

Rainfall patterns across the Virginia-Carolina region have changed significantly since early July. In many areas of the region peanut fields have not received rain in at least 3 weeks. Lack of soil moisture at this point in time combined with excessive heat has slowed peanut growth and development and is likely affecting pollination. Peanuts are resilient and can compensate for dry periods we are experiencing, but rain in the near future is needed to realize full yield potential.

Most peanut fields continue to be relatively weed free, although growers are applying herbicides in some cases and hand removing weeds that may be herbicide resistant. Gypsum applications are complete at this point in the season, and growers are applying the micronutrients boron and manganese with fungicides to correct these deficiencies.

Most growers are in the process of making their second and in some cases third fungicide sprays. However, leaf spot advisories in North Carolina indicate that conditions are not favorable for leaf spot disease to develop, with the last effective spray date occurring in early July. The leaf spot advisory system utilizes temperature and relative humidity data from weather stations to determine if conditions are favorable for pathogen development. This program can help growers make a decision on whether fungicide applications are warranted. Although fields are dry in many areas at this point in time, stem rot disease is still a concern, especially if rainfall patterns shift. Sclerotinia blight in the upper Virginia-Carolina region is not active in most fields due to dry soil conditions and high temperatures. However, growers are encouraged to scout closely in low areas of fields that have a history of this disease. Tomato spotted wilt is beginning to be expressed in some areas, and this is most prevalent in fields where peanut stands are marginal across the entire field or where reductions in stands are sporadic.

Chlorpyrifos applications are complete at this point in the season to control southern corn rootworm. There is concern that use of this chemical can cause spider mite outbreaks given the dry conditions many fields are experiencing. Overuse of fungicides under these conditions can also cause spider mite populations to increase. Foliar-feeding insects, including corn earworm and tobacco budworm, are not abundant across most of the region and have not reached economic threshold levels. However, this could change quickly, and given growth of peanut foliage has been delayed in some areas, growers will need to be proactive in scouting and addressing these insect pests if they develop. Peanut varieties that express a more robust canopy can withstand higher levels of feeding by insect pests. There is concern that lesser cornstalk borers and burrower bug could become established in the lower Virginia-Carolina region if dry conditions persist. Burrower bug is often more prevalent in fields grown under reduced tillage practices.

The majority of peanut in the Virginia-Carolina region is not irrigated, and the previous comments apply to non-irrigated production. However, for growers with irrigation (approximately 20%), conditions may be more conducive for leaf spot and stem rot

disease development, southern corn rootworm larvae survival and subsequent feeding on pods, incidence of Sclerotinia blight, and possibly foliar-feeding insects. Growers will need to stay on top of these potential issues to protect yield. .

The estimate of planted acres in North Carolina continues to be 96,000 acres (38,900 ha) while acreage in South Carolina is 75,000 (30,400 ha) and 24,000 (9,700 ha) in Virginia. Given dry conditions across of much of the region at the critical period of flowering and pollination, yield potential in the region has been lowered slightly to 3,900 pounds/acre farmer stock (4,370 kg/ha.)

Area of a field near Whiteville, NC that experienced ponding of water early in the season.



Stunted plant near Whiteville, NC caused by tomato spotted wilt



Pod development and above-ground growth in a field near Whiteville, NC. Peanut was planted May 15 with images recorded July 15.





Peanut field and pod development near Lewiston-Woodville. Peanut was planted May 18 with images recorded July 21.





Texas panicum in a field near Lewiston-Woodville, NC on July 21.

