



College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences

Stripling Irrigation Research Park  
March 2011 Event and Activity Update

*From the Superintendent:*

The activity level at Stripling Park ratchets up a notch at this time of year. We begin burn-down of cover crop in our conventional tillage plots, start preparing the soil in our vegetable plots, start marking plots, alleys, etc. in our fields, and check our tractors and implements to make sure they are ready to go. We are also looking at replacing the sprinklers and regulators on our pivots and linear-move systems as they are approaching 10 years old.

We continue to watch with great interest the happenings in Atlanta and Washington. As I stated last month - at the moment, the level of state budget cuts (FY2012) to the research and extension activities in the College are not known. We do know that the 4% cuts to FY2011 budgets are to be considered 'permanent'. The CAES is led by a great team of administrators that, somehow, have managed a "boat-load" of budget cuts without resorting to layoffs. We shudder to think about another round of substantial cuts to the College's FY2012 budget.

The news out of Washington isn't much better. With the dismantling of 'special grants', also known as earmarks, funding for Stripling Park's recently expanded work in subsurface drip irrigation will cease unless an alternative form of funding is worked out. This will certainly impact our ability to expand this research beyond what we're doing now. Also, with Congress leaning toward cutting discretionary spending, agricultural research is likely to take a substantial hit. Budget cutting and the loss of earmark funding also affects us in other ways as the same funding mechanisms support key folks, including scientists, at USDA facilities in Watkinsville and Dawson - some of whom conduct key studies here at SIRP.

To offset the loss of state and federal funding, scientists continue to work hard writing grant proposals to our commodity commissions and other groups (like USDA and foundations). We have recently learned that we will be receiving grants from the Georgia Vegetable Commission, Georgia Corn Commission, and the Georgia Cotton Commission. We greatly appreciate the funding for and support of our activities related to enhanced irrigation of crops like sweet corn, field corn, and cotton. I am also part of a fairly large USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant proposal dealing with VRI that is being reviewed at the present time.

On a positive note, I am proud to report to you about the training on irrigation (drip and surface) that I delivered to a troop of Georgia National Guardsmen. These troops are headed to Afghanistan this month to serve as an Agribusiness Development Team. This group was very

interested in what each speaker was presenting and asked many questions. I tried to relate my information to the conditions they will likely encounter in Afghanistan.

Finally, your Superintendent was ‘interviewed’ a couple times in the past and those interviews are now showing up online. The first was during last year’s Sunbelt Expo by the folks from the Growing Georgia website. I was asked to give an overview of the Park. Take a look at the interview at this link (keep your laughs to a minimum):

<http://growinggeorgia.com/videos/1513-calvin-perry-discusses-uga-irrigation-research-facility>

The second was recorded by Farm Bureau during the National Guard training. See the video at [http://www.youtube.com/user/GeorgiaFarmMonitor#p/u/3/3t0XR1PAi\\_8](http://www.youtube.com/user/GeorgiaFarmMonitor#p/u/3/3t0XR1PAi_8)

### ***Potential Shut Down of Georgia’s Weather Station Network:***

Many of you have heard that UGA will have to shut down the Georgia Automated Environmental Monitoring Network (also called ‘the weather station network’) unless a sustainable source of annual funding is established (\$300,000 per year). UGA itself (thru our College) contributes about \$52,000 to the system. The original shut down was set to begin April 1 with complete shut down by July 1. I just learned that the Georgia Dept of Ag and a department or two in the CAES have put up some funds to delay the shut down by a month or two. The CAES administration is working with many groups, including power companies and commodity commissions, to try to line up funding to keep the system up. Dean Angle has noted that state and federal folks feel the users should fund the system, not government.

To keep up with the latest developments, go to the AEMN web site:  
[www.georgiaweather.net](http://www.georgiaweather.net)

### ***Recent Activities related to the Park:***

Feb 1 & 2 – 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation Production Systems Training – Bainbridge, GA

Feb 3 - Met with Tracey Thornton, Congressman Bishop’s new chief of staff.

Feb 8 – Nelson Irrigation Training, Tifton

Feb 17 – Calvin made presentation (Athens) on irrigation to a group of Georgia National Guard troops that will be going to Afghanistan to serve as an Agribusiness Development Unit. There is primitive flood irrigation and some drip irrigation.

Feb 23 - Met with Jason Lawrence, Congressman Austin Scott’s ag staffer.

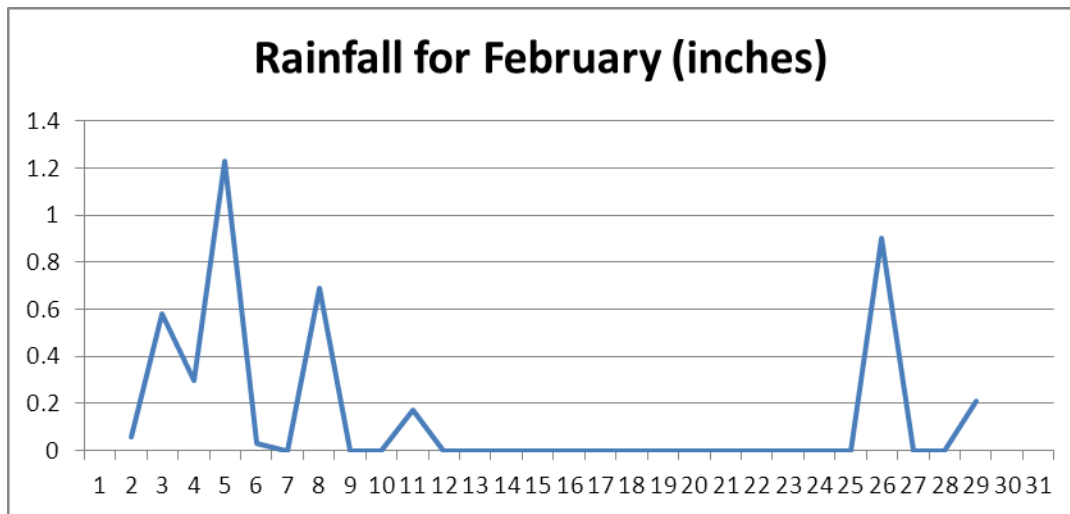
### ***Field Activities:***

During February, SIRP managed to get a fair bit of field work accomplished. We re-installed some mouse-damaged subsurface drip tape (see photo below) in the SSDI system. We also worked with Dr. Sparks’ crew to prepare vegetable beds and then apply fumigant (photo below). We also had a vendor come in and do some extensive repair and modifications of buried piping supplying our SDI test area (Access Field). We have also sprayed all plots that will be conventional tillage for 2011.

Note: Again a reminder - we are still on the look-out for a **2-row KMC peanut combine** in pretty good shape that a generous farmer would be willing to donate to SIRP/UGA. KMC has been willing to help UGA by refurbishing the combines Dr. Beasley has found, including putting on a bagging attachment.

### ***Weather Happenings at SIRP:***

The total amount of rainfall received at SIRP during February (according to our 'official' rain gage) was **4.17** inches. This compares to 4.55 inches in January, 0.76 inches in December and 4.48 inches in November. As always, for information from one of UGA's automated weather stations near you, go to [www.georgiaweather.net](http://www.georgiaweather.net) .



### ***Water in the News:***

“Water War Gets Court Date” - which is currently set for March 9.

<http://www.gpb.org/news/2011/01/27/water-war-gets-court-date>

“Showdown over water rights Wednesday at 11th Circuit”

<http://www.ajc.com/news/showdown-over-water-rights-865278.html>

“Most important case' for Georgia in decades”

<http://www.ajc.com/news/most-important-case-for-861901.html>

“UGA: State weather stations may have to close”

[http://www.onlineathens.com/stories/030811/uga\\_796207198.shtml](http://www.onlineathens.com/stories/030811/uga_796207198.shtml)

“Statewide weather station network shutting down”

<http://www.walb.com/Global/story.asp?S=14207953>

Georgia Farm Bureau’s Zippy Duvall discusses water issues

<http://growinggeorgia.com/videos/1544-zippy-duvall-discusses-water-issues>

***Upcoming Events:***

- Mar 3 – Senninger training in Tifton
- Mar 3 & 4 – Superintendents’ meeting in Attapulcus, GA
- Mar 7 – 4H2O Planning Meeting at SIRP
- Mar 8 – Calvin meets with Sunbelt Expo regarding VRI
- Mar 9 – SSDI Planning Meeting at SIRP
- Mar 10 – Student Shadows from Pelham High School
- Mar 16-17 – Earthtec Solutions on-site training

***Trivia:***

In a 100-year period, a water molecule spends 98 years in the ocean, 20 months as ice, about 2 weeks in lakes and rivers, and less than a week in the atmosphere.

***Photos of Recent Activities:***



***Re-installing SSDI drip tape.***



*Applying fumigant to vegetable plots.*



*Jay and his wife Ashley opening baby shower gifts. Jay and Ashley are expecting a boy in early April. Nice UGA cap Jay.*