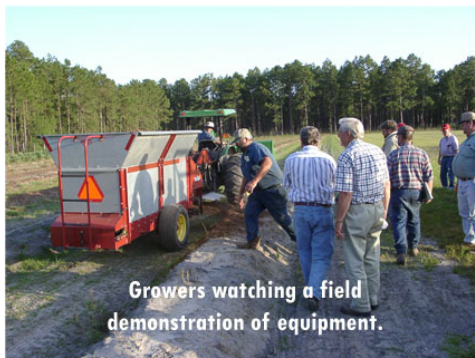


Blueberry Open House Well Attended



Crowd boarding wagons for field tour.

The 4th Annual Blueberry Open House at UGA's Blueberry Research Farm near Alapaha, Ga. was well attended on May 3, 2001. Between 90 and 95 people enjoyed the "Twilight Tour and Cookout". This included both current blueberry growers, and those interested in the crop as a potential commodity for their farm operations. The event, hosted by UGA's Dr. Scott NeSmith and Dr. Gerard Krewer (both Professors in the Dept. of Horticulture), was a chance to share with the industry the latest blueberry research projects and developments. "Our goal is to have the industry feel they are a part of our program", said Dr. NeSmith. "We want to share with them our research findings as they are being generated", he further added.



Growers watching a field demonstration of equipment.

Growers that attend the Open House are offered a hands-on experience in a field setting, as opposed to the traditional "classroom" approach to information delivery. On going projects at the Research Station were over-viewed by Dr. Krewer and Dr. NeSmith, and then visitors were turned loose to see results up close for themselves. Those attending got to see the latest research projects with growth regulators for improving fruit set and fruit size of rabbiteye blueberries. They were able to examine the effects of mulch on growth of southern highbush blueberries, including a demonstration of mulching equipment. Many of the visitors enjoyed seeing and eating fruit from the latest blueberry



Growers examine equipment used at the UGA Blueberry Farm.

The Blueberry Open House is fast becoming a tradition that allows informal interaction of growers and CAES personnel just before the busy season starts. The "chief chef" for the past couple of years has been Mr. Danny Stanaland, County Extension Coordinator, Bacon County. "Danny gladly loads up his cooker, and heads over to Alapaha, bringing with him many of the blueberry growers from his area", said Dr. NeSmith. Mr. Donnie Morris, a blueberry grower from Baxley, Ga., sent blueberry tarts again this year, which are always a big hit. Dr. Krewer provided peaches from his research plots in Attapulgus for snacking. In other words, the event is a team effort. "I hope we can keep this tradition going", said Dr. NeSmith, "We need this kind of opportunity for fellowship between our College and the industries it supports".



Group gathers for "twilight cookout".

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