



# Georgia Department of Agriculture

## 2006 Specialty Crops Block Grant Program Final Performance Report

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The Georgia Department of Agriculture received \$129,864.25 from the USDA-AMS Specialty Crops Block Grant Program to increase the competitiveness of all Georgia specialty crops both domestically and internationally. Funds were used to conduct international promotions of Georgia specialty crops in China, increase demand for Georgia's horticulture, increase awareness and education of organic crops and to support an agricultural fair at state farmers market. Most industries benefited from the proposed marketing and promotion programs that were undertaken through increased consumer and buyer awareness of locally grown products.

## **A. PROMOTION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

### ***1. Georgia Grown Agricultural Fair***

#### ***Issue***

The Georgia Department of Agriculture through the Georgia Grown Agricultural fair intended to promote Georgia's specialty crops by connecting producers and farmers with local restaurants, chefs and caterers throughout the state. The fair would increase awareness of local produce, stimulate interest in local specialty crops and increase the amount of local produce used in local restaurants.

#### ***Approach***

The department invited 200 attendees for the fair and promotion of the fair led to an increase in attendees. Around 290 attendees showed up for the show and this included chefs and restaurant professionals. There were 66 booths set up at the fair. Of the 66, 62 were occupied by Georgia farmers and producers and 4 booths were set up to provide educational materials to the attendees. The fair was held on August 18, 2008 at the Atlanta State Farmers Market in Forest Park, Georgia. The food fair ran from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. and during that time local chefs and grocery chains were invited to discover the unique products from Georgia.

#### ***Goals, Results & Lesson Learned***

A follow up evaluation form which was a survey, was handed to the farmers immediately after the show and the exhibitors estimated \$364,050 worth of sales in the next 12 months based on contacts and leads made. All the exhibitors also stated that they were likely to return for next year's show and ranked the show 4.15 out of 5. However, a post survey conducted 6 months after the show, which was answered by only 18 exhibitors out of the 62, showed actual sales of \$130,900. Due to the limited number of survey completed, this number did not present a fairly accurate representation of the promotions success. The Department of Agriculture will work vigorously to get more information from exhibitors in the future so as to gauge the success of the fair.

#### ***Outcome Measure***

The agricultural fair assisted producers and farmers in promoting specialty crops within the state. The Georgia Department of Agriculture will continue to promote its specialty products throughout the state by conducting other agricultural fairs in the future. This will allow Georgia

farmers and producers to continue striving for the long term goal of brand recognition of Georgia agricultural products through the Georgia Grown logo. Future promotions will increase awareness, marketability, and consumption of Georgia grown specialty crops.

## ***2. Organics Promotion***

### ***Issue***

The Organics Promotion projects intended to support local organic producers and farmers through three projects which included:

1. grower education, and consumer awareness through
2. increased distribution of the Local Food Guide, and
3. the “buy local” marketing campaign. The GDA will be a first-time partner in all three of these efforts.

These efforts would also address consumer and institutional demand for local, sustainable and organically grown food.

### ***Approach***

Georgia Organics approached the above issues through the following:-

#### ***Grower Education & Consumer Awareness***

In February 2008, Georgia Organics hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference, *Quantum Leap: Taking Food and Farms back to the Future*. The Conference was held in Dalton, GA and catered to sustainable farmers, emerging growers both young and old, extension agents, community leaders, businesses and other various stakeholders in the sustainable food and farm community from across the state and southeast. The Conference is the state’s single largest sustainable agriculture event and serves a critical educational and networking need.

#### ***Local Food Guide***

In September 2007, Georgia Organics published its 2007-2008 Local Food Guide, the state’s only consumer-based resource, listing sustainable and organic farms, businesses and community organizations.

#### ***Buy Local Marketing***

Georgia Organics launched a *Buy Local Campaign* in the fall of 2007 and produced promotional materials to be utilized during and after the launch. Georgia Organics worked with Iconologic, a branding and marketing firm, to develop the brand "I'm a Local" to promote and identify locally grown produce. Georgia Organics organized and publicized an “Eat Local Week”, September 20-30, by partnering with 36 restaurants, hosting five events statewide and collaborating with groups in Athens and Savannah

### ***Goals, Results & Lesson Learned***

#### ***Grower Education & Consumer Awareness***

The 2008 conference saw record attendance with over 700 participating in the two-day conference which featured workshops, in-depth sessions, farm tours and the southeast’s largest

sustainable agriculture Trade Show. The growth of the conference since 2006 has been steady and impressive. The 2008 Conference saw a 50% increase in conference attendance, a 45% increase in the number of workshops offered and a 76% increase in the number of Trade Show exhibitors.

<b>Year</b>	<b># of GO Conference Attendees</b>	<b># of Workshops Offered</b>	<b>Evaluation Rating</b> (1 lowest - 5 highest)	<b># of Trade Show Exhibitors</b>
<b>2006</b>	325	23	4.6	13
<b>2007</b>	465	22	4.8	34
<b>2008</b>	700	32	4.6	60

The Conference also offered four farm tours with over 300 people participating. Georgia Organics was proud to have the Georgia Department of Agriculture as a sponsor of the conference for the first-time helping to execute a highly successful and substantive training and networking opportunity.

In addition to the Conference, Georgia Organics hosted 50 other producer-related workshops and events throughout 2007 that were attended by more than 3,000 growers and extension agents. Finally, Georgia Organics continues its signature mentoring program pairing existing sustainable growers with new and emerging farmers to provide hands-on technical experience and expertise. Mentees are trained in all aspects of running and/or managing a sustainable farm from production to marketing. In 2007, the program mentored 15 new farmers; 50% of which were minority and/or women.

*Local Food Guide*

Between its release in the fall of 2007 and summer 2008, nearly 50,000 print copies were distributed statewide at 160 distribution points including at restaurants, retailers, grocers and markets, farms, other businesses and at large community events statewide with additional downloads from the Georgia Organics website, which received over 5 million hits in 2007. Following is a testimonial from a participating farmer included in the Guide:

“I must say it has been the best advertisement for me. I have had phone calls from Tennessee to South Carolina to all over GA from folks finding me in the Local Food Guide. I also distribute them from my farm store and everyone wants one. Greatest I’ve found!”

--- Chaz Holt, Farmer and Owner of Holt Heritage Farm & Supply, Euharlee, GA

The 2008-2009 version of the Local Food Guide was released in September 2008 and 60,000 copies were printed to be distributed statewide to over 175 distribution points. The Local Food Guide, now with an established reputation is in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of publication, continues to serve as the premier consumer resource to connect Georgians with sustainable and locally grown food.

The statewide Guide includes farms, restaurants, grocery outlets, other retail outlets, farmers' markets, and growing supply sources.

The 2008-2009 Local Food Guide included the following:

<b>Listing Category</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
<b>Farm</b>	103	124	20%
<b>Restaurant*</b>	68	65	-4%
<b>Farmers' Market</b>	51	58	13%
<b>Business</b>	30	39	30%

\*The standards for inclusion in the Restaurant section of the Guide were strengthened to ensure a certain percentage or frequency of local food was being procured on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. Hence, this stricter standard reduced the number of restaurants included but reflects a strong commitment to using and supporting local and/or organic foods.

### Buy Local Marketing

The following is a summary of the promotional items produced in conjunction with the Buy Local Campaign

- *Farmers' Market Banners:* Georgia Organics produced distinct banners at no cost for 40 farmers markets around the state. Markets had two designs to choose from but centered on the "We're Local" branding theme. Many markets have no signage and no marketing budget, so the market managers were extremely grateful to receive promotional support.
- *Point of Sale Cards:* Georgia Organics created point of sale template materials for retailers to use in promoting local produce. Stores such as Whole Foods and Sevananda Natural Foods Market in Atlanta now use them in their produce departments.
- *Harvest Calendar Posters:* Georgia Organics reproduced the Harvest Calendar from the Local Food Guide in a small poster format so the public could identify seasonal availability of locally grown produce.
- *Produce Stickers:* Georgia Organics produced "I'm a Local" produce stickers for farmers to place on their produce. The stickers have been distributed to farmers at events and markets and are now sent to all new farm members who join Georgia Organics.
- *Restaurant Window Clings:* Georgia Organics created window clings for restaurants to use in promoting and branding themselves as purchasers of locally grown food. Many of these clings are now visible around the state. Examples of locations are Beechwood Inn, Muss & Turners and Food 101.

- *Buy Local Website:* Georgia Organics created a website [www.buylocalgeorgia.org](http://www.buylocalgeorgia.org) to help direct the public to events and listings in association with Eat Local Week.
- *CSA & Farmers' Market Directory:* Because of the high volume of demand for Farmers Market information and CSA box shares, Georgia Organics created a one page directory of existing CSA's and Farmers' Markets around the state to distribute to the public via markets, events and online

### ***Outcome Measure***

The Georgia Organics' conference, local food guide and buy local marketing are the most important tools Georgia Organics uses to increase supply, provide robust grower education and drive consumer demand. The following chart demonstrates the overall growth now taking place in the good food movement with the aide of the outcomes outlined in this summary report.

<b>GEORGIA'S 6-YEAR GROWTH</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>% Change (07-08)</b>
Farmers Markets	9	12	18	27	51	62	22%
CSA's	5	8	8	19	25	35	40%
CSA Shareholders			405	816	1,400	2,874	105%
Certified Organic Producers	10	20	26	33	48	51	6%
Certified Organic Acreage	273	413	665	1,076	1,565	3,081	97%
GO Conference Attendance		150	320	325	465	700	51%
GO Membership		300	391	400	525	1,000	90%
Farms Listed in GO Directory				66	102	130	27%

## ***3. Promotion of Healthy Living through Healthy Snacks in Schools***

### ***Issue***

The promotion of healthy snacks in schools was intended to safeguard the overall good health of school children through the introduction of programs aimed at teaching children healthy eating habits. The programs would educate school children on the value of fresh fruits and vegetables to their diet and how they offer healthy and nutritious elements that are recognized as critical to preventing cancer and other chronic diseases and also reducing obesity and diabetes.

### ***Approach***

The original approach of the project was to provide a fresh fruit or vegetable snack to 500 elementary aged school children, every other day during the 2007-2008 school year, and educate them about healthy eating choices. However, the project was altered, through approval from the Department of Agriculture, to accommodate a new program introduced through the Georgia Department of Education. The collaboration with the Department of Education would reach many more school children. The original project goal was to establish two schools in Georgia as pilots for the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program. One of the pilot schools would

be in a metro area and one in a rural area. The original objective of the project was to generate opportunities to introduce the FFVSP and develop Georgia's preparedness for full funding of the program in the FY09 budget.

### ***Goals, Results & Lesson Learned***

The project was modeled after the successful USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program that provided fresh fruit and vegetable snacks to children in school on a daily basis. The original USDA Specialty Crops Block grant would provide a fresh fruit or vegetable snack to 500 elementary aged school children, every other day during the 2007-2008 school year, and educate them about healthy eating choices. At that time there were only 15 states in the USDA the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program and industry leaders were working hard to have Georgia included as one of future pilot states. This grant was to provide a pilot program in Georgia from which results could be presented in Washington, DC.

This project was awarded in November 2007 after the school year had begun. To work with the schools systems we had to wait until the summer of 2008 to begin the project. However, in the spring of 2008 Congress funded the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program nationwide and all states received funds for the snack program.

Following meetings with Georgia Department of Education officials and discussions with the two schools that were to receive these block grant funds and the Department of Agriculture, it appeared the best operational plan was to include these two schools in Georgia's new the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program rather than treating them separately. This change allowed the 500 students in these two schools to have snacks five times a week rather than three times as outlined in the original proposal and the change would broaden the impact of this grant to reach 18,991 students.

From consultation with the Georgia DOE officials, a plan was developed so that this project assisted with all 18,991 students rather than just 500 students in the original proposal. The revised operational plan called for this project's funds to be used to supplement all 27 schools in the program with additional fruit and vegetable purchases, snack display racks, carts, and other creative ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption as well as educate these 18, 991 students on healthy eating choices.

Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association had originally planned to conduct 'before and after' testing on the students in the two pilot schools; however, once the project was expanded to 18,991 students the costs of testing proved to be logistically impractical and very expensive. However, in the end, each school was required to provide a written report as to how the funds were used to enhance fruit and vegetable consumption in their school and how the kids enjoyed the snacks. All the schools that participated in the program have voiced the success of the program and the change in children's eating habits and preferences. Attached are copies of such reports.

### ***Outcome Measure***

As a part of the 'snack program' educational goals, many of the schools have planted classroom gardens so the students can learn how fruits and vegetables are grow and enjoy some of the fruits

of their labors when the produce is harvested. Currently, these gardens have begun producing fruits and vegetables, and growers and industry officials have gone to the schools to speak to the students about the produce they grow and the benefits of fresh fruits and vegetable to the children's diet. The goal of this project was to offer healthy and nutritious fruits and vegetables that are recognized as critical to preventing cancer and other chronic diseases, reducing obesity and diabetes to 500 students in Georgia. With amendments to the program, this project is impacting 18,991 students. The long term effect to these students will be extremely valuable.

## **B. HORTICULTURE PROMOTION**

### ***1. Georgia Green Industry – Horticulture Promotion***

#### ***Issue***

The horticulture industry through Georgia Green Industry intended to enhance the competitiveness of the horticulture industry in Georgia through projects that were aimed at developing informational material to consumers, to promote the vast array of Georgia-grown plants and their landscape uses.

#### ***Approach***

The Georgia Green Industry Association worked with the Department of Agriculture to design and publish an informational website. The primary aim was to teach consumers about Georgia-grown plants and increase demand for Georgia horticulture. The website also contains information relating to the horticulture industry (i.e. location of nurseries and growers) and research from the University of Georgia. Georgia Green Industry Association interviewed several web design companies. Through these interviews the GGIA Communications Committee developed a check list and priority list of information to be placed on the sites during development. A web design company in Cumming, Georgia, was hired for this project.

#### ***Goals, Results & Lesson Learned***

Two websites were developed; one for gardeners and commercial entities planning a landscape installation to register under the Outdoor Water Use Program and the other for GGIA to provide further outreach to members, industry and consumers.

Georgia is currently experiencing one of the longest and most severe droughts in the state's history. Through mandates from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), Georgia gardeners have been required to participate in the Outdoor Water Use Program in order to have the authority to water newly installed landscapes. In 2008, GGIA was a member of the Urban Agriculture Council (UAC). Through UAC, several associations combined efforts to meet the requirements of EPD. The groups worked with the Center for Urban Agriculture of the University of Georgia to develop an educational program that provides information to consumers about efficient outdoor watering for landscapes. At the end of the educational program, participants could take a test, which if passed successfully, allows them to print a certification form that will allow the gardener to use water for outdoor landscapes when newly installed. The group developed a website: [www.outdoorwateruse.com](http://www.outdoorwateruse.com) for this certification process. Over

20,000 households and commercial entities have registered through the program and the website has had over 100,000 hits since the site began in March, 2008.

Additionally, GGIA and UAC members worked with The University of Georgia Horticulture Department to develop “Best Management Practices for Landscape Water Conservation” (BMPs). These Best Management Practices are shared on the outdoor water website as well as the GGIA website. The Best Management Practices were provided to retail garden centers and landscape companies throughout Georgia to aid in plant sales during the historic drought. Large garden center chains, such as Pike Nurseries, and independent local garden centers are using the Best Management Practices on their websites and many have provided copies to sales associates that are distributed in the store as sales are being made.

To help ensure outreach to the consumer regarding the outdoor water use program and the information contained in the Best Management Practices, GGIA and the UAC members jointly purchased radio advertising, developed a promotional campaign, and hired professional voice talent when producing the promotional spot. The campaign was held during drive time hours on radio stations in north Georgia whose demographics include listeners in the 40+ age group, primarily female, and with incomes at \$50,000+ annually. These demographics represent over 90% of the customer base for horticultural products. The radio advertising campaign was held during March and April, 2008 which is the prime springtime sales period.

Due to the historical extent and length of the drought, GGIA has been unable to accurately assess the impact of the promotional campaign. For the first time in history, Level 4 Outdoor Watering Restrictions have been in place for more than one month. Level 4 Restrictions began in September, 2007 and continues in many places to date. This regulation has impeded the growth of the horticulture industry and has caused many businesses to close their doors or to drastically reduce their production and/or employee levels. However, without the campaign, over 20,000 families and/or commercial businesses would not have installed new landscaping during 2008. The outdoor water use registration program and its accompanying public relations campaign has certainly enhanced sales of horticultural material as well as service sector sales from the landscape installation company.

For the second website, [www.ggia.org](http://www.ggia.org), GGIA has been developing the site since June, 2008. This site took second place in priority, through approval from the Department of Agriculture, as the outdoor water use information was mandated by EPD and was time sensitive for spring sales, therefore, impacting the most beneficial use of the funds to encourage purchase of Georgia horticultural products.

Currently, the GGIA site is well into development and links to many University of Georgia publications for both the industry professionals and consumers who visit the site. The completion of the information for the certification tests for the professionals is finished and on-line. Promotion for these certification programs to consumers is in the development stage and will be finalized in early 2009. The GGIA site is currently receiving over 75 hits per day, with as many as 45 people spending over 5 minutes reviewing the site or performing “click-thrus.” As the site has not yet been advertised to industry professionals or to consumers, we feel confident

that once developed, the site will become a conduit of information to the gardening public and the green industry professional.

### ***Outcome Measure***

The outdoor water use website provided an avenue for consumers to legally irrigate newly installed landscapes. The program has impacted over 20,000 households and/or commercial businesses, leading to an estimated \$150 million in sales during the spring gardening and landscaping season. The GGIA website for both consumers and industry professionals has been developed and modification continues to be done to the site to cater for both consumer and industry professionals. Using funds generated by the membership, appropriations from the GGIA reserve fund, and the funds provided through the 2006 Specialty Crop Grant, GGIA has invested just over \$51,000 in direct funds for the GGIA website and contributions to UAC for the outdoor water use site. Approximately \$11,000 in-kind staff salary funding was provided by GGIA for the efforts undertaken in these Specialty Crop projects. GGIA will continue efforts to enhance and promote the horticulture industry in Georgia.

## **C. INTERNATIONAL MARKETING PROMOTION**

### ***1. International Fruit and Vegetables Promotion***

#### ***Issues***

Currently between 5% and 10% of Georgia's fruit and vegetable crop is exported to international markets. By working with the Southern United States Trade Alliance (SUSTA) to coordinate farm visits and promotional presence in the Canadian produce markets, the goal for this project was to strengthen the trading partnership and increase the percentage of Georgia Grown products exported to Canada.

#### ***Approach***

By working with the Southern United States Trade Alliance (SUSTA) to coordinate farm visits and increase promotional presence in the Canadian produce markets, GFVGA has strengthened the trading partnership and increased the percentage of Georgia Grown products exported to Canada. This project included three new components to Georgia's current international trade efforts and allows Georgia products to become more prevalent in the Canadian produce market by increasing demand of Georgia produce in Canada. These components included far, visits, trade shows, magazine feature stories and a fourth component added later on, a watermelon promotion.

#### ***Goals, Results & Lesson Learned***

There were three components to the original project proposal and a fourth one was added later on in 2008. The explanation below details the progress:

##### ***Farm Visits:***

Working with SUSTA, the Southern United States Trade Alliance, this project hosted a Georgia farm visit by 10 Canadian produce in June, 2008. The objective was to have the international

buyers on Georgia farms during the growing and packing season. The buyers visited nine farms and these included: Hendrix Produce (watermelons, Vidalia onions); Stanley Farms (Vidalia onions); Sunny Ridge Farms (blueberry); Coggins Farms (mixed vegetables including melons); Little River Produce (mixed vegetables including melons); Perry Vineyards (muscadines); Lewis Taylor Farm (mixed vegetables including melons); Jackson Farms (watermelons) ; Big 6 Farms (peaches). The Canadian buyers were extremely impressed with the innovative equipment and modern technology at the farms and in all the packing facilities and reiterated that the best ways to know Georgia produce is to visit the farms. Following the tour, many growers reported an increase in orders from the retail chains represented by the 10 Canadian buyers at the end of 2008 and anticipated more orders in 2009.

#### *CPMA Trade Show:*

This is the largest produce show in Canada and for the past four years Georgia has not had a presence at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association show. Unfortunately the 2008 show was held in Western Canada, a region which Georgia growers do not ship to very much due to distance and the cost of shipping. This component of the project is being delayed until the Spring of 2009 when CPMA returns to Toronto. Georgia will work in conjunction with SUSTA, to coordinate a presence at CPMA in 2009.

#### *Magazine Feature Stories:*

In order to receive the largest ‘bang for the buck’ these feature stories were to be placed in conjunction with the CPMA Trade Show. They would have had little effect if they had been run during the 2008 CPMA in Western Canada where there was no Georgia presence. These articles will be included with the 2009 CPMA in Toronto. A feature story and advertisement will be developed for Canada’s two produce publications, Produce Business and Canadian Grocery.

#### *Watermelon Promotion*

In 2008, Georgia Fruits and Vegetable Association received additional funds from the Georgia Department of Agriculture to conduct a watermelon promotion. The goal of this promotion was to promote locally grown watermelons and connect watermelon produce farmers with retailers, groceries and stores. Part of the watermelon promotion involved a presentation by a watermelon representative at the 2008 Southeast Regional Fruits and Vegetable Conference held in Savannah. The speaker presented information to the watermelon growers attending, about opportunities to market fresh produce and watermelons through programs designed by Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Association. One of the program included connecting farmers and buyers. The GFVGA conducted 8 watermelon farm tours which included, Jackson Farms ; Lewis Taylor Farms ; L & M Produce; Marker 29 Produce ; Van Solkema Produce, Southern Valley, Gibbs Patrick and Jackson Farms. From these farm tours, farmers were able to connect with several buyers and market their produce.

In addition, GFVGA also held in-store promotions of watermelons at several stores. One such store was Harvey’s Supermarket, a regional supermarket chain in the southern part of Georgia. During the months of May, June and July of 2008, the company held in store promotional campaigns on watermelons. This campaign included signage, brochures, and guest appearances by the Georgia Watermelon Queen. This helped to boost the sales of watermelons. Many farmers estimated an increase in sales of their watermelons due to the farm tours conducted. Continual

promotion of watermelons will help many farmers in the long run and GFVGA is committed to continue these efforts and help many Georgia farmers.

### ***Outcome Measure***

GFVGA intends to continue promoting Georgia's fruits and vegetable through a variety of means. The farm tours proved to be beneficial to many local farmers and the association plans to conduct more farm tours and connect farmers with other international markets. This will not only help the farmers, but also boost Georgia's economy. Unfortunately, the trade show and magazine feature stories were not conducted but GFVGA plans to attend more trade shows to promote Georgia's fruits and vegetables.

## ***2. International Promotion of Georgia Pecans***

### ***Issue***

Georgia pecan growers experience downfalls in the price of pecans due to the cyclical nature of pecan cultivation. During OFF-years of production, pecan growers invariably face a plunge in the price that they receive for their pecans ultimately affecting many Georgia pecan growers. A normal crop production during OFF-years accounts to 40 million pounds, while in an ON-year; normal crop production is 120 millions. A stable, consistent market during both ON and OFF years is very critical and needs to be created and sustained through continued promotional and marketing campaigns. The international market is China is proving an avenue pecan growers can venture into. In 2006 Georgia exported 18-20 million pounds of in-shell pecans to China. This promotion could potentially increase the export to 20-30 million pounds of in-shell pecans.

### ***Approach***

Georgia Pecan Growers Association received funds to undertake a marketing and promotional campaign in China. These funds were used to participate in two promotional events in China. Georgia Pecan Growers Association participated in the SIAL China Tradeshow in May of 2008 where 3 grower members of the organization flew to China and promoted Georgia Pecans at the show. The growers distributed samples and exporter directory of growers at the show, showed videos of a pecan farm, and talked about the nutritional value of pecans. The GPGA also participated in a trade mission to China. A member of the association flew to China and met with buyers interested in importing pecans

### ***Goals, Results & Lesson Learned***

The goal of this project was to create a market for pecan in China. The association obtained over 90 quality leads at the trade show that were brought back and distributed to the participants that had displayed products at the show. Georgia made a record crop in 2007 of over 150,000 million pounds. GPGA exported around 40 million pounds out of the port of Savannah. Georgia has never exported more than 15 million pounds in the past. Due to the promotions undertaken the previous year, Georgia pecan growers boosted their exports. There was tremendous success with this project. Georgia managed to sell 100% of its pecan production.

Ever since pecan promotional and marketing campaigns have been introduced in China, the pecan industry has seen a robust growth in export sales. These marketing efforts have given Georgia pecan producers new venues and means of promoting their products and has resulted in

exposure to new buyers and distributors. The informational literature given out at all promotional activities have had lasting pecan awareness in China. Continual promotional and marketing efforts aimed at creating a larger customer base, are very much needed for the continued growth in export sales of pecans

### ***Outcome Measure***

The 2008 crop is an OFF year in production but the prices are very good, and growers are likely to sell all of their production as well. As GPGA looks towards 2009 and the ON year in production, the association is planning more international promotions. GPGA is still working on its long term goal of creating lasting relationships for exporting to the China market. This will be obtained through their continued dedication to the market. The program was a great success for the year 2008.

## **C. FOOD PROTECTION**

### ***1. Crisis management***

#### ***Issue***

This project intended to establish a crisis communication plan for Georgia's fruit and vegetable industry. Losing just one day of market sales costs the fruit and vegetable industry in Georgia hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars. The spinach food safety issue in 2006 stopped all spinach shipment nationwide for more than a week. During the summer of 2008 the Salmonella saint-paul outbreak cost tomato growers over \$100 million dollars. In Georgia alone, growers had losses exceeding \$14 million dollars. While a crisis communication plan may not save growers from suffering losses in the future, a plan was critical and would set guidelines in place to help the industry effectively interact with the media and concerned consumers during such outbreaks.

#### ***Approach***

The goal of this project was to have a 'crisis communication plan' in place identifying those organizations, media and shareholders that would be critical in establishing consumer confidence and awareness to minimize loss in a crisis. The plan was communicated to Georgia fruit and vegetable growers through two avenues and these included the industry press and the SE Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference. More than 1,500 growers and industry suppliers were educated on the key elements of the crisis plan through these two venues. The measurable outcome was the plan itself. Without the plan there was no way to minimize crisis. Unfortunately, a crisis (or preferably advertent one) is necessary to test the effectiveness of the plan.

The project was initiated in the winter of 2008. The crisis communication consultant selected for this project was Sahlman-Williams of Tampa, FL, a public relations and marketing firm with extensive expertise in agricultural production and consumer awareness. The initial work was an audit/review of the current Georgia fruit and vegetable industry processes and communications, including food safety, labor, pest control, transportation, water and other issues. The firm

conducted interviews with Georgia fruit and vegetable growers, packers, shippers, retailers, researchers and industry association leadership to identify Georgia's most vulnerable crops and where the greatest exposure is located. This work was completed in late Spring 2008.

### ***Goals, Results & Lessons Learned***

After the industry research was completed the firm developed a written Crisis Communication Plan Draft with recommendations that outlined the key steps for Georgia's fruit and vegetable industry to address crisis preparedness. The plan established recommendations as to the communications chain, who should serve as spokesperson(s), internal organizations as a central clearing house, and action steps needed to be taken in certain scenarios.

After review and approval of the crisis preparedness operational plan, specific crisis preparedness materials are now being created for use by GFVGA. This includes a communications checklist and grower card with contact information for media and crisis management assistance.

### ***Outcome Measure***

As a part of this grant, GFVGA has started organizing Crisis Issues Teams to annually review the plan, update the materials and identify/monitor future challenges. These industry representatives are now holding periodic conference calls to review the information and ensure communication channels are open between all Georgia fresh produce organizations.

With the distribution of the grower info sheets and contact cards at the SE Regional Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference in Savannah in January 2009 Phase 1 of this project will be completed. Phase Two of this plan has been funded with a second block grant. This phase will include crisis simulation training and further internal communications and interaction of the Crisis Issues Teams scheduled for early 2009.

## INDIVIDUAL GRANT CONTACT INFORMATION

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### Promotion of Vegetables

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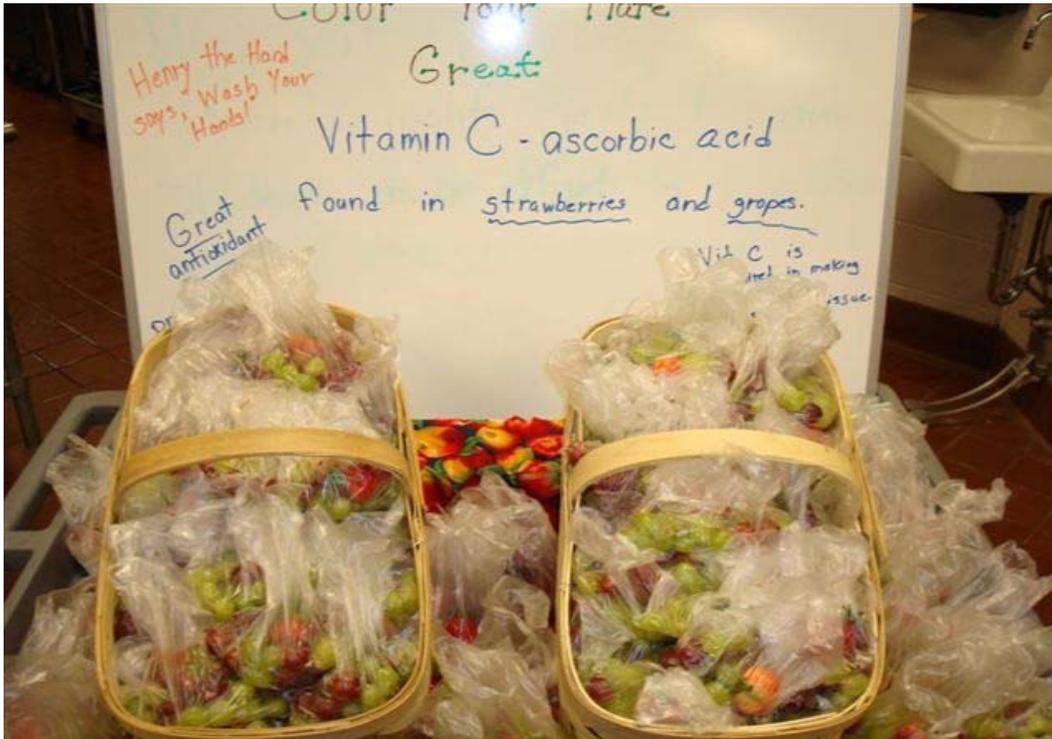
### International Promotions

1. *International Promotion of Georgia Pecans*  
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Hilton Speleger  
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2. *Canadian Fruit and Vegetable Promotion*  
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### Food Protection

1. *Healthy Living Through Healthy Snacking*  
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## ***Promotion of Healthy Snacks in Schools***



**Fresh Fruits Cart at George E Washington Elementary School**



**George E Washington Elementary School Children receiving a Healthy Fruit Snack**

## Nutritional Information

# Granny Smith Apples



**Granny Smith**, or **green apple**, is a tip-bearing apple cultivar. It originated in Australia in 1868 from a chance seedling propagated by Maria Ann Smith (nee Sherwood), where the name "Granny Smith" comes from.<sup>[1]</sup> They are found wild in New Zealand; it was originally introduced to the United Kingdom circa 1935 and the United States in 1972 by Grady Auvil.

Granny Smith apples are a light speckled green in color. They are crisp, juicy, tart apples which are excellent for both cooking and eating out of the hand. They also are favored for salads because the slices do not brown as quickly as other varieties. It also tends to have a harder texture than other green apples, posing problems for denture wearers.<sup>[2]</sup> It is particularly popular as the main ingredient of apple pies, its tart flavor being well suited to baking.

The Granny Smith originated in Australia in 1868 in Mary Ann (Grannie) Smith's backyard garden. It was there she found a seedling growing in the place where she often would discard French Crab apple cores. The seedling bore apples that Grannie Smith began using in her cooking. The apples produced such terrific and tasty dishes that Grannie Smith marketed the fruit. About a century later the apple bearing Grannie Smith's name was introduced to America where it has grown in popularity ever since.

Washington growers began planting Granny Smith in the late 1960s. It is now the third most widely produced variety in the state. Green with an occasional pink blush, Granny Smith is a favorite of tart apple fans and is best served fresh, crisp, and cold. Even when used for cooking, the Granny Smith keeps its zesty flavor. Granny Smith apples are perfect for fruit platters and salads.

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 large apple  
(242g / 8 oz.)

#### Amount Per Serving

**Calories** 130      **Calories from Fat** 0

**% Daily Value\*\***

**Total Fat** 0g      **0%**

Saturated Fat 0g      **0%**

Trans Fat 0g      **0%**

**Cholesterol** 0mg      **0%**

**Sodium** 0mg      **0%**

**Potassium** 260mg      **7%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 34g      **11%**

Dietary Fiber 5g      **20%**

Sugars 25g

**Protein** 1g

Vitamin A 2%      •      Vitamin C 8%

Calcium 2%      •      Iron 2%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

Calories per gram:  
Fat 0      •      Carbohydrate 4      •      Protein 4

## Georgia Organics Promotional Material



**Point of Sale Retail Template**



**Restaurant Window Cling**



**Produce Sticker**



Farmers' Market Banner

## Georgia Grown Agricultural Fair Promotion

