

May 5, 2008

Commissioner Steve Troxler
NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
1001 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1001

Dear Commissioner Troxler,

This letter is to express my concerns and opposition to potential restructuring and management of agricultural research station and research farms. I have farmed my entire life and am well aware of the high quality and efficient work performed by the staff of our research stations. The continued success and productivity of my farming is directly related to the sound and affordable advice I receive from research stations.

While there are many excellent research stations and farm staff I have a personal relationship and experience with the Mountain Research Station in Waynesville. Their technical expertise has been invaluable. Their commitment to agricultural research has benefited our farms' productivity and profitability.

Clay County is a small rural farming community. Our neighbors are like family and we all share our experiences and farming methods. Currently I have the honor of serving as the Chairman of the Clay County Board of Commissioners. As a farmer and commissioner I am aware of the significant benefits of the effective partnership our county has with the Mountain Research Station staff. The personnel continually offer their time and help by providing our community and farmers with safe and affordable solutions to their problems.

The Mountain Research Station provides our farming community with a diverse array of information for the management and improvement for cattle, beneficial use of commercial fertilizers, insect and pest control, row crops and, new agricultural industries. They clearly demonstrate a dedication and commitment to our agricultural needs and success.

For these reason I am adamantly opposed to any effort to transfer control of the research stations to NC State University. I am also, against proposals to close research stations. There has been a long-standing legislative mandate outlined in state law *G.S. 106-22*, *G.S. 106-22.1*, and *G.S. 106-22(16)* that ties agribusiness with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. I want the current arrangement to remain in place for the continued well being of our agricultural producers and our agribusiness.

Sincerely,

Herbert Checks
Chairman,
Clay County Board of Commissioners