

NATIONAL SWEET POTATO NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2014

The President's Message

Annual Convention Coming Up Fast

by Ken Thornhill, LA

Make your hotel reservations now and remember to register.



The 52nd annual Convention of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL is just around the corner. The theme for the 2014 Convention is “Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler (Let the Good Times Roll)”, and we plan to do just that. The Convention will be held in New Orleans, LA, at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in the historic French Quarter, on January 19-21, 2014. Just like our famous cuisine, Louisiana has a rich and colorful cultural

history that is firmly “rooted” in New Orleans. The Royal Sonesta Hotel New Orleans displays a timeless elegance and refinement reminiscent of its European counterparts. The hotel is distinctively European and unmistakably New Orleans.

Louisiana is gearing up for an entertaining and informative meeting, and we hope that all of you will be able to join us. We are developing a great educational program that will

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2013 Sweet Potato Statistical Yearbook Available Now

The Council takes pride in presenting and making available the 11th publication of the *2013 Sweet Potato Statistical Yearbook*. To order your copy, make a check for \$20.00 payable to THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL, and mail it to THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL, 12 Nicklaus Lane, Suite 101, Columbia, SC 29229.

Sweet Potato Statistical Yearbook 2013



THE UNITED STATES
Sweet Potato Council
 12 Nicklaus Lane, Suite 101
 Columbia, SC 29229
 www.SweetPotatoUSA.org

This edition of the *YEARBOOK* contains 20 years (1993-2012) and some 50 pages of sweet potato statistics. It contains an additional six (6) pages of new data. This new data presents sweet potato prices on selected terminal markets from four (4) different shipping areas (CA, LA, MS and NC).

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USDA Purchases of Sweet Potatoes in 2013 Sets All-Time Record

by Charles Walker, Executive Secretary

Total purchases of sweet potatoes (fresh, fresh bulk, frozen and canned) by USDA in 2013 set an all-time record of more than 26 million pounds. This quantity represents 109 percent increase compared to the 2012 total of 12,696,600. The frozen cate-

gory set an all-time record in 2013 as the frozen quantity purchased increased by 71 percent. USDA's interest in fresh bulk purchases is very, very encouraging to sweet potato growers. This program, which only began in 2008, has

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Council Board Meeting at 2014 Convention in New Orleans

The next Board Meeting of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL will take place at the 2014 Convention in the Royal Sonesta Hotel in New Orleans. The first meeting will be at 2:00 PM, Sunday, January 19, 2014 and the second meeting will be next day, Monday, at 4:00 PM.

Issues before the Board will

be: (1) Election of Board Officers for 2014; (2) Review of the Board's financial status; (3) Review and approval of 2014 budget; (4) Extension of agreement with American Heart Association to continue using heart check mark; (5) Selection of dates for mid-year Board Meeting and lobbying trip to Washington, DC; and (6) Others.

Recognition of 2013 Associate Members

by Charles Walker

Judging by the number and the amount of financial contribu-

tions by Associate Members to our Council in 2013, it was a very good year. This number and the amount is even more profound when one considers that sweet potato prices for growers were weak for most of 2012 and 2013.

As it has been noted many times before in this Newsletter, Associate Members are those who not only have an interest in their U.S. Sweet Potato Industry, but are willing to confirm that interest by making an investment in this very important Industry. Furthermore, they are seeing some of the very important positive activities taking place in this exciting Industry, and they recognize the potential for even greater things for this Industry in the future.

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CA Farm Advisor Scott Stoddard holds some newly-harvested LSU52 sweet potatoes.



JOE ALVERNANZ (1920-2013), Former President of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL, Passes Away

Corps. His nickname of 'Sweet Potato Joe' was given to him by his fellow marine, close friend, and actor Brian Keith. Joe was the first farmer that Brian ever met and Brian was the first actor that Joe ever knew."

Joe was very active during his life. "After the war", Joe became a "sweet potato farmer". In addition to serving as President of our Council in 1997, "he served as President of the California Sweet Potato Council" and "was a Director" of The U.S. Sweet Potato Council "for over 20 years".

Joe passed away on November 2, 2013 at the age of 93. "He filled his life with love of family, had the greatest sense of community service and unselfishly helped anyone in need."

"After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, Joe felt a desire to serve his country and enlisted in the United States Marine

"He was the first California farmer to attend the National Sweet Potato Convention, among other industry firsts. Joe served as President of the Merced County Farm Bureau, and was on the Board of Directors of the Nisei Farmers League. He formed the California Sweet Potato Growers Co-op in Livingston, along with several other local growers, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year" Joe was also involved in many community activities.

Source: Modesto Bee, 11/7/13.

National Sweet Potato Collaborators Group to Meet in Dallas

Dr. David Picha of LSU has announced that the **National Sweet Potato Collaborators Group** will hold its annual meeting in Dallas, Texas at the Sheraton Dallas on Friday, **January 31** and Saturday, **February 1, 2014**. Attendees can make their hotel reservations by calling the Sheraton at **(214) 922-8000**. Room rates under the SAAS group rate are \$149.00 for a single/double and \$169.00 for a triple/quad.

52nd Annual Convention of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL

For the upcoming Convention in New Orleans, make your hotel reservations no later than 12/20/13 by calling the Royal Sonesta Hotel at (504) 586-0300. Use the "registration form" on Page 4 of this issue to register for the Convention.

USDA Purchases (from Page 1)

now increased by 1,466 percent in just six (6) years. In 2008, USDA purchases of fresh bulk sweet potatoes amounted to just 1,280,000 pounds (32 truckloads), and in 2013, increased to the level of 20,040,000

(501 truckloads). USDA's total sweet potato purchases in 2013 resulted in \$8.3 million in sweet potato sales

Additionally, USDA purchases for fiscal year 2014 are also off to a good start. As this issue of the Newsletter goes to press, they have already committed to purchase

8.6 million pounds of canned product, 831,600 pounds of frozen product, and have issued a solicitation to purchase 8.8 million pounds of fresh bulk.

To see all the numbers on USDA purchases, over the past few years, refer to *Table 1*, below.

Table 1. Total sweet potato purchases by USDA by fiscal year¹, broken down by type [fresh, fresh (bulk), frozen and canned], total cost, and cost per lb. in dollars, 1997-2013.

Year	Total (lbs.)	Fresh (lbs.)	Cost (\$)	Cost per lb.	Fresh bulk (lbs.)	Cost (\$)	Cost per lb.	Frozen (lbs.)	Cost (\$)	Cost per lb.	Canned (lbs.)	Cost (\$)	Cost per lb.
1997	8,291,594	0	0	0	0	0	0	871,200	417,292	0.479	7,420,394	3,120,645	0.421
1998	7,469,922	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,469,922	3,357,840	0.450
1999	7,399,418	0	0	0	0	0	0	633,598	323,835	0.511	6,675,820	3,131,046	0.469
2000	6,069,020	0	0	0	0	0	0	356,400	186,674	0.524	5,712,620	2,875,587	0.503
2001	12,583,384	0	0	0	0	0	0	237,600	113,348	0.477	12,345,784	7,266,110	0.589
2002	20,158,847	6,164,000	1,898,426	0.308	0	0	0	712,800	409,516	0.574	13,282,047	8,014,950	0.603
2003	1,652,400	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,652,400	1,117,144	0.676
2004	6,304,639	0	0	0	0	0	0	316,800	183,625	0.580	5,987,839	2,483,054	0.415
2005	23,633,154	3,682,200	1,156,755	0.314	0	0	0	831,600	549,440	0.661	19,119,354	11,509,681	0.602
2006	21,115,335	320,000	75,400	0.236	0	0	0	554,400	328,826	0.593	20,240,935	12,161,616	0.601
2007	5,450,079	200,000	52,400	0.262	0	0	0	316,800	180,761	0.571	4,933,279	2,650,200	0.537
2008	18,173,873	80,000	22,090	0.276	1,280,000	202,680	0.158	396,000	242,550	0.613	16,417,873	9,660,583	0.588
2009	7,671,214	0	0	0	1,240,000	217,520	0.175	316,800	211,067	0.666	6,114,414	3,447,512	0.564
2010	11,941,115	0	0	0	4,560,000	856,080	0.188	0	0	0	7,381,115	3,811,185	0.516
2011	14,607,292	0	0	0	5,040,000	1,083,868	0.215	871,200	621,060	0.713	8,696,092	5,285,678	0.608
2012	12,696,600	0	0	0	5,280,000	1,259,560	0.239	1,346,400	891,039	0.662	6,070,200	4,466,071	0.736
2013 ¹	26,484,371	80,000	28,600	0.358	20,040,000	3,310,688	0.165	2,296,800	1,356,636	0.591	4,067,571	2,704,045	0.665

¹Fiscal Year for USDA runs from October 1 through September 30. Source: www.usda.ams.gov

Recognition of 2013 Associate Members (from Page 1)

The foundation, or underpinning, for all of this excitement is **sweet potato nutrition**. Sweet potato nutrition is superior to any other vegetable or fruit available to the consumer.

On behalf of our Council, we are very, very thankful for our Associate Members, and I know you will join me

in thanking each and every one of them. I am honored to recognize them in this issue of the Council's National Newsletter.

(Note: Associate Memberships received after this issue goes to press will be recognized in a subsequent issue of the Newsletter.)

Name	Company, City and State	Amount
Manuel E. Vieira	A.V. Thomas Produce, Inc., Livingston, CA	1,000.00
Sarah Alvernaz	California Sweet Potato Growers, Livingston, CA	250.00
Dwight Koehn	Dwight Koehn Farms, Livingston, CA	50.00
Bob Scheuerman	UCCE Emeritus, Merced, CA	50.00
Craig Arnold	Arnold Farms, Winton, CA	50.00
Robert Chad	Chad Ranch, Winton, CA	50.00
Kent Nissen	Nordany Broker, Inc., Grand-Falls, NB, Canada	250.00
Ray & Juli Proracki	Ontario Sweet Potatoes, Ontario, Canada	50.00 ¹
Mac Johnson	Category Partners, LLC., Aurora, CO	50.00
Kelsey McKoin	McHe Farms, Bonita, LA	50.00
Todd O'neal	ConAgra Foods Lamb-Weston, Delhi, LA	250.00
Walter Tuma	Libuse, LA	50.00 ¹
Ricky Broussard	J&M Industries, Ponchatoula, LA	50.00
Jimmy Turner	Pluck Produce, Belzoni, MS	50.00
Justin Wade	Justin Wade Farms, Calhoun City, MS	50.00 ¹
Tim Edmondson	Edmondson Farms Packing, Vardaman, MS	50.00
Gary Penick	Gary Penick Sweet Potato Farm, Vardaman, MS	50.00
Tim Edmondson	SMP Southeast Marketing, Inc., Vardaman, MS	50.00
Michael Zieger	Aspen Sales Group, Bedminster, NJ	300.00 ²
Jane McCormack	McCormack Farms, Middletown, NJ	250.00
Bill Keith	Crown Cork & Seal Company, Arden, NC	1,000.00
Henry F. Chancy	Millstream Farms, Dunn, NC	1,500.00 ³
Steven A. Ciccarello	Farm Fresh Produce, Faison, NC	1,000.00
Kendall Hill	Grifton, NC	250.00 ¹
Sonny Scott	Scott Farms, Lucama, NC	50.00 ¹
Jacob Odom	Odom Farms, Mt. Olive, NC	50.00
Thomas Joyner	Nash Produce, Nashville, NC	1,000.00 ¹
Danny C. Pierce	Crop Management Services, Princeton, NC	500.00
John W. Kimber	Kimber & Co., Raleigh, NC	50.00
Jeff Scramlin	L&M Company, Raleigh, NC	50.00 ¹
Craig Yencho	N.C. State University, Raleigh, NC	50.00 ¹
Jeff Scramlin	Wada Farms Marketing Group, Raleigh, NC	500.00
John C. Barnes	Barnes Farming Corporation, Spring Hope, NC	1,000.00
Cary T. Strickland	Spring Acres Sales Co., Spring Hope, NC	500.00
Terry Strickland	Strickland Brothers Enterprises, Spring Hope, NC	500.00
Butch Parker	International Paper, Wilson, NC	100.00 ⁴
Wiley A. Boyette, Jr.	Rock Ridge Farms, Wilson, NC	50.00
Isaac Matthews	Lansing Trade Group, Maumee, OH	50.00
Jack D. Osman	The Wellness Farm, Stewartstown, PA	50.00 ¹
Darin Borders	Darin Borders Farms, Center, TX	50.00 ¹
Elizabeth Covington	Dallas, TX	50.00 ¹
Warren Henninger	Ag World Support Systems, Moses Lake, WA	250.00

¹Received after the Winter 2013 issue went to press, but on or before 12/31/12.
²Received \$250.00 after the Winter 2013 issue went to press, but on or before 12/31/12, and \$50.00 in 2013.
³Received \$500.00 after the Winter 2013 issue went to press, but on or before 12/31/12, and \$1,000.00 in 2013.
⁴Received \$50.00 after the Winter 2013 issue went to press, but on or before 12/31/12, and \$50.00 in 2013.

Mississippi Sweet Potato Crop Report

by Stephen L. Meyers
 Sweetpotato Extension Specialist,
 Mississippi State University, Pontotoc, MS

After a wet and trying harvest in 2012, most Mississippi growers were pleased with 2013- overall good yields and quality. Planted acreage for 2013 was 18,450 acres- down 18% from 2012 (22,500 acres). Transplanting operations began the final week of May, peaked in mid-June, and continued on some acres into mid-July. Planting conditions May through the third week of June were ideal for storage root formation — daytime highs in the 80s, lows in the mid-60s, and sufficient soil moisture. Rainfall throughout this same period was routine and overall provided just the right volume to promote root set and activate pre-emergence herbicides. However, some localized heavy rainfall in this period did result in the replanting of limited acres. The final week of June through the early July was a grab-bag of weather with much of the state's ground hot and dry. For the most part, root set in the later plantings were well -below the sets on earlier plantings.

Overall, rainfall was scarce in July and August, often with significant rainfall events separated by 2 or more weeks. Rainfall that did occur was spotty-dropping several inches of water on fields adjacent to others receiving none. By all accounts temperatures remained relatively mild in 2013 with few days reaching the upper 90s and none hitting the three-digit mark (according to National Weather Service records). Dry weather continued into the first half of September.

Harvest

Harvests began on minimal acreage the last week of August. Harvest activity picked up in early September but slowed as many producers realized more time and moisture was needed to allow for increased root sizing and to improve digging conditions. While root initiation in early plantings provided good root set, it also became evident that heavier root sets require more time to get each root up to size. For this reason, early harvests saw very few jumbos and many small No. 1 roots. After a mid-September rainfall, root size and digging conditions improved. As of November 1, 2013, approximately 90% of the state's sweetpotato acreage had been harvested.

Unfortunately, in 2013 several weed species continued to evade applications of registered herbicides. Hophornbean copperleaf, hemp sesbania, pigweeds, and cocklebur were among the greatest escaped weed species in 2013. Yellow and purple nutsedge continue to be problematic for many of the state's growers. This weed affects much of the sweetpotato acreage across the country. Preliminary research conducted by Dr. Mark Shankle and the author at Mississippi State University this year indicated that one yellow nutsedge plant per square foot of hipped row contributed to a 19% reduction in USDA No. 1 sweetpotato yield. Nutsedge control studies continue to be an area of emphasis at MSU.

Reniform nematode was problematic on numerous acres across in Mississippi. The cool and wet spring restricted the use of preplant soil fumigants.

(continued on Page 5) ▶

California Sweet Potato Update

by C. Scott Stoddard
Farm Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension, Merced, CA

October was another critically dry month, and November is looking no better. It has been a year of no rain for California, and the lack of precipitation is looming ominously as the next big crisis for agriculture here in the Golden State. Regardless of whom I talk to, the conversation eventually turns to water, or rather, the lack of it. With irrigation districts unable to supply enough water to fully irrigate crops, growers have been forced to use wells to a much greater extent, and now groundwater levels are dropping dramatically. Everybody knows somebody who has lowered his pumps to keep the water flowing this year.

With careful management, sweetpotatoes can be grown on 2.4 acre-feet of water, or about 28". This assumes a modestly wet soil at the beginning of the year, however, from winter and spring rains. This didn't happen, and therefore the fields were pre-irrigated with sprinklers, increasing water use and costs, or were planted into dry soil with only transplanter water. Adding to the problem this year was a lot of wind in the spring. Dust storms were common, especially in the Livingston area where the soil is very susceptible to wind erosion. Late planted fields, however, missed much of wind and grew quite well. Overall, I estimate production to be less than our 4-year average of 337 cwt per acre (842 boxes/acre), for total

production around 600 million pounds.

No rain. Dust storms. Dry wells. At least we didn't have a plague of locusts — insect pressure was low this year. Despite these challenges, California sweetpotato acreage increased over last year, to almost 19,000 according to USDA.

Red Yam 175

Most growers tried both *LSU52* and the new red yam *175* in 5 to 25 acre blocks. I made this comment in the summer *Sweetpotato Update* about *175*: "...it looks to have a lot of promise for the industry, but I still have my fingers crossed that it will live up to my expectations." In a nutshell, it did not meet expectations. Too round, deep, and low yielding, *175* may already be on its way out. At best, it is just a stepping-stone until something better comes along.

Former farm advisor Bob Scheuerman told me recently that he worked his whole career evaluating new red yams. He found two over the course of 30+ years. One of those is *Diane*, which was introduced in trials in 1988 (the other was *Garnet*). For all of its shortcomings, one reason *Diane* is the standard is because it will produce in years like this when the weather tears up other varieties.

So the search for a new red yam for California continues. Luckily, there are a lot of very nice looking new entries in the *(continued on Page 5)* ▶

Louisiana Sweet Potato Update

by Mavis J. Finger
Sweet Potato Specialist/Regional Horticulture Specialist
LSU AgCenter, Sweet Potato Research Station, Chase, LA

The 2013 Louisiana sweet potato crop began with a slow start due to a cool, wet spring, which delayed planting statewide. This less than ideal spring weather was coupled with a dry spell during the late growing season which further delayed the crop. Approximately 7,500 acres of sweet potatoes were planted in Louisiana in 2013. Harvesting began in early August in the southern part of Louisiana, with most producers in Louisiana initiating harvest in mid-September. Producers are harvesting a good quality, average yielding crop in 2013. As of November 1st, approximately 80% of the crop had been harvested statewide. Harvest is expected to near completion in early November.

In contrast to the poor weather conditions encountered during the early spring, weather and soil conditions were ideal during planting and the early growing season in most cases. The majority of the crop was planted in late-May through June. Rainfall during planting and the early growing season provided adequate moisture for root development and heavy root sets were reported. However, drier weather predominated during the late growing season statewide and the crop was delayed in final sizing. Producers with irrigation capabilities were able to keep the crop on schedule.

Overall, weather conditions during harvest have been ideal although sporadic, heavy rains have delayed harvest activities in some cases. Few reports of breakdown or rot as a result of these rain events have been received.

In-season insect pressure has been light overall during the 2013 growing season. As with the past 3 years, few reports of sugarcane beetle damage were received this growing season.

Herbicide Study

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's (LDAF) Specialty Crop Grant Program recently funded a \$69,440.00, two year project submitted by Dr. Donnie Miller and Dr. Tara Smith. The project aims to document the effects of reduced rates of hormonal herbicides, 2,4-D and dicamba, encountered in an off-target event on the growth and yield of commonly grown sweet potato varieties in Louisiana. Additionally, susceptibility as affected by plant growth stage at time of exposure will be assessed. Information obtained from the study may lead to more restrictive label application requirements in areas within close proximity to the crop. Results from the study will also be used to help individuals identify herbicide injury symptoms and determine yield impacts based on visible injury observed following off-target events.

Convention

Finally, Louisiana is proud to be hosting the National Sweet Potato Council Convention which is scheduled for January 18-21, 2014 in New Orleans, LA. The convention is being held at the beautiful Royal Sonesta Hotel located on historic Bourbon Street. An exciting and informative program has been planned. We hope that you will be joining us as we plan to "*Laissez Les Bon Temps Rouler* (Let The Good Times Roll)!"

52nd Annual Meeting and Convention of THE UNITED STATES SWEET POTATO COUNCIL January 19-21, 2014 ~~~~~ Royal Sonesta Hotel New Orleans

REGISTRATION FORM

Please print information for each person attending the convention:
\$375.00/person postmarked by 12/13/2013 \$425.00 late registration (Adults & Children)

Company Name _____
Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

*Number of persons planning to attend the Tuesday night banquet _____

Please enter Full Names of all persons registering under the same business name and address. (Please indicate: Male, Female, Spouse, Child, Sponsor, Exhibitor, or Speaker, and if you require special accommodations for meals.)

Total No. Registered _____ Registration Rate = _____ Total Amount \$ _____

*Number Attending Spouse's Tour _____

Please make check payable to: *Louisiana Sweet Potato Association*. Please forward your registration fees and information to:

Louisiana Sweet Potato Association (Attn: Tara Smith)
P. O. Box 120, Chase, LA 71324

tsmith@agcenter.lsu.edu / 318-435-2903 / Fax: 318-435-2902



Mississippi Update (from Page 3)

For that reason, VydateL was used preplant on increased acreage in 2013. Studies at MSU continue to investigate the use of foliar VydateL applications for in-season nematode control (the chemistry has both contact and systemic activity). The current best recommendation is crop rotation to a non-reniform host. Many sweetpotato acres in the state are rotated with soybean and/or cotton- both of which serve as a host for the reniform nematode. Corn, grain sorghum, and peanut are options that must be considered for growers who are able to rotate to them.

Pests

Overall insect pressure was light with the greatest injury coming from cucumber beetle throughout the season. Armyworm and cutworm injury was heavy in localized pockets and sugarcane beetle injury was evident on limited acres.

Animals of the four-legged variety continue to be problematic for Mississippi sweetpotato growers. The state's heavy deer population contributed to the defoliation of patches of sweetpotato vines. Nearly every field in the state is impacted by deer grazing. Uponroot enlargement, deer begin to dig up the hills to feed on the storage roots. Wild hogs are becoming increasingly problematic within the state. While

hogs do not affect as many growers as deer, where they do occur they cause an incredible amount of damage to a field of sweetpotatoes.

Varieties

Beauregard remains the most grown variety in Mississippi. However, in 2013 increased acreage of *Orleans* was planted in the state. Growers planting *Orleans* were seeking a *Beauregard*-type sweetpotato with consistently better shape and thus a better pack-out. The consensus was that *Orleans* had a slightly better root set than *Beauregard* and therefore required an additional 7 to 10 days to size up. It was suggested by Don LaBonte (LSU) that *Orleans* may require a slightly wider in-row spacing when conditions are favorable for high root set. This should reduce the time required for sizing.

Larry Easley

On September 8, the Mississippi sweetpotato industry lost a dear friend. Larry Easley, 57, spent his life manufacturing the equipment that helped make sweetpotato production what it is today. In one way or another, Larry had an impact on every sweetpotato grower in Mississippi and many beyond the state's borders. Larry's legacy lives on in the equipment he fabricated and the lives he touched, and he will be missed.

NC Sweetpotato Industry Update, Winter 2014

by Dr. Jonathan R. Schultheis

Professor & Dept. Extension Leader, Dept. Horticultural Science
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

In the previous newsletter, it was stated that it had been unusually cool and relatively wet in March and April in North Carolina. These conditions continued well into July. Because of the cloudy weather with regular and excessive rains, sweetpotato plantings were delayed or never made in some cases. If fields were planted, the persistent wet field conditions delayed crop development. Because of the difficult weather, planted acreage was likely reduced about 15% compared with last year's crop, somewhere near 55,000 acres. Due to fields being planted late, many harvested fields had roots with smaller sizes than normal.

The good news for North Carolina is that growing conditions were very favorable for August through October and provided the time needed for many sweetpotato roots to increase in size, which resulted in reasonable yields across the state. However, this season's yields will certainly average less than last year. The reduction in acreage coupled with later than usual plantings, and wet, cool growing conditions for the first half of the season will likely result in a crop that is 20 to 25% less than last year.

Other news...

► **Dr. Lina Quesada has joined** North Carolina State University and the sweetpotato team. Dr. Quesada is a plant pathologist and has research and extension responsibilities for vegetable diseases. Prior to joining the plant pathology department, Dr. Quesada received her PhD from Michigan State University and conducted work as a postdoctoral researcher. Her program at North Carolina State University

strives to deliver novel and improved disease management recommendations to vegetable growers in North Carolina, and to advance knowledge in the field of vegetable pathology.

Dr. Quesada is already getting to know the North Carolina sweetpotato industry and has made numerous visits and several diagnoses for many sweetpotato growers. With the wet growing season, it will be interesting to see if more rots occur in storage this storage season. It is good to have our new Extension Plant Pathologist on board. The sweetpotato team and industry welcomes Dr. Quesada and the expertise she brings.

► **New farm equipment** is always of interest to growers. A prototype vine snatcher was recently unveiled at the North Carolina sweetpotato field day. The work on this piece of equipment has been an on going project by Dr. Mike Boyette of the Biological and Agricultural Sciences Department with its more recent work being sponsored by the North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission. Initial grower response has been positive regarding the vine snatcher.

► With increasing product being utilized for frozen food and the high cost of labor, there is renewed interest in **harvest mechanization**. One grower in North Carolina has already invested in sweetpotato mechanical harvesters. However, in cooperation with Cray Industries, Inc., Lockwood product line, other growers are actively evaluating mechanical harvesting equipment to determine if it fits into their sweetpotato operation.

Table 2. A comparison of FOB prices (in dollars) of sweet potatoes on 11/7/12 and 11/7/13 for the four states of CA, LA, MS and NC, for orange types only.

State, Year	U.S. #1	U.S. #1, Petite	U.S. #2	No grade marks med	No grade marks jumbo
CA, 2012	18 to 19	-	-	M8 to 9	M11
CA, 2013	M19	-	-	M9	10 to 12
LA, 2012	14 to 15.75	-	M8	-	M8
LA, 2013	M17.50	-	M10	-	M9 to 10
MS, 2012	M14 to 15	-	8	-	6.50 to 8
MS, 2013	M17 to 17.50	-	9.50 to 10.50	-	10
NC, 2012	M14 to 15	10 to 12	7 to 9	-	M7
NC, 2013	16 to 18	12 to 14	8 to 10	-	9 to 10

California Update (from Page 4)

pipeline. Thanks to the cooperation of Don La Bonte (LSU) and Craig Yenko (NCSU), many experimental varieties entries have already been evaluated in the ALT (Advanced Line Trial), are ready to move into replicated test plots next year.

But where 175 disappointed, *LSU52* did well, at least until late season. This variety produces very attractive orange-skinned roots (similar to *Jewel*) with good orange flesh color and minimal yellow cortical ring. It has a very smooth skin texture completely

unmarred by eyes, lenticles, lumps, grooves, or any other defect. It has good RKN resistance, but is susceptible to wireworms and grubs. It can produce a lot of jumbos, which means it has strong total yield potential. It stores very well, but this is a double-edged sword because it is also reluctant to grow plants in hotbeds. No doubt this new variety has some skeletons in the closet, but right now it looks very promising as a *Beauregard* replacement.

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 is a Proven Solution



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Chemical Resistant Pigweed

President's Message (from Page 1)

Statistical Yearbook (from Page 1)

appeal to all those associated with the industry. Horticultural research updates, policy and labor information, a presentation by a producer featuring a Louisiana sweet potato operation, and a panel presentation featuring speakers from the sweet potato processing industry, are a few topics on the agenda.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Royal Sonesta Hotel New Orleans (1.800.SONESTA or 504-586-0300). Just ask for group code "United States Sweet Potato Council"

and make your reservations by December 20, 2013, to ensure that you are able to reserve a room in our block for \$159.00 per night. You will find a registration form on *Page 4* of this issue, and information can also be accessed on the Louisiana Sweet Potato Commission website www.sweetpotato.org.

If you have questions concerning the 2014 convention, please contact Rene Simon (rsimon@ldaf.state.la.us) or Tara Smith (Tsmith@agctr.lsu.edu).

Is production increasing or decreasing? What about acreage? What about yield, or season-average price to growers? Is crop value increasing or decreasing? Which state's crop value is increasing fastest? Which state has the highest crop value per acre? Which state has the highest FOB prices? How do terminal market prices for various states compare? What is the level of weekly retail prices? How do the number of retail ads for sweet potatoes compare to those of other vegetables? What is the per capita use of sweet potatoes, and is this use increasing or decreasing? What about world production and trade in sweet potatoes? What are the major countries for exports of U.S. sweet potatoes? You find answers to these questions and many, many more in the new *Yearbook*.

THE UNITED STATES



Inc.

12 Nicklaus Lane, Suite 101
Columbia, SC 29229



Merry Christmas & a Happy and Prosperous New Year To All Sweet Potato Growers