

# NATIONAL SWEET POTATO NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007

## The President's Message

by Bob Weimer, CA

By the time you read this I suspect that California will have completed its sweet potato harvest. At the time of writing, harvest was on schedule and should be 85-90% complete by Nov. 1. Conversations with growers indicate a decent yield, quality is good and product going into storage is in good condition. There appears to be an obscure disease complex possibly spurred by the erratic weather conditions during seed bed and planting time that created some issues. Growers have indicated high plant losses in some fields and it's not the result of fusarium stem rot. Scott Stoddard with UC pathologists are investigating.

Again the orange and red skin varieties are dominant with  
*(continued on Page 4)*

## USDA Sweet Potato Purchases

It's early in the new fiscal year, but already USDA has purchased 160,000 pounds of fresh sweet potatoes and 407,209 pounds of canned sweet potatoes. Additionally, they issued an invitation for bids (announcement FV-302, invitation 079) on 11/17/06 on another 21,420 cases of canned sweet potatoes.

*(continued on Page 2)*

## Council's Trip to Washington: Productive

by Charles Walker

THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL spent a day and a half in Washington, DC, on June 26 and 27. While there, the Board held its mid-year Board Meeting, met with USDA to promote the nutritional aspects of sweet potatoes, and had 10 different meetings with the offices of 10 different elected officials from sweet potato producing states.

During the meetings with  
*(continued on Page 2)*

## The California Sweet Potato Council Invites You to San Francisco and the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

Bob Weimer, California sweet potato grower and President of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL, is inviting growers from around the world to come to San Francisco and attend the Council's **45<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention**, January 21-24, 2007. This year's convention is being hosted by the California growers and Bob is encouraging growers to register early (*see registration form on page 3*) and to make their reservations directly with the Convention Hotel, Hotel Nikko, at 1-415-394-4111.

San Francisco has always been among the leading U.S. cities for attracting conventions, and Bob goes on point out that "the city is a mix of cultures, fine dining, history and, of course, interesting politics." Hotel Nikko was selected for its convenience, a hotel that is only steps away from Union Square, which is the heart of the city. The hotel offers most everything a guest can ask for, including exercise, swimming, massage, dining, and access to a wide variety of restaurants and stores just by

*(continued on Page 3)*



TARA SMITH was recently named state sweet potato extension specialist for Louisiana. Tara, who received her Ph.D. from the Department of Entomology, Louisiana State University, in May 2006, assumed her duties in May of this year. Her doctoral program research focused on soil insects of sweet potato. Tara replaces Mike Cannon, who had been the state sweet potato specialist prior to his retirement in January 2006. Tara will have statewide outreach responsibilities and will work out of the LSU Agricultural Center, Sweet Potato Research Station in Chase, LA.

## Weight Watchers' "Pick of the Season" Promotion

by Charles Walker, Executive Secretary



Weight Watchers' "Pick of the Season" is a trademark of Weight Watchers International, Inc. and is used under license.

I really want to congratulate the Board of Directors of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL for agreeing to **fund and join hands** with Weight Watchers in order for fresh sweet potatoes to become Weight Watcher's "Pick of the Season." As far as I know, it is the first **national** promotion that has ever been supported by the Council.

In spite of the fact that it appears that some sweet potato shippers and states have not bothered to take advantage, or at least not full advantage, of this wonderful promotion, it is very likely that it will still go down in "sweet potato history" as a very successful promotion. The **goal** of this national promotion is: To recognize sweet potatoes as a **highly nutritious and healthy food**, to

*(continued on Page 2)*

## Board Meetings Announced for the Upcoming Convention

The Board of Directors of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL, INC. is scheduled to have two meetings during the upcoming Sweet Potato Convention in San Francisco. The first meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 21, 2007 at 4:00 PM. The second is scheduled for Monday, January 22, 2007 at 5:30 PM. There are a number of important issues to be discussed at these meetings, and all Board Members are encouraged to attend.

### A Productive Washington Trip *(from Page 1)*

elected officials, the Council advocated for three issues: (1) The adoption of the Chambliss Amendment (SA 4009) to the Senate Immigration Bill, S. 2611; (2) The creation of a Sweetpotato IPM Special Research & Extension Grants Program in the amount of \$1 million; and (3) A 100-percent increase in funding of the RAMP and CAR programs.

Elected officials, or staff members, met with were from the five sweet potato producing states of: AL, AR, LA, MS and NC, as follows: (1) Rep. Bud Cramer, Democrat and Senator Richard Shelby, Republican, of Alabama; (2) Senators Blanche Lincoln and Mark Pryor, Democrats, of Arkansas; (3) Rep. Rodney Alexander, Republican, and Senator Mary Landrieu, Democrat, of Louisiana; (4) Rep. Roger Wicker and Senator

Thad Cochran, Republicans, of Mississippi; and (5) Reps. Bob Etheridge and Mike McIntyre, Democrats, of North Carolina.

#### Delegation Members

Board Members and others that traveled to Washington and that accompanied the Council for its appointments were: (1) Arnold Caylor, AL; (2) Terres and Kim Matthews, AR; (3) Brian Breaux and Dewey Freeman, LA; (4) John Edmondson, Howard Fisackerly, Benny Graves, and Randle and Karen Wright, MS; (5) Carson Barnes, Norman Brown, Jose Calderon, Sue Johnson-Langdon, Laurie Wood, and George Wooten, NC; and (6) Executive Secretary, Charles Walker, SC.

As Executive Secretary, I want to express my thanks and appreciation to all of those that accompanied the Council on this very important trip. •

### EPA and Chloropicrin

Chloropicrin, a soil fumigant, is used by some growers in sweet potato production. In this regard, the following e-mail was received by the office of the Council: "USEPA is expected to release its preliminary draft Risk Assess-

ment for the soil fumigant chloropicrin in late November. The Chloropicrin Manufacturers Task Force will be providing comments to EPA. If you have questions or would like further information, please contact **Steve Wilhelm**, CMTF Chairman, at [steve.wilhelm@niklor.com](mailto:steve.wilhelm@niklor.com) or telephone (661) 824-2494."

Depending on the content of EPA's draft, the CMTF may be asking sweet potato growers to write comments in regards to the draft. •

### USDA Purchases

*(from Page 1)*

For a summary of sweet potato purchases (in both pounds and dollars) over the past seven years, refer to *Table 2*, below. •

**Table 2. USDA Sweet Potato Purchases, by type, by year<sup>1</sup>, 2000–2006**

Type	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>P O U N D S</b>							
Canned	5,712,620	12,345,784	13,282,047	1,652,400	5,987,839	19,119,354	20,240,935
Frozen	356,400	237,600	712,800	0	316,800	831,600	554,400
Fresh	0	0	6,164,000	0	0	3,682,200	320,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,069,020</b>	<b>12,583,384</b>	<b>20,158,847</b>	<b>1,652,400</b>	<b>6,304,639</b>	<b>23,633,154</b>	<b>21,115,335</b>
<b>D O L L A R S</b>							
Canned	2,875,587	7,266,110	8,014,950	1,117,114	2,483,054	11,509,681	12,161,616
Frozen	186,674	113,348	409,516	0	183,625	549,440	328,826
Fresh	0	0	1,898,426	0	0	1,156,755	75,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,062,261</b>	<b>7,379,458</b>	<b>10,322,892</b>	<b>1,117,144</b>	<b>2,666,679</b>	<b>13,215,876</b>	<b>12,565,842</b>

<sup>1</sup> Government fiscal year, 10/1 through 9/30.

**Table 1. Farm Real Estate: Average Value (\$'s) per Acre in Sweet Potato Producing States, January 1, 2002-2006**

State	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Change 05-06 (%)
AL	1,700	1,760	1,860	2,400*	2,750	14.6
AR	1,410	1,480	1,650	1,870*	2,050	9.6
CA	3,400	3,600	3,800	5,090*	5,390	5.9
LA	1,440	1,500	1,580	1,770*	1,900	7.3
MS	1,330	1,400	1,480	1,690*	1,850	9.5
NJ	8,600	9,100	9,750	10,500*	10,900	3.8
NC	2,900	3,100	3,300	3,940*	4,250	7.9
SC	1,900	2,050	2,150	2,400*	2,600	8.3
TX	775	810	855	1,030*	1,250	21.4

Source: NASS, USDA. \*Revised

### "Pick of the Season" Promotion *(from Page 1)*

encourage Weight Watchers' current members and non-members to incorporate sweet potatoes as part of a **healthy diet**, and to **increase demand** for fresh sweet potatoes.

Weight Watchers has: (1) **Printed and distributed one million, full color, fold out recipes** at its weekly meetings of members, and Weight Watchers leaders at these weekly meetings have discussed the POTS promotion with sweet potatoes.; (2) **Allowed shippers to use** the "Pick of the Season" logo on shipping containers and consumer packs; (3) **Allowed state organizations to use** the POTS logo in their promotional and publicity materials and activities; (4) **Featured the program in "Recipe Wire,"** which is distributed to

that features sweet potatoes; (6) **Posted a** highlight feature about sweet potatoes in the Market Fresh section of its website. This highlight feature contains information about sweet potatoes and is linked to four different sweet potato recipes. It will remain on the Weight Watcher's website, at least until 12/31/06; (7) **Allowed a sweet potato ad** that focused on sweet potato nutrition to appear in its electronic newsletter. This newsletter was expected to reach about 3.2 million Weight Watchers' readers.

With all of these activities of the "POTS" promotion taking place during this Fall quarter, I'm sure that an increase in demand for sweet potatoes will have been created. That's a good thing — for both sweet potato growers and consumers. It's sad that Weight Watchers allows an organization to take advantage of this promotion only one time — for only one quarter. Our "POTS" promotion ends on 12/31/06.

It would be nice to get some feedback or comments from readers in regards to the POTS promotion. To offer your feedback, please call me at (803) 788-7101 or e-mail me at: [charleswalker@worldnet.att.net](mailto:charleswalker@worldnet.att.net). •

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# Convention

(from Page 1)

walking out of the hotel. It also offers guest parking and on premises Enterprise car rental office. According to Bob, daily parking rates in the city are about \$40.00, so he recommends public transportation.

The three airports of Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose service the San Francisco area, with the San Francisco Airport being the closest. Shuttles from San Francisco Airport to most downtown hotels are available.

According to Bob, an informative and interesting program will be offered. He also mentions the Monday activity of the spouse program that include a narrated tour of San Francisco, lunch at Neptune Palace on Pier 39, followed by a ride across the Golden Gate Bridge to Sausalito, with time for shopping and a chance to connect with those who sat in the meetings. Then, attendees will take a late afternoon ferry ride across the bay back to San Francisco and back to the hotel. This, according to Bob, "should offer some spectacular views."

For questions about convention activities, schedules and exhibits, contact Bob Weimer at (209) 358-1685 or Duane Hutton at (209) 394-7311.

## Exhibitor Information for the January 21-24 San Francisco Convention

The Exhibitor fee for the upcoming Convention in San Francisco is \$400.00 per table. Hotel Nikko, the convention hotel, will provide each exhibitor one 3' x 6' table. Exhibitor space is limited and may fill up quickly. [Note: Any electrical hookups must be approved by the hotel's A/V office. Each exhibitor is allowed to handle its own materials, and each exhibitor is responsible for set up and tear down in a timely manner.]

The Convention Registration fee for exhibitor attendees is \$250.00 if registered by January 3, 2007, or \$275.00 if registered after January 3. Contact Hotel Nikko directly at 1-415-394-1111 to make your reservations.

## 45th Annual Convention of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL

January 21-24, 2007 ♦ Hotel Nikko, San Francisco, CA

~ Tentative Program ~

### Sunday, January 21

- 1:00 PM Registration & afternoon hospitality (no host, upper floors)
- 4:00 PM Board of Directors Meeting
- 6:30 PM President's Reception

### Monday, January 22

- 7:30 AM Breakfast
- 9:00 AM Welcome remarks (speaker pending). For spouses, board buses for tour of San Francisco/Sausalito
- 9:15 AM Cost of Producing Sweetpotatoes in California, by **Scott Stoddard**, UCCE
- 9:45 AM Lab diagnosis and genetic fingerprinting, by **Dr. Deborah Golino**, UC Foundation Plant Services
- 10:15 AM Break
- 10:30 AM State Highlights: AL, NJ, SC, TX, VA, Canneries, by **Norman Brown**, & Canada
- 11:00 AM Produce Marketing Trends, by **Dr. Sherman Hardesty**, Dept. of Agriculture and Resource Economics, UC Davis
- 11:45 AM Business meeting
- 12:00 Noon Lunch
- 1:00 PM Board buses to join spouses' tour
- 5:30 PM Board of Directors Meeting

### Tuesday, January 23

- 7:30 AM Breakfast
- 9:00 AM GIS and other information services, by **Richard Wesch**, John Deere Agri Services
- 9:30 AM Genetic Engineering in agriculture: General concerns and what's in the pipeline, by **Dr. Peggy LeMeaux**, UC Berkeley
- 10:15 AM Break
- 10:30 AM State Highlights: MS, LA, NC and CA.
- 10:45 AM Biofuels research and developments, by **Dr. Bill Ord**, USDA, ARS, Richmond, CA
- 11:15 AM Plant patents on sweetpotato varieties: Impacts of cooperators and end users, by **Dr. Craig Yencho**, NCSU
- 11:45 AM Business Meeting
- 12:00 Noon Lunch
- Afternoon open
- 6:00 PM Social hour
- 7:00 PM Banquet (keynote speaker pending)

### Wednesday, January 24:

- 7:00 AM Assemble for Livingston packing shed tour and lunch.
- Return time: 5:00 PM

### REGISTRATION FORM



## 45th Annual Meeting & Convention of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL



January 21-24, 2007 ♦ Hotel Nikko, San Francisco, CA

Contact the hotel directly at: 1-415-394-1111 or e-mail: [reservations@hotelnikkosf.com](mailto:reservations@hotelnikkosf.com) for reservations.

Ask for convention rate.

Please print information for each person attending the convention:.

Name	Company	Address	State	Zip	Phone

On, or before, January 3, 2007: *Number of registrants* \_\_\_\_\_ x \$250.00 = **Total registration fees payable \$** \_\_\_\_\_

After January 3, 2007: *Number of registrants* \_\_\_\_\_ x \$275.00 = **Total registration fees payable \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: *Sweet Potato Council of California*, then send **check and registration form to:**  
**Sweet Potato Council of California, P.O. Box 366, Livingston, CA 95334**

**Questions about the Convention:** Call **Duane Hutton** at (209) 394-7311 or **Bob Weimer** at (209) 358-1685

An optional *after convention tour* to the California growing area is being offered on 1/24/07. This optional tour will require six (6) hours of travel:

Cost of lunch and bus = \$40.00 per person (bus subject to cancellation for lack of sign up)

Cost of lunch only = \$10.00 per person (You furnish your own transportation.)

## The Council Recognizes Its 2006 Associate Members

Associate Members are individuals, firms, or organizations that have an interest in the Sweet Potato Industry, and that are willing to make an additional investment in the Industry and the activities of our Council. Our Council is very proud and very thankful of its Associate Members, and wishes to recognize them by presenting them in this month's issue, as follows:

Name	Company	Amount (\$)
Lesli Pullen	Gowan Company (Imidan), Tuscon, AZ	400.00*
Sam Winterburg	BRIGHT HARVEST SWEET POTATO, Clarksville, AR	1,000.00
Steve Bisesi	MACRO PLASTICS, Fairfield, CA	250.00
Carlos Vieira	A.V. THOMAS PRODUCE, Livingston, CA	250.00
Craig Arnold	ARNOLD FARMS, Winton, CA	50.00
Robert Chad	KISHI BROTHERS FARMS, INC., Winton, CA	50.00
Kelsey McKoin	McHE FARMS, II, Bonita, LA	50.00
Claiborne Adcock	C&P FARMS, Holly Bluff, MS	100.00
Jimmie Turner	PLUCK PRODUCE CO., Belzoni, MS	50.00
Salvatore Parzanese	PARZANESE BROTHERS PRODUCE, Elm, NJ	250.00
David Gardner	DMG FARMS, Angier, NC	250.00
H. Andrew Tyson	ANDREW TYSON FARMS, Nashville, NC	
Danny Pierce	CROP MANAGEMENT SERVICES, Princeton, NC	100.00
Craig Yenko	N.C. STATE UNIVERSITY, Raleigh, NC	50.00
Richard Anderson	ANDERSON FARMS, Tarboro, NC	50.00
Wiley Boyette, Jr.	ROCK RIDGE FARMS, Wilson, NC	50.00
Jerome Vick	VICK FAMILY FARMS, Wilson, NC	250.00
Jerry Gallop	GALLOP SWEET POTATO FARMS, Erhardt, SC	
William Davis	CESSCO, INC. Johns Island, SC	50.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$3,250.00</b>

\*This amount received for an ad insert in the Summer Issue of the newsletter.

## Sweetpotato Collaborators Group To Meet February 3-4

The National Sweetpotato Collaborators Group (NSPCG) will hold their annual meeting February 3 and 4 (Saturday and Sunday), 2007, in Mobile, Alabama, at the Riverview Plaza Hotel. As always, this 2-day conference should be very informative, with a variety of talks on different aspects of sweetpotato production. Posters and oral presentations will be given on post harvest and food science, pest management, seed and field production, and breeding and genetics. On Saturday, a special session is planned on property rights of clonally propagated plants and the impacts on the sweetpotato industry.

Specifics about the meeting can be found at the Collaborators website at <http://www.sweetpotatoes.org>. The Collaborators meeting differs from

the National meeting in that it is all work and no play! The meeting is held in conjunction with the Southern Association of Horticultural Science annual conference. Talks are given, topics discussed, committee meetings take place. It is at this meeting that decisions are made regarding entries into the National Collaborators Variety Trial, the multi-state variety evaluation that is instrumental in introducing potential new cultivars to the industry. Jewel, Darby, Beauregard, Diane, Bienville, and Covington, among others, were all evaluated first in the Collaborators Trial.

The Sweet Potato Collaborators Group had its origin in 1938, when at the invitation of Julian C. Miller (Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station), George B. Hoffman (U.S.D. A.), and W.S. Anderson

(Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station), a group met at Laurel, Mississippi, and discussed research needs for the industry. Federal funds were secured for the group to conduct research and extension projects throughout the sweetpotato belt. It is through collaborative efforts such as this that give the group its name.

To this day, the National Sweetpotato Collaborators Group is a network of sweetpotato scientists dedicated to the exchange of research and knowledge for the improvement of sweetpotato production and its associated products. The Sweetpotato Collaborators are a diverse community including research scientists, extension specialists, industry representatives, and growers. The NSPCG is open to all in the international com-

(continued on Page 5)

## President's Message

(from Page 1)

probably 70-75% of the production. The whites and oriental varieties make up the balance. About 12-15% of the California acreage is certified organic.

Labor, wages and chemicals are minefields that growers immediately face. Labor supply currently appears adequate, but a few growers indicated difficulty keeping crews in the field. The trades industry, which competes with Ag in the labor market is currently in downturn and that may be good for a year or so. None of the current immigrant labor plans bode well for California Ag. Minimum wages in CA go to \$7.50 an hour in Jan 2007 and \$8.00 Jan. 2008. The increased costs and restrictions on chemicals and fertilizers is a hammer which complicates production.

As many of you may know, California Sweet Potato Industry with Scott Stoddard, U.C. Extension, taking the lead, has developed a very inclusive cost analysis of production costs. Costs per acre are hovering around \$5500 per acre. Are growers receiving adequate compensation for their product? Doubtful.

Again for those that read statistics and comment that California growers are receiving phenomenal gross dollars per acre need to understand that the numbers reported do not reflect actual farm gate receipts. We have attempted to correct this with the reporting agencies (Ag Commissioner) but to no avail. The numbers reflect sales to market which reflect packing costs, material, markups etc. For example there is product marketed (40LB cartons) that may sell for \$6.00 and the grower may receive a \$1.00 or less. The total \$6.00 is applied to the growers return.

For more fun things though, California is hosting the National Sweet Potato Convention. It will be held in San Francisco and should prove to be great venue. See Page 4 of this newsletter for the tentative program and registration form. Help us plan with early registration. •

## California Sweet Potato Update

by Scott Stoddard

Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Merced, CA

I like to start these columns with a little review of the past season's weather, because it helps explain to a large degree the pest pressure that occurred as well as the overall yield and quality of the crop. Merced experienced very extreme weather this year. Winter was warm and dry, spring was cool and wet, and summer set records for both high temperatures and fewest hot days in August.

For two weeks in July, Merced and most of the state of California was so hot it was almost unbearable. Daytime highs soared above 110° F, hitting 116° on some days. Night temps stayed in 80's. It was like Death Valley had suddenly grown to encompass the San Joaquin Valley. Crops wilted in the relentless heat, tomato and cotton blossoms shriveled on the vine, and air conditioners ran around the clock. Then in August, the "heat storm" passed, and temperatures were very moderate. In fact, August had almost no 100° days at all.

The effect of this funny weather on many crops was dramatic and obvious, the effect on our sweetpotatoes much less so. Sweetpotatoes are very heat tolerant, especially when adequately irrigated. Beauregard seemed to have sized faster than normal, though the growth effects were less obvious with the other varieties. Harvest in general was only modestly delayed by the delayed planting that occurred after our very wet spring. Lots of heat units in July made up for some lost time back in April. We were lucky this fall to not yet have any significant rainfall, since many fields were still being dug in early November. Overall, the cool spring and hot summer seem to have mitigated each other and the overall impact on the crop. Yields seem to be about average at this time.

This season saw the introduction of modified harvesters

to take advantage of increased tonnage going to processors. Conveyor belts were welded to the existing frame to move jumbos to the back of the harvester, where they were dumped into cardboard bulk bins. This modification reduced the amount of time and labor needed to separate processing potatoes from the others.

Several farmers also participated in growing strip trials of a potential new Japanese yam, L-01-29. This line from LSU breeder Dr. Don LaBonte has looked excellent in the Collaborators Trial for the past three years. Bed production, root shape, color, and yields have been very promising, which is why it was tested in several different locations this season. Results are very encouraging. It is my hope that California growers will have an additional variety to grow in the near future.

The first cost of production study in more than 20 years was completed this past spring, which revealed what most growers already know: growing sweetpotatoes costs a lot of money in California, over \$5000 per acre. A breakdown of the costs can be found in the report posted on the web at <http://coststudies.ucdavis.edu>. A presentation about this will also be made at the National Sweet Potato Convention in San Francisco, Jan 21 – 23, 2007. Registration and hotel information is available at the Sweet Potato Council of California's website, [www.cayam.com](http://www.cayam.com).

## Louisiana Sweet Potato Update

by Tara Smith

Extension Specialist, LSU AgCenter, Chase, LA

As of November 1st, 65-70% of Louisiana's acreage was harvested and producers in Louisiana are expecting an average performance from the 2006 crop. Many growers completed planting early this year (prior to July 1). Early and mid-season plantings had good plant stands, while some late planted fields struggled due to drought and excessive heat conditions.

Growers in North Louisiana dealt with a 13-inch rain deficit through much of the growing season but a few timely rains and irrigation capabilities kept them on schedule for the most part.

South Louisiana growers received more rain in June and July than they had in recent years and early predictions were that the 2006 growing season and overall crop performance would be improved from that of the past few years.

Growers throughout the

state were inundated with rain in mid-late October, 10-15 inches in some areas. Conditions were dry prior to the rain events and some growers only experienced slight delays in harvest. Others however experienced longer delays and some breakdown of roots occurred in the field due to prolonged soil saturation.

Most growers had resumed harvest by November 1st, and time will tell what effect the October rains will have on the percentage of the crop that remained in the field.

On a positive note, the quality of the harvested portion of the crop looks good and the rainfall did provide some necessary moisture for later plantings that still had some maturing to do late season. Growers are optimistic that this year's crop will perform well despite some adverse conditions.

## Mississippi and Market News

Mississippi sweet potato shippers agreed to cooperate with *Market News* in reporting FOB shipments and prices of fresh market sweet potatoes back in July. *Market News'* first Mississippi report for the 2005 crop was for the reporting period July 2-5, 2006 when 40 truckloads were shipped. The last report for the 2005 crop was for the reporting period October 26-28, 2006 when just four (4)

truckloads were shipped, bringing the total shipments of the 2005 crop from July 2-5 through October 26-28 to 733 truckloads.

Mississippi's first shipments of the 2006 crop, as reported by *Market News*, was for the reporting period August 24 to August 26, when it shipped just four (4) truckloads. As this newsletter goes to press, the last reporting period of the 2006 crop is November 12-15, when the state shipped 103 truckloads, bringing the total quantity shipped of the 2006 crop to 490 truckloads.

Therefore, if one adds the quantity of 2005 crop shipped, 733 truckloads, to the quantity of 2006 crop shipped, 490 truckloads, then Mississippi has shipped a total of 1,223 truckloads during the period July 2 through November 15.

## Sweetpotato Collaborators (from Page 4)

community who work with sweetpotatoes and desire to exchange information about the crop.

The United States Sweet Potato Council and the National Sweetpotato Collaborators Group have agreed to hold their 2008 Annual Conference as a joint meeting in North Carolina. This will be a great opportunity for growers, researchers, and others to come together and discuss issues and current topics relevant to the sweetpotato industry. Presiding Chair for this meeting will be Dr. Zvesdana Pesic-VanEsbroeck, Director of the Micropropagation Unit at NC State University.

## North Carolina Selects the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, NC for 2008

January 2008 is not as far away as it sounds, and the N.C. Sweet Potato Commission has already started planning for the national convention that it will sponsor at that time. According to its Executive Director, Sue Johnson-Langdon, "North Carolina is in a dither making plans for an enjoyable and informative meeting in 2008. Never before has THE U.S. SWEET POTATO COUNCIL met in the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina and quite frankly, we're excited.

"The location we have picked, The Grove Park Inn Resort and Spa, is one of the South's most venerable and famous grand resorts. Built in 1913 from granite stones mined from Sunset Mountain, the resort overlooks the Asheville, North Carolina skyline. Over 500 unique accommodations provide guests with majestic views of the legendary Blue Ridge Mountains, historic property, and cascading spa waterfall. There are a wide selection of restaurants, lounges, meeting space and

access to the spa and golf course. For more information about the Grove Park Inn, please visit their website at [www.groveparkinn.com](http://www.groveparkinn.com)."

Some of the activities being planned are: (1) bluegrass music from the Sweet Potato Pie Band; (2) folklore; (3) unique pottery; (4) specialty shops; and (5) visits to the famous Biltmore Estate and a Cherokee Indian reservation — both within easy driving distance.

Sue says "Wahoo!" and she will keep everyone informed at the details come together. •

## Harold Quebedeaux of Louisiana Passes Away

Harold Quebedeaux, founder and former owner and operator of Mansura, LA- based Harold Quebedeaux Produce, Inc., died August 12. He was 74.

In the early 1950s, he started out as a field buyer in Sunset, LA based Smith Bros. Produce. When the company

became Mansura Parrot Produce Co., Quebedeaux became a partner. In 1973, he founded Harold Quebedeaux Produce, Inc., in Mansura.

Quebedeaux also served as a Board Member and president of the Marksville, LA-based Avoyelles Sweet Potato Association, a member and vice

chairman of the Louisiana Farm Bureau Sweet Potato Advisory Committee and member and past president of the Baton Rouge based Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission.

Quebedeaux is survived by his wife of 43 years, Lorraine; his sons Ryan, Randy and Chad; his brother Gilbert; and four granddaughters.

Source: *The Packer*, Sept. 4, 2006 •

## How Many Shipments Go To Foodservice?

by Charles Walker  
Executive Secretary

I've heard many different estimates of how many sweet potatoes, or what percent, are shipped to food service operations since I have been with the Council. Recognizing that North Carolina reports food service shipments through *Market News*, I went back and actually added the numbers for the period 11/12/05 through 11/11/06. The numbers revealed that out of Total Shipments of 8,781 truckloads during the period, 1,545 truckloads, or 17.6 percent, were shipped to food service. •

For more information about the National Sweet Potato Newsletter or THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL, contact:  
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Executive Secretary  
12 Nicklaus Lane, Suite 101  
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**Merry Christmas & a Happy and Prosperous New Year To All Sweet Potato Growers**



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