

Should Farmers Consider Saving Peanut Seed?

Peanut growers realize that contracts for farmer stock peanuts are approaching \$1,000/ton. Shelled peanut prices will likely continue to climb and the price of seed will probably go up for 2012. Typically, anywhere from 12 to 15 cents per pound is added to the trading price to determine the seed cost.

This year, planting Georgia-06G at 6 seed per row-foot ended up with about 135 pounds of seed per acre. Seed prices were about \$0.90 per pound this past year, meaning growers spent about \$120-\$125 per acre in seed cost. IF we end up seeing seed cost approach \$1.20 per pound the seed cost could increase to about \$160 plus per acre. This figure is pure speculation, says Dr. John Beasley, UGA Extension Peanut Agronomist, and should NOT be taken as absolute! Where seed costs will be in the spring is anybody's guess but odds are it will be higher than this past spring.

If you are considering saving seed several factors should be considered. First and foremost, it is important to know that according to federal seed laws it is **ILLEGAL** to save seed of a patented cultivar. The only patents on peanut seed are those associated with the high oleic trait. The following cultivars have the high oleic trait: Georgia-02C, Georgia-09B, AT-215, Florida-07, and FloRun '107'. The remaining runner-type peanut cultivars being grown in Georgia are protected by federal seed laws as PVP cultivars. According to the seed law, a grower can save seed of a PVP cultivar to plant on their own holdings (farm). It is **ILLEGAL** for a grower to sell seed of a PVP cultivar to another producer.

Peanuts being considered for seed should come from a field that was **IRRIGATED** well during the season **AND** had **GYP SUM** applied at the level of 1,000 lbs. /acre or more. Peanuts being saved for seed will need to be stored over the winter in a structure that minimizes the dramatic fluctuations in air temperature and humidity we experience in the winter and early spring. These temperature and humidity fluctuations can cause rapid seed deterioration. The best place to store peanuts being saved for seed is in an approved, ventilated warehouse. The worst place to store "seed peanuts" being saved for seed is in a peanut trailer sitting under a shed. A sample of the seed will need to be germination tested, preferably by the Georgia Department of Agriculture Seed Lab in Tifton.

Saving seed sounds like a simple process; however, it can be complicated. If not handled correctly, the seed can have very poor germination the following spring. In addition, there have already been some steep fines (\$300,000 and more) paid by some producers in the past few years for saving seed of patented cultivars of different crops. Just be sure that you have considered all the cost and management that is necessary to save your own seed, if you have never done so before.

If you need more information on saving your own peanut seed, or related information, contact the Burke County Extension Office at (706)554-2119.