

Station Facts

The Upper Piedmont Research Station was created on rented land in Rural Hall in 1948. In 1954 the donation of Chinqua-Penn Plantation led to the current home of the UPRS. The UPRS currently consists of 835-acres of land and adjoins the Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H center that consists of 250 acres.

Infrastructure

The UPRS consists of 835 acres of which over 300 acres is productive pasture and grass lands, over 135 acres is used for crop production and rotations, there are approximately 300 acres of mature hardwood trees and another 100 acres of soft woods that will be used for expansion of pasture and crop land. The station is located adjacent to the historic Chinqua-Penn Mansion. There are many historic structures located on the station such as a large sale barn, historic log horse barns and a 200-foot long stone dam. A newly constructed building fitted with 54 Calan gates is being used to study beef cattle efficiency. Newly constructed curing sheds have allowed the station to shift research from flue-cured to burley tobacco production practices, in efforts to study alternative and innovative means of producing burley tobacco.

Events

The UPRS hosts the N.C. Angus Association's Spring Fever Sale each year in May. The UPRS is the only station in the system that hosts a local farmers market. The Rockingham County Farmers Market is used by local farmers to sell produce, crafts and art. Plans for the future include using the market to test market new crops being grown at other research stations. The UPRS station also maintains the Chinqua-Penn education and nature trail. The trail is used for recreation, education and community involvement. The trail has been used for fundraising walks for the MS Society and the local Hospice chapter.

Research Programs

Cattle The UPRS is conducting projects on beef cattle production and efficiency of growth using a historic herd of Black Angus cattle. The efficiency studies are funded by the American Angus Association and are collecting data to identify cow families that produce feed efficient progeny.



The beef cattle research efforts should lead to the discovery of a gene or genes responsible for efficient feed conversion in beef cattle. Understanding these genes could decrease the cost of beef production and revolutionize the beef cattle industry.

Tobacco The UPRS was the first station to work on air-cured tobacco that is used for smokeless tobacco products. The tobacco company, Swedish Match, funded the project and developed technology for mechanically curing the tobacco.

The station has centered its tobacco efforts to understanding the principles of burley tobacco production. Since the tobacco buy out the research community believes that burley tobacco will become a major crop in the piedmont of NC.

The efforts in burley tobacco production will eventually result in major mechanization of the burley industry which should allow more production and productivity for the industry.

Grapes The wine grape industry is one of the fastest growing agricultural industries in NC and the UPRS has the largest research vineyard in the state. There are over 45 different varieties of vinifera grapes in the vineyard, that is the largest collection of wine grape varieties that exists in the state.

Enhanced studies with wine grapes in the piedmont will lead to the discovery of new and innovative varieties of wine grapes that are disease and insect resistant and yield a good quality grape.

Other research efforts include, but are not limited to, honey bee production, strawberries, brambles, paulownia trees, conservation no-till production practices and the use of canola for biofuel production. Over 56 varieties of canola are being evaluated for suitability in the piedmont for production of biodiesel.



Community Partnership

The UPRS is the only research station located in the old-belt tobacco production region. The upper piedmont of North Carolina consists of steep slopes, clay soils and a lot of land well suited for grazing cattle and cow/calf production.

The UPRS conducts research on flue-cured and burley tobaccos, cow/calf production is studied using a herd of registered black angus cattle, horticulture crops such as wine grapes, strawberries and brambles as well as forestry products such as Paulownia trees are being studied.

The Chinqua-Penn Trail is 1.5 miles, and is continually maintained. It winds along the borders of the station and the plantation grounds. The trail is free and open to the public.



Research Stations Division

Working together for one cause

Mission

To manage crop and livestock facilities that serve as a platform for agriculture research to make farming more efficient, productive, and profitable, while maintaining a sound environment and providing consumers with safe and affordable products.

Partnership

Agriculture research in North Carolina dates back to 1877, when state legislation established the N.C. Department of Agriculture along with “Experiment Stations” as a division of the department. Since that time, the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Research Stations Division, in partnership with N.C. State University, has established 18 statewide locations. Each facility has unique climate and soil conditions, giving researchers a living laboratory in which to investigate a variety of regional crops, forestry concerns, livestock, poultry, and aquaculture. The Division supports these studies by providing land, water, equipment, buildings, and staff who work around the clock to help build a stronger foundation for the future of agriculture.

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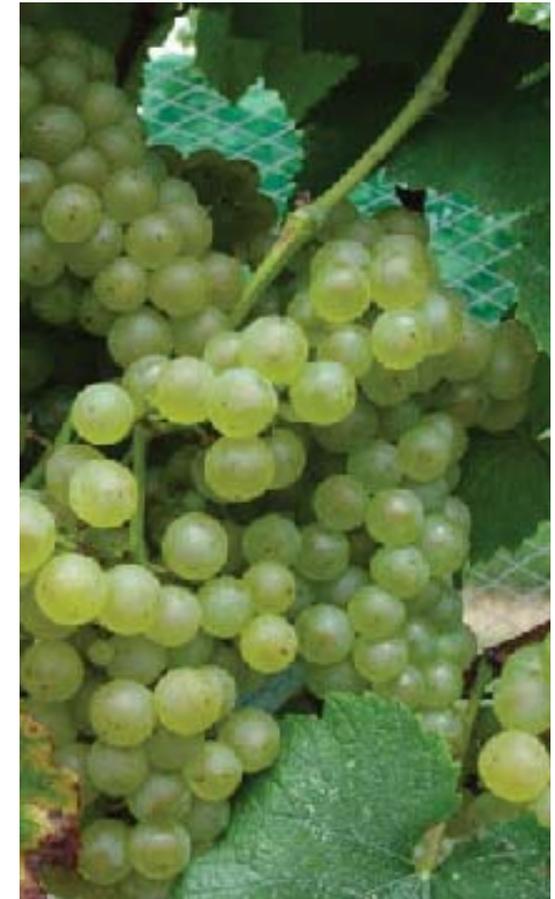
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Upper Piedmont

RESEARCH STATION

Rockingham County



RESEARCH STATIONS DIVISION

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