

FARMERS AND CONSUMERS

100th Anniversary 1917 - 2017

MARKET BULLETIN

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • GARY W. BLACK, COMMISSIONER • WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018 • VOL. 101, NO. 21 • © COPYRIGHT 2018

Meet us in Moultrie for Expo Oct. 16-18

41st Sunbelt Ag Expo offers the latest in farm technology, research

By Kendall McWilliams
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Each October, farmers from across the Southeast take time away from their duties on the farm to visit the Sunbelt Ag Expo – an agricultural trade show in Moultrie that spotlights the newest innovations in farming technology.

During its 41st showcase later this month, the Expo will continue to enhance its mission by connecting farmers with the latest on-farm technologies, products and services – helping to improve the farmers’ bottom line and making life better on the farm, said Chip Blalock, executive director of the Expo.

The show takes place over a three-day span, but the Expo staff does not languish through downtime the other 362 days of the year. Instead, the 10-person staff continues to operate with the mission of recruiting exhibitors to showcase the latest advancements in modern agriculture for the next year.

“Throughout the other eleven and a half months of the year we travel throughout the Southeast – Farm Bureau meetings, county ag agent meetings, ag teacher meetings, FFA convention – so on and so forth,” said Blalock. “A lot of our time is

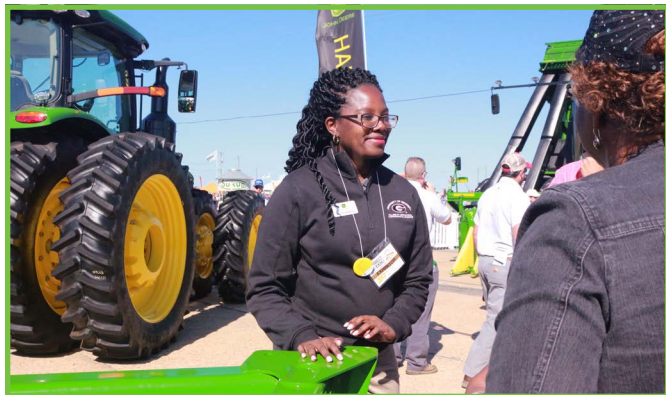
See **SUNBELT AG EXPO**, page 12



Field of dreams Spence Field during the 2017 Sunbelt Ag Expo.

Amy Carter/GDA

An education in agriculture opens doors for Georgia youth



Amy Carter/GDA

Lessons learned Alexis Barnes discusses the value of ag education with community leaders from Dougherty County at the 2017 Sunbelt Agricultural Expo in Moultrie.

By Amy Carter
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At the age of 14, Alexis Barnes had her future all mapped out.

“I was dead-set on becoming a librarian,” she said.

That was until she walked into a farmer’s classroom at Arabia Mountain High School in Lithonia. A course in agricultural education was a requirement of her studies at the magnet school, and it would be her first exposure to the field that would become her vocation.

According to the Georgia Department of Education, more than 400 teachers in Georgia specialize in agricultural education, reaching more than 70,000 students with lessons in agriculture, natural resources and leadership through classroom instruction, hands-on learning and participation in FFA.

An education in agriculture is as much about good citizen-

ship and living life well as it is about growing bountiful crops.

“Everyone will hopefully vote in an election and everyone votes at the grocery store. That is the life lesson best learned in an ag classroom,” said Joshua Rogers, the ag educator who taught Barnes that good earth contains as much wisdom as any textbook.

During the 2018 session, the Georgia General Assembly passed legislation that will deliver that lesson to more of the state’s schoolchildren. The Georgia Agricultural Education Act strengthens the state’s ag education program by mandating that any middle or high school offering it must adhere to the three-component model. Additionally, the legislation allows the state education department to develop a pilot program to expand ag education into elementary schools statewide.

Shortly after the law was enacted in April, 28 school systems applied and were accepted to participate in the pilot

See **AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION**, page 12

The Fresh Market gives premium placement to Georgia Grown members

By Amy Carter
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ROSWELL – The Georgia Department of Agriculture officially launched a new partnership with The Fresh Market grocery chain Sept. 27 that is putting the Georgia Grown logo at the forefront of shoppers’ minds. “Local Georgia Picks” is a new merchandising initiative that places more than 170 Georgia-made products within easy reach of shoppers in 13 Fresh Market stores throughout the state.

Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary W. Black said the launch came nearly seven years to the day after the department trademarked a new Georgia Grown logo, heralding a renewed emphasis on promoting Georgia farmers and value-added producers. The Fresh Market partnership is just one of many that Georgia Grown, the marketing and economic development arm of the GDA, pursues daily toward that end.

See **FRESH MARKET**, page 12



Amy Carter/GDA

Free samples Marilyn Santulli, owner of Marilyn’s Gluten Free Gourmet, offers samples of cheese straws, brownies and blondies to a shopper at The Fresh Market in Roswell.

FORESTRY MATTERS: Georgia Forestry Commission launches new monthly column

By Stasia Kelly

For many Georgians, fall is their favorite season. As temperatures descend from terrible through tolerable, the days get shorter and Mother Nature paints the landscape with her most magnificent technicolor brushes. It's the perfect time to launch the Market Bulletin's "Forestry Matters," a monthly update on the amazing natural resource that have earned Georgia the title of No. 1 Forestry State in the nation – and the way forestry impacts all of our lives.

Did you know Georgia ranks higher than any other state in commercially available timberland? Georgia has 22 million acres of privately owned timberland, most of it in the capable hands of private landowners. Georgia leads the nation in annual timber harvest volume, while tree volume has continued to rise since 1953. Forestry has an overall annual impact of \$35 billion on our state and provides 144,000 jobs. Importantly, Georgians also reap \$37 billion in ecosystem services (clean water, clean air, homes for wildlife, recreation and aesthetics) from private forests.

The appearance of Georgia forests and management activities that keep them healthy changes with the seasons. October marks the beginning of some important transitions to keep in mind.

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division's annual ban on outdoor summer burning, which affects 54 counties in primarily the northern half of the state, was lifted on Oct. 1. Anyone wishing to burn hand-piled yard debris is reminded to get a burn permit from the GFC at GaTrees.org or by calling 1-877-O-K-2-BURN. Escaped debris burning is the number one cause of wildfire in Georgia, and the burn permit system helps ensure that conditions on any particular day, time and place, are safe for outdoor burning. While many folks feel confident in their fire-tending capabilities, it's smart to review the safe burning practices shared by the GFC at <http://gatrees.org/forest-fire/wildfire-prevention/debris-burning/>. According to GFC's Protection Department leaders, "experience" and "pride" have allowed for escaped fires to scorch thousands of acres. Water and a cell phone to call 911 should always be your burning partners.

To better serve our customers, the GFC has converted to National Weather Service fire weather forecasts. The GFC and NWS have long been partners in fire weather forecasting, and this shift will provide the highest level of technical features for continuity across the state and even the nation. As the prescribed fire and open burning season accelerates, weather forecasting becomes more critical. Weather is, in fact, the most important environmental factor that affects fire behavior, followed by fuel and topography. Fire weather forecasts are used by the GFC to determine if burn permits will be issued for the day, and this enhanced partnership allows all users, including GFC's wildland firefighters, to access the same information and adjust responses for the highest level of service to Georgians.

Prescribed fire is one of the most important tools in forest management. Prescribed fire (Rx fire) is a safe way to apply a natural process, ensure ecosystem health and reduce wildfire risk. The Georgia Forestry Commission offers prescribed burning services, which include plan preparation, equipment loans and on-site assistance. Contact your local GFC office for details. In addition, prescribed fire certification classes are offered throughout the year, throughout the state. Upcoming classes are scheduled for later this month in Athens (40 person maximum) and for December in Tifton. Find out more here: <http://gatrees.org/forest-management/prescribed-fire/prescribed-fire-certification/index.cfm>.

The Georgia Forestry Commission provides leadership, service and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources. It's likely you've met members of our amazing team in your home county. We are dedicated to servicing your needs as we support healthy, sustainable forests providing clean air, clean water and abundant products for you and for generations to come.

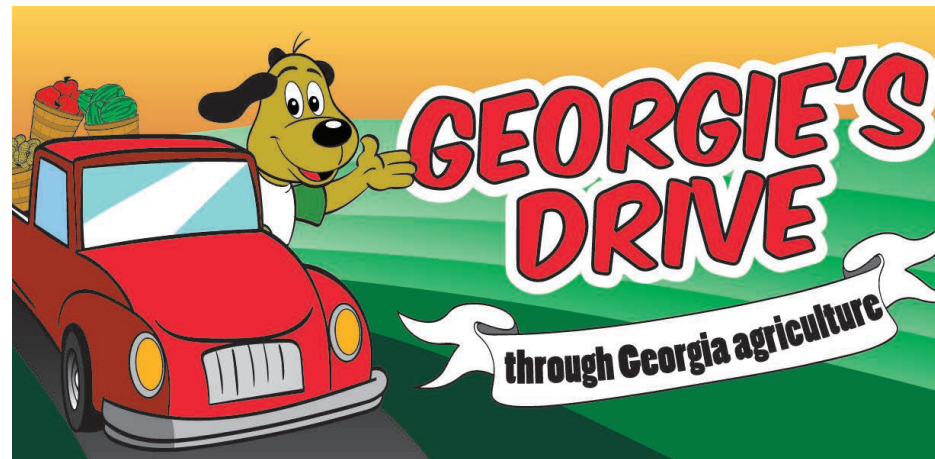
Please visit GaTrees.org to find out more, and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to stay instantly connected with everything forestry in Georgia. This fall, you'll get updates and photos from our foresters about the best North Georgia spots to enjoy North Georgia's beautiful autumn foliage season. And of course, we look forward to meeting you every month, here in Georgia's trusted agriculture handbook, the *Farmers and Consumers Market Bulletin*.

-Stasia Kelly is media relations specialist for the Georgia Forestry Commission, based in Atlanta. With a career in communications that's now centered on forestry, she labels herself a city girl with a country heart.

GEORGIA FORESTRY
COMMISSION



FORESTRY
MATTERS



Georgie's Drive Thru Sylvester

Hello! I'm Georgie, the Georgia Grown mascot. I travel the state of Georgia promoting our No. 1 industry – agriculture! Did you know that the city of Sylvester in Southwest Georgia is the proud home of Peter Pan Peanut Butter? In fact, every single jar of Peter Pan Peanut Butter – including creamy, crunchy, whipped, natural and roasted – is produced at the Conagra plant in town. Plus, the world's largest peanut butter sandwich was made right down the street at the Georgia Peanut Festival in 1987. It was 14 feet long and 14 feet wide! My son Skip asked if they cut the crust off the edges. The Peanut Festival is held on the third weekend in October at T.C. Jeffords Park. The park is at the crossroads of GA Hwy. 112 and U.S. Hwy. 82, and has one of the original steam locomotives used on the G.A.S. & C. Line (Georgia-Ashburn-Sylvester-Camilla) on display. Old No. 100 ran the "GAS Line" from 1930 to 1948. Here's an interesting fact about peanuts for you: Although George Washington Carver's research yielded hundreds of uses for peanuts, peanut butter wasn't one of them. Peanut butter was invented by Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, who also gave us Kellogg's Corn Flakes. How *grrrrreat* is that?



Lee Lancaster/GDA

GDA is accepting applications for the 2019 Georgia Veterinary Education Loan Repayment Program

The Georgia Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for the 2019 Georgia Veterinary Education Loan Repayment Program. Applications will be accepted until 5 p.m. Nov. 9.

Before receiving their award, participants must devote at least 20 hours per week for a period of 12 months to providing food animal veterinary services in a rural county with a population of 35,000 or less. Each participant signs a service commitment with the board that requires them to dedicate their time to providing these services in the rural counties identified in their applications.

The State Veterinary Education Board of Georgia administers the program and works alongside the Georgia Student Finance Authority to make payments on the student loans of the program's participants after their service period is complete.

Four veterinarians were selected from a pool of 11 candidates the inaugural year of the program. Those four have successfully completed the requirements for the 2017-2018 award year. They are:

- Dr. Jana Powell of Eatonton
- Dr. LeAnna Wilder of Montezuma
- Dr. Madison Fyke of Forsyth
- Dr. Edmond "Tyson" Strickland of Winterville

Each received \$20,000 from the Georgia Student Finance Authority applied against their outstanding veterinary education loan balances.

The Georgia General Assembly has subsequently appropriated \$100,000 for fiscal year 2018-2019 to continue to grant financial assistance to veterinarians willing to provide food

animal services in under-served areas across the state. The 2019 program year funding will be available to award up to 11 Georgia veterinarians who apply for the grant opportunity.

Application materials may be found online at <http://agr.georgia.gov/georgia-veterinary-education-loan-repayment-program.aspx>. Completed applications may be returned via email to statevetboard@agr.georgia.gov or mailed to:

Georgia Department of Agriculture
Attn: Bo Warren
19 Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. SW Suite 210
Atlanta, GA 30334

Contact Bo Warren at bo.warren@agr.georgia.gov for more information about the program.

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COOK GEORGIA GROWN:

Fresh Apple Cake

Ingredients:

1 cup oil
2 cups sugar
3 eggs (well beaten)
3 cups chopped apples (any kind)

1 cup chopped pecans
3 cups self-rising flour
2 tsps. Vanilla

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease and flour a tube pan.

Mix together the first five ingredients. Sift flour and add to mix. Stir well and add vanilla.

Pour into tube pan and bake for 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Brown Sugar Icing

Ingredients:

1 cup brown sugar
½ cup margarine

¼ cup evaporated milk
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparation:

Melt margarine in a saucepan and add brown sugar and evaporated milk.

Bring to a boil and let boil for two minutes. Let cool, then add vanilla.

Let icing cool completely before pouring on cake.

-Submitted by June Gibby of Young Harris, who says: "This cake is better when made a day or two ahead. Cake can be frozen up to six weeks, and slices better when frozen."

Editor's Note: Coffee rub is a key ingredient in this recipe, but we failed to include the instructions for making it when we published this recipe in our Sept. 26 issue. We regret the error.

Coffee-rubbed burger dog with Kings Hawaiian Kona Coffee BBQ sauce and Apple-Pecan Coleslaw

Ingredients

For dogs:

2 lbs. ground beef
1/2 cup coffee rub
8-pack King's Hawaiian hot dog buns

Coffee Rub:

1 ½ cups ground coffee
1 cup light brown sugar
2 Tbsps. Chili powder
1 Tbsp. granulated onion
1 Tbsp. smoked paprika
2 Tbsps. Kosher salt
1 Tbsp. black pepper
2 Tbsps. rubbed sage
Combine in food processor.



Pecan Coleslaw:

8 oz. bagged coleslaw
¼ cup mayonnaise
½ chopped toasted pecans
¾ cup chopped scallions
¼ tsp. cinnamon

½ tsp. sugar
½ tsp. chili powder
1 medium Granny Smith apple (1/2 c julienned apple)
3 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar

Preparation

Make coleslaw: Toast and coarsely chop pecans, and thinly slice granny smith apple. Place pecans, apple, and coleslaw in a large bowl. In a smaller bowl, combine mayonnaise, apple cider vinegar, scallions, sugar, cinnamon and chili powder and season to taste with salt and pepper.

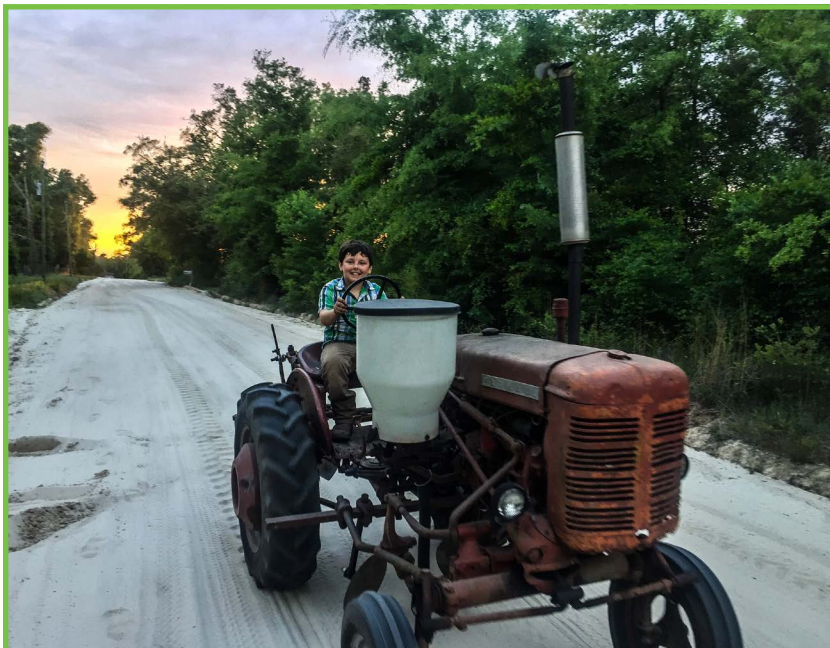
Make coffee rub: combine all ingredients for coffee rub. Measure out amount needed for coating burger dogs. Store remainder in an airtight container.

Divide ground beef into 8 equal-sized portions. Place each portion onto a sheet of plastic wrap, and flatten each portion into a 6- x 3-inch rectangle. Roll up with plastic wrap to form a log, and twist at both ends to compact into a uniform shape.

Spread coffee rub onto cutting board. Remove log from plastic wrap, and roll in the coffee rub to coat evenly. Repeat with remaining 7 portions of beef. Place coffee-rubbed dogs on a cookie sheet lined with parchment, and rest in the refrigerator uncovered until ready to grill.

Preheat a stovetop grill pan, an outdoor gas grill, or prepare a charcoal grill. Grill dogs until they reach desired degree of doneness, or until an instant read thermometer registers 160 degrees in the center of each dog.

Toast buns if desired. Place burger dogs in buns, top each dog with some coleslaw and a spoonful of barbeque sauce and serve.



Brantley County's Farmer of the Year got an early start

Eight-year-old Ethan Eunice of Brantley County is the counterpoint to all the statistics that say farming is an older man's game. At it since the age of 3, his management of the family produce shack earned him the 2018 Farmer of the Year Award from the Brantley County Chamber of Commerce. When his parents told him he'd been chosen for the award, Ethan exclaimed: "I'm gonna have to wear a tuxedo for this!"

Something of a Renaissance man, Ethan is on the "A" Honor Roll at the Georgia Cyber Academy and enjoys attending church, playing baseball, football and basketball, loves to sing, swim, fish and – of course – farm. Last year, in first grade, Ethan added author and illustrator to his long list of accomplishments with the release of "The Growing Garden," a book he sells through The Produce Shack at the Home Grown Barn. He even has a tutorial on YouTube that demonstrates how sugar cane syrup is made on his family's farm.

"This is good hands-on experience for him," said Ethan's mother, Sarah Eunice. "He is learning what it takes to run a business – a lot of hard work and dedication – and he's having fun while he's doing it."

Ethan's family – parents Sarah and Rowdy, brothers Jus-

tin and Gabe, and Papa Mike Eunice – worked together with other family and friends to establish the farm. Neighborhood kids earn spending money and fresh vegetables for their families by helping to harvest the produce on the farm.

The Produce Shack offers a variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables, including red and white potatoes, sweet onions, carrots, yellow squash, zucchini, sweet corn, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, watermelon, cantaloupes, sugar cane, fresh herbs and sunflowers, along with local honey, pure cane syrup, farm-fresh eggs and hand-crafted signs

The Produce Shack is open most Saturdays (during harvest season) from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., or until sold out. During the week, there is an honor system table with a mailbox out front.

"This place is a great opportunity to share with the community, and who knows, maybe inspire someone along the way," said Sarah. "At the Home Grown Barn, it's more than just planting something. It's sowing seeds."

Ethan Eunice's Produce Shack is located off U.S. Hwy. 82, about three miles down Ga. Hwy. 259 at the corner of Waynesville Road in Brantley County. You can also find it on Facebook by searching for "Home Grown Barn" or through the website www.homegrownbarn.com.

Gordon County Tractor Club hosts 12th annual antique tractor show

By Amy Carter

amy.carter@agr.georgia.gov

CALHOUN -- October is a polarizing month for tractor enthusiasts. Those who yearn for new and improved head south to Moultrie, home of the Sunbelt Ag Expo, where the latest and greatest farming technologies take center stage. But others travel north to Calhoun, where the Gordon County Antique Engine and Tractor Club not only appreciates old, but puts it on display.

The club is hosting its 12th annual Antique Engine and Tractor Show at the Cherokee Capital Fairgrounds later this month. Last year, the event drew some 100 exhibitors with farm machines in various states of restoration – or not. Either way, it's all good to owners and browsers alike.

Last year, Bradley and Candy Ritchey drove three hours from Granite Falls, N.C., to display their garden tractors, and to admire the full-sized machines all around them.

"We do this for fun and to get out and talk to people," Candy Ritchey said. And to find new projects.

At one show they attended, a man told them he had a larger model of one of the smaller garden tractors they were showing. "He said, 'I've got one just like that in my chicken coop.' We said, 'Yeah, right,'" Candy Ritchey recalled, but they took their trailer along when they drove two hours to the guy's house to check it out – just in case.

"My husband said, 'If it's the right thing, it's coming home,'" she said.

Tom Thurston of Rome shipped a 1965 Cockshutt – known as an Oliver in America – from Ontario, Canada,

to Georgia to restore. Thurston said his wife claims the Cockshutt for herself because she loves the color scheme – a red belly framed by harvest gold paint on the wheels and checkerboard grill. Unlike the Ritcheys, Thurston was raised on a farm.

"We had Olivers, John Deeres, Farmalls – just about all of them," he said. "I wanted something different."

Thurston doesn't farm now. He just enjoys restoring tractors and taking them out for a spin every now and then.

"We live about a quarter-mile off the road and I like to aggravate the neighbors, so I'll drive a different tractor down to the mailbox everyday," he said.

Chantell Matthews, the granddaughter of a Massey-Harris mechanic and daughter of an antique tractor enthusiast, said the club has been hosting the show for 12 years. Admission is free for spectators and exhibitors. The club raises money off a \$5 raffle – this year they're offering a 2003 John Deere Gator 4x2 (gas) – and their "famous" pinto bean and cornbread dinner.

Matthews said she has no idea where the idea for pinto beans and cornbread came from, but club members start cooking it before dawn the day of the dinner, and combine the proceeds from the dinner and the raffle to fund a \$1,500 scholarship for a local high school student planning to pursue ag studies in college.

The show will be held Oct. 19-20 at the Cherokee Capital Fairgrounds, Ga. Hwy. 53 West, Calhoun. Gates open at 9 a.m. both days. For more information about the show, find them on Facebook; visit the club's website at www.gcaeatc.com; or call Ricky Matthews at 770.382.4165 or Beverly Primmer at 770.773.0855.



His or hers? Tom Thurston's wife's restored Cockshutt 1650, built in July 1965 in Iowa for the Canadian market, on display in Calhoun last October.

FRESH MARKET

Continued From Page 1

“To really meet the consumer on a day-to-day basis it takes retailers like The Fresh Market to say, ‘Hey, let’s invite these local entrepreneurs into our store. Let’s feature them on the shelf,’” Black said.

The partnership was a collaborative effort between Georgia Grown, The Fresh Market and Diana Earwood, owner of the ag consulting firm Plain Stated, which is based in Atlanta.

“Diana really opened our eyes to the way to do this,” said Ross Reynolds, senior vice president of merchandising for the grocery chain. “Vendors solicit us, solicit the store managers – Diana really taught us how to approach a program like this, to get involved with the Georgia Department of Agriculture and Georgia Grown.”

Earwood scouted potential vendors at events like the University of Georgia’s Flavor of Georgia contest, and by visiting Atlanta-area farmers markets. She conducted three tasting rounds with store category managers at The Fresh Market’s headquarters in Greensboro, N.C.

Jennifer Badger, local category coordinator for the chain, said the 75 Georgia Grown products added to the list of Georgia-made products offered in The Fresh Market’s stores were selected to meet the chain’s motto of inspiring people to make everyday eating extraordinary.

“I think with the addition of these Georgia products you really incorporate great state pride and you cover – from North Georgia down to Savannah – just the creativity and the hard work of the Peach State resident,” Badger said.

“Local Georgia Picks” can be found in The Fresh Market stores in Alpharetta, Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Dunwoody, Macon, Marietta, Peachtree City, Roswell, Savannah and Suwanee.



Pride Road Elaine and Yasin Muhaimin introduced shoppers to food products made with Hibiscus. They left New Orleans for Atlanta in 2009, their pockets full of Hibiscus seeds.



On display Georgia Grown gets prominent placement at The Fresh Market in Roswell.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

Continued From Page 1

program for elementary grades. Those systems will work with the state to develop an ag-based curriculum for their elementary schools, said Central Region Ag Ed Director Chris Corzine, who acted as interim state program manager for the DOE during the school selection process.

The state has set a deadline of December for that work to be done, Corzine said, to allow time for public review and state school board approval. The pilot program is set to launch at the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year.

Most of the school systems that applied to participate in the pilot program were located on the west side of Georgia, but Corzine was encouraged to see that Fulton County applied on behalf of a school near Atlanta.

For students like Barnes – who hails from metro Atlanta – the agricultural education curriculum is their first introduction to farming and related fields. In her case, that first impression was powerful. Now 23, Barnes is traveling the world as a training development specialist for John Deere.

“My freshman year in high school, I took Mr. Joshua Rogers’ ag ed class. Josh had recently graduated from UGA CAES and very quickly taught me to ‘believe in the future of agriculture with a faith born not of words, but of deeds,’” Barnes said.

As anyone raised in the organization knows, those words are the opening declaration of the FFA Creed.

“The proper way to be an agriculture educator is to teach from literature like this, which our core principles are founded upon,” said Rogers, who now teaches at Coffee County High School in Douglas.

Rogers grew up on a farm. Barnes did not. They found common ground, nonetheless.

“The journey that we both took through our first four years of high school, we took together,” Rogers said. “She was brilliant

from the start.”

Barnes followed in Rogers’ footsteps by matriculating to the University of Georgia’s College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Her second year there, Barnes got involved with the Office of Diversity Affairs, which introduced her to MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences).

“I saw a group of people that looked like me and had similar passions and, most importantly, were helping each other to grow and achieve,” she said. “I got more involved, took on leadership roles and found mentors in students Charice Stroud and Victoria King. Both women had been long-time active members of the organization and exemplified a lot of the qualities I wanted to develop in myself.

“I listened to their stories and realized that if I wanted to succeed in the ways they had, I didn’t have to do anything but use the resources in front of me and apply myself.”

And apply herself she did. At the 2015 MANRRS National Conference, an idle conversation led to an impromptu interview with John Deere, and the rest is history. Or, rather, her story.

“As a black woman I am recognizing that, although I don’t see many people that look like me in meetings or in my day-to-day business, I still see myself here, making an impact along with everyone else,” she said.

“I’ll never know if some of the tasks given or situations created that tested my abilities were because I am a black woman, black, a woman, young, or a city girl. All of those things make me a minority. But fire forges steel. Every day I learn more and more about the industry and I’m that much more confident that I chose the right industry to build a career.”

A choice made nearly 10 years ago when a city girl walked into a farmer’s classroom.

SUNBELT AG EXPO: Research farm is a proving ground for fresh ideas

Continued From Page 1

spent on promotion. Really everything we do is geared toward getting exhibitors to come show the latest technology in agriculture for our farmers and attendees to come in and take this information back to their operations.”

Spence Field, which is comprised of 100 acres of indoor and outdoor exhibit space and a 600-acre research farm, is home to the yearly event and accommodates for some 1,200 exhibitors showcasing the latest advancements in modern agriculture. Companies specializing in all areas of agriculture from crop protection brands and livestock handling equipment to the newest precision ag technologies are represented at the Expo, providing information about their products and services through both static exhibits and educational seminars and demonstrations.

A prime example of the cutting-edge technologies showcased at the trade show is Blue River Technology’s new See & Spray system, a state-of-the-art photosensitive sprayer designed to use an archive of photos to identify nuisance plants and apply herbicide directly to problem areas as the sprayer navigates through the field. This technology allows

farmers to effectively manage weeds in their row crops without broadcasting chemicals, enhancing environmental and economic sustainability. This equipment cuts spray costs by 90 percent, said Blalock.

“It’s so new we don’t even have a price on the machine yet, but that’s why we do what we do – to show this technology before it’s the norm,” said Blalock. “I liken it to when we showed PC computers for the first time in 1983. It was the ‘90s before the computer became the norm in offices and on the farm.”

Outside of the static exhibit space lies the Darrell Williams Research Farm, which Blalock calls the “crown jewel of the Sunbelt Ag Expo.” The 600 acres of cotton, peanut, corn, soybean and forage research plots allow visitors at Expo to see farming equipment functioning in a real-time work setting. Harvesting demonstrations, tillage demonstrations, equipment driving ranges, irrigation technology and precision ag demonstrations are conducted daily during the Expo.

Expo Farm Manager Cody Mitchell and his staff work with university and corporate researchers to conduct research on seed vari-

eties, crop protection products, irrigation and water management practices, and precision agriculture technologies.

“We do the research so that we can test things on our farm and let companies get comfortable with their technologies before they put the product on the market,” said Mitchell. “We like to put it to the test and let farmers come out and see for themselves that this stuff actually works. They can trust it, buy it and invest for the future on their farms.”

Blalock attributes the show’s success each year to the boots-on-the-ground team that works to orchestrate the South’s largest farm show. From the office staff to the parking lot attendants, Blalock says that each member of the team plays an integral part in the process.

“We couldn’t do it without those people that come in and help us. It’s kind of like (old) home week. Everybody comes back together, and we know we’ve got a job to do and we get it done,” he said. “It takes a total team effort and we are blessed with a great team, here in the office and on our research farm.”

For more information about the Sunbelt Ag Expo, visit sunbeltagexpo.com.



Rad Yager of Certified Ag Resources in Camilla talked to farmers about a soil moisture probe during Field Day at Sunbelt in July.

Find Georgia Agriculture Online!

www.agr.georgia.gov



www.facebook.com/georgiangrown



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@GaPoultry



@lamgeorgiagrown



Georgia Grown: <https://www.pinterest.com/GaDepAg/>

Notice

Ads for the Nov. 7 issue – including Farm Services and Handicrafts – are due by noon, Oct. 24.