



From your friends at Savage Equipment

On the Calendar

Jan 24-27:

Texas Pecan Short Course; Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

Feb 19:

NC Pecan Growers Mtg.; Lumberton, NC; Contact ncpecangrowers@gmail.com.

Feb 25-26:

Southeastern Pecan Growers Conf.; Sandestin Resort, FL; Info at sepga.com

Mar 8-10:

Western Pecan Growers Conf.; Las Cruces Convention Center

Mar 29-31:

Georgia Pecan Growers Conf.; Perry, GA; More info at georgiapecan.org

Savage Equipment: A story of perseverance

The story has continued for well over five decades now. It began with a young welder of modest means in southern Oklahoma. He and his young bride needed a better way to get pecans out of their trees each fall. Basil Savage was in his mid-twenties when he started tinkering with an idea for a low-cost tree shaker that he could attach to his tractor's power take-off. Combining a lot of long hours of work with his tenacious will to succeed, Basil accomplished what he set out to do. The somewhat homely tree-shaking machine would prove to be the first of dozens more equipment innovations that would stream from the inventive mind of Basil Savage.

Fast-forward fifty-six years or so, and the company that grew from that little tree shaker now leads the world in crafting equipment for the pecan industry. Savage Equip-

ment manufactures a couple dozen different types of machines that cover just about everything needed for growing, cleaning and processing pecans. New ones are coming out every year, and they are shipped to far-flung places like Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Israel, Mexico and South Africa. The company now employs several dozen people and serves pecan growers and processors from three operating locations.

Even with all the advancements and expansion over the decades, several things remain. The Savage team still builds machines (including tree shakers) in Madill, Oklahoma. They still serve pecan growers, large and small, across the American pecan belt. They still strive toward relentless improvement of their existing devices and continually work to create new, innovative machines. And, Basil Savage is still the man at the helm of the company. These days, Basil's three sons are integral to running the equipment company and the pecan opera-

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"A hard life, but a good life."

When I was casting about in search of an engaging "human interest story" for this season's newsletter, Savage of Georgia's, Billy Brown, mentioned Edsel Turner as the sort of character who might have an interesting story to tell. Billy even went the extra mile (actually about 140 miles) and drove out to "Mr. Edsel's" place to spend part of the afternoon getting to know the man and his wife a bit better. Here is what he learned.

In the heart of The Great Depression, Edsel Turner was born to a farming family in Surrency, Georgia, a town of a couple hundred folks that is near—well, some other

lightly populated towns in southeast Georgia. He was one of four brothers who grew up "poor but happy," helping their dad raise cotton, tobacco and corn. They also had a few acres of pecans, which may have helped inspire Mr. Turner's later transition to pecan farming. Early in life, young Edsel lost most of his ability to hear. He struggled through school with this impairment until the ninth grade, when he dropped out altogether. He convinced his sweetheart, Pearl, to marry him before she finished high school, and they have been together ever since. He will tell you, he "couldn't have done it without her."

"Done what?" you might ask. Throughout their life together, the Turners have used their knowledge of farm-

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story of perseverance (continued)

tions, and several of his grandchildren are also part of the team. It is a true family enterprise, and the company's many long-term employees are now part of that family.

Savage Equipment's success story certainly did not happen overnight, and the journey included some lean times and significant obstacles to overcome. Today's operating environment certainly has presented its own set of challenges recently. Throughout the trials of the Covid pandemic, Savage Equipment kept the lights on, the welders welding, the machinists machining and the painters painting. They continued to deliver much-needed equipment and spare parts to growers and processors around the world. The Savage team even managed to develop new machines and improve upon some of their existing designs.

The complex problems caused by supply chain disruptions have been a frequent feature of national news recently. Savage Equipment has not been immune to these issues

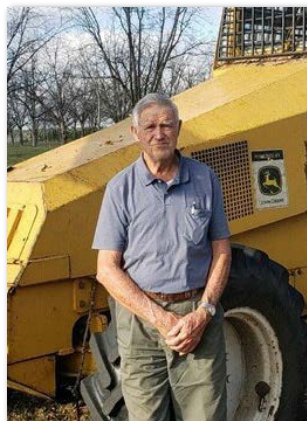
as lead times for various component parts have grown longer and longer. As they have done for decades, the innovators and problem-solvers at Savage Equipment continue to conquer these challenges and turn out shiny, new equipment at a steady pace. Recent examples would include the Savage response to an unexpected scarcity of their trademark red paint. They ended up delivering an 8261 Harvester in a stylish, new black finish and turned out several mobile pecan-cleaning machines in a gray paint scheme instead of the classic red. In addition, the Savage parts department has significantly expanded its inventory to help ease disruptions to the supply chain and to accelerate our response time when a customer needs a part and needs it in a hurry.

Moving forward, the Savage team will no-doubt find more innovative solutions to the continuing supply chain troubles and other obstacles that the unknowable future is certain to hold. Their outlook remains positive and focused on a bright future.

A good life (continued)

ing, some wise investing, a steadfast work ethic and their genuinely positive attitude to build a rather prosperous life for themselves. In 1969, Mr. Turner bought some acreage and started his own farm, growing cotton, tobacco and corn and raising calves and pigs. A few years down the road, he started moving in a different direction and discovered that pecan growing agreed with him very much. He gradually eased into pecans from row crops. Along the way, he invested in other agricultural enterprises that have proven fruitful over the years.

Despite the daily struggles that come with deafness, he skillfully worked the land, raised a loving family and built a thriving future. Mr. Turner also had his share of brushes with mortality—like the time he was “cooning for catfish” and grabbed hold of an alligator instead. For the uninitiated, “cooning,” (also called “noodling”) consists of feeling for catfish holes underwater with your bare hands (like a raccoon). To be successful, one must stick their hand in the hole until the catfish bites them; then they must take hold of the fish and pull it out of the water. Then there was the time Mr. Turner was almost swallowed whole by an industrial



corn-grinding machine. He was able to jump up and pull himself out at the last second. Incidents like these may have taught Mr. Turner to keep a positive outlook no matter how dire the circumstances, for he surely is an optimist. Why would someone his age be making significant investments in new pecan equipment and planting more trees? Optimism. At 89-years-young, Mr. Turner still pulls his weight in the pecan orchard and loves doing it. He also welcomes the help of his son and a great-grandson on the pecan farm. Mr. Turner describes his couple hundred acres of pecan trees as “heaven on earth,” and the place he most likes to be. In fact, after Billy Brown spoke with him for this article, “Mr. Edsel” climbed back aboard his hedger and got back to work trimming his trees for the coming growing season.

Like many in his generation, Edsel Turner doesn't recognize that the life he has built is anything noteworthy. He wondered aloud why we would even want to tell his story. On reflection, he considers his journey so far to be “a hard life, but a good life,” and we would agree. Edsel and Pearl Turner have built a legacy they can be proud of, and we are grateful that they shared some of their remarkable history with us.



News you can use!

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

Short crop expected in Georgia

An article in the Southeast Farm Press written by Brad Haire (Nov 22, 2021) provides a sobering prospective for this year's pecan crop in Georgia. The article leads with the statement, "Georgia's total pecan production likely won't be more than 60 million pounds," which tells you just how sobering things could be. This assessment comes from University of Georgia Extension pecan specialist, Lenny Wells who also says, "Every crop gets shorter as the season progresses, but when the season starts out with a limited crop as we saw this year, that crop gets shorter quickly."

An erratic cool spring delayed the trees' budbreak and hindered foliage growth, he said, tapping the brakes on flowering and crop development by 10 days or more, which may have caused some pollination problems. "Following crop set in early summer, I noticed throughout the state, young orchards, or 30 years and under, appeared to have a pretty good crop, while most older orchards appeared very light to almost blank," he said.

According to Wells, there were other factors causing the short crop this year including a really tough season of scab infestation and a severe shortage of sunshine during critical periods. An especially limiting factor was a period between September 16 and September 22 when "solar radiation was half of what it should have been during that time." This shortage of sunlight was a severe constraint on varieties that mature in mid-season, especially ones that carried a heavy crop load. The early varieties fared better, likely because they had mostly finished filling before this September cloudy period.

If this very limited production plays out as expected, it would be less than half of last year's large pecan crop and far below the average for Georgia over the past decade.

Why a Quality Assurance Program for pecans?

In the December issue of Pecan South Magazine, managing editor, Catherine Clark lays out a positive case for the pecan industry to have a Quality Assurance Program

going forward. In the article, Ms. Clark spells out the "What", the "Why" and the "How" of a Quality Assurance Program for pecans. As the article describes, a Quality Assurance Program for pecans is already in motion, led by the American Pecan Council. In fact, we are in Phase 3 of this process, which includes "some working group and committee meetings, an industry-wide survey, and the public comment period once they have the finalized draft."

In August 2019, the American Pecan Council approved the hiring of KCoe Isom, a food and ag consulting and accounting firm, to develop and draft a voluntary Quality Assurance Program for the industry. This step came after a strategic planning process that identified five main areas of change and opportunity for the industry.

The "What" section of the article describes a Quality Assurance Program and its purpose. "At its most basic definition, a Quality Assurance Program aligns an industry or company within a set of standards, communicates to customers that the product is high quality, and gives the industry or company credit for practices it's already doing." Clearly, the current understanding of "quality assurance" is much broader than simply taking steps to ensure a relative high quality for the product itself.

"The purpose of a Quality Assurance Program is to collect a vat of best practices for an industry or a company and demonstrate what expectations are or what good work is already being done," explains Lisa Becker, CPA, Senior Associate with KCoe Isom. "It's meant to really articulate to customers and consumers what practices are in place related to topics of importance for those groups."

These topics often include food safety, sustainability, business ethics, worker health and safety, traceability, and resource management.

The first step in the process of establishing a QAP is to determine the issues that are important to the industry along with the industry's customers and other stakeholders.

"This is a program written by the industry for the industry. We as KCoe have come in as technical experts in pulling together a lot of these resources and pulling stakeholder information together, and talking about these protocols," Becker explains.

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Quality Assurance Program (continued)

“But at the end of the day, this program has been reviewed and approved and inspired by the QAP working group, the APC, and various growers and processors we’ve engaged with along the way through surveys and interviews. So, it’s really meant to be a program the industry built for itself.”

The first few paragraphs of the article and the “Why” segment lay out the reasoning behind the push for a QAP. Significantly, customers at the wholesale and retail level are far more interested in how food products are grown and processed than ever before. Food safety and ecological considerations are much more important in today’s marketplace, and industries are going to great lengths to minimize risk and avoid potential damage to their brands.

Green Valley Pecan Company has had an active Quality Assurance Program for over 20 years; within the last 14 years, the company has formalized its program and honed in on food safety and quality. Customer demands for traceability and transparency continue to be a major reason for Green Valley’s QAP.

“[Wholesale] customers are wanting and demanding brand preservation. They don’t want to be involved in any type of recall or negative publicity. So, I think that’s why they’re pushing on the supplier to make sure they have good QAPs,” says Green Valley Pecan Company’s Director of Plant Operations, Brenda Lara.

In the “How” portion of the article, Ms. Clark describes Phase 3 of the American Pecan Council’s QAP initiative and the steps that follow. After a final draft is approved, “the pecan Quality Assurance Program becomes active, and industry members can begin applying for certification if they wish. Once certified by a third-party verifier, industry members can then place the QAP seal on their products.”

A Quality Assurance Program will certainly have a significant impact on the pecan industry. The industry members that are quoted in the article are supportive and believe that a move in that direction is inevitable. They see the current QAP initiative as something that will be demanded by the evolving marketplace. They also see the APC-sponsored program as preferable to a government-driven QAP effort.

This article sheds light on a topic that will impact most

folks in the industry. A pecan QAP will have far-reaching implications, and it might be worth your time to read this article in its entirety.

Keeping input costs down in challenging times.

A very useful article in the January issue of Pecan South might help many growers remain profitable in the 2022 growing season (*Rising production costs require detailed attention to inputs*). Lenny Wells, Extension Pecan Specialist at the University of Georgia, has provided a wealth of ideas (and the research to back them up) aimed at minimizing input costs while maintaining a healthy, thriving pecan orchard. The piece is far too extensive to fairly summarize it here, but if you’re a grower concerned about steeply rising input costs and the potential for lower pecan prices next year, it is an article that will likely be worth your time. While it is focused on growing pecans in Georgia, much of it will apply to growers in many areas.

Wells begins the article by spelling out just how much input prices have risen over the past year or so. Nitrogen is up over 240 percent since the spring of 2021. Commonly used herbicides are also up by hefty percentages.

One of the biggest areas in which you can potentially save money in your pecan operation is fertilizer—I refer primarily to nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), and zinc (Z). I want to emphasize that I am not telling you to skimp or cut corners. I am just recommending how to eliminate some things you may not need. In order to do this, you will need a current soil sample and a leaf sample from last year. Without that, you won’t know if you can do what I am suggesting here or not.

Wells then goes element by element to describe how to be more deliberate and accurate regarding when, how much, and what methodology to use in their application. He describes specific situations in which it may even be acceptable to forgo applications of certain chemicals in the coming year without sacrificing the quality of your crop. Wells says that the 2022 growing season “is already shaping up to be another challenging year for producing pecans.

If you add all this up, following the guidelines above can save you as much as \$98 per acre just on phosphorus, potassium and zinc with no ill effects at all.

It seems like advice a grower might want to consider.



The Savage Silverline conveyor

If you need to move a lot of nuts quickly on a food-friendly surface like stainless steel, you should look into the Savage 815S Vibratory Conveyor. This marvel of engineering uses very specific modes of vibration to move large flows of nuts from machine to machine or into bins. They can be employed as single units or in an almost unlimited series end-to-end. These vibratory conveyors are available in lengths of 6, 8 or 10 feet.



An ounce of prevention for your Redline equipment

When Benjamin Franklin wrote “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” he was reminding the citizens of Philadelphia that the expense of preventing fires in the city was a bargain compared to the expense of rebuilding after a fire. This nugget of wisdom can be applied to many things, including the value of preventing problems with your orchard machines over fixing the troubles that result otherwise. Extra care in putting your orchard machines away for the next several months can increase their longevity and help prevent future headaches. Here are a few suggestions.

Go over each piece of equipment thoroughly, inspecting all parts and paying close attention to sprocket and chain wear, bearing condition, belt and sheave wear, and torn or worn rubber flaps and fingers. List the replacement parts that are needed and order them early. Savage Equipment will be better able to expedite delivery, and parts can be installed during slack periods, thereby avoiding costly delays during the season when the machines are needed most. In the current environment of supply-chain woes, this point is especially relevant.

Lubricate all chains and check oil in all gearboxes. You will want to wipe most of the oil from the chains before using the equipment later. Check chain and belt tension. Consult your manual to know how much movement the chain or belt should have.

Test hydraulic systems by checking that all cylinders are operating correctly with no leaks. Escaping fluid under pressure can have sufficient force to penetrate the skin causing serious injury. Fluid escaping from a very

small hole can be invisible, so use care when detecting leak locations and do not use your bare hand. Be sure all connections are tight and that the lines and hoses are not damaged. Check pins in hydraulic cylinders to make sure they are secure.

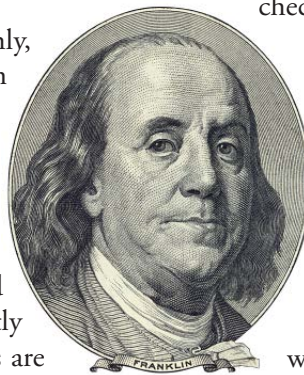
Check tire pressure. Follow the tire manufacturer's suggested psi requirement printed on the side of the tire. Check the tightness of the lug nuts or bolts on the wheel. Lug nuts should be torqued to about 55-ft lbs. (75 NM).

Check for loose nuts, bolts, and set screws throughout your machines. Check sprocket placement. All sprockets should run in a precise line with their appropriate drive sprocket. If any major moving parts have been replaced, check them for alignment and operation.

The telescoping driveline and U-joints should be greased, BUT... all pillow block and flange type bearings are sealed bearings and excessive greasing can burst the seals, shortening the bearing life. Savage recommends greasing these types of bearings by giving them one stroke of grease very slowly once a year at the beginning of the season.

Drain all fluid from the tank, lines, and pump when storing your sprayer, to prevent parts from freezing and bursting. You will need to do this during the operating season as well if your sprayer is going to be exposed to freezing temperatures.

It's always best to shelter the equipment in a dry place. Clean the equipment thoroughly inside and out. Trash and dirt will draw moisture and cause rust. Paint all parts from which paint has been worn. Savage offers spray paint to match your original paint along with decals and safety stickers to keep your equipment looking sharp and improve its durability and safety just a bit. An ounce of prevention will help your machines hold their value.





Pecans: still a healthy choice.

On the *WebMD* website, the page titled Health Benefits of Pecans (Reviewed by Dan Brennan, MD, September 17, 2020), you'll find a great summary of the many ways that pecans are good for you. They contain important nutrients that are "important for healthy skin, eyes, teeth, bones, muscles and nerves." These nutrients, along with protein, fiber and healthy fats, are beneficial to heart health, diabetes management, arthritis relief and

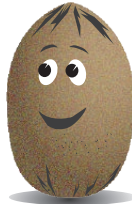
disease prevention.

Since pecans are high in calories, the article cautions against overdoing it and recommends a portion size of 1 ounce which it says is about 19 pecan halves (must be talking about pretty small pecans).

The writer is especially keen on raw pecans, which are "cholesterol-free, sodium-free and low in carbohydrates." Try adding them to pancake batter, muffins, cookie dough, salads, oatmeal, quinoa and yogurt or just carrying some around for a healthy snack. Sounds good to us!



Hey Dez, I visited the grandparents last weekend, and boy, are they a funny pair.



Yeah, Elliot? How so?

Well, they had been getting so forgetful recently that they decided to go to the doctor. The doctor told them there wasn't much he could do and told them to just start writing things down so they don't forget anything important. So Sunday afternoon, Grandma asks Grandpa to get her a bowl of ice cream. "You might want to write it down," she said. Grandpa says, "Don't be silly, woman. I can remember that you want a bowl of ice cream." He had barely stood up, when she tells him she wants it to be the chocolate fudge ice cream. "Write it down," she told him, and again he said, "No, no, I'll remember. You want a bowl of chocolate fudge ice cream." Then Grandma says she wants the chocolate fudge ice cream to have some nuts on top. "Write it down," she says and again he said, "No, I've got it. You want a bowl of chocolate fudge ice cream with some nuts on top." So, he goes in the kitchen and he's gone a good while—maybe 20 minutes or more. He comes out to Grandma and hands her a bowl of freshly cooked oatmeal. She looks at the bowl, looks at him, looks at the bowl, then looks at him and says, "You forgot the toast!"

Pecan Toffee

Here's a great recipe to satisfy that nutty-chocolaty-crunchy craving.

It comes from the kitchen of Frances Savage at Hauani Creek Ranch here in southern Oklahoma. (A great place for recipes and farm-fresh pecans: www.pecansnow.com.)



Ingredients

- 1 ½ C Chopped Pecans, divided
- 1 C Sugar
- 1 C Butter, softened
- ⅓ Cup water
- 5 (1.55oz) Milk Chocolate Bars, broken into small pieces

Instructions

- Line a 15x10 in. jellyroll pan with heavy-duty aluminum foil; lightly grease foil.
- Sprinkle with 1 cup of pecans to within 1 inch of the edges.
- Bring sugar, butter and ⅓ cup of water to boil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, 12 minutes or until candy thermometer registers 310° (hard crack stage). Pour over the pecans and sprinkle with chocolate pieces. Let stand 30 seconds.
- Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup of pecans. Chill 30 minutes. Break up toffee using mallet or rolling pin.
- Store in airtight container.

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