

# PECAN COUNTRY NEWS

Volume 30

Winter 2020

## On the Calendar

### Jan 27-30:

Texas Pecan Short Crs;  
College Station, TX

### Feb 8:

NC Pecan Growers Conf.;  
Goldsboro, NC

### Feb 21-22:

Southeastern Pecan  
Growers Conf.; Panama  
City Beach, FL

### Mar 1-3:

Western Pecan Growers  
Conf.; Las Cruces, NM

### Mar 24-25:

GA Pecan Growers Conf.  
UGA Conf. Center, Tifton

### Jun 20-21:

Tri-State ArkLaMiss  
Pecanference; New  
Roads, LA

## It's 2020! Savage is still thriving and ready for more.

Ready or not, it's 2020. While the decade of the Twenties may still seem a little strange to our eyes and ears, it's now as real as The Roaring Twenties of the last century. And, though technology has advanced in tremendous leaps since 1920, we are no closer than our great-grandparents were to knowing what this new decade will hold.

This year marks fifty-five years since Basil Savage entered the thrilling and unpredictable world of the inventor/entrepreneur. With some solid metal manufacturing skills, for such a young man, and an extraordinarily creative mind, Basil Savage decided to build a new kind of pecan tree shaker. Climbing trees to



One of the original Savage Shakers

shake out pecans did not appeal much to Basil or his new bride, and buying an expensive shaker was not an option for the young couple.

If you asked him now, what he thinks of that first machine, he'd probably tell you it wasn't very good. But it worked well enough; and many generations of Savage Shakers later, they are still machines that fill the need for pecan

Continued on page 2

## Loren Damron bids farewell after forty-one years at Savage Equipment

In the fall of 1978, a thirty-something-year-old Loren Damron, answered a "help wanted" ad in the local newspaper. He dropped by the new manufacturing company that was just starting to gain a little traction in Madill, Oklahoma. Back then, only a handful of employees worked for Savage Equipment, and they needed a part-timer to handle some cleaning chores and other odd jobs. It worked out well for Loren because he and his wife were "house parents" for eight kids at the Baptist Children's Home nearby, and the job allowed Loren to finish work before the youngsters were home from school. A couple years later, Loren was full time at Savage and starting to learn the ropes by helping out with parts and purchasing. Over the years, he became more involved in these functions and even did a stint managing Savage Equipment's remote location in Lampasas, Texas. During those part-time days in the 1970's, Loren could not have imagined he would end up sticking with

Continued on page 2



Loren has hardly changed at all.

866-572-8243 [info@savageequipment.com](mailto:info@savageequipment.com)



# Pecan Folks

It's 2020... (cont. from page 1)

growers everywhere. The same is true for the dozens of other devices developed by Savage over the years. Those first machines were sold to a dozen or so growers in Oklahoma. Today, Savage Equipment, Inc. is crafting and selling machinery in three locations and distributing it to pecan businesses across North America and several other continents.



**One of the early Savage pecan cleaners from the early 1980's**



**Basil Savage shows off the features on a newer version of the Savage Shaker in the late 1960's**

As we enter a new decade, Savage is proud of the journey we've travelled as a company and excited about the new developments that are just around the corner. As we strive to create even more useful, innovative equipment for the pecan community, we are thankful to that community for allowing us to thrive after more than five decades in the business.

Loren Damron (cont. from page 1)

Basil Savage and his fledgling manufacturing company through more than four decades of virtually continuous expansion. When asked why he stayed, Loren said that he's always enjoyed the diversity of roles he was able to fill at the small, family-owned business and he liked the way folks at Savage "just seemed to get along and work together." He was also proud to be part of a company providing useful equipment that served the pecan-growing community.

In December, Loren made his last commute to Madill, Oklahoma from his home near Durant. He plans on enjoy-

ing the extra time that retirement will afford by taking some short trips with his wife and making a more serious hobby out of fishing. As the longest-serving employee of Savage Equipment, Loren will leave behind a great legacy of loyalty and perseverance. Many of our readers will remember Loren because he sold, delivered or sent parts for one or more of your Savage machines. We're sure you'll want to join us in wishing Loren a long, healthy retirement. It won't quite be the same around Savage Equipment, but we're happy knowing Loren is enjoying the blessings of retirement, including some great fishing.

# 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.

### **Agricultural labor problems and potential solutions abound in 2019/2020**

Getting good labor on the farm, and especially seasonal labor, has been increasingly difficult in recent years. A booming economy is great for folks seeking a job and not-so-great for employers seeking employees. Welcome changes to the H-2A Temporary Ag Worker Visa Program have been highlighted in two Farm Press articles in recent months. More expansive changes are proposed in a bill affecting immigrants and employers, entitled the Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2019, that was introduced in late October. This bill is now in committee and is considered unlikely to be embraced by the Whitehouse.

An article by Logan Hawkes (Farm Press website, Oct 2, 2019) discusses Agriculture Secretary, Sonny Perdue's explanation of changes to the H-2A program designed to "streamline and speed the process of getting workers in the field."

Perdue noted that Department of Labor's Office of Foreign Labor Certification announced in August updates to the pertinent H-2A forms and that the online filing process for the H-2A temporary agricultural program will take effect on Oct. 21 as part of their modernization efforts.

DOL officials said the improved labor market test will assess whether qualified American workers are available to fill temporary agricultural jobs by advertising all H-2A job opportunities on Seasonal-Jobs.dol.gov, the expanded and improved version of the Department's existing electronic job registry.

The rule changes and the website should also make it easier for Americans to find and fill open jobs and relieve employers from some regulatory burdens such as the need to advertise jobs in a print newspaper. New rules are "designed to strengthen protections for U.S. and foreign workers" as well as easing burdens on employers in obtaining and certifying farm workers.

The article goes on to describe some skepticism by farmers that were hoping for more significant changes, although they are pleased to have a more streamlined

process.

In a related Farm Press article (Oct 7, 2019), entitled *Mid-South Farmers look to H-2A for seasonal labor*, author Ron Smith discusses farm labor and the H-2A program with farmers in Arkansas and Missouri.

Many farms now need workers capable of learning to operate sophisticated equipment—precision planters, spray rigs and harvesters.

Employees with many of these skillsets find higher paying jobs, with benefits, in other industries, leaving agriculture scrambling to fill key positions.

"It's an issue across the Cotton Belt," says David Wildy, Wildy Family Farms, Manila, Ark. Wildy, during a recent National Cotton Council Producer Information Exchange tour stop at his farm, says he never attends farm meetings that the topic doesn't get mentioned. "We have three steel mills in the county," he says, "and we have to compete with them for labor."

For several years, Wildy has used H-2A labor to augment his workforce through the busy seasons and has been "pleasantly surprised" with his crews from South Africa.

Wildy says H-2A comes with numerous regulations. "It can be hard, and we have to jump through a lot of hoops. We pay travel here and back. We are required to pay a certain amount per hour, based on the area."

He says farmers have to start early in the year to get the paperwork done and secure H-2A workers for the next season. "We've been pleased with it."

Another grower interviewed for the article, Marty Moore of Hornersville, Missouri, grows cotton, soybeans, peanuts and melons. The family also operates a packing house that requires several dozen seasonal workers. He used H-2A labor in 2019 as domestic labor was not available. He says they were "the best crew ever."

To qualify for H-2A nonimmigrant classification, the petitioner must:

- Offer a job that is of a temporary or seasonal nature.
- Demonstrate that there are not enough U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available to do the temporary work.

Continued on page 4



# More Pecan Pieces

Ag Labor (cont. from page 3)

- Show that employing H-2A workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers.
- Generally, submit a single valid temporary labor certification from the U.S. Department of Labor with the H-2A petition. (A limited exception to this requirement exists in certain “emergent circumstances.” See e.g., 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5)(x) for specific details. (<https://bit.ly/2kmmLgs>).

## Almonds and Pecans May Be Key to U.S.-China Farm Deal

In a December 20, 2019 article by the above title in Bloomberg News, staff writer Niu Shuping, in Beijing, lays out an optimistic scenario for nuts in the freshly negotiated “Phase One” of the U.S./China Trade Deal.

China is likely to purchase about \$2.5 billion worth of American nuts a year as part of its phase one trade deal with the U.S., according to influential agriculture consultant Shanghai JC Intelligence Co. That’s more than it’s expected to spend on key American produce like corn, wheat and even pork, which China needs a lot of, according to JCI estimates.

In mid-December, Beijing and Washington agreed on the first phase of a trade deal in which China would buy \$40 billion to \$50 billion in American farm products. Shuping says that “nuts may come as a surprise to those who are unaware of China’s love for the hard little snack.”

## Is “Desirable” still desirable?

In the December issue of Pecan South magazine, Dr. George Ray McEachern, horticulture professor at Texas A&M University, tells the story of the long-revered pecan variety known as “Desirable”. His article is entitled, *‘Desirable’: True or False?*. It’s an interesting tale that goes back over one hundred years. In 1903, the same year Orville and Wilber Wright were making aviation history on the beaches of North Carolina, C. F. Forkert was making a bit of pecan history in Mississippi when he hand-crossed this venerable nut. The USDA tested “Desirable” in the early 1930’s and introduced it to the public as “Forkert’s Desirable” in 1936. Unfortunately,

Carl Forkert had passed away before his most lasting contribution to pecan history became widely known.

Dr. McEachern’s article sings the praises of “Desirable’s” many admirable characteristics, but also describes a few not-so-desirable traits. The pecan orchards at Texas A&M are home to a handful of very old Desirable trees that were planted by pecan pioneer, Fred Brison, probably sometime in the 1940’s.

The Brison Block has 18 trees that are over 70 years of age, with trunk diameters of 36 to 48 inches. These are big old trees, yet they produced over 110 pounds of large, clean inshell pecans per tree. The nut size was also big because of the good spring rains up until May.

McEachern is “confident there is no other variety that could produce this volume of quality nuts at this age.” However, one unfavorable characteristic of this variety is its growth structure and limb strength. Dr. McEachern tells us that the limbs are more lateral than upright and the “wood or limbs are weak and can break easily with heavy crops, wind, ice, snow and hurricanes.” Other downside traits include its relatively late start to fruiting (7 to 10 years) and its susceptibility to scab, although this has only become a problem since the 1980’s. Terminal dieback has become another recently developed threat for “Desirable” trees.

“Desirable’s” upside characteristics are many. It’s size and high percentage of meat are two of its most profitable traits. It’s also a variety that tends to produce consistent crops with very minimal alternate bearing. As the folks with very old “Desirable” trees can tell you, their production has real staying power. While we know much about promising varieties in young orchards, Dr. McEachern believes it could be “25, 50 or even 75 years until we find another cultivar with the positive rewards of “Desirable.””

## Social Media 101:

In The Pecan Grower magazine’s December edition you’ll find an enlightening article, by Alex Ott (APC Director) on how the American Pecan Council is leveraging social media to “stretch assessment dollars” while driving “awareness and demand for pecans nationwide.”

If you’re wondering how a social media campaign might help your pecan business and the steps to get it going, this article would be a great place to start.

# Featured Equipment

## A bountiful 2020 crop of quality pecans starts now.

The 2019 pecan crop is mostly sold or in cold storage somewhere. At least that's true for the northern half of the pecan-growing world. It's the time of year when pecan farmers start focusing on the many ways they can use their expertise and tools-of-the-trade to give their trees every advantage as they prepare to emerge from dormancy. Pecan orchards can be threatened by voracious insects, diseases, mineral deficiencies, and sometimes, all of the

above. Let not your heart be troubled. The good news is, nobody offers more ways to protect your orchard investment than Savage Equipment. Savage has been crafting high-quality, affordable PTO-driven sprayers for many decades. Savage builds sprayers to accommodate almost any tractor size, orchard and budget. We also offer Nelson's powerful diesel-powered sprayers, including the Super 80 and the Super 92, along with the line of Nelson PTO sprayers. Additionally, any of Savage's three locations can provide you with useful orchard cleanup tools like the popular Savage Limb Rake and the Nelson Tree Squirrel.



Savage 5528



Savage 5534



Savage 5537



Savage 5540



Savage 5740



Nelson Tree Squirrel



Nelson 6800P



Savage Rake 7218



Nelson Super 80



Nelson Super 92



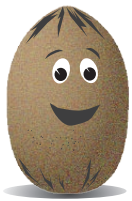
# Just Plain Nuts

## Biggest Pecan Bragging Rights

In 1962, a Texas dentist had a pecan replica made in honor of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. The story is told that this Spanish explorer survived on pecans while imprisoned by natives near Texas' Guadalupe River—a river he called the "the river of nuts." The locals of Seguin, Texas began claiming to have the world's largest pecan (at about five feet in length), and this was pretty well the state



of things until a pecan farming family in Missouri had a pecan model built in 1982 that dwarfed the Texas nut at an amazing twelve feet long. The Missourians enjoyed teasing the Texans of Seguin, who still claimed title to housing the largest pecan (although clearly they did not). Well, that couldn't stand. In 2011, Seguin residents had a giant sixteen-foot pecan crafted, allowing them to rightfully reclaim the title of "Home of the World's Largest Pecan"—well, pecan replica actually.



Hey, Stu—Instead of "the John," I now call my toilet "the Jim." That way it sounds better when I tell foks I go to the Jim first thing every morning.

You're a genius, Dez!  
Why didn't I think of that?



## A random selection of funny thoughts:

*The trouble with doing things right the first time is nobody appreciates how difficult it was.*

*I assert dominance over millennials by responding to their texts with phone calls.*

*What did the beach say as the tide came in?  
Long time no sea.*

*Diet Coke: Making people feel better about ordering a Big Mac and large fries since 1982.*

*I went to the pet store because my daughter wanted a pet spider for her birthday. Can you believe they wanted over 40 bucks for one!? I told them to forget it—I can get one cheaper on the web.*

*Write a wise saying and your name will live forever.  
—Anonymous*

*This interesting recipe comes from an old cookbook called **The Wide, Wide World of Texas Cooking** by Morton Gill Clark. This pound cake has loads of pecans in it, and what's more Texan than that!*

## Pecan Pound Cake

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. sweet butter
- 3 cups sugar
- 6 eggs
- 4 cups flour
- ¼ tsp. mace\*
- ⅓ cup milk
- 1 lb. chopped pecans
- 2 tsps. vanilla
- ½ tsp. salt

### Directions:

Cream butter and sugar together until very light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine flour, salt and mace and sift together. Add flour mixture and milk alternatively to egg batter, again beating after each addition. Stir in chopped pecans and vanilla. Pour into an ungreased 10-inch tube pan and bake at 275° F. for 1½ hours. Cool cake in pan 10 minutes before turning out on rack to cool completely. When cold, wrap in wax paper and refrigerate overnight before cutting. Makes 20 Slices. (\*Mace comes from the covering of the nutmeg seed and has a similar taste.)



If you've got a pecan story, a good, clean joke or a pecan recipe you'd like to share, send it along to [pecancountry@savageequipment.com](mailto:pecancountry@savageequipment.com). We love to hear from our Pecan Country neighbors.