PEANUTS — *Culture and Uses*

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PEANUTS — *Culture and Uses*

A SYMPOSIUM

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This book is dedicated to the improvement of practices related to production, harvesting, curing, storing and processing of peanuts.

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FOREWORD

In 1951 the National Fertilizer Association published a symposium entitled, *The Peanut — The Unpredictable Legume.* The title reflected the frustrations of agronomists who were attempting to develop recommendations regarding fertilizer practices for peanuts. The following quotation is from a report issued by the Southern Research Institute in 1946 entitled, *A Survey of the Research Status of the Peanut Industry:*

> "Not only does the peanut fail to respond markedly to direct applications of commercial fertilizers, but such responses as are observed are not constant, varying widely from field to field even on the same soil type. This behavior is in marked contrast to that of other crops such as corn or cotton for which the yield increase to be obtained for a given application of fertilizer can be predicted with almost mathematical certainty."

Responses to fungicides, insecticides, spacing, rate of seeding and other production practices were, to a large extent, unpredictable at that time also.

Research conducted during the last 20 years has made the peanut a much more predictable legume. It remains an unusual and interesting plant, but even today its response to direct application of fertilizers is not as predictable as is the response of other field crops.

Amazing progress has been made in peanut production during the past 20 years. Today's production and harvesting practices bear little resemblance to those of 1951. *The Peanut — The Unpredictable Legume* makes no mention of chemical weed control or of peanut combines. Hoeing was discussed and instructions were included for proper stacking of peanuts. Today chemical weed control has replaced hand hoeing and peanuts are combined directly from the windrow, and a field of stacked peanuts is almost as rare as a field of shocked corn. In 1951 many growers shelled their peanut seed by hand; today practically all seed are shelled and treated by commercial shellers.

Most of the varieties being grown today were unknown 20 years ago.

In 1951 the average yield of pods per acre was 834 pounds and yields of less than 500 pounds per acre were common. In 1971 the average yield per acre was 2045 pounds and yields of more than 5000 pounds per acre were not uncommon.

The American Peanut research and Education Association expresses its appreciation to the authors of the chapters in this book. The project began more than four years ago. During this period many new herbicides, insecticides and fungicides have been developed. New laws and regulations pertaining to their use have been promulgated necessitating last minute changes in manuscripts. Throughout this period the authors and their review committees have given freely of their time. To all these people we owe a debt of gratitude.

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