



Paul Beliveau (left) and Denny Moore on the set of *The Georgia Farm Monitor*.

Monitoring agriculture

The Georgia Farm Monitor, now in its 38th year, is the only weekly news and information program dedicated to Georgia's largest and number one industry - agriculture. The Monitor has been on the air continuously since 1966, when it began as a local program co-produced with Georgia Farm Bureau (GFB) in the studios of the CBS affiliate in Macon, Georgia. The show moved to its own production studios at Farm Bureau in 1978.

Over the years, 16 more stations were added and the program can now be seen in every Georgia TV market, plus many areas of Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee. In 2000, the Monitor began airing several times

a week on RFD-TV. The Georgia Farm Monitor's first RFD-TV broadcast each week is Wednesday at 8:30 p.m.

"The Georgia Farm Monitor was created by Farm Bureau to fill a need for information to our farmers and also

to tell the farmer's story to consumers," Wayne Dollar, GFB president, said. "We continue that tradition today as our staff travels the state and visits other parts of the nation to cover stories of interest to farmers and consumers. We still feel it fills an important need in 2004, and being on a network that covers all of rural America is an honor and a tremendous opportunity," he added.

While the program focuses on agriculture with the Georgia farmer in mind, national agriculture issues, consumer information and feature stories about rural life and interesting people are also part of the program each week.

The largest state east of the Mississippi, Georgia is quite agriculturally diverse with some twenty major commodities. Agriculture is also big business, with a more than \$57 billion dollar economic impact to the state's economy.

Here are some commodity examples:

- Georgia is number one nationally in poultry and number six in egg production, with a combined total farm value of \$2.3 billion a year.
- Georgia has cattle (1.3 million head last year) and hogs and pigs (345,000 head.)
- There is a major equine (horse) industry worth \$248 million to the state's economy. It's estimated there are several hundred thousand horses in Georgia, mostly in metro Atlanta.
- Georgia farmers grow everything from cotton (1.6 million bales in 2002) to 40 percent of the nation's peanuts (1.3 billion pounds) to tobacco (55 million pounds) to corn (33 million bushels) to 100 million pounds of those great-tasting Georgia peaches. North Georgia apples (10 million pounds worth) and South Georgia blueberries (17 million pounds) and watermelons (510 million pounds) are always popular, as are those famous Vidalia® onions (14,000 acres of them) and a host of vegetables. Georgia produces almost a quarter of all the squash in