

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2003

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HOUSE DRH80448-LH-200 (04/22)

Short Title: Agribusiness & Agriculture Fellows Prog. (Public)

Sponsors: Representative Goodwin.

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AS A PILOT PROGRAM THE AGRIBUSINESS AND
3 AGRICULTURE FELLOWS PROGRAM AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO
4 IMPLEMENT THAT PILOT PROGRAM.

5 Whereas, farming, fishing, and forestry occupations will grow 3.3%, add
6 35,000 new jobs by 2012; and

7 Whereas, market pressures, low prices for agricultural goods, and keen
8 competition have heightened the need for informed agricultural decision making; and

9 Whereas, modern farming requires knowledge of new developments in
10 agriculture, business, finance, and management; and

11 Whereas, agricultural education provides future workforces with the
12 necessary academic and vocational skills needed to compete successfully in a world
13 market; Now, therefore,

14 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

15 **SECTION 1.** There is established as a pilot program the Agribusiness and
16 Agriculture Fellows Program to be administered by the State Education Assistance
17 Authority, in consultation with North Carolina State University, to provide scholarship
18 loans to students who are pursuing college degrees in agribusiness and agriculture. The
19 Fund shall provide 25 four-year undergraduate scholarship loans per year of six
20 thousand five hundred dollars (\$6,500) each. The State Education Assistance Authority
21 shall adopt very stringent standards, including minimum grade point average and
22 scholastic aptitude test scores, for awarding these scholarship loans to ensure that only
23 the best high school seniors receive them.

24 **SECTION 2.** The Authority, in consultation with North Carolina State
25 University, shall develop the criteria to administer the Program. The criteria for the
26 Program shall include all of the following:

- 1 (1) All students shall be enrolled in an institution of higher education in
2 North Carolina in an accredited bachelors degree program in the field
3 of agribusiness or agriculture in an institution of higher education in
4 North Carolina.
- 5 (2) All students shall be residents of North Carolina. For purposes of this
6 section, residency shall be determined by the same standard as
7 residency for tuition purposes pursuant to G.S. 116-143.1.
- 8 (3) All students shall enter into a legal agreement and promissory note
9 with the Authority to accept employment in agribusiness or agriculture
10 in exchange for receiving any funds, which agreement shall include
11 stipulation that the student agrees to accept employment in need-based
12 counties.
- 13 (4) Any additional criteria that the Authority considers necessary to
14 administer the program effectively, including all of the following:
 - 15 a. Consideration of the appropriate numbers of minority students
16 and students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to
17 receive funds pursuant to this section.
 - 18 b. Consideration of what areas of the State shall be considered
19 appropriate for work after graduation.
 - 20 c. Consideration of the academic qualifications of the individuals
21 applying to receive funds.
 - 22 d. Consideration of the commitment the individuals applying to
23 receive funds demonstrate to the field of agribusiness and
24 agriculture.

25 **SECTION 3.** The Authority shall ensure that the following loan
26 cancellations and repayment schedules apply to all funds distributed pursuant to this act:

- 27 (1) The individual who graduates with a bachelors degree in agribusiness
28 or agriculture and who works in that field in North Carolina shall have
29 that amount of the loan cancelled that is based on the amount of time
30 employed and the number of academic years funds were received. One
31 full year of employment shall cancel one academic year's loan.
- 32 (2) The individual who graduates with a bachelors degree in agribusiness
33 or agriculture and who does not work in that field in North Carolina
34 for any or all of the equivalent of the number of years funds were
35 received shall repay the loan to the Authority according to a schedule
36 prescribed in the promissory note, plus ten percent (10%) annual
37 interest.
- 38 (3) The individual who does not graduate with a bachelors degree in
39 agribusiness or agriculture shall repay the loan according to a schedule
40 prescribed by the Authority, not to exceed fifteen percent (15%)
41 annual interest. In establishing a schedule and interest rate, the
42 Authority shall take into consideration the reasons the individual did
43 not graduate with a bachelors degree in agribusiness or agriculture.

1 The Authority shall ensure that all repayments, including accrued interest,
2 shall be placed in the Program.

3 The Authority may forgive or reduce any loan repayment if the Authority
4 considers that extenuating circumstances exist that would make repayment impossible.

5 **SECTION 4.** The State Education Assistance Authority, in consultation with
6 North Carolina State University, shall adopt rules to implement the Agribusiness and
7 Agriculture Fellows Program as described by this act.

8 **SECTION 5.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State
9 Education Assistance Authority the sum of one hundred sixty-two thousand five
10 hundred dollars (\$162,500) for the 2004-2005 fiscal year to implement this pilot
11 program.

12 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2004.