

NC Cooperative Extension, Craven Center

Agricultural Update



November 2024

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Important Note: Registration deadline for events listed below will vary from as few as 24 hours prior the event to as much as 3-4 days prior the event so please register as much in advance as possible. Also, while attendance is open to anyone, meals, when served, will only be provided for those that register in advance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tobacco variety webinar - Join us on December 19th at 9:00 a.m. for a flue-cured tobacco variety webinar! This event will feature Dr. Ramsey Lewis, NC State Tobacco Breeder, and Dr. Matthew Vann, NC State Tobacco Agronomist. They will cover new genetics and up-to-date yield information that has been recorded from 2020 – 2024. Registration is required at <https://go.ncsu.edu/tobaccovariety2024>

Virtual Workshop for Small Farmers in North Carolina - On December 10, 2024, beginning at 6:30 PM via Zoom (Link will be provided after registration) researchers, Dr. Obed Quaicoe, Dr. Kenrett Jefferson-Moore, and Dr. Jarvetta Bynum will address issues that farmers in NC face, value-added consumer questionnaire feedback, specialty crop focus group data, and current research information/opportunities. This workshop will include:

- \$25 Target Gift Card for Attendance
- Current Research Information/Opportunities
- Value-added Consumer Questionnaire Feedback
- Specialty Crop Focus Group Data

To reserve your place, please contact Jarvetta Bynum at (336) 508-1229 or email her at jsbynum@ncat.edu

Animal Waste Recertification Credits – Classes below offer virtual and in-person recertification credits for animal waste applicators.

In-Person (Contact the appropriate NC Cooperative Extension for details)

Duplin County - 2 chances: Friday Nov. 22nd & Tuesday Dec. 3rd

Hoke County - December 2nd

Greene County-December 5th

Cumberland County - December 5th

Sampson County - December 6th

Wayne County- December 4th

Bladen County - December 10th

Eastern North Carolina Certified Crop Advisory Training: This event will provide 20 hours of credits for Certified Crop Advisors. The tentative date for this event (awaiting approval from National CCA) will be December 10-12, 2024 at the Johnston County Extension office, 2736 Hwy 210, Smithfield, NC. More information will follow once final plans have been approved.

34th Annual NC Commodity Conference – Join the grain and cotton industry December 8-10th to gain access to the latest trends, tools, and predictions to continue thriving within your sector. The event features include keynote presentations, commodity and legislative updates, production sessions and panel discussions. The event will be held Sheraton Imperial Hotel 4700 Emperor Blvd, Durham, NC 27703 Durham, NC **(919) 941-5050**. Secure your stay with preferred rate today under NC Commodity Conference room block. The agenda, registration and additional information is found at the [NC Commodity Conference website](#).

The North Carolina Vegetable Growers Association and NC Cooperative Extension will host the **2024 Vegetable & Fruit Expo** in Myrtle Beach, December 3-4. This event includes a trade show, educational sessions, and pesticide credits. For more information or to register, click [here](#).

Private Applicator License Renewal Information

The NCDA & CS extended the recertification period due to the hurricane so they have not sent out renewals yet. They will do so some time in late December. As such, watch your mail and send it back to them immediately to meet December 31st deadline. As alternative, you can pay online any time at the [NCDA & CS Pesticide Division's website](#).



\$10,000 UMO AgPrime Grants Available

The University of Mount Olive Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center is pleased to announce a new round of funding of the UMO AgPrime Grant Program!

This project provides up to \$10,000 for new or innovative agricultural project ideas to eligible North Carolina farmers located within Pamlico and 32 other selected counties. Applications are now open but are due by 5:00 p.m. on December 16, 2024. The application and instructions can be found by [CLICKING HERE](#).

For additional information or assistance with the process, contact:

Ed Emory, UMO AgPrime, email: semory@umo.edu or call (910) 290-1002

Dr. Stan Dixon, UMO AgPrime, email: william.dixon@umo.edu or call (252) 526-1587

The Shape of Things to Come: Communication with Legislation

Reduction of greenhouse gases, increasing carbon storage, and utilization of less energy are three goals that continue to gain traction within industry regarding agricultural production and processing. In fact, California has recently passed two bills, one [SB-253](#) requires business entities operating within California with sales more than \$1 billion to report greenhouse gas emission and [SB-261](#) requires business entities to disclose their climate-related financial risks and countermeasures. McDonalds just announced an agreement with Syngenta to create a more sustainable hamburger by utilizing [Enogen](#), a corn that quickly converts starches to usable sugars to provide more readily available energy to cattle. Other companies have set goals to be “net zero greenhouse gases” or “sustainably produced” by 2030. Some states are examining a ban on “factory farming”.

This trend has several facts that merit discussion. First, for some words such as “sustainable farming” or “factory farms”, there is no consensus regarding what these terms actually mean. They are just buzzwords. Secondly, some of financial incentive from the Inflation Reduction Act address climate issues. However, there has been no clarification how farmers will actually be rewarded or included in any these financial incentive. As such, we encourage you to stay alert of these types of business efforts, pledges, and promises so that you can discuss them with local, state and federal representatives. Annual sales of farm products (field crops and livestock) within Craven typically exceeds \$60 million. Adding to this economic contribution to our economy is the added support jobs. Too, many of our farm products are processed within NC and shipped to other states and countries. Thus, agriculture continues to be a leading industry within NC. As we proceed toward climate goals, make sure your voice is heard and that you too receive the proper financial incentives, not just our corporations.



With a greater emphasis on farmers implementing cover crops and increasing incentives for farmers to adapt this practice, we have received numerous calls concerning the true value of cover crops.

Thus, we once more state that it is critical that you have a specific goal that you wish to accomplish by using cover crops. Essentially, one must understand what can and cannot be done in Eastern NC by planting cover crops!

Carbon sequestration in soils is one good example. Many support the use of reduced tillage and reduced inputs to increase soil carbon as well as reduce energy cost associated with crop production. However, increases in soil carbon require a climate that will allow such. NC State University has decades of tillage comparisons with no meaningful, significant, measurable soil differences. Yes, the no-till almost always provides greater yield in years of low rainfall. And, yes, in wet years the role is reversed and conventional tillage provides greater yield. However, many of the measurable soil parameters such as carbon content, organic matter content, soil bulk density, and other items that may be used to measure soil "quality" change very little, if at all, over time, regardless of the tillage system for most of our soils. Our environment is simply such that organic matter decomposes almost all year long. As such, we simply cannot meet many of the "proposed" carbon increases desired. So, should you be provided the opportunity to receive funding to change to reduced or no-till practices with cover crops, if it fits within your operation, then do so. However, should financial incentives be tied to a measurable increase, then it is probably best to avoid this agreement.

One must realize that to obtain desired cover crop biomass in the spring, the cover crop needs to be planted as soon as the primary crop is mature and harvested. Two examples, corn and early maturing soybeans, will actually mature in August or September. However, harvest is delayed until grain moisture is low for corn and when the soybean stems and pods are dry for soybean. This additional time waiting for favorable harvest of the crop allows rainfall to leach nitrogen and potassium from the soil. Soil microbes also increase using nutrients already in the soil. As such, when we finally do plant cover crops months after the crop is actually "physiologically mature", many of the soil nutrients have leached. Too, it is likely to be later in the season when cooler weather will slow cover crop growth. As such, we simply do not realize the full potential of developing large amounts of cover crop biomass.

This is not to say that cover crops do not have great merit. They do indeed! Cover crop residue left on soil surface affords rainfall to soak into the soil near the point of impact rather than flowing along the soil surface to the lowest spots. Thus, primary crops utilize water better! This also allows equipment entry into the field faster. Too, the cover crop protects against early season wind and wind-blown sand during early season primary crop emergence. Recent research shows that many cover crops decrease harmful nematode populations while increasing beneficial microbes. Lastly, cover crop biomass will aid in reduction of some weed seeds. However, significantly increasing soil organic matter or sequestering carbon is not a likely outcome of cover crop implementation for most soils in this area with current technology. Sorry, it is simply the reality between an "ideal, hopeful outcome" and "reality".

Podcast

Two podcasts that are released regularly by Extension regarding crop production within this area are listed below:

CropSense: Jacob Morgan, Director of Jones County Extension, produces weekly podcast with NCSU faculty and industry. If you would like to listen to these podcasts, visit, <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1780395/12734496> or email him directly.

Corn Kernels - Dr. Ron Heiniger will post information regularly. See details in this newsletter under the section, "[Corn News](#)".

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Recommendations for the use of agricultural chemicals are included in this publication as a convenience to the reader. The use of brand names and any mention or listing of commercial products or services in this publication does not imply endorsement by the NC Cooperative Extension Service nor discrimination against similar products or services not mentioned. Individuals who use agricultural chemicals are responsible for ensuring that the intended use complies with current regulations and conforms to the product label. Be sure to obtain current information about usage regulations and examine a current product label before applying any product.

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