

SWEET POTATO *Speak*

NEWS
ABOUT THE NC
SWEETPOTATO
INDUSTRY

ISSUE 01 | MARCH 2020

GETTING OUR FUTURE IN GEAR



On Tuesday, February 11th, the Board of Directors and NCSPC staff participated in an all-day strategic planning session, facilitated by Applied Vision Works. We have made great strides in the sweetpotato industry and remain to be an agricultural leader not only in North Carolina, but the U.S. and beyond. To further build accountability and structure to our efforts to promote sweetpotatoes, this in-depth exercise was designed to brainstorm ideas to catapult North Carolina sweetpotatoes in new directions.

Good things are growing at the NCSPC

and our goal is always our **members, first!** As each new phase is released, we will share our progress. Until then, now is a great time to get connected. Visit one of our social channels such as **Instagram, Twitter or Facebook**. Visit our web page (www.ncsweetpotatoes.com) to see new recipes or review the recently updated school-aged curriculum. We would love to have you stop in our office, if you're in the area! We are here to serve **YOU** and will continue to do our very best to let you know where we are, and where we're going—for you!

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.



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North Carolina Report: John Cooper - Connect C

In his State of the Union Address, President Trump stated his commitment to ensuring that "every citizen can have access to high-speed internet, including – and especially in – rural America." The Federal Communications Commission has voted to establish a \$20 billion rural digital opportunity fund. We hope this will be helpful to close the urban and rural divide.



President Trump signed the USMCA, (United States - Mexico - Canada Agreement), involving more than \$1.3 trillion of commerce making this the largest trade agreement in history. This agreement will have a major impact on the creation of additional jobs in the agricultural and energy industries. Additionally, the China Trade Deal means a big increase in purchases by China and changes to intellectual property and technology issues. China has agreed to purchase around \$200 billion in American products, including up to \$50 billion in agricultural products in the next two years.

While the national economy is doing very well, it is tough times on the farm. Commodity prices are lower and many farmers have had only

average yields of their crops. With some of the tariffs being resolved with China and agreements being more favorable to agriculture, we trust the farm economy will improve in the upcoming year. It is not surprising that family farms filing for Chapter 12 bankruptcy has increased 20% nationally--the highest since 2010. The increase of 2019 filings in North Carolina was 33% over 2018.

The NC General Assembly will begin the short session on April 28, 2020 for an undetermined period of time.



The 2019 Farm Act, including the SweetPotato section on branding, and the state budget veto override will be top priorities when the legislature returns in April.

I am pleased to report that, during a recent visit to the NC General Assembly cafeteria, I found that the placemats (see image on page 3) celebrate February as SweetPotato Month. This placemat includes historical facts such as colonial doctors recommended sweetpotatoes to combat diseases caused by nutritional deficiencies. Other facts are included such as 29% of sweetpotatoes are used

in processed products (fries, chips, puree, baby food, pet food, canned goods and beverages) and the sweetpotato is the NC state vegetable as 56% of all sweetpotatoes are produced by North Carolina farmers.

Federal Report: Brad Edwards - Jenkins Hill Consulting

Congress schedule is quite typical for a Presidential election year, with upcoming primaries and caucuses scheduled over the next couple of months. The U.S. House of Representatives will likely continue their effort of checks and balances of this administration on a wide variety of legislation and regulatory roll backs that the administration has put in place. The U.S. Senate will remain on track to continue to approve additional federal judgeships and federal nominees. The President just released the administration's annual budget proposal that calls for cuts in domestic spending and shifting of some federal priorities. His budget will not be enacted and Congress will remain on their budget agreement of spending from last year for FY 2021.

There is the possibility of a bi-partisan legislative solution to cyber security and data security issues at some point this session.

The 30 day implementation date on the Phase One deal with China was effective as of February 15th. However, with the Coronavirus outbreak, it's likely the implementation will be slower than expected.

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US trade negotiations continue to work on Phase One implementation and Phase Two.

The teams at **Connect C** and **Jenkins Hill** are proud to partner with the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission 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.

FULL SPECTRUM

CROP NUTRITION SINCE 1925

Rainbow Plant Food is an ammoniated fertilizer. Precise amounts of primary, secondary and micronutrients are combined into every single granule. With Rainbow, your sweet potatoes get the balanced nutrition they need to provide maximum quality and weight, while achieving stronger yields.

Discover what a full spectrum of nutrients can do for your sweet potatoes.

RainbowPlantFoodProducts.com

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Celebrating Sweetpotato Month

with NC Sweetpotatoes

1st in the Nation in Sweet Potato Production

56% of sweet potatoes grown in US are from NC farms

Top 5 counties – Sampson, Johnston, Wilson, Edgecomb & Nash

NC sweet potatoes contributed **\$236 million** to NC's economy in 2013

400 Sweet Potato Farmers in NC

94,365 acres planted in NC in 2019

91% acres planted are Covington

Other **9%** planted are Beauregard, Japanese, Bayou Bell and other varieties

29% used in processed products (fries, chips, puree, baby food, pet food, canned, beverages, etc.)

71% fresh market (retail, wholesale, food service and exports)

NC sweet potatoes are available 12 months a year

NUTRITION POWERHOUSE

1 Medium sweet potato has **103** calories, **1g** fat and **0** mg cholesterol

HISTORICAL ROOTS

- 1492** Columbus found Native Americans growing sweet potatoes in the New World
- 1700s** Colonial doctors recommended sweet potatoes to combat diseases caused by nutritional deficiencies
- 1854** A sweet potato field in NC sold for \$6.25 while 5 pigs and their mother sold for \$6.60
- 1861** Sweet potatoes were a coffee substitute during the "War Between the States"
- 1920s** George Washington Carver developed **118** uses for sweet potatoes
- 1995** Sweet potato named the state vegetable of NC



INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVENT CALENDAR

In December, we carried out a social media advent calendar. The activity allowed us to get 34,400 impressions, 2,200 clicks to our website and 4,500 engagements in less than four weeks. Further, we increased our social media community by 20% on Facebook reaching 4,300 fans and 80% on Instagram reaching almost 1,000 followers.

The advent calendar is a popular German tradition which is used to count the days of Advent before Christmas. Every Sunday we raffled different items on our Facebook and Instagram pages such as smoothie-makers and spiralizers. This incentivized our audience to visit our website and cook new recipes using North Carolina sweet potatoes.



NEW FINNISH WEBSITE

The NCSPC now has a website for the Finnish market. It was created to further support the NCSPC activities in Scandinavia, especially during the International Sweet Potato Week, as we are currently organizing in-store promotions at KESKO - A trading company near Helsinki, which operates retail chains in Finland and north-eastern Europe with 1,800 stores. The new website will provide market visitors with additional information about North Carolina sweet potatoes.

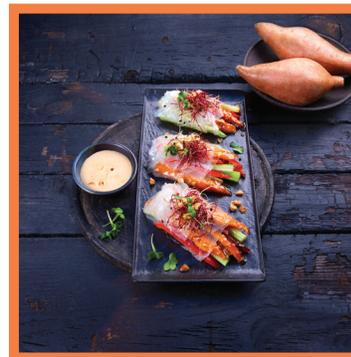
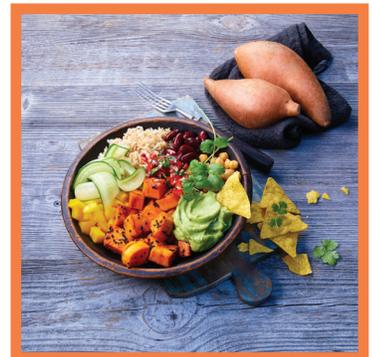
This will also benefit us in months to come as we begin to arrange meetings with the buyer/category manager of KESKO.

In total, the NCSPC has a website in **7 different languages:** English, German, Polish, Swedish, Danish, Italian and Finnish. www.bataatti-usa.fi

RECIPE PRODUCTION: NC SWEETPOTATOES "ALL-YEAR-ROUND"

We carried out a new recipe production inspired by the versatility of North Carolina sweet potatoes. The dishes are ideal for each season of the year and all types of meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner but also starters and desserts. The main objective of this production is to show people they can cook many different dishes with North Carolina sweet potatoes, as these are available all-year-round.

The recipes will be used to produce brand-new recipe cards to be handed out at the POS during the International Sweet Potato Week, as well as at further media events and trade shows. A part of the recipes will be used for our yearly



press mailing scheduled to be



DOMESTIC MARKETING

SPRING HAS SPRUNG WITH THE NORTH CAROLINA SWEETPOTATO COMMISSION AND FRENCHWEST|VAUGHAN

From celebrating North Carolina Sweetpotato Month to promoting the Annual Meeting of Membership, the media relations team has been hard at work keeping North Carolina sweetpotatoes in the news. Taste of Home featured the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission's Sweetpotato Pie in its article, "Most Popular Dessert Recipes of All Time," which was also picked up by MSN Food & Drink and MSN Canada Lifestyle.

In January, FWV attended the NC SweetPotato Commission's Annual Meeting, where the team shared information about an upcoming Crisis Communications Workshop for members. Following the event, FWV promoted the day's activities to trade media, highlighting the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission grant, Distinguished Service award and maintenance of current NCSPC board members. As a result, coverage was secured in FreshPlaza and The Shelby Report.

In social media news, FWV wrapped up the NCSPC's holiday influencer campaign highlighting the reasons North Carolina sweetpotatoes should be included on holiday menus, resulting in more than 48K impressions. FWV also kicked off the NCSPC's spring influencer campaign to showcase light and easy recipes perfect for warmer days ahead. Finally, we completed the NCSPC's holiday Pinterest campaign, showing off sweet and savory sweetpotato recipes for holiday menus. The campaign resulted in 383k overall impressions. A spring campaign is on its way!

What's So Sweet About N.C. Sweetpotatoes?

Variety & Versatility
There are hundreds of varieties of sweetpotatoes, all equally delicious but differing in size, color and taste.

- COVINGTON SWEETPOTATO**
A favorite for roasting or boiling, has sweet colored skin and super sweet orange flesh. Try roasting with your favorite toppings or cut into wedges and bake in a side dish.
- WHITE SWEETPOTATO**
The white sweetpotato has a pale copper skin, almost like a white potato, but don't let that fool you. This tuber is moist, tender, creamy and ideal for soups and stews.
- JAPANESE SWEETPOTATO**
Japanese sweetpotatoes have red skin and dry, white flesh. Roast them up with a bit of your favorite seasonings for a colorful side dish.

Sweetpotato Nutrition
Just because they're called "sweet" potatoes doesn't mean they are unhealthy – in fact, sweetpotatoes are chock full of nutrients.

- VITAMIN A
- FIBER
- POTASSIUM
- CARBOHYDRATES
- 100 CALORIES

North Carolina & Sweetpotatoes
Since 1971, North Carolina has been the No. 1 sweetpotato-producing state in the United States.

- #1
- >400
- 60%

Home to over 400 sweetpotato growers, the state's hot, moist climate and rich, fertile soil are ideal for cultivating sweetpotatoes, averaging nearly 60% of the U.S. supply.

Sweetpotato vs. Yam
That sweet, orange-colored root vegetable you love so dearly is actually a N.C. sweetpotato. Most people think that long, red-skinned sweetpotatoes are yams, but they really are just one of many varieties of sweetpotatoes. Let's break down the main differences between yams and sweetpotatoes!

	Sweetpotato	Yam
TASTE	Sweet, like yams	Starchy, usually not very sweet
APPEARANCE	Flesh can vary from white to orange and even purple	Rough, scaly and very low in beta carotene
NUTRITION	Has more protein, calcium, iron, sodium, vitamin A, beta-carotene and water	Has more fat, carbs, low potassium, vitamin C, vitamin B6 and vitamin E
PRODUCTION	Nearly 60% of the U.S. sweetpotatoes are grown in N.C.	Nearly 90% of yam crops are grown in West Africa



In celebration of North Carolina Sweetpotato Month, FWV shared its recently produced infographic with local and trade media, showing off the variety, versatility and nutritional benefits of the state vegetable.

The NCSPC wrapped up its partnership with the North Carolina Museum of History's "History of the Harvest Exhibit" in February with CoCo participating in the Tater Time event held at the museum, educating more than 100 children and parents about our orange superfood.

On the creative front, FWV conducted a photo and video shoot featuring Chef Mary Jayne Wilson of Amélie's French Bakery & Café in Charlotte. Keep an eye on NCSPC's social media channels for content from the shoot.

The NCSPC and FWV are hard at work planning the commission's media and influencer event in Madison, Wis., for North Carolina Sweetpotato Week in May. We're looking forward to spreading the word about the orange superfood to the Madison market.

After an exciting winter highlighting everyone's favorite holiday staple, the NCSPC and FWV are ready to watch our marketing results bloom this spring!

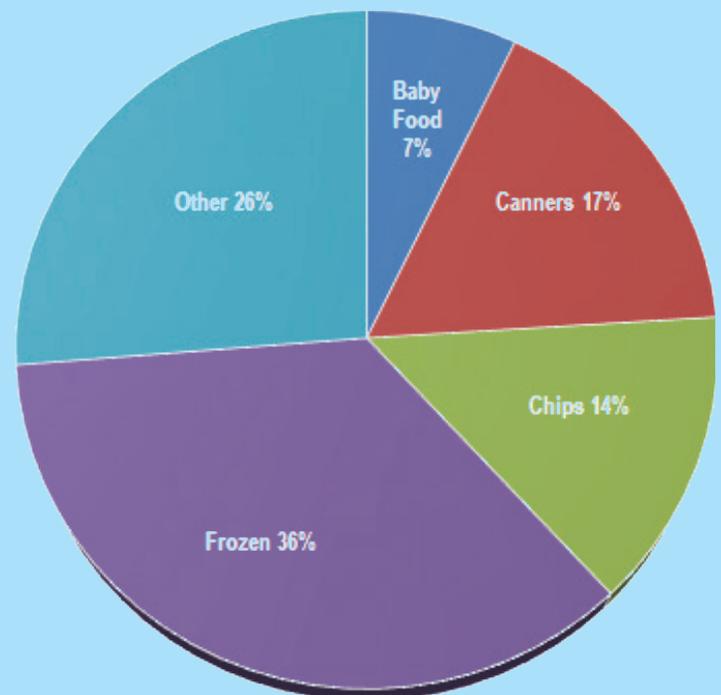
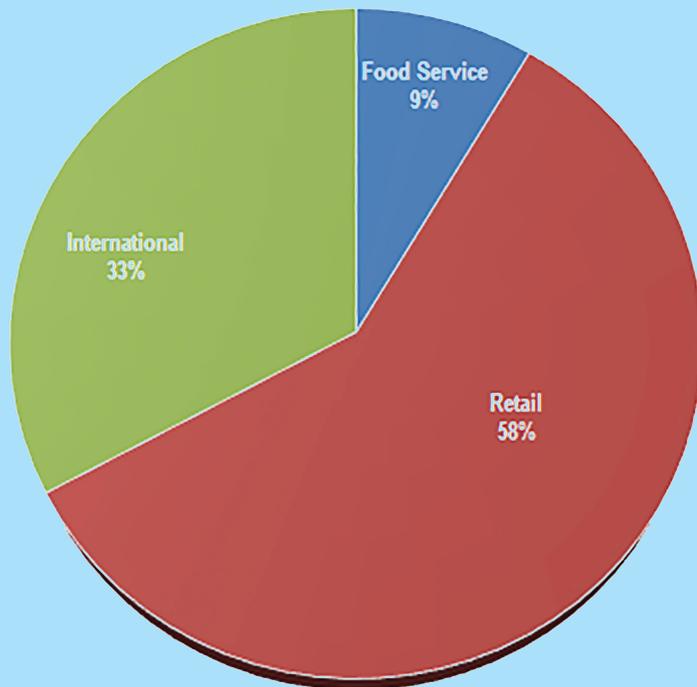


NC MARKETING REPORT

November 17, 2019 - February 08, 2020

During the listed time frame 3,280,253 **40 pound cartons** of fresh market sweetpotatoes were shipped.

During that same time period there was an additional 52,232,410 **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	\$14.00-\$18.00
US # 2	\$10.00-\$14.00
Jumbos	\$9.00-\$15.00
US # 1 Petites	\$11.00-\$16.00

The 2019 crop season total to date (August 11, 2019 thru February 08, 2020) is: 5,849,787 (40-pound cartons fresh market sweetpotatoes). This compares to 5,908,964 (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: NCD&CS **Market News**

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

2019-20 ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Ag Pack

919-625-4625
vmedlin@nc.rr.com

Arcola Hardwood Co., Inc.

252-257-4484
arcolumbercoinc@embarqmail.com

B&B Produce

919-894-1803
bbproduce@hotmail.com

Barfoots of Botley

+44-1243-261211
www.barfoots.com

BB&T

919-938-4768
www.bbt.com

Benchmark Buildings & Irrigation, Inc.

252-398-3116
www.bbandi.com

Bennett International Transport

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Brandt

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www.brandt.com

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252-508-2677
www.simplot.com

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252-291-9278
www.LancasterFarmsNC.com

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757-562-6131
www.manryrawls.com

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www.nashproduce.com

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910-594-0096
www.nwfarms.net

Pierce Soil & Crop Consulting

919-920-0238
dpierceriver@gmail.com

Pratt Industries

704-878-6615
www.prattindustries.com

Roberson Produce Co.

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www.robersononion.com

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952-683-3266
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S.A.I.L.

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www.sail.li

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TRP CPAs, PLLC

910-891-1100
www.trppca.com

Vick Family Farms

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www.vickfamilyfarms.com

Wada Farms Marketing

919-578-4020
www.wadafarms.com

Wake Stone Corp - Hi-Cal AgLime

843-241-5883
www.wakestonecorp.com

Weaver Fertilizer Co.

336-661-1495
www.weaverfertilizer.com

Wilco Transportation Services, Inc.

919-689-2500
scott@wilcotrans.com



North Carolina SweetPotato Commission

700 E. Parrish Dr., Suite C

Benson, NC 27504

919.894.1067 ph

919.894.7018 fax

www.ncsweetpotatoes.com

A graphic featuring the word "UPCOMING" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is centered and overlaid on a background of various blue squares and rectangles of different sizes and shades, creating a dynamic, abstract pattern.

- March 6** | Sweetpotato Wine Dinner - University Club
- April** | Promotions Committee Meeting Time / Date TBD
- April 14** | Board of Directors Meeting 6:00 PM
- May 1-10** | North Carolina Sweetpotato Week Promotion
Madison, Wisconsin