

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007**

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SENATE BILL 75

Short Title: Funds for Specialty Crops Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Albertson; Atwater, Bingham, Jenkins, Kerr, Soles, and
Weinstein.

Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget.

February 12, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA SPECIALTY
CROPS PROGRAM.

Whereas, the North Carolina Specialty Crops Program is a statewide partnership of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and the Marketing Division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; and

Whereas, the program began in the early 1990s as a local effort in the Kinston area and then expanded statewide through funding from Golden L.E.A.F. and the Tobacco Trust Fund; and

Whereas, the program is now in need of long-term sustainable funding to ensure the program's future; and

Whereas, the program is an entrepreneurial catalyst for rural development, reducing risk to growers who want to diversify their crop base by eliminating less feasible alternatives, and providing a systematic way of evaluating niche crops that otherwise would have limited funding possibilities; and

Whereas, the program is designed to spur economic development by identifying potential new crops for North Carolina growers, determining whether these crops are suitable for growing conditions in the State, screening for the best varieties and refining production practices, developing markets for these new crops, developing new value-added products and businesses, and educating both Cooperative Extension agents and growers about new crop opportunities; and

Whereas, the successes of the program include the development of the Sprite melon which grossed three million dollars (\$3,000,000) in annual sales, the Athena cantaloupe which grossed 16 million dollars (\$16,000,000) in annual sales, the Red-fleshed seedless watermelon, which grossed ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in annual sales, and others; and

1 Whereas, potential areas of exploration and expansion for the program
2 include developing new markets for underutilized crops, developing high value
3 nutraceuticals, medicinals and natural dyes from plants, developing high value branded
4 and organic crops, breeding crops with greater nutritional value, developing season
5 extending technologies to expand the production and marketing window for crops, and
6 other activities; Now, therefore,

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated to the Board of Governors of The
9 University of North Carolina the sum of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for
10 the 2007-2008 fiscal year and the sum of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for
11 the 2008-2009 fiscal year to be allocated to North Carolina State University for the
12 support of the North Carolina Specialty Crops Program.

13 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.