

Final report for the 2018 Conference on Hot Topics on Peanuts

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This conference took place on September 18th, 2018 from 3 to 5 p.m. in the Crosswinds Golf Club conference room, Savannah, GA. About 150 people attended the conference and a total of 6 talks were presented. The focus of the 2018 Hot Topics was on “International activities of Peanuts.”

The first speaker was Dr. Scott Monfort, a UGA faculty member gave an update on the 2018 Georgia peanut crop. He said a 25% reduction in planted peanut acreage was observed. Relatively dry and cooler temperatures through April and early May have pushed the peanut planting to a late start in mid-April for the southwest states. Overall, Dr. Monfort says the 2018 crop has low yield potential due to late planted peanuts and rains from middle of May and continued through August plus all the heat and dry weather we have experienced after August. Dr. Stanley Fletcher, an emeritus faculty member from the UGA gave a presentation on Washington, DC and Farm Bill update. He first gave an overview on the 2018 working Farm Bill and discussed the possible timeline, key peanut provisions and major issues that have been discussed at the Congress. Dr. Fletcher also briefly discussed some trade related programs like Market Facilitation, Food Purchases & Distribution, and Agricultural Trade Promotion Programs.

For the special focus session on International Activities of Peanuts, Dr. David A Hoisington, a UGA faculty member and the Director of the USAID funded Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Peanut gave a presentation on their new 5-year (2018-2023) program for increasing peanut productivity, quality and profitability in the USA and globally. Their new 5-year program are focused on the determining existing peanut diversity using modern genomics; testing production packages for crop, pest & disease management; improving drying and storage; linking farmers to local & regional markets; understanding nutritional benefits; and capacity Building. Dr. Adam N Rabinowitz, another UGA faculty member gave the next talk on the economics of peanut import and export. He has emphasized on the importance of peanut trades. Dr. Yen-Con Hung a UGA faculty member gave a presentation on “Peanut research activities around the world.” He first went through the global peanut production data provided by Ms. Stephanie Grunenfelder from the American Peanut Council and India, Argentina, U.S., and China are the top 4 peanut producing countries. He then introduced the major peanut research institutes from around the world including: UGA peanut team, USDA-ARS Market Quality and Handling Research Unit, USDA-National Peanut Research Laboratory from the USA; ICAR-Directorate of Groundnut Research and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics in India; three Institutions with strong peanut research activities in China; and peanut research scientists and programs from several Africa countries.

The final presenter was Mr. Lee Beckman from the Georgia Ports Authority. He discussed how the port channels have been improved by widening and deepening to accommodate the newer, larger ships that are now being used and their new mega rail and inland terminal network for goods to be shipped efficiently and make business more profitable. This presentation gave a great preview to the Savannah port tour the following day.