

Farm Update: Summer 2023

At this point, the crops are looking good. We have had timely rains this growing season, only experiencing a three-week dry period. We are very fortunate, as we have had extreme crop-damaging rains in the past. Corn appears to be above average, but not record-breaking. Soybeans will depend on the amount of rain received in August, but at this point, they are looking good. Tobacco harvest started the first week of August, which is the latest start we've had so far. We typically try to start in early July but were delayed getting into the field due to a cool spring which also caused a slow start to the crops.



Cucumber yields are above average as well. We tried a different fertilizer this year which has paid off, along with the lack of heavy rain that would have risked crop damage. However, COVID-19 has greatly affected the pickle industry. When everyone was home due to the pandemic, pickle sales went up, but now that we have returned to a sense of normalcy, sales are down. This decrease in demand results in grower contracts being cut prior to planting. This year, the companies have been holding everyone to their contracted number of bushels, and it seems everyone had a good crop. In the past, we were able to fill unmet bushels that others couldn't uphold due to a poor crop, but that is not the case this year. We could have harvested the fields five to six more times if the demand was there. It is disheartening to have to destroy leftover crops.

Lastly, our turkeys and hogs are doing well. We are praying the bird flu is a thing of the past since it has not appeared in North Carolina this year. Hog performance and production have been doing fine, and while the pork industry overall has not been doing well due to oversupply and a lack of shipments from the pandemic, this has not directly affected our operations.

Adventures of Savannah and Grayson

Savannah and Grayson have stayed busy this summer. Savannah continues to work at the Wayne County USDA Farm Service Agency office in Goldsboro. She has been enjoying her experience and continues to gain valuable knowledge while working there. Grayson will be wrapping up his final year at NCSU this school year, and after changing majors, he will now be graduating with a bachelor's degree in accounting and a minor in pulp and paper engineering in May 2024. Post-graduation, he plans to sit for his Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam.

USDA Trade Mission to Amsterdam



Tour of Bunge Oilseed Crushing Plant with Brent

The third week of April was very eventful and educational for Reggie and Savannah as they traveled to Amsterdam to attend the very first USDA Ag Trade Mission to Amsterdam. The week kicked off Monday morning with an overview of the Dutch government and some of the struggles within the industry. They received briefings from the Foreign Ag Services office in The Hague, Alexis Taylor, Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Ag Affairs, and Shefali Razdan Duggan, US Ambassador to the Netherlands. These, along with site visits and many networking activities while in the Netherlands, made the trip a very productive experience. One great and informative site visit included a tour of the Bunge Oilseed Crushing Plant, where they crush GMO and non-GMO soybeans imported from both the United States and Brazil. They received a tour of the facility with Brent Babb, US Soybean Export Council Regional Director for Europe & Middle East, and a few others. It was a great experience to see the next step once our soybeans leave the country! Reggie and Savannah also stayed an extra day to meet with Davy van Ewijk from Farm Fresh and

tour their Dutch facility. Farm Fresh is one of our partners which pack and ship our sweet potatoes; their world headquarters is located in Faison, NC. They were able to see what happens to the sweet potatoes once they leave the U.S. and enter Europe. Strickland Farming

Group is GlobalGAP certified for their sweet potatoes to meet the European sustainability requirements.

Additional visits and networking opportunities included the Food Innovation Academy, Zandbergen World's Finest Meats, a banquet at the Historical Tobacco Theater, the Royal Palace of the King of the Netherlands, the world-famous Keukenhof Garden, and more! It was an honor for Reggie to be able to represent the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and U.S. farmers, as well as support soybean exports throughout the world on this trip. The trade mission will be one to remember for both father and daughter, especially Reggie, as he got to see Savannah's passion for agriculture. She was in turn able to experience why Reggie loves what he does and why he is on these boards.

For more information and photos on Reggie and Savannah's trip to Amsterdam, as well as other updates on the farm, make sure to follow Strickland Farming Group on social media!



Reggie and Savannah at Farm Fresh



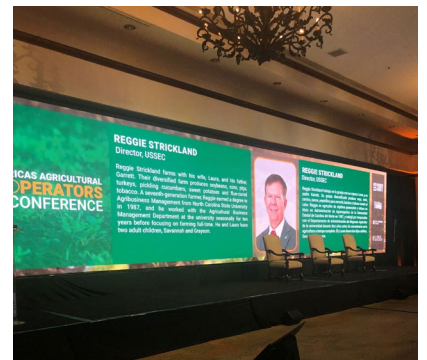
Additional pictures from Reggie and Savannah's trip to Amsterdam: (L) A tour of Royal Flora Holland, which is the largest flower auction in the Netherlands; (M) Alexis Taylor speaking at the US-NL Trade Mission; and (R) A tour of Sligro Food Group, a supermarket offering a comprehensive range of food and food-related products and services.

Summer Travels and Visits from Friends



This summer has been full of travel for Reggie with both USSEC and United Soybean Board (USB). In June, he traveled to St. Louis to attend work group meetings for USB, where he currently sits on the Communication and Education Committee and the Demand/Innovation-Technology work group. They worked on finalizing the fiscal year 2024 budget, which was their final look at where it would be best to invest the U.S. soy farmers' checkoff dollars. Later that same month, Reggie traveled to San Jose, Costa Rica, with USSEC to attend the Americas Agricultural Cooperators Conference. This conference provided attendees with updated information on USSEC, the markets, and future trends, as well as valuable networking opportunities. In July, Reggie traveled to Niagara Falls to attend the full USB meeting, where the FY 2024 budget was approved. Laura also

took some time off work to travel with Reggie, and they spent a couple of days visiting Niagara Falls together. Lastly, in August, a good friend of Reggie's, Aaron Gingerich, visited the farm while vacationing with his wife and kids. Aaron, who farms with his dad, uncle, and brother in Lovington, Illinois, and Reggie met ten years ago through a peer group and have kept in touch since. It was fascinating for Aaron and his family to see the farm's variety of crops since they are primarily used to seeing corn and soybeans. They enjoyed getting to see sweet potato and tobacco plants for the first time!



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