

Georgia Farmers Strike Oil With Olives

The Georgia Olive Farms (GOF) co-op has started introducing a new cash crop to farmers in the southeast U.S. GOF buys olives for processing and also sells seedling trees and offers turnkey programs for new growers.

"We had our first commercial crop of about 3 tons last year," says Kevin Shaw, GOF.

Shaw and his cousins, Sam and Jason, are founding members of the co-op, planting their first orchard in 2009. Currently, they and other members have 84 acres under production, with the goal of up to 20,000 acres in the next few years.

The reason for the stepped goals is to make sure they can match milling capacity and marketing with production, explains Shaw. Key to their plans for creating a high value product is quality control.

"We want to keep the oil as fresh as possible," he says. "Even novice olive oil tasters comment on how fresh our oil tastes."

The co-op had only 500 bottles of oil available from their first crush and has been busy exposing celebrity chefs and others to build future demand. They expect to harvest 10 times as many olives in 2012 and up to 30 times as much within 4 years. By this fall's harvest, GOF plans to have its own mill for processing the crop.

In addition, the co-op is selling three varieties of olive tree seedlings to interested growers. They estimate 50,000 trees have been planted to date. At 600 trees per acre, the number is likely higher, says Shaw, who has fielded calls from three growers wanting

to put in trees this spring.

"We have a map of what we call the olive belt," says Shaw. "It runs from as far north as the Carolinas to as far south as central Florida and west to Mississippi. We've had folks in Texas purchasing olive seedlings as well."

Olives are already grown in Calif., Ore., Arizona and Texas. However, U.S. production is only about one percent of consumption. For the Shaws and GOF, that leaves lots of room for growth.

"We are working with farmers to establish olive orchards throughout the olive belt," says Shaw. "GOF is an open co-op, and we welcome new members."

While establishing their first orchards, GOF has also been evaluating watering systems, comparing varieties and developing harvesting equipment. Last year's crop was picked with a modified blueberry harvester.

"There are olive harvesters on the market, but they cost two times as much as a blueberry harvester," says Shaw. "We had to beef it up a lot to be aggressive enough for olives; yet it can still roll into a blueberry field and be used there."

GOF members worked with consultants from around the world to develop the optimal template. Knowledge and skills learned, including the use of high-density production, are now being shared with others.

"Olives were a new crop for me" says Shaw. "We grow cotton, peanuts and corn. Olives take a different mindset, and we haven't figured everything out yet. People



Georgia Olive Farms co-op buys olives for processing and also offers turnkey programs for new growers. Last year's crop was picked with a modified blueberry harvester.

who join in will be learning along with us."

Contracts for growers are available. Turnkey support includes all services related to establishing an olive orchard. These can include location and purchase of land, site preparation, trees, bamboo and trellis for seedling support, posts, irrigation, planting management, harvesting and milling. GOF will also arrange for bottling, labeling, marketing and purchase of an orchard's olive oil.

For pricing on trees contact Georgia Olive Tree Nursery.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Georgia Olive Farms, 39 Valdosta Highway, P.O. Box 245, Lakeland, Ga. 31635 (ph 229 356-3647; kevin@georgiaolivefarms.com; www.georgiaolivefarms.com) or Georgia Olive Tree Nursery, P.O. Box 245, Lakeland, Ga. 31635 (ph 229 560-5615; sam@georgiaolivefarms.com).

"Squealer" Attracts Wild Hogs

"Feral hogs have been a problem in many Southern states for years, and their numbers are growing in other areas. Our new Hog Squealer call helps you bring hogs in when hunting," says Jerry Antley, Downsville, La.

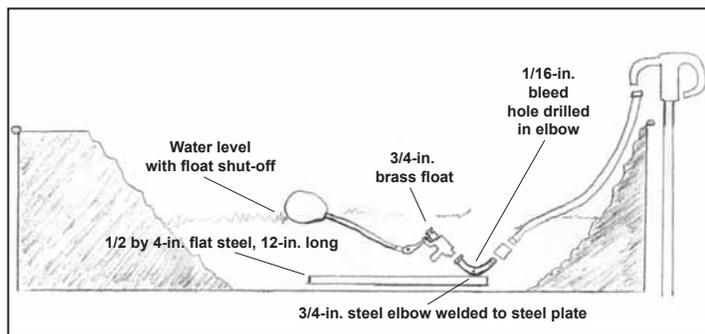
The Hog Squealer consists of a hard plastic green barrel attached to a soft plastic "hose".

"It sounds exactly like a wild hog and can be heard for a long ways off," says Antley. "The call is equipped with two reeds, which you control by placing your finger over a hole in the barrel. You can cover the hole for older hogs, and leave it open for younger pigs. You can also learn to make different kinds of calls, in order to mimic an excited or distressed hog.

The Hog Squealer sells for \$14.95 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jerry Antley, 238 Vic Allen Rd., Downsville, La. 71234 (ph 318 982-5632; cedarhillja@aol.com; www.cedarhill-gamecalls.com).

Hog Squealer call helps you bring hogs in when hunting.



Patrick Fordyce designed a valve for his metal stock tanks that keeps the hydrant from freezing during the winter.

Winter Water Valve

"I made a valve for winter watering in my metal stock tanks. The design keeps the hydrant from freezing and the water stays open all winter," says Patrick Fordyce, Hilger, Mont.

"It consists of a 3/4-in. steel elbow welded to a heavy 4 by 12-in. steel plate, 1/2-in. thick. A 1/16-in. bleed hole is drilled into the side of the elbow. A garden hose from the hydrant connects to one side and a shutoff float valve to the other. The float valve is set so water

just covers the valve. The small bleed hole continues to fill the tank. If cattle drink the tank down too far, the float valve opens to full flow so there's always ample water. I only have to check periodically to make sure the bleed hold is not plugged."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Patrick Fordyce, Wild Chance Ranch, 13411 Salt Creek Road, Hilger, Mont. 59451 (ph 406 462-5611).



Bonilla plastic seed tabs are designed for Deere 50 and 90 Series seed boots and do a better job of keeping seeds from bouncing out of seed slots, says the company.

Tabs Put Seeds Into Slot

Bonilla seed tabs keep seeds from bouncing out of seed slots. The simple plastic tab fits Deere 50 and 90 Series seed boots. It's an easy add-on that helps ensure better seed placement and emergence, says Phil Needham, Needham Ag Technologies, LLC.

"Deere drills and air seeders can have a hard time keeping seeds in the slot," explains Needham. "That is especially so in no-till fields with heavy residue, uneven surfaces such as wheel tracks, and when planting at higher speeds."

Needham says the factory installed seed tab doesn't provide a good enough seal. However, the Bonilla seed tab is made from UHMW (ultra high molecular weight) quartz. The heavy-duty poly material is flexible and wear resistant. Its 7° angle also follows the seed slot behind the boot more closely than

the original flat tab.

"When we ran field trials comparing the Bonilla seed tab with the factory-installed tab, we could see the difference," says Needham. "More seeds were retained in the seed slot, even in heavy residue, no-till conditions, and the tabs last three times longer."

Needham Ag Technologies is selling the Bonilla seed tabs on their website for \$3 each plus shipping. Tabs for the Deere 90 Series equipped with extended wear seed boots require a longer bolt and lock nut for the Bonilla seed tabs, adding 25¢ per tab to the cost.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Needham Ag Technologies, LLC, 4911 Kentucky 81 North, Calhoun, Ky. 42327 (ph 270 785-0999; www.needhamag.com).

"Best Bargain In Farming"

Join thousands of your fellow FARM SHOW readers who've already ordered a copy (or copies) of our latest "Encyclopedia of Made It Myself Ideas - Vol. II". As one reader told us, it's the "best bargain in farming". Use the enclosed order form, go to www.farmshow.com, or call us at 800 834-9665 to order.

