



July 2017

Open Letter to Those Who Support Our Local Peanut Farmers:

In a nutshell, peanut growers are one family whose roots run deep and extend beyond county, state and regional borders. Whether it's Georgia, Alabama, or Florida, our passion for planting, cultivating, and harvesting a bountiful crop is what bonds us together as peanut growers.

The 2002 Farm Bill, passed by Congress and supported by peanut farmers, ushered in free market principles that empowered multi-generational farmers, while inviting first-generation, non-based peanut farmers to produce. That Bill, in addition to having the US Government buy-out the existing quotas, allowed the peanut industry to be driven by the free markets. The playing field was leveled and all farmers had an equal opportunity to produce for that market. The industry thrived and the world enjoyed our peanuts at a relatively low cost to the taxpayer.

Sadly, 12 years later the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill unintentionally weakened those bonds of the peanut growers and greatly tested the character of our farming community. Moreover, hundreds of non-based peanut growers have been exposed to **artificial risks born out of the 2014 Farm Bill**.

Non-based peanut farmers were hopeful that their Florida Peanut Producers Association (FPPA) would fight to restore free market principles and even the playing field. However, FPPA leadership unceremoniously told our farmers that nothing will be done about it and that they would soon be out of business.

The Florida Peanut Federation (FPF) was therefore established out of necessity when it became obvious that the interests of hundreds of non-based farmers were being ignored. FPF's goal is to resurrect the bonds and restore the character that not too long ago embraced and supported non-base peanut farmers, who simply want a level playing field for all growers.

We have some work to do. Recently, factions within our industry have attempted to misrepresent who we are and what we stand for, and trivialize our Federation and our 170+ members – farmers who produce a significant percentage of the peanut production in Florida. We will not let these efforts deter us, nor distract us from finding common ground with our fellow peanut farmers to get an equitable solution!

While traditional base growers are eligible for a safety net provided by the US Treasury, non-based peanut farmers are in danger of losing millions of dollars of investments, which jeopardizes thousands of farming jobs and countless small businesses and communities that rely upon the peanut growing industry.

Our goal is to simply level the playing field for base and non-base growers, while ensuring that we continue to grow in a thriving world market. FPF will continue to use its resources to assist in marketing, education, and research to promote our industry, while also working with US Congress to pass a 2018 Farm Bill that is equitable to all active producers.

To be clear, our position for the 2018 Farm Bill, as stated in our letter to the House Agriculture Committee on April 14th, calls for the following components: 1) A marketing loan of \$355/ton; 2) Storage and handling fees paid by the CCC for forfeited peanuts; 3) Separate payment limitation for peanuts; 4) A base update, of existing peanut base, to be allocated to all active producers, using a 5-year average (2011-2015); 5) A PLC (Price Loss Coverage) at or near the cost of production to make the program work effectively. FPF concurs with the University of Georgia's 2017 cost of peanut production analysis.

We have come too far as a family of farmers to let public policy stand between us or undermine what has made us the envy of the world. FPF will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with other peanut farmers looking to come together to pass a fair and equitable 2018 Farm Bill.

We are the **Florida Peanut Federation**. Visit our new website at www.FloridaPeanutFederation.org to learn more about our farmers, our cause and our association.

Sincerely,

Deborah Tannenbaum
Executive Director
Florida Peanut Federation

cc: U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
Georgia Peanut Commission
Alabama Peanut Producers Association
Florida Peanut Producers Association

