



sweetpotatospeak



Dear North Carolina Sweet Potato Supporter,

Synergy—“the working together of two or more things to produce an effect greater than the their individual effects.” When I look at our organization, the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission, that’s what I see—synergy, teamwork, an excellent example of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

We’re an eclectic group of growers, public relations professionals, marketing specialists, culinary experts, lobbyists, project directors, scientists, and educators—all with the same mission—to increase production and consumption of North Carolina sweet potatoes.

As you read the articles in this issue, I think you’ll agree. Our board members and lobbyists have forged valuable relationships with state and federal congressional leaders who listen to and act upon the needs of our industry.

Our marketing, social media, and advertising programs are exposing millions of US consumers to the nutrition, availability and versatility messages. And in recent years, this type of outreach is expanding our markets into the European Union to include the UK, Germany, Denmark, Norway, and further into the EU.

Scientists and educators continue to investigate and innovate in the labs and in the fields. Their discoveries have given us new products, new varieties, and valuable information that will benefit consumers, manufacturers, and our industry.

And absolutely key to all of our accomplishments are the sweet potato growers who demonstrate their dedication to the industry by staying abreast of the latest research, the latest happenings on Capitol Hill and the NC General Assembly, actively participating in research programs, and toiling in the fields.

In some form or fashion all our presentations, projects, discoveries, and blood, sweat, and tears connect and make us a winning team. Together we’ll continue to knock the ball out of the park, score the winning touchdown and sink a hole-in-one.

So, I wouldn’t skip a word of this newsletter. You’ll be encouraged by this synergy, this teamwork. And, no doubt you’ll be inspired to continue the critical position you play on our team.

Sincerely,

**SUE JOHNSON-LANGDON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NORTH CAROLINA SWEETPOTATO COMMISSION, INC.**

Marketing Worth Mentioning»

Eye Catching, Mouth Watering, Crowd Pleasing
Serving Samples Sways Shoppers
NCSPC and NCDA&CS Salute and Score

Capitol Briefs & Bulletins»

Taking Issue With the Issues
Persistence Pays for Exporters

Notable News»

It’s About *TIME*
State Government Fuels Foreign Marketing Momentum
NC Sweet Potatoes Weather the Storm

Lab Notes»

Parched Sweet Potatoes Possess Potential to Plump Profits

North Carolina Sweet Potato Marketing Report

in this issue



Marketing Worth Mentioning

Eye Catching, Mouth Watering, Crowd Pleasing

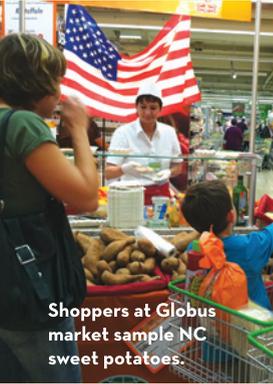
Lewis & Neale Agency continues racking up results

They've done it again! Lewis & Neale Agency (L&N) wrapped up another year of positive promotion, marketing, and public relation activities. As promised, L&N took our messages of nutrition, quality, versatility, and availability to our audience. Consumers, retailers, foodservice professionals, online and print media, and trend setters received news, samples, recipes, educational materials, and photography to support our mission to increase awareness, educate and motivate users, and position NCSPC as the authority on all things sweet potato.

The most recent program, "Sweet Taters for Tots," aimed at educating and motivating moms to choose sweet potatoes as part of a healthy diet for their growing children. Leaflets, outreach to 100 mommy bloggers, a photo contest, and editorial packages to five online parenting sites yielded these results—

- A photo contest featuring tots enjoying sweet potatoes was promoted on Facebook and on blogs with a reach of 14,400;
- Online magazine postings feature sweet potato recipe ideas, photography, and nutrition news on *Parents* 2.6 million; *Family Circle* 411,000; *Parenting* 5 million;
- Blog postings on Blissfully Domestic, Bliss Tree, and Modern Moms—estimated combined reach 250,000.

NCSPC and L&N look forward to bringing you more good news about the results and impact our programs have on our industry.



Shoppers at Globus market sample NC sweet potatoes.

Serving Samples Sways Shoppers

International program targets German consumers

We suspected it. We acted on it. Now, we know it. North Carolina sweet potatoes sell in Western Europe. This summer the NCSPC's German public relations and marketing firm, MK-2, coordinated a sweet potato sampling program in four major grocery chains: Globus, Kaiser's Tengelmann, Karstadt, and Kaufhof. The Commission's Sue Johnson-Langdon and NCDA&CS International Marketing Specialist, Kelly McIver, traveled to Germany to visit and observe the sampling program firsthand. Consumers tasted sweet potato rounds sautéed in olive oil and also received recipe cards for further inspiration. "The

take on the cards was almost a hundred percent," observed Johnson-Langdon. "The sweet potato samplers were so busy that the woman sampling lettuce ended up helping the sweet potato sampling, too," she added.

Outreach online and to the press has proven to be a positive approach to promotion, too. *Gastronomie Impulse & Hotel*, a long-lead trade magazine targeting high-end properties, included recipes and photography provided by NCSPC. The circulation of this magazine is 30,000; the advertising value of this placement is approximately \$13,000.

NCSPC and NCDA&CS Salute and Score

Two tactics connect consumers to NC sweet potato growers

NCDA&CS and NCSPC teamed up for two summer projects. A first-ever billboard campaign saluted sweet potato growers and their importance to the economy. Six billboards in sweet potato growing areas reminded consumers that NC is the leader in sweet potato production and has worldwide reach. The campaign ran for a month on five billboards and for two months on one. The combined daily effective circulation (DEC) was an audience of around 204,000. The number is based on the annual average daily traffic count, vehicle occupancy, period of exposure, and number of hours of the sign is illuminated.

The second summer project focused on fitness and families. The two partners in promotion were sponsors of the Charlotte Eagles, a men's professional soccer team. The \$2000 sponsorship helped support nine summer soccer camps in the Charlotte area. NCSPC and NCDA&CS sponsored the team's captain, Greg Dalby. Both organization's realized exposure to thousands of soccer fans through announcements at home games, four logo placements on the team's electronic publication *EaglesNews* (4,500 subscribers), logo placement on 2,000 camper t-shirts, the team's corporate sponsor page, and a half-page ad in the Charlotte Eagles' yearbook and media guide.

Capitol Briefs & Bulletins

Taking Issue With the Issues

NCSPC board members meet with congressional leaders

Never a group to simply let things happen, NCSPC board members took their concerns to their congressional leaders in June. The meetings focused on key issues of the 2012 Farm Bill and other concerns that impact North Carolina's sweet potato growers.

Topping the list of topics was the current guest worker program, which now falls under the 2009 Department of Labor executive order. Board members stressed the need to change the costly and cumbersome H-2A and E-Verify legislation for more affordable and reliable options to prevent a negative impact on growers and the state's agriculture sector.

Because the NCSPC receives its funding from assessments (\$15 per planted acre) the need for accurate, current data is critical. This information is available from USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). Board members stressed the importance of having access to up-to-date acreage counts in order to continue the NCSPC goals to support the growers and the industry.



A) (front row) Sue Johnson-Langdon, US Representative Renee Ellmers, Rob Hill (back row) George Wooten, Dewey Scott, Adam Wooten, Johnny Barnes
B) (front row) Rob Hill, US Senator Kay Hagan, Sue Johnson-Langdon, (back row) Johnny Barnes, Howard Fisackerly, Dewey Scott, Adam Wooten
C) (front row) George Wooten, Rob Hill, Sue Johnson-Langdon (back row) Dewey Scott, US Senator Richard Burr, Johnny Barnes, Adam Wooten

Persistence Pays for Exporters

EU approves new MRL level

The wait is over. As of August 16, 2011, the European Union has issued a new maximum residue level (MRL) for produce imports, including sweet potatoes.

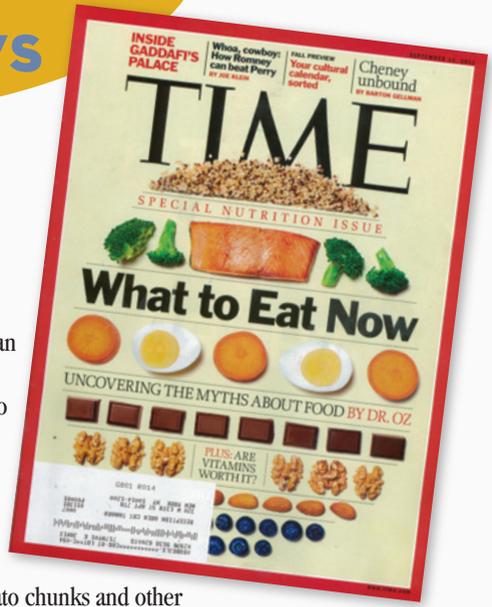
For months the NCSPC and its lobbying firm, CompassNC, has been encouraging federal and state legislators to impart to the EU the importance of lowering MRL requirements for Scholar[®], a cost-effective post-harvest fungicide proven effective and safe for use on sweet potatoes.

"We are very grateful for the congressional support needed to make this happen," said CompassNC's John Cooper. "Having an affordable option to protect sweet potato exports will make a real difference to our growers," he added.



sweet potato protection

Notable News



It's About *TIME*

Sweet potatoes are part of eat-well-be-well message

The September 14 issue of *Time* magazine focused on nutrition. The special nutrition issue included an article by Dr. Mehmet Oz, the cardiologist who gained national attention on the popular *Oprah* show and who now hosts his own daily program focusing on health and nutrition.

The article is a sort of eat-well-be-well primer and preaches the virtues of moderation, portion control, and exercise. A photo of sliced sweet potatoes graces the cover of the magazine. A second photo of sweet potato chunks and other heart-healthy foods appears within the article. This connection to nutrition and its messenger (Dr. Oz) is invaluable to delivering the message that sweet potatoes offer tasty and healthy meal solutions.

State Government Fuels Foreign Marketing Momentum

NCDA&CS to share funds with NCSPC

The NC General Assembly has awarded \$500,000 to NCDA&CS, which they will share with commodities who are able to put up their own money to extend the reach into foreign markets. NCSPC is also a recipient of the money, largely because it has made great strides in international marketing. The Commission will provide matching funds over a two-year time period.

NCDA&CS is recommending initiating an integrated marketing program that will continue to build the momentum established in Germany and investigate opportunities to branch out into other countries in Western Europe, including Scandinavia and Spain.

NC Sweet Potatoes Weather the Storm

Hurricane hurls winds and rains along East Coast

In August, Hurricane Irene slammed into the East Coast. High winds felled trees and knocked out power to millions. Roads washed out, rivers swelled, and houses flooded. Early estimates reported over 1,100 homes lost and damages approaching \$70 million in North Carolina.

The state's entire sweet potato growing area felt the effects, though the degree of damage varied by location. Fortunately, wind was not a real threat because the roots are protected by the soil. Depending on the side of the storm fields were located, the effects of rainfall varied widely. "Some of the low-lying fields suffered damage, but the estimated statewide damage is less than 12%, and the quality and quantity of the 2011 crop will meet the rising demand," said Sue Johnson-Langdon, NCSPC executive director.





Parched Sweet Potatoes Possess Potential to Plump Profits

Testing in dehydrated sweet potato project begins

Demand is on the rise for dehydrated sweet potatoes. Currently, the US imports approximately five million pounds, 83%, of dried sweet potatoes from China and Peru. Pet food and human food manufacturers want to source dried sweet potatoes in this country to ensure a safer, more reliable product ingredient, but domestic prices for the ingredient cut profit margins.

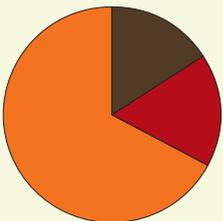
Opportunity to decrease dependence on imports is real. The NCSPC Foundation is working to find a way to provide more dehydrated sweet potatoes at a lower cost than current US produced product by deploying drying technology typically used to cure tobacco. A \$30,000 grant from the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA (RAFI-USA) recently kick started research and testing to fine-tune cost-effective production. Trials took place at Barnes Farming and focused on the impact of temperature and time to dry 14,500 pounds of sweet potatoes.

John Kimber, project director for the NCSPC Foundation, is very hopeful for the future of this unique value-added product, "The fact that the Foundation was able to secure grant money in a tough funding environment is very encouraging," said Kimber. "In concert with Dr. Mike Boyette of NCSU Bio and Ag Engineering, Den Truong of USDA, Dr. Korinn Saker of the NCSU Vet College, and Roger Townley of Townley Associates, we have shown that growers have an opportunity, either working together as a company or separately, to use existing drying technology to create a new business opportunity," he continued.

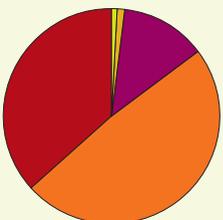
demand=opportunity

NORTH CAROLINA SWEET POTATO MARKETING REPORT

May 26, 2011 - August 31, 2011



Total 40-Pound Cartons	=	2,745,655
■ Food Service	433,996	= 16%
■ International	456,533	= 17%
■ Retail	1,855,126	= 67%



Total Pounds in Addition to Fresh Market	=	30,166,530
■ Baby Food	41,360	= -1%
■ Canners	171,840	= 1%
■ Chips	3,968,170	= 13%
■ Frozen	14,845,560	= 49%
■ Other	11,139,600	= 37%

The FOB prices ranges for this time period are US \$16-\$18, US #2 \$8-\$10, Jumbos \$8-\$10, US #1 Petites \$12-\$14. The 2010 crop season total to date (August 8, 2010-August 31, 2011) is 11,996,894 (40-pound cartons fresh market sweet potatoes). Source: NCDA&CS Market News Section.

2011-2012

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Johnny C. Barnes, Vice President
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George Massengill, Secretary-Treasurer
Hill Top Farms – Four Oaks, NC

Sue Johnson-Langdon, Executive Director
North Carolina SweetPotato Commission – Benson, NC

Dwayne Ferrell
Vick Family Farms – Wilson, NC

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Godwin Produce Company – Dunn, NC

Frank Howell
Howell Farming Company, Inc. – Goldsboro, NC

Phil Hudson
John Hudson Farms, Inc. – Newton Grove, NC

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Arcola Hardwood Company – Warrenton, NC

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Moody Dunbar, Inc. – Dunn, NC

Nash Produce – Nashville, NC

NC Certified Sweet Potato Breed Producers – Bailey, NC

Reliable Farm Data Research, Inc. – Clinton, NC

Sail Sea Air Integrated Logistics LLC – Wilson, NC

Scott Farms, Inc. – Lucama, NC

Spring Acres Sales Company – Spring Hope, NC

Strickland Bros. Enterprises, Inc. – Spring Hope, NC

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Wada Farms Marketing Group, LLC – Idaho Falls, ID

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Williamson Produce, Inc. – Wilson, NC



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