Vidalia Onion Variety Trial Results

Attached as a Microsoft Excel file are the results of this year's variety trial. This was the largest trial to date with 69 varieties. Actually there was only 68 in the trial because one of the entries' seed did not germinate. In addition, the trial was not without problems. Ten varieties from the second harvest were destroyed during curing. We had one of the dryers malfunction and the onions were cooked. For these varieties we are only reporting total yield. Surprisingly, there was not many seedstems or doubled bulbs this year, so this data was not collected. The pungency and sugar data should be available shortly and that will be shared when it becomes available.

The total yield ranged from 518-1,130 50-lb bags/acre. The lowest yield was with 'XON-565W', which happened to be the only white variety in the trial and the highest yield was with 'Century'. This is the first year we are reporting colossal size onions (≥4 inches). For the colossal grade the range was from 21-285 50-lb bags/acre with 'Miss Megan' having the highest yield in this category. With the addition of the colossal size class, jumbos are now ≥3 inches and <4 inches. Jumbos ranged from 118-500 50-lb bags/acre with 'Sapelo Sweet' having the highest yield. Finally medium yields ranged from 14-99 50-lb bags/acre with 'RGH-707704' having the highest yield in this class.

Onions were harvested from April 23 to May 20 2008, which represents a 27 day harvest time frame. Varieties were harvested five times as they matured during this period. On the first harvest (Apr. 23-24) only two varieties were harvested, 'Candy Ann' and 'Candy Kim'. The next harvest was on Apr. 29 with 10 varieties harvested. The third harvest was May 5 with 26 varieties. The fourth and fifth harvests were on May 12 and 20 with 14 and 16 varieties harvested, respectively. Looking at just the last three harvest dates of May 5, 12, and 20 the percent marketable onions went from 70% on May 5 to 59% on May 12 to, finally 49% on May 20. This, in large measure, represents the increasing problem of sour skin and slippery skin disease as the season progressed.

This was the first year we evaluated red onions in earnest with 16 varieties. Total yield for reds ranged from 544-891 50-lb bags/acre. In general the red onions were later maturing with the majority harvested on May 20. In the past when we have
trialed red onions, many had 'torpedo' shaped bulbs. This was not the case with these onions, which have the more characteristic Granex shape. Also included among the red onions were two that were intermediate day onions.

**Sustainable Agriculture Summit Held in Fort Valley**

The Sustainable Agriculture Summit was held in Fort Valley on June 12, 2008, which was organized by Julia Gaskin the Sustainable Agriculture Coordinator for the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. This summit had as its theme, Focus on the Future. There were almost 200 in attendance with representatives from UGA, Fort Valley State University, Georgia Organics, and the USDA among others. Dr Scott Angle and Dr. Mark Latimore, Dean of CAES and Interim Dean of FVSU, respectively gave the opening remarks.

Dr. Nancy Creamer with NCState gave a talk on the Center for Environmental Farming Systems of which she is the Director. This unique center is a cooperative effort between NCState, North Carolina A&T State University, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture to conduct research on organic and sustainable farming. The center is located near Goldsboro, NC and their website is: http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/index.htm. There are six units in the center that include a beef unit, dairy, swine, organic cropping systems, farming systems, and the Small Farm Center.

There were breakout groups for discussion and identification of issues important to Georgia in the arena of sustainable agriculture. The results of these breakout groups will be shared with attendees once compiled with the hope they will be the impetus for future work.

Mr James. Hill, the Southern SARE 1890 Land Grant Liaison gave an overview of changes in the funding approach of SARE. Both short term and long term grant funds in a variety of program areas will be available. Their website is: http://www.southernsare.uga.edu/.

**Twilight Summer Field Day**

We are having our annual summer field day at the Vidalia Farm and Vegetable Research Center on June 19, 2008 from 6-8 pm. We will have supper at 6 pm followed by visits to the field plots. Dr. Terry Kelley will be joining us from Tifton to discuss the methyl bromide situation and alternative strategies. In addition, he will give an update on the new vegetable commodity checkoff program. Cliff Riner, the county agent in Tattnall County, will also be on the program to discuss his projects at the farm including a large study on cantaloupe. I have trials in on watermelon, cantaloupe, and pumpkin as well as evaluating watermelon pollenizers for triploid production. Other work includes late onion production, evaluating Surround for sunscald protection, and continued pumpkin variety improvement.
Dr. Beverly Sparks the Associate Dean for Extension should be joining us. The new building should be complete (I hope) and we will be holding the program in this building. I have attached directions to the farm in an MSWord document. See you there!

From My Desk

Don't forget our upcoming field day at the Vidalia Farm. This should be a great opportunity to see some of our spring and summer projects at the farm. Please encourage your growers and other clientele to come.

Regards,

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