

# Sweet Potato Speak

Issue 01  
March 2018



news about the nc sweetpotato industry

2018

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## 56<sup>th</sup> US Sweet Potato Council Convention a Success

Over 600 conferees arrived in Wilmington January 21-23 to participate in the 56<sup>th</sup> National Sweet Potato Convention. Conventioneers came from across the U.S. and Canada to attend the most widely attended conference in the history of North Carolina hosting this event.

Presentations by Don Labonte and Ken Pecota spoke to varieties in the pipeline and what we can look forward to in our future.

A technology class was conducted, educating attendees on how UVAs can aid in the care of their crops, an inspiring presentation was made by Jason Brown, NC farmer who left the NFL to give back to the community.

Eric Snodgrass, gave a riveting presentation about weather patterns and climate and the role they play in agriculture.

Lina Quesada presented on strategies to address emerging diseases in sweet potato production. Sweet potato is the 7<sup>th</sup> most important crop in the world, according to Quesada, so the importance of keeping our state disease free and stable is of the utmost importance.

Dr. David Kohl gave an economic report on the road ahead for agriculture. Included in this presentation were notes regarding

agriculture in the US economy and where we fit in the global marketplace. He even had a self evaluation for attendees to take so they could see the needs of their farming operations.

Play time included Designer Handbag BINGO, where ladies, and one man, sipped mimosas and peach bellinis while playing bingo in the hopes of winning one of 10 stunning handbags. In addition to Bingo, Monday Night brought forth an Oyster Roast and Low Country Boil and a Casino Night, further proving the competitive nature of our industry.

Chef Vivian Howard conducted a cooking demonstration at as part of the convention festivities, look for the recipes she prepared, coming to the NCSPC



website soon!

Ideas may be fresh since convention has recently concluded and we've already started a list of possibilities for the next time we host convention; let us know your ideas!

We believe a good time was had by all. A heartfelt thank you from the Planning Committee and Staff of the NCSPC! We look forward to hosting this event again in 5 years.

*The North Carolina SweetPotato Commission Inc. is a nonprofit corporation made up of over 400 sweet potato growers along with the packers, processors and business associates that support them. The sole purpose of the commission is to increase sweet potato consumption through education, promotional activities, research and honorable horticultural practices among its producers. Thanks to the six sweet potato farmers that chartered the commission in 1961, the commission has supported its growers and maintained North Carolina as the No. 1 sweet potato producing state in the United States since 1971.*

[www.ncsweetpotatoes.com](http://www.ncsweetpotatoes.com)

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[www.5girlsproduce.com](http://www.5girlsproduce.com)

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**Arcola Hardwood Company**  
252-257-4484  
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[www.carolina-eastern.com](http://www.carolina-eastern.com)

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[www.clintontt.com](http://www.clintontt.com)

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[www.coastalagro.com](http://www.coastalagro.com)

**Courtier Nordany Broker, Inc.**  
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**Crop Management Services**  
919-920-0238  
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**EWR, Inc.**  
901-753-5026  
[www.ewrinc.com](http://www.ewrinc.com)

**Farm Fresh Produce**  
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# Capitol Briefs

## Federal Report:

**Brad Edwards - Jenkins Hill Consulting**

Congress recently passed a budget deal on spending for Fiscal Year 2018 and 2019. This measure will raise the caps on defense discretionary spending by \$80 billion in FY 18 and \$85 billion in FY 19. It also raises the cap on non-defense domestic discretionary spending over the next two years. It fully repeals the automatic spending caps known as sequestration for non-defense programs. Included in this package will be \$90 billion in emergency funding and disaster relief for areas impacted by last year's storms. The debt ceiling has been suspended until March 2019. Six billion in funding has been set aside for the Opioid addiction to help address the nation-wide crisis.

This measure also provides funding for new infrastructure investments. In addition, the agreement included additional funds to alleviate the backlog of claims at the Department of Veterans Affairs health centers. It also extended tax provisions that expired in 2016 through 2017.

The U.S. Senate recently debated comprehensive immigration legislation, however they were unable to get a consensus on a legislative path forward at this time. If a consensus can be reached, the Senate would return to debating this legislation. The U.S. House of Representatives is anticipated to begin consideration of immigration legislation in March at this time.

The current Farm Bill will expire September 30, 2018. The U.S. House of Representatives is likely to move their House legislation on re-authorizing this bill this spring with the U.S. Senate to follow.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has granted an agricultural waiver for the new Electronic Logging Device (ELD) that was effective December 18, 2017 until March 18, 2018. This law requires all drivers who fall under the hours of service rule will be required to use this device. Agricultural interests have weighed in with their concerns to members of congress and U.S. Department of Transportation for a further extension.



## North Carolina Report:

**John Cooper - Connect C**

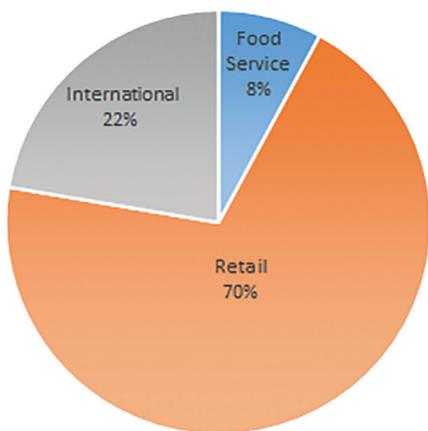
Since January 1, 2018, North Carolina lawmakers have been in and out of session due to the continuing issues with the House and Senate redistricting. There have been Committee meetings, appointment confirmations, and some votes during these sessions. The General Assembly short session will begin in May.

The U.S. Supreme Court had a split decision on the NC Senate and House districts. They left intact the district lines for Wake and Mecklenburg Counties as previously determined by the General Assembly; however, they sided with the ruling of the Professor from Stanford University that there will be changes in six other counties (Cumberland, Guilford, Hoke, Bladen, Sampson and Wayne) with the House and the Senate. This means that it is extremely likely that the NC State Senate will remain as a super majority and only lose a few seats. Thirty seats are needed for the Republicans to retain the super majority and that is expected. The NC House districts are changed to a degree that the Republicans could use several seats and it will be very close if a super majority is retained in the house. Based on previous elections, it is likely that the Republicans will maintain their majority.

The Governor has filed an appeal before the State Supreme Court on an issue back from 2011 hoping for a

# NC Marketing Report

October 22, 2017 thru February 03, 2018



**Total - 40 Pound Cartons 6,222,143**

The FOB Prices ranges for this time are:

- US#1 \$12-\$16
- US #2 \$8 - \$10
- Jumbos \$8 - \$10
- US #1 \$1 - \$14  
Petites

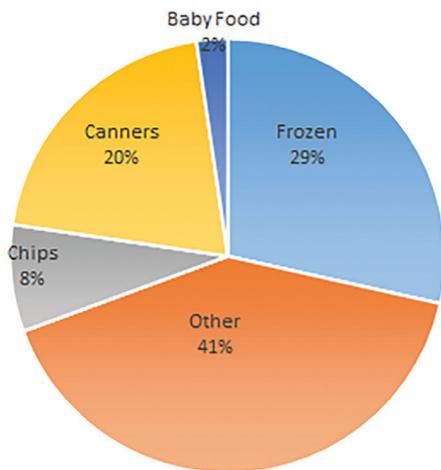
The 2017 crop season total to date (August 20, 2017 thru February 3, 2018) is:

17,809,491 (40 pound cartons fresh market sweet potatoes)  
This compares to 17,316,665 (40 pound cartons fresh market sweet potatoes) for the total to date last season of the 2016 crop.

\* Source: NCDA&CS Market News

**Total Pounds in addition to Fresh Market**

**76,535,891**



## Capitol Briefs- NC Report Continued

different ruling. This process seems as if it will never end. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against making an immediate determination on whether the U.S. Congressional district maps are constitutional. They elected not to expedite that review and we think that will be months away. Therefore, the U.S. Congressional districts are now set the same as they were for the 2016 elections. Any future changes made would not be effective until 2020 and based on the Supreme Court's future ruling.

The U.S. farm income forecast for 2018 is the lowest in 12 years. The forecast is that farmers' profits will decrease almost 7% to \$59.5 billion dollars. This would be the lowest since 2006 and down 52% from a record \$128.8 billion in 2013.

The team at Connect C is proud to partner with the NCSPC as we obtain legislation and administrative action at the State level that is beneficial to the sweet potato industry in North Carolina.

**Rainbow.  
Full Spectrum Nutrition  
for Sweet Potatoes.**

Quality is just as important as weight for a sweet potato crop. Outside of weather, nothing influences performance more than your fertilizer program. Most soils in the coastal plain are deficient in boron & manganese. Unless a good source of these nutrients is available in your fertilizer, the crop may suffer. Rainbow Plant Food contains precise amounts of nutrients chemically compounded to form a homogenous granule. The nutrients in Rainbow fertilizers exist in an available form, so they can move quickly through the roots in time to promote healthy, hearty growth. When high yields and quality are critical, growers can rely on Rainbow fertilizers to produce the best sweet potatoes possible.

Find out more at [RainbowPlantFoodProducts.com](http://RainbowPlantFoodProducts.com)

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PLANT FOOD

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# Public Relations Update

*Consumption on the rise – Europeans are hungry for North Carolina sweet potatoes*  
Mk2- Maria Kraus

The sweet potato market in Europe is recording growing numbers both in volume and value during past years. Being by far the largest supplier, the USA makes up for more than 75 % of the total market share. Just looking at 2015 and 2016, export sales increased 23% and the appetite of European consumers for American sweet potatoes is still not satisfied. As a matter of fact our orange root has seen an image boost in recent years, making it the number one trend vegetable among EU foodies.

Younger consumers have found their excitement about the American staple using it as culinary multi- talent. Therefore it comes as no surprise that innovative sweet potato recipes can be found all over the media in Europe leading to increasing demand and growing sales. In the German market alone, the media results and value for NC Sweet potato in print and on-line alone surpassed the 22 million dollar US level comparable to a larger brand campaign.

Accompanying this development for more than a decade is the European marketing program of the NCSPC. Always close to the pulse of the ever changing EU markets, the program has constantly reinvented itself to meet those demands.

For the 2018 program year, projects are already in the works. Starting it off is the *International Sweet Potato Week* - a multi-level sales and education campaign taking place in countries throughout Central, Eastern and Northern Europe. Pushing consumer awareness of the origin USA, specifically, North Carolina for high quality, delicious sweet potatoes.

The program strengthens the market position of US sweet potatoes and thereby adds its share to a further promising future of NC sales in Europe.



*NCSPC Marketing Initiatives in 2018*  
PadillaCRT, Julie LePere

As a new initiative in 2018, the NCSPC partnered with MyFitnessPal, a fitness and healthy eating on-line community, to encourage greater use of sweet potatoes among health and fitness enthusiasts. The partnership launched in January to kick off the new year, target those seeking self-improvement, and leverage healthy resolutions.

Enthusiastic and knowledgeable of nutrition and fitness, MyFitnessPal members already know sweet potatoes are a natural choice for those living a healthy, active lifestyle. In this partnership, the Commission aims to deliver sweet potato recipes, tips and inspiration by driving this health-conscious audience to the Commission's website.



Throughout January, sweet potatoes were highlighted through creative ads that acted as visual reminders of all the nutritious and delicious ways members can incorporate sweet potatoes on their health and fitness journey. The sweet potato ads resulted in +915,000 impressions and drove +2,200 clicks (actual visits) to the website for recipes and inspiration. Additionally, NCSPC was highlighted in MyFitnessPal's E-Newsletter achieving over 2 million impressions, while the sweet potato placement alone drove more than 240,000 clicks to the Commission's website.

The three-month partnership with MyFitnessPal will pick up again in May and July to emphasize sweet potatoes' year-round availability and versatility with the goal of growing your sales.

# More Candidts from Convention





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## Associate Members (cont'd)

**Godwin Produce Co. Inc.**  
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[www.sweettater.com](http://www.sweettater.com)

**Ham Produce**  
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**Interlog USA, Inc.**  
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**Mallory Alexander International**  
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[www.mallorygroup.com](http://www.mallorygroup.com)

**Manry Rawls**  
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[www.manryrawls.com](http://www.manryrawls.com)

**McCain Foods USA, Inc.**  
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**NC Certified SP Seed Growers**  
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[www.netafimusa.com](http://www.netafimusa.com)

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**Snow Tractor**  
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[www.snowtractor.com](http://www.snowtractor.com)

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[www.southern-produce.com](http://www.southern-produce.com)

**Spring Acres Sales**  
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[www.springacres.com](http://www.springacres.com)

**Steele Plant Company, LLC**  
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[www.sweetpotatoplant.com](http://www.sweetpotatoplant.com)

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**Strickland Bros Enterprises**  
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**Wada Farms Marketing**  
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**Wadsons Farm Ltd.**  
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910-654-5163  
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