In Cashiers in 1948, Dick Jennings started the first commercial trout farm in the South, known today as Sunburst Trout Farms. Ben Eason, its current third-generation farmer, has fond memories of growing up on the farm, feeding and catching trout with his father and grandfather. "I also distinctly remember falling into one of the baskets that we catch the trout in when I was very young," he joked. Sunburst Trout Farm currently harvests around 400-500,000 pounds of Rainbow trout each year. Rainbow trout take anywhere from 18 to 24 months to fully grow into a marketable fish. "Lake Logan provides the perfect growing spot for our trout because they like cool, clean, flowing water," Ben said, "plus it is within close proximity to our processing facility." Sunburst Trout Farm only moves the amount of fish from lake to processing facility that they need to fill orders each week. A regular day on the farm consists of feeding the fish, which is Ben's favorite part because it is peaceful, cleaning the tanks and facility, monitoring oxygen levels and processing the fish. "We take a lot of pride in knowing that when customers buy our final product, they can know that it was swimming 48 hours before," Anna Eason said, "so it's as fresh as you can get." Sunburst Trout Farm is unique because they try to mimic the natural environment of Rainbow trout and use every piece of the fish. Whether cut and served as fillets, sold and used as a product in Blue Diamond dog food or recycled as compost, no part of the fish is wasted. Many restaurants use trout from their farm, but Sunburst Trout products can also be found in Asheville Ingles Markets or The Fresh Market stores as well as select other retailers nationwide. "We take pride in providing a quality product and being part of something bigger than ourselves," Anna said. When they are not working on the farm, Anna, Ben and their three kids love anything Disney, "if given the opportunity, we would definitely be the next Flynn Rider and Rapunzel." #FarmFeatureFriday #NCAgriculture