

NOVEMBER 1, 2024

Robeson County



SMALL FARMS ON THE MOVE NEWSLETTER



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● TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOIL TESTING

Soil testing is a service provided by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) at their Agronomic Division in Raleigh that will assess the present levels of major plant nutrients, soil pH, and micronutrients. You can pick up free kits at your local Extension Center. Soil samples are currently free through November 26. For more info, visit <https://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/>

If you are interested in learning more about any information in this newsletter, contact the Extension Center at 910-671-32-76 or visit our website at robeson.ces.ncsu.edu. For accommodations for persons with disabilities, contact Cooperative Extension no later than ten (10) business days before the event.

Nelson Brownlee
Extension Agent
Agriculture - Small Farms
Email: Nelson.Brownlee@ncsu.edu

● A word from Nelson Brownlee

After a three-year hiatus, the “Small Farms on the Move Newsletter” has returned to provide small farmers in Southeastern North Carolina with important information on timely topics and upcoming events. Please do not hesitate to call North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson Center if you need any assistance.

Thanks,
Nelson Brownlee

Robeson County Center
O. P. Owens Agriculture Center
P. O. Box 2280
455 Caton Road
Lumberton, NC 28359

Phone - 910-671-3276
Fax - 910-671-6278
Website - robeson.ces.ncsu.edu

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Test Now to Avoid Peak Season Testing Fee

In today's economy, consumers are always looking for ways to save money. One of the most practical ways to save money is to have your soil tested. Soil testing is a service provided by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at their Agronomic Division in Raleigh. For the eleventh consecutive year, a \$4 fee will be charged for all soil samples processed by the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division during its busiest season: December through March. There is no fee from April through the end of November. Fees for other specific tests including plant tissue analysis, solution analysis, and nematodes will remain the same. So, it's very important to get your samples to Raleigh by November 26, to avoid the new fees.



For farmers, soil testing is the first step in planning an economical and environmentally – sound fertilization program. The efficient use of nutrients can help reduce fertilizer costs, and environmental concerns without reducing yield or quality. This requires a well-planned fertilization program based on soil sampling, wise selection of nutrients based on needs and costs, and proper application of fertilizers. For homeowners, soil testing takes the guesswork out of maintaining the soil in optimum condition for plant growth and development.

Collect samples three to six months before planting time, taking good samples, filling out paperwork properly, and packaging samples for delivery in a well-organized manner.



Soil Sample Kit

Risk Management Basics:

What Every Farmer Needs to Know

Agricultural 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?

Common Tools for Managing Production Risks:

- Enterprise choice
- Diversification is an effective way of reducing income variability and enhance profitability
- Crop and revenue insurance
- Applying new technologies on the farm
- Best management practices

Common Tools for Managing Marketing Risks:

- Marketing plan
- Revenue insurance
- Value-added products
- Marketing cooperative
- Direct marketing

Common Tools for Managing Financial Risks:

- Recordkeeping and budgeting
- Insurance
- Pay down debt
- Estate planning and family living expenses
- Off-farm employment

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, life insurance
- Estate and transition plan

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

Summary

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.

Biosecurity: Steps to Keeping Your Livestock Healthy

Biosecurity at the farm level refers to measures taken to prevent pests or diseases from entering your premises and to control outbreaks if they do occur. This is particularly important if you own or work with animals. Two basic Biosecurity measures for protecting livestock from diseases are :

- purchasing healthy stock
- preventing any exposure to disease organisms.

Other preventive measures include proper nutrition, sanitation, and controlling animal and human traffic on and off the farm. If disease occurs, control measures include early detection and treatment.

It does not matter if you are a large-scale producer or a non-commercial livestock owner; you have the responsibility for keeping your animals healthy. Below are seven simple steps you can adopt on your property.

1. Regularly check animals for unusual disease symptoms and immediately report them to your local veterinarian or livestock professional.
2. Develop proper signage.
3. Keep farm vehicles and equipment clean.
4. Manage the movement of visitors on your property.
5. Limit the use of your machinery or equipment that is also used to travel to common livestock locations (e.g., feed store, stockyard)
6. Quarantine new animals and/or sick animals on the farm.
7. Do not allow your feed and water and to become contaminated with manure or other animal waste.



For more information on Biosecurity, please contact the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center.

Upcoming Events

Robeson County Farmers Market

Wednesdays 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Saturdays 7:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.

Located at the corner of 3rd and Water Street, downtown Lumberton

Continuing Education Credits for Animal Waste Management Operators There will be an opportunity to attend a six-hour class on November 30, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.. You can also attend this class if you need partial credit (1 or 2 hours). Classes will be held at North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, located at 455 Caton Road in Lumberton, North Carolina. Registration deadline for in-person class is November 20. To register please use the following link: <https://go.ncsu.edu/wastemgmt24>

“Linking Small Farmers to USDA”

Outreach Meeting on Linking Resources to Farmers and Landowners

December 4, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Powell-Melvin Service Center, 450 Smith Circle, Elizabethtown, NC 28337.

You are invited to attend an Outreach meeting that focuses on USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Risk Management Agency (RMA), and the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) programs. The meeting is designed to inform farmers and landowners of the various programs that will provide financial assistance for their farms and provide resource information for rural communities. You will also receive information about Cooperative Extension’s Small Farms programs and North Carolina Department of Agriculture programs.

Please register by Tuesday, December 3, 2024, by using the following link:

<https://go.ncsu.edu/smallfarmersnewprogram>

SARE Cover Crops Training for Farmers

Thursday December 5, 11:00 a.m.

New Grounds Farm, 292 Alvin Road, Pembroke, NC 28372.

For more information, or to register, please contact Nelson Brownlee, at 671-3276 or by email at nelson_brownlee@ncsu.edu

2025 Beginning Beekeeper School

January 28, February 5, 26, March 5, 12, and 26

O.P. Owens Ag Center, 455 Caton Road, Lumberton, North Carolina 28360

Two topics will be taught each night by experienced beekeepers. A fee of \$45 will be charged (due the first night of the class) will be charged which covers registration, textbook, handouts, and first year’s registration in the Robeson Area Beekeepers Association. (please make checks payable to Robeson Area Beekeepers Association). Class is limited to the first 30 to register, so call immediately to reserve your space.

2025 North Carolina Small Farms Week

March 23-29, 2025

The Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T will coordinate various programs honoring small farmers. The theme for the week is “Next Gen Agriculture” The kickoff for the week will be held on Monday, March 24, in Warren County. On Wednesday March 26, the Small Farmers Recognition Luncheon announcing the 2025 North Carolina Small Farmer of the Year will be held in Greensboro. The closeout for the week will be held March 28, in Cumberland County. Look for more updates later.