

Agricultural REVIEW

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November 2024

Raleigh, N.C.

Free soil sample tests through Nov. 26

The deadline to submit soil samples for free testing is Nov. 26. After that date, the peak season fee will go into effect. The fee is \$4 per sample during peak season, which lasts through March.

Fees collected during peak season are reinvested into the lab to improve efficiency. Contact the Agronomic Services Division at 919-664-1600 with any questions.

Upcoming Ag Review ad deadlines

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

- Nov. 1 for the December issue
- Dec. 2 for the January 2025 issue
- Jan. 2 for the February 2025 issue
- Feb. 3 for the March 2025 issue

NCDA&CS responds to WNC following Helene

■ Full extent of damage remains unknown

Hurricane Helene brought damage and destruction to Western North Carolina in late September, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services immediately began offering assistance.

Western North Carolina sustained major damage including significant damage to roads, cell towers and electrical systems, as well as still unquantifiable damage to crops, farmland, supplies and livestock. But North Carolina's agriculture community is strong and resilient and always willing to step up for others in need.

"I have seen the very worst of North Carolina this year, and the very best," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "The worst was the

damage caused by Hurricane Helene. I flew for three days over the damage, stopping to see the people and what they were going through. It has been heartbreaking. But in the same breath, it has been amazing to see how the people of North Carolina and other states have risen to the task of trying to help people. I've seen neighbors helping neighbors – that's what we've always done in North Carolina. It has really been heartwarming."

Preliminary damage assessments are beginning to try to evaluate the extent of hurricane and flood damage to ag crops. No estimates are available as of press time.

"The need is great, and this will be a long-term effort that we need people to stay engaged with," Troxler said. "This area will need help for quite some time, so it's important



Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler visited Western North Carolina to survey the destruction left by Hurricane Helene.

we continue recovery efforts in the months to come."

Each division in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has been involved in (See Helene, page 3)

Farmland preservation grant cycle now open

The application period for county governments and conservation nonprofit groups to apply for farmland preservation grants from the N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund is open. Applicants have until Jan. 17, 2025, to apply.

"A growing population and increased development continue to put pressure on family farms," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "Agricultural conservation easements are the best tool to preserve farmland. I encourage farmers and landowners across the state to work with local partners and apply for grant funding to become North Carolina Forever Farms."

Grants are available for agricultural conservation easements on working farms and forests; to support public-private enterprise programs that promote profitable and sustainable agricultural, horticultural and forestland activities; to develop agricultural plans; and to create Agricultural Growth Zones that enhance local investments in farmland preservation.

Landowners interested in preserving their farms through agricultural

conservation easements must work with county governments or land trusts to apply for grant funds. If awarded a grant in which the application requests funds for the conservation easement purchase value, landowners will be compensated for the purchase of the development rights.

During the most recent grant cycle, the N.C. ADFP Trust Fund awarded \$18.2 million to protect working farms and forests, support county farmland preservation efforts and promote agricultural enterprises.

Agricultural conservation easements not funded in the previous grant cycle are encouraged to reapply for funding. Reapplications must notify the Farmland Preservation Division via online form.

A new online grant portal will be used for Cycle 18 applications. Grant applications, rules, and information packets are available online at <https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/farmland-preservation/applicants>. For more information, call the Farmland Preservation office at 919-707-3074.

From the tractor



Commissioner Troxler

As I am writing this, we have wrapped up the 2024 N.C. State Fair with 998,926 in attendance.

An early highlight for me was the Century Farm Family Reunion that drew an estimated 2,400 attendees to the State Fair. It was so good to see so many farm families gathered together, especially this year in the face of so much adversity for so many people.

Once again, we held it in the Hunt Horse Complex to accommodate all the guests. Chip Carter, the host of

by Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler

RFD TV's Where the Food Comes From was the keynote speaker.

We have 42 Century Farms that are part of our farmland conservation program and six of them attended the event on Oct. 21. You can read more about the Century Farm Reunion and see photos from the event on Page 5.

If you are planning to take soil samples this year, you have until Nov. 26 to submit them for free testing. The peak-season fee goes into effect after that and will be in place until March 31, 2025. The fee is \$4 per sample during peak season.

The Agronomic Services Soil Testing Lab processes 300,000 samples annually.

I also want to mention Faylene Whitaker being named the 2024 Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year. She is the first woman ever to receive this recognition in the Expo's 34-year history!

I am proud to call Faylene a longtime friend, who is also a fierce advocate for NC agriculture and represents our state and industry so well.

She exemplifies the very best in North Carolina agriculture and agriculture in the southeast.

Faylene is proof that you don't have to grow up on a farm to be successful in agriculture. Faylene's willingness to learn, perseverance, and positive attitude helped grow the 10-acre farm she started with her late husband, Richard, into Whitaker Farms & Garden Nursery, operating on 940 acres and 3 locations in and around Climax with her sons.

Faylene has been an integral part of local and statewide agriculture through her active roles in the N.C. Farm Bureau, the Randolph County Soil and Water Conservation Board of Supervisors and as a member of the NC Board of Agriculture. Additionally, she has held leadership roles in the N.C. Greenhouse Vegetable Growers

Association, Tobacco Growers Association of N.C., N.C. Strawberry Association, and has served on the USDA FSA State Committee.

This is a tremendous accomplishment for a such a well-deserving woman in agriculture! I hope you will join me in celebrating this achievement with her.

Finally, I want to mention that tourism and agritourism, especially in the fall and around the holiday season, are big economic drivers in Western NC.

As we approach the holiday season, I want to call on North Carolinians to support our farmers and farms by buying local. That includes supporting our Christmas tree growers by buying a real N.C. Christmas tree this year.

Supporting Western NC farms and businesses will help this area recover and ensure that these business can continue to thrive and contribute to the community.

Agricultural Review

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Steve Troxler
 Commissioner

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**AGRICULTURE
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 TO: 888777**

By opting in, you agree to receive texts from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services containing hurricane relief resources. You may opt out at any time. In partnership with ReadyWake! Alerts



To keep up with the latest NCDA&CS news, follow the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on Facebook or on Twitter @NCAgriculture, or @gottobenc on Instagram

Post-hurricane soil management recommendations for WNC

Hurricane Helene caused great devastation throughout much of western North Carolina and farm fields were not spared. There are reports of impacts to fields in all landscape positions. This situation calls for a vigilant approach to soil and crop management that includes assessment on a field-by-field basis.

Caution should be used in first visiting fields since crossovers or bridges to enter fields may have been compromised during the storm. Here are considerations to address potential issues.

Because this is disaster related, growers should keep records of expenses incurred as related to restoration including debris removal. Documentation with pictures is encouraged. If there is reason to believe insurance claims can be made with any loss, contact your agent.

Remove any visible debris from the field. Storm water is powerful and can push and float all kinds of debris into fields, including large objects such as cars, appliances and trees. Debris may be buried and not noticed until future tillage operations.

For areas where erosion has occurred, significant topsoil is lost. If so, phosphorus, potassium, and significant micronutrients such as manganese, zinc and copper, may have been removed. If not being replaced by fill, soil sampling existing soil is strongly encouraged. Any fill for reconstruction purposes (grading, filling gullies) should be tested for general soil fertility prior to use. There are no state regulations on topsoil quality in NC, so it is buyer beware.

Sediment or soil eroding from other locations may be deposited over native soil in fields. This can potentially impact fertility.

Since this deposition is often topsoil from other locations to floodplain areas, it may have high nutritive value. If predominantly sand has been deposited, it may have relatively low nutrient levels.

Deposits may be seen visually over existing soil, but the depth of deposition cannot be accurately assessed. Use of a soil probe can be helpful. Probe down to see where the soil layer transitions into native soil and measure the depth of deposition. Use the following considerations in assessment and management.

Maps can be drawn of depositions across a field as evaluated. Zones can possibly be created from this effort and may be helpful for future management decisions.

0–2 inches of deposition. Consider this to minimally impact drainage and fertility. It may be best to mix the overlying sediment with native soil with normal tillage using a disc or shallow tillage implement.

2–4 inches of deposition. Considerable deposition has occurred and may impact field management and crop production. If 3 or 4 inches of soil overlies the field, consider soil sampling this depth for soil fertility, especially for pH, phosphorus, and potassium levels. While sampling, take a sample from the next 3- or 4-inch depth for comparison purposes.

More than 4 inches of deposition. A great level of deposition has occurred. Soil sample the deposited layer for soil fertility and evaluate.

Movement of soil such as grading and other soil management such as tillage in such situations should be carefully evaluated on a site-by-site basis. Note textural/soil type differences when evaluating. Layers that are very different in texture could potentially cause drainage issues. If fieldwork is planned, wait until the soil is dry enough to reduce compaction.

Soil stabilization is one of the first steps for the recovery of impacted areas. If possible, consider planting a cover crop with rapid growth and an extensive root system. It will help stabilize the soil, reduce erosion and stimulate soil biological activity.

On soils that were properly limed before the flood, soil pH, soil calcium and magnesium levels should be sufficient on most soils. If soils have not been sampled in 3 or more years, soil testing is highly encouraged.

In flooding situations, there are often concerns over pollutants in soils.

Given the widespread origin of floodwaters, it is difficult to assess contamination of soils since various unknown chemicals can be associated with these events. If there are known chemicals of concern at a given location, use of a commercial environmental lab that offers analysis for contaminants is an option but can be expensive.

Soil fertility labs do not offer this service. To initially evaluate crop growth impacts, plants such as wheat and soybeans can be grown in soil collected from fields of concern in a greenhouse setting to bioassay for materials that are toxic to plant growth.

\$18.2 million in farmland preservation grants awarded

The N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund recently awarded \$18.2 million to protect working farms and forests, support county farmland preservation efforts and promote agricultural enterprises.

Over \$8.8 million was awarded for 20 agricultural conservation easements on 1,392 acres of farm and forestland across the state. Five counties were awarded grants under the new Agricultural Growth Zones program, an initiative to combine state and local funding on agricultural conservation easements in areas of strategic importance to local agricultural communities.

“The need for farmland preservation in North Carolina is at an all-time high as we continue to attract new businesses and new residents to the state,” said N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “As development pressure continues to build, we have an opportunity to help farmers who wish to stay on their land through farmland preservation grants like these. “This year the trust fund received

124 grant applications and \$47 million in funding requests – the most ever for the program. We will continue to push for more funding to ensure we have the natural resources available to sustain ourselves in the future.”

The following is a list of awarded agricultural conservation easement projects:

Alamance Soil and Water Conservation District received \$58,295 to preserve a 17-acre farm.

Haywood Soil and Water Conservation District received two grants totaling \$364,100 to protect 87 acres of working land on two farms.

Johnston Soil and Water Conservation District received \$827,025 to preserve 159 acres of farmland.

Mainspring Conservation Trust received two grants totaling \$481,026 to protect 56 acres of working land on two farms in Cherokee County.

Piedmont Land Conservancy received \$256,434 to protect 109 acres of farmland on a farm in Surry County.

Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy received \$205,020 to protect 201 acres of farmland in Haywood County.

Three Rivers Land Trust received four grants totaling \$1,572,810 to protect 308 acres of farmland on four farms in Cabarrus and Rowan counties.

Triangle Land Conservancy received \$587,231 to preserve 74 acres of working land in Lee County.

Wake Soil and Water Conservation District three grants totaling \$1,977,072 to protect 115 acres of working land on three farms.

Working Lands Trust received four grants totaling \$2,479,006 to preserve 262 acres of farmland on four farms in Lenior, Moore and Rockingham counties.

The following is a list of awarded agricultural plans:

Alexander Soil and Water Conservation District received \$17,000 for the development of a Cost of Community Services Study.

Franklin County Cooperative Extension received \$8,500 to update the county’s Voluntary Agricultural Districts ordinance.

McDowell County received \$17,000 for the development of a county Farmland Protection Plan.

Randolph County Cooperative Extension received \$17,000 to update the county’s Farmland Protection Plan.

Extension received \$8,500 to update the county’s Voluntary Agricultural Districts ordinance.

Rowan County Cooperative Extension received \$8,500 to update the county’s Voluntary Agricultural Districts ordinance.

Stanly Soil and Water Conservation District received \$17,000 to update the county’s Farmland Protection Plan.

Wake Soil and Water Conservation District received \$17,000 to update the county’s Farmland Protection Plan.

The following is a list of awarded agricultural development projects:

Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District received \$7,375 for the Chatham County Farmland Preservation Plan Implementation Project.

Haywood Soil and Water Conservation District received \$40,264 for the Tuscola Farm Vocational-Agricultural Project.

Rutherford Soil and Water Conservation District received \$65,000 for the Farmland Trusts Pilot Program.

Southwestern NC RC&D received \$22,500 for the WNC Farm to Table Phase 2 Project.

Stanly County received \$487,326 for the Livestock Arena and Agricultural Center.

Union County received \$15,000 for the Union County Land Preservation and Conservation Easement Program.

Yancey County received \$450,000 for the Yancey County School Animal Science Pathway Expansion Project.

The following is a list of awarded Local Agricultural Growth Zones grants:

Buncombe Soil and Water Conservation District received \$1,945,443 for the Buncombe County AGZ.

Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District received \$295,443 for the Chatham County AGZ.

Lee County received \$489,443 for the Lee County AGZ.

Orange County received \$1,445,443 for the Orange County AGZ.

Wake Soil and Water Conservation District received \$1,445,443 for the Wake County AGZ.

Eight open agricultural conservation easement grant contracts were awarded additional easement purchase funds due to higher appraisal values or denial of federal funding, totaling \$2,574,694.

Coastal ghost forests: The silent sentinels of sea level rise

The images that most likely come to people's minds when they hear climate change or sea level rise are often of flooded city streets and buildings being lost to the sea. However, these dramatic images often overshadow the more subtle yet significant impact sea level rise is having along the Atlantic coastline. The change may not be noticeable from year to year but over time, you may start to notice those tracts of maritime forests, Atlantic white cedar and cypress-gum swamps you used to see while driving along the coast or in your backyard, thinning like a receding hairline. All that remains of what once was are standing dead trees (also known as snags in wildland firefighting terminology).

So, what is happening?

The short answer is saltwater intrusion and a rise in the coastal water table. When sea levels rise due to storm surges, saltwater from the ocean can encroach inland into freshwater systems, a process known as saltwater intrusion. While this inundation of seawater is often temporary, rising sea levels from melting ice sheets and the thermal expansion of seawater as it warms are leading to more frequent coastal flooding and saltwater being pushed farther inland. Land that was once dry becomes inundated and salt accumulates in the soil, eventually reaching levels that trees cannot tolerate, leaving behind ghostly gray stands of deadwood. These dead trees, now marking a transitional zone between coastal forests and saltwater marsh, have become known as coastal ghost forests. As the coastal water table rises and ongoing



Rising sea levels can contribute to thinning forests near the coastline.

land subsidence, soils can become saturated, leaving them waterlogged and depleted of the oxygen required for healthy root function and growth. Furthermore, both predicaments cause tree stress that can provoke secondary stressors such as insect attacks and disease, further exacerbating the situation. Tree mortality from rising coastal groundwater levels is at least as significant, if not more so, than saltwater intrusion in the Coastal Plain of North Carolina.

The natural process of coastal forests receding inland as salt marshes advance with rising sea levels, resulting in the creation of ghost forests, is not new to our coastline. Over geological

timescales, sea levels have risen and fallen between glacial and interglacial periods, submerging the lowland of the Eastern Seaboard and then subsiding. This is evident in the number of escarpments on the Coastal Plain, marking where the shoreline once lay. As recently as 60 million years ago, the sea extended as far inland as the fall line that separates the Piedmont from the Coastal Plain. During the ice age of the Pleistocene Epoch, the coastline was 20 to 50 miles east of where today's beaches exist! The formation of North Carolina's modern Coastal Plain directly results from these past coastal systems migrating back and forth with rising and falling

sea levels.

Due to its low elevation and ongoing land subsidence, much of North Carolina's coastline is vulnerable to rising sea levels and the transition of coastal forests to ghost forests. In 2021, the N.C. Forest Service (NCFS) began mapping ghost forests in eastern North Carolina in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and six other states along the Atlantic Coast to estimate and map the extent of tree mortality in this region from factors related to sea level rise and the resulting saturation and saltwater intrusion. To date, the NCFS Forest Health Program has mapped more than 61,000 acres of forestland impacted

by sea level rise and continues to be involved in documenting this damage and monitoring its occurrence over time. Dr. Marcelo Ardón, associate professor of forestry and environmental resources, and fellow researchers at N.C. State University are also asking for the public's help tracking the spread of ghost forests across public lands along the North Carolina coastline. Ardón has developed a citizen science project called Sentinels of the Sound and an iNaturalist page where the public can upload photos of wetland forests at specific stations set up along the coast. This will be used to document changes in coastal forests over time.

However, this story does not end with imminent doom and gloom. Dr. Matt Kirwan, an associate professor at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, studies the formation and survival of coastal landscapes and sees a silver lining in the transition from coastal forests to ghost forests. Kirwan says that although the development of ghost forests is a sign of climate change and the loss of land is tragic from the human perspective, the transition is also a sign of ecological resiliency. Rather than these coastal forests being lost to the sea with nothing left in their place, they are being converted to salt marshes, which are ecologically important ecosystems. Salt marshes sequester carbon, provide habitat for several wildlife species and improve water quality. Moreover, many researchers are evaluating land management practices and exploring more adaptive strategies to help facilitate the inland movement of coastal forests and the transition of forest to marsh.

Helene

(Continued from pg. 1)



Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler in Western North Carolina following Hurricane Helene.

disaster relief in some form or another. That involvement has ranged from humanitarian efforts to sheltering people and their pets at the Western North Carolina Ag Center to delivering emergency USDA food for mass feeding.

North Carolina Forest Service personnel have been on the ground working with local emergency management to clear roadways and assist with rescue efforts.

The Food Distribution team has been coordinating and delivering emergency food supplies.

The Animal Welfare Section has

been in communication with animal shelters in the region assisting with their needs.

Agricultural Emergency Operations has been working to coordinate efforts for response and communicate with industry representatives.

The Western North Carolina Ag Center was used as a shelter for residents and their pets. The Western NC Farmers Market served as a distribution site for Manna Food Bank.

The Food & Drug Protection Division worked with impacted Grade A dairies to help them get their animals milked. They are also working with

businesses to help them open again.

Members of the Marketing Division's Livestock team were on the ground working with farmers to address immediate needs.

The Veterinary teams contacted livestock operations to assess needs and worked to secure feed, water and hay. The Poultry Health team offered assistance to the hundreds of poultry farms in the impacted area.

Research Stations cooked for local emergency response workers and served as a distribution hub for donated items.

The Soil & Water team coordinated with districts across the state to determine needs. The department's Financial Services and Payroll teams worked behind the scenes to set up systems for paying bills and entering hurricane – related work time.

Other divisions have been working with their respective industries to provide waivers and support.

The N.C. State Fair activated its "State Fair Cares" donation effort, allowing fairgoers an opportunity to contribute to support disaster relief efforts while they purchased their tickets online. The collected monies will go to the MANNA FoodBank of Asheville.

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is continuing to help with clean-up and recovery efforts.

N.C. Pesticide Board announces five case settlements

The N.C. Pesticide Board recently approved the following settlement agreements. Settlements involved improper sales and use of pesticides in Buncombe/Haywood, Iredell, Lincoln, New Hanover and Yadkin counties.

Settlements are listed by county below:

(Buncombe and Haywood) Israel Estrada, a licensed private pesticide applicator, agreed to pay \$800 for buying a soil fumigant restricted-use pesticide in Asheville and applying it in Haywood County without the required fumigation subcategory on his license.

(Iredell) Brian Howard, a licensed private pesticide applicator in the Harmony area, agreed to pay \$500 for buying and applying a soil fumigant restricted-use pesticide without the required fumigation subcategory on his license.

(Lincoln) Robert C. Nash, a licensed pesticide dealer for Tri-County Farm Supply in Crouse, agreed to pay \$400 for selling restricted-use pesticides to a pesticide applicator with an expired license.

(New Hanover) Justin M. Dove, agreed to pay \$500 for applying a pesticide in a location not listed on its label, an application inconsistent with the pesticide's label and a violation of state law that states a pesticide applicator may not operate in a faulty, careless or negligent manner.

(Yadkin) Related to the above case in Iredell County, Jonathon Ferguson, a licensed pesticide dealer for Nutrien Ag Solutions in Yadkinville, agreed to pay \$400 for selling a soil fumigant restricted-use pesticide to a pesticide applicator who did not have the required fumigation subcategory on his license.

The N.C. Pesticide Board governs programs relating to pesticide management and control.

Pumpkins and watermelons draw ‘giant’ crowds at State Fair

With a little help from a forklift and a crane, some of the largest pumpkins and watermelons in the world were weighed in at the N.C. State Fair on Tuesday. Growers waited in anticipation to see if their giant would weigh more than the last. The winning entries were on display in the Agri Supply Expo Center for fairgoers to see and photograph at the N.C. State Fair, Oct. 17-27.

The weigh-in included the special competition sanctioned by The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth and hosted by the N.C. State Fair. The competition is open to competitors from other states.

This year, two pumpkins weighed more than 2,000 pounds each, with the third-place finisher not far behind. Chris Rodebaugh of Lewisburg, WV, placed first with a 2,206.1-pound pumpkin – setting a state record for the largest pumpkin grown in West Virginia. Terry and Lois Nelson of Thomas, WV, came in a close second with their 2,197.8-pound pumpkin. Albert Rodebaugh II of Craigsville, WV, placed third with a 1,858.5-pound pumpkin.

In the separate North Carolina-only competition, the top NC-grown pumpkin weighed 824.2 pounds and was grown by Ernie Coley of Jefferson. Mark Rollins of Clyde also placed with his 515.4-pound pumpkin. Donald Murphy of Pink Hill brought the third-largest NC-grown pumpkin, weighing 332.1 pounds. Growers from North Carolina can enter both contests.

The watermelon competition also saw many impressive entries. Andrew Vial of Liberty took first place with a 258.6-pound watermelon. Chris Rodebaugh of Lewisburg, WV, placed second with his 242.6-pound watermelon. Third place went to Chris Kent of Sevierville, Tenn., with his 233.9-pound watermelon. This year’s watermelon competitions are sponsored by Agri Supply.

“We have some remarkable entries this year, despite the challenges farmers have faced in North Carolina and beyond,” said April Blazich, horticulture superintendent. “At times, it’s been too hot, too dry or too wet. But farmers in North Carolina are resilient and fairgoers won’t be disappointed with these entries.”

The Great Pumpkin Commonwealth is an international organization that promotes growing giant vegetables. The top three winners in pumpkins take home between \$1.50 and \$3 per pound. The top three winners in watermelons are awarded between \$3 and \$6 per pound.



Shoaf family honored as Farm Family of the Day at State Fair

The N.C. State Fair is a place where thrill-seekers and foodies can enjoy exciting rides and tasty treats; however, it is also a time to celebrate local agriculture and the hardworking folks who make it our state’s leading industry.

Farm Family of the Day, sponsored by Tractor Supply Co., is a program that recognizes one standout farm family each day of the N.C. State Fair.

On Opening Day, Oct. 17, the N.C. State Fair and Tractor Supply Co. recognized Winston-Salem’s Shoaf Farms. Currently owned and operated by Jimmy Shoaf Sr. and Jimmy Shoaf Jr., the farm and the surrounding land have been in the family for three generations. Between the farm and neighboring land is a church where many generations



The Shoaf Family was the Farm Family of the Day at the N.C. State Fair on Oct. 17.

of the Shoaf family are laid to rest in its cemetery.

Surviving Shoafs and loved ones deeply cherish these family ties and the memories they cultivate.

“Jimmy Sr. and his brother Billy used to ride their grandfather’s sled, which was pulled by a mule, throughout the farm,” said Mariette Riedell, who nominated Shoaf Farms for Farm

Family of the Day. “Jimmy, Billy and their other brother, Paul, would help with the tobacco and other crops, and Jimmy and Paul still farm today.”

It’s an eclectic farm that specializes in raising hay, sweet potatoes and beef cattle — mainly crossbreeds of Red and Black Angus. Shoaf Farms also raises hogs and hybrid daylilies.

Jimmy Sr. possesses skills in carpentry and mechanics that have proven useful in enhancing the farm. He’s built his own barns and repaired broken equipment, much like his ancestors before him. Jimmy Sr. was excited when his son started to show interest in farming and farm equipment, but he didn’t want to pressure him into pursuing the same occupation.

After Jimmy Jr.’s parents divorced, he found that diving into farming was a therapeutic outlet. Jimmy Sr. eased

his son into the field by having him care for a few pigs and handle some basic farm equipment. Jimmy Jr. also got involved with the Davidson County FFA, exhibiting crops at the Davidson County Fair.

“Jimmy Jr. took to agriculture like a duck to water,” said Mariette. “His love of farming continued to grow with age, and despite having a job, he’s continued the work that allows Shoaf Farms to thrive!”

The Shoafs are incredibly honored to be named an N.C. State Fair Farm Family of the Day. The fair has always provided the Shoafs with opportunities to connect with others who share their agricultural interests, as well as a time to explore new farming technologies that help improve productivity on the farm.

Horse Events

Southeastern Ag Center, Lumberton 910-618-5699

- Nov. 2 & 3 Carolina Paint Horse Association. Contact Lori Smith, 336-309-9470.
- Nov. 4 Horse and Tack Sale. Contact Brad Stephens, 828-390-0878.
- Nov. 9 & 10 Cowboy Mounted Shooting. Contact Pamela Lohery, 540-570-8785.
- Nov. 16 Da Bomb Barrel Racing. Contact Josh Smith, 910-639-6387.
- Dec. 2 Horse and Tack Sale. Contact Brad Stephens, 828-390-0878.
- Dec. 6-8 Cowboy Mounted Shooting. Contact Pamela Lohery, 540-570-8785.
- Dec. 14 Central Carolina IEA, Western Reining and Ranch Show. Contact Diane McAlinn, 919-609-8139.
- Dec. 26-30 Tobacco Road Cutting Show. Contact Mike Farr, 919-497-7942.

WNC Ag Center, Fletcher 828-687-1414

- Nov.8-10 Bull Mania. Contact the WNC Ag Center, 828-687-1414.

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

- Nov. 1-3 NCHJA “C” Indoors. Contact Joan Petty, 919-669-9877.
- Nov. 6-10 Jump for the Children/ Duke. Contact Joan Petty, 919-669-9877.
- Nov. 13-17 Jump for the Children II/ Duke. Contact Joan Petty, 919-669-9877.
- Dec. 6-8 Annual Holiday Classic Open Horse Show. Contact Richard Isley, 336-908-3302.
- Dec. 13 & 14 ... Carousel Farms Halls, Bells & Barrels. Contact Jeff Mullen, 919-796-8375.
- Dec. 28-31 Raleigh Indoor Holiday Classic. Contact Joan Petty, 919-669-9877.

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

Recertification deadline extended for private pesticide applicators

Due to the impact of Hurricane Helene on pesticide training and recertification, private pesticide applicators statewide will have until Dec. 20 to meet their recertification requirements.

“We made the decision to extend the deadline to give private pesticide applicators more time to obtain their recertification because we knew those in the impacted counties would likely need more time as many are focused on recovery efforts,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler.

“In addition, county Cooperative Extension office, where many pesticide recertification programs are held, are being used for emergency management operations.”

Pesticide applicators can call 919-733-3556 with questions about the extension or they can review their credit status at the newly created private applicator portal at <https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/structural-pest-control-and-pesticides/pesticide/private-pesticide-applicator>.

2024 Century Farm Family Reunion breaks attendance record

The 2024 Century Farms Family Reunion saw the largest crowd in the program's 54-year history. An estimated 2,400 Century Farm family members gathered in the Hunt Horse Complex on Oct. 21 for the reunion, which happens once every four years.

The Century Farm Program was created in 1970 when the North Carolina State Fair looked to offer a "Salute to Agriculture" by initiating a search of all families who owned a farm in North Carolina for 100 years or more.

At the time, 800 farms submitted applications to be recognized as Century Farms and were honored at a luncheon at the 1970 N.C. State Fair. Today, there are about 50,000 farms in North Carolina, but only 1,988 have the distinct honor of being a Century Farm.

In 2016, Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler announced the creation of the Bicentennial Farms Program, which honors farms that have reached the 200-year milestone. Just 134 farms in the state hold that title.

The 2024 reunion saw a performance by Nu-Blu, a Bluegrass/Americana band hailing from Siler City. A program followed with remarks from Chief Deputy Commissioner David Smith, Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler, N.C. State Grange President Jimmy Gentry and "Where the Food Comes From" host Chip Carter.

"Believe me, I know what it takes to keep a farm in a family for a hundred years, 200 years," Troxler said. "It's a labor of love, is all I can say."

After the devastation Hurricane Helene brought to Western North Carolina, Troxler emphasized the importance of gathering in community and taking part in traditions like the N.C. State Fair and the Century Farms Reunion.

Thank you to all our Century and Bicentennial Farms Families. The next reunion will be slated for the 2028 N.C. State Fair.



#NextGenAg

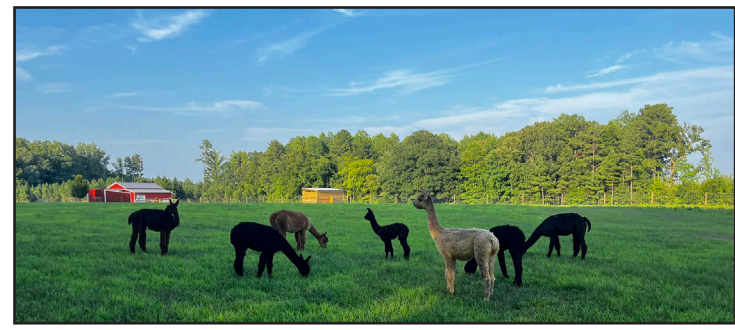
(Continued from pg. 8)

farm," Lauren said, "so, we want to give people an opportunity to enjoy both aspects by creating a hiking trail that they can follow while spending time with our llama, Wednesday." The farming couple's ultimate dream is to have an Airbnb on the property where visitors can come and spend a weekend on the farm to relax and

escape the pressures of life, which is ironically Lauren's favorite part of owning and operating the farm. "I love going out to simply sit in the field with the alpacas," she said. "All the worries and stresses of life seem to fade away in the peaceful environment surrounded by loving and friendly animals. There is no other feeling quite like it."

For anyone considering a career in the agriculture industry, Lauren

reminds you to do your research, ask questions, and follow your passion. "Agriculture needs young people to continue to grow, innovate and thrive," she said. "So, find what part of the industry speaks to you and go for it. Do your research. Truly think about the pros and cons. Ask questions. Shadow a farmer. Bring your ideas to the table and chase your dream." We are so proud of all that Lauren and Chris are doing to



Alpacas graze at Hardly Farm.

further the N.C. Agriculture industry how it will continue to grow and impact others!

To keep up with the latest NCDA&CS news, check out the department's blog at www.ncagr.gov/blog, and Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



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. For example, if you want your ad to be published in the September issue, we must receive it by noon on Aug. 1.



Bees, Supplies & Services For Sale

NOTICE

N.C. law requires a permit to sell honey bees in the state, with the following exceptions: sale of less than 10 hives in a calendar year, a one-time going-out-of-business sale of less than 50 hives, or the renting of bees for pollination purposes or to gather honey.

Contact Don Hopkins, state apiarist, NCDA&CS, 1060 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1001.

Wildflower & clover honey, \$16/qt. John Carwile, Lincolnton 704-748-3258.



Equipment For Sale

22" disc, \$900; 6' Ford sickle mower, \$400; Ford 3-14 low clearance plow, \$300; 7 ft. tiller w/vert springs, \$800; 1940s Oliver manure spreader, \$800. Frank Corriher, China Grove 704-202-8249.

72" Bush Hog brand finish mower, model ATH 720, \$700 obo. David Christenbury, Harrisburg 919-633-0931.

Case Intl 1020 header, 20 ft., field ready, GC, \$7,500. Robert Lewis, Gibsonville 336-362-1356.

FARM EQUIPMENT

GP no till drill, 10 ft., model 1000, bought new 2016, less than 100 ac planted, pics avail, \$20,000. Evan Myers, Winston Salem 336-242-3911.

David Bradley hammermill feed grinder, \$500. Richard Burage, Concord 704-791-3434.

Woods mower, model RM59-1, \$250. Caroline Satterwhite, Graham 336-263-2584 or 263-4039.

(3) JD M tractors & 1 JD MT, \$5,000; Gorman Rupp irrig pump, 6" inlet/outlet, Chrysler motor, Ames pipe 3-6", fittings/sprinklers, \$6,000. Warren Brothers, La Grange 252-559-5825.

'94 JD 9400 combine w/920f header, EC, last used 11-23, shed kept, \$29,900. Harden Phipps, Julian 336-601-9031.

JD industrial wheels & tires for compact series tractor, used less than 50 hrs., \$1,200. Brian Clayton, Roxboro 336-592-5750.

Tractor, fair cond., needs work, \$2,200. Jeff Brittain, Hickory 828-327-4782.

Minn. Moline corn picker, self-propelled, needs work, \$1,000. David Steelman, Mooresville 704-562-7393.

Ford 8N, new brakes, 2 new axles, new grill, needs cleaning & fresh fuel, \$2,850; Kemp chipper, pto driven, \$750. Don Clabough, High Point 336-889-2692.

FARM EQUIPMENT

Single row mulch layer/fumigation rig, 28" bed, 9" high, up to 60" rls, \$4,750; mulch lifter, retrofitted w/transplanter seats, w/3 sets puncher wheels, \$3,500. Ted Sherrod, Kenly 919-201-8779.

(2) drag harrows, \$75 ea.; hay spike, \$100; 3 pt gates, \$10-\$100; other items. Jim Odette, Apex 919-362-9341.

1953 Farmall Super C, eng stuck, all other parts good, w/cults, \$1,000. Larry Tallent, Lawndale 704-538-3424.

1952 AC B, all orig., w/cults, draw bar, front wghts, \$1,350. Kelton Adams, Denton 336-596-3386.

Ford 601 Workmaster diesel, new tires, hyd pump, water pump, fuel injector, pto override clutch, \$5,500. Denny Rollins, Mocksville 336-492-7223.

Wood splitter, 28-ton, LNC, used little, \$1,200. Riley Gobble, Salisbury 704-754-6103.

Hay spike, 3 pt, GC, \$150; 3 pt scoop pan, GC, \$200; (2) spring tooth harrows, GC, \$200. Lloyd Mabe, Danbury 336-703-8232.

Pallet forks for 3 pt, \$350; 3 pt dump shovel, \$350 obo. Henry Zehr, Union Grove 336-468-6370.

JD 90 skid steer, motor stuck, needs tires, 23 hp Onan gas, \$700. Denny Barney, Mocksville 336-909-5180.

FARM EQUIPMENT

1 set ag tires & wheels for 4 Series compact utility tractor, from 50 hp tractor, VGC, \$1,800. Craig Poole, Raleigh 919-801-3661, call/text.

JD 1240 4-row planter, \$1,200; Holland 2-row tobacco transplanter w/water & fert, sheltered, \$900. Tony Cruse, Albertson 252-560-4594.

JD self-propelled lawn mower, slightly used, GC, 6.75 ho OHV iron liner, \$125. Bob Whitaker, Mocksville 336-469-4822, do not text.

Metal lathe, 8 ft. x 8 in. long, 5 ft. high, 1.5 hp, drills & bits, 1,500-1,800 lbs., \$1,800. Marvin Davenport, Columbia 252-706-0439.

Kubota tractor, 25 hp, hys trans, 4wd, 46 hrs., front end loader, roto tiller, disc harrow, bo tiller, single bottom plow, pallet forks, \$34,000. Billy Nutt, Timberlake 336-592-0251.



Equipment Wanted

AC 333 no-till planter/planter parts w/rnd metal seed hoppers. Jack Simpson, Todd 704-242-0763.

Ford 309 corn planter plates; corn, beans, sorghum & filler plates; Ford 309 corn planters for parts. Charles Chamelin, Kernersville 336-769-4418.

EQUIPMENT WANTED

Long tongue & pto shaft for NH 273 sq baler. Larry Lyerly, Gold Hill 704-213-0590.

Draw bar & brackets to fit Ford Jubilee or 601. J. Johnson, Burlington 336-212-5943 or 214-4505.

Ford 7610 or 7810 tractor, or NH. Larry Hales, Autryville 910-624-4147.



Farm Labor For Sale

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

Lawn mower/tractor repair, garden tillers, other sm eng & outdoor power equip in Alexander & surrounding co; 45+ yrs exper., p/u & deliv, \$30-\$60/hr. William Munday Sr., Taylorsville 828-638-1521.



Farmland Wanted

Land to hunt coyotes in the piedmont area, ref. avail. Matt Sink, Midway 336-978-5956.

Tobacco barn in Heritage Circle celebrates 20 years

This year the old tobacco barn in Heritage Circle celebrated its 20th year of being used to cure tobacco during the fair. But it's impossible to know just how many seasons of tobacco have come through its short, single door and how many times fires were lit to begin the curing process.

But you can bet it will continue to be a functioning tobacco barn under Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. It was Troxler's vision for the area that saw the tobacco barn being the centerpiece of a transformed and reinvigorated Heritage Circle, much like tobacco barns had been the foundation of rural communities across the state.

"I looked around and saw my heritage and way of growing up disappearing around me, and I wanted to do something to show people what that was like," Troxler said. "I thought curing a barn of tobacco during the State Fair using the traditional ways was the perfect demonstration for Heritage Circle."

Having the vision and making that vision a reality fell to Pat Short, who was a longtime friend of the Commissioner through the tobacco industry and a number of tobacco research projects.

"I remember thinking that first year that I didn't know how we were going to fill that barn at the fair," Short said, "But the Commissioner was never worried. He said 'don't worry about that. You get me the tobacco and I'll get the people to fill it.' And he did!"

Troxler put out a call to friends and on that first Friday of the fair people showed up and starting working and pretty soon that barn was filled. And, for 19 years since, teams of people have shown up to compete in the popular Tobacco Stringing Contest for a chance to win a share of \$1,000 in prize money offered by the John Deere Boys Ice Cream booth that sits at the entrance to Heritage Circle.

Sandy and Ken Jones of Maple Hill were there the first year and nearly every year since. The husband and wife duo, along with son-in-law Michael Sunday, became 10-time champions of the tobacco tying competition after taking first place at this year's contest.

Sandy and Ken Jones compete each year with their son-in-law as the Maple Hill Loopers.

"We were there the first year and were walking through



Sandy Jones, Ken Jones and Michael Sunday took first place at the 2024 Tobacco Stringing Contest -- their tenth title.

and we asked what was going on," Ken said. "Pat asked if we knew how to tie tobacco and if so would we help fill the barn. We said 'it's been 30 years!' and he said 'it has been for all of us.' And then we spent the rest of the afternoon looping tobacco and filling the barn."

During the competitions, Sandy loops the tobacco with a steady pace, while her husband and Sunday hand her bundles of three leaves. Ken said. Each stick of tobacco is judged on the number of bundles on the stick, the evenness of leaves, and time.

The competition is like a homecoming of sorts, where people gather and reconnect year after year.

"It's been fun! Some of the people we have competed against, we have gotten to be good friends with," Ken said. "Plus, it's the fair and we love the fair. So, you've got the excitement of the fair and knowing you are helping out and doing something a lot of people don't know anything about."

After the contest, people stick around to tie the last of the roughly 400 sticks of tobacco it takes to fill the barn. The Jones' 10-year old granddaughter has caught the tobacco tying bug, too. Last year she was asked to be a hander for another team that needed a third person and later she was explained to people

from New York what they were doing.

The barn and the tobacco offer teachable moments — part of the reason behind the exhibit. One of the biggest lessons is that Sandy Jones and the other stringers make it look way easier than it is.

"From movie stars to TV personalities, we show everyone who wants to learn how to do it," Ken said. "It's about meeting people and sharing a lifestyle we enjoyed growing up."

And that is exactly what Troxler envisioned when he decided to cure tobacco in the barn — bringing people together and shortening the distance between the city and the country.

There were a few hiccups along the way, but the tobacco barn continues to bring people together.

"What most people don't know is we had to redo the old barn because the first year we cured tobacco in it, the logs would catch fire and people tending to the fire would have to spray it down when that happened," Troxler said. "I have seen tobacco barns burn to the ground before, and while I like to attract attention to the State Fair, burning a barn down at the fair is NOT the way to do it!"



#NextGenAg: Leaving a legacy with alpaca farming

Creating a legacy to leave behind for future generations is a desire of many parents across the nation, including Lauren Sullivan, co-owner and operator of Hardly Farm LLC in Castalia. Growing up on a farm, Lauren had a knowledge of and appreciation for agriculture instilled in her at a young age, but it wasn't until her daughter, Emilene, came along that she decided to make farming her dream.

As a third-generation farmer, Lauren has many fond memories of her grandparents and mother on the farm. "My family has always been involved in agriculture, especially my grandpa, who was big in the tobacco industry," she said. "I remember watching him work on the farm, going to tobacco sales with him, and helping my grandmother shell butterbeans. They always ensured that I had a love for the land and an appreciation for the hard work of farmers across our state." During the tobacco buyout of 2004, Lauren's grandfather got out of the tobacco business and switched to growing other row crops and tree farming. Throughout the years, the land that Hardly Farm now sits on has been used for many agricultural purposes, including tobacco, soybeans, and row crops. "This land has a lot of history, which is why we are proud to be farming it today as a family," Lauren said. "I think my grandfather would be proud if he saw the farm today and knew that we were helping to keep our family



The Sullivan family operates Hardly Farm LLC in Castalia. in the agriculture industry."

After graduating high school, Lauren began her college journey at N.C. State University, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in Animal Science. "I always knew that I wanted to be in the agriculture industry, because I have a strong love for animals," she said. "However, growing up, I never would have said that I was going to live here on the family property, much less operate a farm." After working in the animal science industry for ten years, Lauren switched to commercial insurance for personal reasons. In 2019, Lauren and her husband Chris had their first daughter, Emilene, and decided to do what Lauren never thought she would do, which was move back home on the family property. "I immediately knew that I wanted my daughter to have the same experiences that I had growing up on this land," she said. "So, my husband and I built a house on this property and our journey here began."

When Emilene was three years old, the family travelled to a small craft fair in Cedar Point and met a vendor selling teddy bears made from alpaca fiber. "That was the first time we had heard of alpaca farming, and we were immediately hooked," Lauren said. "At that moment, I realized that I didn't only want my daughter to grow up on the farm, but I wanted to leave her a legacy." That very day, Lauren and Chris began researching the ins and outs of alpaca farming.

From the summer of 2022 until February of 2023, Lauren and her husband attended classes, alpaca farm events, did online research and met with other alpaca farmers across the state to fully understand the process of starting and maintaining an alpaca farm. On June 9, 2023, they brought home their first herd of alpacas and began their very own farming journey. "I've always had a strong love for animals, so the idea of raising them,



honestly, seemed like a natural fit," Lauren said. "Our farm has grown so much in this last year. It's been both exciting and incredible to see how far we've come and how much support the community has given us." Today, the farm is home to 13 alpacas and 1 llama, with plans to expand beyond that in the coming months. When asked why they have just one llama, Lauren explained that it is so they can show the public the difference between the two animals. "Many people think that llamas and alpacas are the same animal, but they are not. In fact, llamas are about double the size of alpacas," she said. "We have both on our property so that we can not only explain those differences to people, but so that they can see them with their own eyes." In addition to caring for the animals throughout the year, Lauren and her husband host a variety of events for the public to enjoy on the farm, including field

trips, private tours, craft classes and alpaca yoga. When visiting the farm, make sure to check out their on-site farm store for all types of goodies made out of alpaca fiber!

In addition to her degree in Animal Science and passion for animals, Lauren brings a variety of skillsets to the industry, including social media management experience, strong communication skills, and a passion for educating people on the importance of agriculture. "Agriculture provides all of us with food and clothes every day," she said. "Without it, we wouldn't survive. I want people to not only acknowledge and recognize that importance, but also learn how rewarding it is to support local members of the community. There is nothing quite like purchasing products from a neighbor or farmer in the community. Not only are the flavor and taste of those products often better than what you can find in the grocery store, but they also provide a sense of community that is very rewarding."

In the future, Lauren and her husband are seeking to expand the farm in many ways. Beyond expanding the herd and continuing to grow their agritourism offerings on the farm, they plan to open a hiking trail in the next few months where visitors can enjoy nature and walk a llama on the property. "In addition to being an alpaca farm, we are also a loblolly pine tree

(See NextGenAg, pg. 6)