

# Peanut Planting Moving Along In Arkansas

**WALNUT RIDGE, ARK.**

The peanut acreage in Lawrence County looks a lot different in 2012 than it did last year, said Herb Ginn, county extension staff chair for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

"This is tremendously different than last year as we still had floodwaters we were contending with," he said. Early spring weather allowed growers to get busy, until a very dry April ground planting to a halt.

Even so, "looks like we have close to 5,000 acres of peanuts this year here in the county this a little more than I had expected," Ginn said.

Travis Faske, extension plant pathologist for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, said Tuesday that Arkansas' peanut acreage is estimated at 18,000 acres, well up from the approximately 7,500 acres grown in 2011. Most of the peanut acreage is in Lawrence and Randolph, with 3,000-4,000 total acres spread among Clay, Lee, Poinsett, Phillips, Mississippi and White counties.

Two peanut buyers, the Clint Williams and Birdsong Peanut companies, which have most of the contracts for 2012 acreage in Arkansas, are building buying points near Pochontas and Walnut Ridge. These are expected to be ready by harvest time.

Some of that acreage increase belongs to farmers trying their hand at peanuts this year.

"We have picked up several new growers this year and a few of our previous growers have increased their peanut acres," Ginn said. "We now have close to 10 growers this year, which is a nice increase from just one grower with 600 acres in 2010."

Both Randolph County Extension Staff Chair Mike Andrews and Clay County Extension Agent Ron Baker also saw growth in both the number of growers and acres.

"We have a combination of first-time growers and second-year growers," Andrews said, adding that he's expecting "There will be more calls coming as the peanuts emerge and decisions need to be made on weed control, irrigation, fungicide applications, etc."

"We will be watching for insects in the next few weeks, as well as weeds," he said.

Baker said he expected about 2,000 acres of peanuts in his county this year, all on the west side.

"About 1,600 acres are already planted and beginning to emerge," he said.

In Phillips and Lee counties, "peanut planting is going great," said Robert Goodson, an extension agent who works both counties. "I know for sure there will be at least two maybe three producers in Lee County and the same one in Phillips. Estimates for the two counties are around 2,000 acres. Phillips had 600 last year." △



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