

Field conditions have been good for field operations over the past 10 days in most areas of the region. The remainder of the week of October 9 also appears to be good for field operations. However, rain is projected over the weekend of October 14. Some fields have become dry with increased pod loss during digging and vine inversion reported.

Heat unit accumulation data associated with four time periods are presented in the Table 1. Temperatures below 40 F were experienced on October 8 and 9 across much of the region. Frost was avoided during those days and temperatures have increased on October 10 (Table 2). However, temperatures are predicted to be below average for the next week. For all practical purposes, peanut development and further pod maturation is unlikely to occur. Growers have been advised to dig pods and invert vines irrespective of pod maturity. It is very likely a significant portion of the peanut crop in the V-C Region will be less than ideal in terms of yield and market grade characteristics (sound mature kernels and extra larger kernels, for example.) Immature kernels will be more vulnerable to freeze damage should that occur. Currently, frost is not predicted across the region in the near term. Growers are advised to stop digging operations at least 72 hours prior to a possible frost event. This allows kernels to dry and shrink. Dry kernels have less water for freezing and thawing (the cause of cell rupture and damage) while shrinkage of kernels creates a layer of insulation between the inner side of pods and the kernel in the pod.

Sclerotinia blight increased substantially in numerous fields over the past two weeks. Cool and wet temperatures are ideal for this disease. While epidemics for the pathogen causing leaf spot disease have slowed, peanuts in fields with poor control early in the fall have continued to defoliate. However, across the region most fields have peanuts with good vine health.

Burrower bug damage has been reported at one buying point. Dry weather early in the year most likely contributed to presence of this soil-borne insect. This pest is relatively new to the upper areas of the region. In 2022, farmers in four counties in North Carolina experienced damage from this pest. Peanuts with damage from this pest have the potential to be moved to the Seg 2 category based on Federal and State Inspection Service criteria.

Approximately 50% of peanut land area has been dug across the region with 20% harvested as of October 10.

The current yield estimate for the region is 4,000 pounds per acre (4,480 kg/ha).

Table 1. Average heat unit accumulation from September 4 through October 9 at Clinton, North Carolina. This location is central to the V-C Region.

Interval	Growing degree days (DD₅₆)
September 4-12	22.5
September 13-21	13.1
September 22-30	10.2
October 1-9	9.4

Table 2. Daily low temperatures for October 7-10 at locations in North Carolina.				
Location	October 7	October 8	October 9	October 10
Lewiston-Woodville	52	43	40	48
Rocky Mount	53	44	40	48
Kinston	55	44	41	53
Clinton	52	41	39	53
Kenansville	51	39	37	46
Whiteville	56	42	40	52

Peanut field near Rocky Mount, North Carolina dug on September 28.





Peanuts in a field near Windsor, North Carolina that were recently threshed.



Leaf spot disease and Sclerotinia blight in the peanut canopy near Lewiston-Woodville, North Carolina.



Diseased plants associated with Sclerotinia blight in a field near Lewiston-Woodville, North Carolina.





Pod load from plants recently dug near Rocky Mount, North Carolina.



Pod shed after digging in a field near Lewiston-Woodville, North Carolina.

