

sweetpotatosp^eak



Dear North Carolina Sweet Potato Supporter,

The devil is in the details. We've all heard that expression, and for me, someone who likes to focus on

the big picture and move on, it's particularly true. Sifting through the minutiae can be tedious; waiting for results is akin to watching paint dry. It's the "big idea" that motivates me— recognizing the needs and taking immediate action to find the answers or provide solutions.

So, I'm saluting those who enjoy examining things under the microscope—literally and figuratively. Those are the people whose work is to make the innovative ideas and industry-changing discoveries a reality.

We owe a huge part of our industry's success to the researchers—professors and students who work in the lab researching sweet potato nutrients and their effects on human health, discovering new uses and products for sweet potatoes in the marketplace, and finding cost-effective and safe solutions for managing insects, curing, storing and shipping.

They are the men and women—armed with nothing but a positive attitude, clipboard, and a pencil—who approach strangers in supermarkets and shopping malls or utilize social networks to

find out what their perceptions of sweet potatoes are, how often they eat them, and what ways they prepare them. Without this kind of research, we wouldn't know our consumers. We wouldn't be able to answer a need.

The kinds of projects I've described above are underway right now. Our partners at NCSU are developing systems to monitor and track infestations with the goal of identifying and avoiding fields that present a high-risk to growers. A grant to help recommend upgrading storage facilities is being implemented. Our public relations agency is conducting consumer research in mid-Atlantic states to help us determine what they want, need, and expect from our industry.

On behalf of the Commission, its members and supporters, I'd like to say thank you to the researchers, the men and women in the trenches who are happy to heed the needs of growers, manufacturers, healthcare professionals, and consumers. Their efforts and discoveries allow us to focus on the big picture—growing more and selling more North Carolina sweet potatoes.

Sincerely,

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

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Marketing Worth Mentioning

Making It Right, Light, and Bright

Agency focusing on research and recipe development

Lewis & Neale Agency (L&N), NCSPC's domestic marketing and public relations partner, is focusing efforts on two fronts this year: market research and recipes.

L&N staff dietitians are using the latest research to identify nutritional information that will best support NCSPC's marketing mission. Dr. Mary Ann Lila, Director of NCSU Plants for Human Health Institute, conducted research on behalf of the NCSPC Foundation. Using information L&N gleaned from Dr. Lila's findings, consumers in the mid-Atlantic will be asked to share their attitudes and perceptions on sweet potato nutrition. This valuable information will be used to tailor campaigns that suit the tastes, needs, and lifestyles of consumers.

Along the lines of nutrition, health and weight management is paramount when marketing sweet potatoes as a functional food. L&N will provide newly developed, healthful sweet potato recipes and photography to food and health editors of long-lead publications. "We're keeping things light and bright when it comes to these new recipes," said Cristy Alvarado, account executive at L&N.

Results from the research and outreach to the media will be shared in future issues of this newsletter.



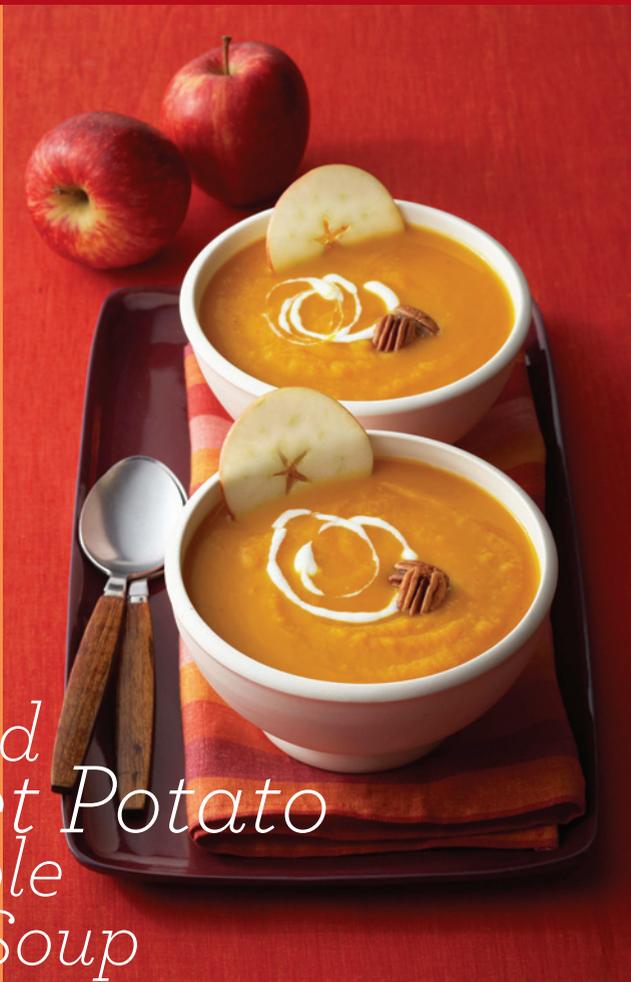
market research & recipes

Online Streamline

NCSPC website re-do makes navigation easy

Check out the NCSPC's improved, easier-to-navigate website (ncsweetpotatoes.com). At first glance the difference is subtle, but after a mouse click or two, the change becomes clear. The streamlined, intuitive design allows users to find what they are searching for easier than ever. So whether it's a search for recipes, industry news, or nutrition information, finding it is a snap (or a click).

And speaking of recipes, spend some time perusing that page. Suzanne Corbett, food editor for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* did! She published two articles just in time for Thanksgiving that included sweet potato cooking tips, recipes and photography.



*Curried
Sweet Potato
Apple
Soup*

Capitol Briefs & Bulletins

2012 Farm Bill Update

House and Senate Agriculture Committees continue work

The 2012 Farm Bill debate continues to be debated in Congress. Recently the House and Senate Agriculture Committee leaders developed a bipartisan, bicameral proposal for the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction that would save \$23 billion. However, the Joint Select Committee's failure to reach a deal on an overall deficit reduction package effectively ended this effort. The House and Senate Agriculture Committees will continue the process of reauthorizing the farm bill in the coming months before a September 2012 expiration.

Immigration Issues Burden Growers

NC Congressman promises to keep issue top of mind

On October 19, NC Representative Walter Jones (R, District 3) met with Johnny Barnes of Barnes Farming and John Cooper, NCSPC's lobbyist, to discuss the 2012 Farm Bill and immigration and E-Verify as it relates to growers and packer/shippers.

The E-Verify system was created as a tool to allow businesses to electronically verify the employment authorization of their newly hired employees. A by-product of the system has created a shortage of manpower. Imported labor is critical for agriculture, and this season field workers were in short supply. The shortage creates a financial burden for the growers, which was particularly apparent during the recent harvest.

Congressman Jones was very supportive and agreed to work with members, the Farm Bureau, and other organizations regarding the labor situation. His plan is to arrange future meetings between NCSPC's executive director, board members, and members of the US House of Representatives.



From left: Johnny Barnes, Representative Jones, John Cooper

Sweet Potato 101

Getting Schooled in Insect Management

New step-by-step guide removes guesswork

North Carolina State University has developed a four-step "Insect Management Guide" that helps take the guesswork out of when, where, what, how often, and how much pesticide to use to maximize control over root- and leaf-feeding insects. Corn and tobacco wireworms, flea beetle larvae, and caterpillar pests are specifically targeted.

"Today's recommendations provide good control, but damage still occurs in some fields," explains Mark Abney, assistant professor with NCSU Department of Entomology. "We'll continue to evaluate new insecticidal chemistries and application methods that will increase control while reducing costs to growers and minimizing environmental impact."

Wireworm damage is still the most common insect problem facing NC sweet potato growers, and two species, the tobacco wireworm and the corn wireworm, are responsible for most of the damage. A wireworm management program was developed over several years by researchers at NCSU working collaboratively with growers across the state.

Download the guide at www4.ncsu.edu/~mrabney2/index-4.html. Other insect management guides are also available at this site.

Fall Armyworm
on sweet potato vine



Notable News

There's a New Kid in Town

NCSPC rolls out welcome mat

The Commission would like to introduce Socorro “CoCo” Daughtry—our new administrative assistant. Originally from Idaho (another kind of potato country), Daughtry comes to NCSPC with experience in working with non-profit organizations and their boards of directors. She is well versed in digital photography, layout, design, and publications—all bonuses and benefits for the Commission.

Daughtry feels very well prepared for her new assignment and credits her abilities to experience working for the Idaho School Boards Association. “My time working there afforded me some of the basics on how business should be conducted. Toss in being a wife and mother, and I’m well-equipped to deal with a myriad of issues including managing funding, keeping projects moving forward to completion, showing up on time, and doing what it takes to get a job done professionally,” she said. “I like being busy, and I like it when no two days are the same. I think I’ve found that opportunity at NCSPC, and I couldn’t be happier,” she added.

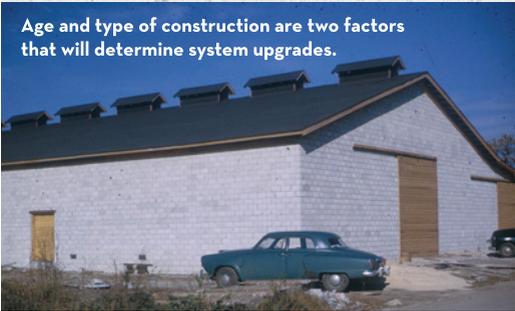


Is It Time to Upgrade?

Grant funds free storage system review



Age and type of construction are two factors that will determine system upgrades.



The NC Tobacco Trust Fund has awarded a \$60,000 grant to the NCSPC Foundation (NCSPCF) to fund efforts to provide engineering services detailing possible upgrades to each participating owner/operator of postharvest storage buildings.

Differences in age, size, construction, and equipment in the storage facilities means each building needs its own unique analysis to ensure accurate recommendations. Dr. Mike Boyette with NCSU Biological and Agricultural Engineering, is the developer of modern storage systems, and he will lead the project, which is scheduled to begin early next year.

North Carolina currently has almost 100 curing and storage facilities with an estimated capacity of 15.5 million bushels. “Over 90% of the entire US post-harvest storage capacity is on farms in North Carolina. Clearly, they [storage facilities] are a valuable asset to our sweet potato industry and are critical to its continuing vitality,” said Boyette.

Participation is voluntary, and there is no cost to the owner/operator. All findings and recommendations will be confidential, although gross data may be published in Cooperative Extension newsletters, grower meetings, and other industry functions in order to encourage participation. Those interested in participating in this initiative may contact John Kimber, NCSPCF Project Director, at johnkimber@aol.com.



Spencer Proves Indispensable

NCSPC mascot in demand

He’s always been a hit, but lately, Spencer SweetPotato is getting more requests for personal appearances. He’s making the rounds at school events, festivals, auctions, music stages, and parades. There have been times when he’s had only a 10-minute break before being whisked off to the next event. Over the last few months he’s delighted kids of all ages in all parts of the state—up in the mountains, south to the border with South Carolina, and up and over to the northeast. Everywhere he goes Spencer displays a wholesome, strong, and healthy attitude that is directly connected to sweet potatoes. And at over six feet tall, wearing bright green shoes, a contagious smile, and a bright orange suit, he’s hard to miss!

Lab Notes

Tracking the White Grub

Potential monitoring may reduce infestation risk

The vegetable entomology department at NCSU is taking aim at invasive soil-dwelling insects in an effort to increase control and decrease the grower expense. One target for new research strategies is the white grub (*Plectris aliena*). The white grub presents a particular challenge because it appears in some fields and not others. New tactics include developing a system to track the spread and distribution of the white grub by identifying the pheromone, or chemical, the adult female beetle produces to attract the male beetle for mating.

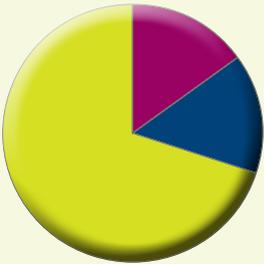
“We are looking for answers to why the white grub appears in some fields and not others. Being able to identify connections to infestations will allow growers to pinpoint and avoid high-risk fields,” explained Mark Abney, assistant professor at the NCSU Department of Entomology. Significant progress in the search for the pheromone in 2011 means field trials of prospective compounds will begin in 2012.

NCSU graduate student Nancy Brill has been studying factors that may limit the spread of the pest, including temperature. Laboratory studies determined that overwintering grubs are susceptible to freezing at temperatures below 24°F. However, even during the coldest time of the year in eastern NC, soil temperatures at depths greater than four inches do not drop below 24°F.

Plectris aliena

NORTH CAROLINA SWEET POTATO MARKETING REPORT

September 1, 2011 - November 9, 2011



Total 40-Pound Cartons		=	1,734,704
■ Food Service	250,301	=	15%
■ International	259,705	=	15%
■ Retail	1,224,698	=	70%



Total Pounds in Addition to Fresh Market	=	30,166,530	
■ Baby Food	286,000	=	1%
■ Canners	3,564,390	=	14%
■ Chips	5,384,492	=	21%
■ Frozen	10,400,823	=	40%
■ Other	6,121,700	=	14%

The FOB prices ranges for this time period are US #1-\$17, US #2 \$8-\$10, Jumbos \$7-\$10, US #1 Petites \$12-\$13. The 2011 crop season total to date (August 21, 2011-November 9, 2011) is 1,754,822 (40-pound cartons fresh market sweet potatoes). Source: NCDA&CS Market News Section.

2011-2012

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NC Certified Sweet Potato Breed Producers – Bailey, NC

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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

Two Toe/Tater Man Produce – Sydney, FL

Universal Forest Products, Inc. – Grand Rapids, MI

Vick Family Farms Partnership – Wilson, NC

Wayne E. Bailey Produce Company, Inc. – Chadbourn, NC

Williamson Produce, Inc. – Wilson, NC



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