

Give Thanks for Farmers   
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This is the time of year where our country takes time to step back and consider what we are thankful for. Although I personally feel we should be thankful every day of the year, this week gives me an opportunity to write about being thankful. Times are difficult for many people in our communities and even in our own families; however we can still find countless things to be thankful for. Like many of you, I’m thankful for my family, my health and my freedom. But this year I also encourage you to give thanks for something a little different; farmers. Not only the many farmers here in Madison County, but also those across Georgia and America.

These farmers provide a safe and abundant food supply for Georgians, Americans and even for people across the world. Georgia’s farmers work tirelessly all year to provide poultry, beef, pork, peanuts, watermelons, peaches, grain, vegetables, and many other products for consumers while dealing with difficult weather conditions, record-high input costs for fuel, energy, and fertilizer, and uncertain prices for their products. Farmers take all of these uncertainties in stride while continuing to provide safe and abundant food for all of us to enjoy, especially during this thanksgiving season.

While I’m thankful for all the great products our farmers provide, I’m even more thankful for the economic impact agriculture and farmers provide for our state. Even during the last several years of this economic recession, agriculture has remained a steady source of employment and economic stimulus in rural communities and large cities across the state. According to economists with the UGA College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Georgia agriculture generated a total economic impact of nearly $69 billion and represented more than 380,000 jobs in 2009, making it Georgia’s number one industry. I’m certainly thankful for the help our farmers have provided in keeping our state and local economy going during these difficult times.

We should all be thankful that we’re able to go the local grocery store and purchase a wide variety of food, fruits and vegetables that are still relatively affordable thanks to the hard work of our farmers. When you’re sitting around your Thanksgiving table this week or even eating leftovers for the next week, consider the farmers who worked hard to produce the food that’s there. Farmers never enter into their profession for praise or glory from others, but I think they deserve it nonetheless.