

# Agriculture

## Farm report



### Peanut shortage will cost

With peanut buyers facing the shortage of drastically reduced yields, the recommendation to consumers is to stock up now, before peanut prices go sky-high.

"If I were a consumer, I would stock up on my peanut butter because the price of peanuts is only going to go up," said Perquimans County Agriculture Chairman Bill Jester, who estimated that the price of nuts would soon exceed 20 cents above the present grade price of 23 cents a pound.

While some are charging that the peanut shortage is largely due to producers who are holding out for higher prices, Jester said he did not believe that to be the case locally.

"I would guess that only 4 or 5 farmers store their nuts out of some 100 growers in the county," said Jester, who added that most county peanuts were marketed at harvest or soon thereafter.

The only hope for staving off a peanut shortage is to loosen import policies, according to Jester, who said that such a move would draw mixed reactions from producers.

"I don't think the average farmer on the surface would be for that (loosening import quotas) but certainly maintaining shelf space in the market place must play a role

in their (farmers') reactions," said Jester.

Ed Nixon, who is the Perquimans County representative to the North Carolina Peanut Growers' Association, said that the association took a stand on the issue of import quotas at a recent meeting before Congress in Washington, D.C.

"They (the association) said that they would not support any increase in import quotas that would cause the price of domestic nuts to go down," explained Nixon.

The association does, however, recognize the possible need for loosening import quotas in order to maintain shelf space, according to Nixon.

"Peanuts are competing with cashews, pecans, and other nuts for shelf space and if people can't buy peanuts, they're going to replace it with some other nut," said Nixon, adding, "We don't want to starve them — we want to keep them eating."

If import quotas were lifted too long, the effect on next year's crop would be detrimental, said Nixon.

Most peanuts are imported from China, the number one

peanut growing nation in the world, as well from India and Africa.

Jester related figures that indicated that compared to October of 1979, 1980 peanut yields were down roughly 42 percent in the United States.

"We won't be down that much in the county though," said Jester, who estimated county-wide peanut production to be down "some 15 percent."

The North Carolina peanut crop is forecast at 307 million pounds, 19 percent below last year's production of 378 million pounds.

This past week the wet weather and the holiday slowed most farm activities across the State. The average number of days suitable for field work was limited to 2.8. Soil moisture supplies continued to increase and are now only 2 percent less than adequate. Where weather permitted, farmers were busy harvesting soybeans as well as sowing small grains and cover crops. Other farm activities included cutting fire wood, corn and cabbage harvest, and plant bed preparation. Farmers in western North Carolina were also busy cutting Christmas trees and marketing burley tobacco. Pastures across the State continues to be in fair to good condition.

Soil moisture supplies are presently averaging 22 percent surplus, 76 percent adequate, and 2 percent short. The only dry areas reported this past week were located in

the southeastern Coastal Plains.

The overall availability of fuel supplies for farm use improved slightly this past week. Galoline, L.P. gas, and diesel fuel are all considered to be 98 percent adequate and 2 percent surplus at the present time.

Harvest of corn for grain was slowed this past week by the rainfall. Currently 97 percent of the crop has been harvested compared with 98 percent of a year ago and the 5-year (1975-1979) average of 96 percent.

Soybean harvest also moved slowly over the past week and now stands at 64 percent complete. This is behind last year's progress of 72 percent and the 5-year average of 68 percent. In the Coastal Plains, harvest is 64 percent complete while in the Piedmont, progress is at 67 percent. The Mountain Region shows 58

percent of the crop harvested so far.

Harvest of the cotton crop in North Carolina moved to 97 percent complete during the past week. This is well ahead of last year's progress of 84 percent and the 5-year average of 87 percent. In the major producing areas of the northern and southern Coastal Plains, harvest is about 98 percent complete now.

During the week, harvest of sorghum grain advanced to 93 percent complete, the same as last year's progress but slightly behind the 5-year average of 94 percent. In the Piedmont Region, where most of the state's sorghum is grown, harvest is about 98 percent complete.

All of the small grain crops continued in good condition this past week with about 5 percent of the acreage rated excellent. As of November 30, about 92 percent of the expected wheat acreage for the

State had been seeded, slightly ahead of the 5-year average of 88 percent. Currently, 94 percent of the expected acreage for oats has been seeded, 95 percent of the

barley, and 94 percent of the rye. Progress at this time last year showed 97 percent of the oats seeded, 96 percent of the barley, and 93 percent of the rye.

### Swine day set

A Swine Field Day will be held Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 2 p.m. at Ed Nixon's farm building located on Balahack Road beside his home.

The program will include short talks by Jack Parker, Extension Swine Specialist speaking on reproductive problems in swine" and John Hanson, Extension Economist in Livestock Marketing speaking on the future for hog

producers. Immediately following these presentations, Carroll Davis, Ralston-Purina District Sales Manager and Dr. Gene Nemecek, Purina Swine Specialist Veterinarian will conduct a "wet lab" where live hogs will be diagnosed and then sacrificed and dissected showing how different diseases and problems affect swine internally.



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