



College of Agricultural &
Environmental Sciences

Stripling Irrigation Research Park
March 2010 Event and Activity Update

Recent Activities at the Park:

February 1- Dean Angle WIMBA online broadcast
February 1-2- Calvin in Savannah for Georgia Dairy Conference
February 2- Avery Ins. Co. Customer Appreciation Luncheon @ SIRP
February 9- Sweet Corn Meeting @ SIRP
February 19- SSDI Meeting @ SIRP
February 23- Field Corn fungicide research meeting @ SIRP
February 25- Golden Triangle RC&D / MCBOC meeting @ SIRP to discuss “The Big Slough Restoration”

Recent Visitors:

During February, the Park has been hosting our researchers to determine their needs for spring preparations of the crops they are going to be planting, harvesting and researching for 2010. Our conference room is being used to host agricultural events of appreciation and discussion that will impact our citizens and community. Thank you to Avery Ins. Co. for their recognition of our local farmers and their sincere appreciation to that group for their business.

In the News:

- The House and Senate chambers of the Georgia General Assembly recently passed legislation related to conservation of water. The bills would allow outdoor watering only between the hours of 4 p.m. and 10 a.m. Farmers would be exempt, as would people who irrigate their own food gardens, private well owners, nurseries, golf courses and athletic fields. The legislation also requires builders to use more efficient water fixtures, such as low-flow toilets, in newly constructed buildings. For those of you that follow the happenings under the gold dome, this legislation is in the forms of HB 1094 and SB 370.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-politics-elections/lawmakers-approve-culture-of-360928.html>

- The March issue of Georgia Trend magazine has an article, **2010 Power Women: Change Agents**, that mentions Dr. Beverly Sparks, UGA College of Ag & Environmental Sciences Associate Dean for Extension. The article also mentions Deborah Sheppard, Altamaha Riverkeeper.

http://www.georgiatrend.com/cover-story/03_10_power_women.shtml

- The same issue of Georgia Trend has an article, **2010 Counties Of Excellence**, and it highlights a project right here in Mitchell County. The awards are selected by The Association

County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) and Georgia Trend, and reward good ideas that are well executed.

http://www.georgiatrend.com/features-economic-development/03_10_counties.shtml

- Former Rep. Richard Royal of Camilla is quoted in a story in the Florida Times-Union. Mr. Royal chairs the Lower Flint River Planning Council. In the story, Mr. Royal notes that the state figures don't rely on water meters that farmers installed on their irrigation wells as a result of legislation he sponsored. Mr. Royal also said the councils are also waiting on population forecasts from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget. The story noted that some observers have said the first draft of those figures contained major flaws.

[http://jacksonville.com/news/georgia/2010-03-](http://jacksonville.com/news/georgia/2010-03-03/story/dubious_data_enters_georgia_water_debate)

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Field Activities:

The rains have kept the Park's plots saturated. This is starting to become an issue as field corn, sweet corn, and tomato plots will need attention very soon. Yet as this newsletter is being finalized, more rain is in our forecast. Throughout February the Park researchers have been meeting, discussing, determining where, what and when they will be at the Park preparing their plots for Spring.

Weather Happenings at SIRP:

The total amount of rainfall received at SIRP Feb. 1-28 (according to our 'official' rain gage) was 6.45 inches. This compares to 7.41 inches in January. As always, for information from one of UGA's automated weather stations near you, go to www.georgiaweather.net.

State Budget:

As most of you know, the UGA administration and the Board of Regents submitted a budget reduction plan on Monday March 1 to the House and Senate subcommittees on Higher Education in response to directives that an additional \$300M from the FY2011 BOR budget be cut, in addition to the Governor's already announced cuts of \$265M. The plan included eliminating 4-H, closing half of the extension offices in Georgia, and closing the Stripling Irrigation Research Park.

A meeting of the SIRP Advisory Committee was quickly scheduled on Wednesday March 3. Word of the meeting spread and I'm happy to report that over 50 interested farmers, agri-business folks, and others assembled in SIRP's conference room to hear about the situation and ramifications from Dean Scott Angle and Asst Dean Joe West.

We thank all of our clientele, friends and supporters that felt it was worth their time and energy to contact state legislators, Board of Regents members, and others to educate the decision-makers on the consequences of closing SIRP.

Last week, the February revenue numbers were bleak - but the Governor announced that he was recommending that the University System not be given the additional \$300M cut in FY11 but instead an additional cut of just over \$110M (plus the original cut of \$265M). Our hope is that with the reduced cuts and the ability to do some extensive planning, SIRP can remain "open for business" and continue doing our good work for Georgia's citizens.

Upcoming Events:

March 5 - Research Park Superintendents Meeting, Athens, Ga.

March 8 – Furlough Day (The Park will be closed)

March 9 - 4H20 Discussion Meeting, Albany

March 23 - ACF Stakeholders Meeting @ SIRP

March 25 - Visit by German Ag-Economics students

April 1 - District FFA Forestry Competition @ SIRP

April 12 - Tri-state Climate Working Group Meeting @ SIRP

June 15-17 - 4-H2O Summer Camp

June 29 - SIRP Field Day

Trivia:

In the continental US, there are 2,110 watersheds. For more information on watersheds, go to www.epa.gov and follow the links.

Photos of Recent Activities:



Spreading fertilizer on corn plots March 15. The Park needs some good weather to plant corn.