

“Its Peanut Blasting Time”

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Peanut growers around south GA have started pulling vines to check maturity and with almost 12 thousand acres grown here in Crisp Co, we're no exception. Peanut maturity sampling is one of many tools in determining when a field is ready to be dug for harvest. With that said, this digging estimate is only as accurate as the sample used for it. UGA recommends picking all the pods off 15 plants out of 25 acres. If the soil type of the field changes or if the field is larger than 25 acres (which is most cases) then multiple 15 plant samples should be taken. Try to dig plants that are representative of the field conditions without leaving pods in the ground. About 180-220 pods are taken from a sample and blasted in a metal cage with a pressure washer; this removes the first few layers of the hull, revealing its actual color. Lastly, a sample is dumped on a profile board (pictured) indicating days till digging based on this hull coloration.

Hulls with varying degrees of brown and black are considered to have sound mature kernels (SMK). These increase the grade of the peanuts in the processing plants. Pods that are sorted into the yellow and white classes on the profile board are immature and can most likely continue to develop if left in the ground. Both the darker mature and lighter in color immature peanut pods need to be taken into consideration on when harvest should occur. Other factors and/or tools can be used in this process and while agents are sorting samples they're also asking the growers: "What was your planting date," "what diseases have you seen," "is this irrigated or dryland," etc. The answers to all these questions could impact when the peanuts should be dug; the common variety planted in GA, 06G, is usually ready anywhere from 130-140 days. Back at the profile board an agent might also be cracking peanuts open to look at the coloration of the seed inside, inside of the hull and to observe if the peanuts are still attached to the pod.

Digging too early or late could be the difference of tonnage and hundreds of dollars.

At the time of this publishing many fields already sampled might need to be reassessed after Irma comes through.

Please contact your local county extension office if you have peanut samples to be blasted.