

THE PECAN NEWSLETTER

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 4348 Carter Creek Pkwy. Suite 101 Bryan, TX 77802
 Phone: 979-846-3285; Fax: 979-846-1752; E-mail: pecans@tpga.org

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Welcome! Here is the eighth newsletter for the 2022 crop year. Thank you to everyone who has contributed information to the newsletter. Good luck with harvest!

SOUTHEAST

Harvest continues throughout the Southeast. While many growers have been harvesting since September, some have just started. One Georgia grower shares that they are two weeks into harvesting and have had trouble finding labor and getting parts for repairs.

“We are harvesting at full capacity this week— ‘Desirables, ‘Cape Fear,’ etc. We will start shaking the ‘Stuart blends this week,” another Georgia grower reports. “Quality looks outstanding on everything so far. We are starting to get some yield numbers back from the plant, and so far, I am a little disappointed. It’s not a disaster by no means, but the numbers just aren’t coming up to what I thought the tree had the potential to yield.”

This same grower adds that although they plan to do a second round of harvesting, it looks like they’ve collected 60-70% of the nuts on their first trip. “So I don’t think we are going to make it up later. Talking with other growers, this seems to be what they are seeing as well,” this producer adds.

Some growers in Georgia say they still have a heavy crop, but even with the yields, their success will come down to price.

TEXAS & OKLAHOMA

This year’s harvest in Texas and Oklahoma continues to be behind schedule. Shucks are opening up later than usual, and growers must wait longer to enter their orchards. One North Texas grower says this is the latest in 10 years they have started harvesting. Another grower in Central Texas reports that their ‘Cheyenne’ pecans are just beginning to

open up.

“‘Wichitas’ and ‘Cheyennes’ are shuck splitting very slowly. Way late—about two weeks behind ‘normal shuck spilt,’ “yet another Central Texas grower says. “Day by day, a few more split, but the last few days, I’ve observed: lots of nicely shuck split nuts that will release with shaking, harvester, and cleaner action; thick, very wet shucks that split when squeezed hard or peeled (in other words, the shuck is “almost spilt” but just won’t open), and lots of sticktights on ‘Wichitas’ and ‘Cheyennes.’”

This grower says that the sticktights appear on full-size 3-5 nut clusters and entire trees.

In South Texas, many growers report that they have lost almost all of their ‘Wichita’ crop to shuck decline. Reports from across the state indicate that the Texas crop is getting shorter and its quality is worsening.

“What we predicted... it’s come full circle. I was totally expecting this from Texas,” a Central Texas grower says.

In Oklahoma, producers continue to assess damage and recover from last week’s early freeze. This major weather event came on top of the severe drought that already seriously impacted the crop.

“We actually had one of the biggest crops on the trees since 2010. Drought took about 25%, and the freeze took another big hit,” an Oklahoma grower shares.

Overall, estimates suggest that about 50% of the native crop has been lost.

“Half the leaves are falling off the trees; pecans are turning black,” one grower in northern Oklahoma says. “We have had about 15% shuck split [before the freeze]. I’m estimating 60 to 70% damage on anything that hasn’t opened up.”

Some growers started harvesting ‘Pawnee’ and other early varieties right before the freeze, but they have had to be selective. Now harvest will be even more difficult as native pecan growers weigh whether or not to head out to the orchard.

WEST TEXAS, NEW MEXICO; ARIZONA

Pecan growers in the West continue to wait to start shaking trees. The region generally waits until the first killing freeze before harvesting. While they wait, producers are stocking up on parts for routine maintenance, preparing the orchard flood, and reviewing their maintenance plans. Those producers with ‘Pawnee’ have harvested that crop but will hold off on their other varieties until hopefully November. Some western producers have decided they can’t wait as long as last year and adjusted their harvesting plans.

“We’ve not started, but due to the late freeze last year, we

PECAN STOCKS IN COLD STORAGE USDA Report			
(1,000 pounds)			
	Sept. 30, 2021	Aug. 31, 2022	Sept. 30, 2022
Shelled	38.09	46.15	43.23
Inshell	97.15	101.05	61.29
Total converted to inshell	173.33 mil. lbs.	193.35 mil. lbs.	147.75 mil. lbs.

We calculate the total inshell by converting shelled meats to inshell using a yield of 50% (multiplying shelled by 2) and adding it to the reported inshell.

are going to start trying some green harvest this year. We plan to start November 7,” a West Texas grower says.

MEXICO

Mexican growers continue to shake trees and bring in fresh nuts. Growers in Jiménez y Camargo in Chihuahua are in the beginning stages of harvest and have barely gotten started on their improved varieties.

Slow shuck split has interfered with harvest activities and caused a slight delay as growers waited for more nuts to open up. With most shucks now open, producers are gaining speed and harvest is picking up. Some areas report an infestation of spittlebugs. Besides that, producers report little to no issues with germination.

In Delicias, clear skies and good weather have allowed growers to move through harvest easily. They are still in the early phases. The native crop is much smaller than anticipated, and the market is unusually slow for this time of year. Some producers attribute the slow market to low native production. Additionally, growers report problems with germinated nuts and poor kernel fill.

Over in Durango, recent freezes and colder temperatures have helped to initiate shuck split and ease the trees into fall. Although a few producers have started harvest, most plan to wait a little longer, with some saying they may begin the first week of November. Growers throughout the state have high expectations for this year’s crop and predict a good yield with high quality.

Harvest in Coahuila appears to be moving swiftly. Growers report that they have collected 90% of their ‘Wichita’ crop, which appears to be of good quality, and about 40% of their ‘Western.’

Growers in Comarca Lagunera continue to move through their harvest and anticipate bringing more nuts into the market this week. These producers report good quality and good production.

Reports from this region indicate that the American market is active, and high-quality nuts from this area sell at around \$3.70 per point. Other accounts place prices at \$3.80 per point for ‘Wichita’ nuts, but only a few sales have been finalized.

Prices for native pecans range from \$1.14 to \$1.26 per pound inshell. As for improved varieties, select nuts are going between \$1.56 and \$1.71 per pound inshell.

MARKET AND PRICES

The retail and gift-pack market continues to be the most active but appears to be moving slower than usual for some growers.

“We can’t get a price quote,” one southeastern grower says. “Pecans are a luxury item for folks, and inflation is causing people who stop by the stand to purchase some to not buy any because the rest of their expenses have gone up dramatically.”

Other growers are having better luck with their retail businesses and online shops.

“Good news is retail store activity. It is good. We’re starting to see several customers arriving at the same time each day, and sales are good—inshell, cracked, and shelled meat,” says a grower in the central part of the Pecan Belt. “We raised prices about 10%, and no one is complaining or backing away from sales. I’ve had to help our store manager the last few days with the number of customers arriving at the same time.”

Growers selling on the retail side—specifically those in the Central Region of the Pecan Belt—are reporting prices between \$3.25 and \$3.35 per pound inshell.

One grower says they’ve sold a load of ‘Cheyenne’ that were “real fancy, big nuts” for \$3.20 per pound inshell. “There’s high demand for good quality pecans, but there’s just not that many good ones out there,” they explain. “Some retailers are having to go outta state for the first time [to find nuts].”

As for the commercial and export markets, prices and interest have been reportedly mixed. Export buyers are starting to show more interest, while some domestic buyers and shellers are weighing their options and exploring other production areas for pecans.

One grower says they haven’t sold anything yet, but prices look good.

“I moved the few ‘Pawnees’ that I had. Medium size—\$2.75 per pound,” another grower reports.

A buyer reports that the market came on strong in the Southeast but is starting to come off a bit as the industry gets a handle on the crop. They expect the price to trend down a bit. “Pawnee’ started at \$2.65 per pound for really good ones, but it’s now down to \$2.40 to \$2.50 a pound,” this buyer adds.

“Pricing is hard to get with not much interest—‘Pawnee’ in the \$2.50 range. Haven’t gotten much pricing on anything else,” a grower in the Southeast reports.

“As far as price, I have gotten bids in the \$2.25 [per pound] range on ‘Desirables.’ I will have a better idea on prices next week for other varieties,” another Southeastern grower says.

As with most years, the market is a contentious subject. Contradicting reports from buyers, shellers, and growers have contributed to disparities in reported prices. This year’s pricing is complicated as everyone tries to get the best deal to counteract the rising costs associated with running a pecan business. Some industry members plan to talk with as many people as possible before settling for a price that may not meet their needs or expectations. Additionally, some producers have begun to look into cold storage options.

E-MAIL: If you would like to contribute information about your crop and area, please contact Catherine Clark at cclark@pecansouthmagazine.com.

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