

2017 has so far been good for South Carolina peanuts. Relatively frequent rains paired with seasonable temperatures have given most areas great potential for a quality yielding crop.

Normally around this time I like to share results from last year's digging date test to show how some of our newer varieties performed over a range of digging dates in South Carolina to help determine the best time to dig each variety. The prolonged drought we experienced last year coupled with this trial having been in a dryland field, however, led to unrepresentative yield and grade results. In short, this means we won't be visiting these results here this year. Learning from this, the current year's digging date study has been setup under irrigation (even though this year it seems we would have been okay in dryland), and so this time next year we will be able to share these results before harvest.

As we near the end of the growing season, some topics can be more timely than others. Even so, one thing that remains important at all stages of peanut production is scouting. We may be on the lookout for different things at different times, but having a realistic feel for what's happening in each field is always a good thing. Scouting no doubt takes time, and time is all too often limited. Still, scouting is one of the best ways to make the most informed decisions. Two items to maintain on the late season scouting list are late leaf spot and pod maturity (as well as late-season pests like velvetbean caterpillar in our more southern counties). Going in reverse order, we can gently remember that we get the most representative idea of how each field is progressing by taking several samples (at least 200 pods' worth) from across a field when we are estimating maturity (pod blasting or hull scraping). Taking all our samples from one nearby spot close to the road shows us how that part is doing and certainly takes less time, but this may not give us the best idea of where most of the field is currently sitting at maturity-wise.

In the not-too-distant past when the bulk of SC peanut production was Virginia-types, it has been common for many fields to be good to go with a final fungicide application near 105 days after planting. Things are not always what they used to be (if they were, we'd be making sure the mules are ready for harvest season), and two items recently emphasizing this are greater late leaf spot development on Bailey and the increased acreage of runner-type varieties. In 2017 and 2016, runners accounted for about 60% of SC peanut acres. Most of these runners have estimated maturities near 140 days after planting at the minimum, with several more requiring longer maturities near 150 days after planting to maximize their potential. Adding to this, harvesting peanuts during the previous two years has been challenging, and this has in some cases contributed to volunteer peanuts in following years. If these volunteers escape destruction early in the growing season they can easily increase disease pressure. These combined items set the stage for anticipating extending fungicide coverage of most peanut acres past 105 days. Even without volunteers, once late leaf spot lesions develop the disease becomes more difficult to manage. Dense canopies with lesions benefit from the use of systemic products to help protect hard to reach leaf surfaces, but we also know cost is many times a factor contributing towards fungicide choice. At the very least, an application of chlorothalonil (Bravo) near 120 DAP (and another possibly near 135 DAP for late runner-type varieties) helps protect covered leaves from new infections. If scouting reveals lesions in the canopy with at least two weeks remaining until harvest, playing it safe and protecting leaves helps buffer us against further spores or potential

weather delays. Keeping the leaves on the plant so we can keep the pods on the pegs for harvest is what we're shooting for. At \$450/ton, if an \$8 application of chlorothalonil saves one pod per row foot (at least 36 lb/A), it pays for itself.