

VIDALIA VEGETABLE NEWS

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VIDALIA ONION FIELD DAY

The annual Vidalia Onion Field Day is scheduled for Thursday April 6, 2006 at the Vidalia Onion and Vegetable Research Center. As in the past, it will be held from 12:00 - 3:00 pm, beginning with a sponsored lunch at noon followed by visits to the field plots. We have a full program of current research projects to present. There will be presentations on weed control, fertility, cultural practices, fungicides, organic onions, and the latest on the putative virus problem.

The Vidalia Farm is located on Hwy 178 about 10 miles south of Lyons. Directions and contact information are attached to this email. I would encourage you to attend if you have onions growing in your county and I would encourage all growers and other allied industries to attend as well.

DEAN VISITS WITH VIDALIA ONION COMMITTEE

At the last meeting of the VOC on March 16th, the Dean was able to come and visit with the growers. Dean Angle shared with the growers his plans for the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. He hopes to increase enrollment by changing the transfer policies, which should help the agricultural industry in Georgia. In addition, he indicated plans to rebuild extension with the hiring of new agents particularly in critical areas such as the onion producing region.

The growers were very support of the Dean's position and are looking forward to working with the University. Later that evening they committed \$6,000.00 to help pay for needed repairs of the controlled atmosphere facility in Tifton.

VIDALIA ONION HARVEST

The onion harvest will be upon us shortly. The growers have met to set an opening date of April 17th, but plenty of onions will be harvested prior to this date. Growers wishing to harvest onions prior to the opening date will have to have Georgia Dept. of Agriculture inspectors physically in their packing sheds. The Dept. has assured growers there will be enough inspectors to handle this eventuality. Based on what I've seen and heard the earliest onions (Japanese overwintering onions) will be harvested the first week of April.

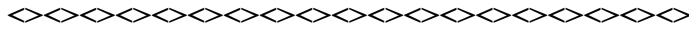
This may be a good time to discuss harvesting onions. The early Japanese material is usually strongly daylength sensitive with tops down early and uniformly. These onions, however, can be left in the field for up to a week after this, weather permitting. They will

continue to increase in size presumably from water uptake. This should help with flavor since larger onions are generally milder. Mid- and late-season onions are not usually as daylength sensitive. Some years the tops go down readily while in others they may continue to be upright. Growers should inspect their fields looking for weakness in the necks and suitable size in the bulbs. They should be particularly cognizant of late season bacterial diseases such as sour skin that can attack the crop as temperatures warm up. Late varieties in particular are susceptible to these diseases. Field curing is best if there is any chance of these bacterial diseases being present. Heat curing should be avoided if there is any bacterial disease present. Heat curing will rapidly spread these diseases throughout the bin ruining the entire load.

FROM MY DESK

We are on the cusp of another season. The onions generally look good, but I have heard of more seedstems showing up every day. I hope this will not be a problem across the belt. Please make every effort to come to the field day and encourage your growers to come as well. It is important for them to see what we're doing and to give us feedback on what they think we should be working on. Attached are directions to the farm and a copy of the program. See you at the field day!

Regards,



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