

PeanutFax: Southeast

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Here is this weeks issue of *PeanutFax*, sponsored by the Southeast staff of Valent U.S.A. Corporation.

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We welcome your comments.

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OVERVIEW

Planting this week got underway on a wider basis. Conditions are nearly ideal in some areas, plus growers are trying to squeeze more planting into the optimum window for avoiding tomato spotted wilt virus.

A couple of our contacts this week noted that a big slug of acres

will be planted in a relatively short time, and that's going to put a strain on the buying points this fall. Some growers are trying to spread out planting a bit, especially where they can irrigate. But many dryland producers are pushing hard while they have moisture to make a stand.

While some areas caught showers last week, much of our coverage area needs rain. Subsoil moisture remains good, but hot conditions are drying out the top 2-3" of soil.

The following reports were made Thursday and Friday.

CROP REPORTS

John Beasley, Georgia Extension Agronomist, Tifton, Ga.:

"Planting is going pretty much full speed in this area, and we probably have the best soil moisture and temperature conditions in quite a few years. We had good rains in the winter and early spring, then widespread thunderstorms in late April. Most growers in April received enough

rain, and a few maybe got too much.

"According to the ag statistics last weekend, only 5% of our peanuts were planted, but over the next 3 weeks we'll see a high percentage planted if we get favorable weather. Some areas may be getting a bit to the dry side where they missed rains in the last 2 weeks.

"Fields planted in mid to late April may have weeds popping up, and they're at a stage for good control. It's easy to overlook these small weeds when the focus is on planting. I was in a field Wednesday with a lot of sicklepod that needed attention."

Dallas Hartzog, Alabama Extension Agronomist, Headland, Ala.:

"Our growers are planting with one eye to the sky and one eye on soil moisture. By this time next week we'll be begging for rain. We're not quite critical, but a good, widespread rain would keep things going.

"People in some cases are either planting 2-3" deep into moisture or

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just dusting them in until it rains. Overall, we haven't had a bad moisture situation, but the rains pretty much stopped about May 1. Headland, Ala., is right at normal for accumulation for this time of the year, and I hope we stay that way.

"Folks have been planting peanuts for about a week. I've looked at the germination on some seed lots, and it appears that we're planting some really good seed."

Tom Cary, Worth County Extension Coordinator, Sylvester, Ga.: "Soil moisture is good. We've had a good bit of rain already, and thunderstorms just came through and gave everyone another half-inch. I think our acreage in the county will be about what we've had recently, around 30,000 acres.

"A few acres may have been planted in April, but most folks are just starting, and the majority of the crop will be planted in the next 3 weeks, weather permitting.

"We're planting several of the new varieties with the limited amount of seed we could secure. This is mainly DP1, a little bit of Carver and 01 and 02 from Georgia. Also, we're seeing a little more Valor used in peanuts this year. Several growers tried it in 2002, didn't have any problems and liked the results, so it's being used a bit more this year."

Ed Jowers, Jackson County Extension Agent, Marianna, Fla.: "We're dry right now and, believe it or not, could use a rain. The situation isn't terrible yet, but there's a high pressure cell sitting above us that's pushed all the really bad weather north of us, and that took the rain with it. We can do without the tornadoes, but we'd sure like some general showers.

"A few hundred acres of peanuts

were planted last week. They're cracking and look good. This is the week when we've really started. We got hit with tomato spotted wilt virus last year, and growers are trying to avoid that this year.

"It's a 'Catch 22' situation. We're trying to fit a lot of the crop into that optimum window in mid May, but that's also when it typically gets dry here for 3-4 weeks. Those who can't irrigate will plant a little earlier."

Bobby Boutwell, Royster-Clark Farmmarket, Jay, Fla.: "Peanut planting started about 2 weeks ago, and we're probably 75% planted. That 8- and 12-row equipment really put a dent in the acreage. Moisture has been just right, and temperatures have been up in the 80s. This probably is the best start we've had in 5 years. A little cracking spray activity has started, and more will be going out next week.

"We're planting a lot of twin-row peanuts this year. People are interested in that yield increase. In 2 more weeks we'll start applying gypsum."

Carl Hobbs, Carl Hobbs Ag Consulting, Ashburn, Ga.: "In our area, we've started significant planting in the last 4-7 days, and we just now have hit full speed. One grower who can irrigate everything said he would quit planting peanuts for a week to make sure he has his harvest spread out.

"Peanut acreage is down. I don't have a handle yet on how much, but anybody who's consistently had good yields and strong grades is keeping their acreage about the same. Some of this dryland acreage has shifted out of peanuts. People have sold or transferred their base to east Georgia where they're dying to grow peanuts.

"Planting conditions have been

very favorable—good moisture and warm conditions. I can't recall a spring that's been as kind as this one. We're not deficient for moisture quite yet, but it's getting a little dusty in places. We've been without a rain for a week, and that's all it takes for us to start getting dry."

Ben Whitty, Extension Agronomist, Gainesville, Fla.: "In the north Florida area we may have 25% of the crop planted. Peanuts are moving along pretty good. I was in some this morning (Friday) that sure looked good, but the farmer had stopped planting because it was too dry. That was in Levy County, but most of our production area down here is dry.

"Summertime hit us this week. Above-average temperatures have speeded up the rate that soil is drying. We haven't had a good, general rain in 2-3 weeks.

"The peanuts that are up are doing fine. They've got taproots down in moist soils. But if we go another 2 weeks without rain things will slow up. We're running out of water in the planting zone on sandier soils, and it will start giving out on heavier soils if dry weather persists. Still, though, we're in better shape than last year."

Mark Mitchell, Mitchell Ag Consulting, Inc., Bainbridge, Ga.: "We're close to 70% planted, and stands look really good, overall. There's a little pressure from thrips but nothing to be overly concerned about. I found one yellowstripe armyworm, and that's the only foliage feeder I've seen, so far.

"Our oldest peanuts are 35 days old, and our first crack sprays have gone out. We could stand a shower to help replenish moisture close to the surface, but subsoil moisture is still really good."