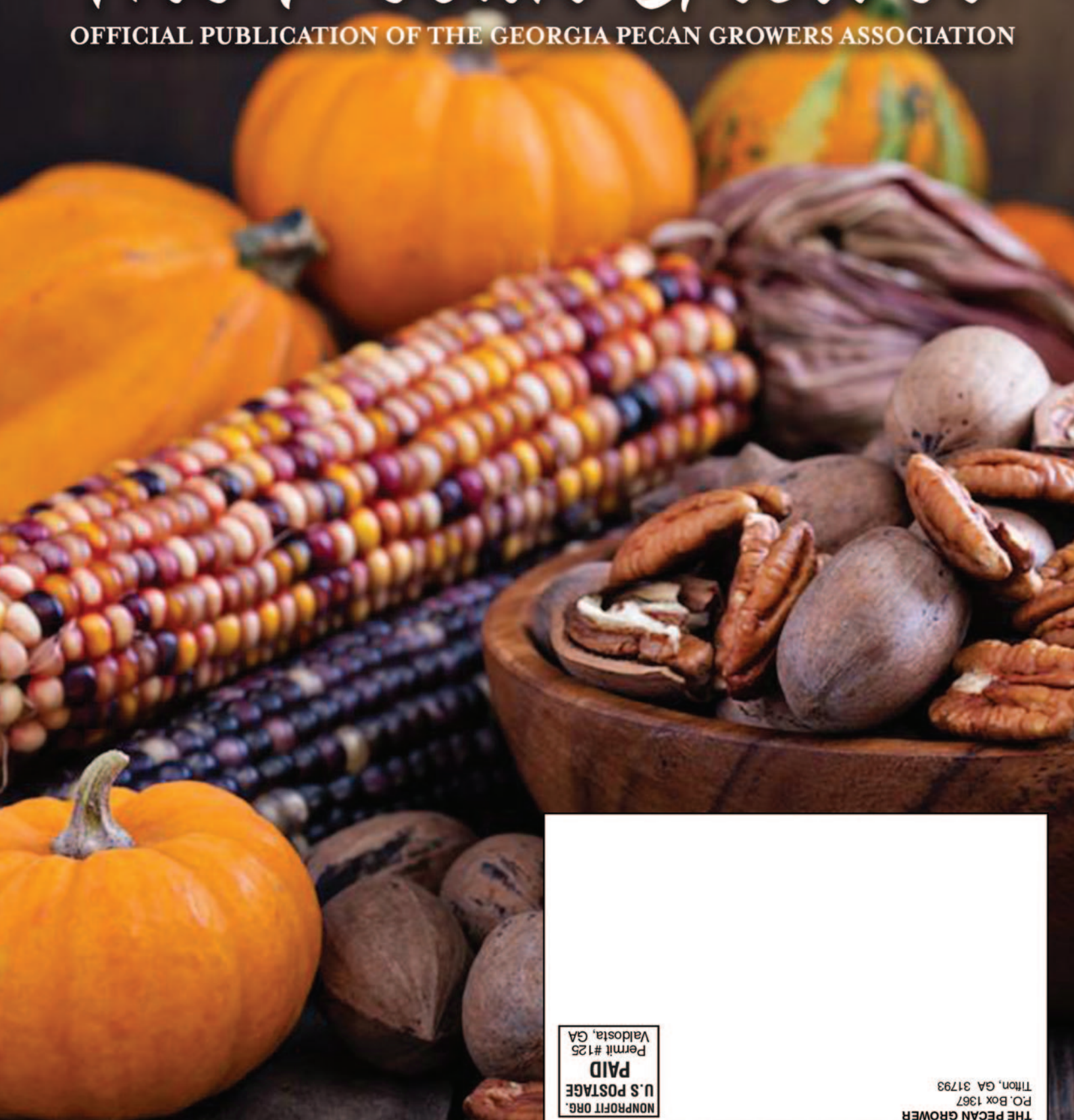


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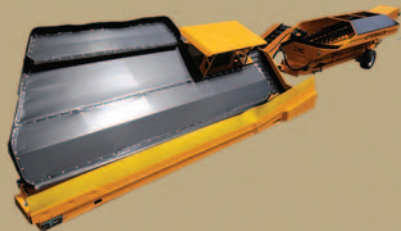


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October 2026

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Perry, GA
- ***October 14-16, 2026***
Global Produce & Floral Show
Orlando, FL
- ***October 20-22, 2026***
Sunbelt Ag Expo
Moultrie, GA

November 2026

- ***November 20, 2026***
Georgia Agribusiness Council
Harvest Celebration
Athens, GA

December 2026

- ***December 6-8, 2026***
Georgia Farm Bureau Conference
Jekyll Island, GA

Fall 2026

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January 2027

- ***January 7-9, 2027***
Southeast Fruit & Vegetable
Savannah, GA

March 2027

- ***March 7-9, 2027***
Western Pecan Conference
Las Cruces, NM

April 2027

- ***April 6-7, 2027***
Georgia Pecan Growers Conference
Perry, GA

EVENTS

IN THIS *Issue*

Association News

- 6 Editor's Letter
- 29 GPGA's Annual Fall Field Day
- 43 Ag Issues Summit Emphasizes Family Farms
- 48 Scout Weesner's Farewell

Expert Advice

- 9 Late Season Leaves
- 14 Why Do We Study Genomes in Agricultural Biology and How Do We Use Them?
- 25 Pecan Production Management Tips
- 46 Southeast Pecan Field Day Comes Full Circle

Industry News

- 30 Pecan Commodity Commission Announces New Appointments
- 31 A New Food Safety Resource for the Pecan Industry
- 36 Pecan Post-Harvest Research Workshop
- 44 National Pecan Federation - *Washington, D.C. Update*
- 49 Lynn Smith Receives 2026 GFB Commodity Award



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Greetings and Farewell!

October marks the beginning of one of the most exciting—and challenging—seasons for pecan growers across Georgia: harvest. After months of planning, pruning, irrigating and carefully monitoring the orchards, the time has finally come to see the results of a year's hard work. This is the season when dedication meets reward and the story of another pecan crop begins to unfold. I am praying for a safe, successful and prosperous harvest season for all of our growers.

This October is also bittersweet for me personally -- as this issue marks my farewell to the Georgia Pecan Growers Association and to the pecan industry in a leadership role.

The past five years with GPGA have been nothing short of extraordinary. When I reflect on my time with the Association, I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities and experiences that have shaped both my career and my life.

From advocating for pecan growers in Washington, D.C., to hosting annual conferences and field days, navigating the challenges brought by hurricanes and other hardships, and welcoming Indian buyers and influencers to Georgia to experience our industry firsthand, I have had the privilege of being part of some truly remarkable moments. I treasure the experiences, lessons, friendships, and memories I have gained through my time at GPGA.

But more than the events, meetings and accomplishments, what I will remember most about GPGA are the people. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to get to know growers not only here in Georgia, but throughout the entire pecan-growing industry. I have grown to care deeply about this industry and the people who make it so special. Your passion, resilience and dedication to agriculture have inspired me more than you will ever know.

Thank you for trusting me with this Association. Thank you for trusting me with your orchards, your concerns, your ideas, your time and your investment. It has truly been an honor to serve you and to work alongside you.

While this may be goodbye to my role at GPGA, it is certainly not goodbye to the friendships and relationships I have built along the way. I will always be cheering for the pecan industry and hoping to see each of you continue to succeed for many years to come.

I also have complete confidence in the GPGA staff and leadership who will continue working on behalf of Georgia's pecan growers. The Association remains in good hands and will continue to be here to support, advocate for and serve our industry.

As I turn the page to a new chapter, I do so with a heart full of gratitude. Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of your story. Serving the Georgia Pecan Growers Association and its members has been one of the greatest privileges of my life.

I wish each of you a successful harvest, prosperous years ahead, and all the very best! 🍂

Best Regards,

Mary Mikelyn Bruorton



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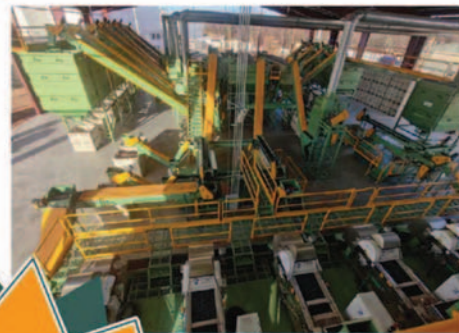
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EXPERT ADVICE

with Dr. Lenny Wells

Extension Horticulturist, University of Georgia

Late Season Leaves

As the pecan season nears its end and the tree's physiology changes, we sometimes see pecan leaves do some strange things. We like to keep pecan leaves healthy and green all the way to the first frost. But sometimes the tree may have a different perspective on things and may respond differently than we would like under certain conditions. When resources get limited for one reason or another late in the season, the health of pecan leaves takes a back seat to the nuts themselves as far as the tree is concerned for kernel filling and beyond.

It is common in dry periods to see leaves begin senescing earlier than we would like -- especially once kernel filling is complete and water uptake by the tree is reduced. This process takes the form of yellowing leaves, usually on lower limbs or shaded limbs, which eventually drop. Most of the time only a small percentage of the foliage is affected. While it may cause concern in the mind of the grower, it is usually not enough to cause any serious issues this late in the season -- as the main job of the leaves is about done.

Throughout much of the year the leaves are functioning to create energy for the tree's maintenance and nut production. Once the crop is made and the nuts have what they need, the tree begins to shuttle any excess leaf nutrients into more long-term storage tissues. You don't want any excessive leaf drop before shaking, but losing a small percentage of leaves in October is not a big deal.

As we get into October, it is normal for chlorophyll in the leaves to break down, revealing the other underlying yellow carotenoid pigments. This is normal. It usually happens gradually and doesn't mean there's anything wrong. In dry falls, it tends to occur earlier, especially once the water is turned off.

Sometimes we will see other forms of leaf yellowing that begin to occur just when the tree's physiology shifts around the time of kernel filling. This year I had several calls about leaves yellowing on the edges and showing the typical symptoms of magnesium (Mg) deficiency in mid to late August. That

Continued on Page 10, See Leaves



Leaves, Continued from Page 9

shift in the tree's physiology should be taken into account anytime there are changes in the leaves at that time of year. When kernel filling begins there is a rapid influx of nutrients to the kernels fueling the accumulation of oils, proteins, and sugars required for the kernel's development. At the same time, the tree's uptake of many of these nutrients from the soil slows down. The rapid shuttling of nutrients from the leaves to the kernel begins to outpace uptake, occurring faster than they can be replaced in the leaves.

This often leads to temporary deficiencies that show up in the leaves. Magnesium is one of the most common nutrients associated with this deficiency; however, as long as your soil pH is around 6.0 or higher, soil Mg levels are in sufficient range, and your leaf Mg was adequate in the July 7-Aug 7 sampling period, it is likely nothing of concern. This should correct itself on its own the following spring once uptake begins again. If not - or if you have one of the previously mentioned issues - you may have to look deeper.

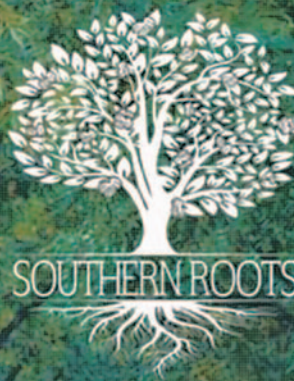
The leaf sufficiency range for Mg is 0.35-0.6. The biggest factors limiting uptake of Mg from the soil are low soil pH, high soil potassium (K) levels, and the calcium (Ca):Mg ratio in the soil. Unfortunately, it is fairly easy for any of these things to get out of whack in orchards grown in the Southeastern U.S.

In orchards where a heavy application of K is needed and soil Mg is marginal, Mg should also be applied to offset the negative effects of K on Mg uptake.

Continued on Page 12, See Leaves



Figure 1. Pecan leaf yellowing in October due to normal leaf senescence and the breakdown of chlorophyll in the leaf.



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Leaves Continued from Page 10

Otherwise, correction of the K deficiency can come at the expense of inducing a Mg deficiency. Likewise, heavy applications of Mg in the absence of sufficient soil K (125 lbs./acre) can also induce a K deficiency.

Magnesium uptake by pecan roots decreases as the Ca:Mg ratio in the soil increases. This occurs on southeastern soils most often when calcitic lime is used to adjust pH rather than dolomitic lime. For this reason, calcitic lime should only be used when leaf Mg is 0.45% or greater. In our acidic soils, Mg deficiency can occur because when pH gets too low, Mg leaches from the soil. Dolomitic lime, which most growers use, solves both the pH and the Mg issue.



Figure 2. Magnesium deficiency on pecan foliage.
Note Christmas tree shaped pattern on leaf.

When dolomitic lime is used to adjust pH, leaf Mg is usually increased the 2nd season following application. Other than dolomitic lime, magnesium sulfate and sulfate of potash-magnesia are common fertilizer sources of Mg. Do not use sulfate of potash magnesia when soil K is already adequate. The additional K will further suppress Mg uptake in the manner described above. Foliar sprays with Mg sulfate can be useful for a temporary Mg supplement. However, this should only occur in April and May while foliage is tender or during a late season growth flush on the tree, usually in July. This tactic is best employed when soil pH is 6.0 or above and liming is not called for.



In most cases these late season temporary deficiencies should not be cause for much alarm. Sometimes they are a natural occurrence and sometimes they are indicative of a problem. They can, however, be an indication that you need to take a close look at your leaf and soil samples and manage your soil and trees accordingly to head off any future problems. 🌰

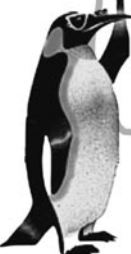
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Why Do We Study Genomes in Agricultural Biology and How Do We Use Them?

By Dr. Karl C. Fetter, USDA Agriculture Research Service,
Southeastern Fruit & Tree Nut Research Station, Byron, GA, USA 31008

Recently, the Southern Hills Orchards hosted the Georgia Pecan Growers Association's 2026 Fall Field Day at their orchards in Leesburg. The field day was a valuable opportunity to view the precision that Southern Hills Orchards has taken to their growing operation and to learn from several scientific leaders in pecan agricultural biology. During the visit I had the opportunity to speak with many growers and industry partners about the work my lab does to support pecan growers using genomic technologies. It quickly became apparent that while many folks are interested in the work, they might not be aware of how genomics can be applied in our industry and why it's useful.

Thus, I wanted to take the opportunity to answer basic questions pecan growers may have, namely, why do we study genomes in agricultural biology and how do we use them?

If you're short on time, I'll give you the answer upfront: a genome provides a road map to the location and type of genes and numerous structural and regulatory elements in a genome, enabling researchers to develop targeted experiments to study gene function.

A genome is, in a sense, a high-resolution road map to an organism's genetic make-up. Without the road map, you can still go on a trip and discover new places, but the map allows you to be more efficient during your travels and to understand the geography of a place.

Continued on Page 16, See Why



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Why, Continued from Page 14

To be more precise, a genome is the totality of genetic and non-genetic information that is used by an organism to synthesize proteins that do work. Many readers will remember that genetic information is encoded by four base pairs (A, G, T, or C), a genetic code corresponding to the molecules that form DNA. Base pairs are strung together in long succession and wound by proteins to form chromosomes in higher organisms but also form long rings, called plasmids, in bacteria and organelles.

Interestingly, mitochondria and chloroplasts have their own separate genomes, which are small plasmids encoding proteins for their specific functions. In eukaryotes (such as aphids or fungi), genomes are organized into a discrete number of chromosomes which frequently have genetic elements like centromeres (where spindle fibers attach during cell

division), telomeres to cap the ends of chromosomes, and regions of chromatin rich in genes, regula-

tory elements and transposable elements. Non-genetic factors are important too, particularly for regulating how and when a gene is expressed. Non-genetic factors (termed epigenetics in scientific literature) can be inherited and modified like DNA, but through different mechanisms.

At this point, you may be wondering how scientists obtain a genome and how genes are identified and their functions understood? Since the publication of the human genome in 2001, genomic technologies have rapidly transformed from the massive industrial-scientific operation that was the Human Genome Project (the project cost \$2.7 billion and involved over 200 laboratories) into a routine afternoon task carried out on a benchtop costing about \$1,000 to \$3,000 depending on various biological factors.

At the Southeastern Fruit and Tree Nut Research Station in Byron, we utilize genome sequencers to create high-quality long read sequences. These sequencers can handle any form of nucleic acid, including DNA or

Continued on Page 18, See Why

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Why, Continued from Page 16

RNA, from any organisms or microbe, and provide non-genetic information as well.

To further demystify the genome sequencing process, I'll outline the path a researcher takes from tissue to assembled genome. To start, tissue is collected (e.g. a young leaf or a whole insect) and frozen in liquid nitrogen to -200 C° . The frozen tissue is disrupted with a mortar and pestle until it is a fine powder and the nuclei containing the DNA are released from cells. Plants have rigid cell walls that complicate tissue lysis, and insects have their own challenges. The disrupted tissue is mixed with hot tissue lysis buffer (which is essentially dish detergent) for a number of hours. Detergent causes cells to expand and cell membranes to rupture, further releasing DNA, RNA, proteins and other molecules. The soup of DNA and molecules are purified through a series of steps designed to isolate DNA from other molecules, and DNA is purified with a series of alcohol washes.

After DNA is isolated, a series of steps are taken to prepare the DNA into a library which is loaded on a sequencer. The metaphor of the library is used, if you consider each chromosome to be a book, and the books form a library, which is the genome. To read a book, the information needs to be written in a language you can understand, you need an index, page numbers, chapters, etc.

Similarly for genome sequencing, the scientist must prepare the DNA into a library that can be read by a sequencer. The choice of library preparation method is wholly determined by the goal of the project and the sequencers available. In the workflows used in my lab, DNA is chopped up into 20 kilobase fragments (that is, fragments of DNA 20,000 base pairs long) and combined with index barcodes into large circular rings of DNA. The library, now in the form of a large ring of DNA, is loaded onto a flow cell and placed into the sequencer.

Continued on Page 20, See Why

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Why, Continued from Page 18

On the flow cell, a specialized protein builds an exact copy of the DNA stand by sequencing one base at a time using fluorescently labelled base pairs. When the labelled base pairs are joined together, they release a tiny flash of light that is detected by a camera in the sequencer. Recording these flashes of light in real time allows the system to accurately record the DNA into a simple (but very large) text file. Although sequencing technologies change rapidly, the core approach remains the same: to build a sequence by identifying one base pair at a time while generating millions (and sometimes billions) of sequence reads.

After DNA is sequenced, the researcher will then have gigabytes of read data to work with, so much data in fact, that personal computers don't have enough memory or CPU power to analyze it. At the USDA, our high-performance computing environment is called SciNet (<https://scinet.usda.gov/>) and is composed of several computing clusters located throughout the country. On SciNet, we can run programs, unattended for days or weeks, and process large amounts of data efficiently in a professionally maintained computing environment.

To assemble a genome, the millions of sequence reads are compared to another, randomly at first, to find overlapping regions where the same piece of DNA was sequenced more than once. Algorithms have been created to rapidly find overlapping reads which assemble into contiguous sequences. This approach to genome assembly is somewhat akin to building a house from Lin-

coln Logs. If you remember Lincoln Logs toys, each piece is fairly small (a few inches at most) and the pieces vary in size and purpose. Each log has a notch that fits to another log. After overlapping and notching many logs together, in our example millions of logs, a house is constructed.

Once the genome assembly is complete, it is nothing more than a long string of A, T, G or C in a text file. To make the assembly useful, genes and regulatory elements must be discovered and annotated in the genome, otherwise, the assembly is a featureless text file of limited utility.

Genome annotation is a complex and rapidly evolving field and there are many approaches one could take. One of the best supported approaches is to take existing gene models and compare them to new genome assembly. By comparing like with like, a set of gene model predictions are constructed, and then statistically validated, by, for example, comparing features from real genes to the predicted genes. Genome annotation is a

Continued on Page 22, See Why



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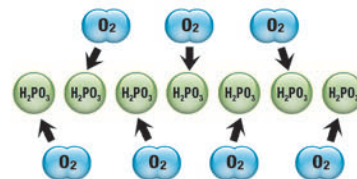
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Why, Continued from Page 20

field of inquiry at the very cutting edge of science and an area of rapid development.

Now, you may be asking, when does the fun start? When can we use the genome in an experiment? After the genome is sequenced, assembled, and annotated, it is ready to use. Because a genome is a precise catalog of all the genes in an organism, they can be used to discover gene function. Researchers often want to understand gene function, as they give us clues about how an organism responds to its environment. For example, if an aphid evolves resistance to a pesticide, it is very likely that a mutation in a gene arose and spread throughout a population. By finding genes that confer resistance to a pesticide, we can develop new strategies to counter the resistance.

In my lab, research has been focused on sequencing aphid genomes, in particular, the yellow pecan aphid (*Monelliopsis pecanis*), the black pecan aphid (*Melanocallis caryaefoliae*), and the blackmargined aphid (*Monellia caryella*). Colonies of these aphids are

maintained by Dr. Ted Cottrell (USDA ARS) in Byron. We sequenced the genomes with a combination of long-read technologies to obtain high-depth and high-quality genome assemblies.

The yellow pecan aphid genome assembled the best and is the focus of current research in the lab. The yellow pecan aphid genome assembled into six chromosomes (humans have 23 autosomal chromosomes for comparison) and is 509 million bases large (the human genome is about 3 billion bases). In comparison to other insects, the yellow pecan aphid has high genetic diversity.

An important finding from the research is how transposable elements regulate genetic diversity. Transposable elements are similar to viruses and they live inside a genome. Similar to viruses, transposable elements carry their own replication machinery and jump around a genome. Sometimes they suppress genetic diversity or carry functional genes with them as they jump. We characterized these patterns and demonstrated how transpos-

Continued on Page 24, See Why

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able elements suppress genetic diversity in some regions.

Upcoming experiments in the lab will utilize the genome to focus on discovering gene functions in aphids. One upcoming experiment, to be carried out in the Fall, will enable us to discover genes in the black pecan aphid that enable it to elicit chlorotic feeding zones on pecan leaves. This experiment is designed around a differential gene expression experiment. We will take Sumner cultivars and allow the black pecan aphid and the yellow pecan aphid to feed on them for a set number of hours. At regular intervals, we will collect aphids to sequence their RNA, which is the expressed form of DNA that is translated into proteins.

By sequencing the RNA, we can discover secreted proteins and compare lists of proteins secreted by the black pecan aphid that are absent in the yellow pecan aphid. This information is likely critical for understanding the development of chlorotic lesions on pecan cultivars, giving us clues for future management practices.

I hope I have been able to de-mystify genomic technologies and their application in agricultural biology. The field of genomics is rapidly evolving, pushed by advances in medicine, biotechnology, and agriculture. Genomics is at its core, a fundamental science, but there are numerous applications that benefit growers and post-production operators. At USDA ARS Byron we are pushing the envelope of agricultural genomics, and we are excited about upcoming experiments to discover gene function in aphids. 🌰

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- 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

November

- Harvest early for top quality and price
- Don't allow pecans to lie on ground for extended period of time
- Market crop
- Prepare site for new planting
- Collect and stratify nuts for planting
- Prevent damage to crop from nuisance wildlife

December

- Continue harvest and marketing of crop if not complete
- Prune and train trees
- Lime, zinc, phosphorous and magnesium may be applied
- Remove debris
- Plant trees
- Service and repair equipment
- Thin overcrowded orchards
- Soil test
- Dig nursery trees

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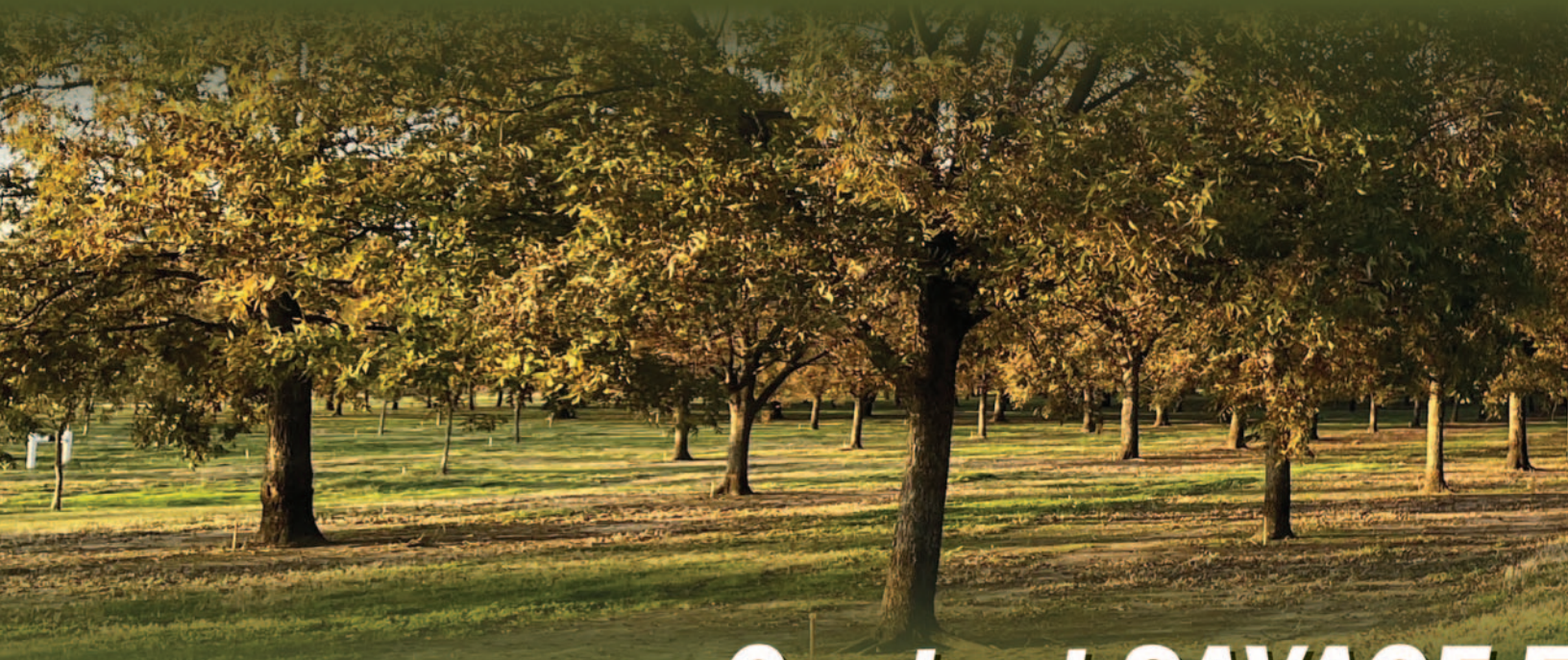
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GPGA'S ANNUAL

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

The Georgia Pecan Growers Association (GPGA) hosted its annual Fall Field Day at Southern Hills Orchard in Leesburg on September 4, welcoming more than 250 growers and industry partners from across the region. The event provided attendees with an opportunity to hear the latest research and recommendations from University of Georgia and USDA Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) specialists on pest and disease management, pecan breeding and orchard production practices.

The orchard tour also offered a unique opportunity for attendees to get a firsthand look at the planning, development and management of Southern Hills as a relatively new pecan operation. With the orchard first planted in 2019, grow-



ers were able to see how the operation has developed in just a few years and learn more about the management decisions and practices that have shaped its growth.

After kicking off the morning with a welcome from GPGA Executive Director Mary Mikelyn Bruorton and Southern Hills General Manager Eric Miller, GPGA divided attendees into three groups and rotated each group among three stops in the orchard. Dr. Lenny Wells from UGA led a discussion on irri-



FALL FIELD DAY



Eric Miller and Brad Sorenson of Southern Hills Orchard led the discussion at one of the orchard tour stops, sharing insight into the operation's management practices, long-term goals and outlook while answering questions from attendees.

Each attendee also received a field day notebook containing information and resources from the day's presentations as a reference source. The field day concluded with lunch provided through the generous support of GPGA sponsors.

This day wouldn't be possible without our hosts, sponsors, attendees, and staff. GPGA would like to thank everyone who helped make 2026 Fall Field Day a success! 🍌

gation and fertilizer recommendations, as well as hedging recommendations and fielded questions from the groups. Dr. Clemen Oliveira, also from UGA, presented research on pecan scab disease. Dr Ted Cottrell from USDA-ARS Byron presented research on pecan aphid management, other pests, and obscure scale detection. Dr Apurba Barma of UGA led discussion on hickory shuckworm, prionus root borer, mites, and bacterial leaf scorch.



Pecan Commodity Commission Announces New Appointments

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

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper recently announced new appointments to Georgia's Agricultural Commodity Commissions. Members appointed to the commissions serve three-year terms and may be reappointed for additional terms. Georgia's commodity commissions collect producer assessments, as authorized under each commodity's marketing order, to support industry research, education and promotional efforts.

For the Georgia Pecan Commodity Commission, Scott Hudson and Justin Jones were appointed as new members, joining current commission members Arren Moses, Jena Ellis Wright and Brenda Evans. Will Easterlin, Cason Anderson and Trent Mason were appointed to serve as advisory members.

The Commission selected Arren Moses to serve as Chair and Jena Ellis Wright to serve as Vice-Chair, providing leadership for the group.

Appointments to Georgia's Agricultural Commodity Commissions are made by the Ex-officio Committee, which includes Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler J. Harper; Georgia Farm Bureau President Tom McCall; Russ Moon, an appointee of the Georgia Senate Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs; and Wes Shannon, an appointee of the Georgia House Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs. 🌰



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A New Food Safety Resource for the Pecan Industry



By Anne Warden, CEO of American Pecan Council & American Pecan Promotion Board

Food safety touches every part of the pecan industry. From the orchard and processing facilities to consumer tables, each step plays an important role in delivering a safe, high-quality product.

The American Pecan Council has listened to your feedback around this key issue and have partnered with Knowledge Anywhere to create a new centralized food safety platform to put useful, science-based resources in one place for members of our industry. Our goal is to make food safety education more accessible at every point along the supply chain, because we know food safety is most effective when our industry is proactive.

The new platform, now available at: <https://apc.knowledgeanywhere.com/> will provide

growers, shellers and processors access to easy-to-use tools and information that help strengthen food safety practices across operations of all sizes. Educational resources will range from foundational topics such as food safety culture and sanitation to guidance on the recall process and more.

The platform is designed to be a resource you can return to, whether you're looking to build a stronger food safety program, train employees, refresh your knowledge or simply find answers to food safety questions.

APC is also developing pecan-specific courses and resources created specifically for our industry, from orchard to table. These materials will focus on the unique

Continued on Page 32, See New



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New, Continued from Page 31

needs and priorities of the pecan supply chain, helping make food safety education more relevant and actionable for the people who work in it every day. We believe having the right knowledge and tools in place will help operations identify potential risks, reinforce good practices and build a stronger food safety culture before an issue requires a response.

Your feedback will help shape what comes next on this exciting platform, ensuring that the initiative remains useful as regulations, practices and priorities change. Once you've had a chance to view the materials on our platform, we'd love to hear from you about new types of content and expanded resources in this category as your needs evolve.

To Access:

Food safety starts with knowledge and we're proud to be facilitating this initiative. Keep an eye on AmericanPecan.com and your inbox for the launch announcement, and you will receive a registration link and code

to get started. If you have not received an invite and/or have questions or feedback regarding the new learning resources available, feel free to reach us at industry@americanpecans.com

About the APC

The American Pecan Council was founded in 2016 and comprised of pecan growers and shellers. APC's mission promotes the benefits of the American Pecan to build consumer demand, develop markets and establish industry standards. 🌰

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Pecan Post-Harvest Research Workshop

By Amanda Snyder, Community Engagement Specialist with UGA College Engineering

The University of Georgia College of Engineering hosted the annual pecan post-harvest processing workshop in collaboration with USDA-ARS and Fort Valley State University on August 19-20 at the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education and Hotel.. Nearly 120 participants filled the workshop meeting space, making it the largest attended since its inception in 2022. Stakeholders from across the southern U.S. and Mexico, along with new attendees from Chicago and Massachusetts, traveled to Athens, GA, for this year's event. The workshop commenced with a special appearance by the Louisiana Pecan Festival Queen, Sarah Brown.

During the welcome reception, Bailey Segars, Senior Manager of Industry Relations for the American Pecan Council (APC) and the American Pecan Promotion Board (APPB), shared updates on the Unified Pecan Promotion Plan, including targeted marketing efforts and a new growers toolkit that includes updated nutrition fact sheets and labels available for free download for industry use. The APPB also offers digital consultations and best practices for effective marketing, including product photoshoots for e-commerce and on-line initiatives.

Research team leaders from the USDA-ARS, the University of Georgia, and Fort Valley State University



also welcomed attendees. The team announced that Dr. Ted Cottrell has been appointed as Acting Research Leader of the USDA-ARS Fruit and Nut Tree Research Station in Byron, Georgia.

The second day of the workshop launched into research updates from the University of Georgia's Manufacturing Living Labs, USDA-ARS Fruit and Tree Nut researchers and Fort Valley State's Agricultural Engineering team.

Continued on Page 37, See Workshop

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The University of Georgia Manufacturing Living Labs (UGA MLL) shared presentations on conditioning, enhancements in cracking technology, and research to improve the shelling process. William McConnell, a graduate student researcher, noted that using negative pressure to condition pecans increases the targeted moisture content 20 to 25 times faster and incurs energy costs of less than 1/100 of a percent per batch at 1 atm and 25°C.

The UGA MLL team has also been evaluating two different cracking machines to determine the ideal parameter settings for increasing pecan half-yield, including the JC cracker, a high-speed machine designed for faster throughput when cracking pecans, walnuts, and pistachios, and the Meyer cracker, a smaller and more economical end-to-end option ideal for smaller-scale shellers. Claire Floyd shared that the recommended settings for both machines and the results are available on this year's workshop webpage:

<https://pecanresearch.uga.edu/2026-workshop/>

Beni Rodriguez, an undergraduate student researcher, mentioned that the cracking team observed potential changes in shelled pecans based on the age of the pecan batch being processed. As a result, they conducted a research study and found that increased storage age of harvested pecans significantly decreases half-yield output by fifteen percent. The main takeaway is that pecans should be processed promptly, and proper refrigeration is important to maintain quality.

Dr. Seyed Alireza Vaezi, a postdoctoral researcher at UGA, presented on computer vision technology to enhance existing cracking and shelling machinery. In recent years, advancements in camera technology have significantly enhanced computer vision capabilities, improving accuracy while reducing implementation costs. The UGA MLL team added hardware and integrated GigE network cameras with high-intensity lighting to rapidly capture images of the entire pecan shelling

Continued on Page 38, See Workshop

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Workshop, Continued from Page 37

process. Hunter Halloran, Senior Research Engineer, Dr. Alireza, and student teams trained their models with over 2,400 labeled images across 1,100 augmented samples using a YOLO Ultralytics framework. The computer vision model has been trained across four key categories: intact halves, kernel pieces, shell pieces, and occluded images. The model also provides instant calculations of half-to-full yield ratios, serving as a live metric for process optimization. Additionally, the model can identify crack quality, including categories such as damaged, circumferential, cracked, longitudinal, open, and uncracked. Images are recorded at 10.1 milliseconds per image. Further details on the computer vision models are available on the 2026 pecan post-harvest research website.

Doctoral students Bruna Karoline Valiate and Ayoub Heydarzade presented their research on smart processing and multi-state experiments focused on industry workflow. Their research focuses on improving production, maximizing half-kernel yield, minimizing kernel loss, tracking and monitoring stick tights, and developing models to predict half-kernel yields and discharge throughput. One key finding is that conducting these research experiments at the University of Georgia's Manufacturing Living Labs saves each pecan producer over \$226,000 in time, effort, energy, and supplies compared to conducting their own independent research to determine optimal conditions for increasing

throughput and final kernel half-yield results.

Researchers from Fort Valley State University's Food Engineering Laboratory focused on innovative technologies to enhance pecan food safety. Dr. Rabin Gyawali studied how lactic acid and blue light can reduce pathogens such as *Salmonella* spp. and *Listeria monocytogenes*. Research results suggest that a 1% concentration of lactic acid significantly reduces microbial contamination on processed pecans, while blue light provides only a modest reduction of pathogens. The FVSU team also evaluated potential negative impacts

Continued on Page 39, See Workshop

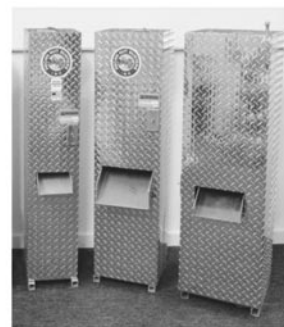
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Workshop, Continued from Page 38

on pecan kernel quality, including reduced texture and kernel darkening. Lactic acid showed no adverse effects; however, prolonged blue light exposure slightly darkened kernels, although the color remained within commercial standards.

Future trials will combine methods to enhance food safety, such as integrating blue light with various photosensitizer compounds, applying sonication to in-shell pecans, utilizing pulsed light systems, and using gaseous chlorine dioxide (ClO₂) to reduce aflatoxin levels in pecan kernels.

Scientists at the USDA-ARS Fruit and Tree Nut Station in Byron, GA, presented various research projects aimed at enhancing food safety for pecans and extending their shelf life. Dr. Cameron Bardsley shared findings from their team's work comparing X-ray treatments and E-beam treatments designed to reduce pathogen contamination while maintaining kernel quality. Additionally, they have investigated the use of pulsed ultraviolet light to target and reduce pathogens such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella*.

Dr. Xiuxiu Sun, the lead research scientist for pecan studies, presented the results of trials that investigated natural, food-safe compounds, edible coatings, and techniques designed to extend storage life, prevent pathogen contamination, and reduce kernel oxidation and rancidity after processing. The team explored various materials, including chitosan, essential oils, methyl-

Continued on Page 40, See Workshop



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Workshop, Continued from Page 39

cellulose, amylose inclusion complexes, and wax coatings, to determine their beneficial properties for enhancing kernel storage. Additionally, advancements in packaging provide extra protection during storage. The team also studied the effects of temperature on pecan oil pressing and determined that pressing pecans at 70°C achieved a balance between yield efficiency and minimal impact on oil quality.

Other ongoing projects at the Byron Station include exploring additional coating methods, modified atmosphere packaging, new pecan products such as pecan flour and pecan beverages, and opportunities to utilize pecan byproducts.

USDA Food Technologist Kaicie Chasteen-Ko presented results chlorine dioxide treatments to reduce foodborne pathogens while maintaining nut quality. The research indicated that higher levels of chlorine dioxide are necessary to effectively suppress pathogens. However, this increased dosage negatively affected kernel

quality by raising the nut peroxide values, which in turn impacts flavor.

USDA Research Scientist Samantha Sherman presented her research on the quality characteristics of pecans from varieties grown in Georgia and Texas, as well as newly crossed varieties intended to enhance beneficial properties. The study compared several factors, including kernel firmness, oxidative stability, oil yield, microbial resistance, pathogen reduction, shelf life, quality retention, total polyphenol content, nutritional quality, flavor, and optimal harvest maturity. Specific results are available on the workshop webpage. Several newly crossed varieties show significant potential for increased profitability, particularly in specialty and health food markets.

After the morning presentations, we transitioned to the lunch presentations. Blair Krebs, Executive Director of the National Pecan Shellers Association (NPSA), emphasized the significant impact of industry-supported

Continued on Page 41, See Workshop



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Tree Shakers service, sales, parts

Workshop, Continued from Page 40

research. Through efforts of the National Pecan Federation the industry has secured approximately \$27.5 million in research funding. This funding supports advancements in pecan processing, food safety, breeding programs, and post-harvest research.

Eric Lyddy from Modern Electronics and Equipment discussed their research collaboration with the University of Georgia aimed at improving the design of pecan shellers. By partnering with Dr. Beshoy Morkos and his research team at UGA, they have successfully increased the percentage of pecan halves while also enhancing processing throughput. Field tests conducted in commercial shelling plants demonstrated increases of up to 13% in the yield of pecan halves, with production rates exceeding 2,000 pounds per hour.

Adam Harrell, Gustavo Ponce, and Hari Manohar presented on how Southern Roots Nut Company has been implementing artificial intelligence (AI) and programmable logic controllers (PLCs). Adam discussed how these new techniques are transforming pecan processing operations. The introduction of AI-powered sorting systems has significantly reduced the need for manual sorting, decreasing labor costs by more than 30% while enhancing product quality and efficiency. Southern Roots Nut Company has integrated sensors, automated controls, and real-time data collection throughout its shelling facilities to optimize plant throughput, reduce bottlenecks, and automate key processes. The company is also researching precise moisture management and drying systems to maximize kernel quality, reduce breakage, and minimize product loss. Hari further highlighted AI's growing role in food safety and quality assurance.

After lunch, attendees headed to the UGA I-STEM building for research demonstrations. Dr. Beshoy Morkos and Senior Research Engineer Hunter Halloran demonstrated how motors, sensors, cameras, feedback controllers, AI, and machine learning have been integrated into the existing pecan cracking and shelling sys-

Continued on Page 42, See Workshop

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Workshop, Continued from Page 41

tem to improve production. Doctoral research students Aiyana Mozaffar and Mozhdeh Rahmanpour presented a video on the use of negative pressure for conditioning pecans prior to cracking. Dr. Seyed Alireza Vaezi delivered an interactive presentation on the application of computer vision for evaluating pecan cracking. Dr. Xiuxiu Sun, along with Research Scientists Samantha Sherman and Kaicie Chasteen-Ko, presented on the use of waxes, coatings, and packaging to enhance pecan food safety and storage. Dr. Cameron Bardsley and Dr. Ajit Mahapatra demonstrated Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) and Cold Atmospheric Plasma (CAP) treatments for pathogen reduction.

The workshop concluded with a feedback session on industry research needs. One request was for the UGA team to include other pecan varieties in their research studies. Currently, the team has been using Desirable pecans as the standard variety for setting parameters and training the AI models, but plans are to

incorporate other varieties once the models have been trained with a robust data set. The UGA team also plans to host hands-on training workshops on computer vision, and techniques we have integrated into the shelling system. Additionally, the UGA Manufacturing Living Labs will be moving into a new space in the coming months, which will provide more floor space to expand research on various shelling machinery. The team is also collecting feedback from stakeholders regarding industry research needs at: <https://forms.gle/qDmVmB-dTJPGNXaum9>.

We always welcome industry to reach out to us, and we hope to see you at our future workshops. 🌰



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Ag Issues Summit Emphasizes Family Farms

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

Senator Russ Goodman (R–Cogdell), chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee and Representative Robert Dickey (R–Musella), chairman of the House Agriculture and Consumer Affairs Committee, hosted the annual Joint Ag Issues Summit on Thursday, August 20th at the Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter in Perry, Georgia. This yearly event closes out Georgia’s summer harvest season while bringing together lawmakers, agriculture leaders and members of Georgia’s agriculture community to discuss the issues shaping the future of the state’s number one economic sector.

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper began the programming by providing updates on several issues affecting the state’s agricultural community, including Block Grant funding, conservation and emergency management efforts, New World screwworm and recent federal actions. Harper also introduced a discussion on the challenges surrounding generational wealth and the long-term sustainability of Georgia’s family farms.

This year’s summit introduced the Joint Study Committee on the Generational Sustainability of Family Farms, which was established by House resolution during the 2026 legislative session. Senator Goodman and Representative Dickey serve as co-chairs of this committee. Members of this committee served as the panel for the day’s discussions leading the Summit and included Senator Drew Echols (R–Alto), Sen. Freddie Powell Sims (D–Dawson) and Sen. Sam Watson (R–Moultrie); House members, Rep. Jaclyn Ford (R–Tifton), Rep. David Huddleston (R–Roopville) and Rep. Angie O’Steen (R–Ambrose), along with Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Tyler Harper.

Future meetings of the committee are planned across the state, including stops in Rome, Douglas and Athens, to provide additional opportunities for agricultural stakeholders to offer input. Goodman explained that the committee is also examining legislation implemented successfully in other states to address generational sustainability of family farms and considering whether similar measures could be adapted to meet the needs of Georgia producers.



Dr. Stanley Fletcher, a Professor of Policy at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, presented his research at the Summit related to the financial outlook of family farms based on his years of work with peanut farm data. His presentation garnered much discussion amongst the panel members.

Fletcher was followed by Marshall Thomas, President of F&W Forestry, who presented a forecast of the forest markets. Thomas was followed by a team of equipment distributors who were able to present the customer service and diagnostic tools they had developed through a MOU with Georgia Farm Bureau. These distributors included Kubota, AGCO, CNH, John Deere, and Associated Equipment Distributors.

A boxed lunch was provided at no cost for the attendees. During the lunch break, Duncan Johnson, who serves as State Executive Director of Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided a brief update to changes in federal farm programs, followed by closing remarks by Senator Goodman and Representative Dickey to end the early afternoon program and adjourn the event. 🍌





National Pecan Federation Washington, D.C. Update

Robert L. Redding, Jr., The Redding Firm

U.S. District Court Rules on Department of Labor's 2025 Interim Final Rule

On August 25, 2026, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California issued a ruling determining that the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) 2025 Interim Final Rule (IFR), "Adverse Effect Wage Rate Methodology for the Temporary Employment of H-2A Nonimmigrants in Non-Range Occupations in the United States," establishing the current methodology for determining hourly Adverse Effect Wage Rates (AEWRs), is unlawful.

The provisions of the IFR that the court found to be inadequately justified included the previously established two-tier wage structure, the housing adjustment, the transition from using statistics from the Farm Labor Survey to the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics survey, and the requirement to pay workers based on the wage level associated with the duties they perform for the majority of their working time. The court also determined that DOL improperly bypassed the standard notice-and-comment process for most of these changes.

At this time, the court has not determined that backpay is owed, nor are employers required to take any action. Any potential backpay would not necessarily apply retroactively to the entire period of H-2A employment. Instead, the court is currently addressing wages paid during the period between DOL's notice and the imple-

mentation of the new AEWR methodology. Whether backpay will ultimately be required, which workers may qualify, and the amount owed will be determined following the establishment of new AEWRs and through further action by DOL and the federal court.

Additional guidance from DOL is expected to be forthcoming in October.

Canada Announces Counter-Tariffs on Imports from the United States

On August 25, 2026, Canada announced retaliatory tariffs targeting approximately \$20 billion worth of goods imported from the United States in response to recently imposed U.S. tariffs on Canadian imports. *The affected U.S. agricultural products include dairy products, honey, molasses, dough and baking mixes*, which represents more than \$780 million in import value in 2025. Canada's countermeasures took effect on September 8, 2026.

U.S. Department of Agriculture funds

\$2 Million Project to Help U.S. Tree Nut

Producers overcome Barriers to Overseas Trade

On August 24, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's **Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)** an-

Continued on Page 45, See Update

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Update, Continued from Page 44

nounced a \$2 million funding opportunity to support the development of affordable technologies that will help tree nut handlers manage pests and maintain product quality during post-harvest storage. The funding is being provided through the Assisting Specialty Crop Exports (ASCE) Initiative and is part of a broader effort to support specialty crop producers.

As explained in the grant application:

“Objective: Recipients will develop technically and economically viable approaches to verify that low oxygen conditions (less than 1% by volume) in packaging for U.S. tree nuts are maintained and certifiable by third parties. The resulting processes will meet conditions of sale requirements in markets and serve as a basis for establishment of a phytosanitary treatment where other pest mitigation techniques are prohibited, impractical, or expensive, thus increasing market opportunities for U.S. tree nuts. Additional pest management tools and residue-free phytosanitary treatment options for U.S. commodities to access export markets will aid in the development of foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities.”

The deadline to apply is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on October 26, 2026.

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Fails to Advance Farm Bill 2.0

On August 6, 2026, the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry held a markup of the Agricultural Act of 2026, also known as Farm Bill 2.0. The markup began at 9:30 AM and lasted approximately four hours, ultimately ending with the committee failing to advance the bill by a vote of 11–10.

The committee currently consists of 12 Republicans and 11 Democrats. However, due to the absence of Senator Mitch McConnell, Republicans were unable to secure the votes necessary to advance the legislation out of committee. It has been reported that Chairman John Boozman plans to reconvene the committee in hopes of passing the bill before the October Congressional recess.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Implements Changes to the Tree Assistance Program

On July 31, 2026, the U.S. Department of Agriculture published Notice TAP-62, outlining updates to the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) resulting from amendments made under the Working Families Tax Cuts Act, which was enacted on July 4, 2025.

The updates include:

- An increase from 50% to 65% in reimbursement for the cost of pruning, removal, and other costs to salvage existing trees, bushes, or in the case of mortality, to prepare the land for replanting.
- Removing the 15% mortality threshold.
- Applying the 75% exception for adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation.

These updates apply to eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers who experienced qualifying losses on or after January 1, 2026. 🌰



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Southeast Pecan Field Day Comes Full Circle

By Andrew Sawyer, SE Georgia Area Pecan Agent, UGA Extension and Michael Patrick, Grower at Murray Farms

On Wednesday, August 26, 230 pecan growers, industry representatives, county agents and researchers representing 30 counties across Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas gathered in Appling County for the annual Southeast Pecan Field Day. This year's field day was hosted at the farm of Mr. Wilbur Murray, located just south of Surrency. The Southeast Pecan Field Day was established in 2013 through the Appling County Extension Office, making the 2026 event a fitting full-circle moment as the program returned to the Murray farm.

Throughout the day, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension specialists and researchers shared the latest pecan research, production recommendations and practical management strategies with growers.

The purpose of the field day is to allow growers and industry representatives to visit an orchard and observe cultural practices firsthand. Although the event is organized

through UGA Extension, it requires extensive preparation by the host grower and family.

Vendors arrived with tractors and equipment along with pecan growers as early as 8AM. The first stop on the orchard tour was a newly planted site where attendees discussed tight planting, removing trees as they grow and early harvest. Mr. Murray shared with growers his long-term plan for this site describing tree spacing and variety selection. Andrew Sawyer, Area Pecan Agent of Southeast Georgia, shared UGA Extension fertilizer and irrigation recommendations for non-bearing trees. Research has shown that less fertilizer and water may be needed than previously thought.

The second stop was a 20-year-old orchard planted on 30 x 60 spacing with 'Cape Fear' and 'Sumner' varieties. Hedging was discussed as a tool for crop load management, improved fruit quality and better fungicide coverage. Interior-setting varieties respond well to hedging. Under the current domestic market, 1,500 - 2,000 pounds per acre yield is necessary for profit. Pre-emergent herbicide demonstration plots were also shown as a way to reduce spraying and in-season costs.

At the third stop, UGA entomologist Dr. Apurba Barman discussed the latest information on insect control. 'Sumner' is the most susceptible variety to Black

Continued on Page 47, See Circle



Circle, Continued from Page 46

Pecan Aphid and the use of integrated pest management methods reduce insect treatments and costs. Dr. Barman was joined by entomologists from Texas A&M and Mississippi State for a short scout school following the field day in which 20 attended.

Another important topic discussed during the field day was disease management. Higher-yielding cultivars that are less susceptible to disease can be more profitable for growers. The popular 'Excel' variety has been a good producer in Southeast Georgia for many years. However, scab is now present in some of these orchards.

Appling County Agent Will Brown and Andrew Sawyer conducted a scab fungicide study on 'Excel' using three fungicides at different timings. Low-susceptibility cultivars can often be managed for scab with three or fewer fungicide applications. UGA pathologist Dr. Clemen Oliveira also shared information about newly designed On-Farm Scab Susceptible Fungicide trials. Appling County was one location for the trials in 2025 and 2026, with trials being conducted throughout Georgia on varieties more susceptible to scab than 'Excel.'

Following the orchard tour, attendees gathered for lunch provided by Hutto's Catering. Sponsors for the event included Chemical Container of Vidalia, Savage Company of Baconton, Shiloh Farm Nursery of Ray City and Vann Nursery of Baconton. Mary Mikelyn Bruorton with the Georgia Pecan Growers Association and Bailey Segars with the American Pecan Council were in attendance as well to network with growers and welcome attendees. Pecan growers represented between 25,000 and 27,000 acres of pecan at the field day.



For the Murray family, the return of the Southeast Pecan Field Day to their farm was especially meaningful. The Murray farm has approximately 500 acres, with about 165 acres planted in pecan trees. The family's pecan-growing history goes back approximately 130 years. Mr. Murray's grandfather, Nicanor Murray, planted the family's first pecan orchard with 15 seedling trees! Around 40 years ago, Mr. Wilbur Murray planted his first orchard and he has continued planting additional orchards throughout the years. Today, Murray remains involved in the farm and continues to share his knowledge and experience. His wife, Barbara is always ready to lend a hand. His son-in-law, Michael Patrick, now manages much of the orchard operation and makes the day-to-day farming decisions. Kimberly and the children, Cainen, Willow and Paisley also help with the farm. The children even helped with prepping for the field day. Cainen mowed the orchards and Willow and Paisley helped set out the vendor signs around their homeschool schedule. His daughter Miranda was also in attendance for the 2026 field day, making the event a special family occasion.

Thank you to the entire Murray family for hosting the event and for the sponsors who make it possible each year! 🌰

Scout Weesner's Farewell

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

After two memorable years with the Georgia Pecan Growers Association, Scout Weesner is beginning an exciting new chapter in her career as the Public Relations Coordinator at CNI in Leesburg, Georgia. During her time with GPGA, Scout became a valued member of the Association and played an important role in numerous events, programs, and activities. She was instrumental in the planning and coordination of both inbound trade missions hosted by GPGA for Indian buyers, held in December 2025 and April 2026, respectively. She also participated in two Fall Field Days and was crucial to the management and execution of two Annual Conferences. Scout traveled widely in the state, region, and nationally to represent GPGA and worked tirelessly on updating GPGA's social media presence, to name just a few of her many responsibilities.

Scout joined GPGA in June 2024 as a Marketing and Communications Intern while completing her degree at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC). After graduating in December 2024 with a degree in Agricultural Communications, she transitioned into a full-time role with the Association in February 2025. She developed her photography and editing skills while working here, which accounted for several covers of *The Pecan Grower* magazine and numerous pieces used for marketing and promotion.

Throughout her time with GPGA, Scout brought enthusiasm, creativity, and dedication to her work while building relationships with growers, industry partners, and others across Georgia agriculture. In late August, Scout left GPGA to continue her career in agricultural communications with CNI.

Executive Director Mary Mikelyn Bruorton explained, "Scout was such a wonderful addition to our small team and very quickly became my right-hand person for Conference, Field Day, and when traveling. I was thrilled to see how quickly she assumed responsibilities and grew professionally in her position with GPGA and I have no doubt we prepared her well."



Bruorton continued, "GPGA has a long history of attracting and training interns and new graduates for positions in the agricultural industry, which has been mutually beneficial for us both. I hate to be partial, but Scout was definitely one of our favorites, and we hate to see her go but wish her all the best."

GPGA is grateful for the many contributions Scout made during her time with the Association. We wish Scout tremendous success in this next chapter and look forward to seeing all that she accomplishes! 🌰

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Lynn Smith receives 2026 GFB Commodity Award

Courtesy of Georgia Farm Bureau

Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) presented Rep. Lynn Smith its 2026 GFB Commodity Award during the annual GFB Commodity Conference held Aug. 13 at the UGA Tifton Campus Conference Center.

The GFB Commodity Award, one of the organization's highest honors, is given to individuals who have supported and promoted Georgia agriculture. The GFB Board of Directors selects the award recipient from nominees submitted by the organization's commodity advisory committees.

"Lynn always kept the interest of farmers' success in the forefront of policy decision that came before her committee," said GFB President Tom McCall. "Her leadership and passion for Georgia and the state's invaluable and varied natural resources will be carried into the future for generations to come."

A Florida native, Smith is a University of Georgia graduate, a former educator, business owner who completed her 30th year in the Georgia House of Representatives earlier this year representing Georgia District 70.

Since being elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 1996, Smith has been a trusted champion for Georgia's farmers, foresters, and rural communities. She served as chairwoman of the House Natural Resources and Environment Committee beginning in 2005. During her tenure, she led efforts to protect Georgia's natural resources while supporting the continued growth of the state's agricultural economy.

Smith helped establish Georgia's regional water planning framework. Beginning with the Flint River Drought Protection Act and legislation introduced in 2002 and culminating in the successful implementation of regional water planning in 2008, she helped create what she described as "the bridge" that provided state agencies with the tools needed to develop long-term, science-based water management solutions for Georgia's future. During her three decades in the House, she also



Georgia Farm Bureau President Tom McCall, right, and his wife, Jane, left, present Rep. Lynn Smith with the 2026 Georgia Farm Bureau Commodity Award during the organization's annual commodity conference held Aug. 13 in Tifton. (Photo courtesy of Georgia Farm Bureau)

served on the Appropriations, Rules, and Reapportionment committees.

In addition to her service in the Georgia House, Smith served as chair of the Southern Legislative conference Energy and Environment Committee and is a member of the Southern States Energy Board.

After earning her degree from UGA in 1968, Smith worked as a teacher, including a stint at Newnan High School, where she taught French, history and civics. She and her late husband, Charles, were married more than 52 years. A master gardener, Smith lives in Newnan, attends Central Baptist Church and enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren.

Founded in 1937, Georgia Farm Bureau is the state's largest general farm organization and has 158 county offices. Its volunteer members actively participate in local, state and national activities that promote agriculture awareness to their non-farming neighbors. GFB offers its members a wide variety of benefits, including insurance, but enrollment in any of the member benefits is optional and not a requirement for membership.



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ACE.....	Page 23	Renfroe Pecan Company	Page 39
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AMVT (Applied Machine Vision Technologies).....	Page 19	South Georgia Pecan Co.	Page 41
Atlantic Can Company	Page 39	Southern Ag & Insurance Services	Page 20
Avery Crop Insurance.....	Page 44	Southern Roots	Page 10
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Bowsmith	Page 16	Sunsweet Pecan Tree Nurseries	Page 3
Carden & Associates, Inc.....	Page 36	Triangle Chemical Company	Page 17
Clough Pecan Company	Pages 13, 51	Tri-Delta Pecans	Page 32
Chubb Agribusiness	Page 50	TriEst Ag Group	Page 25
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Gillison's.....	Page 14		
Georgia Cold Storage Company	Page 12		
Grosch Drilling	Page 30		
Gulf Coast Bag.....	Page 32		
Holiday Tins & Containers.....	Page 36		
Hudson Pecan Company.....	Page 24		
Merritt Pecan Co.	Page 45		
Moses Pecan.....	Page 37		
Oliver Pecan Company	Page 22		
OMC (Orchard Machinery Corporation)	Page 2		
Pacific Distributing/Orchard Rite	Page 40		
Pecan Nut Busters, Inc.....	Page 38		
Pecan Pro LLC	Page 42		
Plant Food Systems	Page 21		



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