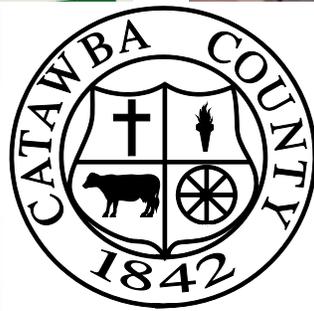
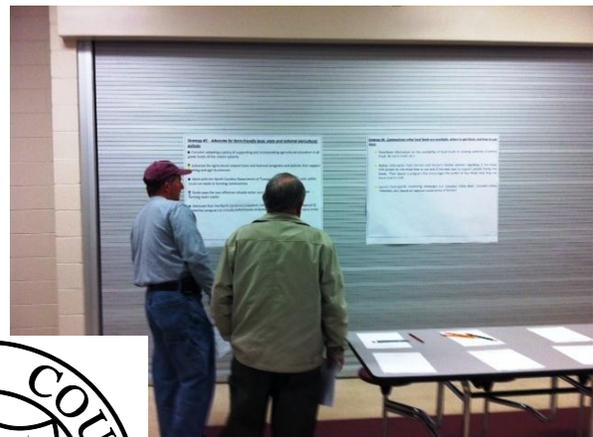
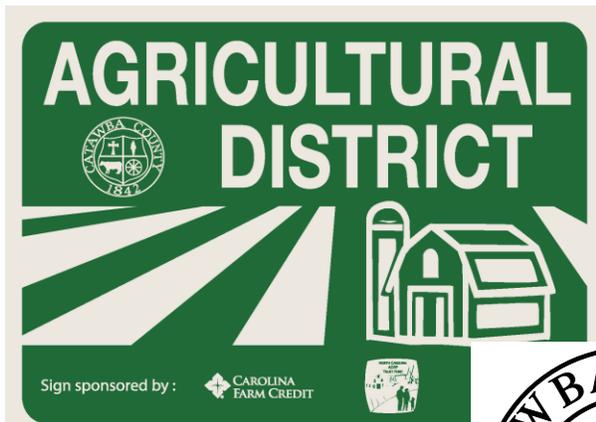


CATAWBA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

2013 Annual Report



“Keeping the Spirit Alive Since 1842!”

Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Kitty W. Barnes, Chair
Barbara Beatty, Vice-Chair
Dan Hunsucker
C. Randall Isenhower
Lynn Lail

Catawba County Agricultural Advisory Board - 2013

Clarence Hood, Chair
David McCart, Vice-Chair
Ken Arrowood
Jeff Elmore
Steve Killian
Jeremy Lee
Susan Proctor

Staff to the Agricultural Advisory Board

Jeff Carpenter, retired Cooperative Extension Director
Mary George, Assistant Planning Director



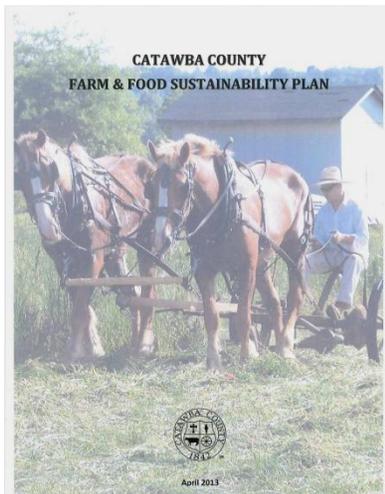
CATAWBA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD ACTIVITIES

Catawba County's Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) program continues to grow with 515 acres added to the program in 2013. This brings the total acreage in the program to over 9,200 acres. This represents almost 13% of the total acreage of farmland in the County, according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture. In addition to approving VAD program applications, the Agricultural Advisory Board spent the early part of 2013 finalizing the Farm & Food Sustainability Plan. They also received a report on damage to agricultural land as a result of a major flooding event in July 2013 and an update on solar farm regulations in the County.



With the execution of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with five cities to allow the County's VAD program to be conducted within their corporate limits and extraterritorial planning jurisdiction, there were three VAD applications approved in municipalities' jurisdictions for a total of 140.95 acres. These applications were approved in the cities of Hickory and Newton.

With the County's Voluntary Agricultural District program successfully on its way, the Agricultural Advisory Board began discussing the concept of developing a Farm & Food Sustainability Plan which would address sustaining agriculture in the County. The Plan would primarily focus on agricultural economic development to recruit younger farmers and provide tools for farm transitioning in the County. With the average age of farmers in the County being 58 years old, it is important to develop ways to help sustain the agricultural economy in the County. In early 2012, the Board of Commissioners appointed a 22-member Working Committee that began meeting in April 2012. The Committee consisted of a broad base of individuals who represented all phases of the agricultural "life cycle" (production, processing, distribution, preparation, and waste recovery) as well as Education/Outreach, Medical, and Food Access/Hunger Relief, and Policy.



The Committee began their Plan development process by being educated on the County's agricultural statistics and national trends to support and enhance agriculture/local foods. In July 2012, the Committee sponsored a series of public input meetings at three County high schools. Over 100 people were in attendance providing opinions on encouraging trends, limitations and opportunities to explore to support agriculture/local

foods. Over 800 ideas were submitted which were used by the Working Committee in the development of 66 action items categorized into the following five broad categories:

- 1) Education – Programs and activities aimed at engaging and increasing the knowledge and skills of farmers, consumers, and youth through outreach activities such as demonstration events, school gardens, and distance learning opportunities for high school students.
- 2) Farmland Preservation/Farm Transition – Programs and activities aimed at maintaining existing farmland, supporting current farmers, and ensuring the recruitment of the next generation of farmer through activities like estate planning workshops, mentoring/internship programs, and advocating for maintenance/establishment of favorable policies related to agriculture.
- 3) Advancing Traditional Agriculture – Programs and activities aimed at equipping farmers with the resources necessary to support the continued viability of our established agricultural enterprises such as dairy, cattle, poultry, and row crops.
- 4) Alternative Agricultural Enterprises – Programs and activities aimed at supporting the most promising alternative crops and enterprises such as small-scale fruit and vegetable production, agri-tourism, and the exploration of value-added processing facilities.
- 5) Local foods – Program and activities aimed at developing a reliable supply of locally produced fruits, vegetables, and meats, developing systematic connections between producers and local institutions like schools, hospitals and restaurants, and helping citizens make the connection between local foods and nutrition.

The Committee then sorted the action items into implementation timeframes: short-term (0-2 years), mid-range (2-5 years) and long-term (5+ years). The Committee also identified approximately 20 community partners that could implement the action items, whether they serve in a lead or supporting role, in order to make the document a true community Plan. The Committee finalized its work in early 2013 and conducted another series of community meetings in March 2013 to present the Plan recommendations to the public. Over 40 citizens attended and supported the Plan. The Plan was then presented to the Board of Commissioners on April 15, 2013 who endorsed the Plan and accepted responsibility for ensuring implementation of the action items where lead responsibility has been specifically assigned to County departments or agencies.



With adoption of the Farm & Food Sustainability Plan, the County implemented a key action item by hiring a Local Foods Agent housed at the Cooperative Extension office. Meetings with community partners were held in late 2013 to establish a tracking system to ensure that the

action items for which they serve as a lead agency were being implemented and to inform other partners as to the status of the Plan's action items.

The Catawba County Agricultural Advisory Board conducted 2 meetings during 2013, in addition to participating in 3 Working Committee meetings and 3 public input meetings to finalize the County's Farm & Food Sustainability Plan. Beyond approving VAD applications, the Board conducted the following activities in 2013:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| June 26, 2013 | Participated in an Agri-business Tour coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce for local businesses and officials to learn about the size and scope of agriculture-related businesses in the County |
| July 18, 2013 | Received a report on the status of solar farms in the County and State legislative issues. |
| September 26, 2013 | Received a report on the status of flood damage to crops and farmland as a result of the July 27 rain event |
| November 13, 2013 | Participated in the NCADFP VAD workshop in Boone, NC |
| November 19, 2013 | Participated in the Chamber of Commerce manufacturing tour as part of the reciprocal agriculture/industry event |

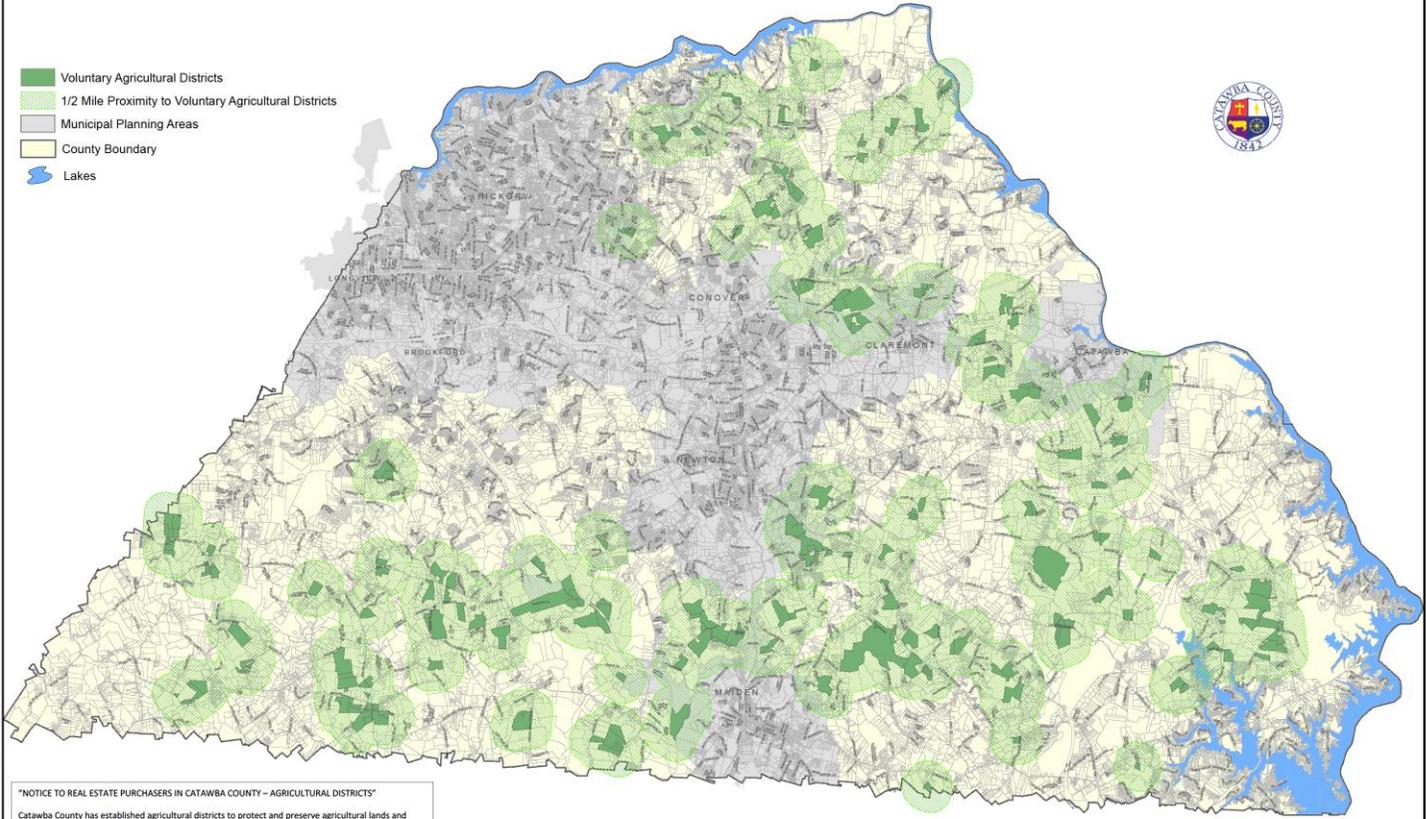
2013 ANNUAL VAD PROGRAM STATISTICS

		Approved in 2013			Cumulative in Program		
Program Type	Jurisdiction	# of Landowners	# of Acres	# of Parcels	# of Landowners	# of Acres	# of Parcels
Voluntary Program	Catawba County	9	374.34	19	77	8,361.5	193
	Catawba	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Claremont	0	0	0	2	55.55	4
	Hickory	2	35.30	3	2	35.30	3
	Maiden	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Newton	1	105.65	1	1	105.65	1
Enhanced Program	Catawba County	0	0	0	10	612.51	22
	Catawba	0	0	0	1	68.5	3
	Claremont	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hickory	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Maiden	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Newton	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	All	12	515.29	23	93	9,239.01	226

CATAWBA COUNTY

Voluntary Agricultural Districts

- Voluntary Agricultural Districts
- 1/2 Mile Proximity to Voluntary Agricultural Districts
- Municipal Planning Areas
- County Boundary
- Lakes



"NOTICE TO REAL ESTATE PURCHASERS IN CATAWBA COUNTY – AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS"

Catawba County has established agricultural districts to protect and preserve agricultural lands and activities. These districts have been mapped by the County to inform all purchasers of real property that certain agricultural and forestry activities, including but not limited to pesticide spraying, manure spreading, machinery and truck operation, livestock operations, tree harvesting, sawing, and other common farming activities may occur in these districts any time during the day or night. Information on the location and establishment of these districts can be obtained from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service – Catawba County office, the office of the Register of Deeds, the County Tax office, the County Planning office, the County Soil & Water Conservation District or the Natural Resources Conservation Service office. For more information on the Voluntary Agricultural District program, you may contact Cooperative Extension at (828) 465-8240 or Planning, Parks & Development at (828) 465-8380.



Approved Voluntary Agricultural Districts
as of December 31, 2013

This map was prepared for Catawba County by the Geospatial Information Services Department. It is intended to provide a general overview of the county's agricultural districts. It is not intended to be used as a legal document. The county is not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. The county is not responsible for any damages or losses resulting from the use of this map. The county is not responsible for any claims or lawsuits resulting from the use of this map. The county is not responsible for any claims or lawsuits resulting from the use of this map.