***The 2012 Georgia Peanut Crop: Will it Break a Yield Record?***

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Following a year in which producers in Georgia planted the fewest acres since 1926 with only 470,000 planted acres in 2011, those same producers turned around and planted over 720,000 acres in 2012. Combine that with very good growing conditions and we go from a year in which the entire peanut industry had very legitimate and serious concerns about running out of peanuts for peanut products into a year in which we may well exceed the "average" carryover of peanuts needed for the domestic and export markets in any one year.

Although the 2012 peanut growing season started out with very dry conditions in the winter and early spring due to the La Nina climatic pattern, frequent summer rain events over most of the Georgia peanut growing region, combined with below normal maximum and minimum temperatures, resulted in more closer to "ideal" growing conditions than we've experienced since the 2003 growing season. In fact, the growing conditions in 2012 are very similar to 2003 and the cultivars we are planting have a better genetic yield potential. If, and this is still a very big "if", we can harvest the 2012 peanut crop in a timely manner, there is a very good chance the record average yield in Georgia (3,560 pounds per acre in 2009) will be broken. I've summarized the maximum and minimum temperatures and rainfall totals for May 1 – September 9, a 132-day period, for 2012 compared to 2003 and a 90-year average for Tifton, GA. Those data are in the following tables.

**Maximum and Minimum Temperatures for 2012 and 2003 in Tifton, GA for May 1 through September 9, a 132-day time period.**

| | 2012 | 2003 | 90-Yr Avg |
|---|---|---|---|
| Avg Maximum Temperature (5/1 – 9/9) | 87.1 | 87.1 | |
| # Days ≥ 95° F | 4 | 0 | |
| # Days ≥ 90° F | 36 | 33 | |
| # Days < 80° F | 8 | 7 | |
| Max Temp | 97.0 | 93.9 | |
| Avg May Max | 85.3 | 84.3 | 84.2 |
| Avg June Max | 86.0 | 87.8 | 88.9 |
| Avg July Max | 90.8 | 88.3 | 90.3 |
| Avg Aug Max | 86.2 | 88.7 | 90.1 |
| | | | |
| Avg Minimum Temperature (5/1 – 9/9) | 68.7 | 69.4 | |
| Avg May Min | 64.2 | 64.9 | 61.5 |
| Avg June Min | 66.8 | 69.4 | 67.8 |
| Avg July Min | 72.0 | 71.4 | 70.2 |
| Avg Aug Min | 70.8 | 72.0 | 69.8 |

**Rainfall Comparisons for 2012 and 2003 in Tifton, GA for May 1 through September 9, a 132-day period.**

| | 2012 | 2003 | 90-Yr Avg |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rainfall Total (132 days) | 30.96 | 26.42 | |
| Avg Rain per Day | 0.23 | 0.20 | |
| Largest Single Rain Event | 5.71 | 1.81 | |
| # Days >0.1 inch | 40 | 39 | |
| # Days >1.0 inch | 8 | 11 | |
| Longest # Days @ 0.0 inch | 8 | 11 | |
| Dates | June 15-22 | May 23 – June 2 | |
| 2nd Longest # Days @ 0.0 inch | | 10 | |
| Dates | 3 times | July 7-16 | |
| | | | |
| May Rain | 3.48 | 1.25 | 3.37 |
| June Rain | 5.23 | 6.51 | 4.46 |
| July Rain | 6.66 | 7.37 | 5.48 |
| August Rain | 13.40 | 8.04 | 4.73 |

In regards to temperature, there were only five times in 2012 that the maximum temperature exceeded the highest recorded in 2003 (93.9). Those were 97 on July 1, 95.9 on June 30, 95.2 on July 26, 95.0 on July 25, and 94.5 on June 29. As you can see those were clustered in a 3-day (June 29 – July 1) and a two-day (July 25 and 26) period.

As far as rainfall events go, even if you disregarded the 5.71 inch rain event on August 8 the rainfall total for the 132-day period in 2012 is close to the 2003 total. In fact, at the Tifton location there was 1.44 inches recorded just prior to midnight on August 7 and the August 8 rain event of 5.71 fell between midnight and 7:00 am, or a total of 7.15 inches in an 8-hour time frame. Some areas around Tifton recorded anywhere from 8 – 11 inches that night and morning.

Weather has played a huge role in placing us where we are on this year's peanut crop. However, I do need to make a few comments about pest problems. Weed control this year has been outstanding when you take the state as a whole. There have been some fields with problems but growers did a very good job with weed management. Insect pressure has been marginal and in most fields, not a problem. The major insect problems have been three-cornered alfalfa hopper season long, tobacco budworm early to middle of the season, and soybean loopers and velvetbean caterpillars late season. Only a small percentage of peanut fields in Georgia reached treatable levels. Diseases were the most common problem with a typical mix of leaf spots and stem rot ("white mold") which are common in wet years.

As of September 10, harvest was just getting cranked up good. We expect harvest to really get going in the next week or two. We did plant about 15% of the acreage in April, up from less than 5% over the past 15 years. The cultivars we have now have much better levels of resistance to tomato spotted wilt and can withstand the virus better than older cultivars. Although spotted wilt was more prevalent this year compared to the last five years, it was still at very low levels.