

MARKET BULLETIN

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CHANGES COMING TO PRODUCE SAFETY EXEMPTION SYSTEM

BY SCDA

To help ease the burden on South Carolina produce farmers, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture's Produce Safety Team has made the decision to transition the yearly Produce Safety Rule Exemption application to a three-year exemption application cycle.

The Produce Safety Rule is part of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) passed in 2011, which sets federal regulatory standards for the production, harvest, and handling of fruits and vegetables to prevent microbial contamination and reduce foodborne illnesses associated with fresh produce.

Some growers may be excluded from inspection under the Rule based upon commodities grown, average annual produce sales, and/or personal/on-farm consumption. Some growers may be exempt based upon processing activities that include a "kill step", or average annual food sales to "qualified end users." However, farms that are exempt must apply for and be granted an exemption from SCDA.

Starting January 2024, farms will only need to apply for their Produce Safety Rule exemption every three years. Everyone who qualifies for exemption will apply during an application cycle. These cycles will begin on January 1 and end on January 31 — giving farms a full month to reapply for exemption. Once farms are approved in January 2024, they will not need to reapply until January 2027.

To make this as smooth of a transition as possible, the program is adjusting some current Certificates.

Please review the scenarios below to determine where your farm applies during this transition.

1. **Your farm has an active Certificate of Exemption that expires after January 31, 2024** — Your expiration date will now be set to expire on January 31, 2024, with enrollment to reapply beginning on January 1, 2024.



2. **Your farm's certificate is set to expire before January 31, 2024** — Your expiration will now be extended to reset on January 31, 2024, with enrollment to reapply beginning on January 1, 2024.
3. **You have not yet applied for exemption but plan to before December** — Your Certificate will only be active until January 31, 2024 due to the transition. To alleviate your farm from having to reapply in January 2024, we will place your application on hold until the new exemption cycle starts.

If you aren't sure where your farm operation falls in the above categories, please go the exemption website to login and view your farm's current exemption status at: psreemption.agriculture.sc.gov/Exemption.

Although application will only be required every three years, your signature for application certifies you will review your coverage status on an annual basis. If during your yearly review, you conclude that your farm is no longer exempt or excluded from the Produce Safety Rule, we ask that you contact SCDA to make us aware of status change.

Please keep in mind that even with this change, exemptions can be revoked by SCDA under the following circumstances: SCDA is made aware or has reason to believe the applicant is not exempt from the Produce Safety Rule, concerns of public health significance, and/or a recall of produce that is a result of egregious farm conditions.

We realize this transition may be exciting but also challenging to get all of our farms on the right page. Please contact the Outreach team if you have any questions regarding these changes or need assistance in determining your farm's status: Visit agriculture.sc.gov/produce-safety/our-department for contact information.



COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

HUGH E. WEATHERS

SOUTH CAROLINA
COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

AGRITOURISM OPPORTUNITIES FOR FALL

The fall is a busy time for those of us who farm cotton, peanuts, corn, and soybeans and other row crops. It's also a busy time for the growing number of South Carolina farms that engage in agritourism. Across the state, people are looking to get outside and enjoy the fall weather — and farms are welcoming them.

Corn mazes, pumpkin patches, and hay rides are mainstays of the fall agritourism scene. (Three South Carolina farms — Stewart Farms, McArthur Farms, and Denver Downs — have Reba McEntire-themed corn mazes this year.) Sunflower fields are gaining popularity on the fall scene, as are more elaborate games and activities. Throughout the year, other agritourism farms are offering farm tours, hands-on education, overnight farm stays, trail rides, disc golf courses, bike trails, bird watching, farm to table dinners, wine tastings and more. Of all that we learned from the pandemic, one good thing is that families want to spend more time together and prefer some outdoor adventure.

The term "agritourism" covers any activity carried out on a working farm or ranch that allows the public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities. We've seen the agritourism sector grow dramatically over

the past several years in South Carolina. Farmers are finding that they can supplement their income and help share their passion for agriculture by welcoming people on to their farms.

I think the South Carolina Agritourism Association is partly to thank for the growth in agritourism, too. Years ago I can remember when there were about 50 farms engaged in agritourism; now I think there's close to 500. Director Jackie Moore is tireless when it comes to educating farmers about how to safely start an agritourism venture and profit from it. Her *Agritourism 101 Manual* is an impressive tool for anyone looking to get into this business. The SC Agritourism Passport program is another successful way for farms to connect with visitors; as people visit participating South Carolina farms, they have their passport stamped to earn Certified SC prizes.

You can join the association and find resources by visiting scagritourism.org.

If you're looking to visit a farm this fall, you can find some agritourism event listings on page 6 of this issue. For a comprehensive database of farms and events, visit scfarmfun.com. Thanks for supporting South Carolina agriculture.

Hugh E. Weathers

UPCOMING EVENTS

Midlands Plant & Flower Festival

October 6 – 8

Friday & Saturday • 8 am – 6 pm

Sunday • 10 am – 4 pm

The area's largest selection of fall plants, pumpkins, and decor. Master Gardeners available to answer questions. Food trucks on site. Free admission and parking.

SC State Farmers Market

3483 Charleston Hwy, West Columbia

Contact: Sonia Brazell

sbrazell@scda.sc.gov • 803-737-4664

scstatefarmersmarket.com

Fall Farm Day

October 7 • 10 am – 5 pm

Come out and visit a real working farm! Our Fall Family Farm Day will have so many fun activities going on! Corn pool, hayride, hay maze, games, horseback rides, bluegrass music, pumpkin patch, animals, sawmill, gristmill, woodworking, sugar cane, Labrador retriever demos, ag simulator, concessions and more! Bring a chair. No pets please. \$8/person, under 2 free.

Old McCaskills Farm

377 Cantey Lane, Rembert

oldmccaskillsfarm@gmail.com • 803-432-9537

oldmccaskillfarm.com

Not So Spooky Halloween Trail

October 14 – 31 • 10 am – 3 pm

Family friendly hiking along decorated trails with games, photo ops, and interactive activities. Optional Spooky section for the brave as well. Visit Casper's cabin and the farm animals too. \$9 per person ages 2+

Silva Terra Nature Park

1151 Melton Road, Liberty

silva.terra.info@gmail.com • 864-420-7690

silvaterra.org

Sunny Plain Antique Power Association's Antique Tractor Pull

October 21 • 11 am

Antique tractor pull; car, truck and tractor exhibits. Kids games, family fun. \$10 admission, 12 and under free.

8 miles West of St. Matthews

Contact: Charles Horger

dcu1953@gmail.com • 803-707-1493

Grazing: Profitability from the Ground Up

October 25 • 9 am – 4 pm

Renowned grazing expert Jim Gerrish will be the featured speaker at the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition annual meeting. Members and the public are invited. There will also be presentations on native warm season grasses and cover crop/grazing partnerships. Lunch included. Sign up on our website.

Phillips Market Center, SC State Farmers Market

117 Ballard Court, West Columbia

Contact: Gary Ward

77tarheel@gmail.com • 803-556-6997

scforage.org/annual-meeting

Herb Lovers' Day at the Farmstead

November 4 • 10:30 am – 4:30 pm

A workshop/retreat-style day is planned for folks who simply want to explore the beauty and benefits of herbs and beneficial plants, as well as for those who have been browsing herbs for decades. It's a full day that's designed and led by the herbalists of Black Walnut Farmstead and studies will be co-learning opportunities so you get to share too! This is not a drop-in event and there will be no vendors. 6-hours of learning and fun, a healing day for you! Learn more and register on our website.

Black Walnut Farms

Bullock Creek

Contact: Jan Pendleton

jan@blackwalnutfarmsllc.com • 803-868-5451

<http://www.blackwalnutfarmsllc.com>

SALES & AUCTIONS

Yon Fall Female and Bull Sales

October 27 • 1 pm (females)

October 28 • 11 am (bulls)

175 females for sale, including registered fall cow/calf pairs, bred cows, bred heifers, open heifers, plus a dozen commercial bred heifers. 150 coming 2-year old bulls and 100 yearling bulls. Registered Angus, SimAngus, and Ultrablacks available. Complete performance and EPD information available. Fertility tested. Free bull delivery in SC.

318 Aiken Road, Ridge Spring

Contact: Yon Family Farms

lydia@yonfamilyfarms.com • 803-622-8597

yonfamilyfarms.com

Market Bulletin Office

Monday – Friday • 8 AM – 4:30 PM

803-734-2536 • marketbulletin@scda.sc.gov

agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin

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803-734-8339

Consumer Protection

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Livestock & Grain

Market News

803-737-4491

Fruit & Vegetable Inspection

803-737-4588

Market News Recording

803-737-5900

Fruit & Vegetable
Market News

803-737-4671

Metrology Laboratory

803-253-4052

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POLICIES FOR ADVERTISING

For our full policies, please visit:

agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin-policies

Only ads pertaining to the production of agricultural products and related items are published. Ads are accepted for South Carolina items, even if the seller lives out of state, provided the item is in state at the time the ad is published and at the time of sale.

Ads are published free of charge and in good faith. The *Market Bulletin* reserves the right to edit and verify ads but assumes no responsibility for their content.

Ads cannot be accepted from agents, dealers, or commercial businesses, including real estate. Sealed bids, legal notices, or consignment sales are not accepted.

SUBMITTING ADS

No matter the submission method, submissions must include the advertiser's name, complete address with zip code and county, and phone number with area code. While we don't publish the address, we need this information for our records. Do not use all capital letters.

- **Online:** Go to agriculture.sc.gov/market-bulletin. Select "Submit Market Bulletin Ad" and complete the form. If you include your email address, you will receive an automated reminder for a renewal.

- **Mail:** SC Market Bulletin, PO Box 11280, Columbia, SC 29211. You must use 8.5 × 11 inch paper.

- **Email:** Send ads to marketbulletin@scda.sc.gov. Put the words "Market Bulletin ad" in the subject line.

- **Fax:** 803-734-0659

The deadline for submitting ads and notices is noon on Tuesday of the week **before** the publication date.

NEXT AD DEADLINE

OCTOBER 10 • 12:00 PM



Check out more fall fun
agritourism events on page 6!



SCDA State Farmers Markets

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE FARMERS MARKET

3483 Charleston Highway
West Columbia, SC 29172
803-737-4664

GREENVILLE STATE FARMERS MARKET

1354 Rutherford Road
Greenville, SC 29609
864-244-4023

PEE DEE STATE FARMERS MARKET

2513 W. Lucas Street
Florence, SC 29501
843-665-5154

VISIT AGRICULTURE.SC.GOV

Click on the State Farmers Markets
button for more information about
each location

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____ New Renewal

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Email _____ This is a gift

10/5/23

LIQ SUPPLEMENT TANK

can also use parts of tanks w/75 mi
Michael Bailey
Lancaster
803-288-3108

5V CRIMP TIN

any old farm equip or metal items removed for free
David Wannamaker
Calhoun
803-682-2117

FARM WAGON

1 or 2 horse, w/orig wood spoke whls
Harry Isbell
Anderson
864-617-2627

PINE CHIPS

by truck load for birds; plastic 55 gal drums w/lids
Smittie Smith
Pickens
864-561-5534

PURPLE MARTIN GOURDS

Mack Welch
Berkeley
843-688-5674

PULPWOOD SAW TIMBER

hdwd pine, all types of thinning or clear cut, pay top prices, Upstate Cos
Tim Morgan
Greenville
864-420-0251

LONG LEAF PINE STRAW FIELDS

for raking
David Shull
Lexington
803-318-4263

2 TRACTOR TIRES

13.6-28, good & used
Larry Baxley
Georgetown
843-325-0900

ANY SIZE WASH POTS

syrup kettle, anvils, lrg coffee grinder, old lighting rod w/ balls & weathervane, more
Perry Masters
Greenville
864-561-4792

If you're having problems with the delivery of your *Market Bulletin*, contact the U.S. Postal Service at usps.com/help/contact-us.htm or 1-800-275-8777



Fall Agritourism Events



Black's Peaches Fall Festival

October 1 - 29
Monday - Saturday • 9 am - 5 pm
Sunday • 1 - 5 pm

We have a festival every weekend of October, and we invite people into the pumpkin patch every day of that month. The Fall Festival is open every weekend in October. \$8 + tax per person. Learn about our school field trips. Activities include: hayride, corn maze, pumpkin chunkin, farm playground, corn shelling, hay maze, cow milking, horse rodeo, and skeeball.

Black's Peaches

1800 Black Hwy, York
blackspeaches@aol.com • 803-684-2333
blackspeaches.com

Pick Your Own Pumpkins & Farm Fun

October 1 - 30
Friday & Saturday • 10 am - 6 pm
Sunday • 12 - 6 pm

Pick your own pumpkins, local honey, mums, seasonal items, and snacks for sale. Hayrides & guided nature tours.

Rooted Family Farm

6730 Abbeville Hwy, Anderson
rootedfamilyfarm@yahoo.com • 301-741-8185
rootedfamilyfarm.com

U-Pick Flowers

October 1 - 31
Monday - Saturday • 9 am - 7 pm

We have all types of sunflowers, zinnias, and wildflowers. Stop inside to purchase a cup (\$7.95) or bucket (\$16), then head to the field & fill it up! You can pre-order our flower buckets on our website. Choose from sunflowers, zinnias, or a mix. Perfect for parties, events, or just because! Pick-up at any of our three locations. Scroll down the home page of our website to find the order form.

The Market at Cotton Hills Farm

2575 Lowrys Hwy, Chester
info@cottonhillsfarm.com • 803-581-4545
cottonhillsfarm.com
facebook.com/cottonhillsfarm

Marshall Farm Fall Fun

October 1 - November 4 • Saturdays & Sundays
Marshall Farm's Corn maze this year—special thanks to the Corn Maze Guy for helping us make it A-MAZE-ING! We can't wait to see everyone come out and get lost! Our 5th Annual Fall Festival will be October 21st.

Marshall Farm

1317 Old Georgetown Road E, Bethune
803-272-9940
facebook.com/farmingtheoldhomeplace

Thirsty Thursdays and Live Jam Session

October 5, 12, 19, 26 • 6 - 9 pm
Family fun games, Acoustic Jam at the honey store. Musicians of all ages and experience. All acoustic musicians of all levels are invited to share talent and learn to play a musical instrument. Family friendly. Dog friendly. Bee friendly. Bring a lawn chair!

Bee Well Honey Coffee Café

205 Hampton Avenue, Pickens
info@beewellhoneynaturalmarket.com • 864-897-9955
facebook.com/BeeWellNaturalMarket

2023 Pumpkin Patch

October 7, 14, 21, 28 • 9 am - 3 pm
The FARM 1780 is Lexington's only locally-grown pumpkin patch! Rain date is the following Sunday (follow us on social for updates). Pumpkin patch activities, you-pick pumpkin patch, children's play area, barnyard bounce house, pumpkin putt-putt, pumpkin tic-tac-toe, pumpkin painting station, fall selfie station, food & drink, pumpkin beignets handmade by Chef Brian Nelson using The FARM 1780's Dutch Fork pumpkins. The FARMstand bar will have beer, wine, and other drinks. Food vendors vary each weekend. Advanced tickets start at \$10 per vehicle. Day of tickets start at \$15 per vehicle. We highly encourage advanced ticket purchases because The FARM is a small, family farm with limited parking. We cannot guarantee admission without an advanced ticket.

THE FARM 1780

1127 Corley Mill Road, Lexington
hello@thefarm1780.com • 803-356-4978
Tickets: thefarm1780.com/event/2023-pumpkin-patch

Project Victory Gardens Fall Fest

October 14 • 10 am - 3 pm
Join us for our Fall Festival! Demonstrations will take place throughout the day. Farm fresh food will be available. Check out the new Big Orange Barn and meet the animals.

Project Victory Gardens

140 Harbor Lane, Townville
projectvictorygardens@gmail.com • 803-522-4703
facebook.com/projectvictorygardens

Fall in the Backcountry Festival in Camden

October 14 • 10 am - 4 pm
Come celebrate fall in the backcountry! Try your hand at cider-making. Watch spinning, weaving, and blacksmithing demonstrations. There will outdoor games to play and our Haunted History Hunt scavenger hunt for kids will be in full swing. Children can also dip candles, make corn husk dolls, and try their hands at weaving and quilt patterns. There will also be ticketed workshops for adults in pickling and soft cheese making, and workshops for all ages to paint pumpkins and create fall garlands.

Historic Camden Foundation

222 Broad Street, Camden
info@historicc Camden.org • 803-432-9841
facebook.com/HistoricCamdenFoundation

Honey Hooplah and Oyster Roast

October 14 • 11 am - 3 pm
We will have bounce castles for the kiddos, sling shot in the pasture, animals to pet, honey house to visit, vendors to support, games, live music, prizes and more to come! Best of all, this is a free family friendly event. There will be food options to purchase in the general area. This year we will also have a VIP area under the tent for the OYSTER ROAST! Order your tickets early to save. Limited seating as well. Each Oyster Roast ticket will include 2 drinks and a cotton candy.

R and R Acres LLC

118 R and R Acres Trail, Jamestown
rebecca@randracres.com • 843-300-5747
Tickets: randracres.com/honeyhooplah
facebook.com/RandRAcresSC

Touch A Tractor Weekend

October 21 & 22 • 10 am - 6 pm
We will have multiple tractors and equipment from small to large here on the farm for you and your family to look at and take pictures with! Climb in them, honk their horns, and see what it's like inside these huge pieces of equipment up close! Enjoy our Norma's Play Area with all of our new activities for 2023: 80 foot slide, tire playground, corn box, rat rollers, mini zip lines monkey bars, hay swings horse swings, balancing beam, jump pads, barnyard basketball, bull roping, duck races, kiddie corral, mini rock climbing wall, corn hole pumpkin tic tac toe, pumpkin chess, fall photo ops, and so much more. Also enjoy our petting zoo, over 35 farm animals on property, our 6 acre a-MAIZE-ing corn maze, hay wagon rides, animal feedings, food trucks, and more while visiting with us on the farm! Don't forget to grab your pumpkins and fall must haves before you leave too! Pony rides and barrel cart rides are available for additional fees. Admission is \$14 per person ages 3+. Ages 2 and under are always free.

Thompson Farm at Brickyard Plantation

100 Brickyard Place, Conway
info@thompsonfarmandnursery.com • 843-236-1400
facebook.com/thompsonfarmandnursery

Hero's Weekend Full of Fall Fun

October 21 & 22 • 10 am - 5 pm
Join us for Hero's Weekend as we celebrate first responders (Fire, EMS, Police)! FREE admission with each paid admission with valid ID! Wagon rides, 6 acre corn maze, pumpkin patch, farm animals, & more! It's sure to be a great weekend of harvesting memories!

Southern Palmetto Farms

2601 Garner Road, Aynor
southernpalmettofarm@yahoo.com • 843-421-4686
facebook.com/southernpalmettofarm



CLEMSON SCIENTISTS STUDY WATERMELON TO IMPROVE ORGANIC VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

BY DENISE ATTAWAY, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Consumer interest in organically produced fruits and vegetables is growing and to help growers meet this demand, Clemson University scientists are studying watermelon production methods to develop strategies to improve productivity and profitability of organic vegetables.

The team is led by Bhupinder Jatana, a researcher at the Edisto Research and Education Center in Blackville, South Carolina, and assistant professor of vegetable crops in the university's plant and environmental sciences department.

Funding for the project is provided by a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant to address challenges such as crop nutrition management and controlling diseases and weeds in organic vegetable production.

Watermelon was selected as the crop for the study because it uses the same cultural and other management practices as other organic crops grown under plastic mulch, such as cucumbers, muskmelons, pumpkins and other cucurbits. Using plastic mulch is a common cultural practice in organic farming. Cultural practices are agricultural methods used to enhance crop productivity through conserving water and soil by reducing weeds, pests and diseases without the use of chemicals.

"Our long-term goal is to develop organic fertilizers and strategies for higher nutrient-use efficiency, as well as weed and soilborne pest management," Jatana said.

Organic watermelon contributed to about 1.3% of the total watermelon sold in the United States in 2021.

"Even though the future of organic watermelon looks promising, it's plagued by management challenges of nutrients, weeds and soilborne pests," Jatana said.

During the study, the scientists will study crop nutrition. One of the difficulties in managing crop nutrition in organic production systems occurs because of a timing difference between the nutrient release rate of organic fertilizers and peak plant nutrient demand. For organic vegetable growers,



this timing difference doesn't allow enough nutrients to support periods of rapid crop growth, which can result in yield loss or decreased crop quality.

The scientists will develop new fertilizers using concentrated organic agricultural byproduct materials. Multiple organic agricultural byproduct materials will be tested. The scientists also will use various soil amendments to increase the retention of soil nutrients so that these nutrients are available for crop uptake for a longer period, allowing for higher nutrient-use efficiency.

In addition to challenges with nutrient management, diseases and weeds also result in substantial losses of organic vegetable crops worldwide. As part of this study, the scientists will pair the new

fertilizers with novel plastic mulch, or new plastic mulch materials coming to the market such as biodegradable materials and so on, for controlling weeds and soilborne pests. They will use organic carbon amendments and irrigation under the plastic mulch to create an anaerobic condition known as anaerobic soil disinfestation, or ASD.

The ASD strategy is an alternative solution to use in place of chemical fumigation to control soilborne pests. It is a process of disinfesting the soil by creating anaerobic (oxygen-free) soil conditions using easily decomposable soil amendments, covering with plastic mulch and irrigating to saturate the soil. It has been proven effective against a wide range of pathogens in organically grown crops.

The impacts of the new fertilizers and novel plastic mulch on crop nutrient-use efficiency, soil health, nutrient losses and weed and soilborne pest management will be evaluated. The scientists will also evaluate the economic feasibility of using the new fertilizers and novel plasticulture.

In addition to Jatana, other Clemson researchers involved in this study are Matthew Cutulle, Brian Ward, Gilbert Miller and Anastasia Thayer. The researchers are also collaborating with Chandrasekar Kousik from the USDA Vegetable Laboratory in Charleston, South Carolina.

Communication about the project, including information about new fertilizers and management practices, will be made public through the Cooperative Extension Service.

Organic farming is becoming more popular. The latest figures from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service for organic farming in the United States for 2021 show a 13%, or \$1.28 billion, increase in total sales and a 5% increase in the number of farms from 2019.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND PESTICIDE DISPOSAL SET FOR OCT. 7 IN YORK

BY SCDA

YORK – The South Carolina Department of Agriculture and York County will hold a household hazardous materials and pesticide collection on Saturday, October 7 from 8 a.m. to noon at the York County Public Works facility, 220 Public Works Road (off Highway 5) near the Moss Justice Center in York.

The collection is for residents only; products from businesses will not be accepted. The household materials collection is open only to residents of York County. Collection of unwanted and unused pesticides is open to residents and farmers of any South Carolina county. Staff will be on site to monitor pesticide collection and disposal and will have final authority on acceptance of products.

Additional details include:

- Quantities will be limited to 2500 pounds of solid and 300 gallons of liquid at no charge.
- Acceptable products include herbicides, insecticides, nematicides, fungicides and

similar products used in agriculture production or around the home.

- Prohibited items include empty pesticide containers, rinsate, infectious, biological or radioactive materials, explosives, and major appliances.
- A hazardous material company will be on site to properly dispose of the materials collected.
- Materials should be transported to the collection event in sturdy boxes with newspaper stuffed between the containers to prevent spills.
- Leave items in the original containers.
- Please notify John Stokes at 803-737-9696 or jstokes@scda.sc.gov if you are planning to attend and have more than thirty (30) gallons of liquid



or two hundred fifty pounds (250) of solid to dispose of.

- Workers will be on hand to unload vehicles, and citizens will be asked to stay in the car.
- Collection events may be cancelled due to inclement weather, with the cancellation posted on SCDA's website, agriculture.sc.gov. Possible makeup dates will be announced later.

The Household Hazardous Materials Collection Event is funded in partnership between the South Carolina Department of Agriculture and York County government.

For more information, contact John Stokes at 803-737-9696 or jstokes@scda.sc.gov.

CLEMSON, COTTON INCORPORATED WORK TO DEVELOP DESIGNER COTTONSEED

BY DENISE ATTAWAY, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Lint has been the focus of cotton research and breeding efforts for centuries, but Clemson University and Cotton Incorporated researchers believe now is the time to look a little closer at the benefits of cottonseed oil.

Christopher Saski, an associate professor of systems genetics in Clemson's Plant and Environmental Sciences Department, and Don Jones of Cotton Incorporated, have received a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture to use molecular tools and unique plant germplasm to understand and improve the genetics underlying oil content in upland cotton.

"Our vision is to develop a joint fiber and seed cotton production system to maximize the value of both lint and seed," Saski said. "This project will deliver solutions to cotton stakeholders' requests to increase the value of the cotton crop to make farming operations more profitable, resilient and sustainable."

During this study, the researchers plan to develop germplasm with high cottonseed oil content and genetic resistance to *Fusarium oxysporum*, *vasinfectum* race 4 (FOV4), which causes fusarium wilt of cotton. Fusarium wilt is the number one disease threat to upland cotton.

In addition to developing new germplasm, the researchers also will work to validate candidate-resistant genes in upland cotton, determine molecular markers to predict and track FOV resistance in breeding programs, create a foundation for international collaboration and develop interdisciplinary training for postdoctoral scientists and graduate students.

"Using cutting-edge research and collaboration, we will empower breeders with the tools and knowledge they need to optimize cotton production for growers, thus helping secure the future of this vital crop," Saski said. "We also will invest in the training of the next generation of interdisciplinary plant scientists with knowledge of genetics, genomics, bioinformatics and biotechnology to deepen understanding of cotton's plant biology."

"This is critical as growers face new challenges from a changing climate and a growing global population."

The researchers want to ensure the new cottonseed has improved nutritional benefits in its oil. Foster Kangben, a doctoral student from Ghana who is

a Fulbright Scholar and is working with Saski on the project, said improved oil content is an added incentive for cotton production.

"For growers, cultivating high oil-content cotton varieties can prove to be a lucrative venture, offering an additional incentive alongside fiber production," Kangben said. "As for consumers, cotton oil could emerge as a favorable alternative to other types of cooking oils, especially for culinary applications, offering not only its unique properties for cooking but also potential health benefits."

Cottonseed oil has been in use for over a century as a source of edible oil and biodiesel because of its high content of unsaturated fatty acids. It also is used as a cooking oil in marinades, dressings, pastries, margarine and shortenings.

It is a stable oil compared to other cooking oils because of its long shelf life. Cottonseed oil also has a high smoke point and it does not "mask" the taste of foods, making it ideal for multi-purpose frying.

Humans can benefit from eating cottonseed oil. Studies have shown that the short-term consumption of a diet rich in cottonseed oil lowers total and LDL (bad) cholesterol because this oil contains fatty acids such as palmitic, stearic, oleic, linoleic and linolenic.

Aside from culinary and human health-related uses, cottonseed oil also has potential as a renewable alternative fuel source to petroleum-based fuels. Vegetable oils have been shown to offer similar output with slightly lower thermal efficiency when used in diesel engines. Studies have shown that various blends of cottonseed oil had a substantial reduction in carbon monoxide emission in conjunction with improved heat release characteristics.

During this study, the researchers will seek to identify the genetic basis of oil and protein traits in cottonseed. Clemson's high-performance computing resource, the Palmetto Cluster, will be used to perform genetic analyses to determine various cottonseed oil traits.

The study will be planted in six field locations—South Carolina, Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, Georgia, and Arizona—over two years to collect data on how the environment influences oil traits.

Developing cottonseed with improved oil content and genetic resistance to FOV4 will help ensure South Carolina cotton growers get an increased income based on lint yield and a "newly enhanced byproduct" in cottonseed oil, Jones said, adding collaborating with Saski on this project was an easy decision to make.

"I am working with Dr. Saski based on his proven record of delivering solutions to grower problems," Jones said. "For example, he leads a private/public sector partnership that, in four short years, identified resistant germplasm to the devastating pathogen,

FOV4. In doing so he and his team also discovered the causative genes for the resistance and how that defense mechanism works. Using the same genetic resources – which is very cost-effective – he will employ the same process to uncover genes which control oil content in cottonseed."



Clemson University doctoral student Foster Kangben, works on cottonseed genetics and plant architecture in cotton planted at the Pee Dee REC. The cannabis-shaped leaves are a leaf shape common to cotton known as "okra-leaf."



Cotton Facts

- United States paper currency is a blend of 75% cotton lint and 25% linen.
- Cotton is a member of the Mallow family of plants. The Arabic people called it "Qutum" which is where the word "Cotton" comes from.
- Between 1920 and 1922, the Boll Weevil caused cotton production in South Carolina to drop 70%.

Source: [South Carolina Cotton Museum](http://SouthCarolinaCottonMuseum.org)
sccotton.org

2023 LEGAL NOTICE

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR CANDIDATES TO FILL A VACANCY ON THE SOUTH CAROLINA COTTON BOARD

Pursuant to the provisions of the "Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act" and the Marketing Order for South Carolina Cotton No. 12 issued by the Agriculture Commission of South Carolina, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the terms of office of the listed members of the South Carolina Cotton Board, expire on December 31, 2023, and, therefore, the listed vacancy shall occur at that time.

DISTRICT 1: Gill Rogers, Hartsville, SC

DISTRICT 2: Frank Rogers, Blenheim, SC

DISTRICT 3: Open Board Seat

If you are interested in becoming a SC Cotton Board member, you will need to request a petition. This petition can be requested by calling 803-734-9807, 803-734-2217 or by emailing elloyd@scda.sc.gov. All petitions must be received by **Friday, October 20, 2023**. For a petition to be eligible/accepted, it must be signed by no less than five Cotton producers from the counties of the district seat you are petitioning for.

Terms of office are for 3 years. To qualify, a candidate must be a resident of South Carolina and be actively engaged in the production of Cotton within the State of South Carolina for a period of no less

than one year. Additionally, during that one-year period, candidate will have derived a substantial portion of his income there from and shall continue to do so during their term of office. The Cotton Board holds approximately 4 quarterly meetings per year to conduct their business. Reimbursement for mileage is paid for travel to and from meetings. In addition, a \$55 per diem is paid per meeting attended.

The purpose of the Marketing Order is to allow South Carolina cotton producers to engage in the following programs:

1. **Cooperation with Other Agencies**
 - a. The Board, with the assistance of the Ag Commission and subject to the provision of The Commodities Marketing Act, is hereby authorized to cooperate with agencies and organizations engaging in the support of cotton production, research, and promotion of South Carolina grown cotton.
2. **Market Development Programs**
 - a. The Board is hereby authorized to plan and establish market development programs which will result in the expansion of existing markets. These activities may be carried out in conjunction with other agencies including the National Cotton Council and Southern Cotton Growers.
2. **Advertising and Sales Promotion**

- a. The Board is hereby authorized to plan, prepare, administer, and conduct programs, and expend monies for advertising and sales promotion to promote the sale of cotton in domestic and foreign markets and for the purpose of maintaining existing markets or creating new and/or larger markets for cotton grown in the State of South Carolina.

South Carolina Cotton Producer Districts:

District 1 includes the Counties of Clarendon, Darlington, Georgetown, Lee, Sumter, and Williamsburg.

District 2 includes the Counties of Chester, Chesterfield, Dillon, Fairfield, Florence, Horry, Kershaw, Lancaster, Marion, Marlboro, and Richland.

District 3 includes the Counties of Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Anderson, Bamberg, Barnwell, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Cherokee, Colleton, Dorchester, Edgefield, Greenville, Greenwood, Hampton, Jasper, Laurens, Lexington, McCormick, Newberry, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Saluda, Spartanburg, Union, and York.

FRANCES PRICE, Chair
The Agriculture Commission of South Carolina
PO Box 11280, Columbia, South Carolina 29211

South Carolina Department of Agriculture