

There are a number of beginning and aspiring farmers interested in leasing or buying farmland in Anson County and other areas of North Carolina. If you are looking to sell or lease your farmland to a like-minded farmer or interested in providing mentorship to provide work opportunities, consider developing a farm profile on NC Cooperative Extension's online database, NC FarmLink (ncfarmlink.ces.ncsu.edu), to attract farm seekers and farm workers.

Still not sure if this is the right move for your farm? See NC FarmLink's Success Stories on their site.

About NC FarmLink NC FarmLink is a program of NC State Extension (www.ces.ncsu.edu) that connects farmers, landowners and service providers across North Carolina, helping to grow the state's agriculture industry. NC FarmLink maintains databases of both available farmland and farmers looking for land, working with landowners and farmers to ensure an appropriate and lasting match is made.

We will help guide you through considerations and assist you in locating resources you will need when negotiating a land tenure arrangement. We envision a resilient agriculture industry where farmers have affordable options for accessing farm and forest land to create sustainable farm operations; where landowners have viable opportunities for keeping their land in farming; and where agriculture continues to be an integral part of our economy, environment and communities across North Carolina.

NC FarmLink is managed by NC State Extension, with valuable support provided by a network of partners across the state.

Anson County is in the Farmlink Western Region. William Hamilton is the Western Region Director. You can contact him at 828-273-5663 or whamilt@ncsu.edu.

NC FarmLink and WNC FarmLink (wncfarmlink.org) have recently merged their databases in an effort to form a stronger and more unified partnership of farm linking organizations in North Carolina. Both organizations were formed within the last five years to serve different regions of North Carolina. Now, their combined efforts not only aid farmland access for both beginning and expanding farmers but also with farmland preservation.

Farmland loss is an increasing risk across the state due to retiring farmers and development pressure. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, between 2007 and 2012, North Carolina lost 2,695 farms and approximately 60,000 acres of farmland.

"We are thrilled with this merger and strong partnership," says Suzanna Denison, WNC FarmLink's Land Access Coordinator. "We are excited to move forward together as a more unified team for both farmland access and preservation in North Carolina."

FarmLink services provide opportunities for farmers and landowners to connect in order to make farmland matches possible. Now there is a single database in North Carolina for those seeking land and those looking to find a farmer in order to keep their land in agriculture. Further information can be found on the NC FarmLink website: www.ncfarmlink.org. While on this website, farmers can look for available farmland with searchable terms such as acreage, county and current farm production. Landowners can search the farmer profiles for someone to farm their land and farmers can search these same profiles for aspiring farmers to continue farming their land when they retire.

Both of these options provide a web tool that can help make farmland matches possible and ultimately assist in the preservation of North Carolina's farms. WNC FarmLink provides land matching support services to the western region of the state, including one-on-one consultations, workshops, and technical and legal land access support.

The NC and WNC FarmLink services are free. The goals of NC and WNC FarmLink include: Providing a web-based farmland matching service, where users can search and pursue matches on their own. Providing resources and service provider information, which can help support the farmland access or transition process. Creating farmland access opportunities that support local agriculture and economies. Ensuring farmland preservation in North Carolina through these farmland matching services.

"At NC and WNC FarmLink, we want to help ease the challenges in either finding land to farm or someone to farm your land," Denison says. "Not only do we provide farmland matching tools, we also offer on the ground support to determine if it is a viable land match, as well as one-on-one consultations and technical support in lease arrangements, farm financing and other factors key to successful farmland access or transition."

About WNC FarmLink WNC FarmLink matches farm and forest landowners with new and experienced farmers eager to find land to farm in WNC. The program is a free service to WNC residents. WNCFL offers personalized one-on-one consultation, provides group workshops to help beginning farmers negotiate equitable leases and prepare logistically and financially for long-term land tenure and purchase, which is a major obstacle for beginning farmers. For more information, visit wncfarmlink.org.

Governor Proclaims May 3-9 Hurricane Preparedness Week

Governor Roy Cooper has proclaimed May 3-9 Hurricane Preparedness Week in North Carolina and reminded residents that now is the time to prepare for the 2020 hurricane season. Hurricane season runs from June 1 through November 30.

"North Carolina knows all too well the damage and disruption that hurricanes can bring, but being prepared can help people fare better and recover quicker," said Gov. Cooper. "Especially with COVID-19 affecting everyone's daily lives, now is the time to make sure you and your family are ready this hurricane season."

Gov. Cooper urges families to use this week to discuss their emergency plans, update their emergency supplies, and review their homeowners and renter's insurance policies. This year, it's also important to consider how the COVID-19 virus might alter your typical preparedness for hurricane season.

When considering your evacuation planning during the COVID-19 pandemic, a plan to stay at a hotel, or with friends or family who live farther inland are better options than relying on a large emergency shelter. Be sure to include items in your preparedness kit like hand sanitizer, face masks, copies of your health insurance cards and documents and your medications. If you do evacuate, be sure to check in with family members, or an emergency contact, to let them know where you are.

"North Carolina is getting ready for hurricane season even in the midst of a pandemic," said North Carolina Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry. "We have responded to simultaneous disasters in the past and will work with our local partners to do so again if needed."

The most dangerous threats from hurricanes and tropical storms are flooding and storm surge.

During this hurricane season, North Carolina is introducing Know Your Zone (at www.ncdps.gov), a tiered evacuation system that highlights areas most vulnerable to storm surge from hurricanes and tropical storms, and other hazards. If it becomes necessary, local officials will order evacuations using pre-determined zones created by coastal counties. The Know Your Zone lookup tool is a new color-coded interactive map you can use to determine the evacuation zone where you live, work, or are visiting based upon street address.

Having flood insurance is one of the best ways to prepare for flooding.

"Homeowners with flood insurance experience faster recoveries," said Director Sprayberry. "Flood insurance is key to recovering quicker and with more resilience."

"Preparing for an emergency is an easy and simple way to help protect you and your loved ones when a disaster strikes," said Public Safety Secretary Erik A. Hooks. "By having an emergency supply kit with enough non-perishable food and water to last each person three to seven days, you'll be ready for aftermath of a storm when you may be without power, water or other essential services."

Essential items for your emergency kit include:

- Food/water for every member of your family for several days
- Copies of insurance cards/papers and identification sealed in a watertight plastic bag
- First-aid kit • Weather radio and batteries • Hand sanitizer • Face masks • Cash
- Prescription medicines • Sleeping bag or blankets • Changes of clothes
- Hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and deodorant
- Pet supplies including food, water, leashes, bedding, muzzle and vaccination records

During storms, people should stay tuned into a trusted local news source and keep a battery-powered radio nearby for weather and evacuation information. They also need to heed the warnings of state and local officials and evacuate quickly when told to do so.

More information on hurricanes and overall emergency preparedness can be found on the ReadyNC website at www.ReadyNC.org.

Free Groceries for Families in Need May 13

For families in need, free groceries will be available. The Atrium Health Bus will be onsite too. The Anson and East Union Mission Network, Anson Crisis Assistance Second Harvest Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry will be at Wingate United Methodist Church, 111 Hinson Street in Wingate, on Wednesday, May 13. Please arrive and register between 8 and 10 a.m. The food distribution begins upon the truck arrival, usually between 9 to 9:30 a.m.

- Be sure to bring your own bags, boxes or carts to carry your food.
- Arrive between 8 to 10:30 a.m. to be sure you can receive food.
- If it is raining the day of or before the delivery, contact Anson Crisis Ministry for a recorded message to know if it is cancelled: 704-694-2445.
- You can only pick up food for yourself and one other registered household.

Interested in volunteering for the Mobile Food Pantry? Email tschumpert@wncumc.net. The goal of the Mobile Food Pantry is to feed the hungry and serve those in need.

If you are in need before or after the distribution of food date, please contact Anson Crisis Ministry at (704) 694-2445 or Union County Crisis Assistance at (704) 225-0440.

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.



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