

PECAN COUNTRY NEWS

Volume 21

Fall 2017

On the Calendar

Feb 23-24, 2018:

Southeast Pecan Growers Conv.; Point Clear, AL

Mar 27-28, 2018:

Georgia Pecan Growers Conf.; Univ. of GA-Tifton

Jun 21-22, 2018:

Tri-State Pecan Growers Conf.; Monroe, LA

Jul 15-18, 2018:

Texas Pecan Growers Conf.; San Marcos, TX



The great American pecan harvest is here!

American Pecan Council & Weber Shandwick team visit Savage

In mid-September, several members of the American Pecan Council visited the Savage Equipment facilities and the Savage family's pecan operations at Hauani Creek Ranch in south-central Oklahoma. They were accompanied by the new executive director of the council, Byron Gossett, his staff of two and quite a few representatives of the PR firm Weber Shandwick. This agency is now handling public relations and marketing for The American Pecan in accordance with the Pecan Marketing Order.

This visit was stage two of the three-stage pecan industry "immersion tour" that began in west Texas and New Mexico back in June. On this leg of the tour, participants were able to experience southern Oklahoma pecan farm operations at Hauani Creek as well as the cleaning facility there. A bus tour of the planted orchards and native groves culminated at the farm's ancient "triple-tree" where participants were able to get photos and have a multitude of questions answered. The bus then headed to



Pecan immersion tour guests and Savage employees enjoy a barbecue lunch in the Savage Equipment showroom

the Savage Equipment manufacturing facility and a delicious barbecue lunch complete with homemade pecan pies. During the meal, Weber Shandwick enlightened everyone with a slide presentation of their vision for pecan marketing and some of the steps they've already taken to begin driving up demand for American pecans. Their American Pecan website is a beautifully crafted start to the process. Readers should take the time to check out the photos, recipes and stories found at the new website, www.americanpecan.com.

Full of ribs, chicken, brisket and pie, the assembly then toured Savage's manufacturing facilities and were able to get many more

Continued on page 2

Ellis family is making a lasting impression on the pecan industry.

In 1944, Marvin and Irene Ellis purchased a peanut and cotton farm in Vienna, Georgia. The farm also had about 60 acres of pecan trees in several varieties. These trees were the beginning of what would eventually become Ellis Brothers Pecans, Inc., a multi-generational retail, wholesale and mail-order pecan business that has weathered many hardships and now thrives as a great success story.

The farm brought Marvin good success in the row crop business for many years. Two of his sons, Bobby and Randy, joined him in the farm operations until the economic challenges of the 1970's when Randy left the farm to join his father-in-law in Crisp County, Georgia. In 1977, Marvin asked his oldest son, Elliott, who was with the University of

Continued on page 2



Three generations of Ellis pecan men: Left-to-right are Slade, Brad, Elliot, Keith and Stephen

866-572-8243 info@savageequipment.com

Pecan Folks

Ellis family (cont. from page 1)

Georgia Agricultural Extension Service at that time, to come back and help run the farm. Cotton and peanuts continued to perform poorly for several years, so Elliott started selling pecans at a roadside stand and advertised on a single billboard. His mother, Irene made her famous pecan brittle and sold it to many a traveler who ventured off I-75 to visit a real working farm. As the hard times continued into the early 1980's, Bobby left the farm to work at the nearby Air Force Base in Warner Robins.

Finally, things began to turn around. When Elliott's son Brad completed his degree in agriculture at the University of Georgia, he came back to the farm to help his father. He was followed by his brother, Keith who also completed studies at the University of Georgia. From there, the Ellis family business really began to grow and expand. In 1992 the company won a family business

award from the Cox Family Enterprise Center (part of Kennesaw State University). Until her death in June 2006, Irene Ellis worked in the retail store selling pecan treats, including many that were made from her original recipes.



Pecans, peaches and other yummy stuff available at Ellis Brothers' store

The family pecan business now encompasses about 2700 acres of pecan trees and operates with the help of the second, third, and fourth Ellis generations. Over the years, they've expanded the retail store and shelling plant five times. The business has grown to include custom work in tree spading and orchard hedging. And to top it all off, the Ellis family now has their very own patented pecan variety, known as (you guessed it) the "Ellis" variety, which is expected to be available for commercial production in 2018. That would be a great end to the story, but something tells me there are many more exciting chapters ahead for the Ellis family.

Savage Equipment tour (cont. from page 1)

questions answered concerning the range of equipment for pecan growing and processing .

The group then boarded the bus bound for further pecan exploits in Texas courtesy of Ben Anthony and the crew at Leonard Bend Farm near Granbury.

The final leg of the pecan industry immersion tour takes place in Georgia in October. There, the Weber Shandwick group will finally get to see what an actual pecan harvest looks like, and their journey through the pecan world will have come full circle.



Pecan Pieces

News you can use!

Here's a sampling of pecan-related news available on the internet and some of our favorite pecan publications.

New pecan marketing order moving ahead

It's been over a year now since the U.S. pecan community voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Federal Marketing Order for pecans. In an Aug. 2, 2017 article by the above title (found on www.westernfarmpress.com), reporter Cecilia Parsons brings us up-to-speed on how things have progressed since the order's inception and the establishment of the American Pecan Council.

"We're starting from scratch," said Philip Arnold, a member of the American Pecan Council and a long time New Mexico pecan grower and buyer who gave a laundry list of activities the new organization has been undertaking.

That includes the hiring of an executive director and staff who are working out of the American Pecan Council's new office in Ft. Worth, Texas.

The first-ever APC Executive Director is Byron Gossett, who works out of the council's home office in Fort Worth. The Western Farm Press article includes comments by Mr. Gossett.

"First, the FMO creates a funding mechanism, for the first time, that allows the creation of a comprehensive messaging campaign to the American consumer about the positive traits of the American Pecan," said Gossett. "This will ultimately stabilize and increase demand. Second, the FMO presents the opportunity and funding to pursue an objective crop estimate process that is crucial to an improved price discovery methodology for the American Pecan. Third, and perhaps most important, the FMO provides the platform for unifying a traditionally fragmented industry and leverages the experience, insight and creativity of industry leaders (including growers, shellers and handlers) throughout the 15 pecan-producing states."

Director Gossett also describes how funding provided through assessments will be used to support the home office and professional staff. The actions of the APC office will be guided by the Council's seventeen elected mem-

bers. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, provides oversight for the funded programs established by the Federal Marketing Order.

Growers of improved varieties of pecans will pay three cents per in-shell pound while growers of native varieties or substandard nuts will pay two cents per in-shell pound. The assessments will be retroactive to Oct. 1, 2016.

The article goes on to outline the current state of U.S. pecan production and estimates for this year's crop. The most recent estimate, provided at the Texas Pecan Growers Association Conference in July, is 301 million pounds. This would be a fairly healthy increase from the 2016 production of approximately 270 million pounds. More accurate crop estimates and reporting are another goal of the APC.

Could 2017 be a bumper year for pecans?

In a July 31 article on the Southwest Farm Press website, author Logan Hawkes takes a good look at the anticipated 2017 pecan crop, focusing particularly on the western pecan-growing states. The article compares current estimates for 2017 to last year's crop and evaluates the implications for pecan prices.

According to growers across the Southwest, if early signs of crop and market growth are correct, the 2017/18 season could be a good one—if all the cards fall right.

Earlier this month, USDA released numbers on last year's pecan crop, revealing 2016 was a good year for strong prices and high demand. A high of nearly \$3 a pound for high quality nuts were reported at the height of last season. Overall, New Mexico growers, known for the superior quality of their pecans, received an average of just under \$2.94 a pound for the year, a record high.

The article speaks of "the greater southwest region" including the states of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona and Louisiana, reporting that about 59 percent of the U.S. pecan production has come from this region in recent years. From there, the article moves on to consider pricing expectations and concerns for the coming season.

While strong prices are expected for this year's

Continued on page 4

More Pecan Pieces

Bumper year for pecans? (cont. from page 3)

pecan crop, many growers across the Southwest are concerned that while demand, both domestic and international, has demonstrated some growth over the last two years, the exceptionally high prices for U.S. pecans could force large nut buyers to purchase more walnuts and almonds to avoid higher pecan prices. The end result could be a rapid decline in pecan prices if that trend were to continue.

"I'm happy when pecan prices are strong, of course," said John Clayshulte, a New Mexico pecan producer who farms near Las Cruces. "But there is such a thing as prices being too high."

What creates the conundrum, according to New Mexico State University agricultural economists, is that the price of any commodity can rise only so far before consumers change their buying habits. The same holds true for restaurants and food processors who use pecans to mix with other food products.

Despite some concerns about demand from China and increased production in Mexico and other countries, the writer remains optimistic about overall demand, stating that, "...if early signs are any indication, demand will still exceed supply this year, potentially making 2017/18 a good year for U.S. pecan growers."

Beware the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

Another Western Farm Press article (*Biological control research focuses on BMSB pest as insecticidal option*, by Cecilia Parsons) concerns a pecan pest known to many: the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug, or just BMSB. The article is actually related to mitigating this bug's impact on the pistachio, but most of the information would be of interest to pecan growers. If you need a little help with the word "marmorated" so did this writer. It means "A swirled pattern of one color superimposed on another; marbled, veined."

The BMSB is not a picky eater and that's a problem. At one time, it held the top spot on USDA's list of invasive insect species (as in most destructive). It even has an official website dedicated to its eradication: www.stopbsmb.org (really!). The website is funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Research grant. On this site I learned that this bug is an unwelcome invader from Asia that sneaked into the U.S. in the late 1990's. It was first discovered in Pennsylvania, and by 2010 the BMSB was having a devastating effect in most



The BMSB is drab brown with black mottling on its back and a distinctive pattern of alternating white and black triangles around the outer edge of its abdomen. It has whitish bands on antennae and legs.

of the mid-Atlantic states on crops of sweet corn, peppers, tomatoes, apples, and peaches. Some growers reported total losses that year.

The bad news is that the BMSB has infiltrated most of the pecan belt states. The good news is that its natural enemy in east Asia, the "samurai wasp" has also found its way to the U.S.. This wasp and other parasitoids that are native to these parts are showing some promise in being able to reduce BMSB populations. So, as research continues, perhaps a viable defense will be found before this pest starts having a large economic impact on the nut-growing industry like it has in several other crops.

Devastation in the wake of two hurricanes

Our thoughts and prayers go out to our Pecan Country neighbors that have suffered great losses at the hands of Harvey and Irma. The two powerful hurricanes hit large parts of Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina with ferocious winds and incredible rainfall totals. The most widespread damage to pecan trees occurred in Georgia with perhaps a 30% crop loss for the state.

In a Sep 14 Southeast Farm Press article online, pecan expert, Lenny Wells says the following:

Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irma has become the most damaging wind event ever seen by the Georgia pecan industry. Roaring through Georgia on Monday with sustained winds of 20-40 mph and gusts reaching from 50-75 mph, Irma brought damage to virtually every pecan orchard in the state, significantly weakening what was a strong 2017 pecan crop.

Dr. Wells provides a wealth of information in the article on what types of recovery help is available for damaged orchards. He also goes into detail about which trees might be salvageable and which are probably not worth trying to save.

Featured Equipment

Is this the year for a Savage Silverline shelling system?

If you've been thinking about cracking and shelling your own pecans (and maybe your neighbor's pecans as well), you probably already know that Savage makes the best equipment for the job. The Savage Silverline includes two cracker models: the 238S, which can crack up to 400 nuts per minute and the 244S, capable of cracking up to 1200 nuts per minute. Both have been in commercial use in various corners of the world for many years. Both crackers produce a very high percentage of complete nut halves and are capable of cracking almost any size of pecan—small natives to the mammoth varieties. These machines use precisely controlled air power to “snug up” firmly against the pecan and then shatter the shell.

In a complete shelling operation, the nuts from a

cracker will be delivered to a sheller that will further separate the meat from the shell. The “Silverline” offers shellers in three sizes, and the smallest of these, the



Small Shelling Plant

405S, will easily handle the volume from two of the smaller crackers. All shellers are completely adjustable, allowing high performance with virtually any size of pecan. Savage Equipment also manufactures a complete line of bucket elevators, inspection tables and nut-meat sizers.

You can find out more about the Savage “Silverline” equipment at www.savageequipment.com and you can take a look at videos on our YouTube page www.youtube.com/savageequipmentinc.

Farm Safety: A little extra care can make all the difference.

As we're wrapping up this newsletter, it happens to be National Farm Safety and Health Week (Sept. 17-23). It was set forth by President Trump's proclamation on September 15th this year. This occasion and an article I read recently, got me thinking how quickly a good day working in the orchard can turn into a day of tragedy that can never be undone. The April 20 article on the Southeast Farm Press website was entitled *One of farming's tragic truths gets national news coverage*. I also read through the “national news” piece to which this article refers: *Your farm is trying to kill you* (from the website Politico: by Ian Kullgren, April 12, 2017). The articles communicate how dangerous farming can be: “...more dangerous and deadly than police work or fighting fires.”

Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in America, with 22 of every 100,000 farmers dying in a work-related accident. Farmers are nearly twice as likely to die on the job as police officers are, five times as likely as firefighters, and 73 times as likely as Wall Street bankers.

These are rather sobering statistics and injury rates on the farm are even worse. Let's face it, the farm has many risks to safety, including large and sometimes unpredictable animals, powerful machinery, dangerous chemicals, and high places to fall from like barn lofts and grain silos.

Many of our readers run family farms and are well aware of the dangers that come with the territory. As we start another busy harvest season, we'd like to help our customers minimize those dangers by offering a few equipment-related suggestions.



- Be familiar with the operation and safety precautions associated with your equipment. If you don't have an operator manual, get one from the manufacturer.
- Make sure everyone who might operate or work around the equipment knows the procedures and precautions associated with it. If you're not sure everyone has been properly trained, make it happen. If there's a language issue, get some translation help with the training.
- Ensure all shields and guards on your equipment and PTO shafts are in place and functioning properly.
- Perform a preseason checkout and make sure belts, chains, sprockets, bearings, etc. are in good working order. Replace them before they break.
- Ensure employees wear eye and ear protection where it's appropriate, and set a good example.
- Get your whole team involved in building a culture that keeps employees alert for hazards and more proactive at correcting a dangerous situation.

Taking a little extra time and care can go a long way toward ensuring every day on the farm a good one.

Just Plain Nuts

National chefs get a chance to experiment with pecans

The July Issue of NUTFRUIT, the official magazine of the International Nut and Dried Fruit Council, featured an article on the National Pecan Shellers Association's trade event known as the Pecan Chefs Summit. The event, held this past spring, enabled commercial chefs to immerse themselves in the world of pecans through various cooking events and educational sessions.

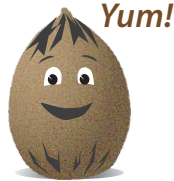
The Pecan Chefs Summit, was created by the National Pecan Shellers Association and designed to get R&D chefs

more engaged in, and familiar with pecans. These chefs spent two days learning how to employ pecan products—pieces, halves, meal, oil and flour—in a variety of dishes. Attendees enjoyed hands-on cooking experiences and collaboration with other creative chefs.

The 2017 event was held at the Time Inc. Food Studios, and included chefs from Aramark, Baskin Robbins, Cinnabon, Hyatt Hotels, PeachDish, SouthernBite.com, Time Inc. Food Studios and US Foods. You can check out recipes created at the event by visiting the National Pecan Shellers website, www.ilovepecans.org/recipes/. **Check out one of these delicious recipes below.**



We borrowed this great recipe (that includes a little kick of cayenne pepper) from the National Pecan Shellers Association website, ilovepecans.org. Go ahead—give it a try!



Pecan Goopy Butter Pie

by Brenda McGranahan of Cinnabon & Benjamin Stanley of Baskin Robbins

Ingredients:

- 1 (18-ounce) box yellow cake mix
- 1/2 cup pecan meal
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 stick (4-ounces) salted butter
- 3 large eggs
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 3 tablespoons spiced rum, divided
- 2 cups pecan halves
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the cake mix, pecan meal, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper. In a

microwave safe bowl, microwave the butter for about 30 seconds. Add the butter and 1 egg to the cake mix and stir until well combined. Press the cake mixture into the bottom of a greased 9×13 glass baking dish.

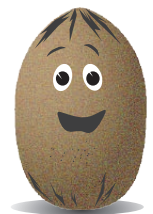
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat 2 eggs and cream cheese until smooth. Add the powdered sugar and 2 tablespoons of spiced rum. Pour the cream cheese mixture over the crust. Sprinkle the pecan halves over the surface.

3. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until pie is cooked through and golden brown.

4. To serve, whip the heavy cream with the remaining 1 tablespoon of spiced rum and the granulated sugar to form soft peaks. Spoon Pecan Goopy Butter Pie onto a dessert plate and dollop with spiced whipped cream on the side.

Prep Time: 15 minutes; Cook Time: 40 minutes. Serves 6

*Wow—time sure flies, doesn't it? I can't believe it's been **5 YEARS** since we started this little newsletter. Amazing!*



If you've got a humorous story, a good, clean joke or a pecan recipe you'd like to share, send it along to pecancountry@savageequipment.com, and we might just include it in our little newsletter.