



## News Release

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### **GEORGIA GROWN FORESTS FEATURED IN "BUY LOCAL" PROGRAM**

The Georgia Forestry Commission has established a new partnership with "Georgia Grown," a program which promotes the state's locally grown products. Georgia Agribusinesses including farming, poultry and now, forestry, are featured in the member-based program that links producers, processors, distributors and consumers to form one powerful, statewide community.

"Georgia Grown is an exciting new tool that will bring our sustainable forests and forest products to the attention of people seeking locally produced goods," said Robert Farris, Director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. "Georgia is a national forestry leader, and this partnership will raise awareness about our abundance of trees and the many benefits they provide, right here at home."

Georgia Grown was established by the Georgia Department of Agriculture in 2011 to help businesses with a vested interest in agriculture become even more successful. The organization and its brand are desired by a growing number of businesses and consumers who seek to "buy local" in support of sustainability, quality and integrity.

"I want to thank the Georgia Forestry Commission for their continued support of the growth of agribusiness through joining Georgia Grown," Department of Agriculture Commissioner Gary Black states. "The success of the program is reliant on the members who are committed to growing the Georgia Grown brand and finding innovative ways to expand the agricultural industry here in Georgia. With committed membership to this program, we will build brand integrity to all of our products and services, while expanding partnerships throughout the state."

Georgia boasts 24.8 million acres of forestland, the majority owned by private, non-industrial landowners. Of these 24.8 million acres, 24.4 million acres are timberland available for commercial use - more than any other state in the nation. The forest industry provides an average

of \$448 million in state tax revenues each year and a recent University of Georgia study of essential ecosystem services provided by forests - clean water, carbon storage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics - are worth an estimated \$37 billion annually. This is in addition to the value of timber, forest products and recreation. More than 108,000 Georgians have forestry related jobs, making it Georgia's second largest manufacturing employer.

For more information about Georgia-grown forest products, forestry and services of the Georgia Forestry Commission, visit [GaTrees.org](http://GaTrees.org).

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