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Ethan Dillon Speaks at Commissioners Meeting

On Tuesday, July 15 Ethan Dillon had the opportunity to speak before the Anson County Commissioners, sharing how 4-H has made a positive impact on his life. Ethan will proudly represent Anson County 4-H as a delegate at the Youth Voice Conference August 22-23, where he'll attend workshops, engage with county commissioners, and learn more about local government and civic leadership. Great job, Ethan!

Smart Labor Policy Helps Make North Carolina #1 for Business

On July 10 North Carolina was named America's Top State for Business in 2025 by CNBC, marking the third time in four years that the Tar Heel State has earned this top ranking. The announcement credits North Carolina's performance in key categories like workforce, economy, and business friendliness – areas where the North Carolina Department of Labor (NCDOL) plays a vital role.

NC Labor Commissioner Luke Farley said the award is a reflection of how sound labor policy contributes directly to economic success. "This recognition validates what we see on the ground every day: common-sense regulation promotes job growth, while burdensome red tape drives jobs away," said Commissioner Farley. "The NC Department of Labor is proud to be our state's secret weapon for economic development - helping job creators thrive by ensuring safety, fairness, and predictability in the workplace.

NCDOL enforces workplace safety laws and labor standards for more than $5\ \mathrm{million}$ workers and 250,000 employers across the state. Under Commissioner Luke Farley's leadership, the agency focuses on clarity, consistency, and collaboration, helping businesses understand the rules, comply efficiently, and invest with confidence.

NCDOL supports job creators without compromising on worker safety through programs like:

- Free On-Site Safety Consultations No-Cost Training and Educational Resources • Safety Awards and Recognition Programs • Dedicated Compliance Hotlines
- In CNBC's annual ranking, North Carolina placed:
- \bullet #3 in Economy (3.7% GDP growth in 2024) \bullet #4 in Business Friendliness
- #4 in Workforce (top-tier STEM and skilled labor pipelines)

Major companies including Amazon and JetZero recently announced new investments totaling more than \$20 billion and bringing over 24,000 new jobs to the state, citing North Carolina's business climate and workforce quality.

"We work with employers – not against them," said Commissioner Farley. "By offering clear rules and establishing key partnerships, NCDOL helps create the kind of environment where businesses can grow – and North Carolina workers can prosper." For more information about how NCDOL supports job growth and workplace safety, visit www.labor.nc.gov.

About NCDOL The North Carolina Department of Labor promotes the health, safety, and prosperity of workers across all industries. Headed by an independently elected Commissioner of Labor, the agency enforces labor laws, safety standards, and workplace protections across the state - supporting both employee rights and the success of job creators.

NCDA&CS Encourages Farmers to Search Fields for Tropical Spiderwort Following Recent Discovery

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) - Plant Industry Division is encouraging farmers statewide to inspect their fields for the presence of tropical spiderwort (Commelina benghalensis). The aggressive, invasive weed is recognized by the USDA as one of the world's most troublesome and was recently discovered in eastern North Carolina.

Late June, tropical spiderwort was found in a cotton field in Craven County along the Neuse River. Eradication efforts are underway. Although tropical spiderwort is most likely to be found in eastern North Carolina, the weed could establish in most of the state. This invasive species poses a serious threat to over 20 economically important crops, including soybeans and cotton.

Also known as Benghal dayflower, tropical spiderwort was first detected in the United States in Florida in 1928 and has since spread to Alabama, California, Georgia,

Hawaii, Louisiana and Mississippi. Although sporadic infestations have been reported in North Carolina, eradication efforts to date have been effective, and officials are calling on growers to help maintain that success.

"Farmers have a unique opportunity to detect and eliminate a difficult-to-control weed before it becomes a widespread and costly issue," said Dr. Bill Foote, director of the Plant Industry Division.

Tropical spiderwort closely resembles several native dayflower species commonly found in North Carolina, which can make identification challenging. There are several ways to identify Benghal dayflower tropical spiderwort, including red hairs on leaf sheaths and the presence of underground flower structures. The easiest way to differentiate this plant from other easily confused species is through its leaves as pictured below.

The weed can be introduced into fields via floodwaters, migratory birds, or contaminated equipment and vehicles transported from infested areas. It thrives in a range of soil types but prefers full sun and moist, fertile conditions. "Farmers are our first line of defense in the fight against tropical spiderwort. We need their help to detect and eliminate new infestations before they become established. If left unchecked, the cost and difficulty of control will rise dramatically over time," Foote said.

If you suspect the presence of tropical spiderwort in your fields, contact your local county extension office immediately for assistance and verification: ces.ncsu.edu.





Benghal dayflower, or tropical spiderwort (top photo), has leaves less than twice as long as they are wide and appear more egg-shaped with a rounded edge. A common lookalike, Asiatic dayflower (above), has a tapered leaf at least twice as long as it is wide, coming to a point.



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