

PeanutFax: Southeast

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Here is this week's issue of *PeanutFax*, sponsored by the Southeast field staff of **Nichino America**, maker of **Artisan**[®] peanut fungicide and **ET**[®] herbicide/defoliant.

OVERVIEW

This week we started our annual harvest survey reports, and these will continue at least through September.

As you'll notice, the responses this week are heavily weighted toward the eastern half of our coverage area, which missed the brunt of Hurricane Ivan.

On the western side of our coverage areas, Ivan knocked out a good deal of the communication links -- especially those to south Alabama and western Florida. We received no responses from those areas this week.

We called several of our

regular contacts in those areas but found that phone service was still down on a wide basis.

Just as we closed out this issue Friday evening, consultant Ed Kane in Robertsdale, Ala., returned our call from his pickup. Kane lives 15 miles from Gulf Shores, which was devastated by Ivan.

"Peanuts have a wilted look, but the leaves stayed on," Kane said. "From that standpoint, peanuts came through better than cotton. The more open cotton was at that point, the more of it you can find on the ground now. The wind beat off leaves and small bolls, too, and shredded soybean leaves."

The logistics of dealing with the crop have been complicated by Ivan in a number of ways, he said. Trees are across roads in many locations, and metal roof panels and other debris are scattered around fields. Traffic from nearby Interstate 10 also

is being diverted through the countryside in some areas, clogging back roads and making it difficult for locals to get around.

It will be hard to reach some fields with equipment right away, and it will take time to clear away debris that blew into the crops.

Reportedly, Ivan dumped 14" of rain through parts of that area, Kane added.

"Overall, agriculture took a terrible hit," Kane said. "Center pivots are twisted up, all types of farm buildings were heavily damaged or destroyed and the forestry and pecan industries will be affected for years to come. In some places it's easier to count the trees still standing than those that were knocked down."

On Friday afternoon we also reached Dallas Hartzog, Alabama Extension Peanut Spe-

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cialist. Hartzog is based in Headland in southeastern Alabama near the Georgia and Florida state lines.

His corner of Alabama did not sustain the heavy winds and torrential downpours that were reported farther west. Hartzog said that his local area only received around 2" of rain, with the top wind speed at about 40 mph.

"West of Headland the intensity picked up, and I've heard of rainfall totals of 5-6" and 10" or more in western Alabama," Hartzog said.

In his immediate area, harvest could be underway again Monday if conditions remain dry and sunny.

"Most of our peanuts probably haven't been extraordinarily damaged, so far," he added. "A lot, of course, depends on how good a grower's disease control program was and where peanuts were on the maturity curve at the time of all the rain. As soon as the soil dries up, farmers will really go to harvesting peanuts."

On Thursday we received a report from Jay Chapin, South Carolina Extension Peanut Specialist. He said that some South Carolina fields had to be dug this week due to over-maturity, disease pressure (late leaf spot, CBR, or white mold), or fear of being unable to return to the field after more rain.

Hurricane Jeanne, which is headed for the Atlantic Coast, adds another potential complication to harvest. The latest projections show landfall on Wednesday or Thursday someplace between Miami and the

North Carolina and South Carolina state line.

"Most of the South Carolina crop is still in the ground and will reach optimal harvest within the next week, if not already there," Chapin estimated. "Hurricane Ivan will be with us for at least the next 2 days, and then Jeanne looks like it is headed this way. Maybe we can get some peanuts combined in between weekly hurricanes.

"Whenever we do get decent harvest weather, one thing seems certain — we will have a lot of peanuts that need to be dug faster than we can possibly combine them. About all we can do is prioritize according to field maturity and vine health. Over-mature fields and fields with severe leaf spot defoliation or soil disease (CBR and white mold) will reach a point where they are just going to have to be dug whenever soil conditions allow it, and then be on top of the ground until the combine gets there.

"If the weather will finally break, at least we have a chance for the peanuts not to be repeatedly rained on after being inverted."

HARVEST REPORTS

Virginia, Dinwiddie County, Extension worker: "We have started digging."

Georgia, Jefferson County, Grower: "We expect to start digging about September 22. Right now we're looking for some dry weather."

Georgia, Screven County, Extension worker: "We have started digging but aren't combining yet."

Georgia, Wilcox County, Extension worker: "We've harvested less than 1% of our crop. The only yields, so far, are dryland, and they're averaging about 2,200 lbs/acre. About 80 acres of early planted peanuts were dug and picked before Frances. Many peanuts planted on May 1 need to be dug now, but fields are too saturated. Some dryland peanuts on sandier ground were dug last Friday and Saturday, but afternoon rains have stopped most of that now. Peanuts planted in mid May still have a chance to recover from the storm if we are able to resume harvest next week."

North Carolina, Gates County, Consultant: "We have started digging. We have a lot of acres to dig, but fields are way too wet. We had 3" of rain yesterday (Wednesday) in some areas. As soon as the weather breaks, growers will not look back until they are finished."

South Carolina, Orangeburg County, Grower: "We have started digging. Cloudy, rainy weather is hampering harvest. We had problems with late leaf spot. The crop looks promising if weather conditions improve. We're now looking at Hurricane Jeanne heading our way."