

Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer Of The Year

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DANIEL JOHNSON NAMED GEORGIA FARMER OF THE YEAR FOR 2007

MOULTRIE, GA – As Daniel Johnson of Alma puts it – “farming is all I’ve known. At nine years of age, I started picking cotton for my father and other neighbors.”

“Long hot summers in the tobacco fields will make you or break you,” he said, “and I loved every minute of it. Farming has always been my way of life.”

When his father died suddenly at the age of 49, Johnson had a decision to make – either buy the farm or move on. He purchased the 171 acres and has never looked back.

Today, Johnson’s farm has grown into a 1,675-acre diversified operation and his selection as the 2007 Swisher Sweets/Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year for Georgia. He was selected for the honor in judging conducted by the Georgia Extension Service and was nominated by James Jacobs.

Johnson now joins nine other Southeastern state winners as a finalist for the Swisher Sweets/ Sunbelt Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year Award for 2007, which will be announced during the Sunbelt Expo in Moultrie, GA, on Tuesday, October 16th.

As the Georgia state winner, Johnson will now receive a \$2,500 cash award and an expense paid trip to the Sunbelt Expo from Swisher International of Jacksonville, FL, a jacket and a \$200 gift certificate from the Williamson-Dickie Company, a commemorative fireproof home safe from Misty Morn Safe Co., and a \$500 gift certificate from Southern States. He is also now eligible for the \$14,000 that will go the overall winner and the use of a Massey Ferguson tractor for a year from Massey Ferguson North America.

Swisher International, through its Swisher Sweets cigar brand, and the Sunbelt Expo are sponsoring the Southeastern Farmer of the Year Award for the 18th consecutive year. Swisher has contributed over \$740,000 in cash awards and other honors since the award was initiated in 1990.

Tobacco, cotton and peanuts continue to be the backbone of the operation today with 200 acres of tobacco producing 2,400 pounds per acre. There's 896 acres of cotton, yielding 820 pounds per acre.

Peanuts cover over 429 acres with a yield of 3,820 pounds per acre. Also included are 350 acres of wheat with a yield of 50 bushels per acre and 40 acres of timber.

"I was one of the first three farmers in Pierce County to start cotton in 1987," said Johnson. "Plus in 2004, I was the first person in Pierce to plant peanuts on a large scale.

"It has really been a thrill ride," he added. "And I'm really looking forward to the future and doing something I thoroughly enjoy doing – farming."

Johnson and his wife Patricia have four children, daughters Lindsey (18) and LeeAnn (12) and sons Dan (8) and Dawson (3).

Previous state winners from Georgia include: Timothy McMillian of Enigma, 1990; Bud Butcher of Senoia, 1991; James Lee Adams of Camilla, 1992; John Morgan of Mystic, 1993; Alan Verner of Rutlege, 1994; Donnie Smith of Willacoochee, 1995; Armond Morris of Ocilla, 1996; Thomas Coleman Jr. of Hartsfield, 1997; Glenn Heard of Bainbridge, 1998; Bob McLendon of Leary, 1999; James Lee Adams of Camilla, 2000; Daniel Johnson of Alma, 2001; Armond Morris of Ocilla, 2002; Jim Donaldson of Metter, 2003; Joe Boddiford of Sylvania, 2004; Jimmy Webb of Leary, 2005; and Gary Paulk of Wray, 2006.

Georgia has had two overall winners with James Lee Adams of Camilla in 2000 and Armond Morris of Ocilla in 2002.

Johnson's farm, along with the other nine state finalists, will be visited by a distinguished panel of judges during the week of Aug. 6-10. The judges for this year include Rogers Reynolds, retired executive with Farm Credit; Dr. Jim Butler, retired Agricultural Engineer and Research Leader and Elwyn Deal, retired Clemson University Extension Service/

Note to Media: The farm of Daniel Johnson will be judged on Monday, Aug. 6, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The address of Mr. Johnson's farm is 2747 Daniel Road, Alma, GA. If you would like to join the judging process, please call Bobby Batson (704/788-7025) or contact the farm (912/218-0464).

For additional News Releases and Information: www.sunbeltexpo.com or bbatson@swisher.com.