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If it weren't true, it would be hard to believe it is already August! Time no doubt flies by, even more so when we are busy. When I was a wee lad (more wee than now), time seemed to go by slowest when I either had the 'luxury' of being bored or dreaded doing something. It wasn't uncommon for me to want time to pass quicker if I didn't particularly favor a situation. Now, time goes by plenty fast enough, and more often than not there just aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done. Still, it seems here as with elsewhere, the lessons of yesteryear are by no means obsolete or antiquated, and now, beyond moments of impatience, the passage of time seems to slow down the more appreciation I am willing to extend to it. In any event, whether a field takes longer or shorter to reach target maturity, at times due to factors outside our control, we can position ourselves to at least plan for a day of reckoning to come when the digger pulls the plug on each field and the crop's hand's called.

2020 so far has been another in a series of not-so-normal years. We had the wettest start to the year I've seen. Now, rain is needed in many fields to keep the developing crop moving ahead to fill pods to their potential. Some moments have been quiet at times, and more than a few have been eyeing up harvest equipment now to help ensure smooth operations when the time comes. Though each year is different, the accompanying table summarizes data for some of the more recently available cultivars from trials over the 2017 to 2019 growing seasons. Most of these were conducted at Blackville, with some also conducted at Florence. Rainfall with crop growth and pest conditions can greatly affect crop progress in a given year and location, so the exact numbers here should be taken with a grain of salt, not unlike a good boiled peanut.

Summary of cultivar harvest performance at varying days after planting (DAP) inversions from 2017 – 2019.

Cultivar	DAP dug	Yield	Acre value	cDD at DAP (after emergence, base 56°F)	No. of experiments (with acre value)
Emery	130	4060 a	\$670	2940	4 (3)
	140	4070 a	\$700	3090	
	150	3510 b	\$610	3310	
FloRun 331	140	4190 b	\$800	3150	4 (3)
	150	4770 a	\$840	3340	
	155	4630 ab	\$860	3520	
Georgia 16HO	140	4580 b	\$830	3130	5 (4)
	150	4870 ab	\$920	3340	
	155	5300 a	\$1000	3420	
	163	4650 b	\$910	3490	
TUFRunner 297	140	4680 bc	\$860	3150	6 (5)
	150	5140 a	\$920	3340	
	155	4920 ab	\$920	3430	
	163	4310 c	\$830	3490	

From these data, harvest of Emery peanut was most advantageous between 130 and 140 DAP, when at least 2940 cDD had built up. Acre value closer to 140 DAP was slightly improved due to greater overall TSMK, but this was still marginal. FloRun 331 and TUFRunner 297 corresponded to optimal harvests after at least 150 DAP (≥ 3340 cDD), with Georgia 16HO leaning more towards 155 DAP (3420 cDD),

those the line was a little blurred between 150 and 155 DAP for all three. These trials mostly were from irrigated fields, and under dryland conditions, the seasonal timing and amount of rainfall directly influences the distribution of how many pods start and are able to continue marching towards maturity from different start times in the year. Less generically, checking pods is still worth our time to verify the status of the crop we think we are getting ready to harvest, which is affected by the actual conditions our field experiences. This also helps rule out whether or not half of a split crop has more pods than the other half. All to say mileage may vary from the results summarized here. Checking fields for maturity 10 to 14 days ahead of anticipated digging dates can help prevent maturity from surprising us if fields have moved quicker.

Fungicide protection near the end of the growing season remains important as a buffer against rains that could delay field access or if cooler fall temperatures slow cDD amounts and maturity development. Harvesting a crop before optimal maturity is rarely something we look forward to, as optimal maturity typically lines up with greatest returns. Disease, yield, and estimated profitability data from the VC and SE regions suggests that harvesting Virginia and runner market type cultivars before optimal maturity should potentially be considered if leaf spot canopy defoliation reaches 40 and 50% of the canopy, respectively. This can help to cut losses if leaf spot infections become intense. However, at the same time, if leaf spot comes in quick at the end of the year without having built up over a longer time (more than a month), it generally has less of an effect on yield. Similarly, regular scouting now can help prevent insect infestations from eating undetected. Other important factors we keep on the radar near inversion include soil conditions (when practical avoiding digging when ground is too wet or too dry) and possible frost following inversion, both of which can greatly affect the quality and quantity of pods making it into the basket at harvest. Always plenty to do in a set amount of time, but doing what we can helps from our end. I hope everyone has a beneficial and profitable harvest.