

New Contender in the Peanut Industry

Peanuts are a staple in snack culture all around the world. They can be roasted, salted, boiled, and even confectioned. But not just any peanut can be used to make the treats we enjoy. Many of the peanuts grown for processing are Virginia-type peanuts, which have large pods and seeds, making them ideal for salting, roasting, and incorporating into sweets. Grown predominately in states like Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, the Virginia-type peanut cultivars account for approximately 15 percent of total U.S. production and its popularity among peanut producers is only increasing.

To meet the escalating demand for large peanuts, ARS scientists at the Wheat, Peanut, and Other Field Crops Research Unit in Stillwater, OK, worked to improve Virginia-type peanuts and their ability to grow in the southwest. Their hard work culminated in the development and release of a new Virginia-type peanut called **'Contender,'** which features the large seeds, pods, and yields that are optimal for peanut processing. Contender also contains high amounts of oleic acid, a special fatty acid that can promote cardiovascular health and extend peanut product shelf life. Considering its superior market quality, Contender looks like a heavyweight against other peanut cultivars.

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