

## Gaston Grower Spotlight- November 2021



### Thank a Farmer This Thanksgiving

Regardless of where you stand on the turkey vs. ham for Thanksgiving debate there is a farmer to thank behind the meal you have prepared. North Carolina ranks 2nd in Turkey production, and 3rd in hog production within our nation. While Gaston county doesn't host any commercial turkey or swine facilities, we host growers harvesting crops that provide our state's livestock with the necessary components for animal feed. We will take a closer look at soybean this thanksgiving, and the role it plays on your Thanksgiving plate.



## Soybeans

Soybeans can be found growing in the more rural parts of our county. Growers in our area will usually rotate soybean fields in a rotation including small grains or corn. Planting of the crop begins sometime between the beginning of May and ends before July. The crop is harvested between October and the beginning of December. A soybean is made up of about 80% meal and 20% oil. The meal is used primarily for animal feed (97%) and the remainder for food products. The oil is primarily used as vegetable oil, or as an ingredient in foods (like salad dressings). Other uses for soybean oil include biofuels, and industrial uses. Whether vegetarian or carnivore a soybean farmer has most likely played a role in what is on your plate every day. The crop's versatility makes it a very valuable crop worldwide. The United States and Brazil produce the most soybeans, and export the most soybeans. Most of the beans produced locally are utilized for feed in domestic livestock production and are not exported.



## Soybean Trial

Gaston County Cooperative Extension participated in a state wide trial this year in cooperation with a local grower. This trial compared fungicide treated seed with untreated seed, and yield was evaluated. The picture above is of the weigh wagon utilized to measure the weight of the yield of each plot within the trial. Fungicide treated seed is usually utilized for assisting in early season management of pathogens that could potentially impact growth and yield. The aim of this trial statewide is to determine for our growers if investment in treated seed is worth the return received in yield. The results are not finalized and reported, but Gaston County Cooperative Extension was grateful to have an opportunity to contribute in a trial that has implications for more profitable production of soybeans for our growers.



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