

Small Farms on The Move

March 2021

35TH ANNUAL SMALL FARMS WEEK SET FOR MARCH 21-27

Small Farms Week

35 Years: Resilience. Strength. Diversity.

March 21-27, 2021

North Carolina A&T State University's annual tribute to small-scale agriculture will begin March 21 and will feature educational

programs, panel discussions, and the unveiling of a new Small Farmer of the Year.

All events will be held virtually, and farmers and interested members of the public can sign up free of charge at the [Small Farms Week registration webpage](#).

Small Farms Week was launched in 1987 by Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T as a way to connect with small-scale farmers – including minority farmers and those in limited-resource communities – and ensure they receive the latest research-based information on farming techniques, new tools, and technologies. It also gives the public a chance to meet their agricultural neighbors and learn about farm operations and food production. The theme for this year's celebration is "35 Years: Resilience. Strength. Diversity."

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James Hartsfield, Sampson County Extension Farm Management Agent, and I will continue to provide farmers with important information on timely topics and upcoming events. If you are interested in learning more about any information in this newsletter, contact me at the Extension Center or e-mail me at Nelson_Brownlee@ncsu.edu.



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ABOUT N.C. COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

N.C. Cooperative Extension is a strategic partnership of NC State Extension, The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University, USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA), and local governments statewide. Extension professionals in all 100 counties and with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians connect millions of North Carolinians with research-based information and technology from NC State and N.C. A&T. Educational programs specialize in agriculture, food and nutrition, 4-H youth development, community development and the environment.

“Our small farmers have to be strong and resilient, even in the best of times,” said Rosalind Dale, Ed.D., Extension Administrator at N.C. A&T and Associate Dean in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES). “The last year has required extra resourcefulness because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Small Farms Week gives our farmers a needed chance to take a breath, educate themselves, and take advantage of all the resources Cooperative Extension has to offer.”

A virtual kickoff event for Small Farms Week 2021 will take place Friday, March 19, in Avery County, the location of Trosly Farm, owned by Amos and Kaci Nidiffer, the 2020 Small Farmers of the Year. Events will begin at 9 a.m. and will include a profile of agriculture in Avery County and a discussion of agricultural trends in the county featuring three local farmers. The kickoff will also recognize the Nidiffers for their 2020 Small Farmer of the Year Award.

On Monday, March 22, and Tuesday, March 23, educational events will focus on the health benefits of community gardening including boosting your immune system during the pandemic, plant and livestock production, farm management and winter production in high tunnels. Wednesday, March 24, will start with an educational forum on marketing and agribusiness followed by an update on small farms initiatives by staff with Cooperative Extension and the CAES.

Wednesday will also feature one of the highlights of Small Farms Week: The Virtual Small Farmers’ Appreciation Program, with a keynote address by Jimmy Gentry, President of the NC Grange, and the announcement of the 2021 Small Farmer of the Year.

“The Small Farmer of the Year Award puts a face on farming and introduces our communities to the people behind the farming operations they depend on,” said Dale. “These are people who work year-round without any recognition, so it is a pleasure to learn about their work and thank them for their efforts.”

Small Farms Week events will conclude Thursday, March 25, with a panel discussion among N.C. A&T students on career opportunities in agriculture.

There will also be a local event to highlight North Carolina Small Farms Week. On March 22, there will be a Regional Virtual Workshop, “Plasticulture Equipment Rental Program for Small Farmers.” The workshop will be from 2-3 p.m. For more information on the workshop and Small Farms Week, please call Nelson Brownlee at 910-671-3276.

RISK MANAGEMENT BASICS: WHAT EVERY FARMER NEEDS TO KNOW

Agriculture producers make decisions in a risky environment every day. The two situations that most concern agriculture producers are: 1) is there a high probability of adverse consequences, and 2) would those adverse consequences significantly disrupt the business? With the Coronavirus pandemic currently still sweeping the globe, producers are faced with decisions which could have major impacts on their farm operations.

Risk – What is it?

- Chance of loss



- Likelihood/probability of adverse outcome
- Uncertain consequences
- Exposure to hazard, peril, or potential loss

Two Components of Risk

- Frequency of loss
- Severity of loss

Primary Sources of Risk

- Production
- Marketing
- Financial
- Human Resource
- Legal

Production Risk – What is it?

- Any crop or livestock production related activity or event that is uncertain.

Common Tools for Managing Production Risks

- Enterprise choice
- Diversification is an effective way of reducing income variability and enhancing profitability.
- Contract production is contracts between farmers and agribusinesses specifying certain conditions associated with producing an agricultural product.
- Crop insurance
- Revenue insurance
- Applying new technologies on the farm
- Best management practices

Marketing Risk - What is it?

- Any marketing related activity or event that is uncertain leading to variability of prices for outputs and/or inputs.

Common Tools for Managing Marketing Risks

- Marketing plan
- Revenue insurance
- Vertical integration includes all the ways that output from the stage of production is transferred to another.
- Value-added products
- Contract production is contracts between farmers and agribusinesses specifying certain conditions associated with marketing an agricultural product.
- Stock Market options
- Marketing cooperative
- Direct marketing

Financial Risk – What is it?

- Any uncertainty that directly threatens the financial health of the farm business or results in financial loss.

Common Tools for Managing Financial Risks

- Recordkeeping and analysis
- Budgeting
- Insurance
- Pay down debt
- Family living expenses
- Estate Planning
- Off-farm employment

Human Resource Risk – What is it?

- Any event relative to the human element of the farm that is uncertain.

Common Tools for Managing Human Risks

- Develop and maintain operating procedures for farm (employee procedures and management practices)
- Good family and labor relations
- Disability, health, and life insurance
- Estate/transition plan

Legal Risk – What is it?

- Any activity or event that threatens the legal standing of the farm or puts the farm in legal jeopardy.

Common Tools for Managing Legal Risks

- Legal business entity
- Insurance
- Contracting
- Estate/transition plan
- Government actions and regulations affecting your operations

Risk Management Priorities

- Minimize safety risks - nothing is more important than safety!!!
- Use good agricultural practices
- Support your neighbors
- Property, liability, and health insurance
- Pay attention to business management

A bend in the road is not the end of the road, unless you fail to make the turn. Risk management is all about anticipating the bends in the road and successfully making the turns.

WHAT KINDS OF FINANCIAL RECORDS DO I NEED TO KEEP?



In order to get ready for the 2021 farm season, farmers need to know their production costs to make good management decisions. Management is a process in which information is the input and decisions are the output. Budgets provide information for farm management decisions. An enterprise budget is an estimate of projected income and expenses associated with the production of a commodity. Once you know your production costs, then you can decide what prices are needed to make a profit.

Most agriculture operations are made up of a combination of several crops and/or livestock. Enterprise budgets break the operation down into segments in order to tell which commodity is contributing to profitability and which commodity is losing money. An enterprise is a distinct part of the farm business that can be analyzed separately and is usually based on some production unit, such as an acre of corn or one breeding cow.

Enterprise budgets can be either historical or projected. Historical enterprise budgets are the same as income statements by enterprise and are created using actual income and expense information. Projected enterprise budgets attempt to estimate income and expenses in the future.

A business-minded producer will evaluate each commodity within his/her operation to determine where he/she is making money and where he is not. Budgets can help identify this as well as areas where he could cut costs and become more efficient, breakeven prices for marketing, and the operations level of risk exposure within his/her enterprises.

For more information on enterprise budgeting, please contact Nelson Brownlee at 910- 671- 3276.

UPCOMING EVENTS
(SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

March 22, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. -- Regional Virtual Plasticulture Workshop for Farmers – Farmers will have the opportunity to learn about plasticulture and drip irrigation, how to setup and use the plastic layer equipment, and the plasticulture equipment rental program for small farmers.

Please click on the following link to join:

<https://ncat.zoom.us/j/93424868198?pwd=ZzgvL1p0dmdKRXRhOUtSSU5tVWRYQT09>

For more information, please contact Nelson Brownlee at 910-671-3276.

September -- Linking Small Farmers to USDA - NRCS and FSA Outreach Meeting - USDA representatives will be discussing USDA programs. *Dates to be announced.*

October 1 - 9, 2021 -- 74th Robeson Regional Agricultural Fair, Robeson County Fairgrounds, Highway 41 South, Lumberton – There will be lots of rides and entertainment, farm exhibits, great food, and fun. Come join us at the Fair!

