

## **North Carolina Needs to Produce More of its Own Feed Grains**

***By: John Hart, Southeast Farm Press***

North Carolina State University Agricultural Economist Dr. Nicholas Piggott continues to emphasize the importance of North Carolina producing more of its own feed grains to meet the demands of the state's livestock industry.

It's a message he recently delivered to the Ag Development Forum during the Southern Farm Show at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. The North Carolina feed grain deficit currently averages around 50 percent: That is the state must import about half of the grain needed to feed hogs, chickens and turkeys in North Carolina, while producing the rest within the state.

Estimates peg the need for feed for North Carolina hogs, chickens and turkeys at roughly 310 million bushels per year. In 2018, the state produced about 154,000,000 bushels of its own feed grain, importing the rest.

Piggott says producing more feed grain locally is better for both North Carolina livestock producers and North Carolina grain producers. Efforts to increase North Carolina feed grain production was the reason the North Carolina Feed Grain Initiative was launched in 2012 with funding support from Smithfield Foods.

"In the past 11 years, total planted acreage to row crops in North Carolina has gone down by almost 11 percent, but feed grain acreage has gone down 19 percent. That's a concern," said Piggott, Professor and Extension Specialist in the of Department of Agricultural and Resource economics at North Carolina State University.

Since 2008, North Carolina corn acreage has increased three percent. The biggest drop came in wheat acreage with a decline of 43 percent since 2008. Piggott says the big drop masks the huge runup in wheat acreage approaching nearly 1,000,000 acres in 2013. Today, current planted wheat acreage is estimated at roughly 200,000 acres in North Carolina, a fivefold decrease since 2013.

Piggott said the key to increasing feed grain production is improving basis. Basis is the component of cash prices which reflects local supply and demand conditions The addition of basis localizes futures prices to form the local cash or spot price.

"When basis was increased, farmers responded, and we grew almost 180,000,000 bushels of feed grains in North Carolina. Now we are down to about 140,000,000 bushels," Piggott said.

Piggott believes basis should improve for North Carolina corn and soybean producers this year due to the shortfall in feed for livestock. "If we can't grow it locally, we have to get it from somewhere else," he said. The concern for poultry and hog producers, Piggott said is that it costs an average of between \$1.10 to \$1.30 per bushel, depending on freight rates, to ship corn to North Carolina livestock operations.

"If this continues to rise, the cost of bringing corn into the state for feed really threatens the vitality of our livestock industry. One thing we can think about is investing in infrastructure that will address some of the inefficiencies and potentially lower the cost of doing that," he said.

Piggott said improving railways, roads and ports will benefit both North Carolina agriculture and other industries as well. He said more research and economic analysis is needed.

“In the interim, we can expect continued strong and further strengthening in corn basis which will benefit North Carolina feed grain producers. Continued high or even higher corn basis may in turn encourage corn production in North Carolina, which in turn could temper future corn deficiencies,” he said.

In fact, Piggott believes North Carolina can potentially be self-sufficient in feed grain production in five to 10 years if yield gains and productivity increase. Research and the North Carolina Plant Sciences Initiative are vital for that. He said this is all vital for keeping the North Carolina agricultural industry viable.

“It’s important to keep the livestock industry here in North Carolina. What does North Carolina have that Iowa does not? An ocean. We can become the world’s bread basket for protein right here in North Carolina. We have an ocean. They don’t,” Piggott said. It is very wise to think about future investments in logistics and infrastructure to go along with our yield research.”

### **Farm Assistance and Recovery Mission**

To help farm families through this difficult time, North Carolina Farm Bureau’s Hurricane Relief Fund is offering FARM: Farm Assistance and Recovery Mission. The purpose of the program is to provide assistance to eligible farmers who suffered crop losses from Hurricane Florence and Tropical Storm Michael. Producers impacted by Hurricane Florence and Tropical Storm Michael, in the identified counties, may request direct assistance. Qualifying producers will receive assistance based on the total number of producers who participate in the assistance program, subject to the availability of funds. The assistance provided will not exceed \$500 per producer. The submission deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019. ***Please see the attachment in this email for more information*** as well as visit this website: <http://www.ncfb.org/> to learn more about the program.

### **Seeking YOUR Help!!!**

Researchers at UNCW are studying farmer participation in conservation programs to gauge barriers, motivators, and personality factors affecting participation. We would appreciate your participation in the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/22QPFJV> .

This research survey is conducted by the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. This survey aims to examine factors affecting farmer participation in conservation programs and takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is voluntary, anonymous, and extremely valuable. If you agree to participate, you may stop at any time or refuse to answer any question and will not be treated any differently by the researchers. We thank you in advance for your support! Your participation is voluntary and anonymous. Thank you!

### **The Northeast Ag Expo Small Grains Field Day**

The Northeast Ag Expo Small Grains Field Day was held on Wednesday, February 20th at Jamie Stallings & Sons Farms in Hobbsville. The event kicked off at 9:00am with registration, a vendor tradeshow and available credits for attendees. At 10:00am welcoming and opening remarks were made followed by presentation topics such as: Wheat Disease Management, Wheat Weed Management, Nitrogen Management, Wheat Micronutrient Fertilization, and Mid-Season Management Decisions. The field day concluded with a catered lunch, raffle prizes and ice cream for all attendees. A big thank you to everyone who planned and organized this event, approximately 200+ people were in attendance!!!! To see pictures from the event please visit our photo gallery on our website at: <http://ncwheat.com/media-gallery/>

### **National Association of Wheat Growers: Weekly Update**

## **The 2019 NAWG/USW Winter Conference Concludes with Wheat Growers Leaving Their Mark on Capitol Hill**

The National Association of Wheat Growers and U.S. Wheat Associates held its annual winter conference from February 11-15, 2019 in Washington, D.C. Conducting meetings with Members from wheat states as well as the House and Senate Agriculture Committee and their staff, wheat growers focused their discussions on implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill, challenges facing the wheat industry, and trade. Additionally, NAWG's Committees covered a range of topics including the farm bill implementation, U.S.-Canada-Mexico Agreement and other trade issues, and wheat research needs.

"The 2018 NAWG/USW Winter Conference was notably busy this year as NAWG really focused on meeting with freshmen Members of Congress as well as staff from the House and Senate Committees on Agriculture," stated NAWG CEO Chandler Goule. "Our priority is to get the farm bill implemented as Congress intended and to educate freshman Members on who is NAWG and the role wheat farmers, and all growers, play as the backbone of the agriculture economy."

"On Thursday, February 14th, the National Wheat Foundation held a well-attended educational event for the Administration, Congressional Members and their staff in the Russell Senate Building," continued Goule. "The event had twenty-three representatives from the wheat value chain and showcased how the wheat industry is truly expansive."

NAWG's committees are scheduled to meet at the 2019 Commodity Classic which is right around the corner, scheduled for February 26, 2019 to March 02, 2019 in Orlando, Florida. For more information visit the Commodity Classic site: <http://commodityclassic.com/home> .

## **NAWG Signs on to Crop Insurance Letter**

On February 19, 2018, NAWG and a coalition of about 60 groups, sent a letter addressed to Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to Secretary stating that that farm income has dropped more than 45 percent over five years. In the letter, the groups argued that "it's also important to note that in a time of uncertainty in the farming and ranching community – from natural disasters to trade disputes to government shutdowns – the public-private partnership that is crop insurance has been a consistent and reliable risk management tool." NAWG and the coalition sent a similar letter was sent to the House and Senate Budget committees.

## **Former NAWG President Passes**

Mr. Tilden Madison Angell, 86, of Madison Road, died Tuesday, February 12, 2019, at Iredell Memorial Hospital in Statesville, North Carolina. He spent 59 years as a farmer, operating over 4,000 acres of wheat, corn, and soybeans. Mr. Angell was on the original steering committee of the North Carolina Small Grain Growers Association and was the first-ever president of the National Association of Wheat Growers from East of the Mississippi River. The year he retired as a farmer, he placed 2nd in the North Carolina National Wheat Yield Contest. Mr. Tilden will be deeply missed.

## **Agriculture Committees to Hold Hearings on Farm Bill**

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson announced a full Committee hearing with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue on "The State of the Rural Economy." The committee hearing will be at 10:00amEST on Wednesday, February 27. Additionally, on February 28 at 9:30amEST the Senate is hosting a hearing on "Implementing the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018," where Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue will also testify.

## **USDA to Host 2018 Farm Bill Implementation Listening Sessions**

On February 12, 2019, the USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey announced that the Agency is hosting a listening session on the 2018 Farm Bill. USDA is seeking public input on the changes to existing programs implemented by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service and Risk Management Agency. The listening session will be held on February 26 at 9am in the Jefferson Auditorium in the South Building located at 14th Street and Independence Ave. S.W. in Washington, D.C.

### **House Ways and Means to Hold Hearing on US-China Trade**

On February 20, 2019 House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard E. Neal announced the Committee will hold a hearing on US-China Trade. The hearing will take place on Wednesday, February 27 at 10:00amEST. The only invited witness is Ambassador Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative.

### **USDA Releases Long-Term Commodity Projections**

On February 14, 2019, the Agriculture Department released its long-term trade projections for commodities and other reports last week. USDA said it will release the complete USDA Agricultural Projections to 2028 report on March 13. For more information, visit USDA's website: <https://www.usda.gov/oce/commodity/projections/>

### **SCOTUS Takes on Groundwater Case**

The Supreme Court has decided to review a 9th Circuit decision finding the Clean Water Act applies to wastewater that travels through groundwater to the Pacific Ocean. The appeals court ruled on Feb. 1, 2018, that four wells for the main wastewater treatment plant for West Maui qualified as "point sources" under the CWA.

## **NCSGGA Upcoming Events**

February 27th – March 2nd, 2019

Commodity Classic

Orlando, Florida

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March 5<sup>th</sup> - 6th, 2019

Duplin Grows

Duplin County Events Center

Kenansville, NC

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March 14<sup>th</sup> / 9am – 2pm

Harnett Co. Ag Science Field Day

126 Alexander Drive

Lillington, NC 27546

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March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

AG Science Day

Bailey Elementary School

Bailey, NC

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March 19<sup>th</sup> / 9:00a – 2:00p

Agriculture Field Day

North East Carolina Prep School  
Tarboro, NC

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March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
NC AG Awareness Day  
Bicentennial Plaza (Downtown Raleigh between the Capitol Building and the Legislative Building)

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March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Ag Day  
James W. Smith Elementary School  
150 Koonce Town Rd,  
Cove City, NC 28523

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April 9<sup>th</sup> / 9:00am – 2:15pm  
Onslow County Ag Day  
Richlands Farm  
420 Francktown Rd.,  
Richlands, NC

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April 11<sup>th</sup> / 8:00am  
Surry County Ag Day  
Veterans Memorial Park  
691 W Lebanon St,  
Mt Airy, NC 27030

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April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
AG By the Slice  
Guilford County 4-H

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April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Small Grains Field Day  
Piedmont Research Station  
Salisbury, NC

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April 24th - 26th, 2019  
Farm Animal Days  
NCSU Beef Unit  
4505 Mid Pines Rd.  
Raleigh, NC

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May 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
Got to be NC Festival  
State Fairgrounds Raleigh, NC

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June 18-19, 2019  
NC State FFA Convention & Career Show  
Raleigh Convention Center

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June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Touch A Tractor Kids Series  
4020 Market At North Hills St,  
Raleigh, NC 27609

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August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
NCSGGA Assessment Referendum Voting Day  
Blacklands Farm Managers Tour

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August 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
NCSGGA Board Meeting  
Sheraton Imperial Hotel  
Durham, NC

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October 22nd - 24th, 2019  
Stanly County Ag Awareness Week  
Stanly County Agri-Civic Center  
Albemarle, NC

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*The North Carolina Small Grain Growers Association, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation formed to encourage, promote and develop more efficient and effective small grain marketing and production practices and to participate in all matters relative to the interests of small grain producers. For more information please contact Dan Weathington, Executive Director of NCSGGA at danweathington@gmail.com / 910-736-8258 or Nikki Johnson for Outreach Events and Communications at njjohnson0902@gmail.com / 919-809-8657.*