

SWEET POTATO *Speak*

NEWS
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SWEETPOTATO
INDUSTRY

ISSUE 04 | DECEMBER 2019

The Future >>> Starts With US



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North Carolina SweetPotato Commission, Inc.

**60th Annual Meeting
of Membership**

January 16, 2020
The Maxwell Center
3114 Wayne Memorial Dr.
Goldsboro, NC 27534

The Future >>> Starts With US

www.ncsweetpotatoes.com

When the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission was formed, in 1961, the founders understood the value of keeping the membership well-informed of business conducted on their behalf. Understanding where we have been and where our future is heading is the responsibility each member should take seriously. To help disseminate this information, the NCSPC hosts an Annual Meeting of Membership each January. This free, one-day, meeting provides members an opportunity to hear first-hand reports and presentations that deal with the Commission's business and current issues facing our industry. Likewise, members also learn of opportunities available to advance our industry.

On January 16, 2020 the 60th Annual Meeting of Membership will be held at The Maxwell Center- 3114 Wayne Memorial Drive, Goldsboro. Doors open for registration at 8:00 a.m. and the meeting will be called to order at 9:00 a.m. This year's agenda will cover valuable topics such as: NC sweetpotato branding, federal trade and tariff issues, domestic and international marketing initiatives, Lorsban updates, and the upcoming use of certified seed as mandated by NCDA. Pesticide credits will be available and a complimentary continental breakfast and buffet lunch will be served.

To help you network and gain information on products and services that can

Continued on page 03

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

North Carolina Report: John Cooper - Connect C

The North Carolina Farm Act of 2019 (S315), is currently still pending at the North Carolina General Assembly. This year's farm act contains a variety of provisions important for North Carolina agriculture including the branding of sweetpotatoes, regulation of the hemp industry, and changes to the definition of agritourism. The branding of sweetpotatoes is Section 21 of the bill and, if passed, will have a very positive impact on the sweetpotato industry in North Carolina. Section 21 is known as the "North Carolina Sweetpotato Act" and it empowers the Commissioner of Agriculture to take all actions necessary and appropriate to create, license, promote, and protect a trademark for North Carolina Sweetpotatoes. It also establishes a Sweetpotato Advisory Council to assist the Commissioner as he works to implement the branding package. The regulations for hemp were the most controversial aspect of this year's farm bill and they take



up more than 20 pages of the 30-page document. Law enforcement and farmers eventually came together, thanks to hard work by several members of the General Assembly, and a compromise was reached. The compromise bill,

known as a conference report, passed in the Senate on October 28, 2019 by a bipartisan vote of 40-10. It has not been heard in the House of Representatives. After the Senate vote, concerns were raised about the provisions for shooting sports in the agritourism section. The current language requires shooting sports on farms to comply with



extensive regulations created by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC). The county commissioners where the shooting range is located would then certify that the shooting range meets all of the WRC guidelines. The reason the conference report was held up in the House is to have a discussion about including language giving county commissioners the ability to pass zoning ordinances regarding these shooting ranges in addition to the WRC guidelines. The provisions regarding the branding of sweet potatoes are not controversial and have remained intact throughout all of the negotiations on other sections of the bill. We expect the farm bill to be a priority when the legislature returns in January.

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a new map for the 2020 U.S. House races that could

cost the Republican party seats in Congress. Democrats are favored to flip the seats held by Republican Reps. George Holding and Mark Walker. If Democrats in North Carolina were to keep the three seats they currently hold and also flip the seats held by Holding and Walker, they could put a damper on national Republicans' hopes of flipping the U.S. House back to a Republican majority in the 2020 elections. Both the Senate and the House approved the maps along party lines, with Democrats voting against the maps. A decision by the courts is pending.

The Senate and House has adjourned until January 14, 2020. The January session will be a continuation of this year's long session. The adjournment resolution allows the legislature to consider a wide variety of items including veto overrides, access to healthcare, legislation related to redistricting, and appointments/nominations.

Federal Report: Brad Edwards - Jenkins Hill Consulting

Immigration/H2A:

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) recently introduced HR 5038, Farm Workforce Modernization Act of 2019. This bill contains provisions related to alien farmworkers, including provisions establishing a certified agricultural worker (CAW) status and changing the H-2A temporary worker program. This bill is likely to pass the U.S. House of Representatives this Congress, but Senate action is less likely since

North Carolina Senators Burr and Tillis have major concerns with this legislation on impact to agriculture and farmers in North Carolina.

USDA/USTR Trade Assistance funding – The Administration announced last month that another round of trade assistance funding will be available for agricultural interests that have been impacted by current trade retaliatory measures by other countries. In addition, US trade negotiators continue to work to completion

on trade issues with China and UK Bilateral trade relations.

The United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA) appears close to being approved in the U.S. House of Representatives with a December 2019 vote and when that occurs, the U.S. Senate would approve the agreement too.

Congress continues to work on Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 appropriations spending bills. They recently passed a Continuing Resolution (CR)

through December 20, 2019 and hope to reach in agreement to keep the government open until September 30, 2020.

The teams at **Connect C** and **Jenkins Hill** are proud to partner with the NCSPC as we obtain legislation and administrative action at the state and national level that is beneficial to the sweetpotato industry in North Carolina. We appreciate your business and look forward to continuing to serve you.



...Continued from cover

help you at farm-level, there will be a vendor trade show. We are appreciative of our exhibitors and sponsors and their support of the NC sweetpotato industry. This year's sponsors include (*as of newsletter print date*)

- Arcola Hardwood
- Atlantic Pallet Exchange
- B&S Enterprise, Inc.
- Brock Equipment Company
- Carolina Farm Credit
- Getsco
- Helena Agri-Enterprises
- NC Farm Bureau Federation
- Quality Equipment
- Rinker Systems
- Strickland Bros. Enterprises
- Triangle Insurance & Associates
- TriEst Ag Group

We hope you will join us **Thursday, January 16, 2020** at The Maxwell Center in Goldsboro as we bring together a variety of industry leaders with experience that will be beneficial to sustaining our future.

LAB NOTES

LORSBAN UPDATE

The European Union (EU) has a proposal on the table to ban the import of products that have the product Chlorpyrifos, the active ingredient in Lorsban, used on them. This ban is set to take place on January 31, 2020. Since chlorpyrifos is a staple insecticide we use in sweetpotatoes, this ban will affect our industry. However, we are not sure to what extent.

We are currently exploring avenues to try and ensure our market share in the EU does not drop. As far as alternatives, NC State University Assistant Professor, Dr. Anders Huseth has some alternatives he is currently reviewing, with some looking promising.



INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

CHEF CONGRESS IN WARSAW

The U.S. Embassy's Office of Agricultural Affairs proudly inaugurated, last year, its "Ameryka od Kuchni" (America's Kitchen) program. Under this umbrella, it coordinates with U.S. food and beverage industry partners to showcase high-quality U.S. products and demonstrate to Polish culinary and hospitality companies, food retail, and food processors how U.S. products can help to grow their businesses.

Taking advantage of this program, the NCSPC was able to be part of the American pavilion at the Chef's Congress, the largest culinary convention in Poland. It was held on October 9th in Warsaw and hosted over **1,500 participants**, including **chefs** and **key opinion leaders** in the food industry. The congress' purpose is to develop managerial skills and leadership competencies of chefs, as well as the exchange of opinions on the latest culinary trend.



At our booth, we provided information about the taste, texture, versatility, and origin of NC sweetpotatoes. We handed out over 500 promotional materials, including our latest trade-mailing "**10 reasons**" and chef brochures.

Further, 300 product samples were handed out to visitors. The menu included:

- Baked sweetpotatoes with herbs and sea salt
- Sweetpotato tart with red onions and feta cheese
- Sweetpotato brownies

- Sweetpotato tortilla with aioli sauce

Visitors were thrilled about the great taste and versatility of uses of NC sweetpotatoes. They especially liked the texture and sweet taste of our brownies. Knowing these were made without sugar and only sweetpotatoes made them a "sweet treat."

NEW TRADE MAILING - 10 REASONS

We translated and adapted our trade brochure "**10 reasons**" for the Polish market. This brochure is one of our most demanded materials, as it offers an overview of the best reasons as to why to prefer North Carolina sweetpotatoes. So far 1,000 hard copies have been printed and shipped to our partner agency in Warsaw. The material will be used to further promote sweetpotatoes at different POS, media events and trade shows. This is the third language version in which the brochure was adapted.

NEW PRESS MAILING - HEALTHY SNACKS

We translated and adapted our upcoming press mailing for the Polish market. The content shares information about the snacking culture in Poland and presents a range of easy-to-make recipes, perfect for every occasion.



Recipes include: sweetpotato mini pizzas, sweetpotato spread, sweetpotato balls, muffins, and wedges.

The mailing will be sent out to the Polish culinary media landscape including food influencers.



DOMESTIC MARKETING

HOLIDAY CHEER IS HERE WITH THE NCSPC AND FRENCHWESTIVAUGHN!

From showcasing delicious sweetpotato dishes for the holidays to highlighting the Tar Heel state's 2019 harvest season, the media relations team has been hard at work keeping North Carolina sweetpotatoes in the news. *Taste of Home* included North Carolina sweetpotatoes in its article, "The Top Thanksgiving Food in Every State," noting the state's crop accounts for nearly 60% of the U.S. supply annually. In addition, Executive Director Kelly McIver participated in an interview with *FreshPlaza* about North Carolina's successful 2019 sweetpotato harvest and the state's unique storage and curing process.

In September, FWV traveled to the Big Apple to show off the orange superfood at the Let's Eat Healthy Speed Pitching event. We met with over 20 top-tier national media outlets, including *ABC News*, *CBS News*, *Good Housekeeping*, *TODAY*, *Parents* and *Saveur*. As a result, multiple pieces of coverage have been secured on *The Nibble* (food blog), and North Carolina sweetpotatoes were featured on the podcast, *All You Can Eat with Rob Rosenthal*.

FWV and the NCSPC celebrated the harvesting of nearly 100 pounds of sweetpotatoes at the end of October as part of the Commission's sponsorship of the North Carolina Museum of History's "History of the Harvest" exhibit. All of the sweetpotatoes from the harvest were donated to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina ahead of the holiday season. CBS 17 was on-site to cover the harvesting and included the story in its evening broadcast. Additional coverage was secured on the *Philanthropy Journal* (online), and Raleigh House-

wives posted about the donation on its social media channels.

makes North Carolina sweetpotatoes so sweet with multiple foodservice trade outlets, including *Produce Business*, *Dataessential*, *Flavor & The Menu*, *FoodService Director*, *Gold Medal Classroom*, *Plate Magazine*, *School Nutrition* and *Technomic*.

Overall, media relations efforts during the months of September, October and November resulted in more than half a million impressions equalling over \$58,000 in PR value.

FWV conducted a photo and video shoot featuring Chef Stephanie Tyson of Sweet Potatoes Restaurant in



CHEF STEPHANIE TYSON
SWEET POTATOES RESTAURANT

Winston-Salem. Check out the NCSPC's Instagram – @ncsweetpotatoes – to see content from the shoot, or head to the NCSPC website to try her heavenly sweet-potato cornbread stuffing this holiday season.

In social media news, FWV provided on-site support at N.C. State University's All Carolinas Meal in September, as well as the Tuna Run and History of the Harvest events in October. The team captured and posted engaging content at each of the events, resulting in 4.1K impressions from the Tuna Run and 1.2K impressions from the History of Harvest Instagram story series. FWV also kicked off the NCSPC's holiday influencer and Pinterest campaigns to highlight all the reasons North Carolina sweetpotatoes should be included on your holiday menus.

After an exciting year showing off our favorite superfood, the NCSPC and FWV are looking forward to ringing in another sweet year in 2020!



wives posted about the donation on its social media channels.

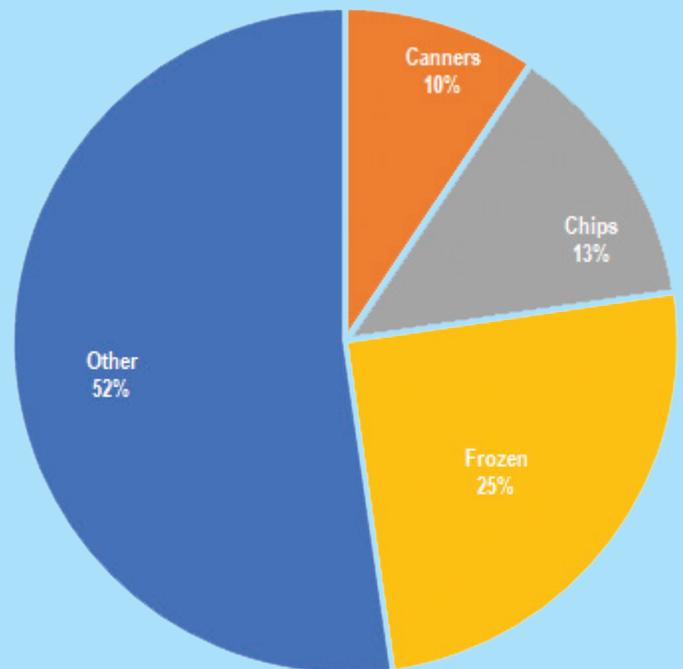
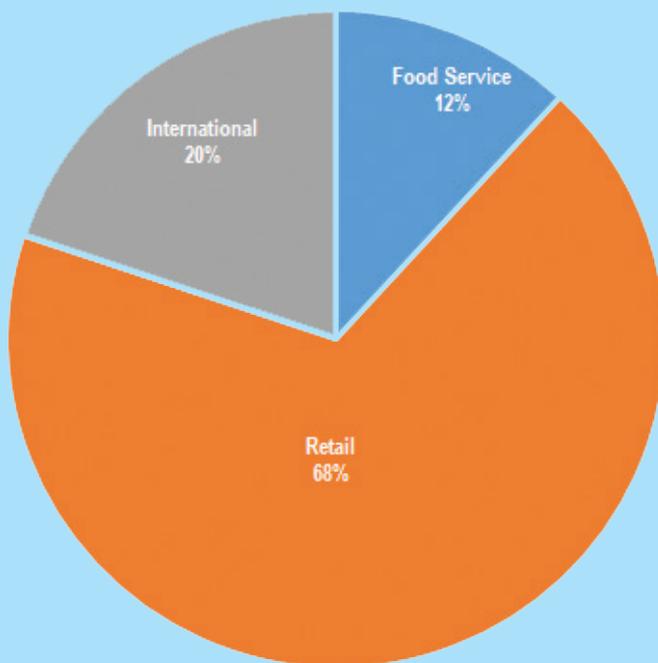
Additionally, NCSPC Communications Specialist, CoCo Daughtry and FWV attended the 2019 International Foodservice Editorial Council (IFEC) annual conference in Madison, Wisconsin, where they shared what

NC MARKETING REPORT

August 11, 2019 - November 16, 2019

During the listed time frame 2,331,976 40 pound cartons of fresh market sweetpotatoes were shipped.

During that same time period there was an additional 38,109,382 pounds of sweetpotatoes sent to various processors the breakdown is as follows:



The F.O.B. price ranges for this time period are:

US # 1	\$18.00-\$25.00
US # 2	\$ 10.00-\$14.00
Jumbos	\$11.00-\$20.00
US # 1 Petites	\$10.25-\$20.00

The 2019 crop season total to date (August 11, 2019 thru November 16, 2019) is: 2,331,976 (40 pound cartons fresh market sweetpotatoes). This compares to 2,331,532 (40 pound cartons fresh market sweetpotatoes) for the total to date last season of the 2018 crop. **Our 2019 crop has started strong - only you can keep it that way!**

*Source: NCDA&CS **Market News**

For questions, comments, concerns or if you are willing to become a contributor, please contact Karrie Gonzalez, NCDA&CS Market News Supervisor, at (919) 707-3121 or Karrie.Gonzalez@ncagr.gov.

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www.robinsonfresh.com**S.A.I.L.**

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UPCOMING

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| December 4 | Promotions Committee Meeting 2:00 PM |
| December 5-7 | NC Agribusiness Council Meeting - Wilmington |
| December 8-10 | NC Farm Bureau Convention - Greensboro |
| December 10 | BOD Meeting 6:00 PM |
| December 18 | NC Sweetpotato Seedsman Meeting
Johnston County Ag Center - 5:00 PM |
| December 24-26 | Christmas Holiday - Office Closed |
| January 1 | New Year's Day Holiday - Office Closed |