



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**2008 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program
Final Performance Report
12-25-B-0856**

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The Georgia Department of Agriculture received \$162,532.26 from the USDA-AMS 2008 Specialty Crops Block Grant Program to increase the competitiveness of all Georgia specialty crops both domestically and internationally. Most industries continue to benefit from the proposed marketing and promotion programs that are currently underway through increased consumer and buyer awareness of locally grown products.

I. *Georgia Grown Agricultural Fair - Georgia Department of Agriculture – Final Performance Report*

Project Summary:

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) hosted the 2009 Georgia Grown Food Show at the Georgia Rail Depot in Atlanta, Georgia. The show was held October 12, 2009, from noon to 4:30 p.m. Georgia specialty crop producers were invited to showcase their products that are presently produced in the state so as to provide educational insight to attendees. All specialty crop producers brought informational packets and samples to showcase at the show. There were 54 local farmers, producers and manufacturers exhibiting at the show. There was a large cross-section of attendees, including teachers, school nutritionists, restaurant owners/food purchasers, chefs, retailers, farmers markets, and hospital cooks. Due to a heavy rain storm, we had approximately 150 attendees accounted for at the show. Our attendance was projected to be higher.

Overall, the show was a success in raising the awareness and marketability of Georgia Grown specialty crops.

Project Approach:

Because of the experience attained from the 2007 and 2008 food shows, the 2009 show was much better organized. There were more promotional activities used in order to reach a wider audience of exhibitors and attendees. Also, because of the previous shows, people were more aware of what can be accomplished through the show, and how advantageous it would be to participate.

As part of the work plan, GDA created and distributed an evaluation survey for information taken during and immediately following the show. There was also a follow-up survey asking the exhibitors and attendees what amount of Georgia Grown specialty crops they are likely to purchase in the following year, the actual amount of Georgia Grown produce purchased in the following year, and general feedback of the Georgia Grown Agricultural Fair. We have included below the two surveys from the 2008 show, which were basically unchanged for the 2009 show.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

This year's food show was more successful than the 2007 show, but not as successful as the 2008 show. This year's was better organized, and overall was larger. There were a greater number of exhibitor booths, as well as attendees. Our goal was to have between 30 and 40 booth spaces filled with specialty crop producers; **we almost reached our goal**

with 27 specialty crop booths out of 55 booths total. Because 50% of the show involved specialty crop growers/producers, we were very careful in using grant funds not exceeding 50% of the overall costs for the show. The remaining 50% of the costs covering non-specialty crops were paid for by the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

We anticipated that, due to the heavy media advertising, the 2009 show dollar estimation with regard to the sale of produce after the show was conducted, would be about 30 percent higher than previous years. The exhibitors estimated, based upon their leads and contacts from the show, that their sales over the next 12 months would be approximately \$6 million. Based upon the surveys and the awareness level resulting from the show, there was an estimated 9% growth the first year, correlating with growth meeting the 30% increase over three years.

Using a 1-5 scale (1 meaning “will not”), both exhibitors and attendees said they were 4.4 likely to attend another food show next year. They agreed they made a large number of contacts that will help them with purchasing and selling specialty crops in the future. More than 200 chef restaurant professionals were impacted by the show.

Because of a reduced department staff, and budget reductions, there were no post-surveys developed and implemented; therefore, we cannot include with this report the amount of specialty crop produce purchased by local restaurants, or the amount of growth in overall sales of specialty crops.

Beneficiaries:

Beneficiaries included the 54 Georgia farmers/specialty crop growers and producers who attended the show, as well as the 150 attendees of the food show and other purchasers of specialty crops, which include chefs, restaurant food purchasers, caterers, teachers, school nutritionists, food service industries and retailers.

Attendee beneficiaries were able to make face-to-face contact with potential sellers and purchasers. This increased the number of possible purchasers for specialty crop producers, and increased the number of possible sellers for specialty crop purchasers. Overall, everyone benefitted because of the excitement of Georgia Grown specialty crops becoming so well known and popular.

Lessons Learned:

This food show was very successful and fulfilled its goal of increasing the awareness and sales of Georgia Grown specialty crops by marketing them to the people who can buy and sell the products.

However, from comments made by the attendees and exhibitors, there will be changes to any future food show. Some of these changes may be: invite more grocery stores; include more vendors; do not hold the show on a Monday holiday; have educational sessions; and have demonstrations of products on the stage.

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**Georgia Grown Food Show
Attendee Follow-Up Evaluation
2008**

Name:

Company:

1. Have you pursued business relationships with any exhibitors from the Georgia Grown Food Show 2008?
Yes No Unsure

2. Have you seen a percentage increase in your company's purchase of Georgia Grown products since the Georgia Grown Food Show 2008?
Yes No Unsure

If so, by approximately what percentage? _____

3. Based on the Georgia Grown Food Show, approximately how much in Georgia products have you purchased and expect to purchase in the next 6 to 8 months?

4. Are you likely to purchase Georgia Grown products based on your experience at the Georgia Grown Food Show?
Yes No Unsure

5. How much more aware do you consider your company to be of Georgia Grown products since the Food Show?
 <10% 10% - 30% 31-50% 51-75% 76-100%

6. How likely are you to attend the Georgia Grown Food Show in 2009?

Not Likely		Possibly		Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

5

7. What suggestions do you have to improve the Georgia Grown Food Show in the future?



Georgia Grown Food Show 2008 Follow-Up Evaluation

1. What sales have been generated from the Georgia Grown Food Show since August 2008?

2. What sales do you estimate in the next 6 months from the Georgia Grown Food Show in 2008?

3. How likely are you to participate in the Georgia Grown Food Show in 2009?

Not Likely		Possibly		Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

4. Please circle all types of relationships formed at the Georgia Grown Food Show 2008?

Buyer/Seller Seller/Broker Other: _____

Seller/ Distributor Seller/Wholesaler

5. Please rate the quality of relationships made at the Georgia Grown Food Show 2008?

Poor		Average		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

6. What suggestions do you have to improve the Georgia Grown Food Show in the future?

We thank you for your time and participation in this survey!

II. Georgia Pecan Growers Association – Final Performance Report

Project Summary:

The Georgia Pecan Growers Association (GPGA) had interest in expanding pecans into mainland China. A group of pecan growers attended the SIAL (Food Show in China) in May of 2008. Georgia Pecan Growers Association (GPGA) followed up by visiting 3 major China cities sponsored by SUSTA in September 2008. GPGA goal was to introduce the large improved Georgia grown pecan varieties into the China market. China has been importing the small Western Schley nuts from Texas and New Mexico. The marketing campaign intended to increase the awareness of Georgia pecans as the healthiest pecan

in the market as well as identifying the physical differences between the western nuts and Georgia pecans.

Ever since pecan promotional and marketing campaigns have been introduced in China, the pecan industry has seen a robust growth in export sales. The Association has continued promotional efforts of Georgia pecans in other countries, which include Czech Republic, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam. This has created a stable, consistent export market for Georgia's pecan growers. 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 purpose of this international promotion campaign was to increase the promotional and marketing efforts aimed at creating a larger customer base which, very much needed for the unrelenting growth in export sales of pecans. Pecan growers anticipated to consistently move and expand in these export markets. Promotional activities were geared to yield a 12-13% increase in pecan exports. This would foster the Georgia economy and stimulate the pecan market within the State. As pecans are an "on year off year" product, this promotion helped move the 2008 "on years" supply which greatly benefited many pecan growers.

The pecan industry contributes \$300 million annually to the state of Georgia's economy. 80% of the world's production of pecans is in the U.S. and Georgia is the major producer contributing 1/3 of total pecan pound production. Georgia saw a record high production of pecans in 2007, with 150 million pounds produced and this contributed to 55% of U.S. production. 40 million pounds of 2007's production was exported to China. Georgia has more than 600 pecan farmers, who are the major beneficiaries, all contributing to the export market in China and are impacted by this export trade. Ultimately, the state of Georgia and the nation as a whole, continue to benefit tremendously from these promotional activities.

Project Approach:

The Pecan Growers Association requested funds to undertake the following activities:

- The Association exhibited at the SIAL Shanghai food show, a USDA endorsed show in China in May of 2008,
- Products and literature was sent to be displayed at shows in Europe and the Middle East. The informational literature given out at these promotional events has so far had a lasting awareness of pecans in China.
- Reverse trade missions – Food brokers were brought to Georgia to showcase how pecans are being grown
- Georgia growers participated in the exhibits to foster relations.

The goal of this project was to create a market for pecans in China and introduce the larger improved pecan varieties from Georgia to other international destinations. The association received over 100 contacts from Chinese buyers interested in pecans that were brought back and distributed to the participants that had displayed products at the show. The association's participation and attendance at the Food shows has given the

Chinese information on the health benefits of pecans and this created interest with buyers. 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. 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, continue to be very much needed for the continued growth in export sales of pecans.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

Marketing activities during the past two or three years were designed to take advantage of and encourage the surge in Chinese interest in the Georgia pecan and resulting sales. Marketing activities have also helped identify the major players in China; provided the opportunity to make a general assessment of the market; published appropriate flyers and brochures for Chinese industry; and targeted in-store promotions. Increased presence has also provided the opportunity to discuss market development strategies with several of the major importer/distributors. The rapid growth of the Chinese market appeared to be sustainable as more and more people become familiar with the pecan. An estimated 60% of the Georgia pecan production was shipped to China in-shell from the 2009 harvest; this amounts to 49 million pounds of pecans. As you can see, there was a slight increase from the 2007 amount of 40 million pounds.

To ultimately reach the anticipated global audience, the association participated in 5 outbound trade shows and 4 inbound trade missions that were scheduled throughout the world. Representatives from the association flew to the trade shows to meet with the in-country representative. Booths were set up to promote Georgia pecans by providing literature, visuals, and pecan samples. A chef was available at many of the trade shows to demonstrate the cooking possibilities of pecans.

Beneficiaries:

Many Georgia farmers have benefited from all the domestic and international promotional and marketing campaigns the association has conducted. Opportunities are available to the more 550 pecan farmers in Georgia. A estimated total of 20 pecan distributors have been able to ship their pecans to many international destinations, mainly China.

Lessons Learned:

Ever since pecan promotional and marketing campaigns have been introduced in China and many parts of the world, 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. 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. From the food shows, it was evident that the association needed to continue educating the world market on the quality of Georgia pecans and define the differences in the product compared to other nuts currently consumed. Furthermore, it was evident that follow-up visits would be primarily important to build a personal relationship in these world markets. Marketing materials used during trade visuals, see picture below, were used to tell the story of Georgia pecans. There was a need to translate the language on brochures and promotional materials into different languages so that consumers could understand in their language. This association intends to secure funds to conduct this action.

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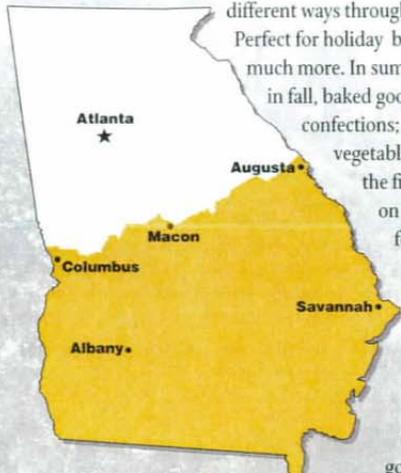
Additional Information:

Georgia Pecans... Nature's Health Food!

Georgia is the nation's leading pecan producing state. In Georgia, pecans are harvested from October through December, but are available year-round.



Albany and Dougherty County are known as the "pecan capital of the world," because of the number of pecan trees in the area. Pecans are one of the most popular all-season nuts. Pecans can be enjoyed many



different ways throughout the year. Perfect for holiday baking and so much more. In summer, ice cream; in fall, baked goods; in winter, confections; in spring, vegetables; pecans put the finishing touch on a variety of foods. Pecans have an unbeatable flavor and are packed with important nutrients. Pecans are a good source of

protein and are loaded with essential vitamins and minerals, including iron, calcium and the B vitamins. Rich in potassium and phosphorus, pecans also provide fiber. They have been found to help lower cholesterol and contain only a trace of sodium.



Buyers Guide to Pecans:

- Georgia pecans can be purchased year round.
- Look for plump pecans that are uniform in color and size.
- The shell of a pecan should be smooth and light brown.
- Pecans are perishable and must be properly stored to maintain optimum quality.



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III. *Georgia Organics – Final Performance Report*

1. Farmer Education

Project Summary:

Georgia Organics was the proud recipient of a \$20,000 grant funded by the 2008 Specialty Crop Block Grant to improve the competitiveness of Georgia’s burgeoning local and organic farming industry. The grant’s funds were used to pursue two specific strategies: increase **farmer education on sustainable and organic practices** and conduct robust and **creative marketing, communication and outreach** to connect consumers with organic and sustainable farmers in Georgia.

The demand for locally grown, organic food is reaching new heights – especially in Georgia. The growth of the sustainable farm movement in Georgia is bucking economic trends, with demand continuing to rise even in this very challenging economy. From 2004-2009, Georgia witnessed the following:

- a 372% increase in the number of producer-focused farmers markets in Georgia,
- a 525% increase in community-supported agriculture programs,
- a 698% increase in CSA shareholders,
- a 146% increase in certified organic producers, and
- a 516% increase in certified organic acreage in Georgia.

GEORGIA'S 5-YEAR GROWTH	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Producer-focused Farmers Markets	18	27	51	62	85
CSA's (Community Supported Agriculture)	8	19	25	35	50
CSA Shareholders	405	816	1,400	2,874	3,235
Certified Organic Producers	26	33	48	52	64
Certified Organic Acreage	665	1,076	1,565	3,081	4,100

The market opportunity these new demands offer has the potential to reverse the assumed fate of small and medium-size farmers, offer large scale conventional growers an entrée into the organic food market, and provide rural communities with a much-needed economic engine.

Project Approach

The 2008 Specialty Crop Grant Award allowed Georgia Organics to continue to progress the movement forward. To follow is an overview of the specific activities conducted, analysis of the measurable outcomes and the projected future plans for the organization to continue the related work with the ultimate goal of enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops in Georgia.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Farmer Education

Project Goal: Reach 500 farmers through the annual Georgia Organics educational Conference, educational workshops, field days, and through the organization's signature sustainable agriculture curriculum. The specific strategies employed included:

- Host the 2010 Annual Georgia Organics Educational Conference.
- Organize two in-depth workshops on sustainable agriculture strategies.
- Organize one outreach session held with collaborative partners.
- Host one regional outreach session with one on-farm field day for growers around the state to learn and collaborate with one other.
- Disseminate copies of Georgia Organics' Sustainable Agriculture Curriculum and resource toolkit to growers, trainers including extension agents, and students statewide.

Outcomes Achieved:

1. *Annual Conference:* The final docket of educational offerings featured 32 educational sessions, 8 in-depth workshops, and 10 regional farm tours with 60 outstanding international, national and regional speakers. The Conference was also host to the largest sustainable and organic agriculture Trade Show in the southeast with 70 vendors. Overall, the Conference hosted nearly 1,300 individuals including:

- 10% of attendees from outside of Georgia representing 22 states
- A near even distribution of first-time conference attendees and returning participants
- 643 attendees specifically representing a farm or agriculture-related organization

Below is a 5-year comparison of major conference benchmarks:

Year	# of Attendees	% of Attendees From Outside GA	# of Workshops Offered	Evaluation Rating (1 lowest - 5 highest)	# of Trade Show Exhibitors
2006	325	10%	23	4.6	13
2007	465	11%	22	4.8	34
2008	700	16%	32	4.62	60
2009	1100	14%	38	4.6	50
2010	1300	10%	40	4.63	70

2. *Organized two in-depth workshops on sustainable agriculture strategies:* The first workshop was held on August 20, 2009 in Pike County entitled The Organic Farmer's Tool Chest. The Organic Farmer's Tool Chest took place at D & A Farm and included a farm tour with farm owner and manager *David Bentoski*. Bentoski is a former Delta mechanic who transitioned from his job at Delta a few years ago to start a certified organic farm. D&A Farm currently cultivates 10 acres, has a produce subscription program with over 100 members, and sells weekly at the Morningside Farmers Market in Atlanta. *Daniel Parson* led a presentation on farm and crop planning and recordkeeping,

the basics of organic certification, rotations and cover crops. Parson managed Gaia Gardens, a 5- acre certified organic farm in DeKalb County, before moving to South Carolina at the end of last season. By the end of his fourth year at Gaia Gardens, Parson had the farm grossing \$45,000 per acre between a 67- member subscription program, and selling at a farmers market in Atlanta. In addition to his farm experience, the final speaker was *John Ruberson, Ph.D.*, Professor of Entomology at the University of Georgia, who discussed the biological control of insect pests in cropping systems. A total of 53 farmers participated in the workshop.

The second in-depth workshop was held on mushroom cultivation as a strategy to increase farm income. The workshop was held on November 14, 2009 and received so much interest, a second class was added on November 15th to accommodate the demand. The class focused on shiitake mushroom cultivation through inoculation of hardwoods as well as oyster mushroom cultivation on pasteurized substrates. Daniel Parson, of Parson's Produce, and Brandi Arts, who has trained and worked with Paul Stamets, co-led the course, using a mixture of hands-on and classroom instruction. Participants actually left the session with an inoculated shiitake log, and oyster-inoculated substrate. The sessions hosted a total of 25 participants across both sessions.

3. Organized one outreach session held with collaborative partners: On April 21, 2010, Georgia Organics hosted a session in partnership with the University of Georgia's Agriculture & Environmental Services lab on soil quality, testing and fertility at the Soil Testing lab and on the UGA hort farm. Dr. Leticia Sonon, Program Coordinator for the Soil, Plant, and Water Laboratory, gave attendees a tour of the UGA Soil Testing Lab and led discussion of the basis of soil testing and making nutrient recommendations. Participants also learned simple steps to conducting a soil sample to better plan for soil fertility and nutrient recommendations. A total of 20 farmers participated in the session. Extension, the UGA College of Ag and Environmental Sciences and NRCS were all involved in this session.

4. Hosted one regional outreach session with one on-farm field day for growers around the state to learn and collaborate with one other: The on-farm field day took place on September 27, 2009 at Walker Farms in Sylvania, Georgia. Relinda Walker, farmer and educator, shared her knowledge of farming, marketing, and transitioning 50 acres (and counting) of her family farm to organic certification over the past seven years. Walker Farms produces a variety of vegetables and grains, including onions and onion seedlings. End-of-summer and fall practices, including cover cropping and farm planning were demonstrated. Relinda also discussed marketing strategies, and her upcoming work to transition an additional 17 acres to organic with the assistance of the new Organic Initiative through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA. A total of 32 farmers participated in the field day.

5. Disseminated copies of Georgia Organics' Sustainable Agriculture Curriculum and resource toolkit to growers, trainers including extension agents, and students statewide: Over 1,000 copies of the revised Georgia Organics curriculum toolkit on sustainable agriculture was distributed to growers, extension agents, agri-professionals statewide and agriculture educators in 2009. A revised third edition was released featuring multimedia presentations and graphics.

Marketing, Communication & Outreach

Project Goal: Reach 50,000 growers and consumers through an enhanced website to provide better educational resource delivery and connectivity solutions for producers to interact with each other as well as potential buyers and consumers.

Activities Performed: In mid-November, 2010, Georgia Organics launched a new dynamic and resource-based website to better educate and connect growers, consumers and businesses. The new website features one of the most comprehensive collections of grower resources and farmer education tools in the southeast that leverage web-based technology. Growers have direct access to practical training materials, and an active online forum which discusses pertinent issues and answers questions on sustainable production practices. The website also serves to link farmers with consumers and institutions seeking locally grown organic food.

Beneficiaries

Farmer Education – Approximately 1,773 farmers were reached through the annual conference, workshops and field days. Some of the workshops offered are listed below. Emphasis was placed upon organic specialty crop education.

“A Day in the Life” of a Successful Organic/Sustainable Farmer. Alex Hitt, Peregrine Farms.

A day in the life of a typical farmer sharing experiences on how to keep positive, make a profit and enjoy what you are doing. Attendance: 85 farmers, chefs, educators, local community

What Organic Is About. Daniel Parson of Gaia Gardens.

Overview of the principals and philosophy guiding organic farming and the benefits for the farmer and the community.

Attendance: 45 mix of farmers, chefs, educators, local community

Building Value with “Organic” with Theresa Marquez, Chief Marketing Executive from Organic Valley.

Marketing strategy based on scientific studies demonstrating benefits of organic food.

Understanding organic sales and consumer trends in your market.

Marketing, Communication and Outreach - We reached over 50,000 people through the Georgia Organics website. Anyone who accessed the website learned valuable information re organic specialty crops.

Lessons Learned

Farmer Education

Problems and Delays: Farmer services and education is a cornerstone of the past and current work of Georgia Organics. Given this area is our forte, no significant problems were experienced that impeded or delayed the progress in this area.

Final Outcome: Georgia Organics was able to impact a total 1,773 through this project. The most notable success of the efforts described above was that Georgia Organics was

able to tailor educational offerings to meet the needs of growers at all levels – be they beginning young farmers, conventional farmers seeking to transition, or current organic/sustainable farmers seeking support to improve their operations. Providing a diverse menu of educational opportunities and resources for growers at all stages was and will continue to be the best strategy to move the organic and sustainable agriculture movement forward in Georgia in terms of meeting the growing supply demands.

Future Project Plans: Georgia Organics is currently building a more robust schedule of educational offerings through the projects outlined above. These strategies seem to be very effective, particularly the conference and on-farm field days.

Marketing, Communication & Outreach

Problems and Delays: In late 2009, Georgia Organics made the decision to connect our internal database with the new website to allow for better flow of information and to ensure the website stayed as current as possible. For example, our internal database captures information from farmers on what they are growing, where they sell and what production methods and certifications they have. Without interconnectivity, farmers would have to be providing that information twice which was not efficient and threatened the ability of consumers to have the most accurate information from growers. The decision to link the two has delayed the process significantly but in the end, will be a wise delay that will pay sincere benefits once live.

Final Outcome: A full functional online hub for sustainable food and farms is in progress and is being tested and refined. The completion of the discussion board is expected to be finalized by the end of 2011.

Future Project Plans: The new Georgia Organics website went live November 2010 and Georgia Organics will now be employing a two-fold strategy to maintain the highest quality online hub for sustainable food and farms in Georgia. We will collect feedback from growers based upon the way the site is organized and what information is still needed, as well as researching trends and best practices from sustainable and organic production systems and business models from around the country to ensure the content stays fresh. In 2011, the plans are for the website to host the state's first Local Food widget, a tool that can be shared on any website that will provide consumers an access point for all local and sustainable food and farm sources within a geographic area of their zip code. This tool will allow more consumers to connect with their local farms and food sources.

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IV. Georgia Green Industry – Final Performance Report

Project Summary: The Georgia Green Industry Association and its partners planned, organized, and delivered 16 risk management educational events to help horticultural producers and landscape industry professionals in Georgia make educated business and crop production decisions, which will improve their profitability and allow them to sustain their businesses in the current market conditions due to the lingering drought and economy. The programs were offered on a regional basis and were the beginning steps to organizing local groups, or chapters, within the horticulture industry.

Project Approach: Within the first month of receiving funds, GGIA formed state-wide teams to conduct joint meetings and conference calls to identify the risk management needs of horticultural crop producers and agribusiness professionals. These meetings included representation from producers, extension personnel, research faculty, and industry suppliers. Seminar content and suggested speakers were developed during these meetings.

All educational committee meetings, listening sessions, and program workgroup sessions were held within 45 days of award notification.

Once curriculum guidelines were prepared, staff procured meeting sites in each of the six regions. Additionally, all speaker contacts were made, travel and audio-visual needs were addressed, and program descriptions were prepared for each location. These activities were on-going throughout the project as each training session was prepared.

Additionally, GGIA and University personnel developed an evaluation instrument to be used to determine the effectiveness of the program. These evaluations were reviewed quickly after each event and any necessary program changes were incorporated into future events.

Schedules were set and venues arranged for the training events within the first three months of the project and training was conducted within the next 9 months.

An aggressive promotional plan for each training session was implemented by GGIA. A variety of marketing tools were utilized for the marketing and promotion of the events and included the activities outlined below.

- Mailed early postcards announcing dates, location, and training agendas. Postcards economical way to reach many producers.
- Wrote press releases and conducted an industry-marketing campaign with appropriate regional and state publications to announce conferences. Including coverage in regional and state publications ensured that members of the association as well as non-members and new producers had access to the information.
- Designed informational flyers and provided same to Extension offices, Georgia Farm Bureau offices, and other local offices that are frequently visited by producers. Although many savvy producers are utilizing information obtained through the internet, many producers still rely on printed material as their primary information resource.
- Distributed promotional materials to county agents and industry suppliers to encourage participation in the seminars. Many industry suppliers are willing to include information about the seminars in their company mailings making it cost effective for GGIA.
- Prepare e-mail list serve addresses for industry contacts and send timely reminders regarding the events. E-mails are an effective and economical way to reach many producers and prove especially effective for reaching direct influencers of horticultural products, marketing and sales representatives for the industry, educators, and other agribusiness professionals.

In months 4-12 of the project, 16 training sessions were conducted across the state. During this time, promotional activities were on-going. Additionally, seminar evaluations were reviewed in order to make timely topic updates in future events, if needed.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved: The following full-day classes were planned, promoted, and executed by the staff of GGIA with assistance from The University of Georgia Horticulture faculty and several county agents in the UGA Cooperative Extension Service:

January 21, 2009	Basic Plant Breeding & Selection
Athens, GA	New Plants & Edible Landscapes Landscape Update Session The Business of the Green Industry
January 22, 2009 Athens, GA	Basic Pest ID for Greenhouse & Nursery Basic Plant Disease ID for Greenhouse & Nursery
January 23, 2009 Athens, GA	Landscape Workshop
February 5, 2009 Columbus, GA	Landscape Update
February 19, 2009 Rome, GA	Turfgrass Session Ornamental & Landscape Session Annuals & Perennials Session
February 24, 2009 Perry, GA	Turf & Lawn Session Color & Design Session Landscape Session Water & Irrigation
May 14, 2009 Savannah, GA	Tree Planting, Herbicides, Plant Diseases

The project description indicated that GGIA would produce at least 10 full-day training sessions for nursery & greenhouse growers and/or their direct influencers in the landscape industry. A total of 16 full-day seminars (minimum of 6 hours training each) were planned, promoted, and executed during the time of this partnership agreement. A total of 420 producers, landscapers and agribusiness professionals were trained in these sessions. Additionally, 318 producers, landscapers and agribusiness professionals attended trade shows, networking meetings, and chapter meetings where handouts of materials generated by the training sessions were made available. Over 820 member companies received training material produced by these training sessions via publications prepared by GGIA.

Two hour classes were planned and executed during the funding period as follows: five 2-hour classes in the Athens area, one 2-hour class in the Brunswick area, three 2-hour classes in the Columbus area, two 2-hour classes in the Canton area and one 2-hour class in the Rome area. A total of 12 2-hour trainings were conducted reaching 338 producers, landscapers and agribusiness professionals. The original proposal included plans for at least one meeting in 6 locales in Georgia, reaching a minimum of 180 people. Our actual project far exceeded initial goals.

Additionally, 5 areas in the state were organized as Chapters of the Georgia Green Industry Association and are now meeting quarterly or bi-monthly. This project provided the necessary resources to begin the organizational process. There will be an additional 4 areas in the state organized as Chapters of GGIA in the future.

Beneficiaries and how they benefitted: The multiple trainings conducted during this project provided nursery specialty crop growers and their direct influencer group of landscape contractors with pertinent and timely information on the following topics: marketing strategies, safety and pesticide handling practices, financial planning, crop insurance information, new plants and products that increase water efficiency in the landscape, and updated information from current research projects at The University of Georgia's Center for Applied Nursery Research. Knowledge gained from these training courses helped producers and landscapers stay current on new trends and to keep their businesses competitive during one of the worst drought times experienced in Georgia's history.

Lessons Learned: An integral part of success for numerous meetings, like those conducted in this project, includes involving local producers and direct influencers in all planning and execution processes of the project.

Additionally, promotion must be conducted by all involved parties to ensure success. Various methods, including mail, phone calls, and e-mail promotion is needed.

Contact Person:

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V. Coastal Organic Growers – Final Performance Report

Project Summary:

Coastal Organic Growers (COG), as a group of independent organic/sustainable farmers, had sales of specialty organic produce that were inconsistent and often not sufficient to cover costs

of harvesting, packing and transporting produce to the market or distribution point. There was no systematic advertising or promotional system in place to successfully market products. We frequently encountered potential customers who were unaware of the local farmers markets or had just discovered them by chance. Local entities, i.e. government, organizations, etc., were virtually unaware of COG's existence and thus frequently used mass distribution sources to provide food for events. This project was designed to improve sales of specialty organic crops by increasing awareness of availability and providing knowledge of the value of such products.

COG developed a public relations program designed specifically to attract buying consumers to individual farm members' products. In so doing, we were able to increase sales of organic specialty products and attract more customers to individual farms and booths at markets.

At the conclusion of the project, we had a logo, website, and various literature pieces which helped to drive customers to the farmer. We thus enhanced our competitiveness and profitability as growers of specialty organic crops in southeast Georgia, while producing a quality product that enhances consumer experience with organic and sustainable farm production.

Project Approach:

COG first hired the firm Bliss Lane out of Savannah, Georgia, to design a logo which would be used on all signage, literature, and ads. We then developed a website, www.coastalorganicgrowers.org to tell the public at large who we are and what we are about. The website lists location and contact information for each farm member.

We published assorted literature (brochure, postcards, seed packets, banners, signage, etc.) designed to explain who we are and to drive consumers to our farm membership. We sought advertising through numerous channels, including displaying at fairs, events, etc. The results were outstanding.

We sponsored programs for area groups to meet farmers, enjoy organic foods, and learn what organic really means. We distributed literature at these events in order to attract potential buying customers back to the market and to our farmers.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

Our goal was always to increase our specialty crop product sales and attract new customers while retaining current customers. By increasing awareness of who we are and what we are about, we accomplished our goals and actually gave current customers more reassurance to remain loyal to us. Attached you will find some charts indicating the increase in sales for 2008-2009, and 2009-2010. From 2008-2009, increases in individual specialty crop farm sales ranged from 0% to 50%, with the majority being only 10%-15%. From 2009-2010, increased specialty crop sales ranged from 5%-75%, with the majority being over 30%. This was a significant increase in sales for this group of farmers.

By increasing our image and improving public perception, we also increased sales through means outside the local markets when organizations began to seek out our farmers to purchase food for

public events. For each of those, COG was included as a sponsor of the event, resulting in even more public awareness.

Beneficiaries:

Both the farm members of Coastal Organic Growers and the general public at large have benefited from this project. The farmers have increased specialty crop sales and some have even been able to offer employment opportunities in a local suppressed economy. Consumers benefited in a more esoteric sense in that they were able to acquire locally grown specialty crop foods free of chemicals that could improve their health conditions and that of their families. They also expressed a relief to be able to purchase organic specialty foods at reasonable prices at the local level. The local economies benefited because money was circulated within the system, thus generating a more direct impact from the exchange. Local public entities benefited as they partnered with COG to increase awareness and improve public image. COG also increased membership and attracted new farmers who practice organic/sustainable farming. As a whole, the project was a win-win situation for all of Southeastern Georgia.

Valuable partnerships and alliances have grown out of this project. Coastal Organic Growers has continued to develop and grow as an ally with Georgia Organics and local entities including chefs, governments, schools, and organizations. Ultimately, these results will benefit the state by improving Georgia's rank among other states in both organic and specialty crop sales.

Lessons Learned:

A most valuable lesson learned was that even though farmers tend to be extremely independent in making decisions about their individual operations, they all can benefit by cooperating to some extent to reach out and bring in potential customers.

Also, it is important to note that as farmers were increasing customer bases, consumers were increasing knowledge. Every farmer member improved public relations efforts and worked to become more knowledgeable of his/her own products. In the process, this knowledge was passed on to the consumers who developed a broader knowledge and appreciation of healthy foods.

Contact person for the project:

Connie Hayes

912-687-3371

connie.jim.hayes@gmail.com

Additional Information:

COG Logo

Sample of a postcard used to distribute

Listed as sponsor at GA Organic State Conference:

<http://www.georgiaorganics.org/conference/2011expo.aspx>

VI. Ross and Company – Final Performance Report

Project Summary:

Through a series of community outreach learning sessions, students were introduced to characteristics, growing patterns and production of both in and out of season specialty crops. Children were exposed to alternative snacks that include fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables that are healthy, locally grown and tasty. Students were given the tools to making healthier food choices at home, school and within the community.

Project Approach:

The program was introduced in five local community-based organizations that provide learning services to over 100 children. Children were introduced to a variety of activities relating to the health benefits of eating fresh fruits and vegetables; their production, characteristics and consumption of locally grown specialty crop fresh fruit and vegetables; interactive presentations; and samples of Georgia's fresh fruit and vegetables. In addition, ten children were selected from each community-based organization to answer survey questions.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

The activities far exceeded what we projected in the original approved project. The participants were exposed to planting, growing characteristics and tastes of often overlooked locally produced specialty crops which included muscadines, scuppernongs, pecans, and other vegetables. We planted over two hundred seedlings and provided an overview of growing characteristics. All presentations included samplings of fresh specialty crops. All presentations promoted developing healthy eating habits, with the focus upon decreasing junk food consumption, increasing physical activity, and character development. These objectives were met by having the children take a very active part in determining where healthy snacks can be found, selecting and assisting with the preparation and serving of snacks to peers, thereby promoting leadership and personal growth.

The project increased the awareness of the benefits from consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables through educational presentations. Initial surveys were provided and completed. Healthy and unhealthy options were given; unhealthy options were chosen often by the children. After the presentations, a second survey was introduced comparing healthy and unhealthy; this time, only healthy options were actually chosen by the children.

The program saw that once the children gained awareness of the benefits and good taste of locally grown specialty crops, the number of children likely to make healthy choices of fresh fruits and vegetables for snacks increased dramatically.

Beneficiaries:

Beneficiaries included all of the children who participated in the program, as well as anyone they shared their new knowledge with, including, for example, their parents/guardians, siblings, and peers.

Lessons Learned:

This program has great potential in reaching children who would otherwise never be exposed to healthy eating. Funding is a serious problem at this time, however. With the current economy, it is much more difficult to obtain grants and private donations.

Contact Person:

Ross & Company, Inc.
Jennifer Brooks
rossco1@bellsouth.net
404-625-8137

VII. *North Georgia Technical College – Final Performance Report*

- **Project Summary:** North Georgia Technical College used the \$10,000 award of specialty crops funds to enhance credit programs of study within the Environmental Sciences Department. The Environmental Horticulture program incorporates many aspects of specialty crop production into the existing state curriculum. In the areas of greenhouse production, nursery production, garden center management, and plant propagation, emphasis is placed on the development of niche markets using specialty crops; for example, locally grown herbs or native plants. In an effort to maximize the effectiveness of the instruction in these areas North Georgia Technical College enhanced an older greenhouse in order to better promote the production and/or use of locally produced products, especially niche market specialty crops. In addition, several smaller pieces of equipment (walk-behind spreaders) were added for use by students studying not only horticulture, but also wildlife, fisheries, and turf and golf course management. These programs teach students to value hardy, native plants that not only may be grown and sold for residential use, but also marketed for use to protect streambeds, as food for wildlife, or to beautify a golf course.
- **Project Approach:** North Georgia Technical College purchased the walk-behind spreaders as described in the application. The college purchased supplies and updated the older greenhouse. North Georgia Technical College contributed labor, as well as additional funds for other necessary materials for the renovation. All purchases and contracts were completed following policies and guidelines established by the Technical College System of Georgia and were subject to an annual audit. The purchases and work began under the supervision of Greg Roach, who at the beginning of the project, served as chair of the Environmental Sciences program. The project was completed by Joshua Jackson, who now fills that role. As such, Mr. Jackson also worked with instructors in the program to include instruction about the importance of specialty crops to the economy of Georgia.
- **Goals and Outcomes:** While existing curriculum and instruction emphasized the development of niche marketing, the growth of native plants, the importance of branding, and other content and techniques key to the success of specialty crops,

there was a specific need. The main greenhouse used to demonstrate these techniques was older and needed updating. By replacing the environmental systems and outer skin, this greenhouse was made functional for additional years of instruction. Students in each of the environmental sciences programs have benefited from an efficient, brighter environment in which to practice these valuable skills. The addition of several walk-behind spreaders allowed practical application of production techniques outside the greenhouse. The overall project goal was for students in each of the identified environmental sciences programs to receive instruction about the importance of specialty crop production and marketing.

All Specialty Crop funding was expended. Equipment and supplies were purchased, and the renovation work completed. The greenhouse continues to be used to promote the use of locally produced plants, especially niche-market specialty crops. The walk-behind spreaders are being used by students studying horticulture, wildlife, fisheries, and turf and golf course management. Almost a fourth of technical college graduates in Georgia go on to start their own small business. To survive in the green industry, the small business owner must discover a specialty crop mentality, and understand how to produce or use hearty, marketable plants. The expected primary outcome for this project was simple: updates that resulted in a more functional greenhouse and the purchase of additional equipment to support specialty crop instruction at North Georgia Technical College. The secondary outcome was that many students benefited from these improvements and received information about the use and/or production of specialty crops.

- **Beneficiaries:** The project benefited all students in the Environmental Horticulture, Environmental Technology, and Turf and Golf Course Management programs of study. The enrollment in those programs totaled 128 for FY 2008. The equipment and updates are projected to serve students for another ten years, thus impacting over 1,200 students. As many of these students will be employed in Georgia's green industry, the economy of the state will also benefit from this grant.
- **Lessons Learned:** An emphasis on using native plants is important for success in the green industry.
- **Additional Information:** NGTC students used the skills learned in this project in many ways (see attachments).

Sampling of Related Articles from NGTC Website:

May, 2010



Rotaract Plants Rain Garden

5/6/2010 - Last fall, the North Georgia Technical College Rotaract Club began a long and carefully planned learning experience to create a rain garden. Sponsored by the Habersham Rotary Club and with the help of the Soque River Watershed Partnership, the project is a part of the Clean Water Act 319 Grant.

From calculating the rain runoff from the roof of the school's dormitory, to analyzing the soil, to preparing the garden bed, members of the Rotaract club have been assisted by Soque Watershed Coordinator and NGTC Instructor Duncan Hughes. In the last few weeks, the Environmental Horticulture students have also been involved under the guidance of instructor Craig Thurmond.

After several postponed dates due to inclement weather, the groups came together the first week of May to plant the native flora chosen for the garden. The area is now lush with Cinnamon Ferns, Blue Flag Irises, Mulhy Grass, St. John's Wart, River Oats, Swamp Sunflowers, and Blue Star Asters. "Those are the common names, but when you see a horticulture student, they can tell you the botanical names," said Hughes.

"We chose a variety of wetlands species for this garden," said Thurmond as he gave instructions to the group assembled, cautioning them to work in shifts so as not to tire in the hot sun. The garden bed had actually been contoured to allow for what he termed "micro habitats for moisture" to make the best use of the rain runoff. The plants themselves will also add to the visual interest as they grow to various heights.

It didn't take long for the entire garden to be planted – approximately forty-five minutes. This Rain Garden is designed to redirect rainwater to low depressions where it can be filtered and absorbed back into the earth.

For more information on creating rain gardens or a list of locally available resources, contact the Soque River Watershed Association at 706-754-9382 or e-mail soque@windstream.net.



Students Connect Protecting Natural Resources

5/6/2010 - As part of the Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant, North Georgia Technical College, in conjunction with several organizations such as the Georgia Cooperative Extension, the Habersham County Farm Bureau, the City of Clarkesville, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, spent a beautiful day in Pitts Park showing students from the North Habersham 6th Grade Academy techniques for assessing natural resources. Several of NGTC's Environmental Technology students were on hand to show the sixth graders the importance of evaluating aquatic life in the river, identifying trees, and checking water quality. Using special equipment, two of the college students scanned the river with electrodes while a third gathered the fish for examination. At another station, Instructor Kevin Peyton guided the children through the process of collecting and identifying “benthic macro invertebrates” (bottom-dwelling bugs) to see if the river was healthy enough to support a variety of species. Under the shady canopy of a picnic pavilion, three NGTC students passed test tubes to each in their group so they could perform tests on salinity, pH balance, and oxygen levels. “The river was muddy and stressed because of the recent rain, but that helped us explain why these tests are so important,” noted Peyton.

Other demonstrations such as tree identification, agriculture awareness, and fly-fishing were staged throughout the park giving the kids a chance to participate with hands-on activities as they learned about the environment. Over 250 students, broken into groups of 15-20, made their way through 11 stations, each manned with representatives from the various organizations. “This is the second year we’ve been able to do this,” said Duncan Hughes of the Soque River Watershed Partnership. “It is so important to give these kids a chance to really get involved – to touch and feel the bugs and see the water tests because that really is the best way that they learn.

“This was a great opportunity not only for the North Hab students, but especially for the North Georgia Tech students,” noted Peyton. “One of the best ways to become an expert is by teaching others.”

Watershed Association, the City of Clarkesville and others, students learned about counting marine life in the river, identifying trees, and checking water quality. Watershed Association, the City of Clarkesville and others, students learned about counting marine life in the river, identifying trees, and checking water quality.

Comments from the sixth graders were unanimous: “That’s cool!” could be heard regularly by any passerby.

For more information on activities related to the 319 Grant, contact Duncan Hughes at 706-754-7872. For more information on the Environmental Technology program at NGTC, contact Kevin Peyton at 706-754-7873.

August, 2010



Horticulture Students Practice Landscape Installation

8/9/2010 - Returning to Clarkesville Elementary School next week will be a beautiful sight, thanks to the North Georgia Technical College Horticulture students who refreshed the garden plot by the entrance sign. The landscaping class got some first-hand practice at fulfilling a landscaping design and identifying herbaceous plants all while performing a community service.

Clarkesville Elementary School’s Martha Eller and Principal Dr. Susan Turpin contacted NGTC Horticulture Technology Instructor Craig Thurmond about the possibility of refreshing the area around the school sign. “I had been stressing about the entrance all summer,” smiled Dr. Turpin.

"We had some plants in the greenhouse reserved for community projects, and this was the perfect place to put them," said Thurmond. "As an added bonus, Dr. Turpin had some

money in her budget and those plants purchased were ones we did not have on hand for our herbaceous plant identification lesson."

"I'm sure all of our students will be proud when they see it on the first day of school! Mr. Thurmond has been so helpful," said Dr. Turpin. "This is far more than I'd hoped for. They even brought over a rain barrel to help introduce good water conservation practices to our classes. It is awesome!"

Because the bed was already in place and the soil was good, it took the group of ten students only a couple of hours to place the ornamental grasses, daylilies, Carissa hollies, burgundy Loropetalum and other perennials.

"Last Spring the college students participated for the first time in the international PLANET competition and they are all very excited about entering the Landscaping Installation event next year," Craig explained. "Our plan is to do one community project each quarter that will serve the purpose of giving the students experience with a particular aspect of landscaping." For more information on Horticulture programs of study at North Georgia Technical College, contact Mr. Thurmond at 706-754-7794 or cthurmond@northatech.edu.

February, 2011



Danny Moe (seated) with instructor Craig Thurmond

Turf & Golf Course Management Student Wins Even Before Competition Starts

2/23/11 - Many of the country's best and brightest green industry students will converge in Joliet, Illinois, March 17-2011, to compete in the PLANET's 35th Annual Student Career Days. North Georgia Technical College is sending a cadre of its best and brightest horticulture students, but even before they board the plane, they can already claim victory. Student Danny Moe won the competition for creating this year's PLANET competition logo.

This logo will be placed on all of the shirts given to each person participating in the PLANET competition, which is expected to attract approximately 1000 competitors from around the world. For his efforts, Danny will receive a check for \$500.00 from PLANET.

“PLANET had very specific details that they were looking for in the design and Danny did a great job of meeting and exceeding their requirements,” said NGTC Environmental Horticulture Instructor Craig Thurmond. “Several of our students created entries, using both hand graphics learned in the landscape design class and computer graphics.”

Students have the chance to compete in events that are directly related to the skills necessary for a career in the green industry. The event also offers a Career Fair which gives the students a chance to meet prospective employers in the industry and discuss employment opportunities.

“We’re off on a good foot heading out to this competition and we hope to have several other winners when we return March 20,” said Thurmond. “Our goal for this year’s NGTC PLANET team is to do our very best and continue to prove to all that technical education can and will compete at all levels in our industry.” Danny and his wife, Rhonda, live in Hiawassee; he is studying Turf and Golf Course Management.

Student Career Days is an annual three-day competitive event among students enrolled in horticulture programs from colleges and universities across the country and internationally. The 2011 event is sponsored by the Professional Landcare Network, www.landcarenetwork.org. For more information on North Georgia Technical College’s programs of study or professional organization affiliations, contact 706-754-7700 or visit www.northgatech.edu.

March, 2011



Horticulture and Turf Management Students Dig Deep and Place High in National Competition

3/21/2011 - Many of the country's best and brightest green industry students gathered together to put their skills to the test in Joliet, Illinois, March 17-20, 2011, for the PLANET's 35th Annual Student Career Days. North Georgia Technical College participated for the second consecutive year, sending 18 high performing students for the three-day event, and boasting several high-placed awards.

NGTC students garnered three second place slots and several more in the top ten. Angie Deputy placed second out of 79 entries in the Turf and Weed Identification contest and fifth out of 96 in Woody Plant ID. Michael Mays placed second out of 35 in the Irrigation Design; he also placed 11th in the Personnel Management category with teammate Jeff Losee. Joe Podany placed second out of 31 entries in the Irrigation Troubleshooting competition.

Also ranking in the top ten were Kent Cantrell who placed 9th out of 48 in the Compact Excavator Operation competition, Johnathan Merck who placed 9th out of 58 in Skid Steer Operation, and Tim Payne who placed 9th out of 38 in Tractor/Backhoe Operation.

And even before they boarded the plane, they had already claimed victory as student Danny Moe had won the competition for creating this year's PLANET competition logo. His logo was placed on all of the shirts given to each person participating in the PLANET competition.

The NGTC team competed against 807 students and 60 schools from both two year and four year colleges and major Universities like BYU, Chattahoochee Tech, Penn State, Ohio State, Auburn, North Carolina State, The University of Georgia, Michigan State, Clemson and Mississippi State just to name a few.

"We truly believe that each student that attended not only learned something about the 'green' industry and job opportunities, but they also learned something about themselves and the quality of education that they are receiving here at NGTC," said NGTC instructor Craig Thurmond.

From Habersham County, three students will be travelling to the PLANET competition. Environmental Horticulture AAS student Hilary Adams of Turnerville placed 14th in Woody Ornamental Plant Identification 25th in Annual and Perennial Identification, and 29th in 3-D Design. Turf and Golf Course Management AAS student Kent Cantrell of Mt. Airy placed 9th in Compact Excavator Operation, and 34th in Landscape Plant Installation. Environmental Horticulture Diploma student Jon Merck of Clarkesville placed 9th in Skid Steer Operation.

From Hall County, three students will be travelling to the PLANET competition. Turf & Golf Course Management AAS student Jeff Losee of Gainesville placed 11th with the Personnel Management team and 12th in Turf & Weed Identification. Environmental Horticulture AAS student William Royal placed 28th in Leadership Skills. Turf and Golf Course Management AAS student Carson Turner of Flowery Branch placed 14th with the

Irrigation Assembly team.

From Hartwell, Ryan Harper, who is pursuing a Turf and Golf Course Management diploma, placed 22nd with the Wood Construction team, and 40th in Paver/Hardscape Installation.

Environmental Horticulture diploma student Judy Hilliard of Dahlongega travelled to the PLANET competition and placed 35th in the Sales Presentation event.

Two students from Rabun County will be travelling to the PLANET competition. Environmental Horticulture diploma student Whitney Loges of Lakemont placed 38th in Exterior Landscape Design. Turf and Golf Course Management diploma student Justin Skelton of Lakemont placed 22nd with the Wood Construction team.

Environmental Horticulture diploma student Tim Payne of Blairsville will travel to the PLANET competition and participated in three events placing 9th in Tractor Loader Backhoe Operation, 34th with the Landscape Plant Installation team, and 41st with the Truck and Trailer Operation team.

Three students from White County, all studying Turf and Golf Course Management, will be traveled to the PLANET competition. Michael Mays of Sautee Nacoochee placed 2nd in Irrigation Design, 11th with the Personnel Management team, and 14th in Irrigation Assembly. Mays ranked 116 overall out of more than 800 competitors. Travis Partin of Cleveland placed 41st with the Truck & Trailer Operation team. Joe Podany of Cleveland placed 2nd in Irrigation Troubleshooting.

Angie Deputy of Pembroke is in the Turf & Golf AAS program. This was her second year competing at PLANET. This year she placed 5th in that same category. She also placed 2nd in Turf and Weed Identification and 13th in Annual and Perennial Plant Identification. Last year, Angie placed 3rd in the Woody Plant Identification; she was the highest placing NGTC student.

Dinah Harrison of Appling is an Environmental Horticulture Diploma student. She placed 34th with the Landscape Plant Installation team and 63rd in Business Management.

“NGTC students in the Turf and Golf Course Management program and Horticulture program were given a wonderful opportunity to compare their skills and knowledge against other quality colleges across the country,” said Turf and Golf Course Management instructor Josh Jackson. “Our goal was to build on last year’s event and increase the student’s confidence level.”

“The students not only competed but spent time in workshops and attended a career fair. Further, several students were sought out by recruiters because of their performance,” said Vice President of Academic Affairs Rex Bishop. “The students did an outstanding job representing the college, and we look forward to them putting together a full team for next year and competing in all of the competitive events.”

Student Career Days is an annual three-day competitive event among students enrolled

in horticulture programs from colleges and universities across the country and internationally. The 2011 event is sponsored by the Professional Landcare Network, www.landcarenetwork.org. For more information on North Georgia Technical College's programs of study or professional organization affiliations, contact 706-754-7700 or visit www.northgatech.edu.

April, 2011



Brandon Lowe talks to NGTC students about potential careers

International Landscape Company Courts NGTC Students

The recent trip to the horticulture industry's PLANET Competition last month is continuing to pay off for North Georgia Technical College's Turf and Golf Course Management and Environmental Horticulture programs. Connections made there are bringing more interest and possibilities to the students completing their programs of study.

Recently, Brandon Lowe, Senior Regional Recruiter for the highly respected ValleyCrest Landscape Companies, travelled to the campus to spend the morning in a highly interactive question and answer session with the students. While most students across the campus were enjoying their morning break, the students in these two programs listened intently and actively sought information on topics ranging from the day-to-day operations in the industry to what kind of options there were for internships to what to wear to an interview.

Lowe gave the students several tips on how to make their resume and application stand out from the others. To land a job in a high profile company with more than 10,000 employees, additional credentials such as professional organization affiliations and leadership positions in extracurricular activities, make a candidate very attractive. "If you have a good variety of skills, the more valuable you are to the company," he explained. Mr. Lowe noted that the reputation of his organization is based on quality and providing timely and accurate care for all aspects of their business from landscape design and installation to maintenance and support. "We have a lot of great competition which we appreciate because it keeps us on our toes and motivates us to stay at the top."

Mr. Lowe also reiterated what the NGTC instructors caution the students about frequently, and that is maintaining a professional appearance. “Yes, it is important to have a neat appearance even if you aren’t wearing a suit and tie,” he said. Even the way phones are answered, messages are delivered or calls are returned can have a huge impact on whether or not a candidate is considered for employment. “Our students were noticed at the PLANET competition,” said Environmental Horticulture Instructor Craig Thurmond. “The networking at events afford opportunities that will set a student on the career path of their dreams.”

The NGTC team competed against 807 students and 60 schools from both two year and four year colleges and major Universities like BYU, Chattahoochee Tech, Penn State, Ohio State, Auburn, North Carolina State, The University of Georgia, Michigan State, Clemson and Mississippi State just to name a few. For more information on the Environmental Horticulture program, contact Craig Thurmond, cthurmond@northgatech.edu, 706-754-7794; for information in the Turf and Golf Course Management program, contact Josh Jackson, 706-754-7751, jjackson@northgatech.edu.

VIII. *Georgia Public Broadcasting*

Project Summary:

Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) produced 15 specialty crop vignettes. They aired on GPB Television 69 total times (67 during this grant). GPB doubled up the airing of vignettes through several summer months to reflect the bountiful overlapping Georgia harvests. There were also 268 total spots (during this grant) aired on GPB Radio. The Georgia Cooks website included the vignettes, as well as accompanying recipes. From planning to pre-production to production, this grant, in combination with the 2009 specialty crop grant, made it possible to complete the entire project.

The 15 crops highlighted were: pecans, Christmas trees, wine/vineyards, greens, strawberries, Vidalia® Onions, peaches, melons, blueberries, peppers, tomatoes, field peas/beans, apples, nursery crops and honey.

Project Approach:

Each vignette gave the history of the crop, information about the crop, beauty footage of the crop, a Georgia farmer/farm that produces the item, and how the item would be used by the consumer.

The GPB website has each vignette available for viewing, and GPB’s Georgia Cooks website is another resource for the Georgia consumer to learn how to prepare recipes including specialty crops. The following is the Specialty Crop Vignettes schedule:

	Crop	Air Dates	# airings
1	Pecans	11.14.09 - 1.16.10 - 7 times	7
2	Christmas Trees	12.11.09 - 12.19.09 - 3 times	3
3	Wine/Vineyards	1.23.10 - 2.13.10	4
4	Greens	2.20.10 - 4.10.10	8
5	Strawberries	4.17, 4.28, 5.1, 5.8, 5.12	5
6	Vidalia Onions	5.22, 5.28, 5.29, 5.29, 6.15	5
7	Peaches	6.19, 6.19, 6.26, 7.3	4
8	Melons	7.3, 7.10, 7.17, 7.24	4
9	Blueberries	7.24, 7.26, 8.9	3
10	Peppers	8.13, 8.14, 8.21, 8.28	4
11	Tomatoes	8.14, 8.21, 8.28, 9.4	4
12	Field Peas/Beans	9.4, 9.11, 9.13, 9.25	4
13	Apples	10.2, 10.9, 10.16, 10.23	4
14	Nursery Crops	10.23, 10.30, 11.6, 11.13	4
15	Honey	11.20, 11.27, 12.4, 12.11	4
	Total Airings		67

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

This project increased awareness, marketability, and consumption of Georgia Grown specialty crops. Combined with the 2009 grant, over 8.2 million Georgians learned about specialty crops in Georgia. Total specialty crop sales at the state farmers' markets and compiled numbers from community markets and grocery stores in 2009 were \$42,826,022.95. Total sales for 2010 were \$47,539,582.14. This represents an 11 percent increase.

Each vignette was viewed by a GPB Television audience = to a Nielsen 1, which is an average audience size for GPB Television and equates to one percent of Georgia viewers and households. This Nielsen number 1 equates to 31,754 Georgia households as of our Nielsen data from October 2010. Over 1,905,240 Georgia HOUSEHOLDS have seen information about Specialty Crops in Georgia on GPB Television. Another approach is based upon a Georgia population of 9.7 million people, and 1 percent or a Nielsen 1 rating equals 97,198 people. Therefore, 60 episodes were viewed by 5,831,880 PEOPLE.

GPB aired over 200 spots on GPB Radio, equal to 4 spots each week for the past 50 weeks. At the completion of this project, 268 Radio spots have aired. Each spot reflects the current Specialty Crop in season and informs the listener that the crop can be found at their local grocery stores and farmers markets. Each radio spot is heard by an average size GPB Radio audience of 6,400 per quarter hour based upon Arbitron data from October 2010. Therefore, 1,280,000 Georgians have heard information about Specialty Crops. Incorporating the 2009 grant, these spots continued to air for the full length of the contract until February 28, 2011.

Finally, the Georgia Cooks web site has been accessed by over 4,038 visitors since November of 2009, with monthly numbers growing since GPB's web site refresh.

In total, GPB has reached over 7.1 million Georgians with information about Specialty Crops in Georgia. The program, using the 2009 grant, had 1 more crop to highlight, another 68 radio spots to air, and another 4 months online, where all of the vignettes are archived, along with rich content about each of the crops.

Beneficiaries:

Georgia consumers who saw a vignette or heard a radio spot benefited when they purchased Georgia Grown specialty crops; they purchased food that is not only good tasting, but healthy for you. Georgia farmers and growers benefited because of their products being promoted, which increased their sales.

Lessons Learned:

A quick and highly visible way to promote Georgia Grown specialty crops is to use television and radio, in addition to computers. Different facets of the population use different types of media. Television and radio are older media techniques, but still extremely important. Using websites by consumers has increased tremendously. A large number of Georgians, as well as out-of-state consumers can be reached in a short period of time.

We need to expand on the vignettes and the radio spots (either more of them, or make them longer in length).

Contact Person:

Carol Danford, Corporate Account Executive
Georgia Public Broadcasting
404-685-2583
cdanford@gpb.org

Additional Information:

To access the archived vignettes and additional Georgia specialty crop information, please go to: www.gpb.org/georgiacooks

IX. *Georgia Beekeepers Association – Final Performance Report*

Project Summary

This project promoted the Honeybee and beekeeping industry to the people of Georgia, including the use and consumption of Georgia honey and honeybee-related products. Secondary goals were to foster awareness of honeybee-related issues and promote conservation of honeybees and honeybee habitats in the state of Georgia.

Quality of life issues are important to the citizens of Georgia. Quality food, produced locally and healthy food alternatives are in great demand. It is important to the buying public that these food products are produced with minimal environmental impact and that they are produced in a sustainable manner. Honey and honey-related products fit all these definitions.

Project Approach

There are approximately 2,000 beekeepers in the state of Georgia with over 60,000 registered colonies of honeybees. This project increased the awareness of Georgia honey as a healthy food product, which should have resulted in a subsequent increase in consumption; this would then benefit Georgia honey producers with increased sales and accompanying revenue. However, because of the state economy, consumers cut back on their purchasing, which reduced sales. The economy also affected growers' investment in new equipment and additional colonies.

Increasing numbers of beekeepers was difficult to determine at this time, but with an increase, it would aid consumers in their quest for locally produced foods. Honey production is ideally suited to smaller properties and compatible with an expanding population base in Georgia communities. Initial investment for upstart beekeepers is also less costly to small producers than many segments of conventional agriculture.

Project Approach: Key Components

Honey Commodity promotions at farmers markets, community festivals and other community programs and activities were conducted. Tasting events featuring Georgia Honey and honey related food products were an integral part of such events. Such promotions provided face-to-face educational opportunities with the general public, supported by members of the Georgia Beekeepers Association (GBA).

Promotion and Delivery of Georgia Beekeepers Association Meetings

Meetings were advertised in press releases. Promotion of such meetings allowed better notification to the general public interested in Honeybees and beekeeping. This promotion created higher attendance at GBA meetings and improved recruitment of new members.

Georgia Beekeepers Association Jr. Beekeeper Educational Events

These events introduced children and young adults, ages of 5 – 18, to beekeeping. Parents or guardians were encouraged to attend such events and share in the educational opportunity. Attendees were taught basic honeybee biology. They were introduced to the various techniques involved in keeping honeybees as well as the assembly, proper use and maintenance of equipment.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Awareness of the quality and flavor of Georgia honey was heightened by honey tastings conducted across the state. Participating consumers noted that locally produced Georgia honey had excellent flavor and was ranked above store brand honey by comparison. There was also an increased awareness of varietal honey produced in Georgia such as Sourwood Honey from the Blue Ridge Mountains and Tupelo Honey from the Savannah and Ogeechee River Valleys.

Over 600 individuals offered up their taste buds in honey tasting events. These consumers demonstrated a preference for locally produced, Georgia Honey as a result of their participation. Store brand honey was ranked as a lower preference item overall by 96% of tasters. Consumer education in reading and evaluating label content such as country or origin, product description by variety and source blending increased awareness and ability to recognize quality and identify Georgia produced honey. Overall sales of honey decreased slightly due to the economic downturn and decreased disposable income on food items considered to be luxury items. Consumers

continued to purchase Georgia Honey as a preference item, but did so by purchasing smaller quantities (smaller container size).

Educational events conducted by the Georgia Beekeepers Association and affiliated local associations reached over 3,000 individuals statewide. They increased public awareness of the benefit of honeybees to the environment and as a first line defense against the spread of Africanized honeybees. A cross section of participants in said programs were given verbal pre-program honeybee knowledge assessments and a general overall score was determined as an average of the responses. At the end of an educational program, a random cross section was sampled for post-program knowledge gain, which was again determined by the average response. Knowledge gain concerning the benefits of honeybees to their community and the environment was significant with an average increase of 31%. Many reported that “urban myths” pertaining to the aggressiveness and unfriendly behavior of the honeybee were dispelled. They also reported a surprised realization that the honeybee industry in Georgia covered such a broad gamut of the industry at large and that Georgia was one of the leading producers of queen honeybees, package bees and beekeeping equipment in the nation.

Jr. Beekeeper Youth Education Programs were attended by more than 200 youth. They were taught basic honeybee biology including life cycle, habitat requirements, role in pollination and honey production.

Beneficiaries and How They Benefitted

The Georgia Beekeepers Association experienced a 26% overall attendance increase at annual meetings, due to better communication and delivery of information facilitated by grant dollars.

Increased program attendance allowed for improved dissemination of knowledge gained through a broader base of information transfer back at the community level.

Visual aids and informational handouts improved the overall delivery and understanding of research based information delivered at the Georgia Beekeepers regular educational meetings. Return of said informational handouts to community beekeeping associations allowed for a broad based dissemination of this information across the state. Local groups then utilized this information to positively influence local municipalities in their decision making process concerning beekeeping rules and restrictions.

This enabling at the local level in many cases allowed local honey producers to operate without the impediment of ordinances and code restrictions, allowing for better productivity and further development of small business.

Lessons Learned

Coordinating volunteers on a large scale is like herding cats with a broom when trying to present a unity of voice. Casual training seminars were developed to provide a more centric and unified message for consumers and governing bodies. It was found that local governing boards responded positively when presented with fact-based information about the beekeeping industry and were grateful for such information.

Honey tastings were extremely popular and existing stocks of honey for said purpose were depleted rapidly at tasting events. Increased amounts of honey are needed at such events to be successful. The general public responded positively and had more of an influence on store managers stocking decisions than anticipated.

The demand for promotional literature far outstripped the resources provided for in the grant. Three times the information would still not cover demand.

The grant has been a very positive experience for all involved.

Contact Information

Keith Fielder
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Eatonton, GA 31024
706-485-4151
kfielder@uga.edu

Additional Information

Georgia Beekeepers Association Web site: www.gabeekeeping.com



Honey Judges make their decisions at the Georgia State Hone Show



Visitor at commodity promotion reviewing promotional literature provided by grant



Individuals provide contact information for product and industry updates



Georgia Beekeepers Association Commodity Promotion Booth at the Georgia Farm Bureau Annual Convention. Pictured is Keith Fielder

X. Georgia Winegrowers Association – Final Performance Report

Project Summary:

The goal of the project was to develop and formalize a market recognizable and consistent brand for the association that would be used in a marketing campaign through print medium. Although the organization had the slogan “Taste a Perfect Day in Georgia” it had no real meaning to the general public in the sense if the slogan was not directly embedded in a picture with a glass of wine or something related to wine, the public did not know what to associate the slogan with.

Project Approach:

We began developing our ads incorporating pictures of wine related subjects to develop the association and awareness of the Georgia Wine Industry. Additionally, we set out to define and prioritize our markets. After interviewing the wineries and research provided from the University of Georgia, it was clear our primary target market is metro Atlanta.

We developed a strategic marketing plan that was directed at Atlanta, focusing on the publications where the demographics of the readership were parallel with that of the

people who purchase wine. This approach gave us the ability to better use the limited resources (time and money).

We chose 4 primary publications (NE Georgia Living, Southern Distinction, Travel Comm Guides, and Georgia Magazine) to advertise. We also developed a brochure (22,000 copies) that is distributed through the States Welcome Centers, WAG's Affiliate members and other tourism related businesses throughout the state.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

In our proposal for this grant, our desire was to increase visitorship to the wineries and events by 15% over 2.5 years. We far exceeded that in our first event that was the 2009 "Wine Highway Weekend". We experienced a 104% increase in the event (658 vs. 1319). In addition our member wineries have experienced a steady 25% increase in visitation as well as sales.

These results have proven that a focused and deliberate marketing effort is far more feasible than a shotgun approach to marketing even when the selected medium may be individually more expensive.

Beneficiaries:

Not only are the members of WAG direct beneficiaries, but the all the businesses in the NE Georgia Wine Region as well. With increased visitation to our wineries to the extent we have experienced, lodging, food service and retail shops have benefited as well. In discussions with our Affiliate Members, which include the services mentioned above, all have indicated growth in their business as well.

Additionally, the State of Georgia and other state municipalities as a whole benefit through the increased revenue from the taxes generated by the visitors spending.

Lessons Learned:

We found that consistency in the marketing /branding message is a key element in creating product recognition. Once we had that part of the formula, we also discovered many of the tourism related agencies (GDED, AG Tourism) are more the willing to assist WAG in getting the message out as, we stated earlier the beneficiaries of our success are far reaching.

Contact Person:

Mike Brown, Executive Director Winegrowers Association of Georgia,
Phone: 813-503-0550
Email: director@georgiawine.com

XI. Georgia Peach Growers Association – Final Performance Report

Project Summary:

Peach growers in Georgia have witnessed a gradual but substantial deterioration of market share for fresh peaches in our own back yard over the last 10 years. In 2008, growers collaborated on the issue and decided to support an aggressive marketing campaign aimed at encouraging consumers to always ask for sweet Georgia Peaches. The message was based on consumer research that revealed peach purchasers usually assumed the peaches they were buying came from Georgia. In addition to funds provided by the Specialty Crop Grant, growers pooled \$35,000 of their own money to ensure success of the campaign.

Project Approach:

By using two forms of media marketing (targeted outdoor advertising and blanketed radio promos), metro Atlanta was blitzed during the peak season (June/July). The message communicated by the media clearly asked each consumer to support their local Georgia Peach farmers and buy sweet Georgia Peaches. The goal of the advertising campaign was to drive the consumer into each retail outlet and ask for "locally grown, sweet Georgia Peaches." The Georgia Peach Growers feel that it is absolutely critical for the Georgia Peach industry to be more competitive in its own "backyard" and educate consumers on buying locally grown, sweet Georgia peaches.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

The designated goal was to increase demand for Georgia Peaches into Atlanta using the consumer-driven approach outlined above, while at the same time bringing back better FOB's to local growers.

Feedback from consumers and retailers alike was extremely positive. The retailers, specifically Kroger, Walmart and Whole Foods, reported increased sales for the summer 2009. The members of the Peach Council reported a consolidated increase of 9% in peach shipments to Atlanta area retailers (+18,500 boxes of peaches).

Members of the Georgia Peach Council collectively reported loads into Atlanta increased from 122 to 133. Primary retailers were not willing to release specific sales data; however, all suggested space allocation for Georgia Peaches has increased over the western peach. A few retailers chose to only offer Georgia Peaches during summer months when available. Retail price points were lower for Georgia Peaches at the store level, indicating Georgia Peaches were frequently a feature item. As a result, profit margins decreased for the retailer (volume increased); however, grower margins on fruit into Atlanta increased considerably from \$11 to \$13.

Beneficiaries:

While Georgia Peach growers were primary beneficiaries, it is becoming evident retailers who supported and continue to support the Georgia Peach programs are also big winners. Since the 2009 season and kick-off of the Georgia Peach campaign, Georgia retailers have not only supported the Georgia Peach industry by offering Georgia Peaches, but many retailers are promoting sweet Georgia Peaches all season long. Retailers carrying Georgia Peaches are recognizing increased profits and consumer feedback about their fresh produce programs. Obviously consumers in Georgia are big winners as well, with the ability to find sweet Georgia Peaches now at nearly all Atlanta markets.

Lessons Learned:

Efforts in 2009 from funds received via the 2008 grant have helped unveil a strategy that Georgia Peach growers continue to follow today. It is evident consumers in not only Georgia but Florida as well, prefer Georgia Peaches over peaches from other states. Georgia is being recognized again as the peach state for the phenomenal flavor provided in those seasonal, summer treats. Since 2008, growers have focused more on print media and billboards as opposed to radio. While the verdict is still out, currently growers feel they receive a bigger bang for their buck with print and billboards.

Contact Person:

Duke Lane III, 478-952-9000,
duke3@lanepacking.com

XII. *Georgia Fruit and Vegetables Growers Association – Final Performance Report*

1. Project Summary

'Locally grown' has become a buzz word in supermarkets and retail locations. The American consumer wants to know the fresh fruits and vegetables they are purchasing are produced locally. According to the University of Georgia's Agribusiness Center of Economic Development the 'agri-tourism' industry in Georgia has an impact of over \$80 million to Georgia's economy. The center estimates there are over 500 agri-tourism venues in Georgia including roadside markets, farm tours, and other activities.

The objective of this project was to enhance current web resources for Georgia 'agri-tourism' and roadside market locations and utilize the 'Google' search engine to market these Georgia locations for growers.

PHASE ONE

March 2010 – October, 2010

The 'georgiagrownfun.com' web site was opened in the Spring of 2010. The base-line of visitors was established during the first three months of site operation (March-June). Beginning in early June a Google ad campaign was initiated. As can be reviewed from the attached materials, during the 'base-line establishing period' the site had 170 visits, with 545 page views. During Phase 1 of the Google ads (March -October) the site had 7,159 visits, with 12,213 page views.

In addition base-line measurements were established for event tracking for outbound traffic. This measures the sites where visitors went when they exited 'georgiagrownfun.com'. The chart below provides those base-line measurements.

	<u>Base Line Establishing</u>	<u>Phase 1 Google ads</u>
Outbound Traffic events	98	4,284
Ga.marketmaker	26	1,948
www.gfb.org	27	1,146
www.georgiaorganics.org	10	374

PHASE TWO

November 2010 - December, 2010

At the completion of PHASE 2 (November – December), the following summary data was summarized to study and evaluate.

During the PHASE 2 AdWord campaign from November 1, 2010 to December 29, 2010, the target web site (www.georgiagrownfun.org) appeared in the top five search results 2,158,202 times. There were 4,134 clicks to the site costing the campaign \$ 1,914.78.

The key words with the most impressions and clicks included,

Apples	754 clicks
Vidalia onion(s)	552 clicks
Strawberries	198 clicks
Georgia peaches	166 clicks
Farm tours	26 clicks

During PHASE 2 (November - December):

- A total of 3,781 visitors entered the site at the georgiagrownfun.org home page.
- 5,923 page views – with visitors average time on a page of 00:59 minutes.
- From the home page visitors clicked to,
 - Ga.marketmaker – 444 times
 - www.gfb.org – 256 times
 - www.georgiaorganics.org – 151 times
 - www.visitgafarms.com – 67 times
 - gfvga.org – 57 times
 - www.pickyourown.org – 42 times
- An event is viewing more than one page per visit – during the campaign there were 1.48 events/visit.

January 2011 – March, 2011

During the January to March time frame there were no Google AdWords purchased. Staff evaluated the reports and recommendations by Google to increase or decrease AdWords purchases and purchase values. In addition the number of keywords were evaluated, by looking at the number of clicks for the search words as well as evaluating the quality of each keyword as a search descriptor. These efforts helped establish the campaign in Phase 3 as outlined below based on usage in PHASES 1 and 2.

PHASE THREE

April – June, 2011

On April 13, 2011, PHASE 3 of the Google AdWord program kicked off. This program included three campaigns:

- Georgia Grown Fruits and Vegetables with 19 Adgroups
- Roadside Markets with 6 Adgroups
- Georgia Agricultural Events with 2 Adgroups

There were a total of 268 key words in this campaign. This was reduced from PHASE 1 and PHASE 2 per 'google' recommendations to increase the hits and length of time on the web sites. This campaign continued until June 2011.

The following are the results from PHASE 3 of the Adword campaign from April 13, 2011 to June 30, 2011. The target web site (www.georgiagrownfun.org) appeared in the top five search results 5.2 million times. There were 13,341 clicks to the site costing the campaign \$6,539.81. Over this 90 day period there were 58,289 impressions/day and 148 clicks/day at a cost of \$72.66/day.

The key words with the most clicks include,

Georgia peaches and related words	2581 clicks
Vidalia onion(s) and related words	1630 clicks
Apples and related words	732 clicks
Muscadine grape(s) and related words	475 clicks
Farm tours and related words	355 clicks
Blackberries and related words	280 clicks

(the related words include such as – 'buy Georgia peaches', 'muscadine grapes for wine', etc.)

- A total of 13,004 visitors entered the site at the georgiagrownfun.org home page.
- 23,026 page views – with visitors average time on a page of 2:42 minutes.
- In the 90 days – 144 visitors/day and 256 page views/day.
- From the home page visitors clicked to,
 - Ga. marketmaker – 5,759 times
 - www.gfb.org – 2,480 times
 - www.georgiaorganics.org – 935 times
 - gfvga.org – 791 times
 - localharvest.org - 306 times
 - www.visitgafarms.com – 273 times
 - www.pickyourown.org – 218 times

One additional item of importance and significance was the number of mobile devices accessing the www.georgiagrownfun.org site. During the April to June time frame the following visits, pages per visit, and avg. time per visit,

	VISITS	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site
Android	508	1.43	0:02:12
iPhone	383	1.35	0:01:10
iPad	365	1.77	0:01:36

This is another example of the need to have all communication venues available to the people looking for fresh produce and/or a rural experience.

POST PHASE THREE

Google analytics continued to be run on the site for 60 days after June 30 to determine the impact of the site with no Google AdWords purchased. As you can see from the results below, without the AdWords the traffic on the georgiagrownfun.org was very limited.

of visitor that entered the site – 401. This is 7 visitors/day compared to 144 visitors/day with Adwords

of page views - 698, average time on a page 3:01 minutes. This is 11.6 page views/day compared 256 page views with Ad words.

From the home page, visitors clicked to,

Ga.marketmaker –	110 times
www.gfb.org –	94 times
www.georgiaorganics .org –	57 times

CONCLUSION

The study provides good insight into the ‘search’ words that Gen X and Gen Y consumers may be using when looking for locally grown products and/or rural experiences. With proper crafting of the ‘Ad Words’ campaign agri-tourism facilities can specifically target local consumers to increase traffic and farm revenue.

2. Project Approach

The project’s approach was to take the current web resources available to growers and road side market operators and determine if Google AdWords would increase web site traffic. As noted in the above summary, the project included three phases in which AdWords were used in Phase One and Three but not used in Phase Two. From the web analytics used, the most effective words were identified which will be provided to ‘local farm markets’ and other agritourism locations to increase traffic and farm revenue.

3. Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The objective of this project was to enhance current web resources for Georgia ‘agri-tourism’ and roadside markets locations and utilize the ‘Google’ AdWord search engine to market these Georgia locations for growers.

From this project it was determined most Google searches were ‘product’ related - peaches, Vidalia onions, apples – and it would be beneficial for ‘agri-tourism’ and roadside markets to utilize those search words in developing a web search campaign strategy.

4. Beneficiaries and how they benefitted

The beneficiaries of this project will be the specialty crop growers and markets that serve the metro audience looking for ‘locally grown’ and farm related experiences to enjoy rural entertainment. From this project those operators have a list of ‘words’ that can measurably be used to drive searches to their web sites. The project shows the frequency and number of ‘hits’ each of the search words received.

This information will be published and provided on the GFVGA web site, to the Georgia Agritourism Association and presented in ‘marketing’ workshops at the SE Regional Fruit and Vegetable Conference in Savannah in January, 2012.

5. Lessons Learned

The primary lesson learned was the ability to use Google AdWords to drive traffic to a web site and the relatively inexpensive nature of this type of advertising.

6. Contact person for the project:

Charles Hall, Executive Director
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
P.O. Box 2945
LaGrange, GA 30241
chall@asginfo.net
706-845-8200

7. Additional Information

The website is www.georgiagrowfun.org

Several of the Google Analytics reports are also attached.



[GO >](#)



It's strawberry pickin' season



Where can I Pick, Buy, Tour?



Roadside Markets



Georgia Organics



More links to Farms & Agfun

WELCOME

Georgia has a rich, proud history steeped in agriculture. Our climate allows us to produce high quality fruits and vegetables ranging from strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and apples, to tomatoes, watermelon, squash, bell pepper, and cabbage...and don't forget Georgia Peaches, Vidalia Onions and Muscadine grapes! With our Christmas tree farms, pumpkins and collard greens there is something to experience almost all year round. So why go anywhere else for your fresh produce when you can stay right here and support our local economy?

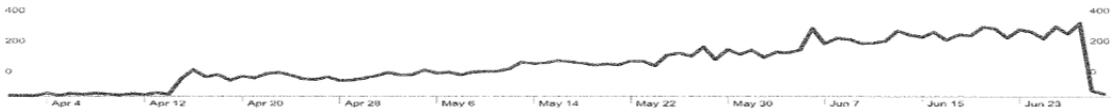
LATEST NEWS

Nov 10, 2010
Peach Festival

Nov 10, 2010
Strawberries Are Here

Nov 10, 2010
2010 Strawberry Festival – April 23 & 24 in Reynolds





Site Usage

13,004 Visits

23,026 Pageviews

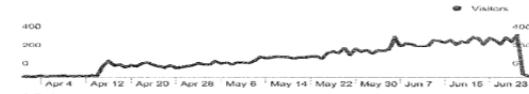
1.77 Pages/Visit

41.73% Bounce Rate

00:02:42 Avg. Time on Site

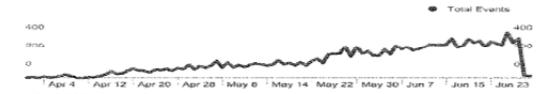
93.01% % New Visits

Visitors Overview



Visitors
12,130

Event Tracking Overview



Total Events
11,029

Traffic Sources Overview



- **Search Engines**
12,320.00 (94.74%)
- **Referring Sites**
389.00 (2.99%)
- **Direct Traffic**
295.00 (2.27%)

Content Overview

Pages	Pageviews	% Pageviews
/	17,079	74.17%
/links/	2,527	10.97%
/2011/04/2011-festivals/	1,282	5.57%
/category/news/	619	2.69%
/contact-us/	404	1.75%

Top Exit Pages			Keywords		
Page	Exits	% visits	Keyword	Visits	% visits
/	10,929	84.24%	(not set)	11,944	96.95%
/links/	1,174	9.05%	georgia festivals 2011	15	0.12%
/2011/04/2011-festivals/	436	3.36%	georgia grown	15	0.12%
/category/news/	102	0.79%	georgia grown produce	8	0.06%
/contact-us/	86	0.66%	georgia produce	8	0.06%



12,130 people visited this site

- 13,004 Visits
- 12,130 Absolute Unique Visitors
- 23,026 Pageviews
- 1.77 Average Pageviews
- 00:02:42 Time on Site
- 41.73% Bounce Rate
- 93.01% New Visits

Technical Profile

Browser	Visits	% visits
Internet Explorer	8,495	65.33%
Firefox	1,667	12.82%
Safari	1,493	11.48%
Chrome	662	5.09%
Android Browser	334	2.57%

Traffic Sources Overview

Apr 1, 2011 - Jun 30, 2011
Comparing to: Site



All traffic sources sent a total of 13,004 visits

2.27% Direct Traffic

2.99% Referring Sites

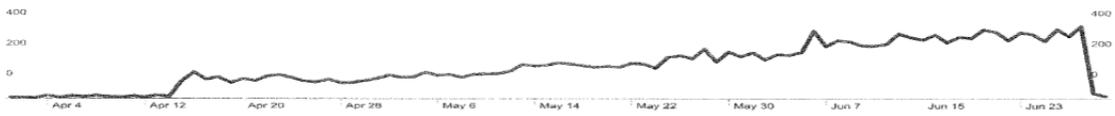
94.74% Search Engines



Search Engines
12,320.00 (94.74%)
Referring Sites
389.00 (2.99%)
Direct Traffic
295.00 (2.27%)

Top Traffic Sources

Sources	Visits	% visits	Keywords	Visits	% visits
google (cpc)	11,944	91.85%	(not set)	11,944	96.95%
gfvg.org (referral)	303	2.33%	georgia festivals 2011	15	0.12%
(direct) ((none))	295	2.27%	georgia grown	15	0.12%
google (organic)	238	1.83%	georgia grown produce	8	0.06%
gagrown.us (referral)	62	0.48%	georgia produce	8	0.06%



12,974 visits exited from 21 pages

Exit Pages			
Exits	Pageviews	% Exit	
12,974	23,015	56.37%	
% of Site Total: 100.00%	% of Site Total: 99.95%	Site Avg: 56.35% (0.05%)	
Page	Exits	Pageviews	% Exit
/	10,929	17,079	63.99%
/links/	1,174	2,527	46.46%
/2011/04/2011-festivals/	436	1,282	34.01%
/category/news/	102	619	16.48%
/contact-us/	86	404	21.29%
/category/news/peaches/	63	333	18.92%
/category/news/strawberries/	44	297	14.81%
/2010/02/pick-your-own-and-spend-time-with-your-family/	40	67	59.70%
/category/news/festivals/	35	146	23.97%
/2010/02/some-more-news-woohoo/	25	63	39.68%

XIII. Georgia Blueberries Association – Final Performance Report

Project Summary:

In 2006, for the first time, the Georgia blueberry crop was 22.7 million pounds and relative to sales, became the number 1 fruit crop in Georgia. The 2010 blueberry crop was 53.5 million pounds. It is expected that in just a couple more years the Southeast Georgia region will be the number one blueberry producing region in North America.

The expansion taking place in Georgia is also happening in the Pacific Northwest, the North and the Northeast USA. Also, other parts of the world like Mexico, Chile, Argentina, and New Zealand are expanding. In order for Georgia and the USA to remain competitive, we must stay on the cutting edge of technology and stay current in production problems that are bound to be expressed.

Recently a new disease has been identified in the Georgia blueberry production region. The new disease has been named “Bacterial Leaf Scorch,” and is caused by the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*. Through initial field surveys conducted in the summer of

2007, it was determined that this disease has the potential to become a major threat to blueberry production in Georgia.

Since little is known about this new disease in blueberries, much research is needed to address the recommendations for control. The scientists working on this new disease have identified several areas that need immediate attention: propagation, varietal differences, vector inhibition and cultural/ chemical control techniques. Dr Phil Brannen, Dr. Harald Scherm, Dr Scott NeSmith, Dr Gerard Krewer and Dr C.J. Chang are the University of Georgia scientists working on this new disease. County Extension agents from Bacon, Pierce, Berrien and Lanier Counties are also involved.

Project Approach:

In the fall of 2007, a 2-acre planting of southern highbush blueberries were planted at the UGA Blueberry Research and Demonstration Farm located in Alma, Georgia. In the Spring of 2008, traps were placed in the field to monitor sharpshooter insects, a possible vector of the disease. Random plots of the field were inoculated with the Xylella bacteria and other plots were treated with combinations of Imidan, Mustang and Admire insecticide.

A local blueberry grower with the disease in his field allowed UGA scientists to put similar trials in his field.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved:

Right now, no chemical controls actively kill the bacterium. However, it may be possible to slow or even break the disease cycle by vector management, killing the insects that transmit the bacterium. The study will continue with modifications into the future. The establishment of the 2-acre field at the UGA Blueberry Research/Demonstration Farm will be a valuable asset as the disease is studied into the future.

Beneficiaries:

Beneficiaries include blueberry growers in Southeast USA: Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, and Alabama. Because of this project, these growers are now aware of this new disease and, if necessary, will be able to break the disease cycle by killing the insects that transmit the bacterium, before they lose a lot of blueberry acreage.

Lessons Learned:

Plants identified with the disease in the field should be removed and destroyed. By doing this, the epidemic can be slowed. It is essential that new plants not be propagated from Xylella infected plants. Plants suspected of infection can be tested by UGA scientists.

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Additional Information: PowerPoints and pictures are available via UGA scientists Dr Phil Brannen and Dr Dan Horton.