

Sweet Potato Research Station



Report to Stakeholders

February 2010

About the LSU AgCenter

The LSU AgCenter is dedicated to providing innovative research, information and education to improve people's lives. Working in a unique statewide network of parish extension offices, research stations and academic departments, the LSU AgCenter helps Louisiana citizens make the best use of natural resources, protect the environment, enhance agricultural enterprises and develop human and community resources.



Research Highlights

The LSU AgCenter's Sweet Potato Research Station is the only research station in the United States solely devoted to sweet potato research and development. The mission of the station is to produce high-quality planting material to serve the commercial sweet potato industry and to conduct research in various disciplines to enhance production of sweet potatoes, including breeding, cultural practices and pest management.

Foundation Seed Program

The main goal of the foundation seed program is to maintain the integrity and quality of commercial sweet potato varieties. The foundation seed program has long served the Louisiana sweet potato industry by providing high-quality planting stock to commercial producers. The seed, which is grown under strict guidelines outlined by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, is purchased by producers, who incorporate the seed into their on-farm seed programs. The Sweet Potato Research Station serves all parishes involved in sweet potato production in Louisiana. In addition to satisfying in-state needs, the station also supplies seed to out-of-state producers if enough is available. In 2007, the station began working with domestic and international entities to supply transplants for propagation purposes. This is a testament to its national and international reputation as a premier supplier of sweet potato planting stock.

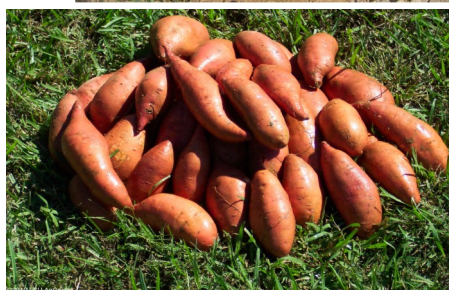
Breeding

The LSU AgCenter's Sweet Potato Breeding Program is one of only three active breeding programs in the United States. Varieties developed at the Sweet Potato Research Station are grown not only in Louisiana but throughout the United States and around the world.

Two of the three popular orange-flesh commercial varieties grown in the United States today,

Beauregard and **Evangeline**, were developed and released from the LSU AgCenter's Sweet Potato

Breeding Program. In addition to Beauregard and Evangeline, other varieties developed at the Sweet Potato Research Station are grown on a limited commercial scale throughout the United States, including Murasaki-29, O'Henry, Hernandez and Porto Rico.



Sweet Potato Research Station Office

Address: 130 Sweet Potato Road, P.O. Box 120, Chase, LA 71324

Location: The Sweet Potato Research Station is located approximately 5 miles south of Winnsboro on La. Highway 15.

Size: 308 acres, including 140 acres of cropland and 130 acres of woodland.

Phone: 318-435-2155

Fax: 318-435-2110

Email:
tsmith@agcenter.lsu.edu

Web site:
LSUAgCenter.com/Sweetpotato

Office Hours:
7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Contact:
Dr. Tara P. Smith
Extension Specialist
/Research Coordinator
tsmith@agcenter.lsu.edu

Sweet Potato Research Focus
is to enhance production of sweet potatoes:

- Virus-tested foundation seed program
- All aspects of sweet potato production and improvement
- Sweet potato variety development
- Improving production efficiency and management
- Insect, weed and disease management

Outreach and Extension
Results of sweet potato research programs are communicated to the sweet potato industry by extension specialists and county agents. Rapid dissemination of production and pest management information to the industry is the ultimate goal of the sweet potato outreach programs. In turn, advisory meetings with producers and industry representatives ensure researchers and extension personnel are aware of and are addressing critical issues in a timely manner.

Significance of Sweet Potato Research

—Production of virus-tested foundation seed sustains commercial sweet potato producers in Louisiana.

—Sweet potato varieties developed at the LSU AgCenter's Sweet Potato Research Station are grown not only in Louisiana but throughout the United States and around the world.

—Production research at the Sweet Potato Research Station is improving production efficiency and increasing yields, ultimately contributing to the state's economy.

—LSU AgCenter sweet potato research and outreach programs have positively contributed to growth in the value-added sector of the industry and resulted in significant economic development opportunities being realized in Louisiana.

2009 Sweet Potato Industry Facts

—14,000 acres of sweet potatoes in production.

—On average, 300 bushels of sweet potatoes produced per acre.

—More than 3.8 million bushels of sweet potatoes produced in state during 2009.

—Sweet potatoes are produced commercially in nine parishes.

—Total farm-gate value of sweet potato production was \$49 million, and value-added production was \$36 million, for a total economic contribution of \$85 million.

Data from the Louisiana Ag Summary

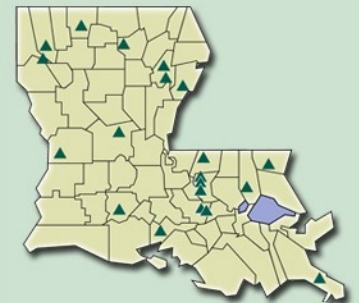
Web site: LSUAgCenter.com/agsummary

Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station

Louisiana's unique combination of crops — ranging from corn, cotton, rice and sugarcane to extensive forestry, poultry, cattle and fisheries industries — presents challenges for providing research-based information to ensure sustainable agricultural production systems.

To address the needs of these industries, the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station operates 11 departments shared by the LSU AgCenter and the LSU College of Agriculture, as well as 20 research locations across the state. To fund the basic and applied research, scientists compete for federal and state grants and checkoff dollars provided by some farmers' groups, along with state and federal dollars. Many of the facilities also sustain their research operations through the sale of agricultural commodities produced on the stations.

The LSU AgCenter has the most successful record of commercialization of intellectual property in the LSU System. Since 2000, nine new companies have been started based on licensed technology from LSU AgCenter. The income is distributed among the LSU System, the inventors and more research.



For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our Web site:

LSUAgCenter.com

Future Plans

Economic sustainability of sweet potato producers

The LSU AgCenter recently was awarded a \$2.8 million USDA Specialty Crop Research Initiative grant for sweet potato research and outreach activities. The multidisciplinary, multistate project will extend into 2012 and will focus on improving sweet potato production efficiency, quality and food safety, ultimately contributing to the economic sustainability of sweet potato producers.

During the fall of 2009, ConAgra Lamb Weston announced intentions to build a sweet potato processing facility in north Louisiana. LSU AgCenter scientists involved with sweet potatoes will continue to work closely with all facets of the value-added sector of the industry to refine and develop production and management strategies that meet the needs of not only the fresh market but the ever-expanding sweet potato processing sector.



2010 Sweet Potato Research Station Field Day

The Sweet Potato Research Station will hold a field day on Aug. 24, 2010. The field day will highlight the foundation seed program, as well as current breeding, production and pest management research projects.



Other Goals:

- Increase production efficiency, improve quality and enhance food safety awareness
- Lead in the development and implementation of sustainable and profitable production practices for sweet potatoes
- Use electronic communication to enhance personal contact and exposure with the industry and with policymakers
- Create awareness among nonfarmers of the value of production agriculture
- Work closely with producers, processors and industry representatives who are involved in the sweet potato industry

Visit our Web site: www.LSUAgCenter.com

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center: William B. Richardson, Chancellor. **Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station:** David J. Boethel,

Vice Chancellor and Director. **Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service:** Paul D. Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director

The LSU AgCenter provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.