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### **Vidalia onions set to ship April 22**

March 18, 2019

The Georgia Department of Agriculture and the Vidalia Onion Committee announced today that the pack date for the 2019 Vidalia onion season is 8 a.m. on Monday, April 22.

“With tremendous consideration after consultation with the Vidalia Advisory Panel, industry experts from the University of Georgia and crop assessments from the Georgia Federal State Inspection Service, I am pleased to announce April 22 as this year’s pack date for the official state vegetable of Georgia, the Vidalia onion,” said Georgia Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black. “For more than two decades, Georgia’s Vidalia onion trademark has garnered global recognition, reaffirming our trust in the Vidalia onions being among the highest-quality in the food industry.”

The annual Vidalia onion pack date is a rite of spring for fans of the vegetable because it is only available for a limited amount of time each year. The unique onion, adored by cooks for its sweet, mild flavor, is hand-cultivated in 20 southeastern Georgia counties by 80 registered growers.

Each year, the Vidalia Onion Advisory Panel, state agricultural scientists and the Department of Agriculture determine the pack date based on soil and weather conditions in South Georgia during the growing season to help ensure only the highest-quality onions are shipped to stores across the country. In 2018, 9,356.26 acres of Vidalia onions were hand-planted to be harvested in the forthcoming weeks, according to Troy Bland, chairman of the Vidalia Onion Committee.

This year, the Vidalia Onion Committee is launching “The Sweet Life,” a new marketing campaign to reach home cooks across the country. The campaign targets grocery shoppers who enjoy cooking and entertaining.

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“The Sweet Life builds on our very successful marketing effort over the last two years that helped to raise the profile of the Vidalia onion among food connoisseurs, particularly millennials who set many of today’s consumer trends,” said Bland. “Now we plan to focus on broader category of consumers who like to cook, entertain and use onions. The goal is to elevate the brand as a signifier of good taste and living well.”

Vidalia onions represent about 40 percent of the sweet onion market in the country and are sold in every state. The Vidalia trademark is owned by the state of Georgia because of the Vidalia Onion Act of 1986. To be considered a Vidalia onion, the vegetables must be cultivated in the south Georgia soil from a distinctive Granex seed and packed and sold after the official pack date each year, resulting in only the highest-quality onions reaching Vidalia fans each season.

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