

Executive Summary

In 2009, the Research Stations initiated a strategic planning process in which four main goals were identified as mission critical. Progress for each goal in 2013 is summarized in this report. Key highlights include:

Over FY 13-14 and FY 14-15, \$5 million was appropriated for research stations to upgrade equipment. By the end of 2014, research stations had acquired 136 new pieces of equipment valued at \$5.52 million. The appropriation was leveraged with trade-ins to maximize purchasing power.

It was recognized that there is a greater potential for beef cattle research in our state if resources at stations could be combined, leveraged and treated as a single, state-wide beef research herd. A plan initiated in 2013 was continued to build a state-wide herd and maximize resources so that individual stations could serve as specialty areas for specific research. The enhancement and reorganization is revitalizing beef research in North Carolina. This is positioning our state to be a regional and national leader in beef research.

At the direction of the General Assembly, Research Stations has been tasked with supporting the developing bioenergy industry in North Carolina. Four staff has been hired to oversee the program and to provide technical support for research in bioenergy crops. Two separate competitive grant cycles totaling \$1.5M have been awarded for bioenergy research in NC and a successful Bioenergy Field Day was held to showcase new and ongoing research with over 100 attendees.

The research stations began managing on a regional model to gain efficiencies and facilitate the sharing of resources. Collaborations among research stations in the Eastern Region and the Western Region have resulted in greater research capacity and streamlined management. A dedicated safety officer for each region was hired and more training and greater hazard awareness has resulted in a decrease in the number of workman's comp claims compared with previous years.

Strategic partnerships between NCD&CS, NC State, USDA-ARS, and state commodity groups has resulted in station upgrades, improvements and increases in overall research capability.

Over 10,000 individuals participated in events hosted at research stations statewide. Activities are diverse and include field days, extension programs, and other community outreach events.