

# **The Peanut Research Foundation**

## **Peanut Genome Initiative – Phase II**

**Steve L. Brown, Executive Director**

The Peanut Research Foundation (formerly The Peanut Foundation) is affiliated with the American Peanut Council and represents all segments of the U.S. peanut industry. We operate from voluntary donations and fund research that benefits our industry as a whole.

In recent years, we have focused our research efforts on modern, non-GMO, breeding technologies. We funded the Peanut Genome Initiative (PGI) which mapped the peanut genome and discovered several useful markers currently in use by breeders. It also resulted in techniques to more easily utilize useful genes found in wild peanut species.

Phase II of the PGI is a four-year, \$2.4 million project with the objective of using tools developed in the original PGI to address important issues in our industry. We are focusing on disease resistance (initially focusing on leafspot), drought tolerance, aflatoxin resistance, and flavor conservation.

We issued our first Phase II call-for-proposals in the fall of 2019. On December 13, our board of directors selected 14 projects to fund for a total of \$550,000. Six of those deal primarily with disease resistance, 4 with aflatoxin, 2 with utilization of wild species, 1 with breeding for drought tolerance and 1 which supports PeanutBase, the primary collection site for peanut genetic information. Contracts for those projects are currently being finalized and research is being initiated.

Each project is unique, but all have goals of addressing real issues using very new, cutting edge genetic, genomic and breeding technologies. While some may think that an individual project may only help one segment of the industry, we can easily argue that success in each one of these research areas will benefit all segments.

There are numerous funders of peanut research. It is the goal of the Peanut Research Foundation to not only fund critical research, but to promote the value of research to other public and private funding partners. In cooperation with the National Peanut Board, we are currently participating in a USDA-NIFA matching program to support additional research on drought tolerance. We are also co-funding a project with the USAID-funded Peanut Innovation Lab to characterize numerous African lines of peanut which offer new sources of genetic diversity. These projects leverage industry donations to utilize public research funding.

The Foundation greatly appreciates the support of Georgia peanut growers in this research initiative. We strive to be as transparent as possible and we're always willing to provide details and documentation of how we spend the funds with which we are entrusted.