

Agricultural REVIEW

Volume: 100 - No. 9 September 2025 Raleigh, N.C.

Available now: Video series with tips and tricks for farms

A free, four-part video series from Visit NC Farms can help agritourism farms looking to take their businesses to the next level.

The NCDA&CS launched the series in late August, looking to help agritourism businesses grow their operations to deliver memorable experiences for their guests.

The series features professional tips, marketing strategies and strategic planning help.

This free resource is available now at <https://visitncfarms.com/industry-resources/>.

Save the date: 2025 N.C. State Fair runs Oct. 16-26

Fall is just around the corner and that means it's time for the N.C. State Fair with its agricultural exhibits and competitions, thrilling rides, arts and crafts, giant pumpkins and fabulous foods. The annual October tradition has been a part of many family memories for generations, proving that "There's no time like Fair time."

This year, the Fair runs Oct. 16-26 at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh and visitors can expect to find plenty of their favorites along with some new and creative foods, new attractions and entertainment, and new rides.

The State Fair is partnering with Duke Energy to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Military Appreciation Day. Thanks to Duke Energy's sponsorship, military personnel, with proof of identification, plus one guest will gain free entry into the fair on

Wednesday, Oct. 22.

Activities saluting the service of military men and women will be held throughout the day, with events kicking off at 10 a.m. with a parade through the fairgrounds, followed by performances by the 440th Army Band at 10:45 and 11:15 a.m. and at 12:30, 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. A Military Uniform Revue will be presented at 2:30 p.m. by the N.C. Department of Cultural and Natural Resources.

"The State Fair continues to offer military members and a guest discounted admission of \$8 every other day of the fair," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "Military Appreciation Day is our way of thanking the nation's armed forces and their families for the sacrifices they have made to preserve our safety and freedom."

Two new ticket packages are being



Youth livestock shows are one of the best parts of the N.C. State Fair.

offered this year – the Bright Lights and Boots Package, which includes an adult Fair admission ticket, plus a ticket to the rodeo, which is new in 2025 and part of the N.C. State Fair

Horse Show lineup. And, the Sippin' Spirits Package that includes an adult admission ticket, plus a cocktail

(See State Fair, page 2)

Advertisers should be mindful of potential scams

Following a few reports of suspected scams, the Agricultural Review is urging sellers to be hyper aware when communicating with potential buyers.

Placing a classified ad in the Ag Review requires sellers to submit their phone number or email address for potential buyers to use to connect with them. This information is published in the monthly print paper and online for digital readers. When your contact information can be found publicly, in print or online, it is important to remain mindful of any communication from

unknown numbers.

There are a few red flags sellers can be mindful of when dealing with potential buyers.

First, be cautious of out-of-state offers. The Ag Review is a monthly publication that is for North Carolina residents. While out-of-state parties could access the paper and view its classified advertisement listings online, the paper's primary audience is North Carolina residents. Sellers should be cautious if a potential buyer identifies themselves as a resident of another state

or country, or asks for an item to be shipped outside North Carolina.

Scammers also may use overpayment as a way to trick sellers. If an interested party offers much more than the listed price, be cautious. Also, be mindful of suspicious payment methods like wire transfers or faulty checks. Consider using secure, traceable payment methods.

As a way to hopefully limit the potential for scammers to get ahold of advertisers' contact information, the Ag Review is looking to give advertisers

the option of listing their ads only in the print publication, not online. Look for more information about this change soon.

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. 3 for the December issue

Dec. 1 for the January 2026 issue

Sellers and buyers can visit <https://apps.ncagr.gov/agreview/Pages/SubmitAnAd> to place an ad.

From the tractor



Commissioner Troxler

Is it really September? It's hard to believe, but it is.

It's been a busy year at the department as we have been working on disaster assistance for farmers while also advocating for agriculture during the ongoing legislative session and with our Congressional delegation, and continuing the day-to-day work of the department.

I anticipate it will continue to be busy in the fall as we plan to open the N.C. Mountain State Fair Sept. 5-14 and continue to prepare for the N.C.

by Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler

State Fair Oct. 16-26.

I mentioned the work happening on disaster assistance and I am happy to share that we have started sending out payments to Helene-affected counties and I anticipate more checks being sent out in the coming weeks.

I appreciate farmers' patience as our team has worked through the applications and verified crop loss and damage. It has been a top priority to get these funds out into the farming community and I am glad it is underway.

I also wanted to share information about a free video series we recently launched through the Visit NC Farms statewide initiative to help agritourism operators develop and grow their business.

Agritourism in North Carolina continues to grow as farms see business opportunities in hosting visitors to their farms and consumers are looking for unique on-farm experiences. According to the latest Ag Census, North Carolina saw a 28% increase in the value of

agritourism from the previous Census period with an estimated 1,000 farms now offering agritourism activities.

To help farms plan for guests and market their activities, this four-part series covers:

- Top 5 Marketing Strategies to Take Your Business to the Next Level
- Designing and Executing Your Annual Strategic Plan
- How to Leverage Artificial Intelligence to Market Your Farm
- Preimmunize Your Destination.

Because every agritourism operation is different, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' plan for farmers to follow. For example, we have farms offering on-site farmers markets, you-pick opportunities, farm stays, goat yoga, tours, trails, fishing, special farm-to-table dinners, mazes, classes and workshops and so much more.

But there are some best business practices to consider, plus some resources like AI that farmers may want to use to help market their farms. This series will cover some of

these resources. You can access the videos at <https://visitncfarms.com/industry-resources/>.

Visit NC Farms is a partnership between the department, local tourism leaders and farm businesses and it focuses on helping connect residents and visitors to North Carolina farms.

If you have never been to an agritourism farm, I would encourage you to visit one today. You can find more information on farms near you at www.visitncfarms.com.

And finally, I mentioned the Mountain State Fair and the State Fair at the start of this column. I hope we will see you at one or even both fairs this year as we celebrate and showcase North Carolina agriculture and the best our state has to offer. The Mountain State Fair runs Sept. 5-14 in Fletcher, near Asheville. And the State Fair runs Oct. 16-26 in Raleigh. Both are great events!

Agricultural Review

15,000 copies of this public document were printed at a cost of \$686.44 or 3.9 cents per copy.

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AGRICULTURAL REVIEW (ISSN 07445466) is published monthly by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 2 W. Edenton St., Raleigh, NC 27601. Second-class postage paid at Raleigh, N.C.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes and classified advertising to AGRICULTURAL REVIEW, 1001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1001.
AGRICULTURAL REVIEW is printed in interest of the farmers of the State and is sent free to residents upon request.

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State Fair

(Continued from pg. 1)



Join us as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of Military Appreciation Day this year.

voucher for the N.C. Stillhouse, which features craft cocktails by North Carolina distilleries.

Cast in Bronze, a popular and unique Carillon musical performance that enchanted audiences in the fair’s Flower Show gardens in 2022, makes its return to Heritage Circle for daily shows.

Charlie St. Cyr-Paul brings the traveling musical instrument featuring 35 cast bronze bells to life, performing a mix of popular music, classic rock and movie soundtracks.

North Carolina agriculture will be on full display at the Fair in the Got to Be NC Pavilion, which features around 40 North Carolina food vendors, sampling and selling local food products. Discover the delicious taste of products Grown. Caught.Raised.Made. in North Carolina.

Be sure to check out one of the livestock shows held daily during the Fair. Shows are held in the Kelly Building, AgriSupply Expo Center and Jim Graham Building with the annual Sale of Champions to be held Sunday, Oct. 26, at 2 p.m. in the Graham Building.

The giant watermelon and pumpkin competitors always draw lots of interest. Fairgoers can see the winners, plus other giant vegetables

on display in the AgriSupply Expo Center.

Another agriculture highlight is the featured Farm Family of the Day sponsored by Tractor Supply Company. Every day the fair will celebrate a farm family for their contributions to the state’s No. 1 industry, agriculture.

Throughout the 11-day run, the fair hosts a number of special days including Wolfpack Day with \$8 admission for N.C. State students and Sensory Day presented by Bandwidth, Oct. 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. where rides, games, booths and vendors operate without lights or music.

Senior Citizens’ Day is Oct. 21 with free admission for those 65 and up. Bojangles biscuits and coffee will be served beginning at 9 a.m. and a short program with music is provided on the Waterfall Stage.

Duke Energy Military Appreciation Day is Oct. 22 with a parade and free admission to military personnel and guest.

Smithfield Foods Hunger Relief Day is Oct. 23 with free admission for guests bringing six cans of food to donate to the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina. This is typically the largest one-day food drive in the state and the need continues to grow.

Tickets to the N.C. State Fair are on sale now at www.ncstatefair.org.

Richmond County Ranger receives 2025 prescribed burning award

N.C. Forest Service (NCFS) Richmond County Ranger Brandon Van Buren has been named recipient of the 2025 State Forester’s Prescribed Burning Award. Van Buren began his NCFS career as an assistant county ranger in Anson County in 2014. He’s held the role of Richmond County ranger since October 2021.

“As a newly qualified prescribed burn boss, Brandon has stepped up to meet the needs of Richmond County landowners,” said Keith Money, regional forester for NCFS Region 2. “Prescribed burning in the Sandhills region

plays a vital role in wildfire risk reduction, habitat restoration and wildlife and timber management. The successful implementation of these burns represents significant planning, coordination and execution, especially given the county’s emergency response workload.”

The State Forester’s Prescribed Burning Award is presented each year during the N.C. Prescribed Fire Council’s annual meeting. It recognizes an NCFS employee or team of employees who demonstrates leadership and excellence in accomplishing prescribed burning in North Carolina’s forests.

Prescribed fires are low intensity fires intentionally set in a defined area to achieve specific management

objectives such as improving wildlife habitat, reducing wildfire risk and promoting healthier forestland. It’s an important, low-cost forest management tool that is used often throughout North Carolina. The State Forester’s Prescribed Burning Award is a token of appreciation to those who are committed to increasing the use of prescribed fire in North Carolina.

During the 24-25 state fiscal year, NCFS Richmond County staff carried out 24 prescribed burning operations totaling 735 acres, supporting more than 20 private landowners and providing critical assistance in land management. Of the 24 prescribed fires conducted by NCFS Richmond County staff,



NCFS Assistant Commissioner and State Forester Greg Hicks (left) presents the award to Richmond County Ranger Brandon Van Buren.

Van Buren served as burn boss for 17.

“We’re proud of Brandon’s commitment and dedication to using prescribed fire to improve the health of North Carolina’s forests and its wildlife habitat while reducing wildfire risk throughout the surrounding community,” said NCFS Assistant Commissioner and State Forester Greg Hicks. “These accomplishments highlight Brandon’s diligence and devotion to upholding the mission and values of the N.C. Forest Service, and to the citizens of Richmond County.”

To learn more about the benefits of prescribed fire and how it may help keep your woodlands healthy and resilient, visit www.ncforestservice.gov/goodfire.

N.C. State Fair tickets on sale now

There is no time like fair time and now is the time to save money and get a jump on planning your trip to the 2025 N.C. State Fair, happening Oct. 16-26 in Raleigh. Discounted advance tickets can be purchased online now through Oct. 16. Tickets can also be purchased daily at the Dorton Arena kiosk and walk-up tickets will be available from Oct. 3 through 16 at Gate 9 at the fairgrounds.

“The fair is a great place to make cherished memories with your family and friends,” said Kent Yelverton, N.C. State Fair director. “These prices are the best ticket offers you’ll see this fair season, so be sure to buy your advance tickets today.”

The advance ticket prices are as follows:

Adults (ages 13-64) are \$10, youth (ages 6-12) and senior adult tickets are \$5 and children 5 and under are free. Group tickets are also available for groups of 40 people or more with prices at \$8 for adults and \$4 for youth.

Advance tickets for ride ticket cards, ride wristbands, the State Fair Flyer and the State Fair SkyGazer are available through Oct. 16. These purchases do not include admission to the fair. The prices are \$10 for 18 ride tickets, \$30 per unlimited ride wristband, \$6 one-way or \$9 round-trip for the State Fair Flyer, and \$6 for the State Fair SkyGazer.

It is important to note that each ride wristband will be valid for one day only during the duration of the fair. Ride ticket cards and wristbands are not valid for the State Fair Flyer or the State Fair SkyGazer.

Additionally, the State Fair offers online-only, special-themed ticket packages, including two new packages:

- (NEW) Bright Lights and Boots Package – One gate admission and one ticket to the NCHSRA Rodeo Event held on Monday, Oct. 20 or Tuesday, Oct. 21 for \$18. (\$2 savings)
- (NEW) Sippin’ Spirits Package – One gate admission ticket and one Stillhouse Cocktail ticket for \$23. (\$2 savings)



The fairgrounds are full of photo-worthy spots!

- Dizzy Pass – One gate admission ticket and one unlimited ride wristband for \$38 (\$2 savings)
- Kegs & Cork Pass – One gate admission ticket, one N.C. Public House Beer + Wine ticket for \$18 (\$2 savings)
- State Fair Flyer Package – One gate admission tickets and one round-trip State Fair Flyer tickets for \$17 (\$2 savings)
- State Fair SkyGazer – One gate admission ticket and one State Fair SkyGazer ticket for \$14 (\$2 savings)

This year the prices the consumer sees when they access the online purchase website will reflect an all-in price, which is the price with taxes and fees included. For more information on tickets, check out the “Important Information for Carnival Ticketing” section under the “Buy Tickets Now” tab on the State Fair website.

The 2025 N.C. State Fair will run Oct. 16-26 at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. The fair offers an experience unique to North Carolina for all who attend, and is an unparalleled value with free entertainment, thrilling rides and games, thousands of animals, endless family activities, competitions, vendors and creative deep-fried delights. For more information, visit www.ncstatefair.org.

NCSU researchers work to develop Carolina Super Teas

North Carolina's agricultural landscape is one of the most diverse in the country, and now researchers are exploring a possible new crop with the addition of tea.

They're working to evaluate tea plants or develop new plants – looking for ones that thrive in colder climates, deliver unique health benefits and serve double duty as both landscape ornamentals and sources for caffeinated beverages.

Ultimately, researchers are exploring the potential of growing tea (*Camellia sinensis*) and yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*) as viable specialty crops for North Carolina farmers. Their work could create exciting possibilities for gardeners and tea drinkers, too.

“Carolina Super Teas” is the name of a research project led by Tom Ranney whose Ph.D. is in horticulture and plant protection. He and his research team in N.C. State University’s Department of Horticultural Science are based at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Mills River.

They are able to explore this possible new specialty crop thanks to funding from the New and Emerging Crops Program. The work falls in line with program's goals of identifying and developing promising crops that can strengthen North Carolina's agricultural economy.

The N.C. General Assembly approves funding annually for the program, and the Research Stations Division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services oversees it. The program has awarded more than \$168,000 to Ranney's team to support research on tea plants and their relatives.

“Teas are big business,” Ranney told attendees at a project presentation. “If you look at 2024, the global value for tea was about, so it is the second most consumed beverage, second only to water globally. So, it is big business and quite significant in different parts



Research specialists John Nix and Irene Palmer stand with tea plants growing at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center.

of the world.”

That kind of demand creates opportunities, especially if researchers can adapt the plants to new regions and growing systems like those in North Carolina.

Expanding the Tea Plant Family

Ranney leads the Mountain Crop Improvement Lab at N.C. State, where the team has a long history of breeding nursery crops like camellias and hollies. Recently, they've extended that work into the world of caffeinated teas, using traditional breeding methods and germplasm collection to explore new possibilities in both the classic tea plant *Camellia sinensis* and also several species of *Ilex*, which is the holly genus that includes native yaupon (*Ilex vomitoria*), yerba mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*) and guayusa (*Ilex guayusa*).

“Yaupon holly is the only plant native to North America that produces caffeine, and it’s found natively from Virginia down to Texas, mostly along the Atlantic coast,” Ranney said.

As for Camellias, they have been grown in the Southeast for a long time, mostly as landscape plants, while most tea production worldwide still happens elsewhere. However, growing tea in the Carolinas isn't completely unheard of. Ranney points to The Pinehurst Tea Company in South Carolina that dates back to the late 1800s. Smaller scale tea production goes back even earlier he said.

“In terms of tea production areas, historically, it has been more in subtropical and tropical areas, certainly in Asia, China, India, some in Turkey and the Middle East, a little bit in Africa and South America. But there have been efforts over the years to try and push tea production into more colder-temperate regions,” Ranney said. “In terms of tea production in the United States, it has an interesting history. Pretty much as soon as Europeans started to settle here, they experimented with growing teas, and it wasn’t until the late 1800s that there were some significant plantations and farms.”

By pushing the boundaries of cold hardiness, the hope is that these plants can be grown more reliably in the Southeast and into Zone 6.

Dual-Purpose Plants for a New Market

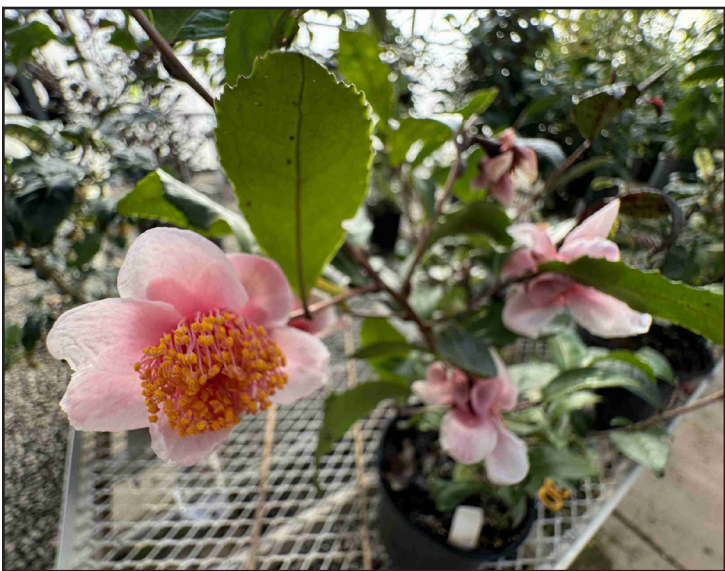
The lab is especially focused on developing dual-purpose plants that work as attractive landscape plants and offer potential for tea production. So, they're working to develop plants with cold hardiness, good branching structure for hedging or mechanized tea harvesting and ornamental traits like variegated foliage or pink flowers. They also plan to identify plants with high levels of metabolites like caffeine and others that contribute to tea quality in their crop improvement. There is an interest in developing some plants with high theacrine

could create tea and other products that offer an intriguing angle for the health-conscious consumer.

“Our objectives are actually kind of similar for both the camellia tea and holly tea projects, which are to develop and screen new hybrids for cold hardiness, these related purine alkaloid compounds and also commercial traits for both landscape and tea production,” Ranney said. “If we can have these diverse markets and different sales channels, it makes the crop more valuable. So, we’re very interested in this dual purpose of plants that you can drink and also have potential for nursery and landscape crops.”

Field Trials and Global Collections

John Nix, a research specialist with the crop improvement lab, is leading day-to-day efforts to improve both tea camellias and tea hollies through plant breeding, field trials and field collection. Through



The pink hybrid camelia is part of the breeding program.

content because it may be useful in some teas or other beverage production. Research has found that yaupon holly, in particular, has that compound, which is a cousin of caffeine and offers a stimulating effect like caffeine but without the negative heart rate or blood pressure effects. So, plants with high theacrine

partnerships with nurseries like Camellia Forest Nursery and Camellia Too Nursery, the team has added elite commercial tea varieties from China and Japan. One such variety is Camellia sinensis 'Yabukita' which makes up nearly 75% of the tea in

(See Tea research, pg. 4)

Bucolic Briefs

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.

The Stanly County Antique Power Yesteryear Club will hold its 32nd Antique Tractor Show and Consignment Auction on Sept. 5 and 6 at the Stanly County Fairgrounds, 24302 S. Business 52, Albemarle. Live music, food vendors, crafts, vintage items, tools, raffle, cast iron, petting zoo, tractors, games and more. Hours are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Auction begins 9 a.m. Saturday. Admission is \$5 per person, with children 12 years of age and younger admitted free of charge. Contact Roger McKenzie at 910-528-6054 for more information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is expanding the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops program to now include medium-sized businesses in addition to small businesses. Eligible specialty crop growers can apply for assistance for expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification.

Cost assistance can be used for developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification, maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan, a food safety certification, certification upload fees, microbiological testing for products, soil amendments and water, and training.

The program also now includes assistance for 2024 and 2025 expenses. Producers can apply for assistance on their calendar year 2024 expenses beginning July 1, 2024, through Jan. 31, 2025. For program year 2025, the application period will be Jan. 1, 2025, through Jan. 31, 2026.

Specialty crop producers can also call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a FSA employee ready to assist. Visit <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/pandemic-assistance/food-safety> for additional program details, eligibility information and forms needed to apply.

The U.S. Small Business Administration announced the availability of low interest federal disaster loans to small businesses and private nonprofit organizations in North Carolina who sustained economic losses caused by drought occurring March 4.

The disaster declaration covers the counties of Duplin, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pender, Sampson and Wayne. Under this declaration, the SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program is available to eligible small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, nurseries, and PNP's with financial losses directly related to this disaster. The SBA is unable to provide disaster loans to agricultural producers, farmers, or ranchers, except for aquaculture enterprises.

EIDLs are available for working capital needs caused by the disaster and are available even if the small business or PNP did not suffer any physical damage. The loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills not paid due to the disaster.

Don't forget to renew your Agricultural Review

Clip the renewal card on the front page of the June issue and mail it in, or go online to www.agreview.org and enter your subscription number. It is listed above your name and address.

It's fair season! Find a fair near you



- Iredell County Agricultural Fair – Aug. 29-Sept. 6, Troutman
- Cumberland County Fair – Aug. 29-Sept. 7, Fayetteville
- Avery County A&H Fair – Sept. 3-6, Newland

- N.C. Mountain State Fair – Sept. 5-14, Fletcher
- Cabarrus County Fair – Sept. 5-13, Concord
- Stokes County Agricultural Fair – Sept. 9-13, King
- Lee Regional Fair – Sept. 10-14, Sanford
- Duplin Agribusiness Fair – Sept. 11-13, Kenansville
- Davidson County Agricultural Fair – Sept. 15-20, Lexington
- Rowan County Fair – Sept. 15-20, Salisbury
- Pitt County Fair – Sept. 16-21, Greenville
- Surry County Fair – Sept. 16-20, Mount Airy
- Wilson County Fair – Sept. 16-21, Wilson
- Macon County Fair – Sept. 17-20, Franklin
- Alleghany Ag Fair & Pumpkin Festival – Sept. 18-21, Sparta
- Chatham County Fair – Sept. 18-21, Pittsboro
- Chowan County Regional Fair – Sept. 23-27, Edenton
- Caldwell County Agricultural Fair – Sept. 25-27, Lenoir
- Cleveland County Fair – Sept. 25-Oct. 5, Shelby
- Haywood County Fair – Sept. 25-28, Waynesville
- Wayne Regional Agricultural Fair – Sept. 25-Oct. 4, Dudley
- Robeson Regional Agricultural Fair – Sept. 26-Oct. 4, Lumberton
- Lenoir County Agricultural Fair – Sept. 30-Oct. 4, Kinston
- Wilkes County Agricultural Fair – Oct. 1-4, North Wilkesboro
- Carolina Classic Fair – Oct. 3-12, Winston-Salem
- Columbus County Agriculture Fair – Oct. 7-12, Whiteville
- Moore County Agricultural Fair – Oct. 7-11, Carthage
- Onslow County Agricultural Fair – Oct. 14-18, Jacksonville
- Brunswick County Agricultural Fair – Oct. 15-19, Ash
- N.C. State Fair – Oct. 16-26, Raleigh

Family keeps legacy alive at the Largest Watermelon Contest



The Murphy family took second place in this year's contest.

This year's annual State Farmers Market Largest Watermelon Contest had a special meaning as it was held in memory of longtime watermelon contest competitor Donald Murphy, who passed away earlier this year. Known for his knowledge and expertise in growing a large watermelon each year, Murphy was a familiar face at the contest and on Watermelon Day. This year, his sons entered a watermelon their dad started growing into the competition, a tradition that has been part of their family for over 30 years.

"Seeing his sons and family at Watermelon Day to carry on their tradition is a reminder of how strong North Carolina farm families are," said Monica Wood, manager of the State Farmers Market. "We are proud to honor his legacy with this year's largest watermelon contest." Rodney Register of Nakina took home first place with a melon weighing 222.5 pounds. Second place went to Donald Murphy of Pink Hill with a 179.1-pound melon, while Leighton Murphy earned third place with a melon weighing 161.7 pounds. John

Bass of Fairmont placed fourth with a melon weighing 160.8 pounds, and an honorable mention went to Cephus Ray of Bailey. Knox Basden, the great-grandson of the late Donald Murphy, received the "The Donald Murphy Future Growers Award." The Largest Watermelon Contest is held each summer at the State Farmers Market on Watermelon Day to celebrate the peak of watermelon season and the hard work of N.C. Watermelon growers. This year's first place melon is currently on display at the State Farmers Market Restaurant. The State Farmers Market is open year-round, offering shoppers locally grown fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses and specialty foods, plus seasonal products from North Carolina nurseries, greenhouses, Christmas tree farms, turfgrass and sod. For the best selection, shop 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The market is located off Exit 297 on Interstate 40 in Raleigh. For more information on the State Farmers Market events, activities and seasonal charts, visit the website or follow along on Facebook.

Tea research

(Continued from pg. 3)



This camelia is a top hybrid selection.

production in Japan. These commercial varieties will be a great benchmark to test against for desirable tea quality, Nix said. Meanwhile, new breeding lines with enhanced cold hardiness are being selected for both container production and field planting. Nix said they've already trialed tea camellias hardy to 0°F, with plans to intercross those with high-quality commercial types. For Ilex species, much of the focus is on Ilex vomitoria (yaupon). As the only native North American plant known to produce caffeine, it's been used for centuries by Indigenous peoples in the Southeast.

"There's sort of a resurgence of interest in yaupon teas. Just seven years ago, the American Yaupon Association was formed to promote the production and development of this as a crop in the southeastern United States, and it's now found frequently in stores. There are quite a few companies that are producing yaupon tea," Ranney said. For example, Asheville Tea Company is developing yaupon blends with ingredients like elderberry or spices. But not all yaupons are created equal. Initial metabolite screening showed dramatic variation in caffeine content between cultivars. Nix said early testing involved just four yaupon plants that were in the nursery in the early days of the project.

"[We found] more than a 10-fold difference in caffeine. So that's a lot of variance. And if you were making tea out of a yaupon without looking at this [testing data], you can maybe tell the quality of tea by how you feel drinking it, but you don't know how good a selection is for tea production without some information like this," Nix said. They've also tested other purine alkaloids that contribute to the tea quality, particularly theacrine. Some had almost no theacrine, but some cultivars had measurable amounts – important information, Nix said.

To find yaupon selections better suited for colder areas, the team has launched a germplasm acquisition campaign across the Southeast. With permits in hand, Nix traveled to the mountains of west central Arkansas last fall, seeking and collecting wild

Ilex vomitoria populations at the edge of the species' range. Considering that yaupon holly primarily occurs throughout the coastal plain of the southeast, Nix found it interesting that plants occur so far inland within the Arkansas mountains. Cuttings and seed from those plants will be grown and trialed to contribute to the crop improvement effort. "We were able to get 31 clonal selections from this trip, and that's from around 11 different sites. And for each of those 11 sites, we were able to get a seed lot to try and hopefully capture some more diversity," Nix said. All of those are now being propagated and screened for rooting, form and tea quality. A similar expedition is planned for southeastern Virginia – again targeting populations near the cooler edge of yaupon's natural distribution. The project includes collaborators beyond N.C. State, too. Dr. Ryan Yates at the University of Mississippi is helping with metabolite analysis, using advanced chromatography to profile each plant's purine alkaloid content. Carlos Iglesias, a global plant expert, is contributing expertise on yerba mate and helping import seed lots from Uruguay and Brazil. Mark Weathington, director of N.C. State's J.C. Raulston Arboretum, has also collected germplasm in South America. Together, the team is assembling a unique and diverse foundation for the future of caffeinated crop breeding in North Carolina.

The Road Ahead

Ranney and Nix said they'll continue evaluating their wild and cultivated collection of plants for traits that matter to growers, processors and consumers. The first field plantings of tea hollies and interspecific hybrids are planned for spring 2026, with ongoing trials to assess cold tolerance, tea quality and production traits. The work aims to build new crops from the ground up, not just look for one perfect tea plant. The researchers hope to build a palette of plants that can serve many different needs, from commercial farming to home gardening to the nursery trade.

Horse Events

Southeastern Ag Center, Lumberton 910-618-5699

- Sept. 1.....Horse and Tack Auction. Contact Brad Stephens, 828-390-0878.
- Sept. 13.....BBHA Open Show. Contact Jerry King, 910-237-4525.
- Sept. 20.....Da Bomb Barrel Racing. Contact Josh Smith, 910-639-6387.
- Sept. 26.....Carolina Cutting Horse Association Show. Contact Nic Johnson, 919-782-8001.
- Oct. 6.....Horse and Tack Auction. Contact Brad Stephens, 828-390-0878.

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

- Sept. 27 & 28... United Horsemen of The Carolinas Open Horse Show. Contact Ronnie Pope, popespaints@outlook.com.

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

- Sept. 5-7NCQHA Tarheel Fall Classic. Contact Shirley Lombardo, 919-362-4656.
- Sept. 10-13UPHA Chapter 12 NC State Championship Show. Contact Dan Shirley, 864-630-1669.
- Sept. 20 & 21... TWHFA Fall Fantastic Show. Contact Dana Coste, 919-390-8126.
- Oct. 1-5.....N.C. State Fair Hunter/Jumper Show. Contact Joan Petty, 919-669-9877.
- Oct. 15-18.....N.C. State Fair Saddlebred Horse Show. Contact Liz Holmes, 919-365-5149.
- Oct. 19-23.....N.C. State Fair Horse Shows. Contact Equine Event Planning, 336-908-3302.
- Oct. 24-26.....N.C. State Fair Open Horse Shows. Contact Equine Event Planning, 336-908-3302.

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

Agronomic Services in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene

The following was written by Sandra Carpenter Aiello, outreach specialist with the Agronomic Services Division.

It's been about a year since Hurricane Helene caused catastrophic damage across Western North Carolina. The storm dumped upwards of 20 - 30 inches of rain in a short amount of time, leading to extensive flooding and damage. Homes, businesses, buildings, crops, fields, rivers, and almost everything was impacted. Some things were forever changed. Loss of life was most devastating. In the days immediately following the storm, the focus was on search, rescue, recovery and getting needed supplies to those in the impacted areas. Recovery is still ongoing and will be for years.

However, the short-term focus



(Above) A strawberry farm was washed away by Hurricane Helene. (Below) Regional Agronomist Steve Dillon and JD Obermiller during a visit to Obermiller's farm in Hendersonville.

saving plants rather than replanting is best. On the other hand, for the field vegetables that grow annually at Searcy's farm, the crops were lost. There it seemed more practical, although significantly challenging, to move equipment to till the sand into the soil in the fields for later replanting.

For both farms, there were numerous topics of discussion and big questions for Steve in efforts to assist growers. Some of these included:

- Were key nutrients leached out of the soil?
- To what extent had the fertile topsoil been washed away?
- In areas where a significant amount of soil loss occurred, what practices were best to restore its productivity? Should fill dirt be used? Should cover crops be used to stabilize soil prior to replanting traditionally grown crops again.
- How much soil was deposited on top of existing topsoil in fields. Would it be best to move deposited soil or till it into the existing topsoil?
- What was the impact of nematode, insect and disease organism movement from one area to another?
- What was the time frame of being able to get crops planted again?

Unfortunately, these events occur without easy answers or quick fixes. Experience is the best teacher and luckily, this type of damage does not occur regularly. However, Agronomic Services has the staff and resources to trouble-shoot and give some of the best advice available by using foundational knowledge in crop and soil sciences along with testing services.

Regional Agronomists are experts in soil fertility, plant nutrition, and management of plant-parasitic nematodes. They meet with growers, discuss concerns, devise sampling plans, assist in taking samples with submission to the Agronomic Services labs in Raleigh for testing. Based on results, an appropriate management plan is developed with the grower's input. Regional agronomists are knowledgeable in the management of insects and diseases as well.

Steve's efforts at the Obermiller's Farm confirmed a significant drop in both soil nutrient levels and pH. Applications of lime and fertilizer were needed. "I was encouraged and thankful for Steve's assistance in my recovery from the storm," said Obermiller. "Having another set of eyes, listening to my concerns and having expert advice helped me to see more clearly how to move forward in this overwhelming situation." Searcy implemented the recommendations to manage the soil in the field.

While the Obermillers lost their spring strawberry crop, the blackberry and blueberry bushes that remained after the storm have bounced back and are producing a significant yield. The new bushes planted to replace what was destroyed will take about eight to nine years to bring about the yield that was previously produced. Picking times are limited, but the crowds coming to pick and support a local farm have been great. Searcy's vegetables were planted and are growing well. He has great optimism for this year's crop. Both growers are thankful for Steve's help during "normal" growing seasons but especially after Helene.

Multiple challenges still exist for many growers in the aftermath, but the resilience of North Carolinians and our farmers prevails. Steve and two other regional agronomists continue their efforts to help western North Carolina growers rebuild their farm operations.



The first visit was to the Obermiller's Strawberry Farm in Hendersonville, about 25 miles south of Asheville. The Obermillers operate a U-Pick strawberry, blueberry and blackberry farm. After 28 inches of rain and floodwater over 4-foot-deep covered his farm, more than 9,000 strawberry plants were destroyed. Strawberries are planted in the fall with intent to harvest the following spring, leaving the Obermiller family with no time to fix land, secure

and plant new strawberry plants, and no crop for the 2025 spring harvest.

Additionally, the swirling debris in the floodwaters collided with established blueberry and blackberry bushes, lifting them from the soil to be washed away. Once waters receded, the Obermiller family was left with significant sand deposits over large parts of their field. While some soil washed in, some washed away creating gaping holes. The soil that was created over millions to billions

of years vanished from his farm in a few hours. The second farm visit was with Jeff Searcy, who farms a variety of vegetables. His fields saw higher floodwater levels than at the Obermiller's farm, close to 20-feet high. In anticipation of Hurricane Helene, he moved his farm equipment to higher ground. However, water levels far exceeded the tops of the equipment, washed mud into pickup trucks, and flipped box trucks. A significant amount of sand was deposited across his fields as well. Each farm's circumstances were unique, and the plans for cleaning up and moving forward were different as well. Unfortunately, in these types of situations, there isn't a "one-size-fits-all" remedy. Everything needed to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Steve used his knowledge of plant and soil principles to provide recommendations for the upcoming growing season on each farm. For example, Obermiller needed to clean out the sand from around the remaining blackberry and blueberry bushes to try and save them. Since these perennial crops take years to develop and produce desired yields,

for everyone has been getting back on their feet. This includes farmers that are the heart of the No. 1 industry in our great state - agriculture.

Earlier this year, I visited two farms in Western NC with NCDA&CS Regional Agronomist, Steve Dillon, to see and hear what some of our farmers experienced and how Agronomic Services is helping to restore their farming livelihoods.

Savoring the new big 'dill' in small-town Mount Olive

Mount Olive, a small town with a big footprint in grocery stores, restaurants and kitchens across the country, is home to Mount Olive Pickle Company. For nearly a century, their brining ingenuity has been a testament to small-town success in the heart of Wayne County, growing from the corner of Cucumber & Vine to Center Street downtown with the opening of the Pickle Parlor, a one-stop shop for all your pickle needs that is quickly becoming a popular destination.

Founded by 37 shareholders to pack and sell pickle products to help support local cucumber farmers, Mount Olive Pickle Company started in 1926 on one acre of land with a 3,600-square-foot building and just \$19.50 in capital. Flash forward nearly 100 years, and the Mount Olive Pickle Company has grown from their humble beginnings to the best-selling brand of pickles, peppers and relish in the U.S. and one of the largest pickle packers in the world.

"The longevity of this company has made us a true North Carolina staple," said Melissa Kilpatrick, consumer and community relations director at Mount Olive Pickle Company. "It's a brand that people recognize, and we are 'dill-lighted' when North Carolinians spot a North Carolina tradition across the country."

For years, the company had a gift shop that sold its products but was not easily accessible to visitors. In June 2025, the company debuted the Pickle Parlor, an educational and immersive experience celebrating all things pickle.

Inside the parlor, visitors can explore company history, featuring a timeline with historic photos dating back to the very beginning. Guests are invited to take a virtual tour of the Mount Olive Pickle plant to learn more about the pickle production process. The parlor

serves daily pickle samples, dill pickle soda and features a classic soda fountain with Pepsi products, paying homage to another iconic North Carolina brand.

"There truly is something for everyone in the Pickle Parlor, from pickle golf shirts to our best-selling Mount Olive beach towel," Kilpatrick said. "The parlor gives us the opportunity to share our history, show off our North Carolina roots and offer a special experience for all ages."

For those exploring eastern North Carolina, the Pickle Parlor is a special and flavorful stop. The company's mission to bridge visitors with the industry that fuels their success is evident by the care and attention to every detail in the store. Each year, more than 80 million pounds of cucumbers used for pickle production are sourced directly from local growers, to keep production close to home. North Carolina currently ranks third in the nation for pickling cucumber production.

"We hope our visitors leave the parlor not only happy about their new pickle merchandise, but also feeling connected to the people, industry and community that have helped shape Mount Olive Pickle Company into what it is today," Kilpatrick said.

The Pickle Parlor is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is located at 109 N. Center St. in Mount Olive.

Can't make it to the parlor? Plan to join the town of Mount Olive for the annual New Year's Eve Pickle Drop on Dec. 31, 2025, or visit the N.C. Pickle Festival held each April. For more information and to stay up to date on other dill-icious news, check out Mt. Olive Pickle Company online and follow them on Facebook.



The Mt. Olive Pickle Parlor is located on Center Street in downtown Mount Olive.

September AgroTips

Test your bulk soilless potting media before planting greenhouse crops.

Before planting greenhouse crops, propagating woody plants or beginning seasonal flower production, commercial producers should sample and test the bulk soilless media they plan to grow their plants in. The procedure, known as saturated media extract (SME), measures nutrient concentration, electrical conductivity and pH. The cost is \$5 per sample for North Carolina residents and \$25 for out-of-state residents, and test results are available online two working days after samples are checked in to the laboratory. Sampling instructions and sample information forms can be found online at www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/uymedia.

Prepare gardens for fall/winter.

First, if you haven't had your soil tested in the last three years, do it now! Instructions for collecting samples are online at www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/uyst.htm#sampling. Act now because after October the lab will begin receiving end-of-season samples from farmers, and the wait for reports will be longer.

If your report indicates that lime should be applied to raise soil pH, don't delay. Winter soil is usually moist and helps lime neutralize soil acidity before spring planting. However, don't add lime unless the soil report recommends it! Excess lime can make some nutrients unavailable to plants.

Second, consider protecting garden soils by planting a cover crop or putting out mulch. Legumes—such as crimson clover, hairy vetch, Austrian winter pea—add nitrogen to the soil as well as organic matter when they decompose in the spring. In addition, crimson clover is a beautiful sight when it blooms! Another option is to plant greens such as mustard or kale and enjoy eating the small leaves as they grow.

If you don't plant a cover crop, you should apply a two-inch layer of mulch, such as composted leaf material, shredded or chipped pine bark, or pine needles. Straw can also be used if it is good quality without weed seeds. The mulch should be thick enough to reduce weed seed germination and retain soil moisture without impeding adequate water and air movement.

Once you have made these preparations, do not apply fertilizer until spring unless you are planting a fall vegetable garden. In that case, you can still follow these suggestions (even sowing a cover crop around the vegetable beds!), but you will also need to apply fertilizer as recommended on your soil report.

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.



Bees, Supplies & Services Wanted

NOTICE

N.C. law requires a permit to sell honey bees in the state. A permit is not required for: The sale of less than 10 bee 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 their movement to gather honey.

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



Equipment For Sale

1950s Intl tricycle tractor, fair cond., been sitting, motor not stuck, \$2,000 or trade. Jeff Brittain, Hickory 828-327-4782.

NI manure spreader, ground driven, good tires, shed kept, \$250; Southern bush hog, 3pt, 6 ft. cut, needs new blades, \$150. Jimmy Houston, Statesville 704-873-7765.

Sm feed bin, holds about 2.7 tons, ladder on side, \$1,000. Scott Loflin, Yadkinville 336-480-4348, text.

Roanoke auto harvester for parts, \$2,000; (4) Roanoke 126 rack barns, \$1,000 ea.; (2) racking tables, tobacco trailers, \$200 ea. David Pace, Archer Lodge 919-971-1494 or 553-7593.

Assort. cult points, feet, spring shanks, drag chains, JD pull combine, IH drill w/seed box, John Blue fert dist., \$1,800/all. N. Lee, Advance 336-998-8922, nights.

Ford 601 Workmaster, w/ scrape blade, bog, potato plow, scoop pan, boom pole, log puller, \$4,500 obo. Ronnie Slate, Kernersville 336-391-9745.

Wood saw, 30 in. blade, runs off belt to tractor, \$175; 3pt equip, bush mower, \$250; 2-row cult, \$225; disc, \$250. William Carter, Burgaw 910-259-4691.

Aerator for riding mower, plugger type, \$225. G. Stowe, Graham 336-675-0466.

FARM EQUIPMENT

1950 M Farmall, w/front saw-mill attach. & belt, fully restored, runs great, \$5,000-\$10,000. Taylor Hill, Monroe 919-621-8570.

JD no. 9 rear sickle mower, 3pt, pto driven, new knife sections incld, \$550. Ed Estridge, Charlotte 704-785-7687.

JD 336 sq baler, works well & well maintained, \$4,000. John Button, Madison 336-418-0057.

Kubota L245H, GC, w/fert hopper & all cults, more, \$5,000. John Doggett, Summerfield 336-462-1852.

NI hay rake for AC snap coupler, needs repair, \$150-\$200. Joe Hackney, Siler City 919-516-6002.

JD 425, ps, 550 hrs., hys, \$3,250; JD lt160, restored, \$1,250. Chris Davis, Clemmons 336-705-0239.

JD 318, hys, ps, \$2,500; JD 176, hys, 14hp, \$1,050. Kent Davis, Clemmons 336-391-4801.

MF 12 hay baler, parts machine, complete machine, \$250-\$500; MH hay rake, ground propelled, GC, \$500-\$800; Sperry NH 489 haybine GC, \$2,200- \$2,500. Ian Cameron, Cameron 910-690-9852.

Old AC, \$5,500-\$7,500; JD 3010, \$8,500; JD-B, \$5,000. Jim Little, Wadesboro 704-465-0007.

NH 570 sq baler, EC, field ready, \$13,000. Michael Goodwin, New Hill 919-795-7821.

FARM EQUIPMENT

Newman 4-sided lumber planer, 70 +/- new 4'x10' cement Hog Slat farrowing crates w/pig feeders & water, \$1,000; 1-ton feed mixer; other equip, \$1,000. John Crisco, Oakboro 704-984-2040.

Razorback bush hog rotary cutter, 5 ft., GC, \$500. Raymond Baker, Graham 336-228-6572.

1969 Ford 3000 tractor, diesel, ps, live pto, good tires, used daily, GC, \$2,800. Reggie Llewellyn, Mt. Airy 336-648-5795.

1955 Ford 740 tricycle tractor, \$4,900. James Dickson, Mills River 828-775-5773.

Hay spear, 3pt, Ford 340 loader bucket, \$175; Ford loader or backhoe forks, \$450; MF 165, new rear rims/radiator, needs eng work, \$2,200; other equip. Brian Pool, Marion 828-442-7525.

Ford Redbelly tractor, ran when last used 5 yrs ago, \$500-\$2,000. Gary Matthews, Fuquay-Varina 919-810-5016.

Old Sears lawn tractor ST/16, w/mower, snow plow, disc harrow, moldboard plow & 3 pt/ bottom plow, \$2,500. William Stone, Boone 828-264-4481, nook7thru12@gmail.com.

Old Snapper push mower, will run, \$75; grass catcher for JD 345, used very little, \$150. Norman Miller, Granite Falls 828-312-2169.

F gleaner, 13 ft. grain head, diesel, FC, \$1,500. Jerry Beatty, Sherrills Ford 828-461-2766.

FARM EQUIPMENT

NH 273 sq baler, w/short tongue, wagon hitch & extended chute, barn kept, orig. owner, field ready, \$2,500. Frank Corriher, China Grove 704-202-8249.

Covered wagon w/tongue, 5x10 ft., new brakes & tires, front bucket seats & bench seat in rear on the side, \$2,000. nego. Sandra & Dale Weathers, Wendell 919-397-2382.

1969 MF 135, gas, live PTO, runs well, good tires, \$3,000. Gray Fisher, Kannapolis 704-785-7317.

Ford 8N tractor, GC, VG tires front & rear, \$2,800. Ray Outen, Lansing 336-982-4404.

AC d15 2-bottom plow, ps, belt pulley, snap hitch, ac, 3pt, GC, \$3,400; Oliver 770 rc, ps, 3pt, factory front wghts, good tires, runs well, \$3,400. David Honbarger, Salisbury 704-636-8208.

2017 RB448 Nolt's Produce raised bed mulch layer w/drip tape attach., \$2,000. Paul Hughes, Newland 828-208-3684.

JD pull scraper, model 200, hyd controlled, 2 yd dirt pan, \$750. Joel Henry Davis, Newport 252-241-7575.

Scoop pan, 3pt, used w/8N Ford tractor, GC, \$150. Henry Lambeth, Gibsonville 336-697-0510.

JD 24T sq baler, works great, GC, \$1,000-\$1,500. Andy Lutz, Bessemer City 704-913-0510.

FARM EQUIPMENT

JD 3020 64, row crop type, \$10,000. Vincent Milazzo, Monroe 704-236-8107.

Molasses cook pan, stainless steel, 240 gal., 4x8 ft., no welds in pan, 4 LP 8 ft. burners w/ tanks, on metal stand w/casters, \$1,200. Leonard Stafford, Oak Ridge 336-643-4990.

Cub Cadet mower/yard trailer, model 135-241-100, 28x41, 42 in. mower deck, 295 hrs., \$700 cash. Opal Campbell, Statesville 704-872-0841.

AC 7045 tractor, 3,100 hrs., VGC, 20.8x38 duals, tires 95%, \$12,000; IH 485 harrow, 22 ft., hyd fold, \$4,200. C.S. York, Staley 336-824-2085.

1949 Ford 8N show tractor, new tires, good body & paint, 12v solid state ignition, \$2,650. Mike Sells, Salisbury 704-633-3230.

JD tractors, \$700-\$7,500; JD 2-4 bottom plows; JD subsoiler, pull, 3pt, \$300-\$650; JD wagon; 3pt Garmon box scrape, tedder, angle scrape, other, \$200-\$1,250. Joe Ferguson, Newell 704-201-4363.

Onan generator, single phase 37.5 KVA/3-phase 57.6 KVA, 6-cyl Ford eng, LP/natural gas, \$4,500; Intl 184 Cub lowboy, 6 ft. deck, turf tires, EC, \$2,500. S. Troxler, Browns Summit 336-601-1006.

(2) Case 1150 crawlers, 4-in-1, (1) for parts, (1) needs batteries & fuel, \$10,500/both. Robert Parrish, Selma 919-965-9321.



Equipment Wanted

JD 10-20 tractor, gas or diesel, running or not. C. Johnson, Burlington 336-212-5943 or 214-4505.

AC D-10 or D-12 tractor, w/3pt hitch, cult a plus, not running ok. David Lloyd, Wake Forest 984-218-2566.

(2) rear wheels for a Mitsubishi MT4501 tractor, 8-lug, w/or w/o tires. Bill Dixon, Oxford 919-702-8204.

Combine tire, 23.1x26, gleaner F; gleaner F3, JD 4420 combine. Jefferson Smith, Asheboro 336-736-4205.

Boom pole for tractor, 3pt, \$100-\$150. Dewayne Griffin, Hallsboro 910-840-7215.

Ford 8N tractor or bigger Ford, running or not. Aron Lamar, Snow Camp 336-512-6682.

Radiator for Case 450 crawler 4-in-1. Robert Parrish, Selma 919-965-9321.



Farm Labor For Sale

Mowing, edging, trimming bushes, landscaping, mulching, leaf removal, \$50. Earl Passmore, Salisbury 704-640-3842.

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

Elect. fence box repair, ssc par-mak, \$20. Bobby Nichols, N. Wilkesboro 336-927-2850.



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.

Pasture land to rent in Chatham co. for cattle. Shawn Petty, Siler City 919-542-8360.



Hay & Grain For Sale

Fescue, lrg rnd bales, at barn, \$55/bale. B.R. Ferguson, Charlotte 704-591-2944.

2024 orchard grass, herbicide free, some lespedeza, min. weeds, feeds most farm animals, 200 sq bales, barn kept, discounted, \$6/bale. Mack Johnson, Raleigh 919-561-1879.

2025 fescue/orchard grass, 4x5, stored in barn, \$35. Larry York, Staley 336-824-2077.

2025 mixed grass hay, 4x5 rnd, shed stored, no rain, \$50. Mark Sloan, Olin 704-880-8892.

Fescue hay, horse quality, can deliv., \$8/bale. Allen Moore, Sumnerfield 336-706-1157.

2025 mixed grass, sq bales, no rain, no min. purchase, \$5/bale. Call/text Nick Gray, Concord 704-960-5091.

Fescue/orchard grass mix, horse quality, stored inside, no rain, fert field, 95% weed free, \$30-\$40. Randy Josey, Statesville 704-880-7964.

Orchard grass, no rain, barn kept, sq bales, \$9/bale. Kenneth Chilton, Pilot Mtn. 336-374-2410.

Horse hay, 4x5 md, 1st cutting, no rain, no chemicals, stored in dry, \$40/bale. Alice Davis, Salisbury 704-855-4930.

Coastal bermuda hay, 4x4 & 4x5 bales, horse quality, stored under shelter, \$45 & \$50/bale. Dan Lancaster, Pikeville 919-222-6853.

'25 peanut hay, net wrapped, 4.5x5 rnd, can deliv. 42 bales/load, \$30-\$35/bale. Larry Bullock, Greenville 252-883-4748.

Coastal bermuda hay, horse quality, lrg sq bales, \$7/bale; 4x5 md, \$45/bale. Jim Newton, Rockingham 910-995-1223.

2025 mixed hay, no rain, min. purchase 25 bales, \$6/bale. Vernon Hill, Mt. Pleasant 980-621-5091.

2025 horse quality coastal bermuda hay, out of barn/shelter, \$8/bale; out of field, we load, \$7.50/bale. Gary White, Sanford 919-775-9769.

Orchard grass/fescue, 4x5, net wrapped, horse quality, no rain/weeds, sheltered, \$50/rl; cow/goat mixed grass, net wrapped, 4x5 rls, sheltered, \$40/rl. Jay Hohn, Archdale 336-289-3686.

2025 horse quality hay, 4x5 md, 1st cutting, \$40/bale; sq bales, 2nd cutting, \$7/bale. Joe Snow, Thurmond 336-648-5997.

Horse quality hay, orchard grass/fescue, \$50/md bale; orchard grass, \$7/sq bale. Johnny Sowers, Lexington 336-239-3020.

HAY & GRAIN

Fescue, 4x5 rnd, \$50/bale; mixed grass, 4x5, \$40/bale. Ronnie Brogden, Creedmoor 919-528-1767.

Fescue, sq bales, \$6 ea.; rnd bales, \$50 ea. Thomas Berrier, Lexington 336-764-1051.

Horse quality hay, deliv. avail, in barn, \$40/rl; outside, \$30/rl. H. Davis, Reidsville 336-260-7606.



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 senior 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 919-742-5053.

Reg miniature horse, 9-yr. stud, true conformation, flaxen mane & tail, sorrel w/star on forehead, \$2,000. A. Hyson, Manson 252-432-0172.



Livestock For Sale

Polled Hereford heifer, ready to breed, \$3/lb.; polled Hereford bulls, \$3/lb. Randy Davis, Elon 336-263-8163.

Tiberian yaks in Alexander co., climatized to foothills heat, starter herd of bull, (2) heifers, 2 y/o, \$2,500. Susan Mitchell, Hiddenite 828-406-0747.

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

St. Croix rams, reg, born 12/22 & 05/23, grass fed, no worming, \$350 ea. R. Harrell, Salisbury 704-224-9969.

Charolais bulls & heifers, polled, gentle, purebred, out of reg sires, 7 mos & up, \$2,000 & up. Johnny Harrison, Salisbury 704-213-0857.

SimAngus herd bulls, blk, polled, bred for calving ease, muscle, growth & disposition, \$4,000. William Pyle, Franklinton 919-215-5677.

Fainting buck, dob 3/24, from fainting herd, healthy, white w/brown/blk head, \$100. Dodd Linker, Clemmons 336-712-2484.

8 Reg Angus heifers, weaned & vaccs, born fall 2024, dams area proven, efficient cows, good feet & disposition, \$3,000 ea. Steve McPherson, Snow Camp 919-444-5307.

LIVESTOCK

Male Kune Kune, 2 y/o, intact, \$125-\$150; mixed female Gulf Coast & Katahdin sheep, 4 m/o, \$125-\$150; weaned mixed feeder pigs, \$20-\$60. Kay Cousins, Enfield 252-567-1513.

Boer/Kiko replacement nannies, 6-8 m/o, dapple & tri-colored, closed SRQA certified farm, \$150-\$200. David Deatherage, Gibsonville 336-210-4355.



Poultry & Supplies For Sale

Muscovy ducks, 4 w/o, straight run, \$10 ea. James King, Liberty 336-622-3712.

Baby turkeys, \$12; Bourbon Red poults, \$15; Bourbon Red & Blk Spanish toms & hens, \$50. George Silvia, Salisbury 980-892-3262.

Chicken netting, 10x10; (2) lrg plastic barrel nests for chickens or ducks; (1) pond liner, 12x12; blk rubber feed dishes, \$1-\$20. Roger Melville, Charlotte 980-355-5907.

Guinea fowl keets, assorted colors, \$6. Vanessa Black, Laurinburg 910-384-2175.

Java pullets & cockerels, 15 w/o, blk & mottled, gentle, good layers & table bird, NPIP cert, \$15-\$20. Deborah Underwood Brown, Holly Springs 919-971-4298.

Dark Cornish bantams, exhibition/show quality, cockerels & pullets avail., \$40 ea. Farrell Thornburg, Asheboro 336-302-5438.

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.

Bobwhite quail, \$5.75 ea.; Ringneck pheasants, \$15 ea. Curtis Meissner, Bostic 609-273-2230.



Poultry & Supplies Wanted

Common pigeons, like barn or city pigeons; no homers unless low price, \$5-\$8. Matthew Holtz, Creedmoor 919-847-6336.



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.

SEEDS & PLANTS

Healthy, potted muscadine & scuppermon vines, several varieties, \$25. Bob Whitaker, Mocksville 336-469-4822, do not text.



Supplies For Sale

Burn barrels, \$10 ea.; feed barrels, \$20 ea.; water totes, \$100 ea.; solid top plastic barrels, 15/30/55-gal., \$10 ea. Jeff Brittain, Hickory 828-327-4782.

Fire barrel w/top, 250 gal., \$150. Steve Plott, Concord 704-782-2778.

Fuel tanks, 2,000 gal. & 4,000 gal., \$1,600 & \$2,000. Miles Little, Midland 704-791-1438.

Old farm supplies, \$1 & up. N. Lee, Advance 336-998-8922, nights.

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

Molasses cook pan, stainless steel, 240 gal., 4x8 ft., no welds in pan, 4 LP 8 ft. burners w/tanks, on metal stand w/casters, \$1,200. Leonard Stafford, Oak Ridge 336-643-4990.

Cedar posts, 5" x 8', \$5 ea. Ben Luthy, Union Grove 336-468-6597.

Custom metal dump utility box, 3pt, 4x4x2, EC, \$150; old cast iron wash pot, 20-gal., EC, \$150. Jack Matthews, Charlotte 704-846-1903.



Trucks & Trailers For Sale

1967 & 1973 Ford F-250 for repair, dual wheels, same size motors, (1) w/9 ft. metal dump bed, \$1,500/both. Robert Pardue, Ronda 336-835-2602 or 927-3684.

Lrg truck tool bed chest for pickup, \$50-\$75. Roger Melville, Charlotte 980-355-5907, rjmelvillejr@live.com.

1989 Ford F-150, 4x4 short bed, towing package, auto, \$4,800. Wayne Dickerson, Ruffin 336-552-6284.

2015 fiberglass camper top for F-350 long bed, fits 2015-2008, new blk paint, \$2,000. James Funderburk, Lincolnton 704-736-5409.

20' Kaufman flatbed trailer w/dovetail, no gooseneck, pocket ramps, doub axle, GC, \$4,000 firm. David Simonson, Statesville 704-450-7335.

Gooseneck trailer, 19 ft., \$750. Mike Sells, Salisbury 704-633-3230.

Calico cow trailer, 16 ft., gooseneck, \$8,950; equip. trailer, 7x20, \$2,850. H. Davis, Reidsville 336-260-7606.



Trucks & Trailers Wanted

Hog trailer, single axle, \$500. Dewayne Griffin, Hallsboro 910-840-7215.

Discovering NC Agriculture: Meet the NC Tomato Man

Discovering NC Agriculture is a year-long series focusing on twelve N.C. grown, raised, caught, and made commodities. 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!

You say toMAYto, I say toMAHto – the NC Tomato Man says heirloom tomatoes!

The Tomato Man, aka Craig LeHoullier, has been growing heirloom tomatoes in his garden since 1981. His love of gardening was born long before he started his first garden. LeHoullier has fond memories of walking around his father's and grandfather's gardens when he was a kid, watching them care for their plants and helping them work. His tomato garden is located in Hendersonville and is planted entirely above ground in either containers or hay bales.

But how'd he come to be known as the NC Tomato Man?

"Well, I'd have to blame myself," LeHoullier laughed while recounting how he got his nickname. After he left his corporate job in biopharmaceuticals, he had to create a new email and decided on the address NC Tomato Man. The name stuck and, over the years, it's become his calling card. Today, the NC Tomato Man has a social media following of 13K on Instagram where he shares updates on his garden and offers advice.

Heirloom tomatoes are tomatoes that haven't been cross bred for 40-50 years and are not a hybrid variety. These tomatoes come from a single genetic line and are essentially the pure breed of the tomato world. These tomatoes are very colorful and have many unique flavors. They also can be grown from seed, are open-pollinated – just be careful because if you plant two different types of tomatoes close to each other you may end up with a new variety! There's no official count on how many varieties of heirloom tomatoes there are, but there's an estimated 3,000 in active cultivation.

Another thing that makes these tomatoes so notable is the fact that they often have rich stories and history attached to them. LeHoullier is a major part of one of these tomatoes' history. In 1990, John Green of Sevierville, Tenn., mailed him the seeds and shared that the tomato had originated with the Cherokee people of the area over 100 years earlier. LeHoullier grew the tomato and gave it its now iconic name: the Cherokee Purple.



Craig LeHoullier, affectionately known as the NC Tomato Man, started growing heirloom tomatoes in his garden in 1981.



Today, he has a collection of several thousand heirloom tomatoes and this year he's growing around 80 different varieties. He uses some of the skills he learned while working in the pharmaceutical industry to help manage data on the tomatoes he's growing, and his good memory helps him keep track of the types of care that each plant needs. Because tomato gardening is seasonal, and he typically does the bulk of his work during the summer, LeHoullier takes the rest of the year to recover.

For gardeners looking to try their hand at growing their own heirloom tomatoes, LeHoullier shared some advice to help ensure their success. "They tend to be very tall plants, so you need to be able to vertically support them," he shared. However, he's found

that, overall, they grow just as well, if not better, than hybrid tomatoes. For people who spend a lot of time out in their gardens, he believes that they will have no problem growing these delicious tomatoes.

If you're looking for more advice or are just interested in learning more about heirloom tomatoes, you can visit his Instagram page or website where he posts regular videos and blog posts. LeHoullier is also the author of "Epic Tomatoes" and "Growing Vegetables in Straw Bales." Both of these books would be good places to start for those interested in growing tomatoes!

At All American Produce, tomato season never stops

Tomatoes are an important and versatile crop for our state's agriculture industry! From greenhouse grown tomatoes to field tomatoes, farmers across the state work hard to produce fresh tomatoes for customers, restaurants and others to enjoy. All American Produce, located in Garland, has been a major player in the tomato industry since 2020, growing over 100 acres of tomatoes each year.

William Augustine, Jr., president of All American Produce Company, is a fourth-generation farmer. Raised on a blueberry farm, William learned the ins-and-outs of the industry at a young age and quickly fell in love with agriculture. "I grew up learning at the hand of my father, who continues to farm with us to this day," he said. "In 2001, we started looking to diversify the products that we offer, which is when I started looking at tomatoes." Today, between 20 and 25 crops are grown each year at All American Produce, including tomatoes, blueberries, cucumbers and broccoli.

As Italians, William and his family have always loved tomatoes. "Tomatoes are the foundation of many Italian dishes, like pasta sauces," William said. "As someone who truly enjoys all varieties of tomatoes, I wanted to experiment with growing my own." In 2014, William started with six greenhouses to grow Roma, Round and Grape

tomatoes. Today, he operates 160 greenhouses, totaling 80 acres of greenhouse tomatoes, as well as 30-40 acres of field tomatoes. "All American Produce was a pioneer farm in North Carolina for the use of high tunnels in growing tomatoes," William said. "Utilizing both high tunnels and our fields gives us the ability to have fresh tomatoes from May to November each year." Although tomatoes are available just seven months out of the year, the All American Produce team never stops planning for tomato season.

Growing tomatoes is a year-round process for William and his team. "We start six months ahead of harvest season to ensure everything is planned correctly," William said. "This means that we are starting to plan for the next tomato season before the current one is over." All tomatoes grown at All American Produce are vine-ripe tomatoes, which helps maintain the color and flavor throughout the season and beyond. The full cycle of their tomatoes from planting to table is 120 days.

William and his team pick tomatoes once they turn color, ensuring they are ripe and ready to be taken off the vine. Once harvested, all tomatoes are brought to the warehouse on-site to be sorted and packed into a variety of products, including Pretty Girl Organic Tomatoes, Pretty Boy Organic Tomatoes, Grape Tomatoes and more. "With the high tunnels providing a controlled environment, we are able to harvest



tomatoes longer without sacrificing the quality," William said. "Our farm manager, Cale Tart, does an amazing job with this, as well as the quality of our other produce items, every year." Tomatoes and other products from All American Produce Company can be found in a variety of restaurants and bars across the state, as well as many grocery store chains like Wegmans, Food Lion, Walmart and Harris Teeter.

All American Produce is currently working on many exciting projects,



All American Produce in Garland grows over 100 acres of tomatoes each year.

including a brand revamp, to bring more customers and awareness to the farm. "We put a lot of thought and hard work into all of our products, so we want people to pick them up and fall in love with them," said Virginia Torres, marketing director of All American Produce. "We know that once people try our products, they will fall in love with the quality and flavor. Getting them to invest is the first step." Keep an eye out for new packaging and announcements on their website and social media pages!

Although William enjoys tomatoes in a variety of ways, two of his favorites are pasta sauce and a fresh BLT. "We

all touch a tomato every day of our life in some form," he said. "That's why we grow a lot of them at All American Produce because we know that people love them and use them consistently." Not only are tomatoes rich in flavor, but also antioxidants that protect against depression and fight mood stabilization. We are so thankful to William and his team for all their hard work in the tomato industry. From trailblazing the way in high tunnel growth to the high quality of products they present today, they are a major player in the tomato industry that will continue to prove impactful for years to come!