Experiences from Pod Maturity Clinics in Martin County, North Carolina.

A. COCHRAN* and C.L. SUMNER
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Williamston, NC, 27892;
and
D.L. JORDAN
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695.

Digging peanut at optimum maturity can have a tremendous impact on pod yield and market grade characteristics for Virginia market type peanut. Removing the outer layer of the peanut pods and visually accessing the color of the mesocarp layer, helps to determine peanut maturity. As peanuts mature the mesocarp layer changes color from white to yellow to orange to brown to black. When about 70 percent of the sample reaches the dark orange to black stage the sample is ready to dig. Several peanut maturity clinics are held each year in Martin County. Farmers bring samples in from their fields and each is checked for maturity using the pressure washer method. Each sample is places in a wire basket and the outer layer of the pods removed with a pressure washer. Checking for maturity allows farmers to dig closer to the optimum maturity and increase their yield and market grade. In 2010, 301 samples for 81 farmers representing 7,409 acres were processed while in 234 samples for 72 farmers (7,748 acres) were processed during 2011. Based on conservative estimates, this activity most likely increased value of peanut to farmers in Martin County by 200 lbs/acre for a total of approximately $1.06 million over the two years (15,157 acres x 200 lbs/acre x $0.35/lb peanut) by enabling growers to dig more timely with respect to optimum maturity.