pecans Meet Today's Consumer Needs

This past April, American Pecans partnered with the leading membership organization of grocery store dietitians, the Retail Dietitians Business Alliance (RDBA). With RDBA, American Pecans hosted an interactive educational webinar on Snacking Solutions for Consumers: Three Trends Driving Purchasing Decisions in 2021. The webinar featured two registered dietitians, Allison Webster, PhD, RD, Director of Research and Nutrition Communications at the International Food Information Council Foundation and Rabiya Bower, RD, LDN, Program Coordinator for the MS/RDN Program at Thomas Jefferson University and former retail dietitian. During the webinar, the speakers shared insights into three emerging con-



sumer trends (convenience, nutrition and flavor), highlighted the ways in which pecans directly meet these consumer needs and discussed how health professionals can apply these trends in their everyday practice to inspire positive habits. This engaging we-

Continued on Page 58, See Recap

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 fill
- Keep orchard mowed
- Patch bud
- Apply fungicides at 14 day intervals
- Apply herbicides as needed
- Monitor for pecan weevil and hickory shuckworm
- Keep leaves free of aphids and mites
- Scout and spray as needed for insect pests
- Prepare for Pawnee harvest by mowing, remove debris and service equipment

September

- Prepare for harvest by mowing, remove debris and 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, remove debris and 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

Recap, Continued from Page 57

binar reached over 6K health professionals, with 11 major grocery retailers represented among the attendees.

In tandem with this event, the American Pecan Council collaborated with registered dietitian and culinary expert, Kristy Del Coro, to develop two brand-new culinary resources supporting these evolving consumer trends, which are now available on the Health Professionals Resources page of our website. Though designed with health professionals in mind, these handouts are available for industry use as well. They offer a variety of pecan inspiration – whether it be innovative pecan pairing ideas or simple ways to incorporate this delicious nut into everyday meals.

Pecan Powerhouses Network


On May 5th we hosted the second event of the **Pecan Powerhouses Network 2021 Quarterly Webinar series**, during which attendees heard from second-generation organic pecan farmer Laura Harper. Laura shared about her fascinating journey in the pecan industry, helped the health professionals understand what a true “day in the life” looks like for a farmer and gave them a unique glimpse into how pecans move from the trees to their tables. A big thank you to Laura for representing the industry so excellently! In our final two 2021 webinars, we’ll feature other special guests – including a culinary expert and registered dietitian. Stay tuned!

Diversified Marketing Plan Raises Pecans to the Top

Through all the diversified marketing campaigns and activations direct to consumers and health pro-

fessionals, consumption rose to 8.5% since the start of the Federal Marketing Order efforts. During the 19/20 fiscal year, consumption was up to 36.5%. All the marketing activities described above have garnered over 770 million reaches to consumers in the first two quarters of the 20/21 fiscal year alone. What does all of this mean and how does it impact industry members? By reaching consumers with messaging, the marketing is putting American Pecans at the top of mind and encouraging purchase intent in a variety of different ways. The more consumers are aware and educated about the many benefits of pecans, the more apt they are to buy pecans. The more product purchased by end users; the more product moves throughout the chain beginning from the grower. When we look at the industry data published in the Pecan Positions Reports, shipments are up 13% and inventory is down 27%. The increased shipment of pecans means there is an increase of movement through the chain of commerce. A displaced pecan is a win for all pecan industry members from the grower all the way to retail. 🌰





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Resilience Lessons & The War Years

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

Note: This is Part Two of a three-part series on the history of Stuckey's. Part One explored the company's founding as a roadside pecan stand up and building of the first brick-and-mortar stores.

World War Two ushered in an era of incredible change and resilience for America's food manufacturers, and Stuckey's was no exception. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 not only led to formal entry into the War, but also the rationing of food and other essential products for the war effort. That included sugar, the essential ingredient for Stuckey's now-growing candy line, and pecan classics like divinity, pralines, fudge and their signature items, the pecan log roll. This change was devastating for the young Stuckey, as every one of his three stores made its own candy in-house. What was worse the Folkston, Georgia store location fell victim to bootleggers who stole sugar rations to make liquor and set the store on fire. Stuckey's was down to two stores.

To survive, Stuckey developed an uncanny ability to trade anything for sugar – from nylon stockings to cottonseed meal and shoe stamps. He joked that he once even traded fish guts for sugar. As a result, Stuckey's became one of the largest sugar traders in the country and at one point even swapped Tom's candies in Atlanta 100,000 pounds of corn syrup for 60,000 pounds of sugar. The company also bought a small stick candy factory in

Jacksonville, Florida to get a larger quota of sugar. Stuckey skimmed on how much sugar went into each pound of the stick candy so he could divert some of the sugar to his stores.

One of the most ingenious ways Stuckey adapted to wartime rationing involved coconut, a much-needed ingredient for the Company's coconut patties. Stuckey added coconut flavoring to corn shucks from local farms, which he ground up to look like coconut. Folks would line up out the door at his stores to get his coconut bars -- they were in such rare supply!

Ultimately, the way Stuckey's survived the difficult war years was by selling candy to the troops, which meant access to the Government's sugar supply. To meet the demand, Stuckey built a candy kitchen in his pecan warehouse. The truth be told, that first candy plant was only 240 square feet with a couple of Coleman burners and boiling pots, but it served its purpose. Stuckey's began boxing candy to ship to the military, stocked in ration kits along with other candy brands of that era like M&Ms, Hershey's chocolate bars and Wrigley's gum.

As is true of any good tale of resilience, adaptation during tough times leads to building back stronger. Boxing candy for the troops inspired the young entrepreneur to design attractive boxes to sell candy at home, which proved to be a gold mine.

"When I first opened, I sold a bag of candy, two pounds for a dollar [out of paper bags]," reminisced Stuckey years later. "Then we started putting it in a nice box at \$1.50 a pound and I sold more candy than before."

The boxed candy led to increased sales from Rich's Department store in Atlanta. Eager to fill the orders and gain the trust of such a big account, Stuckey bought 50,000 pounds of sugar from a guy he knew in Miami. A short while later, two FBI agents came to Eastman to question Stuckey. Turns out it was black market sugar from the mafia. Stuckey told them everything he knew, and they let him go since, according to the authorities, he was "just a candy man."

Continued on Page 61, See Stuckey's

Stuckey's, Continued from Page 60

Golden Years of Travel: Post-War Economic Boom

Despite incredible ups and downs – and brushes with the law – Stuckey's managed to emerge after the War with a good profit base from the \$150,000 worth of candy they had sold to the armed forces. The economy starting picking up, and folks were travelling on the road again.

Even though sugar rationing did not end until 1947, this didn't deter Stuckey from re-opening his Unadilla and Folkston stores in Georgia in 1945. Stuckey's incorporated in 1947 and opened its first franchise in Sunnyside, Georgia that same year. By 1948, another store opened in Richmond Hill, Georgia, and candy demand was strong enough for Stuckey to build a candy facility behind the Eastman store. Stuckey's was on its way!

The 1950's were an era of rapid expansion for the nation's economy and Stuckey's grew at an unprecedented pace as well. In 1950, the Company invested in private carrier air-conditioned tractor and refrigerated trailers to ensure that candy cargoes arrived on schedule and in good condition to the ever-expanding store locations. As time went on, they expanded this phase of operations and maintained a sizable fleet of trucks.

By 1953, Stuckey's had grown to 29 stores and their turquoise roofs started to become a regular sighting along the byways and roadways of America. In March of that year, Stuckey opened a \$125,000 candy plant and office building on the McRae Highway in Eastman, Georgia, followed by a \$100,000 addition two years later.

The was the hay day of American road travel. Southern highways – notably U.S. 17, 301, and 1 – were thronged with automobiles. Stuckey's was a welcome respite for hordes of Northern Snowbirds heading to Florida for their winter sojourns.

At the time, Highway 1, which ran from Maine to Key West, was probably the most well-traveled road on the Eastern seaboard and Stuckey soon populated it with his sloped teal-roof stores. No other stores were really competing with what Stuckey's of-

fered – gas, food, souvenirs and clean restrooms. A Stuckey's stop was seen as a welcome break from the monotony of the road.

Stuckey carefully sited his stores. He had an innate sense of marketing and was an adept student of the migratory habits of the American tourist. He would do his own surveys of traffic volume, breaking it down to local and out-of-state, northbound or southbound. A famous story is how he mapped out the distance between his stores. Stuckey would drink several cups of coffee and drive until he needed to make a rest stop. And that was where he'd build a store.

Stuckey would also send workers to state capitals and state highway departments to dig out road histories and determine where new highways were being built so he could buy up the land.

"We gave out a lot of candy to state highway department officials and secretaries," he joked at the time.

Stuckey had a wonderful friendship with travel-

Continued on Page 62, See Stuckey's



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Stuckey's, Continued from Page 61

ers. His motto was, "Every traveler is a friend." He had a variety of methods to ensure that every Stuckey's stop was a friendly stop. Stuckey himself would frequently make surprise visits to his stores. He had a gift for remembering names and made a point of greeting employees personally. He believed in people, no matter what their background. His business method was "taking a bunch of good country boys and training them, giving them interest in the store, and having them do the finest job you've ever seen." That tradition of building the local economy in small towns was critical to Stuckey's business model --a value still present in the Company to this day.

The pecan, one of the few edible nuts native to the United States, has been at the center of Stuckey's success since its founding as a shed selling pecans on the side of the road. Stuckey's prosperity may have been due to good timing, as the pecan was fast becoming one of Georgia's main crops when the company was founded. In fact, the #1 state for pecan production has consistently been Georgia since the

1950's. Ethel Stuckey's family had 8,000 acres of pecans and his uncle owned 500 acres of pecans that allowed for ready access to a supply of inexpensive pecans. At one point, Stuckey's was believed to sell more pecans at retail than anybody in the world.

Stuckey also worked hard to promote the pecan. In 1964, he partnered with the Dodge County 4-H to offer a free pecan tree ready for planting to any club member willing to buy a pecan tree. Stuckey's published a pecan growing booklet for participants. 2,000 trees were planted under this "one-for-one" plan. Only the Stuart variety was offered, a favorite of Stuckey's.

By 1960, Stuckey's totaled 115 stores, with 1,000 employees and candy sales of \$5 million. Business was booming and expanding, but Stuckey found that he lacked the infrastructure and human capital to continue managing the growth. He began negotiations with Pet, Inc., a St. Louis-based dairy products company best known for its evaporated milk. On December 14, 1964, Stuckey's sold out to PET

Continued on Page 63, See Stuckey's

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Stuckey's, Continued from Page 62

for \$15 million. The merger included the Stuckey candy factory and trucking operation, the right to expand new Stuckey's stores and the Texaco gasoline proceeds.

Stuckey became a VP of the Stuckey's Division and during his tenure at PET, the stores grew from 160 to 350 in 45 states and annual profits in the millions - spreading as far west as California and as far north as Vermont. Sadly, Ted Gamble, the CEO of Pet who had negotiated the merger, died unexpectedly of a heart attack at age 44 in 1969. The new CEO did not understand the value of the roadside brand, and

the management of Stuckey's began to change for the worse. In 1970, Stuckey took early retirement and left his position. Stuckey's did not fare well after its founder's departure. Stuckey's became more corporate-focused and much less personal. The solidly built, people-oriented Stuckey's began to tear apart at the seams.

External events hurt the business as well. Inflation and the Arab Oil embargo of 1973 sharply curtailed gasoline sales and long-distance travel - greatly affected the roadside tourism business. W.S. Stuckey, who loved to work, was not happy with retirement, although he enjoyed traveling the world with Ethel and spending time with his seven grandchildren. His health was failing, though and he passed away on January 6, 1977 of a brain aneurism. That same year, Illinois Central Industries, a Chicago conglomerate, bought PET and began to close company-owned Stuckey's stores across the country. Largely neglected by the new ownership, the number of Stuckey's plummeted to 75. This move ushered in a dark period for Stuckey's when former locations became eyesores on the side of the road and converted to porn shops and poker lounges. It appeared that the once dominant force on America's highways was destined for obscurity unless drastic changes were made.

Next Issue, August 2021: Roadside Revival 🍪



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Lemieux Named NPSA Executive Director

Submitted by National Pecan Shellers Association

The National Association of Pecan Shellers (NPSA) recently named Russ Lemieux as the organization's executive director. Lemieux brings more than 35 years of experience in association management. As a chief staff executive he has worked to develop and direct a variety of association programs, including public relations, marketing and branding. For more than 20 years, Lemieux has worked in support of the pecan industry, including a previous tenure in the late 1990s as NPSA's executive director. During that time he established and launched the pecan industry's first marketing, research, and promotion program.

"Virtually any statement related to the health benefits of pecans can be traced to the scientific studies funded by NPSA's marketing and research program which, at the time, was supported by NPSA

member shellers, suppliers and growers across the country," Lemieux said. "While proud of that accomplishment, I am even more proud of the work the association has continued to do to promote pecans to commercial buyers and grow the industry overall."

Today, NPSA's business-to-business marketing activities are supported largely through contributions from the American Pecan Council (APC). NPSA coordinates closely with the APC and the National Pecan Federation on



Russ Lemieux

Continued on Page 65, See Director



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Director, Continued from Page 64

a variety of programs and services including pecan standards and research on cracking and pasteurization technologies, as well as trade issues. NPSA's work also spans a variety of other areas including statistical reporting and benchmarking, food safety and best practices, and assistance on pecan export trade.

"This is both an exciting and challenging time to be working in the pecan industry, and a true privilege to continue to serve the members of NPSA and the industry at large," Lemieux said.

Lemieux also serves as senior vice president of Kellen, one of the world's largest providers of management services to association and trade organizations, specializing in association management, marketing and public relations, government affairs and event management. 🌰

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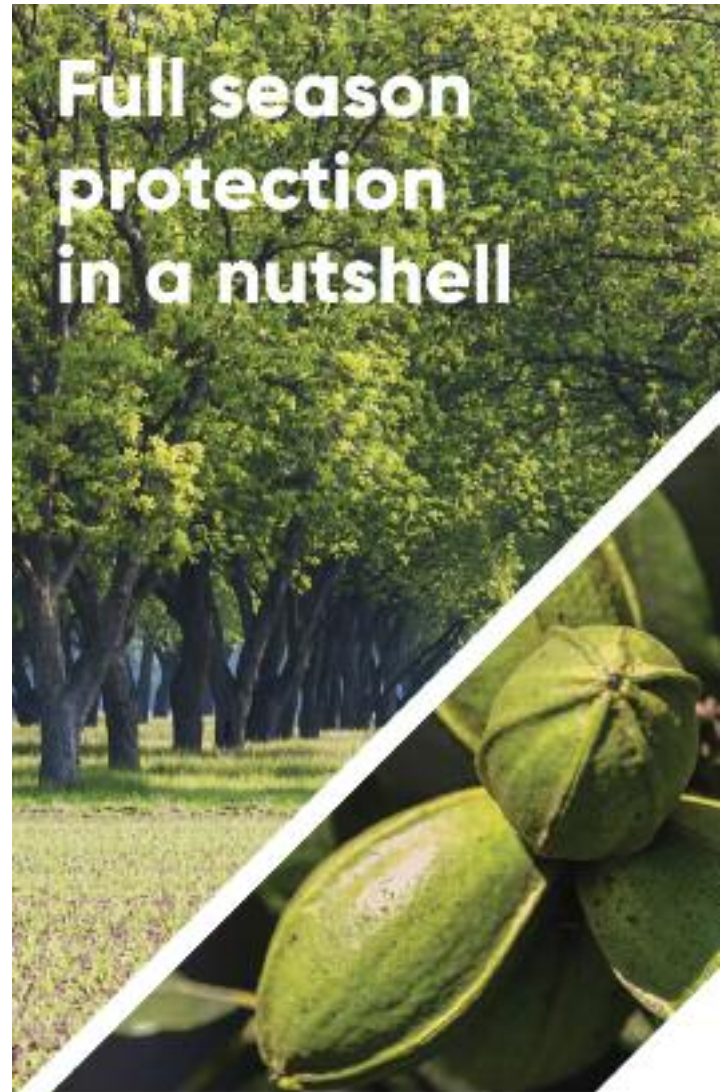
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Hudson Pecan Company.....	Page 63	Vann Farms Pecan Nursery	Page 40
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J.W. Renfroe Pecan Company	Page 51	Walker-Rhodes Tractor Co.....	Page 43
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