No Horse Events are listed this month because of closures due to COVID-19. Stay safe.

Grant available to increase meat processing capacity

Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler recently announced the creation of the Increasing Meat Production Efficiency and Capacity (IMPEC) grant program, administered by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

The $10 million grant program is an effort to strengthen the meat supply chain and ensure consumers have adequate sources of protein. The program will also help counter limitations that occurred with fresh meat in the marketplace as consumers purchased more of their food from grocery stores because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Proposals are being sought for the program. The program can be for the creation of new meat processing facilities or the improvement of existing facilities. Facilities that are seeking proposals are those that have equipment to process meat, but lack the management to ensure the continued operation of the facility.

The grant application and required forms can be downloaded at www.ncagr.gov. Applications must be postmarked by close of business on Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2020. For more information concerning the program submission process, contact Allison Medlin at allison.medlin@ncagr.gov or at 919-693-2483.

To ensure food security for North Carolina, the IMPEC initiative will address the vulnerability identified by this pandemic. The food animal industry represents about 70 percent of North Carolina’s agricultural economy. This program will support that industry by increasing efficiency and as economic drivers.

From the tractor

by Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler

The coronavirus continues to create problems. We were all hoping that as we got farther along in 2020 that we would start to see some return to regular activities, but with perhaps a few extra precautions. That clearly is not the direction this pandemic continues to take.

And now, just months from what should be two of our state’s biggest annual agricultural and cultural celebrations, we are looking at a very different reality.

I am disappointed to cancel both the Mountain State Fair and the N.C. State Fair, but I truly believe it is the right decision at this time and given what we know. The safety of everyone involved is our first and foremost consideration.

Restrictions are eased allowing for mass gatherings, we don’t have a lot of choices.

Additionally, as self-supporting entities, our fairs cannot afford to spend significant financial resources with no revenue coming in and with the chance the event might not be able to open. We have to make good business decisions to ensure the continued operation of the Western N.C. Ag Center and the State Fairgrounds. Both of these facilities mean too much to our communities as gathering places and as economic drivers.

I am proud that the junior livestock shows will go on with some modifications to increase social distancing between exhibitors and animals and reduce the mass gathering of people. Our young people represent the future and every one of them has been challenged by 2020 and have likely missed out on events and activities they were looking forward to.

I suppose you can look at it as preparing them for the real world, where flexibility and adaptability are respected and valued qualities. But most every parent wants to shield their kids from real-world disappointments for as long as they can, knowing that life inevitably will deal them a hand of hardship and heartbreak. If we can manage to preserve a few childhood memories for these youth exhibitors of working with and showing their animals, then it is worth everything that goes into making these shows happen.

For many of our livestock kids, the “Fair” happens in the showring, not on the midway. It is a culmination of lots of hard work, early mornings, late nights, hot days, dirt and sweat, stubbornness and accomplishment.

They deserve the chance to be recognized for their work and commitment.

As 2020 has shown us, there is more than enough disappointment to go around. Hopefully, the junior livestock shows for these young people will be a stand-out memory in an otherwise heartbreaking year.

Jr. livestock shows will be held at both sites

Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, both the N.C. Mountain State Fair and the N.C. State Fair are being canceled for 2020. The Mountain State Fair was scheduled for Sept. 11-20 and the State Fair was slated to run Oct. 15-25.

Despite the fairs’ closures, modified youth livestock shows will still be held at both sites to give kids the opportunity to show the animals they have already invested time and resources into, said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler in making the announcements.

“I can think of a thousand places I’d rather be today than here delivering this news,” Troxler said. “Our Fairs are traditions we all look forward to each year. It’s a time for family and friends to come together to celebrate everything that makes North Carolina such a great place to live. They are also vital economic engines for local non-profits, community groups and small businesses and we understand that this decision affects many, many people. We waited as long as we could, hoping the numbers would take a turn and we’d be able to continue with our planning, but each day brought more challenges than solutions.”

The decision to cancel this year’s fair was based on the following:

-- safety and health of visitors, vendors, competitors and staff,
-- current COVID-19 statistics in the state,
-- North Carolina’s pause in Phase II of reopening thus limiting the size of gatherings,
-- and the long-term financial health of each Fair.

Fairs are expensive to produce, with the Mountain State Fair costing over $1 million annually to put on and the N.C. State Fair costing $6.1 million.

To date, 76 events scheduled to be held at the WNC Ag Center have cancelled, which has resulted in a significant loss of income. Since February, 186 events scheduled at the N.C. State Fairgrounds have been cancelled or postponed.

(See Fairs canceled, pg. 2)
Bogue Sound watermelons are a sweet hit

In the White Oak River basin of North Carolina the first of July ushers in the start of one of the sweetest summer events—watermelon season. And while we are working on the fifth generation of growers,” he added. His daughter, Annabelle, is three.

Watermelons start from seed in the greenhouse in early March, the plants are then moved to the field and are ready for harvesting by the end of June. “We try to get some in the ground early and then some later, to help stretch the season,” Jones said. One acre can generally produce about 2,500 watermelons. Watermelon season typically runs from around the July 4th holiday through late August.

Bogue Sound watermelon farmers grow all types of seeded and seedless varieties of watermelons. “We have customers that ask what makes a Bogue Sound watermelon so sweet,” Jones said. “It is not any particular variety. It is the sandy soil and salt air that makes our watermelons so sweet.” Jones offers this advice for picking the perfect watermelon. “You want to see the stripes kind of blend together and the melon should have a bumpy feel,” he said. “That is a sure sign that the melon is ripe. A lot of people don’t want a sun-burnt melon, but that is another sign a melon is ready. The older generation can tell by the sound a watermelon makes. It should be a deep thump or hollow sound. If it is more of a ping that melon is probably not ready.”

As for serving, Jones suggests cutting the melon up and putting it in the refrigerator and enjoy. “If we take the boat out on the sound we will bring along a couple of watermelons. You can drop them in the cool shallow water until you are ready to cut up and serve. It is a great way to enjoy watermelon when you are out on the water.”

Bogue Sound watermelons are available at several roadside stands and retail locations. Look for the Bogue Sound watermelons sticker.

Mount Olive store pays penalty for price-scanner errors

The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Standards Division has collected fines from a Mount Olive store because of excessive price-scanner errors. “The price on the shelf and the price at the register should match,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “Stores have a responsibility to make sure their pricing is accurate, and most stores pass inspection. Ones with errors face fines until they come into compliance.”

The department conducts periodic, unannounced inspections of price-scanner systems in businesses to check for accuracy between the prices advertised and the prices that ring up at the register. If a store has more than a 2-percent error rate on overcharges, inspectors discuss the findings with the store manager and conduct a more intensive follow-up inspection at a later date. Undercharges are also reported, but do not count against a store. Consumer complaints must be filed in person or by phone at the standard allowed by law and the customer must ask the cashier to scan the product again.

If a store fails a follow-up inspection. In addition to the penalties paid, the store will be subject to re-inspection every 30 to 60 days from the last inspection until it meets the 2-percent-or-less error rate. Additional penalties may be assessed if a store fails a re-inspection.

Therefore, the civil penalty that was recorded in the second quarter of 2020:

Piggly Wiggly #30 at 615 Breazeale Ave., Mount Olive, was found to have $2,088.35 in civil penalties after an initial inspection in February found 31 price scanner errors in a 50-item list. A follow up inspection in March found a 3 percent error rate based on 50 overcharges in a 300-item list. The store will be re-inspected.
gotten the seeds from a friend whose family had acquired them from Cherokees in the area many decades ago.

LeHoullier grew tomatoes from the seeds and saw for himself the unusual purple tone that Green said the tomatoes had. He tasted the great flavor too. He saved the seeds to send to his friend Jeff McCormack, owner of Southern Exposure Seed Exchange in Charlottesville, Va. Although he thought the tomato was ugly, it was delicious and unique. So McCormack offered the tomatoes as Cherokee Purple in his 1993 seed catalogue, making it available to the general public for the first time.

“In 1990, John Green and I were the only people who knew that tomato existed. How lucky would you have to be to know the right people to get it out there?” LeHoullier said, commenting on how fateful it was that Green sent the seeds to him.

As a guardian of more heirlooms

Lots of similar stories have followed since then. One man sent in the seeds he’d grown in his grandfather’s backyard from Italy in 1917. LeHoullier grew more tomatoes from those seeds, saved the new seeds and shared them with the Victory Seeds catalogue to sell to the public. Now that man orders those tomato seeds, named Cancello Family Heirloom, each year and sends them to his extended family at Christmas. Those seeds provide the family members with a connection to their previous generations.

“It’s a great tribute to these people’s families that people can read the stories of these great vegetables,” LeHoullier said.

Over the past 30 years, LeHoullier has received many, many more heirloom varieties seeds, and he feels like he’s become a guardian of those seeds. He turned the driveway of his house in Raleigh into his open-air garden, growing hundreds of tomato seedlings each year. For many years, he sold the seedlings at the State Farmers Market, and he gave away many of them also. “We ended up making friends for life from our plant sales,” LeHoullier said. “We’d call them our annual tomato friends.”

While he’s sent seeds from each variety to Victory Seeds, he’s also kept seeds from every variety. He now has about 50,000 to 60,000 seed packets, vials or envelopes, plus every letter sent to him along with the seeds. When he and his wife moved to Hendersonville in January, they had about 25 boxes of tomato seeds.

Breeding new tomatoes

In addition to his work to preserve heirloom tomato varieties, LeHoullier has also been working since about 2005 to breed new tomato varieties. Most of the ones he’s worked on with an Australian friend, and their team of more than 700 amateur volunteers from across the world, are dwarf varieties aimed at being more manageable for people growing tomatoes in smaller spaces. He started releasing the new varieties around 2010, and currently 123 different varieties have resulted from the Dwarf Tomato Project. Victory Seed Company has committed to selling all the varieties from the project. He hopes the varieties he’s bred will be the heirlooms of tomorrow. “Heirlooms never pretend to be the type of tomato that you can ship off to a market and sit there and be pretty and be good enough to eat a week from now…” What heirlooms give you is a tremendous variety of size, color, flavor, shape and nuances of flavor. LeHoullier said. “Also, you can’t be a seed saver and share with hybrids.”

Ongoing work

While it may seem like blasphemy, his favorite tomato variety is actually a hybrid though. The Sun Gold tops his list of favorites.

“If it’s not zoned for agriculture, you open yourself up to all kinds of issues. There’s a situation in my home county of Transylvania where there is no zoning, and they built a Dollar General way out in the middle of the farmland area of the county,” she said. “Of course, people were upset about it, but they never pushed for zoning or things that could prevent that from happening. I don’t think people realize that until it’s too late.”

The loss of farms can have ripple effects through rural communities, Brookshire said. While attracting development may bring business, getting rid of farmland can have the opposite effect.

“No only are you losing the farm, and that farm is a business, but you’re losing all of the businesses that support that farm,” she said. “Whether it’s mechanics for farm equipment, the people who maintain the farm equipment, processors, the seed suppliers, all of that eventually goes away too and completely changes the local economy in that community.”

Loss of farmland can have far-reaching consequences outside of the realm of agriculture. Transforming previously open land into development sprawl with concrete and pavement creates surfaces which do not absorb rainwater, Brookshire said, which contributes to flooding during the hurricanes North Carolina has experienced in recent years. Impervious surfaces funnel runoff from major rainfall events into rivers and streams, which can lead to major flooding especially the eastern part of the state.

These issues did not arise out of nowhere, Hardee said. Rather, farmland loss in North Carolina can be partially attributed to the state’s unique agricultural history. Unlike Midwestern states with a history of large farming operations, much of North Carolina’s traditional tobacco farming took place on smaller lots in the 30 to 40-acre range. After the tobacco industry began to decline, small operations became unsustainable, and younger generations of tobacco farmers quickly lost their connection to the land as their traditional crop fell out of viability.

“When the current generation who is maybe later in age passes on, the next generation often just says ‘I’m going to get rid of it,’ and it goes from being a 40-acre farm to maybe a 10-acre farm because it’s divided between four sibings. Those are the kinds of things that are happening,” Hardee said. “Then you end up with emigration to our state from places like New York and Pennsylvania.”

(See Farmland loss, pg. 4)
August AgroTips

Tournesol time is optimal for soil samples submitted in August.

The Agronomic Division’s soil testing lab is processing samples quickly now but will be increasingly busy toward the end of the year. Homeowners, landscapers, golf course superintendents and others with flexible schedules are urged to submit samples before the lab’s fall busy season. If cool-season lawn grasses and pastures need to be reseeded, sampling now will make it possible to apply lime in advance of September or October planting.

Get rapid identification of plant-parasitic nematode species with new tests.

The Agronomic Division’s Nematode Assay Section offers a new test that identifies plant-parasitic nematodes based on analysis of molecular DNA. The test costs $10 per sample (instead of $3), but results are available within a couple of days (instead of weeks), and reports can identify nematodes accurately to species. This is particularly useful information for growers who depend on resistant cultivars and/or crop rotation to suppress nematode populations. For more information or to request a quote, contact Dr. Wemin Ye at 919-733-2655 or via e-mail at wemin.ye@ncagr.gov.

Tissue test now to plan for blackberry fertilization next season.

Collect a plant tissue sample about 10–14 days after harvest. Each sample should include 25–30 most recent mature leaves from the primocane. Sampling the florican is not recommended unless it is specifically to diagnose a problem. If you have different varieties, collect separate samples for each one. Now is also an appropriate time to submit a corresponding soil sample.

Focus on strawberry fertility.

Take soil samples and apply any recommended lime as soon as possible. Generally, strawberries need 120 lb of nitrogen per acre per season. Prior to building the beds and laying plastic, apply 30–60 lb of nitrogen along with any phosphorus or potassium recommended for the level. Even when soils are high in phosphorus, an additional application of 30 lb can be beneficial for root growth in the fall. Other nutrients that may have a beneficial effect at this time are sulfur and boron (1 lb/acre).

Continue to use tissue analysis to optimize timing of flue-cured tobacco harvest.

Collect tissue samples five to ten days before each anticipated leaf harvest to determine ripeness. An appropriate sample consists of 10 to 12 leaves from the appropriate stalk position.
Classified Advertising

Advertising in the Ag Review

Ads are run free for N.C. residents & can be submitted by mail to 1001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1001; online at www.AgReview.org; or by fax to 919-733-5047. Ads must include name, address including zip code, phone number including area code, and price or price range for every item being sold.

Deadline for each issue is noon on the first working day of the month prior to publication. Limit is 30 words, editor reserves right to edit or reject ads. Limit 2 ads/person in different categories.

Upcoming advertising deadlines for the Agricultural Review:

Aug. 3 for September newspaper
Sept. 1 for October
Oct. 1 for November
AGRICULTURAL REVIEW

FARM EQUIPMENT


64.5 ac Anson co, south of Wadesville, 60% 1/2+ y/o pines, great deer, hog & turkey hunting, $89,500. Carl Lee, Rockingham 910-995-7886.

87 ac farmland, 65 w/elec, dated farmland, (2) 18x36, pond, pasture, timber, rd frontage, $265,000. Louise Hussey, Robbins 910-638-2360.

80 ac Rowan co, mixed pasture & woodland, house, Pasture & woodland in Pender co, 18” cedar, 60’ x 100’ option, $8,500/ac. Tim Mills, Salisbury 703-644-7327.


FARM EQUIPMENT

JD buildero, 40-420, useable cond, $1,000-$4,000. Mario Beane, Mebane 336-684-2919.

Farmland

Deer/ turkey hunting land for 3 people, Rockingham, Caswell or Alamance co, any size. Dan Apple, Reidsville 336-214-5475.


HAY & GRAIN

For Sale


For Sale


Coastal Bermuda hay, rnd bales, stored under shelter, cow quality, $30; horse quality, $45; hay only, Goldsboro 919-689-9799.

Orchard grass mix, cut, 2020, 4x4 rnd bales, 30, Noel McCraw, Hendersonville 920-292-5010.

Horse Supplies

Longjack, $1,040; Quarter, $1,100. Bob Flock, Winston Salem 336-735-6364.

AGRICULTURAL REVIEW

FARM EQUIPMENT


Simco A fork ranch saddle, 17 in., seat, 16 1/2 in., western, leather, w/leathers, stirrups, $700. Barbara Sedwick, Mocksville 336-940-8547.

Horses & Supplies For Sale

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LIVESTOCK
Charolais heifers & bulls, 7 & 8 m/o, reg sires, polled, gentle, $850 & up. Johnny Harrison, Salisbury 704-616-3982.
Boer/Kiko bucks & does, m/o & y/o, reg sires, 100 $, Jerry Joyner, Tabor City 704-907-6248.
California, blue, & heifers, pump, 12-14, many bred for cook ics, $2,500 ea. Jerry Joyner, Ston Salem 336-416-0694.
Harold Wright, Liberty 336-302-0878, bucks, adga, (2) polled, (1) 7090 or Buddy, 236-6070.
Rod Sellers, 2019 & 2020, does, bucks, 6 m/o & up, reg sires, 3,000 $. Rick Rogers Madison 610-572-3539.

POULTRY & SUPPLIES
Peacocks, $35 & up; turkeys, $7 & up; guineas, $3 & up, S. Smoot, 6227 Webo Rd, Lexington, NC 27370.
White layer ducks, 3 m/o, $10 ea. Austin Hurley, Bear Creek 984-265-9262.
Game fowl, 30 $, Jerry Joyner, Ston Salem 336-416-0694.

Small Animals For Sale

LIVESTOCK
AGRICULTURAL REVIEW
Individuals or families interested in raising small livestock for meat or pet, $10, George Parker, Lumberton 910-374-8176.
Tennessee redback rabbits, ground started, buy 10, get 1 free, $55, Mark Hiller, golborne 910-734-7880.


Biljka junkants, willing to travel long distance to pick up birds. Hunter Tharp, Hays 336-302-6797.


Reg NZ meat rabbits, $1,200.ifton Markland, Mocksville 336-918-4215.

Buck cotters, stock - for sale in North Carolina are required to obtain either a nursery or a nursery dealer license. For more infor, contact the NCD&CS Plant Industry Division at 800-206-9333 or 919-707-3730.

FMX for Sale


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Heirloom tomatoes a passion for “the Tomato Man”

Many North Carolinians may know Craig LeHoullier simply as “the Tomato Man” or maybe “the North Carolina Tomato Man” if they’re being specific. …but he never even ate a tomato until he was a teenager. It’s an odd fact in a love affair that certainly didn’t begin with love at first sight.

That love affair has brought LeHoullier to what he describes as a sort of calling – a purpose in life, or at least a passion. He’s become known internationally for resurrecting thousands of varieties of heirloom tomato seeds and making them available for others to grow. Otherwise, many of those old tomato varieties may have been lost forever when no one decided to grow them anymore or pass down their seeds. He may be best known as the man who named the Cherokee Purple heirloom tomato and saved it from extinction.

Many people also may recognize LeHoullier from the many years he spent selling heirloom tomato seedlings at the State Farmers Market in Raleigh. He’s also become a sought-after speaker about gardening, and he’s written two books titled Epic Tomatoes and Growing Vegetables in Straw Bales (both from Storey Publishing). He has a website too where he shares the joys of his gardening passion.

Craig LeHoullier gives many presentations about his gardening.

“It’s just a wonderful opportunity to help people. I don’t take the responsibility lightly, and I’m in a great position to help them. I tell them what to do, I show them what I do, and they blend in my practices with theirs.”

A love rooted in gardening

His fame in the tomato world may seem a far cry from

Kalawi Farms in Eagle Springs is a peachy family affair

Jan Williams, center and the matriarch of the Kalawi Farms, is pictured with children Katie, Laura, Will and Ben. Kalawi Farms is named for the first two letters of the first three children’s name. The family’s ice cream stand bears son Ben’s name. At right, Jan and peach blossoms.

She’s truly a peach,” Maria Williams says of her mother-in-law Jan Williams, owner of Kalawi Farm and Ben’s Ice Cream in Eagle Springs. Jan and Art Williams started Kalawi Farms in 1985 with a few row crops, five acres of peaches and a small roadside stand. Both Jan and Art grew up in the farming industry. Jan is a third-generation peach farmer and Art’s family grew up farming tobacco and other row crops. “Peaches is Jan’s baby,” Maria said, “although she did teach for many years, she always came back to the farm because that’s what she loves.”

That farm has been a family affair since day one, with the boys growing up knowing nothing but peach farming. Even the name has a deep tie to the entire family. “When the farm first started, Jan and Art had three children, which is where the name Kalawi originated, ‘Ka’ for Katie, ‘La’ for Laura, and ‘Wi’ for Will,” Maria said, “then Ben came along and that’s how they named the ice cream stand.” All the children are still very involved with the farm today, especially Will and Ben. They have helped grow the farm from two to now 40 acres. “It’s just a wonderful opportunity to help people. I don’t take the responsibility lightly, and I’m in a great position to help them. I tell them what to do, I show them what I do, and they blend in my practices with theirs.”

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EDITOR’S NOTE: Every Friday on Facebook, NCD&CS profiles a North Carolina farmer for our Friday Farm Feature. We’ll introduce you to 52 farmers this year and share more about their farm, what they raise and the history of their operation. Kalawi Farms is another in the year-long series. Check it out at NC Agriculture on Facebook.

Even, however the hardest days cannot compare to the joy they gain from building relationships with their customers. “We have people asking us throughout the year, ‘what’s the peach forecast’, as they anxiously await the next crop,” Jan says, “it’s incredibly rewarding to provide a good product to our customers all summer long.”

In addition to produce, Kalawi Farms sells ice cream, cider, salsa and more, made with ingredients straight from their farm. “We have a local lady that develops recipes for these items, makes them and sends them to be sold at our farm stand,” Maria said. “We also sell a peach cobbler that is a family recipe on Jan’s side and make our own ice cream.” Products from their farm can be found at local grocery stores in Moore County, like Harris Teeter and Food King, as well as farmers markets across the state, including the Durham Farmers Market, Robert G. Shaw Piedmont Triad Farmers Market and Holly Springs Farmers Market.

Southern Supreme Fruitcake & More uses Kalawi Farm’s fruit as an ingredient in their popular fruitcake and several breweries around the Moore County area use their peaches and blueberries to make beer. “All our products, including the peaches, are a way of life for us, they are our livelihood,” Maria said, “Sunday meals after church in the summer always include a bowl of peaches on the table because we love them just as much as the customers do.”

Kalawi Farms is a member of the N.C. Peach Growers Society and a large agritourism destination for Moore County. In October, many schools take field trips to visit the farm and enjoy the hay ride, corn maze, barrel train, pirate ship and jump pillow. “The jump pillow is a huge hit for the kids, they will stay out there all day,” Maria said, “and all the activity on the farm in October is a great way to end our season for the year.”

When asked why it is important to eat local, Maria said it provides a peace of mind to know exactly where your food is coming from. “I saw a meme one time that said, ‘support local, you are paying for someone’s ballet lesson’ and that is true,” she said, “farmers are people just like you.” In the future, Jan and Art hope their kids will carry on the family tradition of providing the community with delicious, local peaches. When she is not helping on the family farm, Maria enjoys watching Food Network and trying new recipes on her family.

Heirloom tomatoes a passion for “the Tomato Man”

Craig LeHoullier (Photo courtesy of LeHoullier)

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