



**THE TOBACCO TRUST FUND
COMMISSION'S ANNUAL REPORT TO
THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
NATURAL AND ECONOMIC
RESOURCES AND THE CHAIRS OF THE
HOUSE AND SENATE APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEES AND THE FISCAL
RESEARCH DIVISION**

November 1, 2024

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November 1, 2024



The Honorable Jimmy Dixon
N.C. House of Representatives
Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Oversight
Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources
16 W. Jones Street, Room 2226
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

The Honorable Brent Jackson
N.C. Senate
Co-Chair, Joint Legislative Oversight
Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources
16 W. Jones Street, Room 2022
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Representative Dixon and Senator Jackson:

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-722(a), the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission hereby presents a report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources from the Chairman, William H. "Bill" Teague. As specified in the legislation, this report contains an update on grant activity and operating expenditures.

If we can provide any further information or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William H. Teague". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William H. "Bill" Teague
Chairman

MAILING ADDRESS:
1080 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH NC 27699-1080

PHONE: (919) 733-2160 • FAX: (919) 733-2510
www.tobaccotrustfund.org
E-MAIL: tobaccotrustfund@ncagr.gov

LOCATION:
537 NORTH BLOUNT STREET
RALEIGH, NC 27604



The Honorable Dean Arp
N.C. House of Representatives
Senior Chair
House Appropriations Committee
300 N. Salisbury Street. Room 307A
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

The Honorable William Brisson
N.C. House of Representatives
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 405
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

The Honorable Brendon H. Jones
N.C. House of Representatives
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
16 W. Jones Street, Room 1227
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

The Honorable Larry Strickland
N.C. House of Representatives
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 304
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

The Honorable Donnie Lambeth
N.C. House of Representatives
Senior Chair
House Appropriations Committee
300 N Salisbury Street, Room 303
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

The Honorable Kyle Hall
N.C. House of Representatives
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 305
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

The Honorable Wayne Sasser
N.C. House of Representatives
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 529
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

Dear Representative Arp and Representative Lambeth and Representative Brisson and Representative Hall and Representative Jones and Representative Sasser and Representative Strickland:

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-722(a), the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission hereby presents a report to the Co-Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee from the Chairman, William H. "Bill" Teague. As specified in the legislation, this report contains an update on grant activity and operating expenditures.

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November 1, 2024



The Honorable Ralph Hise
N.C. Senate
Chair, Senate Appropriations/
Base Budget Committee
300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 300-A
Raleigh, NC 27603

The Honorable Brent Jackson
N.C. Senate
Chair, Senate Appropriations/
Base Budget Committee
16 W. Jones Street, Room 2022
Raleigh, NC 27601

The Honorable Michael V. Lee
N.C. Senate
Chair, Senate Appropriations/
Base Budget Committee
300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 523
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

Dear Senator Hise and Senator Jackson and Senator Lee:

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-722(a), the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission hereby presents a report to the Co-Chairs of the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee from the Chairman, William H. "Bill" Teague. As specified in the legislation, this report contains an update on grant activity and operating expenditures.

If we can provide any further information or answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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**TO: THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND
NATURAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE HOUSE
AND SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES**

As the Chairman of the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, I am pleased to present our annual report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Agriculture and Natural and Economic Resources and the Co-Chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.

To say this has been a challenging year for agriculture is an understatement. During the summer, many of our farmers experienced a drought followed by incredible amounts of rain. The tobacco crop became an emergent harvest with many fields losing their quality due to lack of resources including barn space. Other commodities experienced these challenges, impacting the bottom line. Then in September, Hurricane Helene. It was referred to as the storm of the century; and claimed many victims in its path. We are just beginning to understand the tremendous impact on western agriculture. Everyone has heard of the destruction. For some farmers it will take days, weeks and even months to recover; for many, years. I was there and experienced it firsthand. I'm glad to serve on this commission and I am very thankful this program is here to play a part in our farmer's recovery.

The Tobacco Trust Fund Commission's work is **critical** because agriculture remains an essential part of our state's economy, contributing **\$111.1** billion annually, accounting for almost **16%** of the state's income and employing **16%** of North Carolina's workforce. Our board and staff have worked diligently in the past year to make efficient and productive investments that strengthen North Carolina's core business. We have accomplished this by implementing projects to support agricultural diversification, education, job creation/sustainability and environmental preservation. We applaud our legislative leadership for allowing the Commission to continue to serve the number one industry of our state's economy.

Information on active grants and the impacts of our funded projects is included in this report. We have provided a synopsis of each project and its impressive results, which were only possible because of the financial assistance provided.

We are very proud of our work and humbled to play a part in helping our great state move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William H. Teague". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William H. "Bill" Teague
Chairman

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RALEIGH, NC 27604



COMMISSION MEMBERS **2024**

ASHE, John

Reidsville, NC
County- Rockingham
Appointee Officer-
Governor

BARNES, Susan

VICE CHAIRMAN
Kenly, NC
County-Wilson
Appointee Officer-
Speaker of the House

BATTEN, Brandon

Four Oaks, NC
County-Johnston
Appointee Officer-
Speaker of the House

BISSETTE, Edward

Spring Hope, NC
County-Nash
Appointee Officer –
Governor

BYRD, Mark

Bakersville, NC
County-Mitchell
Appointee Officer-
Speaker of the House

CARTER, J.W. (Billy)
III.

Eagle Springs, NC
County-Moore
Appointee Officer-
President Pro Tem

DANIELS, Jennifer

Autryville, NC
County-Sampson
Appointee Officer-
President Pro Tem

FORTNER, Kendra

Cullowhee, NC
County-Jackson
Appointee Officer-
President Pro Tem

GARNER, III, George
E. (Elwood)

Kenansville, NC
County-Duplin
Appointee Officer-
Speaker of the House

GARRISON, Terry E.

Henderson, NC
County-Vance
Appointee Officer-
Governor

HAMM, Maggie

Conover, NC
County-Catawba
Appointee Officer-
Governor

HARRELL, Mark

Clinton, NC
County-Sampson
Appointee Officer-
Speaker of the House

IVEY, Marlowe

Goldsboro, NC
County-Wayne
Appointee Officer-
Governor

KIRBY, Albert D.

Clinton, NC
County-Sampson
Appointee Officer –
Governor

LeQUIRE, Kim K.

Princeton, NC
County-Johnston
Appointee Officer –
President Pro Tem

MCPHERSON, David

Chadbourn, NC
County-Columbus
Appointee Officer-
Speaker of the House

PHILPOTT, Julian

Sanford, NC
County-Lee
Appointee Officer-
President Pro Tem

TEAGUE, William H.
(Bill) **CHAIRMAN**

Leicester, NC
County-Buncombe
Appointee Officer-
President Pro Tem



COMMISSION HISTORY 2024

Background

North Carolina's share of the Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) was divided into three different parts. Under the terms of the consent decree in North Carolina, 50% of the funds are directed to a non-profit corporation, Golden LEAF, to be used for economic development in tobacco-dependent communities. By statute the remaining 50% is equally divided between two state Commissions. The Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission uses their portion for health-related needs (HWTFC). The final portion is allocated to the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (TTFC). With the passage of the 2011 budget, the TTFC now receives funding via appropriations and the HWTFC is no longer in existence.

The TTFC was created on August 2, 2000, with the approval of House Bill 1431. The purpose of the Commission is to assist those adversely affected by the MSA, including tobacco farmers, former tobacco quota holders, persons engaged in tobacco-related businesses, individuals displaced from tobacco-related employment, and tobacco product component businesses in this State. Funds can be disbursed through **compensatory programs** and **qualified agricultural programs**.

Membership is made up of 18 people, six appointed by the Governor, six by the Speaker of the House and six by the President Pro Tem of the Senate. The board met for the first time on February 15, 2001, at which the members were given their charges and sworn in.

Since November 1, 2023

The TTFC met **four times** this past year. During these meetings, board members awarded grant funds, received grantee updates, and acted on grant amendment requests.

In 2024, a total of **37** grant applications were received requesting approximately **\$12 million** in funding. After a very detailed review process, the TTFC approved grants totaling **\$6.7 million** for **26** projects.

The TTFC is very proud of the investments made this past year to help people in North Carolina continue to improve their business and their rural communities. Below are examples of a few of our projects.

- The WNC AgOptions program provides small cost-share demonstration grants to help family farms in Western North Carolina diversify and expand their farming operations. Current and former tobacco farmers are given priority. Farmers utilize these funds to embrace new crops, practices and methodology, new farm products, and new marketing activities. In the process, these projects not only strengthen the farming operation of the grant recipients but contribute to the larger agricultural

community and provide other farmers with the information, local examples, and confidence to pursue similar efforts on their farms, extending the impacts of the program and strengthening farming in NC. This is a three-year project, and the potential impact of this project includes: 370 jobs created or sustained, \$871,874.00 of new income for former tobacco workers, 580 people receiving training, 5,300 acres of farmland impacted, \$5,499,700.00 worth of product sold, and \$818,235.00 in dollars leveraged.

- University of Mount Olive will develop the Shady Grove Educational Livestock Facility (SGELF) that will serve students, agricultural producers, FFA & 4-H members, and the livestock industry through hands-on education, outreach and research. This facility is designed for practical training of students in agricultural degrees at UMO (Ag Education, Animal Science, Veterinary Bioscience, etc.) and secondary students involved in FFA/4-H thus providing the industry with a skilled large animal workforce. The facility will serve as a unique demonstration and training facility for farmers who wish to diversify operations by integrating livestock or improving herd quality through applied training in reproductive techniques (AI, ET), forages, nutrition and animal husbandry practices. The potential impact of this project includes: 530 jobs created or sustained, \$200,000 in new income for farmers, 5,000 people receiving education training, 10,000 people served in total, and \$3,450,000.00 in dollars leveraged.
- Toe River Aggregation Center Training Organization Regional (TRACTOR) seeks to connect their network of farmers from a historically tobacco-led community with new and untapped markets. TRACTOR is experienced in developing novel markets which prioritize local farmers and consumers, including sales through wholesale markets, institutions, CSAs, clinical programs, SNAP/EBT, food pantries, groceries, food banks and local retailers. Through a dedicated Sales and Marketing team, they will leverage these markets to increase small farm revenue, increase access to local foods and further diversify markets to develop a stronger farm economy in WNC. The potential impact of this project includes: 71 jobs created or sustained, 20,000 people served, \$1,250,000.00 worth of product sold, and \$475,054.00 in dollars leveraged.
- ECU-North Carolina Agromedicine Institute will grow the Farm & Ranch Stress Assistance Network-NC to help farm community members manage escalating farm stress associated with agribusiness, adverse health outcomes, and care giving. This will be accomplished by conducting educational sessions at farm-related events, providing free behavioral health sessions to farm community members, assisting farms with the cost of health/safety training, supplies and care giving, and training healthcare professionals on the unique challenges of care giving in the farm environment. The potential impact of this project includes: 5,162 people receiving Education training, 9,000 people served in total, and \$25,000.00 in dollars leveraged.

- NC Cooperative Extension, Harnett County Center will build a farmers market that features 10'x10' stalls, bathrooms, washing stations, and seating areas. This farmers market is phase 1 of a multi-phase agricultural complex that will include a multipurpose training building and commercial kitchen. The market will be built on over 6 acres of land provided by Harnett County Government and will serve the farmers of Harnett County. The farmers market will also complement the Educational Kitchen being added to the Harnett County Center and will serve as the epicenter of agricultural training in Harnett County. The potential impact of this project includes: 85 jobs created or sustained, 2,500 people served, and \$100,000.00 in dollars leveraged.
- Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation and Development, through its Energy Conservation Assistance Program (EnergyCAP), will provide AgEnergy cost-share grants to WNC farmers for energy efficiency or renewable energy projects that will increase farm profitability by reducing overhead costs. The potential impact of this project includes: 80 jobs created or sustained, 2,000 people served, \$48,000.00 in new income for farmers, and \$284,000.00 in dollars leveraged.
- The Wayne County Livestock Development Association will improve the livestock arena at the Wayne County Fairgrounds by renovating and expanding the existing 60' x 100' arena into a modern agriculture and livestock exhibition facility. Key aspects of the renovation include installing a concrete floor, ventilation, a handwashing station and a watering system for penned animals. Additionally, 16' x 100' extensions will be added on each side to increase the total square footage by 3,200 square feet. These upgrades aim to enhance functionality, improve animal welfare, accommodate larger exhibits and audiences, and foster innovation and collaboration within the agricultural community while prioritizing health and safety measures. The potential impact of this project includes: 35 jobs created or sustained, 1,000 people served, and 300 people receiving educational training.

NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION
2018 CYCLE GRANTS – COMPLETED AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2023, OR
ACTIVE AS OF OCTOBER 2024

Project: NCTTFC Supervised Agricultural Experience Institute

Contact: Dr. Sandy Maddox
Director, Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center
University of Mount Olive
634 Henderson Street
Mount Olive, NC 28365
(919) 658-7682

Grant Amount: \$150,000

The purpose of the project was to introduce high school students to career, and scholastic opportunities based in agriculture that they can take part in after graduation. Three overnight residential SAE institutes and one daytime modified institute during the COVID-19 pandemic were held. These institutes brought a total of 91 students and 66 teachers from across North Carolina. The Institute allowed student attendees to evaluate various agricultural operations and facilities (agronomic, livestock, processing, natural resources, and power and structural technology systems). FFA members were also exposed to actual hands-on learning experiences through these activities in the fields of horticulture, agronomy, GPS systems and other areas..

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.umoag.com

NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION
2019 CYCLE GRANTS – COMPLETED AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2023, OR
ACTIVE AS OF OCTOBER 2024

Project: Leadership Development Builds Conservation Capacity

Contact: Ms. Amanda Egendorf-Sand
Executive Director
NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation Inc
5171 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 330
Raleigh, NC 27612
(919) 510-4599

Grant Amount: \$40,000.00

Eighteen intensive training sessions focused on proper interview and PR responses, Myers-Briggs leadership personality exercises, management skills, meeting etiquette, leadership development, capitalizing on local work groups, grant proposal writing, conservation easements, employee mentorship, working with non-conventional conservation partners, “selling” conservation to county officials who fund conservation, additional professional development of soft skills, providing quality technical assistance and conservation planning, serving customers with natural resource management concerns and providing effective conservation planning. 180 people serving in NC Soil and Water District positions attended these conferences in person. Online webinars were also held bringing the total number of people served to 789.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncsoilwater.org

Project: Farm Stress Response

Contact: Dr. Robin Tutor Marcom
Director - North Carolina Agromedicine Institute
East Carolina University
2200 South Charles Blvd.
Office of Research Administration
Room 2900, MS 165
Greenville, NC 27858-4353

(252) 328-9530

Grant Amount: \$191,260.00

The purpose of this project was to expand the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute's Tape & Twine program to help the state's farm community deal with escalating farm stress and improve emotional wellness. This is important because although farming and stress are synonymous, the farm community continues to experience levels of stress not seen for decades. Escalating stress is due to compounding stressors, including depressed market prices, increased production costs, tariffs, foreign trade competition, catastrophic weather, increased labor costs, increased farm-land tax valuation, intergenerational legacy pressure, development encroachment, litigation in the pork industry, environmental mandates, commodity of scale, immigration issues, increased regulations and more. Over the course of the project, more than 12,000 individuals have been served directly through training/outreach and/or behavioral health services. Awareness of and conversations about farm stress and available resources are apparent in all regions of the state and among the diverse groups that make up NC's agricultural community. The Institute has been able to move from simply providing training and increasing awareness about the recognition and management of farm-related stress to providing peer support, suicide intervention/prevention, direct behavioral health services, and improving skills of health/behavioral healthcare providers working to mitigate behavioral health issues in agricultural communities. The Institute's Tape and Twine Program is now the comprehensive Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance of North Carolina (FRSAN-NC) program which also includes a 24/7 NC Farm Help Line.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncagromedicine.org

NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION
2020 CYCLE GRANTS – COMPLETED AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2023, OR
ACTIVE AS OF OCTOBER 2024

Project: **Investing in NC Agriculture Opportunities**

Contact: Dr. Sandra Maddox
Director, Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center
University of Mount Olive
634 Henderson St
Mount Olive, NC 28365-1263
(919) 658-7682

Grant Amount: \$692,000.00

The grantee worked with county representatives in 33 counties across eastern NC to fund innovative projects through its AgPrime program which supported agricultural profitability and productivity. Each project was funded based on its potential to positively benefit the economic development of the respective local communities, agricultural diversification, farm profitability, and skill and resource development for current and future farmers. The project was administered as a cost share project funding more than 54 farms. AgPrime provided resources directly to farmers to assist in farm diversification and expansion. The project also increased the economic sustainability of farms. 226 jobs were created and 479 jobs sustained in addition to the 22,803 acres of farmland impacted. There has been nearly 1,200 acres of new crop production and a total of over \$2.6 million in products sold. A total of \$775,697 was leveraged from other sources by the funded projects.

Status: Complete

Area Served: 33 eastern counties

Website: www.umoag.com

Project: **Depot Hill Project**

Contact: Mr. Jonathan Franklin
Town Administrator
Town of Louisburg
110 W. Nash Street
Louisburg, NC 27549
(919) 497-1004

Grant Amount: \$125,000.00

The Town of Louisburg was to re-purpose a warehouse on historic Depot Hill to provide a commissary kitchen, paved parking to service mobile food units, and a catering kitchen. The commissary kitchen was to serve a demand for facilities to accommodate start-up mobile food units and caterers. Each was to use the kitchen and seek out the county's farmers for ingredients.

Status: Complete. Grantee allowed contract to expire without requesting any funding.

Area Served: Franklin

Website: www.townoflouisburg.org

Project: Eastern Christmas Tree Marketing Promotion

Contact: Ms. Sherry Peele
Secretary/Treasurer
Eastern NC Christmas Tree Growers Association
PO Box 820
Sharpsburg, NC 27878-0820
(919) 437-6546

Grant Amount: \$39,150.00

The Eastern NC Christmas Tree Growers Association will produce a series of short videos promoting the industry. The Association will redesign its consumer-focused website and association-focused website. All promotional videos and the updated website will be advertised via digital marketing. Through digital marketing, consumers are exposed to choose and cut farms located in the Eastern region of NC. This program intends to provide greater opportunities for the eastern Christmas tree growers to reach consumers using modern marketing methods which will encourage an increased number of consumers to visit local Christmas tree farms.

Status: Promotional videos were used to direct traffic to ENCCTGA websites. These websites were updated and redesigned by the Public Relations and Marketing committee. The ENCCTGA websites include a public site for anyone interested in becoming a member or anyone trying to locate a Christmas tree farm.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.realtreenc.com

NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION
2021 CYCLE GRANTS – COMPLETED AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2023, OR
ACTIVE AS OF OCTOBER 2024

Project: Tomato Gray Leaf Spot Management

Contact: Ms. Inga Meadows
Extension Plant Pathologist
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$57,890.00

The grantee surveyed 26 farms that grow heirloom tomato varieties, and the majority (65%) have gray leaf spot (GLS). Of the farms with GLS, disease severity ranged from 20 to 90% leaf area affected. This is a greater incidence and severity of GLS than they had anticipated and could potentially be affecting even more growers than initially hypothesized. They evaluated 10 spray programs for control of GLS and identified seven conventional spray programs and one organic spray program that effectively reduces this disease for growers. Previously, there were no studies published that evaluated effective fungicides – conventional or organic. Results have been published in Plant Disease Management Reports (Kohutek et al., 2023, PDMR 17: V086), updated in the disease factsheet on GLS on tomato (<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/gray-leaf-spot-of-tomato>), and results presented at the Winter Vegetable Meeting in 2023 and 2024. Similarly, the grantee has identified three cultivars and 18 breeding lines that are resistant to gray leaf spot that growers can now deploy. The results generated from this project will allow growers to manage gray leaf spot of tomatoes more effectively by 1) selecting a fungicide program that effectively reduces disease and 2) selecting resistant varieties for farms that have a high level of this disease. In addition, the knowledge of breeding lines susceptible or resistant will allow breeders to better select varieties as parental lines for hybrids so that more varieties are available with resistance.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: High Country Slaughter-Processing Facility

Contact: Dr. Jim Hamilton
County Extension Director
Watauga County
814 King Street, Suite 205
Boone, NC 28607
(828) 265-8000

Grant Amount: \$220,236.00

Watauga County is creating a "High Country Kill & Chill" livestock slaughter and processing center to meet a critical shortage of local slaughter and processing capacity for meat producers in the county (which will also benefit regional producers). Watauga County will construct a facility to immediately support over 20 local cut-and-pack operations and commercial meat producers as well as family custom processing center serving, conservatively, 500 family farms and livestock producers in the region. The project will bolster farm sustainability and provide additional infrastructure to support our local food infrastructure and agricultural economy.

Status: Project is in line with goals & objectives for the project other than the timeline for construction which has been pushed back. Preliminary engineering design and permitting for water and sewer began during first month of 2024. The project is currently paused until final design/build firm for the actual facility is formally selected by the county.

Area Served: Watauga

Website: www.watgov.org

Project: EnergyCAP AgEnergy Program

Contact: Ms. Jessica Hocz
Executive Director
Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation & Development Council
4388 US Hwy 25-70, Suite #3
Marshall, NC 28753
(828) 206-6159

Grant Amount: \$100,000.00

The grantee, through its Energy Cost-share Assistance Program (EnergyCAP), aimed to continue the successes of its AgEnergy Grant Program. Since 2008 EnergyCAP has reduced energy costs on 65+ farms with funding from NCTTFC, USDAREAP, NCDA-ADFP, TVA, and NARCS-Conservation Innovation Grants. The grantee administered 50% cost-share grants to qualified WNC farmers leveraging \$220,000 while assisting in the development of energy improvement projects to decrease farm energy expenses. Projects could include solar PV or solar hot water

renewable energy generation systems, lighting and insulation upgrades, high tunnel plastic replacement, greenhouse improvements, and more.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Western Counties

Website: <http://mountainvalleysrca.org>

Project: Collection Stabilization and History Expansion

Contact: Mr. Mike Rhodes
Tobacco Farm Life Museum Inc.
PO Box 88
Kenly, NC 27542
(919) 284-3431

Grant Amount: \$158,401.00

The updates and repairs to the Tobacco Farm Life Museum stabilized the future of the museum and it will live to tell the story to visitors on life around agricultural living in North Carolina. In the museum collection storage upstairs, a mini-split was installed to control the temperature better. The HVAC systems were updated, and the roof was repaired. Carpet was replaced in the common video and workshop areas. The Fire/Alarm system was replaced, and more cameras were located around the property. Dead trees were logged and milled on the grounds and used to restore the Tobacco Barn. ABC Rock was brought in to add a driveway around the back of the property and used to fill much needed low driveway areas. An electrical security light was added in the parking lot along with additional electrical work for outside events. New exhibit panels were designed and installed.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.tobaccofarmlifemuseum.org

Project: Agricultural Learning Through Farm Development

Contact: Dr. Elizabeth Riley
Department Head, Horticulture Technology & Agricultural Biotechnology
Alamance Community College
1247 Jimmie Kerr Road
Graham, NC 27253
(919) 230-4925

Grant Amount: \$380,550.00

Alamance Community College will begin the initial development of their 47-acre farm, The Bill and Nancy Covington Education Center, to expand opportunities for more hands-on and real-world learning for agriculture and horticulture students. ACC will utilize funds to provide access to a more reliable water source, a teaching space, a restroom facility, and animal production facilities.

Status: Grantee has established a stakeholder committee of members from the programs within the Agricultural Sciences Department. Faculty from Horticulture, Animal Care, Agricultural Biotechnology, Sustainable Agriculture, and Agriculture Education. They also secured an architectural firm, to complete the design and implementation of the new facilities at the Education Center, including the hook up to the Orange Alamance water supply. The modular classroom has been delivered and constructed and septic is complete. City water service has been added to the farm and power supplies have been upgraded. Fencing and fence work should begin by late summer. Six students completed their first year in the Spring of 2023 and grantee currently has fifteen students enrolled in agriculture programs at ACC.

Area Served: Alamance and surrounding counties

Website: <http://alamancecc.edu>

Project: NCTTFC Commodity/Marketing Facility

Contact: Mr. Edward Olive
Director, Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center
University of Mount Olive
634 Henderson St.
Mount Olive, NC 28365-1263
(919) 658-7682

Grant Amount: \$175,000.00

The building construction was completed, and the University hosted a ribbon cutting event. This event celebrated the completion of construction of the building, but also signified the hope and opportunity that the building will provide for so many farm families, students, and other stakeholders. Since the ribbon cutting of the building, project staff have continued conversations with farmers, produce businesses, a local cooperative, entrepreneurs, non-profits, and others to continue to develop the strategic plan for the facility. The University has utilized the building to store, process, pack, and market its agricultural commodities from the student farm. The NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Agricultural Commodity Building at the University of Mount Olive's Kornegay Student Farm will have a profound impact on the future of agriculture, specialty crops production and marketing, and education across eastern North Carolina and beyond.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.umo.edu

Project: Rental Equipment for Small Farms

Contact: Dr. Jennifer Harrison
Buncombe County Ag and Land Resources Director
Buncombe County Agricultural and Land Resources
49 Mt Carmel Road
Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 255-5522

Grant Amount: \$24,499.00

The purchase of both a lime and a manure spreader provide county farmers with a means to improve soil health, soil fertility and water retention as well as the responsible use of animal waste. Lime applications can assist farmers with balancing their pH which helps reduce weed pressure and the lime spreader provides landowners with the ability to utilize the less expensive powdered lime instead of pelletized. The manure spreader helps provide nutrients back into the soil instead of potentially creating a water quality hazard from run off carrying nutrients and pathogens into local waterways. The application of both lime and manure helps plants to better utilize nutrients in the soil and the improved microbiome can increase soil's water holding capacity which in addition to improving growth and plant health, also assists plants in weathering drought. The program is designed to give farmers the ability to better manage their lands, while being protective of their bottom line.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Buncombe

Website: www.buncombecounty.org

Project: Small Farmers Value-added Agricultural Opportunities

Contact: Dr. Obed Quaicoe
Assistant Professor
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
1601 East Market Street
Greensboro, NC 27411
(336) 334-7995

Grant Amount: \$92,713.00

The Department of Agribusiness at NC A&TSU's College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences will implement this project to provide access to value-added training for socially disadvantaged farmers throughout the state. These targeted farmers also include former and current tobacco farmers. Through a series of workshops, farmers will be empowered with knowledge, skills, and resources to develop value-added products as an alternative enterprise on their farms. The project outputs will allow these farmers to expand their farming enterprises and increase farm income.

Status: Grantee was able to support 30 North Carolina small farmers at the 2024 North Carolina Agritourism Networking Association Conference, which was held in New Bern, NC. Approximately 33% of the supported farmers were either former tobacco allotment holders, formerly engaged in a tobacco business or were farming on land that was formerly used for tobacco. Each tour had a unique experience and demonstrated how small additions to a farm could have powerful impacts that could be very profitable.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncat.edu

Project: Project SkillUp: Worker Retraining Program

Contact: Nate Humphrey
Associate Vice President for Workforce Continuing Education
North Carolina Community College System
5001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-5001
(919) 807-7159

Grant Amount: \$250,000.00

The purpose of this project was to implement a Worker Retraining Program based on three core components: providing access to education and training programs that support local workforce needs, developing new strategies to outreach and recruit targeted populations, and creating education opportunities to assist farmers in accessing new methods to support business sustainability. The project was able to offer 423 Scholarships, and 31 courses were developed to aid local workforce needs.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.nccommunitycolleges.edu

Project: Visit NCFarms App Administrators Economic Development/Marketing Support

Contact: Mr. Tyler Senter
Agritourism Administrative Specialist
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1020 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699
(919) 707-3102

Grant Amount: \$200,000.00

The N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services' core Visit NC Farms App team will design, deliver, and service the county App Administrators through an education-based webinar series. Administrators are the keystone to app success and are responsible for asset/agribusiness content management and local-level marketing support. The goal is to elevate economic development, marketing efforts, and relationship-building skills for the county-based Administrators. To boost the local agribusiness economy, Administrators will also access additional marketing items (specific to each county's unique objectives) to enhance the base promotional tool kit employed at app adoption.

Status: Grantee created marketing webinars and allowed access to those by participating counties. The marketing toolkit items, and customized deliverables were made available to the counties by the creation of an online storefront. Participating counties with proof of payment were given access to up to \$2000 credit in the marketing portal/branded storefront. Participating counties redeem their purchasing credit in the marketing portal.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncagr.gov

Project: Caswell CEAD Incubator Farm Program

Contact: Ms. Emily Buchanan
Director, Caswell Campus Operations
Piedmont Community College Foundation
1715 College Drive
Roxboro, NC 27537
(336) 322-2103

Grant Amount: \$368,300.00

Piedmont Community College, in partnership with the local Cooperative Extension Service, will transform historic tobacco fields into a 10–12-acre incubator farm at its Center for Agriculture Education and Development (CEAD) to facilitate education, production, and retail opportunities

for Caswell County farmers and entrepreneurs. This project will help build new markets and visibility for Caswell's local food products. Incubating local food and agriculture enterprises will build a thriving rural economy and food system in Caswell County.

Status: Grantee has established a stakeholder committee within members from the programs within the Agricultural Sciences Department. Faculty from Horticulture, Animal Care, Agricultural Biotechnology, Sustainable Agriculture, and Agriculture Education serve on the committee. The grantee also secured an architectural firm, to complete the design and implementation of the new facilities at the Education Center, including the hook up to the Orange Alamance water supply. The modular classroom has been delivered and constructed. Septic is complete. City water service has been added to the farm and power supplies have been upgraded. Fencing and fence work should begin by late summer. Six students completed their first year, Spring 2023 and the grantee currently has fifteen students enrolled in agriculture programs at ACC.

Area Served: Caswell and surrounding counties

Website: www.piedmontcc.edu

Project: Increasing Small Farm Profitability

Contact: Ms. Molly Nicholie
 Local Food Campaign Director
 Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
 306 West Haywood Street,
 Suite 200
 Asheville, NC 28801
 (828) 236-1282

Grant Amount: \$79,000.00

This cost share program was conducted and promoted to 638 NC farmers through email, as well as through newsletters, workshop presentations, and the NC Cooperative Extension Service. 227 farmers had greater knowledge of pertinent marketing trends and of key marketing strategies and 65 cost shares projects were awarded and completed, benefiting 122 farmers. Cost share applications represented a diverse range of farm size, farm age, and agricultural production. Approved projects included, but were not limited to business cards, rack cards, labels, staff apparel, custom canopies, direct mailers, custom invoice books, tote bags, table runners, banners, marketing videos, egg cartons, and on farm signage. Approved grantees represented 16 counties in Western North Carolina.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Western Counties

Website: <http://asapconnections.org>

Project: Soldier to Ag

Contact: Mr. Lee Ivy
Soldier to Ag Director
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$100,000.00

The NCSU Agricultural Institute "Soldier to Agriculture" program is a 6-week intensive introduction to agriculture for transitioning service members, veterans, and spouses interested in a career in agriculture in North Carolina. The program currently serves approximately 75 students per year with a waiting list of over 500 prospective students. Since becoming part of the DOD bridge program, soldiers from all NC bases now have access to the program. With this bigger audience, the grantee intends to recruit more students to become small farmers or employees in the 33 counties designated in the NC Sentinel Landscape Program.

Status: The grantee has provided seven sessions so far of the Soldiers to Agriculture course which included coursework, hands-on experiences, and internships. Approval was obtained to participate in the Career Skills Program and recruit transitioning service members on Ft. Liberty. Recruitment efforts at Fort Liberty included "table days" and speaking at Career Skills Program briefings. The program was marketed using Facebook and the grantee provided community groups with presentations on the STAG program to include Ascent Transition and Development, Veterans Bridge Home, NC Works, Kiwanis Club, and VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars), etc. Enhanced the STAG course by adding additional hands-on sessions to the curriculum to include an equipment day to introduce soldiers to the types of equipment available, cost of equipment, and career opportunities in equipment sales. While the intended outcomes for the STAG program were focused on agriculture, the grantee has found that this program has helped to bring families together and help struggling service members. Participants have shared that this program has helped them through struggling with mental injuries, brain trauma, and physical challenges to preserve and beat negative thoughts, suicide, and divorce.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Shared Use Community Kitchen

Contact: Mr. Fedd Walker

City of Sanford (Downtown Sanford Incorporated- DSI)
PO Box 3729
Sanford, NC 27330
(919) 770-1106

Grant Amount: \$213,600.00

The shared-use community kitchen is a growing trend in the food industry and is attracting major interest from food entrepreneurs and small businesses. The model proposed by the grantee is a commercial space that has been licensed, certified, and equipped for professional food production and nutrition education demonstrations. The space will be available for rent with users having access to the space and all of the equipment and regulatory compliance it provides. The kitchen will also host cooking demonstrations by Extension Agents and local chefs, which will educate the public about preparing fresh and local foods purchased at the market.

Status: Grantee has completed several items in preparation for groundbreaking including, a presentation of Interior/Exterior finish options, rezoning request to allow for the development using the same standards as the existing downtown properties currently zoned CBD and conducted meeting to discuss design updates.

Area Served: Lee

Website: www.sanfordnc.net

Project: Consumers/Farmers: Bridging the Gap

Contact: Ms. Donna Bailey-Taylor
President/CEO
Johnston County Tourism Authority
234 Venture Drive
Smithfield, NC 27577
(919) 989-8687

Grant Amount: \$111,900.00

The Johnston County Tourism Authority, in partnership with NC Cooperative Extension Johnston County Center staff and the JoCo Grows Agriculture Steering Committee, will endeavor to bridge the gap between consumers and the farming community by executing several innovative marketing projects, holding public on-farm events, designing a cost-share grant program, and engage in educational outreach to support agricultural profitability and productivity for Johnston County farmers. The target audience for these campaigns is local Johnston County residents, the five surrounding counties, and visitors traveling through the county. The intent is to drive visitation and revenues for the county's farming community.

Status: Grantee has conducted on-farm visits and community outreach has increased. Cost-share grant applications have been solicited and payments to farmers have been made for website development, social media campaigns, print materials, and more. The Strawberry Harvest Season marketing campaign was created, and executed and currently, the Cooperative Extension intern is gathering data on the season. The season was not as long as the 2023 season for some farmers, and again managing the weather challenges and having berries ripe for pick-your-own demand challenges the farmers. Fields were sometimes closed due to rain and to give berries some time to ripen. Efforts to market and communicate these openings and closings are done through social media and more push notifications via the NC Farms app. Grantee conducted 26 Farm visits, 18 Community Outreach events, 31 Meetings, and 4 Festivals.

Area Served: Johnston

Website: www.jocogrows.org

Project: Western North Carolina Agricultural Options

Contact: Ms. Jennifer Ferre
Executive Director
WNC Communities
594 Brevard Road
Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 252-4783

Grant Amount: \$849,900.00

The WNC AgOptions program provides small cost-share demonstration grants to help family farms in Western North Carolina diversify and expand their farming operations. Current and former tobacco farmers are given priority. Farmers utilize these funds to embrace new crops, practices, and methodology, new farm products, and new marketing activities. In the process, these projects not only strengthen the farming operation of the grant recipients but contribute to the larger agricultural community and provide other farmers with the information, local examples, and confidence to pursue similar efforts on their farms, extending the impacts of the program and strengthening farming in NC.

Status: The grantee held the New Recipient Orientation meeting, these remain one of the most important elements of the program. They set the tone for the grant period and serve as a tool for motivating, inspiring and educating the grantees. The workshops offered provide the participants with the opportunity to learn new skills and stretch and strengthen existing abilities. A total of 56 people attended in 2024, representing each of the sub-grant projects. Grantee met with grant recipients at least once during the grant cycle to observe progress on their projects, address any changes to the project timelines or budgets, and offer advice on marketing and production. These visits are also excellent opportunities to learn about innovative ventures. The grantee has completed visits to 13 of the 29 recipients. Farmers stay in contact with the grantee via email and phone and the grantee will complete the remaining visits by end of contract.

Area Served: Western Counties

Website: <http://wncagoptions.org>

NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION
2022 CYCLE GRANTS – COMPLETED AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2023, OR
ACTIVE AS OF OCTOBER 2024

Project: Mobile Beef Cattle Working Facility

Contact: Mr. Paul Gonzalez
 Extension Agent - Livestock
 NC Cooperative Extension - Sampson County Center
 55 Agriculture Place
 Clinton, NC 28328
 (910) 592-7161

Grant Amount: \$24,400.00

NC Cooperative Extension Centers in Bladen, Cumberland, Hoke, and Sampson Counties will purchase a cattle working facility that will include a portable squeeze chute with headgate and scales, as well as corral panels and a trailer to transport panels. This working facility will be shared among the four counties and will be made available, for a small rental fee, to any cattle producer in those counties. This program will allow farmers to safely and efficiently handle their animals to perform routine management tasks that should increase animal performance and profit.

Status: The chute and/or panels have been rented by two individuals during this period and was used for a training event for 11 others. The equipment has not been utilized as much as expected, however as the word spreads, the grantee expects more producers will rent it. They have had several inquiries about the equipment.

Area Served: Bladen

Website: <http://Sampson.ces.ncsu.edu>

Project: Harnett Agriculture Academy-Triton High School

Contact: Mr. Justin Wilkinson
 CTE Director
 Harnett County Schools Career and Technical Education
 PO Box 1029
 Lillington, NC 27546
 (910) 893-8151

Grant Amount: \$214,000.00

Harnett County Schools Career and Technical Education Department will design and build a multipurpose structure to facilitate the operations of the Harnett Agriculture Academy at Triton High School. This facility will impact the entire agricultural education program at Triton by providing a venue for cohorts of students to access college-level instruction on their home campus. Having a dedicated structure for training at the agricultural academy will help students attain technical, conceptual, and soft skills identified by employers as critical for meeting future workforce needs in Agriculture.

Status: The grantee has received a permit for construction and has completed phase 1 construction. Water and power have been run to barn along with final grading around barn. The Certificate of Occupancy was awarded by the permits department for barn. Fencing is being quoted while summer camp was held in the unfinished barn for HCS agriculture students.

Area Served: Harnett

Website: www.harnett.k12.nc.us

Project: From Bright Leaf to Berkshires

Contact: Dr. Derrick Coble
Swine Specialist
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
1601 East Market Street
Greensboro, NC 27411
(336) 334-7995

Grant Amount: \$210,152.00

"From Bright Leaf to Berkshires" is an alternative swine production course and outreach program that will be held at the N.C. A&T State University Farm. Its goal is to improve the profitability of farmers who have been financially impacted by tobacco-related policy and social changes by cost-sharing Berkshire pigs using hoop-structure barns. Graduates of the program and attendees of the extension workshops will learn about alternative swine production systems, stocking rates, nutrition, reproduction, breeding systems, waste management, welfare/behavior, diseases, and niche marketing opportunities.

Status: The grantee's Year-2 Cohort, which began February 9, 2024, included 10 different workshop sessions. The grantee provided participants with the information and training needed to increase their profits by using alternative production systems. The grantee trained participants on the proper handling, treatment, and transport of swine in accordance with the National Pork Board's "We Care" initiative. The participants received their "Pork Quality Assurance" and "Transport Quality Assurance" certifications from the National Pork Board for their participation in this workshop. Later, the group was taken to the Outdoor Swine Unit where they learned about the methods of artificial insemination.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncat.edu

Project: CCCC State-of-the-Art Large Animal Facility

Contact: Mr. Justin Pedley
Veterinary Medical Technology (VMT) Animal Facilities Manager
Central Carolina Community College
1105 Kelly Drive
Sanford, NC 27330
(919) 718-7281

Grant Amount: \$196,800.00

Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) will outfit its new, state-of-the-art, 3,690-square-foot large animal facility with equipment to support the training of Veterinary Medical Technology students on common domestic large animal species. Students will learn basic husbandry and handling of large animal species, while simultaneously understanding the importance of pasture management and the nutritional requirements of livestock species. Completion of the facility will facilitate training of approximately 105 students per year with an estimated 83% of new full-time students receiving credentials within three years. These students will help address the dire need for large-animal veterinary services in rural areas.

Status: Progress on the Large Animal Facility project has been limited due to ongoing maintenance team shortages and delays in obtaining quotes for HVAC, grading, and other outstanding tasks. Despite these challenges, the grantee has continued to engage with contractors and suppliers to resolve these issues. Additionally, the NCDOT's Kelly Drive reroute project has introduced new complications, required reassessment and potentially relocate planned pasture and fencing areas. They are actively working on adjusting plans to accommodate these changes.

Area Served: Harnett

Website: www.cccc.edu

Project: Certified NC Christmas Tree Seed

Contact: Mr. Tracy Taylor
Agriculture Research Superintendent
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1020 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699
(919) 414-4982

Grant Amount: \$383,685.00

The Upper Mountain Research Station will construct a metal building on a concrete slab that will serve as the main hub to process, store, and distribute the most elite Fraser Fir seed in the world. This building will also have a lab and office space with the capability to fully support the Fraser Fir breeding program from NC State University. This building will be in Ashe County, which is in the heart of Christmas tree country. It will be uniquely suited to support the rapidly growing Christmas tree industry.

Status: Currently, grantee has completed "phase 1" of this project which is the completion of the grading and the construction of the outer shell of the building. They are currently working with NCDA Property and Construction Division as well as CBSA Engineering to produce the plans and secure a contract to complete "phase 2". Phase 2 will be the completion of the buildout of rooms inside, electrical, plumbing and HVAC for the facility.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncagr.gov

Project: Greenhouse Supporting Local Agricultural Industry

Contact: Ms. Carol Ann Lydon
Associate Dean of Research
Southeastern Community College
4564 Chadbourn Highway
P.O. Box 151
Whiteville, NC 28472
(910) 642-7141

Grant Amount: \$374,500.00

Southeastern Community College will design and erect an educational greenhouse on its campus to facilitate the exploration and acquisition of science-based agricultural skills and practices through hands-on classroom instruction. The greenhouse will be designed based on input from employers in the local agricultural industry to ensure their workforce needs are met. Skills developed and experience gained in the greenhouse will lead directly to stackable credentials in agriculture and horticulture, allowing graduates to enter the local workforce quickly. Having a head start on credentials, skills, and experience will allow these students to support, and one day lead, Columbus County or even the SE NC agricultural industry.

Status: The grantee has completed the infrastructure build out and the full building of greenhouse on time. The outfitted greenhouse with all necessary supplies, tables, benches, etc. is complete as well. Classes are currently being taught in the greenhouse.

Area Served: Columbus

Website: www.sccnc.edu

Project: No-Till Grain/Grass Drill for Landowners

Contact: Mr. Quinton Cooper
Resource Conservationist
Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District
101-B S. Bickett Blvd.
Louisburg, NC 27549
(919) 496-3137

Grant Amount: \$30,000.00

Grantee purchased a no-till drill and shelter for use by the citizens in the county to rent for planting. The drill has been a total asset for the district with planting over 200 acres during the spring of 2023. The drill is an affordable way to assist the landowners who have transitioned from row crops to pasture.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Franklin

Website: www.franklincountync.us/services/soil-and-water-conservation

Project: Princeville's Farmers Market

Contact: Ms. Alexis Carter
Assistant Town Manager
Town of Princeville
201 South Main Street PO Box 1527
Princeville, NC 27886
(252) 823-1057

Grant Amount: \$300,000.00

The Town of Princeville, North Carolina, is constructing a regional Farmers Market that will support local farmers, small businesses, and entrepreneurs. The Princeville Farmers Market building will have a commercial kitchen. It will be located at Heritage Park, the Town-owned public park. The project's objectives are to provide access to locally sourced food and consumer goods and to provide economic development opportunities for community members. The project will benefit the citizens of Princeville, Edgecombe County, and surrounding counties by providing a local space to access fresh foods and locally made items.

Status: Infrastructure has been completed at the farmers market to include raising the ground up with dirt to avoid flooding and laying the necessary infrastructure for plumbing, etc. The previous administration spent about \$500,000 on the infrastructure alone, which was above the expected cost for this project. A challenge to the construction of the building has been obtaining additional funds and changes in leadership. As of May 1, 2024, the Town of Princeville has hired a new Town Manager as well as an Assistant Town Manager. They are working to identify additional funding for the construction of the building. As funding is secured, the next steps will be to have a design phase of the building, put it out for bid and begin construction.

Area Served: Edgecombe and surrounding counties

Website: www.townofprinceville.com

Project: **Ashe Regional Agricultural Center**

Contact: Ms. Judy Bare
Project Coordinator
Ashe County
150 Government Circle, Suite 2500
Jefferson, NC 28640
(336) 846-5501

Grant Amount: \$500,000.00

Ashe County will construct a multi-purpose agricultural center consisting of a livestock aggregation facility and a meeting room for training, commodity group meetings, and conferences. The purpose of the livestock facility is to facilitate local sales that will increase income for cattlemen, provide infrastructure to aid producers with herd management and assist youth programs with animal science training. The structure will consist of pens, scales, a load-out ramp, and a squeeze chute. A show ring will host special livestock sales, demonstrations, and 4-H livestock judging.

Status: The grantee has finished the design. This is the first step necessary to build the facility that makes possible the achievement of goals and objectives. A groundbreaking ceremony was held July 12, 2024. The contractor estimates that construction will be completed by the end of February 2025.

Area Served: Ashe

Website: www.ashecountygov.com

Project: **NCTTFC ALDP Alumni Event**

Contact: Dr. Joy Morgan-Fleming
Assistant Professor & Program Director
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$31,930.00

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Agricultural Leadership Development Program (NCTTFC ALDP) is a two-year agricultural leadership program focused on further developing the personal and professional leadership skills of North Carolina agriculturalists. During the two-year program, leaders participate in in-depth personal assessments, executive coaching sessions, leadership theory and application workshops, and agricultural study tours. During this weekend program Alumni were given additional opportunities to gain new knowledge and expand upon the skills they learned throughout their participation in the program. 63 alumni attended with a total of 89 individuals throughout the weekend. The overwhelming majority of participants remarked that all sessions were at the “met” or “exceeded expectations” ranking. After graduation, the goal is that the participants will return to their communities and organizations with increased confidence and interest in taking on leadership positions.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Needs Assessment: Masters of Agribusiness

Contact: Dr. Kelly Zering
Professor and Extension Specialist
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$15,450.00

This project addressed the need for a new Masters of Agribusiness Management degree program (MABM) at NCSU to enhance the economic well-being of NC citizens and particularly those in rural communities across the state. There is a demonstrable need for this program based on a large sample of conversations with stakeholders. The Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at NC State is committed to launching a Masters of Agribusiness Management

program (MABM) to meet this need. The MABM is likely to become the largest graduate program in CALS and perhaps the most impactful graduate program affecting North Carolina agriculture and rural development. The MABM program will be funded by NCSU. The specific need for this one-year project supported by TTFC is that new degree program approval in the UNC System and at NCSU requires quantification and validation of the need across several large stakeholder groups. This project produced strong information from a wide range of stakeholders and other sources that support the compelling need for a new Masters of Agribusiness Management degree program to be offered by the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. Project investigators and stakeholders are moving forward to acquire start-up funding and continuing funding to launch and grow an excellent program.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: GrowDairy: Growing NC dairy farms

Contact: Dr. Stephanie Ward
Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$264,498.00

Through NC State Extension, the GrowDairy Initiative will provide educational and financial resources to North Carolina dairy farmers to sustain and grow the dairy industry. Producers will work directly with Extension to cost-share consultant fees to troubleshoot problem areas and identify solutions. Grant funds from SDBII (new Federal cost share program) would be used for equipment and/or technology. Both farm families and their communities benefit economically when local dairies grow.

Status: Several extension events that were developed and organized to provide GrowDairy recipients with opportunities to meet the education credit requirements of the grant have now been offered. All grant payments were distributed to recipients by April 2024 and, to date, 10 of the 11 recipients have ordered, installed, and/or have started implementing their approved project. Three of them are targeting milk quality with their project; four farms are targeting seasonality and heat stress; and four other farms are addressing management concerns or business transitioning.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: NC AgVentures Farmer Grant Program

Contact: Dr. Susan Jakes
Associate State Program Leader, Community, and Rural Dev.
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$1,569,968.00

The grantee is overseeing a three-year NC AgVentures Grant on behalf of NC State Extension. The program awards cost-share grants to family farms to diversify, expand, or enhance their agricultural operations. The overall goal is to increase farm profits. The program will benefit at least 150 family farms in 46 counties that were negatively impacted by the downturn in the tobacco economy.

Status: The NC AgVentures grant program is in the second year of a three-year grant. There were 40 participants on the review committee. (They included retired County Extension Directors, Extension Specialists, Extension Agents and farmers.) Awards were allocated based on the percentage of dollars requested in a region to account for regional differences in operation size. Even with this process, each sub-committee had a similar number of applications to review and funds to award. Investing broadly helps to alleviate unemployment and support local economies. The committee awarded 65 grants from applicants in 28 counties. A media announcement of the grant winners was sent to local newspapers in the appropriate counties. Articles about the grant program and grant winners were published in several papers.

Area Served: 46 counties

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Enhancing Agriculture through CASE Institute

Contact: Dr. Travis Park
Associate Professor
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$99,072.00

Agricultural Education faculty in NCSU's College of Agriculture & Life Sciences (CALS) will provide a 10-day, intensive Curriculum for Agricultural Science Education (CASE) Institute training for North Carolina agriculture teachers. CASE is an inquiry-based, STEM-oriented agriculture curriculum. CASE enhances the rigor and relevance of agriculture, food, and natural resources content and provides purposeful enhancement of science, mathematics, and the English language. Tasks include purchasing laboratory materials and teacher support for training through the CASE Institute. CASE has increased both the preparation of agriculture students for and enrollments in high-need agriculture majors. CASE enables graduates to be better prepared for admission to colleges of agriculture and success in agricultural careers.

Status: 20 NC agriculture teachers and six out-of-state agriculture teachers registered for the 2024 training. Making this CASE training session the largest in-person CASE Institute in the nation this year. Clearly, the collaboration between NCTTFC and NC State is having an impact on agricultural education across NC. The 20 NC agriculture teachers represent Avery, Catawba, Durham (3), Iredell, Johnston, Randolph (4), Rowan, Sampson (3), and Wake (3) Counties. Only NC teachers utilized grant funds for support. The other states represented include CO, CT, IA, IN (2), KY, and OH. All non-NC agriculture teachers paid their full registration.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: **Agricultural Education Teacher Leadership Cohort**

Contact: Mr. Joshua Bledsoe
 State Agricultural Education Leader
 The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
 Campus Box 7645
 NC State University
 Raleigh, NC 27695
 (919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$51,500.00

The NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc., and North Carolina Agricultural Education and FFA will provide purposeful leadership and personal growth experiences for sixteen North Carolina agriculture teachers with five to 15 years of experience. These sixteen teachers will participate in a two-year cohort program that will allow them to learn more about themselves, how to lead others and connect with state leaders in agriculture and education. The outcomes of this professional development experience include growing the leadership of our participants and providing an opportunity to retain the best agriculture teachers in the state.

Status: The project start was delayed due to timing and availability of staff. The Agricultural Education Cohort program continued with online and in-person sessions during this reporting period. March 10-12, 2024, the Cohort met in Washington, NC for personal development growth and agricultural tours in the area. John Bledsoe from Farm Credit presented content on building culture during this session. Working with Beaufort County Extension, participants toured local farms and agricultural businesses. A virtual Cohort session was held May 16, 2024. Josh Bledsoe facilitated a discussion on continued development and the value of creating your own personal definition of leadership. One significant accomplishment from several participants was that these experiences have reshaped their thinking and encouraged them to stay in the classroom.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Farm & Food-Hub Post-Pandemic Revitalization

Contact: Ms. Terry Billie
Development Manager
Farmer Foodshare
902 N. Mangum Street
Durham, NC 27701
(919) 701-2543

Grant Amount: \$165,048.13

Through a one-time, post-pandemic investment in improving infrastructure and optimizing operations, Farmer Foodshare will rebuild the capacity needed to expand sales for small/mid-scale NC farms. Over the course of two years, the grantee will return to pre-pandemic levels of service, extending their food hub's customer base to include institutions (such as schools and universities), businesses (including grocery stores and restaurants), and nonprofits. Sales to these customers will increase revenue for the farmers in their Farmer Network.

Status: The grantee has continued to optimize operations and invest in building relationships with farmers. They have added several new customers to the sales portfolio including large institutional customers. The grantee now has a fleet of delivery vehicles including a 20-foot box truck, 16-foot box truck, and one Sprinter van. The last of these is an additional 16-foot box truck that will be partially funded through our approved budget reallocation request. These valuable assets are essential to the infrastructure and significantly increase operational capacity. With the allocation of NCTTF dollars to support the purchase of vehicles in the fleet, grantee will be able to source and sell more farm products from a wider variety of farm types.

Area Served: Orange and surrounding counties

Website: www.farmerfoodshare.org

NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION
2023 CYCLE GRANTS – COMPLETED AFTER NOVEMBER 1, 2023, OR
ACTIVE AS OF OCTOBER 2024

Project: **Certified NC Christmas Tree Seed**

Contact: Mr. Tracy Taylor
Agriculture Research Superintendent
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1020 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699
(919) 414-4982

Grant Amount: \$50,000.00

Current efforts are underway at the Upper Mountain Research Station to construct a metal building on a concrete slab that will serve as the main hub to process, store, and distribute the most elite Fraser Fir seed in the world directly to the NC Christmas tree industry. These efforts are currently supported through a NCTTFC grant that was awarded to the project team during the 2022 cycle. 2023 granting cycle funds are meant to help offset and supplement the rapidly rising costs of inflation and supplement this initial investment.

Status: The grantee has completed "phase 1" of this project which is the completion of the grading and the construction of the outer shell of the building. They are currently working with NCDA Property and Construction Division as well as CBSA Engineering to produce the plans and secure a contract to complete "phase 2". Phase 2 will be the completion of the buildout of rooms inside, electrical, plumbing and HVAC for the facility.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncagr.gov

Project: **Supporting Small Farm Viability**

Contact: Ms. Molly Nicholie
Local Food Campaign Director
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
306 West Haywood Street, Suite 200
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 236-1282

Grant Amount: \$83,250.00

ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project) will offer farmers a cost-share program to support marketing projects with the goal of increasing the economic viability of Western North Carolina farms. Cost share will be paired with training and technical assistance on marketing strategies. The project will serve small farms that have been adversely affected by changes to the tobacco industry with a focus on limited resources and historically disadvantaged farmers. 200 farmers will have greater knowledge of marketing trends and marketing strategies, and 60-80 marketing cost-share projects will be implemented supporting a total of 100 to 140 farmers.

Status: 13 approved projects were completed totaling \$12,686 in reimbursed cost share funds. Over the course of this grant, 45 applications have been received, 37 projects have been approved for funding, and 13 projects have been completed. Applications represent a diverse range of farm size, farm age, and agricultural production. Approved projects have included, but are not limited to farm signage, rack cards, brochures, staff apparel, business cards, product labels, tent canopies, and postcards. Approved farm grantees represent 15 counties in Western North Carolina. The average completed project reimbursement is \$976.

Area Served: Westen Counties

Website: <http://asapconnections.org>

Project: Harnett Agricultural Center Educational Kitchen

Contact: Mr. Brian Parrish
County Extension Agent Agriculture
County of Harnett
P.O. Box 760
Lillington, NC 27546
(910) 893-7557

Grant Amount: \$130,000.00

NC Cooperative Extension, Harnett County Center will create an Educational Kitchen. This kitchen will enable former and current tobacco farmers to expand their businesses by receiving two marketing videos per farm. The first video will be a cooking video to increase business for a product of their choosing. The second video will tell the story of their farm and the products they offer. With the current video cost, the farms will receive an added value of \$24,000. Online video is the fastest-growing media source. This will put the county's farmers on the cutting edge of marketing strategies. <https://youtu.be/0bhn4N7UJ30>

Status: The Architect began working on the drawing and has gone through the first draft of the drawings and shared the answers to questions with the Harnett County Capital Projects Manager, who has updated them on needs based on the current drawing. They are now fine-tuning the drawing and once completed will meet with the grantee to approve or make minimal changes to start the bid process. Grantee has secured co-branded Instagram and YouTube channels and pages under the names "Gardening in the Carolinas", "Farming in the Carolinas", and "Cooking

in the Carolinas.” These platforms aim to enhance the grantee’s outreach by engaging diverse age groups through visually appealing and informative content. These pages will offer a unique blend of education, entertainment, and behind-the-scenes insights into farming practices.

Area Served: Harnett

Website: <http://harnett.org/>

Project: From Tobacco to Sustainable Forestry

Contact: Dr. John Hatcher
Executive Director
Forest Education and Conservation Foundation
1600 Glenwood Ave, Suite 1
Raleigh, NC 27608
(919) 834-3943

Grant Amount: \$75,000.00

The Forest Education and Conservation Foundation (FECF) will educate logging business owners to support historically tobacco-dependent communities to weather the current economic turbulence. The FECF will leverage the North Carolina Forestry Association's Prologger certification program to host new business training workshops, increase video resources made available to address logging/forestry-specific challenges, develop business training resources, and increase access to training materials throughout North Carolina's logging community.

Status: The grantee has completed the initial planning for training topics and has created a video production timeline for execution over the span of the grant. This will include logging cost components, variable expenses, and inflation and their impact on profitability, bookkeeping and contracts. Year 2 will include work force development, insurance and risk management. Year 3 will include taxes, business structure, and financials.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncfecf.org

Project: Haywood County Outdoor Agriculture Classroom

Contact: Ms. Sarah Smart
Agriculture Instructor & FFA Advisor
Haywood County Consolidated School System
1233 North Main Street
Waynesville, NC 28786
(822) 456-2408

Grant Amount: \$150,000.00

The Haywood County Consolidated School System will lead the building of an outdoor agriculture classroom where schools and FFA Chapters from within the county and in surrounding western counties may use hand-on learning to teach agriculture practices to students and community members. The outdoor classroom will also be utilized as an education exchange hub for other Haywood community events such as agriculture-related training and demonstrations.

Status: The Grantee purchased a commercial, vertical roof building for the Tuscola Agriculture Outdoor Classroom. The work has been completed including site prep, gravel, concrete, plumbing, and the metal building has been put up.

Area Served: Haywood and surrounding counties

Website: www.haywood.k12.nc.us

Project: NC Real-Time Network Upgrade

Contact: Mr. Gary Thompson
Chief, NC Geodetic Survey
NC Department of Public Safety/Emergency Management
45105 Reedy Creek Road
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 733-3836

Grant Amount: \$50,000.00

The grantee has upgraded the following three locations: Kinston (NCKI) Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS), Winston Salem (NCWN) Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS), and the Peanut Belt Research Station (NCLW) Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS). Each received upgraded equipment (geodetic antenna and Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) receiver). Upgraded equipment information was submitted to the National Geodetic Survey (NGS) so that the NGS CORS site log could be updated. The receiver and antenna information were updated in the NC Geodetic Survey CORS/Real Time Network application.

Status: Complete

Area Served: Piedmont

Website: <http://https://ncgs.state.nc.us>

Project: Soil Health for Farmland Preservation

Contact: Ms. Amanda Egdorf-Sand
Executive Director
NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation Inc.
5171 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 330
Raleigh, NC 27612
(919) 510-4599

Grant Amount: \$200,000.00

The NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation will further statewide farmland preservation initiatives by providing mini-grants to Soil and Water Conservation Districts to increase technical capacity through the purchase of equipment and software that increases on-farm efficiencies, improves soil health, and ultimately leads to increased participation in VAD/EVAD and conservation easement programs. The outcomes will include a greater number of landowners that have a clear path forward to maintaining profitable farm operations thereby promoting multiple pathways for the preservation of North Carolina's working lands.

Status: The contracting has been placed on hold due to Federal-level talks to ban Chinese-made drones, which significantly impacts this portion of the project. Until further guidance is provided from the Federal government, we will not contract with any Districts for their drones. Due to this conflict and the flooding of our western counties, funds have been redirected from drones to post hole diggers and fencing equipment. It is believed that this equipment will have a greater and more direct impact on soil health and water quality at this time.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncsoilwater.org

Project: N.C. PSI Extension Agent Network

Contact: Dr. Rachel Vann
N.C. PSI Platform Director for Extension, Outreach, and Engagement, Asst.
Prof. Crop and Soil Science
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$301,338.00

The N.C. PSI Extension Agent Network, a network of dynamic and motivated Extension Agents, will beta-test PSI-developed technologies and accelerate the pace at which agricultural solutions

are delivered to end users across the state through interdisciplinary research efforts. This network will be instrumental in connecting PSI developed technologies to farmers in North Carolina to ensure seamless integration of technology into on-farm production situations. Involvement in this network will also catalyze the evolution of Extension to be on the cutting edge of agricultural technology.

Status: The grantee has continued to allow the onboarding of additional agents into the N.C. PSI Extension Agent Network, a “Data at Work” workshop for Agents, a Startup 101 tour for Agents, and several hardware training sessions. The Agent Network has been included for future funding in several grant proposals by faculty at the university who have had positive experiences working with agents thus far and were only exposed to agents, and the Agent Network has been recognized by a national education organization, Nourish the Future, as a positive model for Extension education.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Promoting Local Beekeeping in NC

Contact: Dr. David Tarpy
Professor and Extension Apiculturist
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$263,860.00

This extension training will be conducted by the NC State University Apiculture Program through the NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc. The project provides economic opportunities to growers interested in expanding into bee-dependent crops or pollination services directly. Numerous BEES Academies will be held to train growers and beekeepers in proper apiculture management, as well as several advanced bee-breeding clinics to capitalize on the demand for local queens and nucleus hives. It will enhance pollination services for growers of bee-dependent crops in the state, as well as augment the local community of micro-breeders who promote sustainable local beekeeping.

Status: The grantee took part in the first Born & Bred workshop on queen rearing in collaboration with the NC State Beekeepers Association. They helped train 100 beekeepers in basic queen rearing techniques with hands-on practice. There is a substantial waiting list which demonstrates the high demand for such an education.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Agricultural Education Program Improvement Grant

Contact: Mr. Joshua Bledsoe
State Agricultural Education Leader
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$311,400.00

The NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc. and NC Agricultural Education and FFA, will provide 20 grants to local agricultural education programs in North Carolina. The 20, \$15,000 grants per program will fund transformational projects that will focus on growing leaders, building communities, and strengthening agriculture for high- and middle-school agricultural education programs across the state. Grants will be used to fund innovative, sustainable, and relevant projects that will assist the local teachers and students in meeting the current needs of the agricultural industry in our state and their specific communities.

Status: Applications were reviewed by the grantee's selection committee and were approved for funding. Programs were notified of receiving their grant on January 31. In February, a mandatory meeting was held for all grant recipients via Zoom to outline the grant funding and reporting procedures. Contracts from the schools/school systems were received and funds were distributed in April/May. During that time, state staff visited programs and events to present the schools with their project checks, yard signs, and decals. There was great coverage from local media for these check presentations. Projects are underway at schools and interim progress reports have been submitted. Complete grant information is available on the NC FFA Website. (<https://ncffa.org/agricultural-education/teacher-resources/grant-resources/nc-ttfc-grant-documents/>)

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: NECP Greenhouse Modernization Project

Contact: Dr. Mark Cockrell, Director
North East Carolina Preparatory School
274 Husky Way
Tarboro, NC 27886

(252) 641-0464

Grant Amount: \$85,500.00

The NECPS Agricultural Education Department will enclose a portion of the school grounds with a chain link fence and modernize the existing greenhouse structure by adding cooling fans, a cool cell, a heat source, replacing the wooden parts of the structure with metal, spreading rock on the floor, and installing tables. Secondly, funding will be used to build a headhouse to store pots, potting soil, seeds, etc., and a large shade house to diversify production methods. Finally, funding will be used to build a new, state-of-the-art 35' x 48' greenhouse.

Status: The grantee has constructed a new, modern greenhouse structure with energy-efficient materials. The project includes installing a galvanized chain-link fence with two gates. They have also added an auto-pot system to enable automated irrigation and nutrient delivery to plants.

Area Served: Edgecombe

Website: <https://necprepschool.com>

Project: Northeastern Agriculture Complex Facility Improvements

Contact: Ms. Monica Manzer
Agriculture Teacher
Northeastern High School Agricultural Complex, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank
County Public Schools
963 Oak Stump Road
Elizabeth City, NC 27909
(252) 335-2932

Grant Amount: \$145,152.00

Northeastern High School Agriculture and FFA will update the existing 44' X 84' Jaderloon polycarbonate greenhouse to include new polycarbonate siding and roofing, fans, heaters, and an evaporative cooling pad. The grantee will also update the existing 25' X 50' Quonset polyethylene greenhouse to include a new heater, plastic covering, and exhaust shutters, and will build a new 20' x 46' raised center barn in the animal science facility to accommodate its growing livestock herd on campus.

Status: The grantee has made all of the updates to Greenhouse #1 that were to be performed by The Greenhouse Company, LLC. The Greenhouse Company replaced all the polycarbonate on the greenhouse structure, portions of the framing and both doors. The remaining updates to this structure will be purchased and added later this year.

Area Served: Pasquotank

Website: <https://www.ecpps.k12.nc.us/northeastern-high-sc>

Project: CEAD Agriculture Equipment

Contact: Ms. Emily Buchanan
Director, Caswell Campus Operations
Piedmont Community College Foundation
1715 College Drive
Roxboro, NC 27537
(336) 322-2103

Grant Amount: \$125,210.00

Piedmont Community College's Agribusiness Technology department will partner with the NC Cooperative Extension office to design a program that allows local farmers to use equipment housed at the Center for Educational and Agricultural Development (CEAD) site as they learn about and implement new farming methods and techniques. Caswell County farmers are exploring ways to grow new commodities for a regional client base. To supply farmers with what they need, PCC will need to purchase new equipment. The purpose of this grant is to purchase the equipment needed for this farming program.

Status: The grantee had significant delays due to rising construction costs. The grantee continues to raise funds for the overall project as construction costs continue to rise. As a result, they have slightly reduced the scope of the first phase of the project, which includes the incubator farm plots and food hub. This scope reduction required additional time and consultation for redesign and also pushed back the timeline of approval for the project from the state construction office.

Area Served: Caswell

Website: www.piedmontcc.edu

Project: Caswell County Farmers Market

Contact: Ms. Kamara Barnett
Town Manager
Town of Yanceyville
PO Box 727
158 East Church Street
Yanceyville, NC 27379
(336) 694-5431

Grant Amount: \$500,000.00

The Town of Yanceyville, collaborating with the Caswell County Local Food Council, has developed plans for a 15-stall farmers market shelter located at the Yanceyville Pavilion. It includes a cold storage unit and public restrooms. Beginning construction in November 2023, it will be completed in early 2024. The facility will enable Caswell farmers (and producers from surrounding counties) to conveniently sell offerings from a centralized location where the bulk of workers and town residents reside. Convenient with Highway 86, this provides a larger market for farmers and fresh farm produce to those in town not able to drive to the previous location.

Status: The overall design of the Yanceyville Pavilion is underway including the farmers market shelter. Construction will start when plans are approved, and full funding has been established.

Area Served: Caswell

Website: www.YanceyvilleNC.gov

Project: Wayne Community College Ag Building

Contact: Ms. Tiffany Creech
Director of Grants Development & Management
Wayne Community College
P.O. Box 8002
Goldsboro, NC 27533
919-739-6957

Grant Amount: \$250,000.00

Wayne Community College (WCC) has plans to construct a 3,600 square foot metal building with a brick façade on their main campus that will serve as an agricultural lab space for all Agriculture & Natural Resource programs at the college. This new building will be part of the “Lamm Agricultural Complex” and will showcase training equipment for recruiting events, provide space for hands-on training to reinforce classroom learning and provide a space for summer camps for middle and high school students to promote career exploration in the field of agriculture.

Status: Plans for the project have been approved by the state board of community colleges. The college will make a public posting/request for qualifications for the project.

Area Served: Wayne

Website: www.waynecc.edu

Project: Research and Education Farm Equipment

Contact: Ms. Gena Moore

Director and Instructor of Agricultural Food Systems Program
Wingate University
PO Box 159
Wingate, NC 28174
(704) 233-8000

Grant Amount: \$49,391.00

Wingate University launched an agricultural food systems concentration in the fall of 2022 to build on Union County's agricultural strength while also addressing pockets of food insecurity. To support the program, the University has leased eight acres of land over the next ten years at the Union County Agricultural and Event Complex to develop a research and educational farm that will benefit students and local farmers. Much-needed equipment will be purchased for the Wingate University Research and Education Farm which will include a storage container for housing farming tools and supplies and a greenhouse with a remote monitoring system.

Status: Quotes were obtained from three greenhouse suppliers and installers. Quotes were also obtained from two shipping container suppliers. Proposals were requested and received to begin phase one of farm development including driveway improvements and grading for the greenhouse. A general contractor was selected, and work started on 6/24/24. A final site plan was developed for the farm. General farm management and student participation has yielded new production areas and donation produce.

Area Served: Union

Website: www.wingate.edu

Project: Connecting Farmers to Wholesale Markets

Contact: Dr. Gabriel Cumming
Associate Director
Working Landscapes
108 South Main St, Suite C
Warrenton, NC 27589
(252) 257-0205

Grant Amount: \$251,440.00

Working Landscapes will expand the capabilities and efficiency of its ByWay Foods value-added vegetable processing hub by adding new specialized equipment that enables it to serve broader wholesale markets in North Carolina and Virginia; these improvements will help increase sales more than five-fold. The grantee plans to increase the financial sustainability of 30 farm suppliers by 1) increasing their access to markets and 2) decreasing their input costs through the implementation of soil health practices.

Status: The grantee has continued working with equipment vendors to design and acquire equipment that will improve its production capacity and product line diversity including an automated bagging line and a butternut peeler. Problems with the equipment design have delayed progress, and the design of the bagging line equipment has now been finalized while the equipment is in production. Progress has been made on improving the financial sustainability of the grantee's partner farmers through soil health/regenerative agriculture practice trainings/support and food safety/Good Agricultural Practices training/support. A marketing campaign has been implemented to increase market channels for their products.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://www.workinglandscapesnc.org>

Project: Healthy Farm, Strong Agriculture Community

Contact: Dr. Susan Jakes
Associate State Program Leader, Community, and Rural Dev.
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$194,888.00

NC State Extension Community and Rural Development will lead and execute the project in partnership with The NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc. The project will provide a menu of training options to farmers, helping them to target farm health and safety needs and assist with mandatory training compliance needed for GAP certification and EPA Worker Protection Standards. The training will be available to be conducted on-farm and multi-farm at the community sites. The project outcomes will include increasing knowledge and preventive behaviors to produce high-quality crops, providing a healthy work environment, and increasing the ease of compliance with mandatory training.

Status: The grantee surveyed farm owners and/or farm managers to learn about mandatory and non-mandatory training needs. The data collection steps included attending annual grower production meetings, tobacco GAP, and sweet potato production meetings in Wilson, Nash, and Edgecombe. The project educator and coordinator also conducted follow-up phone calls, text messages, and in-person farm visits to increase survey participation. Most respondents reported tobacco and sweet potato as the top crops requiring farm labor, 88% and 75%, respectively. Other crops reported to require less than 20% each were cucumber, watermelon, and strawberries. The suggestions included online videos, study guides, providing a training book, and having an intermediary between the farm owner and the employee. The identified training needs supported the development of a preliminary menu, including the training offered by the Extension Farmworker Health and Safety Program. Given that Spanish is the primary language

of most farmworkers, the menu lists training provided in Spanish and is free of charge unless otherwise specified.

Area Served: Wilson, Edgecombe, Nash

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Executive Farm Management

Contact: Dr. Michael Best
Director, Executive Farm Management School
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$119,981.00

This grant will support the Executive Farm Management (EFM) program. EFM was established in 2017, and trains managers of larger commercial farms in North Carolina and the southeastern U.S. through an ongoing intensive educational program. The program participants learn how to enhance their strategic business planning and management competencies, which are needed now more than ever in today's large, diverse farms due to their increasingly sophisticated nature.

Status: Grantee held the EFM Alumni Summit in February of 2024 to start building the network of its alumni. The farmer alumni have mentioned that networking is extremely important to them in that it gives them the opportunity to learn from each other in ways that they wouldn't be able to otherwise. The networking of alumni also helps EFM with their recruiting which was the main goal for the first six months of 2024. There have been eight recruiting trips across the state since May 1. The grantee has also spent time visiting alumni farms to ask them how the program has benefited them and to ask for help in recruiting.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Raising Consumption of NC Sweetpotatoes

Contact: Ms. Vanessa Spiron
Grant Administrator
North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission Foundation
700 W. Parrish Dr. Suite C
Benson, NC 27504

(919) 894-1067

Grant Amount: \$133,380.00

Over a two-year period, the North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission Foundation will further develop its nutrition influencer program by creating three audience-specific Dietary Toolkits and hosting two Harvest Tours for Registered Dietician Influencers. These projects will increase the consumption of sweetpotatoes by promoting their health benefits. The results will be a profitability increase for farms in previously tobacco-dependent North Carolina communities as well as producers and industry professionals adversely affected by changes in the tobacco industry.

Status: The grantee has been working on the development of three Dietary Toolkits. This has included contracting with the project manager who oversaw the management of three registered dieticians to produce the subsequent toolkits. They have also begun planning for the Harvest Tour scheduled for later this year.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <https://ncsweetpotatoes.com/about-us/foundation>

Project: NCTTFC SAE Institute 2024-2025

Contact: Mr. Edward Olive
Director, Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center
University of Mount Olive
634 Henderson St.
Mount Olive, NC 28365-1263
(919) 658-7682

Grant Amount: \$100,000.00

The NCTTFC SAE Institute is a week-long residential camp held at the University of Mount Olive. The camp provides industry and leadership training to FFA members providing 45 hours of Supervised Agricultural Experience used toward various FFA chapters, state, and national awards. The Institute allows student attendees to understand agricultural operations and facilities. FFA members are also exposed to hands-on learning experiences in agriculture. The Institute includes chapter advisors and provides 3 hours of Continuing Education Credit as a participant. The Institute includes training opportunities for both FFA members and advisors on leadership, awards, SAEs, and other opportunities.

Status: During this reporting period, project staff planned and promoted the first of two NC TTFC SAE Institutes planned for this project. The date for the Institute was set for July 8-12. Project staff reserved necessary spaces and made arrangements for the event. Project staff collaborated with faculty and staff on plans and needs to provide the training. Project staff also

confirmed participation of a national speaker to train teachers and students on recordkeeping software for SAE and other FFA-based awards.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.umoag.com

Project: NCTTFC AgPrime 2024-2027

Contact: Mr. Edward Olive
Director, Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center
University of Mount Olive
634 Henderson St.
Mount Olive, NC 28365-1263
(919) 658-7682

Grant Amount: \$692,000.00

The grantee will work with county representatives in 33 counties across south-central and eastern NC to fund innovative projects that support agricultural profitability and productivity. Each project will be funded based on its potential to positively benefit the economic development of the respective local communities, agricultural diversification, farm profitability, and skill and resource development for current and future farmers. The project will be administered as a cost-share grant program seeking to fund projects that can be implemented in other regions of the state by agricultural producers and agribusinesses.

Status: Project staff reviewed NCTTFC AgPrime grant applications for funding and had them scored by an independent group of reviewers. Staff then consulted with NCTTFC to ensure that no conflicts were present. Selected farmers were contacted to collect necessary documentation and initial payments of 75% of the approved projects were distributed. Funded participants began work on their projects and site visits were held during this reporting period.

Area Served: 33 Eastern counties

Website: www.umoag.com

Project: Warren County Farmers Market

Contact: Ms. Charla Duncan
Director of Community & Economic Development
Warren County
602 W. Ridgeway St.

Warrenton, NC 27589
(252) 257-3115

Grant Amount: \$500,000.00

To create more stable access to markets for farmers & local food manufacturers, as well as to increase access to healthy and local foods for consumers, Warren County will build a 9,000 sq. ft. farmers' market. This facility will be the only farmers market in the county and be located on the historic agricultural fairgrounds. The permanent area will also provide an office for creating a new position, the Warren County Farmers Market Manager. The open-air pavilion with attached indoor space will allow for COVID-safe practices in the future, as well as allowing vendors to accept EBT.

Status: The grantee's Farmers Market Specialized committee continues to meet. They have received a contract from Wooten (Engineering Firm) and are awaiting approval from the Warren County Board of Commissioners. The grantee is in the process of finalizing the details of the design phase.

Area Served: Warren

Website: www.warrencountync.com

Project: Mount Olive Area Farmers Market

Contact: Dr. Barbara Kornegay
Commissioner
Town of Mount Olive
114 East James Street, Mount Olive, NC 28365
Mount Olive, NC 28365
(919) 658-9539

Grant Amount: \$278,537.00

The Town of Mount Olive was to design/build/operate a 36' by 60' open-air area farmers market on a concrete slab with vendor spaces, parking, restrooms, and signage in cooperation with NCTTFC. The town planned to monitor/rent spaces; and gather data about the project's success with support from Mount Olive Community Development Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce, Mount Olive Presbyterian Church, First Baptist Church, and local businesses. The project was to begin in November 2023 and be completed by December 2025.

Status: Complete - Grantee chose to not accept the grant award

Area Served: Duplin

Website: <http://townofmountolivenc.org>

Project: Educational Opportunities for Pecan Growers

Contact: Mr. Phil Ricks
NCPGA Board Member & Chair of NCPGA Funding Committee
North Carolina Pecan Growers Association Inc.
95 Simon Collie Road
Louisburg, NC 27549
(910) 367-2836

Grant Amount: \$54,000.00

The NC Pecan Growers Association will design and provide educational opportunities for all NC pecan growers to help enhance their abilities to sustainably and profitably produce and market pecans regardless of the size of their operation. This will include conducting various educational workshops/field days. The grantee will republish "Growing Pecans in NC" and produce educational videos for use in field days/workshops and post to the association's web page.

Status: The grantee is preparing to conduct an educational meeting, start on modifications to its webpage, and produce videos.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: www.ncpecangrowers.com

Project: Farm, Food and Family Education Center

Contact: Dr. Kenneth Sherin
County Extension Director
NC Cooperative Extension- Randolph County Center
1003 S. Fayetteville St.
Asheboro, NC 27203
(336) 318-6000

Grant Amount: \$596,851.00

Randolph County will build a new Farm, Food and Family Education Center (F3EC) that will be a dynamic, innovative, and collaborative place for people and organizations to build systems that strengthen economies, enhance resilience, and build community. This Education Center will serve as a "hub" for innovative and collaborative sharing of resources and ideas. It will house a food hub, shared kitchen, demonstration spaces, and an agricultural event center that will be an integral part of strengthening the local food and agricultural systems in Randolph County.

Status: Construction has continued on the Farm, Food and Family Education Center. With the footings and building pad completed, the framework of that building is currently being erected. Grading has continued on the other areas of the project site.

Area Served: Randolph

Website: www.randolph.ces.ncsu.edu

Project: WNC Regional Livestock Center Refurbishment

Contact: Mr. LT Ward
Board Member
WNC Communities
594 Brevard Road
Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 252-4783

Grant Amount: \$80,000.00

After 12 years of successful operation, where over 193,000 cattle have been sold at a value of \$135 million benefiting farmers in western North Carolina - WNC Communities is seeking to restore life into the WNC Regional Livestock Center facility to match the expectations of the participating partners with critically needed refurbishments. Due to a significant increase in participants using the market and the center's overall profile, the need exists to improve the facility to better serve its constituents. The plan includes initiatives that restore the physical appearance and enhance operations.

Status: Interior painting has been completed. Reconstruction and repair to improve access and passage has been completed, making it much easier for trucks to use the roadway. The evaluation of current lighting has been completed and is currently out to bid. The hay shed construction has been completed and is actively being used to store hay. It is a welcome addition to the livestock center and has been used extensively since the flooding in WNC.

Area Served: Western Counties

Website: www.wnccommunities.org

Project: WNC FoodWorks Sustainability Plan

Contact: Mr. Smithson Mills
Board Treasurer
Center For Agricultural and Food Entrepreneurship
1461 Sand Hill Road
Candler, NC 28170

(828) 348-0130

Grant Amount: \$100,000.00

CAFE's new commercial kitchen facility at the WNC Farmers Market will serve early-stage food entrepreneurs preparing foods, cosmetics, and natural products. The desired outcome is to achieve current-account self-sufficiency within three years while supporting the growth of over 50 businesses using agricultural inputs. TTFC support will cover a portion of start-up operating expenses while the project ramps up fee-for-service revenues. Core expenses will include rent, utilities, management, insurance, and supplies. Earlier TTFC support helped leverage over \$2 million in additional funds for constructing and equipping the 5,000 sq ft facility opening in Spring 2023.

Status: The grantee has enrolled 26 new shared-use clients supporting a total of 39 jobs that will help the project establish long-term financial sustainability and allow it to continue creating jobs and economic opportunities for value-added entrepreneurs in WNC. Since the effective date of the grant, the project has enrolled a total of 46 clients supporting a total of 62 jobs. The facility has hosted four new training and education events in the Training & Education Kitchen, serving at least 27 attendees; some training recipients will be hard to track since one event used the space to create a Spanish cooking demo to be used online by the client. To date 15 training and education events have taken place at WNC Foodworks, serving a minimum of 146 recipients. In this reporting period, 29 new companies or individuals have received technical assistance. To date, 60 companies or individuals have received technical assistance from WNC Foodworks.

Area Served: Buncombe and surrounding counties

Website: www.blueridgefoodventures.org

Project: FCEMC Hydroponic Farm

Contact: Ms. Carrie Shields
Key Accounts and Economic Development Specialist
Four County Electric Membership Corporation (FCEMC)
P.O. Box 2000
Burgaw, NC 28425
(910) 259-6374

Grant Amount: \$165,400.00

Four County Electric Membership Corporation (FCEMC) will purchase a hydroponic smart farm container. FCEMC Smart Farm will be a controlled-environment shipping container, creating community-centered programs targeting health and wellness, job skills, mental health, and education. In partnership with James Sprunt Community College, the hydroponic smart farm will provide benefits to students, local farmers, and businesses by encouraging hands-on learning and onsite tours. The space allows for a 24/7 controlled environment with irrigation and LED lights

creating an environment for learning and growing. Annual harvest will be between 2-4 tons of fresh, hyper-local produce without pesticides or herbicides.

Status: The grantee established a Hydroponic Smart Farm Container. The project container can harvest two-five acres of lettuce a year, leveraging innovative farming techniques to maximize production efficiency. An instructor was hired to oversee the operation and instruction of the hydroponic farm container and attended the Farm Hand seminar in Boston to be trained by the Freight Farms team on how to launch, run, and harvest the operation properly. A dedicated course was created around hydroponic farming practices. The three-week course is named “Hydroponics: Growing without Soil”. It provides students with hands-on experience and practical knowledge of modern agricultural techniques. For the first cycle, the grantee planted 2,016 seeds, and with a 98% germination rate, 1,890 plants should grow to maturity.

Area Served: Duplin and surrounding counties

Website: <http://www.fourcty.org>

Project: Mobile Soils Classroom

Contact: Ms. Kayla McCoy
Natural Resource Conservationist/Grants Administrator
Wilkes Soil & Water Conservation District
416 Executive Drive, Suite A
Wilkesboro, NC 28697
(336) 838-3622

Grant Amount: \$122,473.00

The Wilkes Soil & Water Conservation District (WSWCD) will build a Mobile Soils Classroom to provide students with an interactive, walk-thru learning experience about soil and its role in the ecosystem and their lives. The classroom will allow WSWCD to “take the field trip to the classroom.” The Mobile Soils Classroom will promote agriculture in NC through soil and water health education, while also providing pre-K-12 students with an unforgettable and fun learning experience, inspiring them to learn more, and hopefully pursue a related career in agriculture. The classroom will be used statewide and reach 18,500 participants in the first year.

Status: The project has successfully acquired and outfitted a truck and trailer to serve as the foundation for the Mobile Soils Classroom. The artwork and educational exhibits are completed and installed and ready for use.

Area Served: Statewide

Website: <http://wilkesswcd.org>

NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION
2024 CYCLE - AWARDED SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

Project: **West Lincoln Educational Livestock Facility**

Contact: Mr. Shane McKee
 Agriculture teacher/FFA
 West Lincoln High School (FFA Program)
 172 Shoal Road
 Lincolnton, NC 28092
 (704) 736-9453

Grant Amount: \$150,000.00

The grantee will design and build a West Lincoln Educational Livestock Facility to facilitate the new animal science educational program. This barn will be used to expand the agriculture program, enhance opportunities for students for learning animal reproduction and genetics, nutrition, anatomy and physiology, and animal behavior and husbandry. This facility will also be used for the FFA program for practice, animal handling, and shows/competitions. It will not only service West Lincoln students but other schools in the county and surrounding counties and will also serve the public for educational purposes.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Lincoln and surrounding counties

Applicant Website: www.lcsnc.org/WLHS

Project: **Shady Grove Educational Livestock Facility**

Contact: Dr. Sandy Maddox
 Director, Agribusiness Center
 University of Mount Olive
 634 Henderson St.
 Mount Olive, NC 28365-1263
 (919) 658-7682

Grant Amount: \$1,000,000.00

The Shady Grove Educational Livestock Facility (SGELF) will serve students, agricultural producers, FFA & 4-H members, and the livestock industry through hands-on education, outreach and research. This facility is designed for practical training of students in agricultural

degrees at UMO (Ag Education, Animal Science, Veterinary Bioscience, etc.) and secondary students involved in FFA/4-H thus providing the industry with a skilled large animal workforce. The facility will serve as a unique demonstration and training facility for farmers desiring to diversify operations by integrating livestock or improving herd quality through applied training in reproductive techniques (AI, ET), forages, nutrition and animal husbandry practices.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Statewide

Applicant Website: www.umo.edu

Project: FRSAN-NC: Grief & Caregiving

Contact: Ms. Jessica Wilburn
Agromedicine Nurse Coordinator
East Carolina University
2200 South Charles Blvd.
Office of Research Administration
Room 2900, MS 165
Greenville, NC 27858-4353
(252) 328-9530

Grant Amount: \$300,000.00

ECU-North Carolina Agromedicine Institute will grow the Farm & Ranch Stress Assistance Network-NC to help farm community members manage escalating farm stress associated with agribusiness, adverse health outcomes, and caregiving. This will be accomplished by conducting 100 educational sessions at farm-related events, providing 400 free behavioral health sessions to farm community members, assisting farms with cost of health/safety training, supplies and caregiving, and training 50 healthcare professionals on the unique challenges of caregiving in the farm environment. Resources will be made available through the dissemination of at least 75 social media posts, 10 print releases, the Institute's websites and listserv.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Statewide

Applicant Website: www.ncagromedicine.org

Project: Project Pear Further Farming Integration

Contact: Mr. Scotty Summerlin
Executive Director

Duplin County Economic Development Commission
224 Seminary Street
Kenansville, NC 28349
(910) 296-2180

Grant Amount: \$500,000.00

The grantee will assist an established agricultural company and the local farming and grain growing community with the construction of a new state-of-the-art grain handling, drying, and storage facility. Presently, limited grain storage and handling capabilities lead to long unload times and gross inefficiencies. The project will greatly benefit the company and the local farming community by adding a large volume of additional grain storage capacity and unparalleled unloading and drying capabilities. This will allow farmers to return to harvesting expeditiously, allowing them to increase efficiency and lower their operating costs.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Duplin

Applicant Website: www.duplincountync.com

Project: Increasing Capacity for Livestock Events

Contact: Ms. Tammy Falls
Office Manager
Cleveland County Fair Inc
1751 E. Marion Street
Shelby, NC 28152
(704) 487-0651

Grant Amount: \$51,836.00

The grantee will purchase commercially manufactured five-foot vertical bar panels to provide 180, 5'x5' small animal pens for Weathers Livestock Arena. These pens will accommodate the animal exhibit needs during the Fair's dairy goat, meat goat, and market lamb shows. In addition, the pens will greatly benefit established off-season livestock events including the annual Spring Spectacular Dairy Goat Show and Carolina Country Classic Boer Goat Show by eliminating the cost and risks associated with hauling pens borrowed from the WNC Mountain State Fair. A fully equipped show facility will attract additional livestock events that generate rental and tax revenues.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Cleveland

Applicant Website: www.clevelandcountyfair.com

Project: Agricultural Education Teacher Leadership Cohort

Contact: Mr. Joshua Bledsoe
State Agricultural Education Leader
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$72,100.00

The grantee will provide a purposeful leadership and personal growth experience for sixteen North Carolina agriculture teachers with five to 15 years of experience. These sixteen teachers will participate in a two-year cohort program that will allow them to learn more about themselves, how to lead others, and connect with state leaders in agriculture and education. The outcomes of this professional development experience include growing the leadership of our participants and providing an opportunity to retain the best agriculture teachers in the state.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Statewide

Applicant Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Agriculture Education Program at APA

Contact: Mr. David Moody
Head of School
Arendell Parrott Academy
1901 Dobbs Farm Road
Kinston, NC 28504
(252) 522-4222

Grant Amount: \$250,000.00

Arendell Parrott Academy is in the process of conducting a capital campaign that will fund constructing a Science Technology Engineering Agricultural, Arts, and Math (STEAM) classroom building. This project will cover the cost of the establishment of an Agricultural Education Program which will include a classroom and lab within this facility, as well as the curriculum supplies to obtain a Charter for a Future Farmers Of America.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Lenoir

Applicant Website: <https://www.parrottacademy.org>

Project: Greenhouse & GreenSpace Education Project

Contact: Dr. Jim Hamilton
County Extension Director
Watauga County
814 King Street, Suite 205
Boone, NC 28607
(828) 265-8000

Grant Amount: \$67,379.00

The grantee will construct a 16' x 24' production greenhouse to enhance educational opportunities for small farmers and home horticulturalists to produce their own food, enhance & diversify home & farm production and to distribute plants/vegetable starts to underserved communities. The project will also create & improve additional 'green spaces' in the county's impound lot & space surrounding the Agricultural Services Center to enhance outdoor educational opportunities related to pollinators, proper landscaping practices, and stream/environmental enhancement. Additionally, the project will provide secure storage for shared use farm equipment used by area farmers.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Watauga

Applicant Website: <http://www.watgov.org>

Project: Improved Christmas Tree Seed Equipment

Contact: Mr. N. David Smith
Chief Deputy Commissioner
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1020 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699
(919) 414-4982

Grant Amount: \$577,467.00

The Upper Mountain Research Station will install seed processing and testing equipment inside its recently constructed seed center. The NC Tobacco Trust Fund Christmas Tree Seed Center will make the most elite Fraser Fir Christmas tree seed in the world available to Christmas tree producers. This will increase profitability for producers and increase the experience for consumers.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Statewide

Applicant Website: www.ncagr.gov

Project: "Smarty Plants"-Hydroponics Smart Farm

Contact: Ms. Renee Sutton
Chief of Staff
James Sprunt Community College
PO Box 398
133 James Sprunt Drive
Kenansville, NC 28349
(910) 275-6103

Grant Amount: \$86,635.00

The establishment and implementation of the hydroponics Smart Farm at James Sprunt Community College will provide new and innovative educational experiences for area agriculture students. It will establish and provide horticulture and smart farming credential opportunities, while utilizing advanced agricultural technologies, minimizing environmental impact, and preserving precious natural resources. By growing a diverse range of crops in the Smart Farm, the project will help reduce dependence on imported produce, strengthen food security, and promote healthier eating habits for area students and citizens.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Duplin

Applicant Website: www.jamessprunt.edu

Project: Increasing Small Farm Market Opportunity

Contact: Mr. Dru Zucchini
Executive Director
Toe River Aggregation Center Training Organization Regional Inc. (TRACTOR)
Spruce Pine, NC 28714

(828) 536-0126

Grant Amount: \$250,000.00

Local products sourced from NC food systems are in high demand, and TRACTOR seeks to connect its network of farmers from a historically tobacco-led community with new and untapped markets. TRACTOR is experienced in developing novel markets which prioritize local farmers and consumers, including sales through wholesale markets, institutions, CSAs, clinical programs, SNAP/EBT, food pantries, groceries, food banks and local retailers. Its dedicated Sales and Marketing Contractor will leverage these markets to increase small farm revenue and/or production, increase access to local foods and further diversify markets to develop a stronger farm economy in WNC.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Western Counties

Applicant Website: www.tractorfoodandfarms.com

Project: Sanford Agricultural Marketplace Pavilion Expansion

Contact: Mr. Fedd Walker
City of Sanford (Downtown Sanford Incorporated- DSI)
PO Box 3729
Sanford, NC 27330
(919) 770-1106

Grant Amount: \$398,019.00

The City of Sanford will expand their proposed covered farmer's market space at their newly constructed Sanford Agricultural Marketplace. Extending the market space by 2,843 square feet will increase its total size by almost 50%, thus allowing an additional 11 to 12 vendor spaces. As Lee County and its surrounding areas continue to experience significant population growth, the additional space will afford more farmers the opportunity to participate in direct-to-consumer sale opportunities while increasing their revenue potential and addressing demand for both consumers and suppliers.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Lee

Applicant Website: www.sanfordnc.net

Project: EnergyCAP-Ag Energy Grant Program

Contact: Ms. Mariah Hughes
Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation & Development Council
4388 US Hwy 25-70, Suite #3
Marshall, NC 28753
(828) 206-6159

Grant Amount: \$120,000.00

The grantee, through its Energy Conservation Assistance Program (EnergyCAP), will provide AgEnergy cost-share grants to 10+ WNC farmers for energy efficiency or renewable energy projects that will increase farm profitability by reducing overhead costs. The goal is to reduce energy costs on an additional 10 farms by providing 50% cost share, or up to \$10,000, on projects such as solar PV or solar hot water, renewable energy generation systems, lighting and insulation upgrades, and more.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Western Counties

Applicant Website: www.mountainvalleysrcd.org

Project: Livestock Arena Renovation Project

Contact: Ms. Sandra Head
Program Coordinator
Wayne County Livestock Development Association Incorporated
PO Box 1100
Goldsboro, NC 27533
(919) 735-7277

Grant Amount: \$160,000.00

The Livestock Arena Renovation Project entails renovating and expanding an existing 60' x 100' arena into a modern agriculture and livestock exhibition facility. Key aspects of the renovation include installing a concrete floor, ventilation, a handwashing station and a watering system for penned animals. Additionally, 16' x 100' extensions will be added on each side to increase the total square footage by 3200 square feet. These upgrades aim to enhance functionality, improve animal welfare, accommodate larger exhibits and audiences, and foster innovation and collaboration within the agricultural community while prioritizing health and safety measures.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Wayne

Applicant Website: www.waynefair.com

Project: JoCo Grows Ag Literacy

Contact: Ms. Nicole Youngblood
Extension Agent
Johnston County Cooperative Extension
2736 NC Highway 210, Suite A
Smithfield, NC 27577
(919) 989-5380

Grant Amount: \$40,000.00

The JoCo Grows Agriculture Committee will launch a K-5 agricultural education instrument called the JoCo Grows Junior Extension Agents Adventure Guide. The goal is to increase the agricultural literacy of 10,000 youth within three academic school years in Johnston County. Through partnerships with Johnston County Public Schools, home school groups, local farms, and agribusinesses, youth will explore NC Cooperative Extension's three core focus areas of agriculture & food, health & nutrition, and 4-H youth development to increase their agricultural literacy.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Johnston

Applicant Website: www.jocogrows.org

Project: Western North Carolina Agricultural Options

Contact: Ms. Jennifer Ferre
Executive Director
WNC Communities
594 Brevard Road
Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 252-4783

Grant Amount: \$1,074,500.00

The WNC AgOptions program provides small cost-share demonstration grants to help family farms in Western North Carolina diversify and expand their farming operations. Current and former tobacco farmers are given priority. Farmers utilize these funds to embrace new crops, practices and methodology, new farm products, and new marketing activities. In the process, these projects not only strengthen the farming operation of the grant recipients but contribute to the larger agricultural community and provide other farmers with the information, local

examples, and confidence to pursue similar efforts on their farms. All of these objectives will help extend the impacts of the program and strengthen farming in NC.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Western Counties

Applicant Website: www.wncagoptions.org

Project: Waynesville Middle School Teaching Greenhouse

Contact: Mr. Noal Castater
Agriculture Teacher
Haywood County Consolidated School System
1233 North Main Street
Waynesville, NC 28786
(822) 456-2408

Grant Amount: \$150,000.00

The Waynesville Middle School FFA Chapter will install a 72' X 41' greenhouse to provide its 400-plus FFA & Agriculture students the opportunity to learn and explore the Agricultural Sciences through hands-on classwork. This greenhouse will be the focal point of the Agriculture Program and benefit the students with not only Agricultural Best Practices, but with leadership and team-building skills to be used in their future careers.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Haywood

Applicant Website: www.haywood.k12.nc.us

Project: Harnett County Farmers Market

Contact: Mr. Brian Parrish
County Extension Agent Agriculture
County of Harnett
P.O. Box 760
Lillington, NC 27546
(910) 893-7557

Grant Amount: \$800,000.00

NC Cooperative Extension, Harnett County center will build a farmers market that features 10'x10' stalls, bathrooms, washing stations, and seating areas. This farmers market is phase 1 of a multi-phase agricultural complex that will include a multipurpose training building and commercial kitchen. The market will be built on over 6 acres of land provided by Harnett County Government and will serve the farmers of Harnett County. The market will also complement the Educational Kitchen being added to the Harnett County Center and will serve as the epicenter of agricultural training in Harnett County.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Harnett

Applicant Website: <http://harnett.org>

Project: WNC RLC Education/Training Room Upgrades

Contact: Ms. Jennifer Ferre
Executive Director
WNC Communities
594 Brevard Road
Asheville, NC 28806
(828) 252-4783

Grant Amount: \$60,505.00

WNC Communities will upgrade the existing 100 person-capacity Education/Training room at the WNC Regional Livestock Center in Haywood County to support educational/training workshops, agriculture-related events and regional meetings. This project intends to bring the room up to modern-day standards that will not only allow the room to serve its current users better, but to significantly increase the usage of the room, widening the reach and furthering the profile of the WNC RLC as a premiere state-of-the-art agricultural facility in western NC.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Western Counties

Applicant Website: www.wnccommunities.org

Project: Executive Farm Management 2026

Contact: Dr. Michael Best
Director, Executive Farm Management School
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645

NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$119,697.00

The grantee will support the Executive Farm Management (EFM) program. EFM was established in 2017 and trains managers of larger commercial farms in North Carolina and the southeastern U.S. through an ongoing intensive educational program. The program participants learn how to enhance their strategic business planning and management competencies, which are needed now more than ever in today's large, diverse farms due to their increasingly sophisticated nature.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Statewide

Applicant Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: Adding Value to Feeder Cattle

Contact: Mr. Dan Wells
Livestock Agent
Johnston County Cooperative Extension
2736 NC Highway 210, Suite A
Smithfield, NC 27577
(919) 989-5380

Grant Amount: \$31,106.96

The grantee will acquire portable cattle handling equipment and make it available to area cattle producers at low rental cost. Use of this equipment will improve the health and efficiency of beef cattle herds while adding value to feeder calves and ensuring the safety of workers engaged in the management of beef cattle. The project will also implement a feeder calf preconditioning program to provide technical assistance, training, and records assistance to producers of beef cattle.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Johnston

Applicant Website: www.jocogrows.org

Project: Planning Your Farm Future

Contact: Mr. Andrew Branan
Extension Assistant Professor
The North Carolina Agricultural Foundation Inc.
Campus Box 7645
NC State University
Raleigh, NC 27695
(919) 515-9259

Grant Amount: \$37,354.00

Working with commodity groups, this project will gather farm-level data and input on farm and support enterprise succession challenges and strategies, which will be incorporated into an overdue update of the popular “Planning the Future of Your Farm” handbook. The project will also produce an academic paper updating North Carolina's 2006 participation (originally funded by TTFC) in the international FARMTRANSFERS survey.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Statewide

Applicant Website: <http://go.ncsu.edu/agfoundation>

Project: No-Till Seed Drill for Landowners

Contact: Ms. Hannah Smith
District Resource Conservation Specialist
Pitt County Soil and Water Conservation District
403 Government Circle, Suite 4
Greenville, NC 27834
(252) 902-1750

Grant Amount: \$50,000.00

The grantee will purchase a no-till seed drill for use by agricultural cooperators and landowners. The District will promote the no-till drill for planting cover crops, pasture renovation, grassed waterways, and increasing yields through annual forage plantings. Primary users of the no-till drill will be small acreage and limited-resource farmers throughout the county.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Pitt

Applicant Website: www.pittcountync.gov/239/Pitt-Soil-and-Water-Conservation-District

Project: Dewberry Barn Farmer's Market

Contact: Ms. Wendy Butner
Town Clerk/Finance Officer
Town of Cameron
247 Carter Street
P O Box 248
Cameron, NC 28326
(910) 245-3212

Grant Amount: \$25,000.00

Located off highways NC 24/27 and US 1, the Town of Cameron will build start a farmers market. This will serve as the only farmer's market in town, as Moore County and surrounding areas continue to experience exponential population growth.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Moore

Applicant Website: www.townofcameron.com

Project: ACC Growing Greater Agricultural Skills

Contact: Mr. Jerry Hackney
Department Head, Agricultural Sciences: Animal Care & Management
Technology
Alamance Community College
1247 Jimmie Kerr Road
Graham, NC 27253
(919) 230-4925

Grant Amount: \$160,678.00

The grantee will install a tobacco-style greenhouse, potting shed, storage area, livestock fencing, corral, and handling system, and purchase equipment and supplies for the new veterinary medical technology program as well as livestock to enhance the learning opportunities available to the local agricultural community and students. This will increase the earning potential of individuals and increase the tax base of Alamance County while preserving and enriching the local agricultural sector. While students come to ACC's Agricultural Programs from surrounding counties, and those areas will also benefit, all funds will be spent at ACC.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Alamance

Applicant Website: <http://alamancecc.edu>

Project: MWUYF VSA Vacation Vittles 2024

Contact: Mr. Randolph Keaton
Executive Director
Men And Women United for Youth And Families, CDC (aka MWUYF)
P.O. Box 315
Delco, NC 28436
(910) 655-3811

Grant Amount: \$150,000.00

MWUYF's Vacation Vittles Program will generate revenue through VSA sales of locally-sourced produce from its network of small farmers. The produce is sold to summer beach-home renters, farmers' markets, and restaurants. The grantee will promote community capacity-building by adding more farmers, restaurants, and customers; thereby increasing year-round revenues. The beneficiaries will be local small farmers of southeastern NC.

Status: Contract Pending

Area Served: Southeastern Counties

Applicant Website: www.menandwomenunited.org

Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Operating Statement July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 (FY24)													
	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Total Amounts
Cash Carried Forward	\$10,308,645.27												
INTEREST INCOME	\$30,563.09	\$31,860.64	\$32,428.67	\$30,509.88	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$127,294.29	\$28,610.63	\$43,465.09	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$324,732.29
TOBACCO SETTLEMENT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,000,000.00	\$0.00	\$3,010,893.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,010,893.00
OTHER REVENUE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$638.33	-\$638.33	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$881.94	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$881.94
Fiscal Year 2023 Revenue	\$30,563.09	\$31,860.64	\$33,067.00	\$29,871.55	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$4,127,294.29	\$28,610.63	\$3,055,240.03	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$7,336,507.23
EXPENSES													
Personnel Expenses													
Per Diem-BD MEM	\$75.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$120.00	\$0.00	\$90.00	\$0.00	\$30.00	\$0.00	\$105.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$420.00
Trans-BD MEM	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$186.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$24.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$235.75
Subsistence-BD MEM	\$41.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$189.25	\$0.00	\$46.50	\$0.00	\$93.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$370.05
Other-BD MEM	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$101.88	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$101.88
	\$136.30	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$495.25	\$101.88	\$141.50	\$0.00	\$147.75	\$0.00	\$105.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,127.68
Staff Personnel Expenses													
Sal, Ins, Ret, SS Bene.	\$31,356.19	\$35,076.52	\$30,995.67	\$37,914.39	\$32,653.12	\$32,663.97	\$40,015.86	\$32,933.33	\$34,569.77	\$32,930.06	\$32,921.99	\$32,922.02	\$406,952.89
Travel, Exp Acts, Reg Fees, Train.	\$112.66	\$1,198.72	\$661.99	\$0.00	\$162.45	\$641.24	\$0.00	\$282.31	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$170.18	\$3,229.55
	\$31,468.85	\$36,275.24	\$31,657.66	\$37,914.39	\$32,815.57	\$33,305.21	\$40,015.86	\$33,215.64	\$34,569.77	\$32,930.06	\$32,921.99	\$33,092.20	\$410,182.44
Office Expenses													
Repairs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$4,427.15	\$4,427.15
Postage, Freight & Delivery	\$9.65	\$1,209.65	\$204.69	\$19.76	\$9.65	\$231.60	\$9.65	\$0.00	\$177.30	\$118.98	\$26.59	\$177.30	\$2,194.82
General Office Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$325.12	\$0.00	\$625.38	\$0.00	\$42.64	\$354.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,347.89
Furniture	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Computer Equipment/Software	\$0.00	\$18,312.65	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$116.10	\$0.00	\$168.75	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$280.35		\$18,877.85
Communication/Office Equipment	\$27.96	\$192.08	\$178.90	\$299.96	\$23.89	\$149.98	\$33.89	\$907.02	\$227.54	\$0.00	\$1,127.40	\$374.94	\$3,543.56
Other Administrative Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$212.49	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.53	\$555.65	\$829.84	\$139.00	\$2,777.51
Vehicle	\$0.00	\$63.61	\$306.52	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$150.00	\$520.13
Telephone Services	\$304.93	\$304.96	\$304.96	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$610.55	\$541.06	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,582.61	\$292.53	\$3,941.60
	\$342.54	\$20,082.95	\$1,532.68	\$319.72	\$1,158.92	\$737.68	\$696.73	\$1,971.58	\$705.37	\$674.63	\$3,846.79	\$5,560.92	\$37,630.51
Professional Services													
Legal Services/Office Equip.-DOJ	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contract Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Misc. (Temporary Solutions)	\$398.38	\$129.34	\$687.12	\$199.20	\$0.00	\$159.18	\$53.26	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$615.01	\$2,063.23	\$4,304.72
	\$398.38	\$129.34	\$687.12	\$199.20	\$0.00	\$159.18	\$53.26	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$615.01	\$2,063.23	\$4,304.72
Fiscal Year 2024 Expenses													\$453,245.35

2018 Grant Cycle	FY 18-23	FY 24
NCDA&CS	\$98,688.55	\$5,234.75
University of Mt. Olive	\$71,727.29	\$78,251.07
WNC Communities - Safety Impr	\$187,503.84	\$15,996.16
TOTAL	\$357,919.68	\$99,481.98

2020 Grant Cycle	FY 20-23	FY 24
Eastern NC Christmas Tree Grow.	\$19,597.50	\$2,875.00
NC Found for Soil & Water Con	\$59,511.36	\$11,600.08
Town of Louisburg	\$0.00	\$0.00
University of Mt. Olive	\$381,994.07	\$235,356.69
TOTAL	\$608,544.40	\$249,831.77

2022 Grant Cycle	Cycle	FY 21-23	FY 24
Ashe County		\$0.00	\$0.00
Central Carolina Comm. College		\$0.00	\$115,674.21
Farmer Foodshare		\$45,268.21	\$85,894.77
Franklin County Soil & Water Con. District		\$27,556.50	\$0.00
Harnett County Schools		\$0.00	\$20,800.00
NC A&T State University		\$0.00	\$97,789.47
NCAF - Ag Ed		\$0.00	\$4,475.72
NCAF - CASE		\$0.00	\$4,820.14
NCAF - GrowDairy		\$0.00	\$15,426.96
NCAF - AgVentures		\$0.00	\$464,643.65
NCAF - ALDP Alumni		\$0.00	\$18,146.46
NCAF - Masters of Agribusiness		\$0.00	\$14,006.17
NCDA&CS		\$0.00	\$316,545.36
NC Coop Ext - Sampson Co.		\$6,725.00	\$15,406.32
Southeastern Comm College		\$0.00	\$314,500.00

2019 Grant	FY 19-23	FY 24
East Carolina University	\$108,913.78	\$75,998.40
NC Foundation for Soil & Water	\$16,398.58	\$23,601.42
TOTAL	\$125,312.36	\$99,599.82

2021 Grant Cycle	FY 21-23	FY 24
Alamance Comm. College	\$11,990.00	\$263,274.21
ASAP	\$43,415.30	\$35,584.70
Buncombe Co. Ag & Land Res	\$23,274.04	\$1,224.95
City of Sanford	\$0.00	\$0.00
Duplin Co. Agri Comm Ctr Fd	\$85,606.70	\$4,505.30
Green Co. Coop Ext	\$53,200.00	\$0.00
Johnston Co. Tourism Auth	\$42,094.12	\$45,468.02
Mountain Valley Resource Cons.	\$42,175.61	\$35,336.50
NCAF - Solider	\$0.00	\$32,702.85
NCAF - Tomato	\$24,162.97	\$30,033.46
NC A&T University	\$0.00	\$55,622.72
NC Community College	\$0.00	\$4,731.08
NCD&CS	\$40,815.00	\$0.00
NC Egg Association	\$91,341.22	\$15,458.78
NERSBA	\$81,567.95	\$4,293.05
Piedmont Comm College Fd.	\$125,447.32	\$76,085.44
Tobacco Farm Life Museum	\$59,009.63	\$17,128.00
University of Mt. Olive	\$166,250.00	\$8,750.00
Watauga County	\$0.00	\$0.00
WNC Communities	\$474,095.04	\$294,124.37
TOTAL	\$1,364,444.90	\$924,323.43

Cash Carried Forward	\$10,308,645.27
Total Revenue FY24	\$7,336,507.23
Total Expenses FY24(-)	\$453,245.35
Subtotal	\$17,191,907.15
Total Grants Pd Out FY24 (-)	\$3,289,088.45
DebtSvc/Cancer/GenFund FY24 (-)	\$0.00
Current Cash Balance	\$13,902,818.70
Encumbered Funds (-)	\$11,407,708.39
TOTAL Grant/Mgmt/Admin/Enforcement of the MSA	\$2,495,110.31

Encumbered Funds	
2018 Granting Cycle	\$157,889.12
2020 Granting Cycle	\$442,640.01
2021 Granting Cycle	\$2,158,358.49
2022 Granting Cycle	\$2,934,964.99
2023 Granting Cycle	\$5,713,855.78
TOTAL	\$11,407,708.39

This report is based on data from
7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024

Town of Princeville		\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL		\$79,549.71	\$1,488,129.23

2023 Grant Cycle		
ASAP		\$2,450.00
CAFÉ		
County of Harnett		
Forest Ed & Conserv. Foundation		
Four County Electric Memb Corp		\$165,400.00
Haywood Co. Consolidate Schools		\$142,500.00
NC Coop Ext - Randolph Co.		
NC Dept of Public Safety		
NC Foundation for Soil & Water		
NCDA&CS		
NC Sweetpotato Commission		
North east Carolina Prep School		
Pasquotank Co. Schools		\$22,592.51
Piedmont Comm College Found.		
NCAF - Ag Ed		
NCAF - Exe Farm Mgmt		
NCAF - Healthy Farm		
NCAF - PSI Ext		
NCAF - Beekeeping		
Town of Mount Olive		
town of Yanceyville		
UMO - SAE		
UMO - Ag Prime		
Warren County		
Wayne Community College		
Wilkes Soil & Water Cons Dist.		\$94,779.71
Wingate University		
WNC Communities		
Working Landscapes		
		\$427,722.22

Budget Transfers/Debt Service and Cancer Research Payments	
FY 02 Designated Interceptions	\$82,004,511.11
FY 03 Designated Interceptions	\$38,000,000.00
FY 04 Designated Interceptions	\$37,146,734.06
FY 05 Designated Interceptions	\$35,000,000.00
FY 06 Designated Interceptions	\$32,134,175.77
FY 06 Debt Service Payment	\$1,979,096.00
FY 07 Designated Interceptions	\$30,000,000.00
FY 07 Debt Service Payment	\$2,816,688.46
FY 08 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 08 Debt Service Payment	\$6,353,724.00
FY 09 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 09 Debt Service Payment	\$10,722,025.50
FY 09 Designated Interceptions	\$24,398,290.94
FY 10 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 10 Debt Service Payment	\$15,308,738.50
FY 10 Designated Interception	\$5,000,000.00
FY 11 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 11 Debt Service Payment	\$17,116,443.00
FY 11 Designated Interception	\$5,000,000.00
FY 11 Designated Interception	\$5,000,000.00
FY 11 Designated Interception	\$176,825.25
FY 13 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 15 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 16 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 17 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 18 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$58,000.00
FY 19 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
TOTAL	\$380,415,252.59

Total Grants Paid Out Since Inception	
Barn Retrofit	\$41,090,228.00
Burley Marketing Center	\$2,509,555.21
NCDA/NCSU Barn Retrofit	\$168,254.00
Hay Relief	\$5,000.00
FCTCC	\$1,880,113.85
2002 Granting Cycle	\$2,534,958.56
2003 Granting Cycle	\$3,525,839.12
2004 Out-of-Cycle Grants	\$435,130.26
2005 Granting Cycle	\$2,817,630.15
2007 Granting Cycle	\$3,186,010.81
2008 Out-of-Cycle Grants	\$17,651,886.89
2008 Granting Cycle	\$5,076,135.23
2009 Granting Cycle	\$2,581,846.24
2010 Granting Cycle	\$5,471,915.76
2011 Granting Cycle	\$2,904,790.48
2012 Granting Cycle	\$2,008,334.72
2013 Granting Cycle	\$1,601,159.13
2014 Granting Cycle	\$2,227,193.50
2015 Granting Cycle	\$1,695,096.26
2016 Granting Cycle	\$4,482,496.59
2017 Granting Cycle	\$2,162,263.97
2018 Granting Cycle	\$2,420,637.80
2019 Granting Cycle	\$3,124,120.28
2020 Granting Cycle	\$1,124,032.22
2021 Granting Cycle	\$1,902,848.51
2022 Granting Cycle	\$1,571,944.01
2023 Granting Cycle	\$427,722.22
TOTAL	\$116,587,143.77

Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Operating Statement July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025 (FY25)													
	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Total Amounts
Cash Carried Forward	\$13,902,818.70												
INTEREST INCOME	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
TOBACCO SETTLEMENT	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
OTHER REVENUE	\$2.61	\$0.00											\$2.61
Fiscal Year 2023 Revenue	\$2.61	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2.61
EXPENSES													
Personnel Expenses													
Per Diem-BD MEM	\$50.90	\$30.00											\$80.90
Trans-BD MEM	\$0.00	\$214.50											\$214.50
Subsistence-BD MEM	\$0.00	\$177.98											\$177.98
Other-BD MEM	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
	\$50.90	\$422.48	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$473.38
Staff Personnel Expenses													
Sal, Ins, Ret, SS Bene.	\$33,615.34	\$38,428.12											\$72,043.46
Travel, Exp Acts, Reg Fees, Train.	\$369.84	\$491.11											\$860.95
	\$33,985.18	\$38,919.23	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$72,904.41
Office Expenses													
Repairs	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
Postage, Freight & Delivery	\$0.00	\$49.25											\$49.25
General Office Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
Furniture	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
Computer Equipment/Software	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
Communication/Office Equipment	\$281.92	\$133.39											\$415.31
Other Administrative Expenses	\$36.99	\$29.99											\$66.98
Vehicle	\$229.00	\$0.00											\$229.00
Telephone Services	\$305.03	\$296.46											\$601.49
	\$852.94	\$509.09	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,362.03
Professional Services													
Legal Services/Office Equip.-DOJ	\$0.00	\$0.00											\$0.00
Contract Services	\$416.61	\$0.00											\$416.61
Misc. (Temporary Solutions)	\$0.00	\$1,273.15											\$1,273.15
	\$416.61	\$1,273.15	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,689.76
Fiscal Year 2025 Expenses													\$76,429.58

2020 Grant Cycle		FY 20-24	FY 25
Eastern NC Christmas Tree Grow.		\$22,472.50	\$0.00
University of Mt. Olive		\$617,350.76	\$0.00
TOTAL		\$639,823.26	\$0.00
2021 Grant Cycle	Cycle	FY 21-24	FY 25
Alamance Comm. College		\$275,264.21	\$72,090.19
Johnston Co. Tourism Auth		\$87,564.14	\$0.00
Mountain Valley Resource Cons.		\$77,512.11	\$22,487.89
NCAF - Solider		\$32,702.85	\$30,925.20
NC A&T University		\$55,622.72	\$3,639.58
NC Community College		\$4,731.08	\$0.00
NCDA&CS		\$40,815.00	\$0.00
Piedmont Comm College Fd.		\$201,532.76	\$0.00
Watauga County		\$0.00	\$0.00
WNC Communities		\$768,219.41	\$39,155.83
TOTAL		\$1,543,964.28	\$168,298.69
2022 Grant Cycle	Cycle	FY 22-24	FY 25
Ashe County		\$0.00	\$0.00
Central Carolina Comm. College		\$115,674.21	\$0.00
Farmer Foodshare		\$131,162.98	\$2,143.68
Harnett County Schools		\$20,800.00	\$0.00
NC A&T State University		\$97,789.47	\$0.00
NCAF - Ag Ed		\$4,475.72	\$6,223.82
NCAF - CASE		\$4,820.14	\$56,164.96
NCAF - GrowDairy		\$15,426.96	\$165,718.55
NCAF - AgVentures		\$464,643.65	\$400,868.34
NCDA&CS		\$316,545.36	\$0.00
NC Coop Ext - Sampson Co.		\$22,131.32	\$0.00
Southeastern Comm College		\$314,500.00	\$6,348.54

2023 Grant Cycle	FY 23-24	FY 25
ASAP	\$2,450.00	\$24,036.00
CAFÉ	\$0.00	\$0.00
County of Harnett	\$0.00	\$0.00
Forest Ed & Conserv. Foundation	\$0.00	\$0.00
Four County Electric Memb Corp	\$165,400.00	\$0.00
Haywood Co. Consolidate Schools	\$142,500.00	\$0.00
NC Coop Ext - Randolph Co.	\$0.00	\$0.00
NC Dept of Public Safety	\$0.00	\$0.00
NC Foundation for Soil & Water	\$0.00	\$0.00
NCDA&CS	\$0.00	\$0.00
NC Sweetpotato Commission	\$0.00	\$0.00
North east Carolina Prep School	\$0.00	\$0.00
Pasquotank Co. Schools	\$22,592.51	\$26,358.68
Piedmont Comm College Found.	\$0.00	\$0.00
NCAF - Ag Ed	\$0.00	\$154,416.25
NCAF - Exe Farm Mgmt	\$0.00	\$3,100.62
NCAF - Healthy Farm	\$0.00	\$32,886.59
NCAF - PSI Ext	\$0.00	\$47,570.89
NCAF - Beekeeping	\$0.00	\$30,654.02
Town of Mount Olive	\$0.00	\$0.00
town of Yanceyville	\$0.00	\$0.00
UMO - SAE	\$0.00	\$0.00
UMO - Ag Prime	\$0.00	\$139,946.01
Warren County	\$0.00	\$0.00
Wayne Community College	\$0.00	\$0.00
Wilkes Soil & Water Cons Dist.	\$94,779.71	\$0.00
Wingate University	\$0.00	\$0.00
WNC Communities	\$0.00	\$26,956.48

Cash Carried Forward	\$13,902,818.70
Total Revenue FY25	\$2.61
Total Expenses FY25(-)	\$76,429.58
Subtotal	\$13,826,391.73
Total Grants Pd Out FY25 (-)	\$1,291,692.12
DebtSvc/Cancer/GenFund FY25 (-)	\$0.00
Current Cash Balance	\$12,534,699.61
Encumbered Funds (-)	\$9,958,127.15
TOTAL Grant/Mgmt/Admin/Enforcement of the MSA	\$2,576,572.46
Encumbered Funds	
2020 Granting Cycle	\$442,640.01
2021 Granting Cycle	\$1,990,059.80
2022 Granting Cycle	\$2,297,497.10
2023 Granting Cycle	\$5,227,930.24
2024 Granting Cycle	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$9,958,127.15

This report is based on data from 7/1/2024 - 8/31/24

Working Landscapes	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$427,722.22	\$485,925.54

Budget Transfers/Debt Service and Cancer Research Payments	
FY 02 Designated Interceptions	\$82,004,511.11
FY 03 Designated Interceptions	\$38,000,000.00
FY 04 Designated Interceptions	\$37,146,734.06
FY 05 Designated Interceptions	\$35,000,000.00
FY 06 Designated Interceptions	\$32,134,175.77
FY 06 Debt Service Payment	\$1,979,096.00
FY 07 Designated Interceptions	\$30,000,000.00
FY 07 Debt Service Payment	\$2,816,688.46
FY 08 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 08 Debt Service Payment	\$6,353,724.00
FY 09 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 09 Debt Service Payment	\$10,722,025.50
FY 09 Designated Interceptions	\$24,398,290.94
FY 10 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 10 Debt Service Payment	\$15,308,738.50
FY 10 Designated Interception	\$5,000,000.00
FY 11 Cancer Research Pmt	\$8,000,000.00
FY 11 Debt Service Payment	\$17,116,443.00
FY 11 Designated Interception	\$5,000,000.00
FY 11 Designated Interception	\$5,000,000.00
FY 11 Designated Interception	\$176,825.25
FY 13 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 15 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 16 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 17 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
FY 18 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$58,000.00
FY 19 Agency Transfer (2%)	\$40,000.00
TOTAL	\$380,415,252.59

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GREENHOUSE SUPPORTING LOCAL AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY

Purpose: Provide an educational greenhouse on its campus to facilitate the exploration and acquisition of science-based agricultural

skills and practices through hands-on classroom instruction. The greenhouse was designed based on input from employers in the local agricultural industry to ensure their workforce needs are met. Skills developed and experience gained in the greenhouse will lead directly to stackable credentials in agriculture and horticulture, allowing graduates to enter the local workforce quickly. Having a head start on credentials, skills, and experience, will allow these students to support, and one day lead, the Columbus County or even the SE NC agricultural industry.



Project Potential impacts:

- \$19,500.00 Leveraged from Other Sources
- 140 Estimated People Served



COMMERCIAL KITCHEN



Purpose: The new commercial kitchen facility at the WNC Farmers Market serves early-stage food entrepreneurs preparing foods, cosmetics, and natural products. The desired outcome is to support the growth of over 50 businesses using agricultural inputs.



Project Potential impact

- 80 Jobs Created or Sustained
- \$2,500,000 Value of Product Produced
- \$150,000 Leveraged form Other Sources
- \$140,000 State Tax Revenue Generated



Ribbon-cutting officially ushers in hydroponic farming at JSCC

By Kathy Grant Westbrook kwestbrook1@nc.rr.com - July 30, 2024



Monday, at James Sprunt Community College's WestPark campus, Dr. Jay Carraway, JSCC president (center, left, holding scissors) and Don Gatton, CEO of Four County Electric Membership Corporation (center, right, holding scissors) lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Box to Bowl Hydroponics Smart Farm. (Kathy Grant Westbrook|mountolivetribe.com)



Following Monday's ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Box to Bowl Hydroponics Smart Farm on JSCC's WestPark campus, agriculture instructor Katlyn Foy leads a tour inside the farming container. (Kathy Grant Westbrook|mountolivetribe.com)

WARSAW — A crowd gathered on the WestPark campus of James Sprunt Community College (JSCC) Monday at 10 a.m. for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the school's new Hydroponics Smart Farm, where the first produce has already been harvested.

The Hydroponics Smart Farm — dubbed “Box to Bowl” — is the result of a partnership that includes JSCC, Four County Electric Membership Corporation, North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives, Duplin County, and the **North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission**.

Box to Bowl consists of a 40-foot-long shipping container that provides growing area equal to two acres of land, in which plants are grown in a controlled environment absent soil and pesticides. Seeds are planted in a medium of coconut husk and peat moss, fed nutrient-rich water, and nurtured under special LED lights; after two to three weeks, mature seedlings are transferred to vertical panels, where they grow for three to four weeks before the plants are harvested.

The container arrived at JSCC in March and Box to Bowl was up and running in April.

At Monday's ceremony, following opening remarks by Duplin County Manager Bryan Miller and an invocation by Warsaw Mayor A.J. Connors, Dr. Jay Carraway, president of JSCC, addressed the crowd. He began by thanking Duplin County commissioners, as well as N.C. Representative Jimmy Dixon and N.C. Senator Brent Jackson, and went on to mention three people whom, he noted, "...were it not for them, we wouldn't be here": Renee Sutton, chief of staff at JSCC; Greg Sager, with Four County EMC; and Carrie Shields, Duplin County assistant manager. "Those folks carried the water with this project," Carraway said. "A lot of folks have chipped in, but without them, we wouldn't be here."

Speaking on behalf of Four County EMC was Chief Executive Officer Don Gatton, who noted that the challenges faced in traditional farming, such as unpredictable weather and water scarcity, bring opportunities for growth, innovation, and resilience. "This Hydroponics Smart Farm embodies the spirit of innovation and resilience," he said, also predicting that its impact will be felt beyond the JSCC campus.

Mark Harrell, with the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund, praised the passion that both JSCC and Four County EMC brought to the endeavor. "When we first discussed the idea with Four County, we could already see that this project was going to be a success," he said, going on to point out, "The Hydroponics Smart Farm will benefit local farmers, students, and businesses by encouraging hands-on learning and onsite tours."

N.C. Representative Jimmy Dixon addressed the fact that hydroponics is a sustainable farming method, by asserting that traditional farming, as it's been practiced "since Adam was cast out of the Garden of Eden," is also sustainable. "This facility will *never* replace the traditional farmer," he insisted, before stating, "This is just another tool to implement the great sustainability that American farm families have produced over these many years."

N.C. Senator Brent Jackson congratulated those involved with this project for being innovative, encouraging them to "...look and learn and take it to the next generation."

In wrapping up the comments portion of the program, JSCC's Sutton praised the groups that partnered with the school to make Box to Bowl a reality. "I can honestly say, this was a true partnership not just in name only, but all of our partners came to the table and they contributed financially and they also worked," she said.

After the official ribbon-cutting took place, JSCC agriculture instructor and lead faculty member for the project Katlyn Foy led tours of the Box to Bowls operation. Finally, all in attendance were invited to snack on lettuce wraps made with lettuce harvested from the facility.

Suicides in agriculture industry bring awareness to mental health

[Katherine Zehnder](#)

February 2, 2024

Farmer on a farm tractor.

Listen to this story (*8 minutes*)

In 2023 there were three confirmed suicides of agriculture workers in the state of North Carolina. While this may not seem like a lot, the sad reality is that the real number is likely much higher; in order to protect their families, agriculture workers often make suicides look like accidents.

“There is very limited data on agriculture suicides, especially in recent years (2022, 2023), and that is a problem,” Robin Tutor Marcom, EdD, MPH, Director of the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute, told the Carolina Journal. “The fact that there were three known suicides in 2023 and that level of illness requiring hospitalization, for us to have that many in a year is very concerning. Farming and stress are synonymous.”

According to a [policy brief](#) by the National Rural Health Association the suicide rate among farmers is 3.5 times higher than that of the general population. Male agriculture workers have a significantly higher rate of suicide deaths, at 43.2 per hundred thousand, when compared to the average of 27.4 per hundred thousand across all other populations, according to the brief.

Major contributing factors to mental health struggles include financial struggles, social pressure, and reduced access. Many farmers are reluctant to seek out mental health care as it can be difficult to keep personal affairs private in the small rural communities in which they live. Fear of stigma and discrimination is also a contributing factor.



N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler in 2019 (CJ file photo)

“It’s just a matter of making sure that people do get the help that they need and once again not being ashamed to ask for and seek that help.

Steve Troxler NC Commissioner of Agriculture told the Carolina Journal.

Even for those who want to seek help, mental health services are often limited, if available at all, in rural communities.

“...those resources are out there in North Carolina, and I know the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute at East Carolina University has worked on this issue,” said North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler. “What I can tell you is that one farmer suicide is too many. We need to make sure that people get the help that they need and make sure that they’re not ashamed of it. Farming is a stressful, stressful, stressful business. There is so much money involved in it and the risks are so high that you know that’s the big problem. We saw the massive increase in inputs and agriculture over the past several years and what that means is you’ve got much more invested in a crop and if you do have a disaster, you’ve lost much more money.”

“We don’t do any farm session without talking about mental health,” said Marcom. “We are not going to interface with any farmer or farm family member without having this conversation. It really is about starting the conversation and reducing the stigma so that people aren’t suffering in silence. It’s okay to have those conversations and understand that conversation is not weakness.”

The work being done by the Institute and the systems put in place are working.

“We have this happen all the time where someone has recognized an individual in need of help and called themselves or helped that person connect, so we can save lives with the work we do,” said Marcom.

As with other industries, financial stressors are one of the biggest contributing factors to the state of mental health among agricultural workers. As Commissioner Troxler explained, farmers are investing more money along with a growing list of uncontrollable factors such as: weather, inflation, and [the pandemic](#) disruptions. While farmers are investing more money, profits have been squeezed in recent years.

“Some, like dairy farmers, are getting paid less than they ever did before for their milk, so there’s so many different factors and it is a hard job because they don’t get vacation days or sick days. It’s like a 24/7 type job,” said Troxler. “They’re providing food and other things for people you know in the state and across the country, it is hard absolutely...There’s a difference in what a farmer does and working, you know, a job somewhere else.”

The North Carolina Agromedicine Institute is working hard to remove the stigma and make mental health services available to agriculture workers and their families. The Institute is the flagship in North Carolina for work related to farm stress.

The Institute encourages education and awareness to start the conversation and make people aware of the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety. They offer certified training in mental health first aid, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) and CALM (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means). All training is free and available across all 100 North Carolina counties.

“We also have NC Farm Helpline available 24/7, anyone can call, and we can get them linked to services,” said Marcom. “This helpline is not restricted to mental health issues but is available for any farm related issue including production, legal issues etc.”

The Institute also offers mental health services at no cost to farmers, families, workers and anyone working or living in the farming environment.

“Individuals can call the farm helpline or me (Robin Marcom) directly and they will be connected to a mental health professional that understands mental health and the farming culture,” said Marcom.

The Institute’s program funding comes from several sources, including **North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission**; Farm Credits Of North Carolina; the North Carolina Farm Bureau; the Corn Growers Association of NC; and, the NC Department of Agriculture (via USDA).

“Our goal is that if an individual in the community is in need of help, if they are experiencing any kind of mental health issue, that someone in their daily circle would recognize the issue and know where to reach out for help for them,” said Marcom.

In August, Rep. Yadira Caraveo, D-CO 8th, [introduced](#) a [bill](#), known as the National Agricultural Crisis Hotline Act, which would establish through the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) a hotline to provide mental health support for agriculture workers and their families. This bill would amend the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008.

“I think the most important thing is that people need to understand that the mind and the spirit is not separate from the body,” said Marcom. “When we talk about mental health it can affect a person’s overall wellness, our spirit, and our mental health. We aren’t Ichabod Crane, our head and our body are not separate beings, they go together.”

Find contact information for the NC Farm Helpline, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Farmer Crisis Hotline, and other helpful resources available [here](#).

Visit NC Farms: Find local farms, markets

The Sampson Independent

By Eileen Coite Contributing columnist - May 22, 2024



Are you ready for some fresh fruits and veggies? Wish you had a way to make local food connections and find locally grown produce? Be sure to download and start using the Visit NC Farms App! If you have a smartphone, the app can be a tremendous resource right at your fingertips to connect with local farms, farmers markets, roadside stands, restaurants, and great events in our communities. It's a one stop app for finding local food, relaxation and fun across our beautiful, rural Sampson County landscape, and all over North Carolina!

With spring here, local farmers markets will be in full swing before we know it. Wouldn't it be nice to be the first to know as fresh produce becomes ready for pick up, especially if it's right down the road and saves you a trip to the grocery store? Not to mention knowing that your eggs, flowers, fruits and veggies are fresh as can be!

We have 80 local assets in Sampson County enrolled across eight categories of the app — which are: Farms & Fisheries, Pick your Own, Farmers Markets, Local Food & Drink, Shop Local, Farm Stays & Lodging, Itineraries & Trips, and Special Events.

As businesses have announcements to share and events happen in Sampson County, push notifications are shared on the app and will come directly to phones and devices of those who have downloaded the App, so don't miss out on this great opportunity to stay in touch, especially in the most diverse agricultural county of our state!



To download the app, visit the Apple or Android store on your phone and search “Visit NC Farms”. You can even create your own trip itinerary based on where you'd like to travel or what you'd like to see along the way to your final destination! For more information on the app visit VisitNCFarmsToday.com. For farms and businesses interested in free advertising on the app, give us a call at the Cooperative Extension Center – 910-592-7161, and ask for Eileen Coite or Betty Draughon, administrators of the app in Sampson County.

The Visit NC Farms app is supported by many sponsors across North Carolina, with statewide expansion funding being provided by the **NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission**. In Sampson, we are fortunate to have this sponsorship, in addition to tremendous support from the Sampson County Convention Center and Visitors Bureau.

Boutique Meat

The traditional butchery is coming back as an offshoot of the farm-to-table movement

BY Pat Bradford

Published January 31, 2024 | [February 2024](#)



The 55-foot-long meat counter at The Butcher's Market at Oleander Pointe, Wilmington opened March 2022. Steve McMillan

Agriculture and agribusiness drive the North Carolina economy. It is the number one industry in the state, employing as much as one-fifth of the workforce. NC State University cites the economic impact as topping \$103 billion.



CLICK HERE to see the VIRTUAL ARTICLE

Just one to two generations ago, before the widespread proliferation of big box stores, it was common for people to raise their own livestock in rural areas and go to a butcher for butchering the meat.

In the past decade backyard and boutique farms have sprung up as consumers seek fresher, higher quality foods. Covid caused this movement to surge from the Birkenstock crowd into the country club and boardroom crowd.

As a result, a resurgence in both retail outlets and personal sourcing of freshly butchered meats, from beef to pork to poultry, has occurred. Demand has birthed an increasing number of entrepreneurial producers using online ordering, rapid cold shipping, and social media to create sales.

In Wilmington a newer retail outlet offering freshly cut meats is The Butchers Market, a butcher shop and specialty market opened in March 2022 at Oleander Pointe, the former Toys R Us shopping center.

“We are the only specialty grocery in town that butchers all of our meat,” says general manager Mike Murrill, who has 30 years of retail grocery experience.



A Berkshire sow at Wilders farm. Prized in Japan, the Berkshire hog breed dates back to the 1600s in England. East Asian pigs were crossed with the Berkshire, producing the black coats and white spots. Zach Hall

The locally owned market purchases beef from just three cattle producers for consistency and quality.

“The big box groceries buy meat based on a price point. We buy our meat for quality,” Murrill says.

The market also offers prepared foods, produce, deli items, and other specialty groceries.

Father-and-son team Derek and Craig Wilkins founded The Butchers Market.

The local owner/partner is Smith Prevost. His parents have lived in Wrightsville Beach for 15 years, but he grew up in Cary and Raleigh. When he graduated from college, he did some catering and meat smoking. That was how he became a customer of The Butchers Market in Raleigh 11 years ago.

“I was a meat snob, I wanted that quality cut of meat,” says Prevost.

He attributes growing up hunting and fishing for his desire to know where the meat came from and where it was butchered.

“I know exactly where it comes from, that’s what got me into the butcher attitude,” Prevost says.

Besides the 55-foot-long fresh counter there’s a bank of freezers that contain some hard-to-find-specialty meats, including ground elk, kangaroo, antelope, chicken feet, alligator tail, crawfish, frog, ostrich, wild venison, wild boar, oxtail and beef tongue.

A second location in Wilmington is slated for the third quarter of 2024 in Porters Neck. There are three locations in Raleigh, and one in Cary, Wake Forest and Holly Springs.

This type of butcher’s market is not new to the area. The Pine Valley Market opened in Wilmington with a 24-foot meat counter more than 20 years ago in what had been a butcher’s market franchise of Wells Pork. This was at a time when it was uncommon to purchase meat outside of the corner grocery store.

In the late 1990s Lauren “Lolo” Shannon expanded beyond the hand-cut meat market in the shop on College Road. In addition to the fresh-cut meats, the shop now offered prepared foods and other goods.

In January 2003 new owners Christie Feretti and Kathy Webb continued the move away from hand-butchered meats.

“It took me all morning to cut the beef, pork and chicken for the case,” Feretti says.

The case is now 6 feet long.

Morphing with the times, including the 2008-09 recession and most recently the hard hit of the pandemic, a café was born.

“In Covid all things came to a head. People started going to local markets again,” Feretti says.

She met the demand with the café, while continuing prepared meals and gourmet items. However now the main thing is the catering and events company.

“As we expanded, the butchery shrunk,” Feretti says. “I don’t cut our steaks to order anymore. We stock them and we still carry full loins for events and they’re also available for sale.”

Feretti and Webb partnered with Matt and Christyanna Durand in May 2022.

A 2017 newcomer in retail catering as well as restaurant outlets is True Blue, which offers aged prime beef, local pork, and chicken at Butcher and Table on Military Cutoff, Butcher and Barrel on Greenfield Street, and Butcher and Baker in Hampstead.

“At these locations, you can walk up to the butcher counter and pick out your meat and say, ‘I want that steak for my meal,’” says Kat Dennett, True Blue business manager.



Reid and Jaclyn Smith, Wilders founders. Katie Bagwell of Katie Bagwell Photography

She says by far the biggest butcher sales they have are in Hampstead. They also offer butcher boxes by subscription and DIY kits as well as catering.

Moving out into the field, raising and breeding the livestock are Wilders, a farm in Turkey, North Carolina, and Northwest Land and Cattle in Leland. There are numerous other smaller operations that sell farm-raised meat at area farmers markets.

Wilders is a farming venture in Sampson County created at Christmas 2021, in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Husband and wife real estate development and construction team Reid and Jaclyn Smith expanded from their six business ventures in Clayton, North Carolina, into converting a 1,200-acre former equestrian estate for raising and breeding livestock.

Reid's father raised Simmental cattle in Clayton as he was growing up and he says he really wanted to get back to it.

During the Covid-imposed shutdown, the couple and their children moved into farming on their 40-acre Clayton farm, buying their first Wagyu cows. Their herd grew to 100 and they were looking for contiguous acreage to have their livestock, grow their own food for them and the livestock, plus add a social aspect to it. They closed on the Sampson County, 1,200-acre former Longhorn Creek Ranch two days before Christmas 2021. The next day they loaded up their cattle and children and celebrated the holiday on the farm in a travel trailer.

Wagyu is literally translated as "Japanese cows." The meat is described as beef with a rich creamy, buttery taste. With strict registration and DNA parentage testing, pure Wagyu is the most expensive beef money can buy.

Reid and Jaclyn are able to trace all their cows back to their original lineage.



A Wilders Wagyu cow and calf. Allison Potter

“We know dating back four to five generations what their lineage is. We actually use that in our matings, as we are trying to improve our genetics,” says Reid.

In addition to the Wagyu beef herd, now numbering 575 head, Wilders raises Berkshire pigs with 15 breeding sows and 2 boars.

All the cows and hogs are free range. The cows are grass fed and grain finished. Reid says the intent is to not use any hormones or medicines, or even grain, except at the end for flavoring. The Wilders farm also grows crops to feed the animals, including corn, soy and silage.

Wilders meats are sold at farmers markets in the Wilmington and Wrightsville area. There is also a freezer assortment at Motts Channel Seafood.

The new Wilders General Store is open on the farm in Turkey, N.C. A retail shop and parent company RiverWild’s headquarters are on Main Street in Clayton in the former North Carolina Paper Company building. All products ordered online are shipped frozen straight to the consumer’s door. The social media presence is strong.

RiverWild’s 140 plus employees are all encouraged to spend time on the farm.

“We’ve tried to open that up to employees to experience agriculture. A lot of our employees say that’s their only chance to be on a farm, to experience that,” Jaclyn says.

They are creating an agricultural experience for the public through agritourism at the farm.

“Our goal, our message, is support your local farmer, buy from your local farmer,” Reid says.

Founded in 1898, Leland’s Northwest Land and Cattle’s operation is multigenerational on both sides of the family tree. AJ Stanaland is a fifth-generation Brunswick County farmer with a passion for agriculture. Her husband, Wade, is also a fifth-generation farmer. At W & S Farms in Bladenboro, North Carolina, they also farm approximately 4,000 acres with Wade’s father.

Stanaland is carrying on her family's legacy on the same land they have continuously farmed for five generations along Northwest Road NE, Leland in Brunswick County. In addition to her on-the-job training growing up, Stanaland graduated from North Carolina State University with a degree in agricultural business with a concentration in livestock management. Steve McMillan

Together they are raising children, crops, cattle and hogs. Twin sons are competing in goat roping rodeo events.

The Northwest Angus beef cattle herd numbers 650, and along with heritage hogs on 650 acres, they grow haylage of sorghum, ryegrass and oats, along with Bermuda hay and bale peanut hay. Row crops are peanuts, corn and soybeans.

Moving away from the way the family had always sold their meat, AJ started selling direct to the consumer in 2019, with personal deliveries and online sales. Her storefront opened in 2021 with a small grant from the **North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission**.

Her great-great grandfather Gaylord created the pack house, where the family once packed tobacco to go to market. The family repurposed it. Half of the facility is used to pack and ship meat directly to consumers, while the other half is a storefront open six days a week. The company also offers an after-hours freezer pick up for online orders.

"Our main thing is the farm club subscription, which gives the consumer a discount for beef and pork purchases," AJ says.



Chip Carroll and veterinarian Dr. Ethan Williamson look over the cows and calves feeding on rye grass at Northwest Land and Cattle. Steve McMillan

The family is also growing an agritourism event space used in the fall with a feed lot and a pumpkin patch, live music, food trucks, vendors, and kids' activities. Everything is updated to the public via social media.

Both Wilders and Northwest Land and Cattle offer seasonal reservations for whole and half cows for bulk purchase.

Summer camp provides special look at agriculture

- University of Mount Olive
- Jul 22, 2024





MOUNT OLIVE — High school FFA students and teachers from across North Carolina recently participated in a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Camp at the University of Mount Olive. Participants of the weeklong event, sponsored by the **North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission**, enjoyed learning, fun, and all things agriculture.

The group mixed hands-on learning activities with various Farm Tours, focusing on the many diverse options within the field of agriculture. Participants toured The Young Outlaw Ranch, a veteran-owned, first-generation livestock consumption ranch in Dudley, NC. They visited Whitaker Farms, a farm, bakery, and agritourism hotspot in Climax, NC. Veteran-owned Secret Garden Bees in Linden, NC, gave participants a behind-the-scenes look at honey production and marketing. A trip to Bayer Crop Science in Mount Olive gave students a glimpse of agriculture research and innovation.

At the halfway mark of the week, campers volunteered at the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly and at Howell Woods in Four Oaks. They landscaped, cleared trails, painted cabins, and moved livestock feeders.

-

Never failing to end each day with a bang, students had the opportunity to visit the NC Zoo in Asheboro, NC; elevate their heights at URBAN AIR Trampoline Park in Fayetteville, NC; and eat their fill at an ice cream social complete with water activities.

Beyond learning about the state's number one industry, students gained life skills at an etiquette dinner designed to show them how to engage with business associates during a meal properly. "I had so much fun at this camp," said Eva Herrera, a sophomore from Millbrook High School in Raleigh. "It has been a great week to build our knowledge in many areas and has given us many good ideas."

"The SAE Camp has allowed me to understand a new perspective for experiential learning outside of the classroom," said UMO alumna Julia Coltrain, an advisor from Bandys High School in Catawba County. "I now feel confident that I can return to my program and teach students how to develop meaningful SAE projects that will prepare them for their future careers."

Shade Wilbanks, a 2023 UMO alumna, has experienced the camp on all levels: as a camper, as a counselor, and this year as a high school FFA advisor from Knightdale High School in Wake County. "I have seen and experienced the value of this camp from many perspectives," she said. "This year, I particularly enjoyed the deep dive into The AET record keeping software."

The **North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission** funds the SAE camp at UMO through a sponsored program grant. Since its inception in 2017, the camp has helped educate over 200 future agriculturalists to grow their SAE projects through their participation in the National FFA Organization.

"The SAE Camps held at UMO are significant for students because they get hands-on agriculture-related learning experiences that they might not otherwise receive," said Edward Olive, Director of the Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center at UMO. "The activities provide participants with opportunities to develop leadership and a work ethic that will serve them throughout their college and careers. We are hosting more than just a camp at UMO; we are hosting a life-changing experience."

The University of Mount Olive is a private institution rooted in the liberal arts tradition with defining Christian values. The University was founded by the Convention of Original Free Will Baptists. For more information, visit www.umo.edu.



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