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Positive Early Outlook for South Carolina Peach Crop

COLUMBIA, S.C. –South Carolina peach farmers are looking forward to an excellent peach crop in 2016 in spite of the challenges they faced last year. Favorable growing conditions have given growers a positive outlook for a fruitful crop of everyone’s favorite summertime treat.

After delays from heavy rains in the fall, growers immediately began working on the upcoming season. Planting new trees, installing irrigation lines, and pruning established orchards keep South Carolina growers busy year round. Countless hours of hard work are required in the fall and winter to set up ideal conditions for the spring and summer.

“We are off to a good start for the 2016 peach crop,” said Matt Forrest, President of the SC Peach Council and co-owner of Dixie Belle Peaches. “After a late start to winter, we now expect to accumulate more than enough of the necessary chill hours and are anticipating a normal bloom date in a few weeks.”

With an unusually warm fall, growers have been monitoring weather stations daily. Peach trees require between 600 – 1000 chill hours, depending on variety, to overcome dormancy. Farmers choose plant varieties that coincide with their location based on these figures to ensure the highest quality fruit. As the weather has finally turned cool, these hours below 45°F are steadily accumulating and South Carolina peach farmers feel confident that these requirements will be met.

"Although we had a late start to our winter season, once the cold temperatures arrived, we have been in an excellent position to accumulate chill hours with very consistent temperatures and highs in the 50s and lows in the 30s," said Chalmers Carr, president of Titan Farms. "We are well-beyond the minimum chill hours necessary and look forward to a great spring leading into an even better peach season."

With a firm foundation already laid for the 2016 peach season, South Carolina farmers are anticipating a successful season. As the top peach producing state on the East Coast, and second in the nation only to California, South Carolina represents a large percentage of the nation’s peach crop. Customers from across North America are expecting quality South Carolina peaches to put on their tables. South Carolina farmers are excited to again provide them with the tastiest peaches in the country.

For more information about South Carolina peaches visit speakch.org.

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