



## Checking the Vitals of Vivacious Vidalias MP3

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:00] Once again, we're out here on the Mall in Washington D.C., in the tent that we call Veg-University, or Veg-U for short, at the Agriculture Department's farmers market. And with us today, a guest lecturer from Georgia, Chelsea Blaxton. Where from in Georgia?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:15] Vidalia.

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:16] Vida - Isn't that the name of an onion?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:18] They actually named the onion after the town.

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:20] After the town - oh, like a Philly cheese steak or Buffalo wings, something like that?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:24] Yes.

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:25] OK, well what are you lecturing on today, as if we didn't figure that out?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:28] We are discussing Vidalia onions.

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:31] Oh, from the town of the same name! And you have expertise in this Chelsea; you work for the Vidalia Onion Committee.

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:37] "Vi-day-ya."

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:38] Oh, so I say "vi-dale-ya," but you say it how?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:41] I say "vi-day-ya" with the "l" being silent, but most people know it as "vi-dale-ya."

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:46] Yeah, well, which is right?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:46] However you choose to say it.

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:50] Okay, but you say "vi-day-ya," no "l."

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:53] No "l."

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:54] So, we should get the "l" out?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:00:55] Yep.

**Gary Crawford** [00:00:55] Alright, alright. Most people have heard about Vidalia onions; they have inspired many a song.

**Voiceover, Sammy Kershaw, "Vidalia"** [00:01:11] "Vidalia, girl, won't you tell me why, sweet Vidalia, you always gotta make me cry."

**Gary Crawford** [00:01:11] Oh Chelsea, I see your face, you are not reacting well to that song.

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:01:15] Well, these onions, actually, 'cause they're low in sulfur, they don't make you cry.

**Gary Crawford** [00:01:18] In fact, these are sweet partly because of the type of onion, partly because of the soils in the part of Georgia that they're grown that's low in sulphur there - which is what gives most onions that bite - the sulfur. Now, Chelsea, there are lots of types of sweet onions out there, so what's different about these Vidalias?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:01:37] The difference is that Vidalia onions are only grown in Georgia. They grow in 20 counties. Anything that's grown outside of that region cannot be called a Vidalia onion, according to our federal marketing order.

**Gary Crawford** [00:01:48] Oh, in fact, I've heard some people have tried to counterfeit Vidalias, right?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:01:51] That's right. There have been many people that have been fined for doing that.

**Gary Crawford** [00:01:56] Wow, what a crime to have on your record - onion counterfeiter.

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:02:00] So, how did onion fame come to Vidalia, Georgia? Well, it started back when this song was a hit:.

**Voiceover, Cab Calloway, "Minnie the Moocher"** [00:02:05] "Ho de ho de ho."

**Gary Crawford** [00:02:08] 1931, when onion grower, Moses Coleman, discovered the onions growing on his farm were sweet - not like he expected them to be. He liked them though. More farmers started growing them in the same area, and in the 1940s, the state of Georgia set up a farmers market like this one in Vidalia, and the word got out about these onions. Then, a Southern grocery store chain started selling them, labeled as Vidalia onions. And now they're a national delicacy with production only around 212 million pounds - compared to the production of all onions in this country at over 7 billion pounds, with a B. Next time, we're going to look at how to buy and store Vidalia onions - involving pantyhose - and some neat recipes as well. Oh and an onion joke real quick - Why does Mr. Potato Head carry a cell phone? - in case Mr. Onion rings. Chelsea, pretty good, eh?

**Chelsea Blaxton** [00:02:54] No good.

**Gary Crawford** [00:02:56] No good. That's what I thought. Gary Crawford for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington.