

Agricultural REVIEW

Volume: 101 - No. 9 September 2026 Raleigh, N.C.

String tobacco at the N.C. State Fair

Join us at the N.C. State Fair on Friday, Oct. 16, in Heritage Circle for the Annual Tobacco Stringing Competition! Teams of three can register to compete that morning for the 2 p.m. competition.

Prize money is awarded to the top three teams.

Read more about the competition on page eight of this paper!

Upcoming Ag Review ad deadlines

The following are deadlines to submit ads for the Agricultural Review newspaper.

Sept. 1 for the October issue
Oct. 1 for the November issue
Nov. 2 for the December issue

Reminder: Advertisements for the Ag Review may now be submitted through an online portal.

Sellers and buyers can visit <https://apps.ncagr.gov/agreview/Pages/SubmitAnAd> and fill out the form with the details of the item they are selling or seeking.

Sellers: Please continue to be mindful of potential scams. Be wary of out-of-state buyers and checks.

Mountain State Fair runs Sept. 11-20 in Fletcher

FLETCHER – New rides, new entertainment and new food are being added to the lineup of fairgoers’ favorites at the N.C. Mountain State Fair Sept. 11-20 at the WNC Ag Center in Fletcher.

“The Mountain State Fair has become a time-honored tradition in Western N.C. for its blend of agricultural exhibits, favorite exhibits and entertainment, plus a few new attractions each year to add to the fun,” said Jeff Barham, general manager of the N.C. Mountain State Fair. “With 14 free entertainment acts, a full midway, rows of delicious food, livestock shows and display farm animals, plus arts and crafts, music and dancing, the Mountain State Fair has something for everyone.”

Drew Exposition, the midway provider, will debut four new rides at the 2026 fair, including The Dairy, a



Take a ride on the chairlift at the 2026 N.C. Mountain State Fair!

spinning ride complete with flying cow cars; The Horror Hotel a walk-through spookhouse; Crazy Cars geared for the kiddos; and The Aeromax, which lifts adults and kids in brightly colored

airplanes around 40 feet in the air for a high-altitude spin.

Three new grounds acts will join an already exciting lineup of entertainment. Comedy Juggler Neils Dunker, who

hails from the Netherlands, holds three Guinness World Records and has been featured at the Comedy Barn in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., will bring his solo show to the fairgrounds daily.

Also debuting at the fair is the Butterfly Experience, an immersive experience where fairgoers can walk through an enclosure and feed three different varieties of butterflies.

Louisiana native Chef Bryon Landry will bring his interactive Cooking with Kids show to the fairgrounds where young fairgoers will have a chance to learn some cooking tips and prepare dishes that they will be able to make at home themselves.

Popular attractions returning to the Mountain State Fair include the Red Trouser Show, Zerbini Circus,

(See Mountain Fair, pg. 3)

Grants available for large animal veterinarians

Large animal veterinarians in North Carolina are eligible to apply for up to \$25,000 in funding to help support their large animal practices.

The Large Animal Healthcare Enhancement funding opportunity is available to veterinarians who practice in one of the 70 North Carolina counties with a population of 100,000 or fewer and who spend at least 30% of their patient care providing large animal veterinary services.

“Large animal veterinarians are essential to North Carolina agriculture, but too many rural communities continue to face shortages of these critical professionals,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “This program helps veterinarians invest in their practices, reduce educational debt and continue serving the livestock producers who depend on them.”

Grant funds may be used for repayment of educational loans related to the recipient’s veterinary degree, the purchase of equipment or technology for use in the recipient’s large animal veterinary practice or other uses approved by the advisory committee to promote and develop large animal veterinary

practice in eligible counties.

The application period is open now and closes Oct. 14. Applicants who received funding during both of the two most recent funding rounds are not eligible to apply this year but may reapply in a future funding cycle. Other previous recipients remain eligible. Applications are available online at ncagr.gov/grants by clicking on the Large Animal Healthcare Enhancement Fund link.

The Large Animal Health Enhancement Advisory Committee will determine grant awards based on eligible applications. The committee includes the N.C. Commissioner of Agriculture, the State Veterinarian of North Carolina, the chief executive officer of the N.C. Agricultural Finance Authority, one designee from the Food Animal Scholars Program at North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine, two practicing large animal veterinarians, two representatives of the livestock industry, one designee appointed by Troxler and one designee appointed by the state veterinarian Dr. Mike Martin.

From the tractor

by Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler



Commissioner Troxler

Back in August I attended the 137th opening of the Wilson Tobacco Market and it was a great event that reminded me so much of the days when Sharon and I would haul bales of cured leaf to market.

Opening day has always been like a family reunion and I saw a lot of farmers and friends I have known for a long time and met a few I did not know. As you can imagine, everyone is happy to see one another and is in high spirits

hoping for a good payday.

Like a reunion, it was a re-energizing experience to see so many familiar faces and to be reminded of why I love this job and why I continue to do what I do.

As a farmer, I know the struggle and hope behind every crop. This has been a challenging season because of the dry conditions across the state coupled with high input costs.

But farmers keep going, pray for rain in times of drought and try to remain optimistic because they love what they do.

Against the backdrop of our country’s 250th anniversary, there was also a lot of talk at the opening about tobacco being the country’s first crop and how it helped build our state and our country.

Although agriculture has diversified over the years, tobacco remains an important crop in North Carolina. In fact, we lead the country in the production of all tobacco and in

flue-cured tobacco at over 205 million pounds.

As part of the day’s festivities, former Governor Jim Hunt was inducted into the N.C. Tobacco Hall of Fame, which was a well-deserved honor for all he did for the industry. I was pleased to present the plaque to the late Governor’s daughter, Rachel, who serves as our lieutenant governor, and his wife and former first lady, Carolyn, who accepted the award on behalf of the family.

We have included photos from that day on page eight of the newspaper. I hope you enjoy them.

I hope I don’t have to remind readers that it is Fair Season! I know I look forward to the N.C. Mountain State Fair and the N.C. State Fair every year and I hope I will see a lot of our readers at one or both of our department-run fairs.

The N.C. Mountain State Fair

runs Sept. 11-20 at the WNC Ag Center in Fletcher, which is near Asheville. And the N.C. State Fair runs Oct. 15-25 at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh.

North Carolina agriculture is central to both fairs, with livestock shows, agricultural displays, horticultural entries and forestry displays just to name a few ways you can learn more about agriculture at our Fairs.

A number of our Got to Be NC members will be sampling and selling their products at both fairs. Buying local products is a great way to support North Carolina farmers and agribusinesses. You can find the Got to Be NC Pavilion in the Davis Center at the Mountain State Fair and in the iconic Dorton Arena at the State Fair.

I encourage you to come sample the products and plan to take something home to enjoy!

Agricultural Review

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Steve Troxler
Commissioner

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Mark your calendar for these upcoming fairs!

- Hickory American Legion Fair – Sept. 2-7, Newton
- Iredell County Agricultural Fair – Sept. 4-12, Troutman
- Cumberland County Fair – Sept. 4-13, Fayetteville
- N.C. Mountain State Fair – Sept. 11-20, Fletcher
- Cabarrus County Fair – Sept. 11-19, Concord
- Stokes County Agricultural Fair – Sept. 15-19, King
- Lee Regional Fair – Sept. 16-20, Sanford
- Chatham County Fair – Sept. 17-20, Pittsboro
- Davidson County Agricultural Fair – Sept. 21-26, Lexington
- Rowan County Fair – Sept. 21-26, Salisbury
- Pitt County Fair – Sept. 22-27, Greenville
- Wilson County Fair – Sept. 22-27, Wilson
- Chowan County Regional Fair – Sept. 29-Oct.3, Edenton
- Haywood County Fair – Sept. 24-27, Waynesville
- Wayne Regional Agricultural Fair – Oct. 1-10, Dudley
- Robeson Regional Agricultural Fair – Oct. 1-10, Lumberton
- Cleveland County Fair – Oct. 1-11, Shelby
- Carolina Classic Fair – Oct. 2-11, Winston-Salem
- Lenoir County Agricultural Fair – Oct. 6-10, Kinston
- Onslow County Fair – Oct. 13-17, Jacksonville
- Columbus County Agriculture Fair – Oct. 13-18, Whiteville
- N.C. State Fair – Oct. 15-25, Raleigh
- Brunswick County Agricultural Fair & Expo – Oct. 21-25, Ash



Seed center opens, marks milestone for N.C. Christmas Trees

The Tobacco Trust Fund Christmas Tree Seed Center of Excellence is officially open. A ribbon cutting at the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Upper Mountain Research Station not only marked the formal grand opening, but also the beginning of a new chapter for North Carolina’s Christmas tree industry.

NCDA&CS and NC State University leaders joined Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler recently to celebrate the facility, which will process and store the world’s only certified Fraser fir seed developed through nearly three decades of research by NCDA&CS and NC State.

The marquee moment came when representatives from NCDA&CS, NC State, the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission and the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association joined together for the ceremonial ribbon cutting, officially opening the seed center.

“It’s about much more than opening a building or opening a facility,” said Myron Floyd, dean of NC State’s College of Natural Resources. “We’re celebrating the culmination of more than 30 years of research, innovation and collaboration. ... As Alpha Select seeds reach growers this fall, decades of research are becoming real-world results.”

The project was made possible through grants from the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, which funded construction of the building and later the specialized equipment needed to process Fraser fir seed.

“They invested over a million dollars in this facility,” said Tracy Taylor, operations manager for NCDA&CS’s Research Stations Division. “My message to you guys today is, you made a good investment.”

Taylor noted that the center has already processed and cleaned 140 pounds of Fraser fir seed, which he estimated is 3 to 4 million viable seeds that will support North Carolina growers for years to come.

Bill Teague, chairman of the commission, said supporting the project aligned perfectly with the commission’s mission.

Teague also thanked the North Carolina General Assembly for its continued commitment to the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, noting that lawmakers’ ongoing support helps ensure “North Carolina agriculture remains strong, competitive and prepared for the future.”

Commissioner Troxler reflected on the project’s beginnings, recalling a 2021 visit to the research station to hear more about challenges facing the Christmas tree industry. That outline of concerns came from Taylor who was the station superintendent at the time and the director of the Research Stations Division Teresa Lambert.

“They said, ‘We’ve got a problem,’” Troxler recalled. “I told Tracy, ‘Don’t let money stand in the way of your success. We will find the money to get this done. It’s that important.’”

Lambert told the people gathered that the commissioner’s approval meant she and Taylor got to work writing grant requests and figuring out all the other logistics. That led to the proposal to the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission that ultimately resulted in the funding. Then there were construction plans and many other details to figure out.

“We didn’t have a roadmap. We did not have a handbook. We didn’t have an instruction manual,” Lambert said. “We just set out to solve the problem that he tasked us with.”

“It’s a good day,” Lambert continued. “This new facility and the genetic material that Dr. Frampton and Dr.



Above: The Tobacco Trust Fund Seed Center of Excellence in Laurel Springs. Below: The ribbon is cut!-



Justin Whitehill are developing for testing and distribution to North Carolina growers is the only certified seed of Fraser fir on the planet. That’s something pretty impressive. That doesn’t happen anywhere else except Laurel Springs, North Carolina. We should all be proud of that.”

Troxler praised the partnership between NCDA&CS, NC State and the commission, calling it an example of how investments in agriculture and agricultural research strengthen the

state’s farm economy.

“National statistics show that for every dollar invested in agricultural research, there’s \$19 of return,” Troxler said. “We’ve got to keep plowing forward with research every year to make sure that we remain successful. ... This is exactly what we had in mind when we set the Tobacco Trust Fund up [with funding from the 1998 Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement]. We know that we’ve had a transition – especially in the mountains – away

from tobacco, and Christmas trees have become a dominant industry. So the future of that industry is the future of agriculture in Western North Carolina.”

One of the ceremony’s most personal moments came when Taylor paused to recognize four people he said helped remove barriers throughout the project: Commissioner Troxler, Lambert, director of the commission William Upchurch and the director of NCDA&CS’s Property and Construction Division Andy Meier.

Taylor presented each of the four people with a commemorative display featuring a capsule of the first Alpha Select Fraser fir seed ever processed in the new facility.

“When we started processing seed, the very first seed that came through this facility, we kept it,” Taylor said. “Each one of these guys has got a measure of the very first seed that came out of this facility.”

“I promise you, none of these guys will take credit for anything,” he added, “but without them, this building wouldn’t be here.”

Crop This! Contest

Don't miss your chance to participate in the 2026 Crop This! Photo Contest! There are just three months left in this year's series.



Our monthly photo contest looks to highlight agriculture across North Carolina. Through your images, we hope to tell the story of our state's diverse and rich agricultural roots. Each month, we announce a theme focusing on a scene you might find on a working farm, agritourism destination or agribusiness venture. We challenge you to find or take a photo that fits the theme and submit it!

The winning photo of the month will be featured in an upcoming issue of the Ag Review and on our NCDA&CS social media channels. Each month's winner will also be considered for the 2026 Crop This! Photo of the Year.

Send your photos to us at ncdablog@gmail.com. Include your name, county and a brief description of your photo. Original, amateur photography only. Open to North Carolina residents. Full terms and conditions online at www.ncagr.gov/divisions/public-affairs/ag-review/CropThis.

Upcoming themes

- October:** Ag at the Fair, deadline Sept. 15
- November:** Hayrides, deadline Oct. 15
- December:** Holidays on the Farm, deadline Nov. 15

Meet these four social media personalities at the State Fair

AGRICULTURE
got to be NC

DORTON ARENA EVENING STAGE PRESENTATIONS

HEATHER LEAH
HIDDEN HISTORY OF THE STATE FAIR**FRIDAY**
OCT 16 @ 7 PM

ETHAN CLARK
NC WEATHER AUTHORITY**MONDAY**
OCT 19 @ 7 PM

WILL BRINKLEY
DOUBLE S FARMS**TUESDAY**
OCT 20 @ 7 PM

CHUBBY BEARD BANDIT**WEDNESDAY**
OCT 21 @ 7 PM

You follow them online, now come and meet them in person at this year's N.C. State Fair. This year, we are bringing four local social media personalities to the Dorton Arena stage to meet and greet with their fans. Stop by on your fair visit to meet them and snap a picture!

Learn more about our series:

Friday, Oct 16: Heather Leah explores North Carolina's Hidden History — ghost towns, lost graveyards, underground tunnels, mysterious castles and other stories not often found in mainstream history books. At the fair she will speak about the history of the N.C. State Fair.

Monday, Oct. 19: Ethan Clark created North Carolina's Weather Authority when he was in 7th grade. Driven by a passion and immense interest in weather, he saw this as a great opportunity to learn more about weather and serve the people of North Carolina. Since its creation in 2016, North Carolina's Weather Authority has built a large following from all 100 counties in North Carolina!

Tuesday, Oct. 20: Will Brinkley is a first-generation row crop farmer and the owner of Double S Farm in the Arcadia/Lexington area of Davidson County, North Carolina. He is widely recognized online as the "Tarheel Farmer," an agricultural influencer with nearly half a million followers on social media.

Wednesday, Oct. 21: The Chubby Beard Bandit (real name James H. Bullock Jr.) is a popular digital content creator and food reviewer from the Pollocksville area of Jones County. He reviews everything from gas station eats to five-star restaurants, with a focus on authentic Eastern North Carolina barbecue and southern comfort food.

Horse Events

Sen. Bob Martin Agricultural Center, Williamston, 252-792-5111

- Sept. 18-20....Sunnyside Open Horse Show, produced by Equine Event Planning, LLC. Contact equineeventplanning@gmail.com.
- Sept. 26-27....UPHA Chapter 12 N.C. State Championship Show. Contact popespaints@outlook.com.

Gov. James B. Hunt Jr. Horse Complex, State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, 919-821-7400

- Sept. 4-6.....NCQHA Tar Heel Fall Classic. Contact Shirley Lombardo, 919-362-4656.
- Sept. 12-13....TWHFA Fall Fantastic Show. Contact Dana Coste, 919-390-8126.
- Sept. 16-19....UPHA Chapter 12 N.C. State Championship Show. Contact Heather Boodey, 919-215-1221.
- Sept.30-Oct.4 N.C. State Fair Hunter Jumper Show. Contact Joan Petty, 919-556-7321.

***Show dates are subject to change. Call ahead to confirm.**

Bucolic briefs

NCVMA and Friends of NCVMA will host an **Equine Vaccination Clinic at the Ashe County Agriculture Center from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 10.** Each horse will receive protection against Eastern and Western Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE & WEE), tetanus, influenza, rabies and receive a seasonal dewormer. Coggins testing will be optional and included in the \$25/horse fee.

RSVP at <https://members.ncvma.org/page/AsheEquineVaccinationClinic>

Donate your farm and/or farm equipment to The Veteran's Farm of NC, to use in teaching veterans how to farm. All donations are tax deductible. Contact Robin Tutor at 919-721-2039 or robin@vfnc.org.

Ag research grants available

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is requesting proposals for research projects through the North Carolina Agriculture Innovations and Research (NCAIR) grant program. Around \$1 million in grant funding is available to support innovative research that strengthens agriculture and the agricultural economy across North Carolina.

Individual research projects are limited to \$100,000 each and should address challenges or opportunities facing North Carolina agriculture while demonstrating the potential to create meaningful economic impact.

"North Carolina agriculture continues to evolve, and research plays a critical role in helping farmers meet new challenges and seize new opportunities," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "I'm thankful that our legislators continue to invest in NCAIR so we can fund practical, innovative research that can improve productivity, increase profitability and help ensure our state's agricultural industry remains strong for generations to come."

NCAIR supports a broad range of agricultural research, including but not limited to:

- Development of innovative agricultural technologies and production practices.
- Research involving new and emerging crops and value-added products.
- Crop improvement and genetics.
- Agronomic, pest management and postharvest research.
- Agricultural and forestry-based bioenergy research.
- Projects that strengthen the state's agricultural economy through innovation and commercialization.

While not required, funded projects may utilize one or more of the research stations and field laboratories located across North Carolina that are operated through collaboration between the NCDA&CS Research Stations Division and NC State University.

Applicants are encouraged to propose projects that address significant agricultural needs, include measurable outcomes and demonstrate the potential for economic benefits to North Carolina farmers, agribusinesses or rural communities.

Guidance documents and required forms are available at ncagr.gov/grants/NCAIR. The application process opened on Aug. 17; completed applications must be postmarked by Oct. 16.

Questions about research priorities should be directed to Charles Fletcher at Charles.Fletcher@ncagr.gov or 919-817-4037. For questions about the application process, contact Allison Medlin at Allison.Medlin@ncagr.gov or 919-693-2483.

Mountain Fair (Continued from pg. 1)

Extreme Illusions & Escapes, Leon Jacobs on piano, Agricadabra Magic Show, Comedy Hypnosis, Mooternity Ward, First Bite Fishing, Mythic Creatures, Wild Bill's Speedway and the Mobile Dairy Classroom.

Food is always a fan favorite at the fair and joining this year's roster of vendors are Veterans of America Roastery with specialty roasted coffees, Southern Cravings offering nachos, pretzels and more, Sweet Temptations by CoCo serving up bakery treats, Larger Than Lemons specialty fresh squeezed lemonades, and Kershaw's Creamery ice cream.

The 2026 Mountain State Fair runs Sep. 11-20 at the Western N.C. Ag Center in Fletcher. Discount admission and ride tickets are now on sale at www.wncagcenter.org.



Kettle corn is a crowd favorite!

Three promoted to leadership roles in NCDA&CS

Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler recently announced the promotion of Hunter Barrier of Clinton and Salisbury to director of the Research Stations Division and named Tim Baumgartner of Clayton as director of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Jeff Barham of Asheville was promoted to general manager of the Western N.C. Ag Center and N.C. Mountain State Fair in Fletcher.

Barrier fills the role following the retirement of Research Station Director Teresa Lambert and Baumgartner replaces retiring Soil and Water Conservation Director David Williams. Barham replaces former Mountain State Fair General Manager Sean McKeon who became director of the Ag Finance Authority.

“I am always pleased to have well-qualified and dedicated staff members step into new leadership roles at the department,” Troxler said. “We are fortunate to have people who are committed to supporting farmers, the agricultural community and department programs and Hunter, Tim and Jeff exemplify that commitment.”

Barrier graduated from NC State

University with both a bachelor’s degree in soil science and a master’s degree in horticultural science.

He has worked with the Research Stations Division for more than 11 years, most recently serving as the superintendent of the Horticultural Research Station in Clinton since 2020. He began his career as temporary employee at the Piedmont Research Station and served as a research technician, research specialist, and agriculture research manager of the Horticulture Unit at that station.

He also served as coordinator of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ New and Emerging Crops Program from 2018 to 2025.

Barrier is a native of Rowan County where he operates a small farming operation focused on row crops and fruit and vegetable crops. He is active in several agriculture groups, serving on the Board of Directors for the North Carolina Irrigation Society, serving on the Sampson County Extension Advisory Committee and as a board member for the NC State University Department of Horticultural Science Advisory Board, and participating in the Research Center Administrators



Hunter Barrier



Tim Baumgartner



Jeff Barham

Society.

Baumgartner has more than three decades of experience working with landowners developing and implementing natural resource restoration projects across North Carolina. He grew up on a family farm outside of Princeton that produced tobacco and various row crops including corn, cotton and soybeans.

He attended NC State University where he graduated with a bachelor of science degree in Agronomy. After college, Baumgartner held several positions in NCDA&CS and DEQ as well as private sector consulting,

including as director of the Division of Mitigation Services, deputy director of operations for the Division of Mitigation Services, environmental senior scientist, environmental scientist and environmental supervisor. Most recently, he served as a Senate appointee to the N.C. Environmental Management Commission.

Barham is a Western North Carolina native and graduate of Appalachian State University and Christopher Newport University where he received degrees in accounting, business administration, finance and management. He began his career with the State of North

Carolina in 2008, bringing more than 17 years of public service experience. In July 2023, he joined the WNC Agricultural Center as assistant manager.

He has a strong background in business and finance and a deep commitment to serving the agricultural community of Western North Carolina with his knowledge of the WNC Agricultural Center and the N.C. Mountain State Fair.

He and his wife, Laura, are the proud parents of five children and grandparents of six, with another grandchild on the way.

NCDA&CS Food Distribution celebrates warehouse addition

The addition of nearly 29,000 square feet of storage space to the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food Distribution warehouse in Butner will support the division’s efforts to get food onto dinner tables and into school cafeterias across the state. Ten years in the making, a ribbon cutting in late July officially opened the addition and celebrated the completion of the project.

“This has been a long time coming,” said Walter Beal, director of the Food Distribution Division. “Having this extra space is going to really, really help us in what we do.”

Before the addition, the Butner warehouse totaled around 85,000 square feet. The project added a total of 28,879 square feet to the existing warehouse, of which about 20,000 square feet is dry storage space. A refrigerated dock and thousands of square feet of freezer storage was also added. The addition also includes a new warehouse office and restrooms.

“This is a special occasion for us at the department, but it’s also a special occasion for everyone in North Carolina,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “This project is more than just a warehouse addition. This added space represents compassion and hope to many across the state who depend on the USDA commodities that come through this warehouse to make ends meet.”

The Food Distribution Division administers six food programs for USDA, contributing to the nutritional well-being of the citizens of North Carolina. The division operates two state warehouses working to distribute USDA foods to eligible recipient agencies across the state.

The added dry storage space will be used largely to support the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which provides a box of food each month to low-income seniors. Ten years ago, this program served just 1,100 people in one county in the state. Now, CSFP provides food to nearly 16,000 people across 70 counties.

Beal said the expansion of the warehouse will allow the division to ship USDA foods to partner agencies on a more structured basis. The size and storage limitations of the original warehouse prevented the short- or long-term storage of food, especially in busier seasons, meaning food had to be distributed almost as quickly as was received. Now, with additional storage space, the division will be able to space out distribution in a way that will benefit partner agencies and program recipients alike.

This project has been 10 years in the making. Gary Gay, then director of the Food Distribution Division, tasked Beal with drawing up a plan and cost estimate for this project. Beal spent over 18 years as a general contractor before joining the department. It took over six years to secure funding for the much-needed addition, but the division “made it work” and continued distributing food across the state, even amid a global pandemic and continued population growth.

“This is a project that we have worked on a long, long time, but it’s one that is going to pay big dividends to the people of North Carolina,” Troxler said.

Thank you to the following key partners in the design and construction of the warehouse addition: Smith Sinnett (design); Bass, Nixon and Kennedy, Inc. (engineering); The Christman Company (construction); CoolSys (freezer system design); State Construction Office; and NCDA&CS Property & Construction.



Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler cuts the ribbon, officially opening the new warehouse space.



Representatives from the offices of congressional leaders and local government officials, as well as NCDA&CS staff and partners from area food banks, attended the celebration.

Discovering NC Ag: Growing a legacy at Gray Rock Farms

Discovering NC Agriculture is a social media series focusing on N.C. grown, raised, caught, and made commodities. Originally started in 2025, this series has been renewed to run for another year! Tune in each month to see how an N.C. commodity is grown, harvested, packed for consumer use and more. Learn nutritional value, find fun recipes to try, hear from local chefs who use that product, and other unique commodity facts throughout the series. We look forward to helping you better understand some of our N.C. commodities and how they impact your everyday lives!

Tobacco is a heritage crop that's been grown in our state for over 400 years. Although farms have diversified in many ways through the years, tobacco remains an important crop on many North Carolina farms, including Gray Rock Farms in Timberlake. As a seventh-generation family farm, Gray Rock Farm is not only keeping the history of tobacco alive but helps the industry flourish through their crops each year.

In 1816, the original farm and homeplace for Gray Rock Farms was purchased by Andrew Gray in Person County. "In those early days, farming was simply about providing for your family," said John R. Gray, owner and sixth-generation farmer. "My great-great-great-grandfather, Andrew Gray, primarily grew corn and wheat to feed his pigs." The earliest documentation of tobacco being grown at Gray Rock Farms dates back to 1887. From then until now, the family has continued to expand their tobacco operation as well as diversify their farm by producing soybeans, wheat and raising beef cattle. This year, the family planted 260 acres of flue-cured tobacco. "While tobacco continues to be the most important part of our operation, we've learned that successful farming means being willing to adapt," said Shawn T. Whitt, John's son-in-law. "We're always looking for ways to improve, whether that's investing in more efficient equipment, trying new crops, or embracing new practices that help our farm remain strong for generations to come." The farm is currently operating under the sixth and seventh generation, with the eighth generation helping on the farm when they are not at elementary school.



The Gray Family

Planting day at Gray Rock Farms is always exciting for the family because it's when the months of preparation finally come together. "Not only do we have to ensure that everything on our end is ready for planting, but we also have to cooperate with the weather," Shawn said. "Young tobacco plants are especially vulnerable, so we're constantly watching the forecast and making decisions about when to plant, when to pause, and when to keep going to give those plants the best possible start." Once the crop is in the ground, John and his family get to work caring for their other crops while constantly scouting the tobacco. "As the plants grow, we cultivate, apply Crop Protection Agencies (CPAs), such as fungicides and pesticides to create the healthiest environment possible, and lay by the crop applying fertilizer as needed," John said. When the tobacco begins to flower, it's time to top the plants by removing the flower, allowing the plant to focus its energy on producing larger, high-quality leaves instead of seeds.

Tobacco harvest typically begins late summer, but the whole crop isn't harvested at one time. "We start with the bottom leaves and work our way up the plant over three or four separate harvests as each layer reaches maturity," said Joni G. Whitt, Shawn's wife and seventh-generation farmer. "Timing is everything because several fields can become ready at the same time. If you wait too long, you can lose both the quality and the weight of the crop." After harvest, the tobacco leaves spend ten days in the flue-cured barns on-site at Gray Rock Farms where the temperature and humidity are carefully adjusted each day. During this process, the green leaves slowly transform into the golden leaf tobacco that our state is known for. After curing, the tobacco is baled and sold to international dealers and contracted buyers where it is used in the production of tobacco products for markets around the world. "While our role ends at growing a high-quality crop, we take great pride in producing it responsibly and to the highest standards," Shawn said. "Like many North Carolina tobacco farmers, our focus is on caring for the land, growing the best crop that we can, and continuing a farming tradition that has supported our family for generations."

Although growing tobacco has many challenges, like cost of production and mitigating factors such as weather and changing markets, the family at Gray Rock Farms wouldn't change anything for the life they live and the heritage they preserve on the farm. "Tobacco has always had an enormous influence on North Carolina's history, economy, culture and agriculture, but for those of us who farm, it means something even more personal," Joni said. "For generations, it has been the crop that made it possible for family farms like ours to survive. While we grow other crops and raise livestock, tobacco has often been the foundation that allowed us to keep farming year after year." As a Bicentennial Farm, the history, hard work, sacrifice and determination of family generations can be felt on the farm and through the crops produced each year. In looking back at the farm's history, it's easy to recognize and honor past generations as well as see how far the farm has come since its inception in 1816. "For our family and other farm families in North Carolina, tobacco isn't just an important crop, but it's the reason our farm is still here today. It has allowed us to continue a way of life that has been passed down through generations," John said. "It represents



Training the next generation!

more than a commodity. It represents opportunity, sacrifice, and perseverance. It tells the story of early mornings, long days, and families working side by side with the hope of leaving something better for the next generation."

For aspiring young farmers, Shawn encourages working hard, staying humble, and maintaining an attitude of constant learning. "Every season will teach you something if you're willing to listen," he said. "Respect the generations that came before you, but don't be afraid to embrace new ideas and new technology that can make your farm stronger. Most importantly, remember that farming is about more than raising a crop, it's about caring for the land, supporting your family, and leaving something meaningful for the next generation." In the years to come, Gray Rock Farms hopes to continue growing the generations on their farm and furthering their family legacy of farming in our state.

We are so proud of all that Gray Rock Farms is doing to preserve the history of tobacco in our state as well as advance the industry through their crops each year. Preserving a family farm for over 200 years is something to be proud of and we are honored to have them as part of our Bicentennial Farm Family Program. Many challenges have been faced and countless sacrifices made through the centuries that make Gray Rock Farms the thriving farm that it is today. "Some of my favorite memories here are the simple ones – like our kids riding the tractor with us, looking over and seeing their smiles when they help feed the cows, just as I did with my dad John, and watching them experience the same farm that has been home to generations before them," Joni said. "Those moments remind us why we do it. We're not just growing crops – we're raising our family here. We're teaching our children the value of hard work, faith, and stewardship, while passing along traditions that have been part of our family for more than 200 years. In the end, those moments make every long day and every sacrifice worth it." Join us in thanking John and his family in the comments for all that they continue to do for our state's agriculture industry!



Helping out on the farm.

Farming, especially tobacco farming, is a year-round commitment, with work being done to prepare for the season all year long. "One of the biggest misconceptions about farming is that we plant a crop, watch it grow, harvest it and then take the winter off, but in reality, our tobacco season actually begins in the winter," John said. "We start by pulling soil samples and sending them to a lab, so we know exactly what our fields need before the season begins." Once the soil sample results are obtained, the family prepares the greenhouse by cleaning and laying fresh plastic. The greenhouse is then seeded in early February and the waiting process for germination begins. "Once those tiny seedlings begin to emerge, they require constant attention," John said. "We monitor for disease, manage temperatures, apply fertilizer when needed, and eventually begin mowing the plants, up to every other day, to encourage health." While the plants are growing in the greenhouse, the fields are also being prepared with lime and fertilizer, and cultivated, so that the beds are ready when it comes time for the plants to be transferred to the field.

Tobacco

(Continued from pg. 8)

80 and 90 degrees for three days. "Keeping the tobacco at a lower temperature in the beginning helps the leaves wilt without drying out," Pat said. "Over the first three days, the tobacco leaves will turn a yellow color, signaling our crew to raise the temperature." Over the next two days, the temperature is gradually increased from 120 degrees to 140 degrees to fully dry the tobacco leaves. "On day five, we raise the temperature in the barn one final time to 165 degrees to dry out the stems," Pat said. "If you don't dry the stems, the entire tobacco crop will go bad once you bring it out of the barn, so this step in the process is vitally important." Although fairgoers can't physically enter the barn during the curing process, they can see the thermostat on the wall and watch the tobacco through the barn window each day of the fair. If you have any questions about the process or tobacco in general, ask one of the volunteers staffed at the barn. "We love educating fairgoers about the importance of tobacco in our state, as well as the traditional ways that it was grown and raised here," Pat said. "It's been the backbone of farms across our state for many years and continues to be vital to our agriculture industry



The Mock Tobacco Auction is held on the second Friday of the fair.

today. In fact, a farmer once told me that out of 30 farmers selling at the farmers market, 28 of those farmers bought their equipment with tobacco money. So, tobacco is actually paying for the vegetables as well." All tobacco cured in the tobacco barn during the fair is returned to the Oxford Tobacco Research Station to fulfill buyer contracts.

On the second Friday of the N.C. State Fair, crews from the Oxford Tobacco Research Station make a

second trip to the fairgrounds to bring the tobacco that will be used in the Mock Tobacco Auction. "N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler had the Tobacco Pavilion in Heritage Circle built specifically for the Mock Tobacco Auction, which in the early years was held in many other locations across the fairgrounds," Pat said. "Featuring several auctioneers and buyers, the auction showcases how tobacco was actually sold in years past." Last year, the Mock Tobacco Auction hosted five

auctioneers and 15 buyers. Auctioneers are found through community networks and are individuals who have been doing this for many years, including at full-scale auctions back in the day. "When you hear the auctioneers begin to call out numbers, it's like listening to a whole other language," Pat said. "Not only are they calling out the price of each stack of tobacco, but also the names of the buyers, the type of tobacco

and a variety of other information that both the buyers and the ticket marker have to understand. It's a unique process that's fun to watch for all ages." During the Mock Tobacco Auction, Troxler also awards the Best Tobacco Leaf/Bundle to a local tobacco grower. "Growers submit bundles of tobacco at the start of the fair, which are voted on by judges in the industry," Pat said. "From the winning bundles, Commissioner Troxler chooses one to receive his award, which always means a lot to

the growers who work so hard on their crop each year." All tobacco bundle categories and winners can be seen on display inside the glass case in the Tobacco Pavilion all eleven days of the N.C. State Fair. This year, the Mock Tobacco Auction is taking place on Friday, Oct. 23, at 2 p.m., so mark your calendars to attend!

In addition to all the tobacco events and the curing barn in Heritage Circle, the Bowles House offers tobacco merch, like t-shirts, each year to help you showcase your N.C. Tobacco pride. They also have photos around the building that tell the story of tobacco in our state. "It's really powerful to walk around that building and see the impact tobacco has had on this state for many years," Pat said. "By spotlighting tobacco during the fair, we hope to show people not only how important this crop is to our state's history, but how vital it continues to be today for farmers across our state. In fact, tobacco is still one of our most profitable row crops. If we can get people to understand that importance and appreciate the hard work of our tobacco farmers, then we've done our job."

Classified Advertising

General rules for advertising in the Ag Review

- **Advertising is a free service to North Carolina residents only. A North Carolina address and phone number are required for submitting ads.**
- **The editor or advertising manager reserves the right to accept or reject any ad and to edit ads to meet requirements or space limitations.**
- **Priority will be given to ads that are strictly related to agriculture.**
- **Advertisements are limited to 30 words or less. This includes first & last name of advertiser (NOT farm name), complete address and phone number w/area code.**
- **Ads will be published in one issue only. Ads that are to be repeated must be submitted for each issue.**
- **Only two ads per family per issue will be accepted. Family refers to all individual sharing the same residence, mailing address or home telephone number. These ads must be under separate classifications.**
- **All "For Sale" and "For Rent" ads must have a price or price range. Stud service must also include a fee.**
- **The ad deadline is the first working day of the month prior to publication at noon.**



Equipment For Sale

Grain header for MF 300 combine, \$200. James Plowman, Matthews 704-574-8816.

NH 256 roller bar hay rake, front wheel dolly on hitch, EC, sheltered, \$3,500. Roger Gann, Asheboro 336-879-2024.

1951 Ford 8N tractor, overhauled & restored, \$4,500; (2) PowerKing tractors, models 2416 & 1614 w/ equip., \$4,700. Joel Fogleman, Whitsett 336-345-0186.

NH 3930, low hrs., kept in barn, \$13,800. Buddy Bowman, Mt. Airy 336-908-9567.

(2) Woods finish mowers, 5 ft., 3pt, \$550 & \$1,225; 3pt spreader, large hopper, \$1,800. Randy Davis, Elon 336-263-8163.

JD 100 series mower, 17.5 hp, 42 in. cut, \$700. Jeff Brittain, Hickory 828-327-4782.

FARM EQUIPMENT

AC - B, C, CA, \$300 & up; (2) un-styled WC & parts, \$1,400; U, UC & parts, power unit, \$350-\$1,600. Timothy Mabe, Troy 910-572-3539.

Palco cattle handling system, 985 Cattleboss headgate/squeeze chute/palpation cage, 8' adjust. alley, 16' dia. crowding tub, corral panels, swing gates, \$14,750; Cat dozer D6B, \$27,500. Richard Ingram, Greensboro 336-420-9253.

Brinly PA-402 BH pull-behind lawn aerator, plug-type, 40", spare spoons, \$200. Duane Kirschenman, Winston-Salem 704-528-9369 call/text.

1-row JI Case corn picker, early model, \$1,000; 71 JD 2-row corn & bean planter, \$900. Murray Cohen, Pittsboro 919-742-4433.

4-row chisel plow w/buster bar, inclds 8 new replacement points, GC, \$3,500. Jeff Jennings, Elizabeth City 919-801-3721.

FARM EQUIPMENT

1951 JD M, clean body, rebuilt 15 yrs. ago, garage kept, used in parades, \$2,800. James Delapp, Reidsville 931-644-1182, before 10 p.m.

Lewis Brothers #2 crusting machine for poultry houses, GC, \$7,000-\$7,500. Kevin Burroughs, Mt. Gilead 910-439-5137.

NI 1-row corn picker, worked well when last used, fair conduction, \$700 obo. Glenn Koepp, Zebulon 252-230-1352.

Old tobacco stalk cutter, must have truck or trailer to pick up & haul, \$100. Donald DeLancey, Eden 336-552-9702.

MF DM 1308 disc mower, 8 ft. cut, has new cutter bar bearing & belts, field ready, \$8,000. Tyrone Bowman, Mt. Airy 336-955-7422.

Oliver 440 tractor, restored & running, \$10,000. Julie Brock, Oak Island 910-690-4179.

FARM EQUIPMENT

INH 6 ft. bush hog; hay wagon, 6-ton, \$900; JD 3-row plow, 14 in., \$450. Ed Gann, Yadkinville 704-984-0086.

AC D-10 front wheel & tire, \$50. Dale Pardue, Hamptonville 336-468-2038.

Scag V-ride 2, 52 in., Kawasaki eng, 100 hrs., bagger for side discharge, \$10,300. Larry Garrison, Lexington 336-250-6270.

AC B, converted to 12v, has a full set of cults, runs & drives great, rear brakes need work, \$1,200. Kevin Schronce, Conover 828-446-7618.

JD combine w/915 header, field ready, \$20,000. Samuel Crowder, Lattimore 704-692-2240.

3 bulk barns, digital heat exchangers, \$2,000 ea.; 2-row cult w/rollers, \$500; JD grain drill, \$500; tobacco baler, \$1,000-\$1,500. Skip Hayes, Mebane 336-214-4600.

FARM EQUIPMENT

Northern Tool tow-behind trailer sprayer, 55-gal. tank, 7 GPM, Honda eng, LN, \$1,600. Billy Hardin, Siler City 336-202-9855, billy@billyhardin.com.

Grain bin, 1,000-bushel size, 8' high x 14' dia., raised perforated metal floor & underfloor unloading auger; buyer responsible for removal, \$2,500. Joel Henry Davis, Newport 252-241-7575.

8 ft. Tillis tool, 9-shank, GC, \$400; Bush Hog auger w/22 in. & 12 in. digger, \$400. Jay Lemmons, Kernersville 336-972-8708.

Aerator plugger, inclds wgt for top, \$195; drum type spiker, fill w/water, width 3 ft., \$165. Gene Stowe, Burlington 336-675-0466.

Case 850C Construction King backhoe, major components GC, \$6,000. Jerry Green, Franklin 828-342-1698.

FARM EQUIPMENT

Bush Hog brand scraper blade, model 70-07, 7 ft. wide, hd, multi angle, EC, used little, \$1,000. Lake Speed, Kannapolis 704-640-9170.

Post hole driver, 3pt, hyd, \$1,500; JD scrape blade, adjust 3 ways, \$250. Carl Clayton, Summerfield 336-707-3636.

IH 15 rake, \$500; MF pickup rake, \$400. Samuel Anders, Oak Ridge 336-708-5176.

1970 MF 135, gas, ps, 1,455 hrs., rebuilt carb, many new parts, \$6,500; 1980 L2250 Kubota, new rear tires, has issues, will sell as parts, \$2,000. Melvin Morton, Denton 336-857-2717.

Cole corn planter parts, chain, sprocket, plates, \$50; set of spring 2 cults, replaces orig. cults under front of a tractor, \$100. James Faircloth, Raeford 910-875-8706.

Spike tooth harrow, 10 ft., \$700. Russ Hanes, Glendale Springs 828-406-6365.

Generator & starter for Farmall H tractor; will fit others, \$50/both. Steve McCauley, Mebane 336-263-2823.

1957 Farmall Cub, front cult, 42 in. Woods mower, needs work; draw bar, flat belt pulley, wheel wghts., good motor & tires, \$1,800. Bobby Harkey, Albemarle 704-982-2494.

1971 MF 135, GC, \$4,500; 1974 Intl Farmall 140, key start, cults, fert attach, 1pt, bush hog, orig. paint, \$4,500. A.N. Hunter, Wendell 919-612-2658.

NH 352 feed mill, parts or repair, \$500; MF 35 Deluxe, ps, parts or repair, \$1,000; 22 Roanoke boxes, dolly, track, 3pt fork, \$1,000. John White, Mocksville 743-999-4244.

Bush Hog blade, 360-rotation, \$250. Daniel Wall, Wendell 919-631-4918.



Equipment Wanted

Woods cut-off saw, complete, for Farmall Cub tractor. Steve McCauley, Mebane 336-263-2823.

MF 135 diesel. Frank Enders, Halifax 252-583-7371, do not text.

Frontier TD 1316 tedder for parts; need cyl. & pto shaft. Keith Hyatt, Canton 828-648-7538.

PTO irrig. pump, for use w/3" pipe & sprinklers on 2 ac. Mark Oglesby, Cedar Grove 919-259-9599.

Sherman trans for 8N Ford tractor. Denny Barney, Mocksville 336-909-5180.

Woods 660 finishing mower, running or not. John Walter Jones, Laurinburg 910-610-3045.

Front end loader for JD 750 tractor; sm 3ph disc harrow, 4' to 5' wide. Richard Adams, Raleigh 919-846-0922.

EQUIPMENT WANTED

Sm aerator for pasture, spike type. Ron Peters, Reidsville 336-280-6111.



Farm Labor For Sale

Energizer repair, ssc, parmak, \$20. Bob Nichols, N. Wilkesboro 336-927-2850.

Vert. & horiz. mowing, ponds, dams, shooting lanes, reclaiming property, fence lines, \$85/hr. + deliv. of equip. Roger McKenzie, Jackson Springs 910-528-2293.



Farmland For Sale

Land for sale must consist of at least 3 acres and be used for agricultural purposes. Advertisers must indicate use of land.

55 +/- ac in Stokes Co., \$525,000 - \$550,000. Michael Josey, Lawsonville 336-414-3312.

25 +/- ac for rent in Bladen Co., off Hwy 53 W, first yr. \$500 nego. Bobby McCullum, Elizabethtown 910-866-5620.



Hay & Grain For Sale

Orchard/Timothy mix, mtn. grown, top quality, sq bales, \$10-\$14.50; rnd bales, \$60-\$130; alfalfa bales, \$22. Jason Davis, Mills River 828-890-5316.

Spring cut fescue/mixed grass, max. 20 bales, in barn, \$6. Vernon Hill, Mt. Pleasant 980-621-5091.

Coastal bermuda hay, 4x4 rnd, horse quality, stored under shelter, \$50/bale. Dan Lancaster, Pikeville 919-222-6853.

2026 coastal bermuda hay, Aug/Sept cut, horse quality, out of barn/shelter, \$8.50; out of field, we load, \$8; quality rnd bales, \$75. Gary White, Sanford 919-775-9769.

Peanut hay, 4x5 rnd, net wrapped, 42 bales/load, \$35-\$45/bale. Larry Bullock, Greenville 252-883-4748.



Horses & Supplies For Sale

PLEASE NOTE: All equine 6 mos. or older must have a current negative Coggins test. Advertisers must supply the accession number of test, the name of lab doing the test, the date of test and results for each equine advertised. The following advertisers have provided proof of a negative Coggins test.

Pasture board, suitable for older horses, barn w/sheltered paddocks, run-in, rnd pen, 2 feedings/day, up nightly, quality pasture, ref. avail., owner/mgr. on premises, \$325/mo. Mary Ann Harville, Siler City 919-545-4239.



Livestock For Sale

Reg. Belted Galloway bull, dob 6/11/24, blk/white, gentle; hypp neg dam is red/white, \$3,000; (4) weaned Beltie steers, 6 m/o, \$600 ea. A. Furr, Rockwell 704-798-3460, text.

Open SimAngus heifers, born 2024, ready to breed, \$3,000 ea. Murray Cohen, Pittsboro 919-742-4433.

Fainting goats, all healthy & tame, different colors, bucks, \$100; does, \$125. Dodd Linker, Clemmons 336-712-2484.

St. Croix ewes, reg., \$450 ea.; St. Croix rams, \$350 ea. Valerie Cockerham, Yadkinville 336-416-2240.

Grass-based Angus yearling bulls, reg., from Wye Angus genetics, \$3,500. Jon Brubaker, Asheboro 336-465-0702.

Santa Gertrudis purebred beef cattle, SGBI reg., cow/calf pairs bred back, \$4,000; heifers up to 8 m/o, \$2,000; bulls ready to work, \$2,500. Charles OBryant, Reidsville 336-908-0276.

(2) Nigerian dwarf males, (1) w/blue-eye gene, (1) w/splayed horns; gentle breeders, 1.5 - 2.5 y/o, \$120. Donald DeLancey, Eden 336-552-9702.

Mini Zebu bull, 6 m/o, great bloodlines, \$550. Pete Wildeboer, Castle Hayne 910-675-0059.

Reg. miniature Hereford bull, 9 m/o, naturally polled, \$2,500 obo; 3 Boer bucklings, (2) 3 m/o, (1) blk w/brown/white markings, dob 6/2/2026, \$350 ea. obo. Cindy Tucker, Browns Summit 336-580-0984.

Dexter bulls, 2 y/o & 1 y/o; (4) 6 m/o bulls ready in October; some ADCA parentage, some PDCA, \$1,200 - \$1,800. Danny Crowson, Haw River 336-263-3026.

4 young breeding sows, 1 older breeding sow, 1 young boar, all great w/people & raised on farm; prefer to sell all together, \$250 - \$1,000. Sam Bainbridge, Liberty 743-238-8634.

Alpacas, 1 white intact male, 12 m/o, \$700; 1 brown female, 10 m/o, \$900. Patricia Waters, Concord 704-467-9438.



Poultry & Supplies For Sale

Peacock chicks, \$30 ea.; silver pheasant pair, 2026 hatch, \$150; Swinhoe hen, \$75; Amherst hen, \$75; 1 pair white peacocks, 5 y/o, proven breeders, \$400. Posie Guthrie, Pfafftown 336-413-0038.

California, Silver California, bluescales, Gambel's, 8 varieties of bobwhites; partridge, Philby, chukar, Hungarians, \$6 & up. Jimmy Furr, Stanfield 704-351-5654.

Australian Blk swans & Mute swans, \$600 & up; Cape Barren geese, \$600 & up; Ruddy shelducks, \$150 & up. Jim Simpson, Indian Trail 704-361-6497.

LIVESTOCK

Coturnix quail breeding sets, 1 male & 4 females, multiple colors, NPIP certified, \$35/set. Austin Hathcock, Norwood 704-984-3787.

Snowy Call ducks & ducklings, \$10-\$20; Asian goslings, 2 m/o, \$15 ea.; 1 pair Peking ducks, \$60. Jon Levens, Burlington 336-430-0254, text.

Peacocks & peahens, 1-4 y/o, \$75 - \$400. Samuel Jennings, Camden 252-202-3473.

Birmingham Roller pigeons, 7 m/o, from exceptional flyers & stock, \$10 ea. Jerry Allen, Whitsett 336-202-9092.

Guinea keets, Buff Dundotte, Chocolate, Chocolate/Buff crosses, 81 total, 1 w/o to 1 m/o, \$10 ea. Wayne Hunter, Waxhaw 704-219-3023.

9 African geese, incubator-hatched, 2-6 m/o, healthy, farm-raised, \$50 ea. Lisa Matthews, Waxhaw 704-219-3023.

Baby chicks, zombie chickens, Dominique, Dominique/Blk Copper Maran cross, Ameraucana, min. 10, \$5 ea. Joe Snow, Thurmond 336-648-5997.

Bobwhite quail & Ringneck pheasants, flight pen raised, quail, \$6 ea.; pheasants, \$15 ea. Curtis Meissner, Bostic 609-273-2230.



Seeds & Plants For Sale

PLEASE NOTE: Individuals or business selling seed in North Carolina are required to obtain a Seed License (Retail or Wholesale). For more information contact NCDA&CS Plant Industry Division at 800-206-9333 or 919-707-3739.

Rabbiteye blueberry plants, 2 y/o, healthy Tifblue, Premier, Climax, Powderblue, & Brightwell, \$12 ea. or \$10 ea. for 10 or more. Michael Roberson, Trinity 336-862-3488.

Potted muscadine & scuppernong plants, 5-6 ft., healthy, planting & fert. instr. incld., several varieties, \$25. Bob Whitaker, Mocksville 336-469-4822, do not text.



Supplies For Sale

Water totes, 275 gal., \$125 ea.; metal burning barrels, \$10 ea. Jeff Brittain, Hickory 828-327-4782.

Myers shallow well pump, 1hp, regulator, EC, \$175; cast iron wash pot, 20 gal., \$125. Jack Matthews, Charlotte 704-846-1903.

Used Red Jacket well pump motor, 3/4hp, EC; foot valve, EC, \$200/both. Timothy Mabe, Troy 910-572-3539.

Handmade cedar bird houses, mite resistant, \$12; gourds, several sizes, \$5. Bob Whitaker, Mocksville 336-469-4822, do not text.

3-panel cement fence, +/- 200 ft., \$3/ft. Tommy Sink, Lexington 336-250-4234.

POULTRY

Rnd fuel tank, 500 gal., 90"x 40", no holes, \$350-\$400. Thomas Ledbetter, New London 704-984-0715.

(2) greenhouses w/irrig., 100 ft. x 30 ft., \$650 ea.; (1) 100 ft. x 20 ft. knee-wall greenhouse, \$450. Terence Earle, Lewisville 336-399-5246.

Kohler whole home generator, 25kw, 421 hrs., 2.9-liter JD diesel eng, 1,800 rpm, auto Hz feature, 110 gal. bottom fuel tank, fully enclosed, \$8,500. Jeff Braun, Oakboro 704-984-3726.

Red cedar poles, 8-12 in. cir., 40 ft. high, will cut/load free, \$6. Roger Shaffer, Ronda 336-984-4260.

Cedar posts, 8 ft. long, \$25 ea.; hand truck, \$80. Gene Stowe, Burlington 336-675-0466.

Range Master barbed wire, 6 rls, \$75/rl. Sam Anders, Oak Ridge 336-708-5176.

Arc welder cart, \$75. Daniel Wall, Wendell 919-631-4918.

Grass sling, \$40; produce scale, \$80. Gary Williams, Granite Falls 828-493-2461.



Trucks & Trailers For Sale

Homesteader trailer, 5x8, enclosed, LNC, \$2,995. Bob Hemdon, Liberty 336-622-1199.

Miller tip top trailer, 20 ton, light & brakes, \$8,500. Tommy Sink, Lexington 336-250-4234.

Dump trailer on 1956 Ford chassis, \$2,000. Murray Cohen, Pittsboro 919-742-4433.

2025 factory GMC Denali alum. wheels & tires, brand new takeoffs, size LT275/65R20 Goodyear Wrangler, \$1,800; set of tires only, \$800. Jeff Braun, Oakboro 704-984-3726.

1988 GMC C7000 flatbed, 12 ft. hyd dump bed, 8.2 Detroit diesel, 2-spd axle, no air brakes, 144,000 mi, heat/air, \$7,000 - \$7,500. Bobby Huneycutt, Oakboro 980-521-1833.

Farm trailer w/sides, 4' x 8', GC, \$175. Richard Adams, Raleigh 919-846-0022.

1982 Ford F-350 dump truck, 12 ft bed, underbed storage box, 38,500 mi, \$8,250. Steve McCauley, Mebane 336-263-2823.

1975 CJ5 & 1961 Willys pickup, \$13,500/both. Russ Hanes, Glendale Springs 828-406-6365.



Trucks & Trailers Wanted

WW2 Halftrack truck, complete or parts, made by White, Diamond T, Autocar or Intl; used postwar in agriculture & forestry. Robert Harrison, Salisbury 704-202-3301.

1966 Ford F100 p/u; farm dump truck, non-road use, that can be deliv. or w/in 10 mi. Carl Clayton, Summerfield 336-707-3636.

North Carolina tobacco on display at the N.C. State Fair

Agriculture is the backbone of the N.C. State Fair, playing a prominent role in the displays, competitions and attractions each year. Although agriculture can be found on nearly every area of the grounds, Heritage Circle is well-known for showcasing the history and tradition of crops in our state, including tobacco. From the Tobacco Stringing Competition and curing barn to the Mock Tobacco Auction, tobacco not only plays a major role in our state’s agriculture industry, but also in everyone’s favorite fall tradition.

In 2005, when N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler took office, tobacco was scarce at the N.C. State Fair, which was something he immediately sought to change. “As tobacco farmers in Guilford County for over 30 years, Commissioner Troxler and I worked together on several occasions,” said Pat Short, superintendent of Heritage Circle at the N.C. State Fair. “Following his election, he called me to come and work at the Oxford Tobacco Research Station managing their tobacco operation. Shortly after I took the position, we began working on reestablishing the presence of tobacco at the N.C. State Fair.” That same year, the tobacco barn in Heritage Circle was rebuilt and filled with tobacco from the Oxford Tobacco Research Station, a tradition that continues to this day. Then in 2006, the Tobacco Stringing Competition and the Mock Tobacco Auction began. “There is a big disconnect between the public and agriculture today,” Pat said. “It’s important for people to see and understand the heritage of tobacco, and other crops, in our state, which is why we take a lot of pride in it every year.” From the farm to the fair, Pat and his team work hard all year long to make sure fairgoers experience tobacco in a variety of ways in Heritage Circle.

The Oxford Tobacco Research Station plays a major role in

helping get tobacco to the N.C. State Fair. The tobacco supervisor at the research station, Carl Watson, grows anywhere from 15 to 30 acres of tobacco annually, which is used both for trial research with NC State University as well as general crop for the N.C. State Fair and contracted buyers, like Universal Leaf. “Most tobacco at the station is used for trial varieties and research,” Pat said. “The tobacco used in the stringing contest, which also fills the curing barn, at the fair comes from their five to six acres of general crop. Crews, including research station staff and neighbors from Granville Equipment, get up at 5 a.m. on the first Friday of the fair to harvest the tobacco and bring it to the fairgrounds.” Typically, tobacco arrives in Heritage Circle between 10 and 11 a.m. on that first Friday of the N.C. State Fair. As soon as it arrives, people begin stringing sticks of tobacco to fill the curing barn. “The Tobacco Stringing Competition doesn’t start until 2 p.m. that day, but we always need more sticks to fill the curing barn than what is produced during the competition,” Pat said. “We have many volunteers who help us each year, including NCDA&CS staff, members of the NC Tobacco Growers Association and the staff at Duke Homestead, as well as anyone attending the fair who knows how or would like to learn how to string tobacco.” Whether you catch the morning crew or the competition crowd, all you have to do is ask for someone to teach you how to string tobacco if you would like to be a part of keeping the heritage alive during the fair.

Starting at 2 p.m. on the first Friday of the fair, the Tobacco Stringing Competition brings a different energy to the fairgrounds as teams line up to see who can string the best stick of tobacco. “Each team has a stringer and two handers, all holding equal importance when it comes to stringing good tobacco,” Pat said. “Interested teams sign up the morning of the competition at the tobacco barn in Heritage Circle and get ready for their shining moment that afternoon.” Although at first glance it may seem like the stringer is the most important person

on the team, Pat says that the handers are equally as important to ensuring good quality and uniformity of the stick. “Quality is the leading factor when it comes to the Tobacco Stringing Competition because it’s the No. 1 thing our judges are looking for,” Pat said. “Not only does the stringer have to ensure a tight, neat line of tobacco on the stick, but the handers have to ensure the heads are neat and the butts are even on the bundles of tobacco they hand the stringer.” Each bundle contains three to four leaves, depending on size, which the stringer then uses to fill up their stick of tobacco, which is timed by an official timer. “Timing is not the top thing our judges look for, but it is important,” Pat said. “My grandpa always told me that a good stringer could average a stick a minute.” Three judges score each team throughout the competition, ultimately determining the first, second and third place winners who take home a cash prize and bragging rights. “Quality is the most important thing for our judges because it’s always been the most important thing to the farmers,” Pat said. “If the tobacco doesn’t stay on the stick in the curing barn, it can catch on fire, destroying both the crop and the barn.” Once each team has finished stringing their stick of tobacco, volunteers take each one to the curing barn to process over the next seven days.

The curing barn, also known as the tobacco barn, showcases how tobacco was originally cured across our state. “We use a wood fumace, which works just like a wood stove inside a home,” Pat said. Much like a wood stove, the smoke is contained in the flue pipe and then exists outside the barn in the open air, allowing the tobacco to keep its sweet aroma. That is where the name flue-cured tobacco comes from. “We have a recipe for curing the tobacco at the fairgrounds that has been used by farmers since the mid-1800s,” Pat said. Once all the tobacco sticks have been loaded in the curing barn, the temperature is set between

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Sandy and Ken Jones with the Maple Hill Loopers are regular competitors.



Tobacco from the Oxford Research Station is used in the tobacco tying contest.

Celebrating America's first crop at the Wilson Tobacco Market

The 137th opening of the Wilson Tobacco Market drew a crowd Wednesday, Aug. 12, setting a festive and hopeful tone for the start of the tobacco buying season that felt equal parts family reunion and pep rally. With America also celebrating its 250th anniversary, many speakers included tributes to America’s first crop and its role in building our country and our state.

Keynote speakers included Congressman David Rouzer and Don Davis who spoke about supporting tobacco growers and working with fellow Congressional representatives in non-tobacco states to find ways to build support on tobacco issues and other ag concerns.

“David, we have passed the Farm Bill in the House. It’s time for the Senate to deliver a Farm Bill. It’s been way too long,” Davis said.

N.C. Lieutenant Governor Rachel Hunt also spoke about growing up on a tobacco farm



From left: Lieutenant Gov. Rachel Hunt, Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler and former First Lady Carolyn Hunt during a presentation honoring the late Gov. Jim Hunt.

and her appreciation for all that agriculture continues to contribute to North Carolina. “Today is really about celebrating the people who make North Carolina agriculture so strong; our farmers, our families and the communities that have been built around them.”

Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler rounded out the guest

speakers, talking about some of the recent policy wins for the industry, including a new and long needed method for calculating H2A worker pay and tariffs that were imposed on Brazilian tobacco.

The late Governor Jim Hunt, father of the lieutenant governor, was posthumously honored for his long service to the state and



especially tobacco farmers by being inducted into the N.C. Tobacco Hall of Fame. Rachel Hunt and her mother the former First Lady Carolyn Hunt accepted the award presented by Troxler on behalf of the Hunt family.

The program concluded with a mock auction of tobacco cured during the 2025 N.C. State Fair.

Each bundle “auctioned off” represented the way tobacco has been sold over the years, starting with one sheet of hand-tied tobacco, proceeding to sheets of loose golden leaf and ending with the large square bales sold at the market today.