



# 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 \$4 per a kit through March 31. 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](http://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*

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### ● 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

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## 2025 North Carolina Small Farms Week

# Small Farms Week

*Next Gen Agriculture*

**March 23-29, 2025**

North Carolina A&T State University Cooperative Extension invites farmers, agricultural enthusiasts, and community members to participate in Small Farms Week 2025, celebrating the future of farming with this year's theme, "Next Gen Agriculture."

Farmers attending Small Farms Week activities will explore cutting-edge technologies shaping the future of agriculture; engage with expert-led workshops and inspiring panels; connect with industry leaders, innovators, and fellow farmers; and celebrate the resilience and achievements of North Carolina's small farmers. The kickoff for the week will be held on March 24 in Warren County. On March 25 and 26, educational activities will be held on campus at North Carolina A&T State University, which will conclude with the Small Farmers Recognition Luncheon announcing the 2026 North Carolina Small Farmer of the Year. The closeout for the week will be held March 28 in Cumberland County.

✦ Registration is Now Open!

Be a part of this exciting week of learning, networking, and empowerment hosted by N.C. A&T Cooperative Extension.

View the Agenda and Register Today:

<https://whova.com/web/us7un3sJ9Qf90U7xvtkxqBceGWqAYkzTk0KXo2Mn9SI%3D/>

## Good Farm Management Starts with Good Records

### By Brian Mills, Mississippi State Univ. Extension

Many producers don't like doing record keeping. Keeping up-to-date records can be time-consuming and sometimes boring, with having to sift through all your deposits and receipts and then input these into spreadsheets and creating income and cash flow statements. The reward is not always readily seen compared to other farming activities. If you have weeds in your field and you spray it with herbicide, the weeds die. If you feed your calves, they gain weight. Conversely, the benefits of record-keeping may not be seen for months, but it can be the difference between losing and making money.

Good records are the foundation of decision-making on the farm and should be used to inform your marketing, crop insurance, and loan choices. Any decision made on the farm has a financial impact that affects your revenue, costs, or both and, subsequently, your bottom line. Record keeping is important when things are tough as it allows you to evaluate areas of the farm that can be improved or where costs can be cut. The more detailed your records, the more specific changes you can make. This will allow you to evaluate your farm by specific crops, or even by specific fields, to determine where problems may arise. A detailed analysis could show that a field was unprofitable because it had some nutrient deficiencies or maybe the crop grown on that field needs to be re-evaluated. Or perhaps the term of rental agreement is what is causing that field to not be profitable. After diagnosing the issue, you can then determine how changes to this field will impact the farm's financial performance. In a tough year, this sort of evaluation is crucial to breaking-even or at least minimizing losses.



Accurate record-keeping starts with accounting for all income and expense transactions. For each income transaction, you should include date, reference number, purchaser, amount deposited, and the type of income. For expense transactions, the following should be included: date, check/reference number, payee, amount paid, and the type of expense. Having this information will ensure that each transaction is accurately recorded. The more detailed your record keeping, the more specific adjustments can be made.

There are programs that can help with record keeping, such as QuickBooks or Excel, or you can handwrite them. Any record-keeping is better than none. Many producers already have data on specific fields through yield maps, soil maps, etc. Using these along with your other records to make more specific evaluations and how these changes impact the farm's financial statements and ratios is key to long-term financial stability.

## Selecting Alternative Enterprises for Your Farm

### By Nelson Brownlee

Change is continuous in farming. Prices, farm programs, trade policies, technology, markets, and consumer preferences all change continuously, just to name a few. Some farm enterprises benefit from these changes and some are harmed, so the search for profitable alternatives is a continuous challenge. There are seven important questions that should guide the search for alternative enterprises. Answering each one of these is important to achieving success:

1. Why are you interested in alternative enterprises?
2. What are consumers interested in buying and who will be your customers?
3. What are you planning to sell and how will you sell it?
4. Will your product require processing, and if so, how will you sell it?
5. What business and legal issues apply?
6. What resources will you need?
7. Will it be financially feasible and worthwhile?



Realize that enterprise selection is a complicated and demanding process. It should be considered no differently than evaluating any other business opportunity. The amount of time and energy spent in research should be directly related to the amount of capital at risk and the potential rewards. All of this takes a lot of work, but it is well worth taking the time to sure the idea you are considering will work and to avoid problems or disappointments down the road.

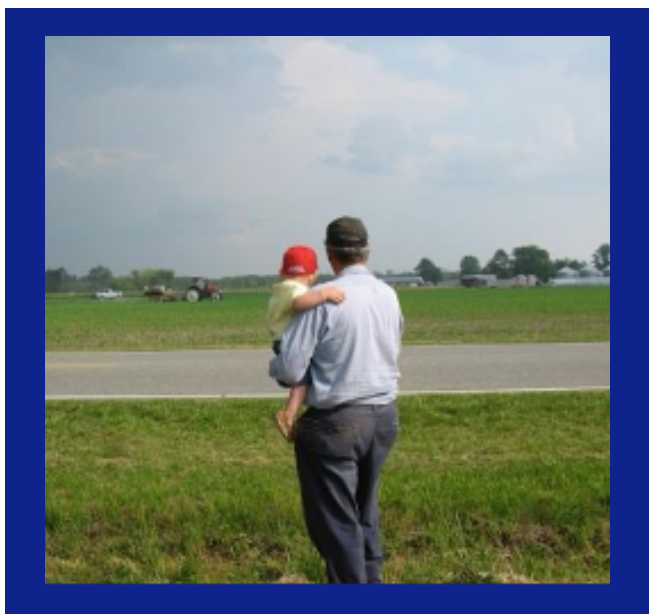
## Planning the Future of Your Farm By Nelson Brownlee

A farm manager should ask the following questions:

1. Have I made any plans for someone to inherit my estate when I retire from the farm business, or in the event of death?
2. Do I want my farm business to continue beyond my life and be operated by the next generation?
3. What operations will continue with my farm business when I can no longer manage it?

When a farm manager answers these questions, he or she is doing what is called “estate planning.”

Estate planning deals with arranging for the transfer of your family’s wealth and property from one generation to the next. It is how you plan to divide up your property and wealth between your surviving spouse and heirs. Estate planning is important because it gives the manager the responsibility of deciding how they want their estate divided. If there is no estate plan in place, the property may not be divided the way the manager wants it. If you need more information on estate planning, please contact our Extension Office.





## Upcoming Events

### **“Farming In the New Normal”**

#### **Grower Workshop on New Farming Techniques and Practices**

**April 9, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

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

You are invited to attend a workshop that show how farmers can adapt to climate change and other challenges by using new technologies and practices. Topics will be taught by North Carolina A&T Cooperative Extension Specialists. Scheduled topics include High Tunnel Production, Pest Management, Weed Identification and Management, and Cover Crop Production. Look for more details later.

To register use the following link: <https://go.ncsu.edu/farminginthenewnormal>

### **2025 North Carolina A&T Small Farm Field Day**

**June 18, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**North Carolina A&T University Farm, 3020 McConnell Road, Greensboro, NC 27401**

You are invited to attend the NC A&T Small Farm Field Day at the University Farm Pavilion to learn about the latest farm practices and techniques. More details to come later.