

# CATAWBA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD



## 2017 Annual Report



*“Keeping the Spirit Alive Since 1842!”*

## **Catawba County Board of Commissioners**

C. Randall Isenhower, Chair  
Barbara Beatty, Vice-Chair  
Kitty W. Barnes  
Dan Hunsucker  
Sherry Butler

## **Catawba County Agricultural Advisory Board**

Clarence Hood, Chair  
David McCart, Vice-Chair  
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Jeff Elmore  
Steve Killian  
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Susan Proctor

## **Staff to the Agricultural Advisory Board**

George Place, II, Cooperative Extension Director  
Randy Willis, Conservation Services Supervisor  
Susan Ballbach, Senior Planner





## **CATAWBA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD ACTIVITIES**

### Background

Catawba County is recognized as both a vital farming community, and an urbanizing county, with a 2017 census population estimate of 155,461. This farm/urban mix enhances the community's overall quality of life, providing housing and economic opportunities, along with the rural character that residents seek. Lands comprised of farms contribute to the economic viability of the area and help maintain a healthy wildlife habitat, adequate open space, and ground water recharge areas.

With the past three years having shown an upward growth in North Carolina, Agriculture Commissioner, Steve Troxler, estimates the NC agriculture/agribusiness industry will likely be a \$100 billion industry by 2020. The expected growth is partly due to additional infrastructure and resources. College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) Dean Richard Linton stated, "We are the third most diverse state in the country when it comes to production of ingredients. We produce just about anything you'd want to put into a value-added good." Linton confirmed Troxler's goal to expand the economic impact of agriculture and agribusiness in North Carolina to \$100 billion by the year 2020. Food manufacturing is a big part of the solution to get us there."

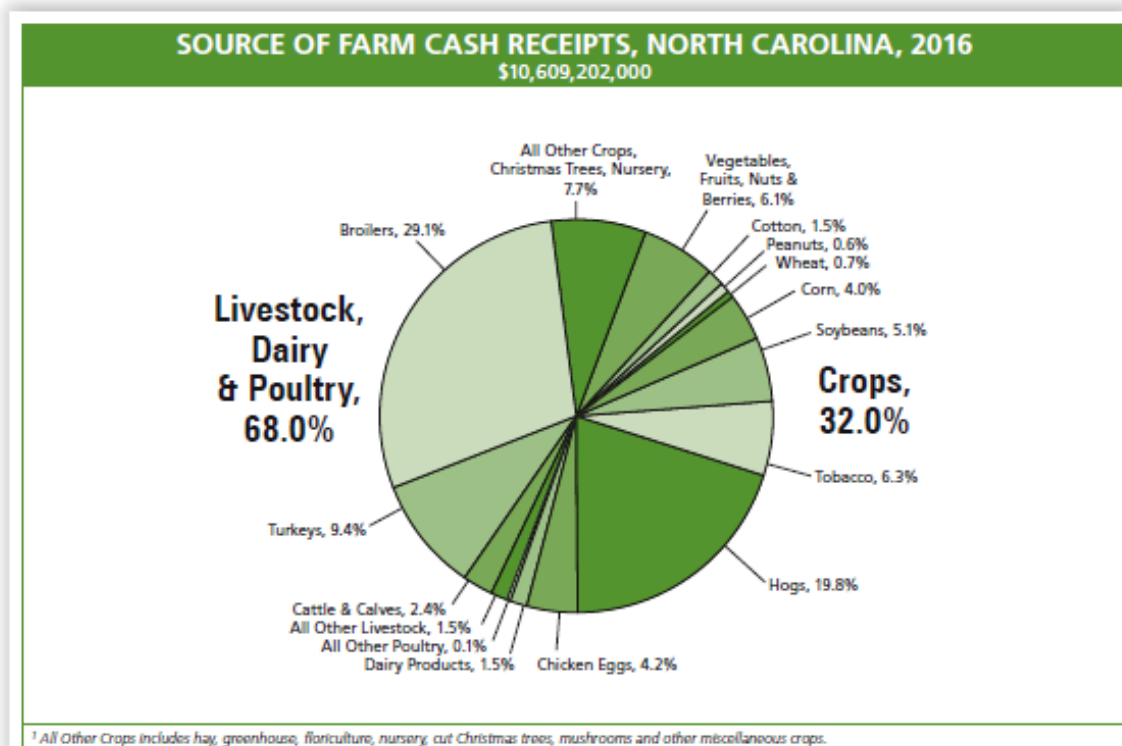
As a rural area, Catawba County is highly recognized for its farm operations. Farms remain a cornerstone in the community as they provide economic vitality and food for residents.



The Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance was adopted by the Catawba County Commissioners in October of 2008 in an attempt to mitigate the loss of farm area. Farmers began enrolling and the program continues to grow.

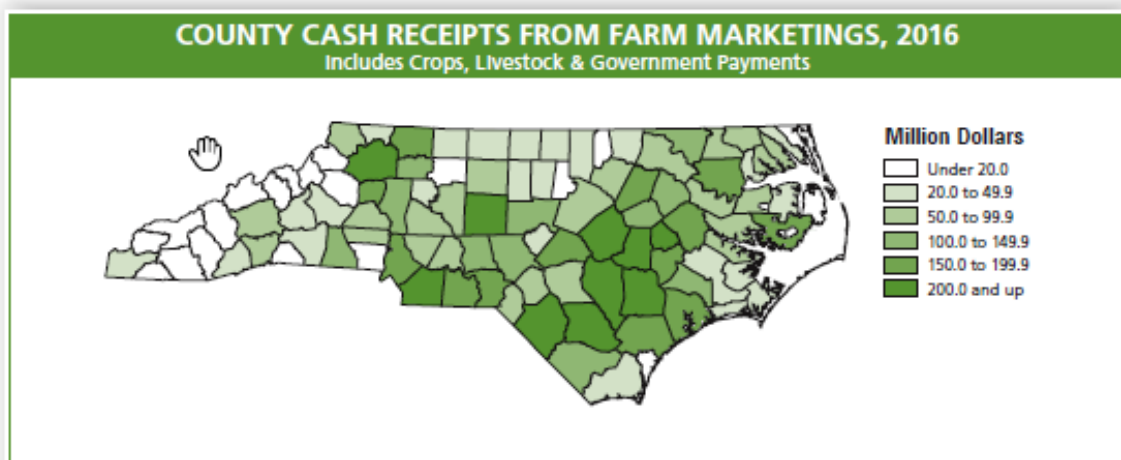


The graph below shows the source of NC Farm Cash Receipts for 2016. Associated value added/agribusiness receipts are not included in these figures. (Data from 2017 is unavailable at this time.) Notice that raising of livestock and poultry make up the majority agricultural receipts at 68.0%.



Source: Economic Research Service (ERS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The map below categories agriculture/agribusiness cash receipts by county. Catawba County ranked in the \$50 to \$99 million category of receipts for 2016.



Source: Economic Research Service (ERS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

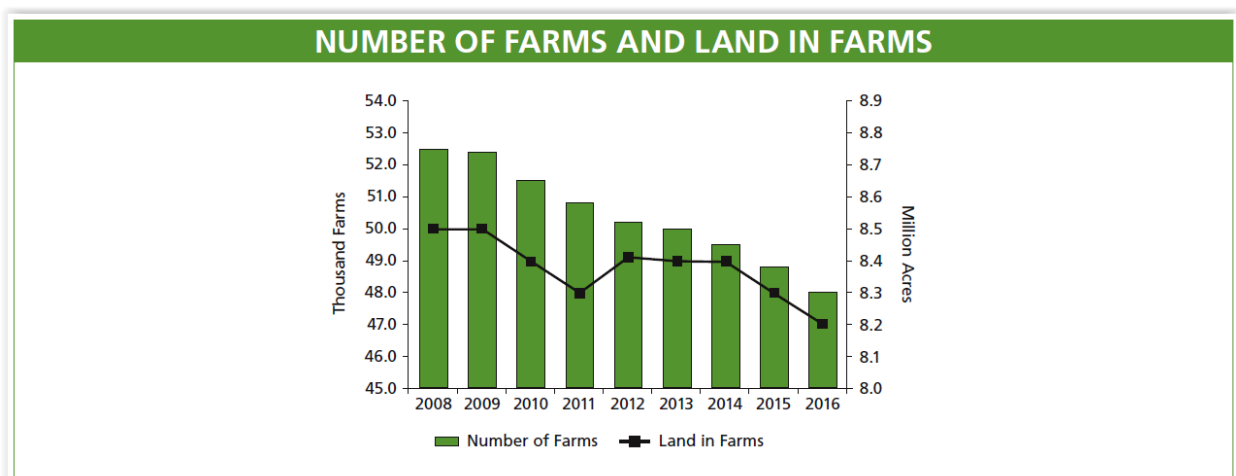
FARM INCOME <sup>1</sup>										
Cash Receipts from Farm Marketings and Government Payments, 2016										
State	Livestock, Dairy and Poultry		Crops		Total		Government Payments <sup>2</sup>		Total Cash Receipts	
	Receipts	Rank	Receipts	Rank	Receipts	Rank	Receipts	Rank	Receipts	Rank
North Carolina	7,213.5	7	3,395.7	17	10,609.2	9	180.1	23	10,789.3	9

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

NUMBER OF FARMS AND LAND IN FARMS <sup>1</sup>									
Year	Number of Farms	Land in Farms	Average Size	Sales Class Estimates					
				\$1,000 - \$9,999	\$10,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 +	\$1,000 - \$9,999	\$10,000 - \$99,999	\$100,000 +
	Thousands	Thousand Acres	Acres	Number			Thousand Acres		
NORTH CAROLINA									
2012	50.2	8,410	168	29,500	12,200	8,500	1,700	1,510	5,200
2013	50.0	8,400	168	28,400	13,000	8,600	1,600	1,500	5,300
2014	49.5	8,400	170	28,000	12,800	8,700	1,500	1,500	5,400
2015	48.8	8,300	170	27,500	12,800	8,500	1,400	1,500	5,400
2016	48.0	8,200	171	26,500	12,800	8,700	1,300	1,500	5,400

Note: A farm is any establishment from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products or sold would normally be sold during the year.

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)



Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

### **New Census of Agriculture in Process**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is currently collecting information for the 2017 Census of Agriculture. The Census of Agriculture is the only NASS questionnaire mailed to every producer across the country and is conducted just once every five years. The Census provides a complete account of the industry, its changes, and emerging trends. Census data are widely used, often relied on when developing the Farm Bill and other farm policy, and when making decisions about disaster relief, community planning, technology development, etc.

At 177 years old, the Census of Agriculture tells the story of U.S. agriculture. It provides the only source of uniform, comprehensive and impartial agricultural data for every county in the nation. The data are valuable to those who serve farmers and rural communities, including federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations, extension educators, researchers, even farmers and ranchers themselves. Census results help shape farm programs and boost services for communities and the industry. The Census of Agriculture is a farmer or rancher's voice, future, and opportunity. For more information about the 2017 Census of Agriculture, visit [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).

NASS revised the census forms in an attempt to document changes and emerging trends in the industry. Changes include a new question about military veteran status, expanded questions about food marketing practices, and questions about on-farm decision-making to help better capture the roles and contributions of beginning farmers, women farmers, and others involved in running a farm enterprise. Producers can respond online at [www.agcounts.usda.gov](http://www.agcounts.usda.gov) or by mail by February 5. The online questionnaire offers new timesaving features.

### **Catawba County Voluntary Agricultural District Progress**

Catawba County's VAD showed slow growth in 2017, with 38.32 acres of land being added to the General Program, and 90.31 added to the Enhanced Program. To help promote membership, a mailing was sent to all owners who had land in the Present Use Value Tax Program to introduce them to the Voluntary Agricultural District Program. It was sent out in December 2017.

### **Award**

Catawba County Commissioner, **Dan Hunsucker and his family** were awarded the 2017 State Outstanding Conservation Farm Family Award from the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, for their operation of Hunsucker Farms, LLC. The award recognizes farmers and their families who are actively taking the initiative to implement sound, innovative and cost-effective conservation techniques and are actively involved in conservation education.

Competition judging criteria include conservation activities, stewardship, community leadership, education, and conservation knowledge. Factual evidence of effective conservation



techniques must be available for review and fall within the following categories - soil resource management, water resource management and pollution impact management. The entire operation, including livestock and property that is owned, rented or operated by the contestant must be considered in the application. State winners must agree to allow their farm to be used for demonstrational purposes so others can learn from their outstanding conservation achievements.



Every year the division helps judge farms entered in the association's competition. Subject matter experts from federal and state agencies, North Carolina State University, farm organizations and association members choose area and regional winners before selecting the state-level Outstanding Conservation Farm Family.



The division helps organize a celebration event to recognize the farming family and the Soil and Water Conservation District that partners with the family to implement conservation practices on the farm. The celebration was held at the farm on September 22, 2017. After the presentation and lunch, participants were invited take a wagon tour of the farm. In his acceptance remarks, Dan mentioned that while growing up, his mother told him that good or bad, you are always an example to someone. His

earning this award shows Dan is a model for making good environmental choices. Dignitaries who participated in the ceremony included Steve Troxler, NC Commissioner of Agriculture; Randy Isenhower, Chair, Catawba County Board of Commissioners; Jimmy Gentry, NC State Grange; Chris Hogan, NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts President; Susie Devine, Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District Chair; Laura Parnell, Catawba Soil and Water Conservation district Vice Chair, Steve Killian, Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor; and Rev. Scott Johnson, St. John's Lutheran Church.







### **Significant Agricultural Related Events in 2017**

June 17—24, 2017	Catawba County's Eat Drink and Be Local (EDBL) week featured week long activities. Events included: a cooking demonstration at the downtown Hickory Farmers Market, a tour of Avalines Farm, a fermentation class by Aubrey Mast at the Hickory Soup Kitchen, Kids' Corner by Julie Lehmann and 4H, Clarence Hood Farm Tour, food demonstrations at Hickory Public Health Farmers Market, bottling party and distillery tour at Seventeen Twelve Spirits, the Farm to Fork Feast Banquet at Market on Main, Hickory, and Family Fun Day at JRH Grain Farms, LLC, with Russell Hedrick.
July 17, 2017	Commissioner Hunsucker was presented with a proclamation recognizing Hunsucker Farms as the state winner of the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' 2017 Outstanding Conservation Farm family Award.
September 22, 2017	Celebration was held at Hunsucker Farms to recognize Catawba County Commissioner Dan Hunsucker and his family for their receipt of the 2017 Outstanding Conservation Farm Family Award. The award was given by the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. (See more in the Award Section.)
October 20, 2017	Farm Bureau Annual Meeting was held at Newton Expo Center (PIN Station), in Newton. Bandys High School received a \$10,000 award for their greenhouse project
November 7, 2017	<p>The 2017 Farm City Week Banquet was held at Main Cellar City Club in Hickory. Mark Story, the CEO/Executive Director at K64, was the key speaker. Mark stressed the importance of communication and collaboration between our education facilities and area businesses to keep Catawba County innovative in the business world.</p> <p>The Outstanding Contributor to Agriculture Award was given to Danny Montgomery, Bunker Hill High School. Danny has demonstrated extensive innovation as an instructor, contributing much to the agricultural industry. He teaches life skills in agriculture and proper usage of tools, and is working to certify the Department in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).</p> <p>The annual action was conducted by Tommy Poovey. Proceeds were approximately \$1,085 and benefited Catawba County 4-H.</p>
December 2017	A mailing was sent to all Catawba County landowners in the Present Use program to promote participation in the VAD.

## 2017 ANNUAL VAD PROGRAM STATISTICS

		Approved Prior to 2017			Approved in 2017			Cumulative To Date 12/31/17		
Program Type	Jurisdiction	# of Landowners	# of Acres	# of Parcels	# of Landowners	# of Acres	# of Parcels	# of Landowners	# of Acres	# of Parcels
Voluntary Program	Catawba County	115.00	11,468.99	281.00	2.00	15.96	2.00	117.00	11,484.95	283.00
	Catawba	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Claremont	2.00	55.55	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	55.55	4.00
	Conover	1.00	130.00	1.00	1.00	22.36	1.00	2.00	152.36	2.00
	Hickory	2.00	35.30	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	35.30	3.00
	Maiden	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Newton	2.00	172.43	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	172.43	2.00
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>122.00</b>	<b>11,862.27</b>	<b>291.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>38.32</b>	<b>3.00</b>	125.00	11,900.59	294.00
Enhanced Program	Catawba County	18.00	1,027.65	38.00	1.00	90.31	1.00	19.00	1,117.96	39.00
	Catawba	1.00	68.60	3.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	68.60	3.00
	Claremont	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Hickory	1.00	50.02	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	50.02	1.00
	Maiden	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Newton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>1,146.27</b>	<b>42.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>90.31</b>	<b>1.00</b>	21.00	1,236.58	43.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>142.00</b>	<b>13,008.54</b>	<b>333.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>128.63</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>146.00</b>	<b>13,137.17</b>	<b>337.00</b>

## VOLUNTEER AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT GROWTH BY YEAR

