Currituck County

Agricultural Development Plan

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This plan was written by W. Stan Dixon and Ed Emory. Dr. Dixon has an Ed.D. from N.C. State University and served with N.C. Cooperative Extension in Martin, Wake and Greene counties. He retired in 2009 from N.C. Cooperative Extension as County Extension Director. Mr. Emory holds a B.S. and M.Ed. from N.C. State University and served with the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service in Pamlico and Duplin Counties for more than 28 years. He retired in 2009 after serving 19 years as County Extension Director in Duplin County.

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- North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Center
- Currituck County Board of Commissioners
- Currituck County Manager
- North Carolina Forest Service
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- The citizens, farmers and agribusinesses of Currituck County

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Executive Summary

Currituck County has a viable agricultural sector that is an important part of the total county fabric of life. The goal of this Agricultural Development Plan is to reflect the importance of agriculture and assess the opportunities, challenges and issues that are currently facing the industry. This plan provides recommendations, based on citizen input, to enhance agriculture, forestry, agribusiness and agritourism.

Farmland is an irreplaceable natural resource, and the farmers who are stewards of the resource impact the economy and quality of life for all county residents. The economic impact of the agriculture sector in 2012 was 8.4 percent of the county's value added total income. The agriculture sector also accounts for 7.6 percent of Currituck County's total employment[1]. Currituck County has the resources, human and natural to ensure that agriculture can prosper in the future. The impact of agriculture in Currituck County in 2012:

*Agriculture and agribusiness contributed $49,522,814 in total income

*Currituck ranked 22nd in the state in corn production

*Currituck was 29th in the state in soybean production

*Currituck ranked 26th in the state in wheat production

*In total cash receipts from agriculture, Currituck County ranked 85th in the state[2]

Currituck County is experiencing population growth, with an increase of 9.6 percent from 2010 to 2016[3]. The county is a member of the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) which is the 37th largest MSA out of 382 in the United States. The county is home to a vibrant tourism industry due to the Outer Banks, Currituck Sound and several National Wildlife Refuges. This subsequent growth has resulted in competition for land. Of Currituck County farmers surveyed, 45 percent, lacked sufficient land to expand or diversify their operations. Currituck County farmers reported facing other critical issues, low commodity prices, rising production input cost and development pressure. Farmers are confronted by other challenges to their operations,

such as an aging farmer population, with the average age of farmers being 56.6 years old and 36 percent not having farm transition plans. These issues present opportunities to enhance agriculture through education and the support of citizens and local government.

Of the non-farm citizens surveyed, 100 percent believe that local government should take action to preserve farmland as a valuable resource. Eighty-six percent of non-farm citizens believe that farming enhances the scenic beauty and open spaces of the county while providing a positive impact on the environment. All of non-farm respondents support farm and forest preservation efforts in the county.

At the center of the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan are proposed recommendations. based on information provided by farmers, agribusiness leaders and non-farm residents through personal interviews and surveys The recommendations and action steps were developed to provide a guide for protecting and enhancing agriculture in Currituck County. The success of this plan depends on the collaboration between local government, agricultural organizations, farmers, agribusiness and citizens of Currituck County. The plan needs to be evaluated annually to celebrate accomplishments and add new recommendations as needed. The recommendations for Currituck County are:

1. **Support measures to protect and promote forest and farmland in Currituck County.**
2. **Develop, Adopt and Implement Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD)Programs.**
3. **Develop and conduct programs to assist Currituck County farm and forest landowners with farm transition planning.**
4. **Promote appreciation and awareness of the benefits of agriculture to Currituck County elected officials and citizens.**
5. **Expand and Support Youth Agricultural Educational Programs.**

6. Develop Technical, Business and Marketing Training for the Maintenance and Expansion of Agriculture in Currituck County.

The intent of this plan is neither to limit nor restrict landowners' rights and uses. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for actions to provide farmers, landowners and citizens an increased awareness of farmland preservation opportunities. Agriculture is important to Currituck County and its economy and to the well-being of family farms. However, the final decision on farmland preservation rests in the hands of the owners of farm and forests.

A Need for Action

Agriculture, consisting of food, fiber and forestry, is North Carolina's leading industry. In a 2015 report by Mike Walden, professor and extension economist at North Carolina State University, more than 16% of the state's workforce was directly involved with agriculture, an industry that contributes $83.7 billion, or 17%, to the gross state product in North Carolina[4]. In Currituck County, agriculture accounted for 7.6 percent of Currituck County's employment in 2012. According to Mike Walden in 2015, agriculture and agribusiness added $49, 522,814.00 or 8.4 percent of the county's value added total income[5].

Currituck County's leadership is cognizant of the importance of agriculture to the local economy and is supportive of an Agricultural Development Plan that addresses issues related to farm and agribusiness viability for the future. The goal of the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan is to provide strategic actions that will guide local leaders in their efforts to preserve farms and forests, as well as market the many benefits of the agricultural industry. Currituck County is one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina. According to the US Census 2016 estimates, Currituck County has a population of 25,809. This figure represents a 9.6 percent increase from 2010[6].

The North Carolina Department of Commerce reported that in 2017, nearly one-third of Currituck County's population was over the age of 55. When farms are passed down to younger generations with little or no attachment to farming, farms are at risk of being removed from agricultural production and sold for development or other non-agricultural uses. This plan is grounded in three basic tenets:

1. Agriculture is an important component of Currituck County's economy.
2. Preserving farms and forests is in the public interest.
3. Farms and forests are sustainable natural resources.

As the state's population has increased, land has been removed from agricultural production to provide housing and services to the growing

population. From 1997 to 2012, North Carolina lost more than 8,900 farms and nearly 1 million acres of farmland. During the same time period, Currituck County experienced a loss of 4,626 acres of farmland[7].

The development of the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan was directed by the University of Mount Olive's Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center in partnership with the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. This plan reports the state of agriculture in the county and the opportunities and challenges confronting agriculture.

Agriculture is defined to include horticulture, farming (row crops and livestock) and forestry. The North Carolina General Assembly defined agriculture in General Statute 105-277.2 through 105-277.7 as:

- Minimum acreage of production land:
    - 10 acres for agricultural use
    - 5 acres for horticultural use
    - 20 acres for forest use
- Production must follow a sound management plan.
- Agricultural and horticultural land must have at least one qualifying tract that has produced an average gross income of at least $1,000 for the three years preceding the application year.
- Forest land must be following a forest management plan.

In order to determine challenges and opportunities to agriculture in the county, personal interviews and survey instruments were utilized. Surveys were distributed in hard copy form at agricultural and community meetings and electronically distributed via SurveyMonkey. All responses to the surveys and interviews are confidential according to the University of Mount Olive Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative. The data collected depicts the state of agriculture and the future needs of Currituck County. This data was used to develop recommendations which will assist county leadership in keeping farm and forest land viable now and in the future.

Overview of Currituck County

Established in 1668, Currituck County was one of the first areas settled in the United States. An original North Carolina county, Currituck County was one of the five original ports. It is in the northeastern section of the State and is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Albemarle Sound, Camden County, and the state of Virginia.

Named for an Algonquin Indian term meaning "The Land of the Wild Goose," the Currituck Outer Banks are abundant with waters, marshes, and woods.

In the early part of the 1800s, Currituck County became known for its fishing villages and peaceful way of life. The Albemarle Chesapeake Waterway, which opened in 1859, became a vital water passage from Maine to Florida. Known today as the Intracoastal Waterway, it separates Currituck County's southern mainland from the northern mainland. Marinas and restaurants serve the pleasure and commercial vessels that navigate the Intracoastal Waterway.

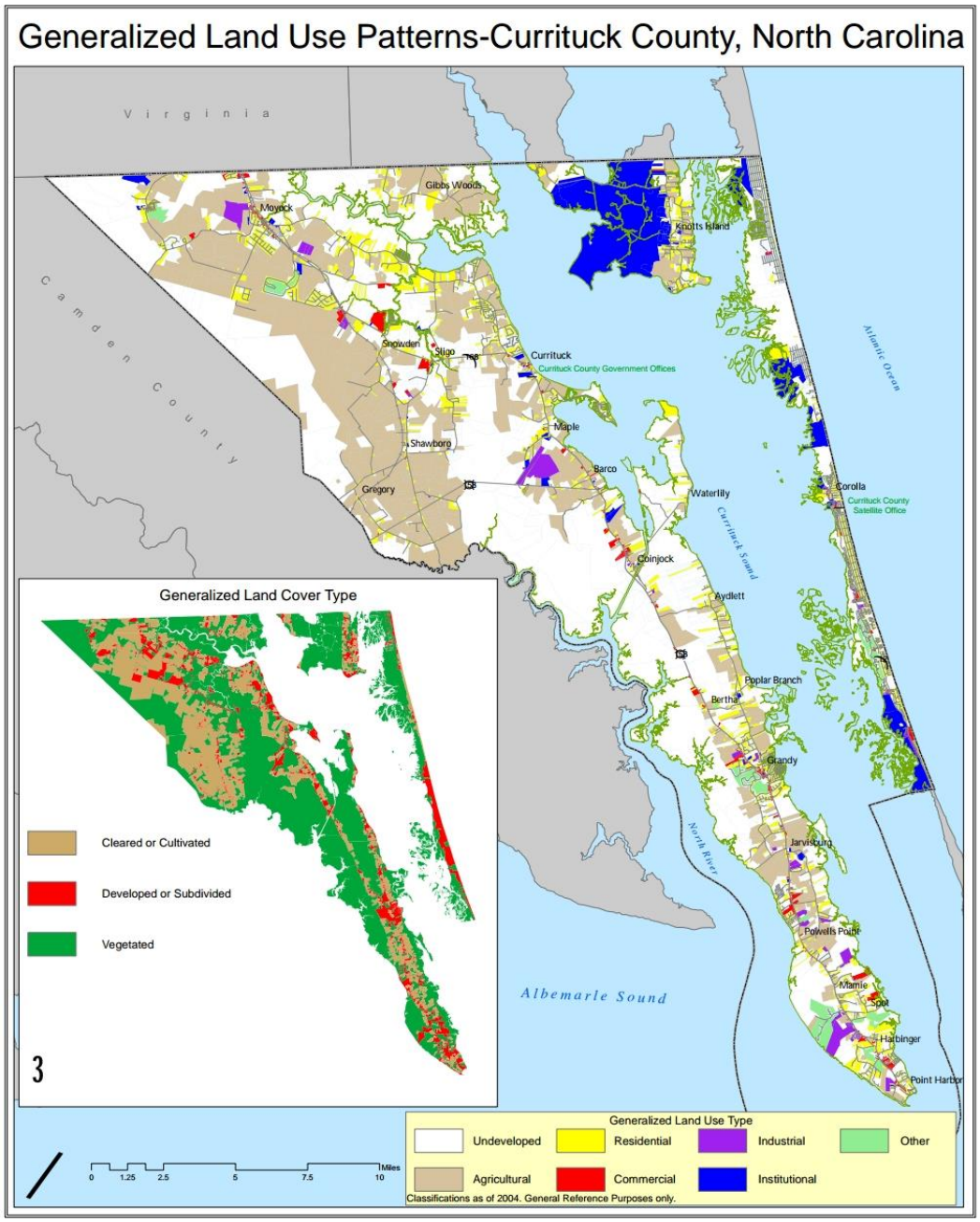
By the late 1800s, Currituck County gained a reputation as a sportsman's paradise. Wealthy industrialists were attracted to the county for its abundance of wildlife and numerous hunt clubs, including the Pine Island Club, and Currituck Shooting Club.

One of the best venues for seeing how the wealthy lived in Corolla is The Whalehead Club, which has been renovated into a historic house museum. Near the Whalehead Club stands an additional restored structure: the Currituck Beach Lighthouse. First lit in the mid-1800s, the lighthouse warned ships hugging the chain of barrier islands along the North Carolina Coast[8].

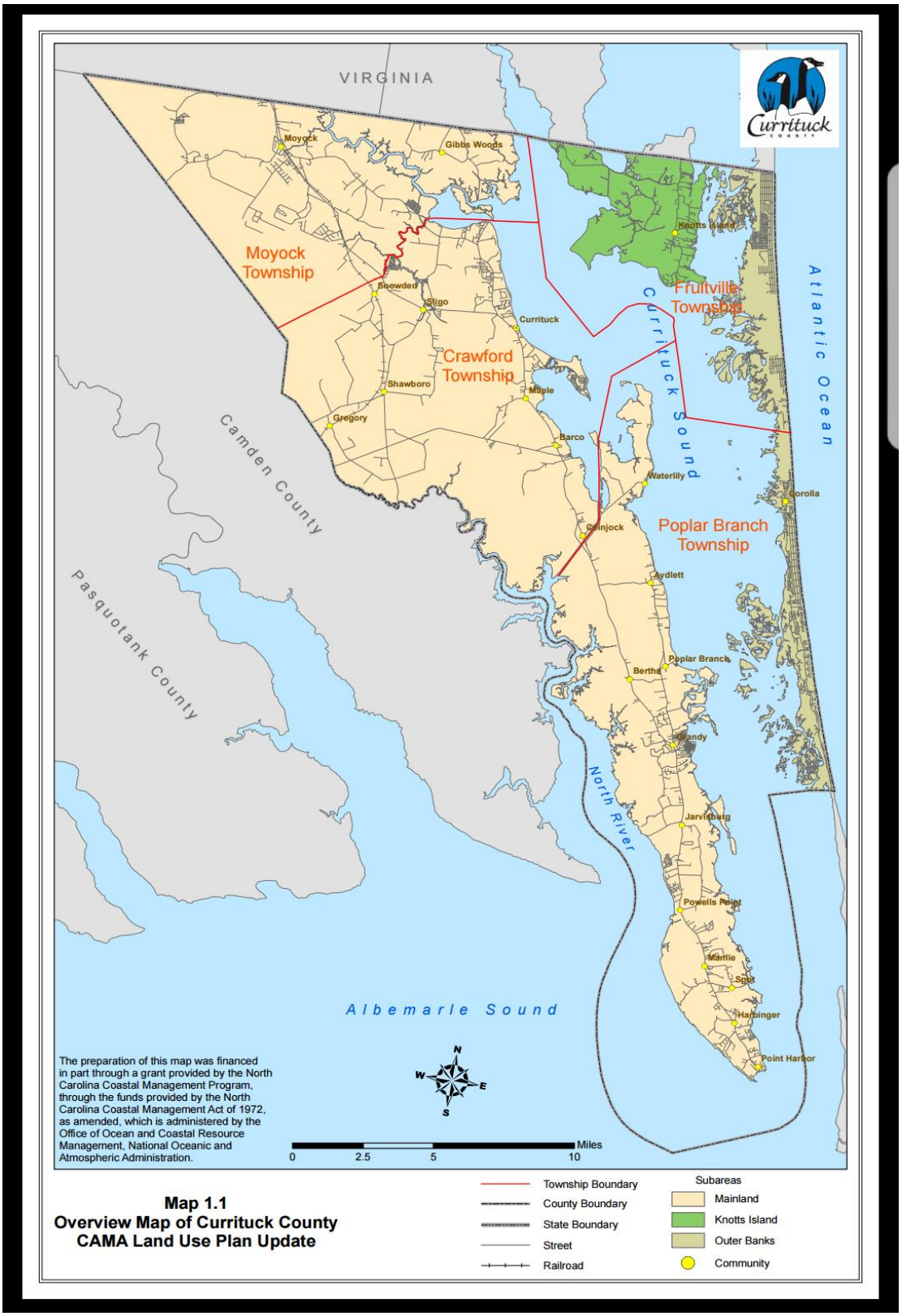
Currituck County is now one of the fastest growing counties in North Carolina. Unprecedented growth has been highlighted by a careful balance between the environment and development. The Currituck Outer Banks are a blend of a past that is rich in heritage with a vision for a progressive tomorrow.

Currituck County Demographics

According to the US Census 2016 estimates, Currituck County has a population of 25,809. This figure represents a 9.6 percent increase from 2010. The county is 90.6 percent white, 5.9 percent African American and 3.8 percent Hispanic[9].



Map 1: General Land Use Patterns, Currituck County, NC[10]



Map 2: Currituck Township Map[11]

Currituck County has no incorporated areas. The county seat is located in the community of Currituck. Other communities include Moyock, Barco, Shawboro, Coinjock, Knotts Island, Corolla, Gibbs Woods, Snowden, Sligo, Maple, Gregory, Waterlily, Aydlett, Poplar Branch, Bertha, Jarvisburg, Powells Point, Mamie, Spot, Harbinger, and Point Harbor.

Currituck County is divided into four townships which are Moyock, Crawford, Fruitville, and Poplar Branch as shown on Map 2.

As part of the Hampton Roads MSA, Currituck County is a member of the 37th largest metropolitan statistical area in the nation (out of 382). A shared border with Virginia provides direct access to resources and opportunities in the Hampton Roads region from rich arts and culture attractions to a highly skilled workforce and growing industry clusters[12].

Economy

The North Carolina Department of Commerce ranks each of the state's 100 counties into three tiers based on the economic well-being of each county. Tier 1 is most distressed, and Tier 3 is least distressed. Currituck County is designated as a Tier 2 county and has remained in the Tier 2 classification since 2007. North Carolina uses these designations to encourage economic growth through incentives in distressed counties. Currituck's tier status provides opportunities for certain grants and other incentives aimed at stimulating the county's economy[13].

In 2015, the median household income in Currituck County was $60,600.00 compared to the state figure of $46,868.00. Ten percent of Currituck's population is considered below the poverty level, lower than the state's level of 16 percent[14].

Forty-six percent or 5,348 working Currituck County residents are employed outside North Carolina. Twenty-one percent or 2,392 residents work within North Carolina, but outside of Currituck County. Thirty-three percent or 3,880 residents work within the county. The unemployment rate is 4 percent which is slightly lower than the North Carolina rate of 4.2 percent. Historically,

Currituck County's unemployment rate increases during winter months and decreases during the summer months[15].

Agriculture and agribusiness provided jobs for 7.6 percent of Currituck County's working residents according to a study completed by Dr. Mike Walden[16].

Cost of Services

American Farmland Trust conducted 151 cost-of-community-services studies, including six in North Carolina, to determine the contributions made to the economy by various land uses. The studies focus on three main land uses: commercial and industrial, working and open lands, and residential. Agricultural and commercial land uses require fewer public services than residential land uses, saving money for the county. For each $1 of revenue received from each land use, the cost of community services study concluded that:

- Residential land cost $1.16 in public services.
- Working and open lands (including agriculture and forestry) required $0.35 for public services.
- Commercial and industrial land cost $0.29 for public services.

While similar impacts would be expected in Currituck County, a study of this nature can help local leaders and developers understand the impact and importance of planned land-use development on the county's economy[17].

Infrastructure and Transportation

Mainland Currituck County is located less than an hour's drive from the major metropolitan areas of Norfolk, Hampton Roads and Chesapeake, Virginia. The state maintained US 158/168 five lane highway runs through the middle of the county connecting the Outer Banks to central North Carolina and Southeast Virginia. This main thoroughfare provides direct access to the Norfolk International Airport, the Port of Virginia, and Interstates 64 and 95.

The Chesapeake and Albemarle Railroad provides rail connection to Currituck County. This rail service directly connects to the Port of Virginia and Class I rail carriers, Norfolk Southern, and CSX. This railway provides industrial,

agricultural and manufacturing entities with effective and efficient road and rail transportation to national markets.

Currituck Reginal Airport (ONX) is a publicly owned general aviation airport located 40 miles south of Norfolk and 30 miles north of the North Carolina's Outer Banks.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation operates a free 45 minute ferry service to Knotts Island. The ferry departs from the mainland dock in the community of Currituck and makes five round trips per day[18].

The Currituck Mainland Water System provides service to over 6,000 active accounts. The county has a water treatment plant with a capacity of 2.9 million gallons per day, with a storage capacity of 1.9 million gallons. In Corolla, the county provides water service through the Southern Outer Banks water system[19].

The shorelines within Currituck County, adjacent to the ocean and sound, fall under the jurisdiction of the North Carolina Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA). CAMA was enacted to protect the resources of the coast as well as human lives and property.

CAMA regulations require permits for certain "development" activities located within what CAMA refers to as the Area of Environmental Concern (AEC). This is the area within 75 feet of the normal water line of Estuarine Shorelines and the area along the oceanfront directly adjacent to the frontal and primary dune system which is subject to greater risk of flooding and coastal erosion[20].

Geographically, Currituck County is divided into three zones:

- Mainland, including Gibbs Woods
- Knotts Island
- Outer Banks beaches

According to the Currituck County CAMA land use plan, the Mainland zone has two sub areas--- northern Currituck and southern (or lower) Currituck. Northern Currituck, due to its proximity to the Hampton Roads MSA, is

creating a high demand for residential development. Lower Currituck is being affected by beach related service industries, causing conflicts with upscale residential development and businesses and agriculture.

Knotts Island has no central water or sewer system. Because of a very high seasonal water levels and extensive wetlands, Knotts Island is not ideal for development.

The Outer Banks beaches of Currituck consist of Corolla and Corova. Corolla has improved maintained roads including NC 12 which connects the community with Dare County. They have underground utilities, and central water and sewer systems. Corova is an off-road area with no improved roads, no central water and sewer systems and is designated by the Federal Government as a Coastal Barrier Resource Act Zone which prohibits the purchase of federal flood insurance[21].

Education

A majority (86.4%) of the population of Currituck County over 25 years of age have completed high school, compared to 85.8 percent of all North Carolina citizens over the age of 25. Similarly, 20.5 percent of Currituck County citizens have a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the state's average of 28.4 percent[22].

The Currituck County School System enrolls 4,100 students in six elementary schools, two middle schools, an early college high school and a traditional high school. The county is also served by the College of the Albemarle which is part of the North Carolina Community College System. The Barco campus in Currituck County houses the COA Regional Aviation and Technical Training Center[23].

Natural Attributes

In Currituck County, as with all areas, natural resources are paramount in agricultural production. Currituck County consists of 261.85 square miles of land and 264.74 square miles of water.

Currituck County is comprised of more water than land, due to the 30 mile long Currituck Sound. This body of water separates the mainland from the

barrier island beaches. The sound is unique in that it is mainly fresh water because of the natural closure of the Currituck Inlet over 200 years ago. The sound is mainly fed by rainwater. The sound is home to a wide variety of marine life and the temporary home of migrating waterfowl, making it a paradise for fishermen, hunters and bird watchers.

Currituck County is the home of two National Wildlife Refuges, named Currituck and Mackay Island. The Mackay Island Refuge consists of 8,219 acres of Currituck County and is located almost entirely on Knott's Island. The Currituck National Wildlife Refuge consists of 4,570 acres and is located on the northern Outer Banks of Currituck County[24].

One mile north of the village of Corolla, is the Currituck Banks National Estuarine Reserve consisting of 965 acres of wildlife habitat. The Donald C. O'Brien, Jr. Sanctuary and Audubon Center at Pine Island in Corolla is one of the last pieces of untouched property on the northeastern portion of the Outer Banks, preserving 2,600 acres of marsh, upland maritime forest and sandy beaches[25].

Both land and water are irreplaceable resources. A combination of best management practices and wise conservation must be employed to keep the resources in good condition.

Soils

Soils are classified into different associations which help determine a soil's suitability for different uses. Soil uses include growing crops, growing trees and residential and commercial construction. Currituck County has seven major soil associations which are:

1. Conetoe-Dragston-Munden is nearly level and gently sloping, well drained, somewhat poorly drained, and moderately well drained soils that have a sandy surface and loamy subsoil. This association makes up 16 percent of Currituck soils. Mainly used for crop land, these soils are also used for some pasture and woodland.
2. Roanoke-Tomotley is nearly level, poorly drained soils that have a loamy surface and loamy or clayey subsoil. This association is mainly

used for cropland, pasture and woodland and accounts for 22 percent of Currituck soils.

3. Portsmouth-Cape Fear-Wasda is nearly level, very poorly drained soils that have a loamy or mucky surface layer and loamy or clayey subsoil. Making up 14 percent of Currituck's soils, this association can be used for cropland, woodland and pasture if properly drained.
4. Dare-Ponzer is nearly level, very poorly drained soils have a loamy or mucky surface layer and sandy or loamy underlying material. This association makes up to 16 percent of the soil in Currituck County. The major soil in this classification is use for woodland.
5. Currituck is nearly level, very poorly drained soils that have a mucky surface layer and sandy underlying material. This soil is found mainly along the Currituck and Albemarle Sounds and is used mainly for wildlife habitat.
6. Dorovan soils are poorly drained soils that have a mucky surface layer and sandy mineral layers. Making up 8 percent of Currituck County this soil is mainly used for woodland and wildlife habitat.
7. Newhan-Corolla-Duckston is nearly level to sloping, excessively drained sandy soils mostly used for recreational activities associated with the beach and wildlife habitat. This association makes up 6 percent of the soil in Currituck County[26].

Water and Drainage

With increasing development occurring within Currituck County and its evolution from rural to more urban in character, issues arise regarding flow of storm water from one property to another. This development is having an adverse effect on agricultural lands as farmers deal with flooding from storm runoff. The soils of Currituck County are mainly poorly drained and increased runoff from development is compounding flood management for agricultural land owners[27].

Forestry

Currituck County forestland totals 40,311 acres, with 96 percent owned by private landowners. According to North Carolina Cooperative Extension Forestry, the income from timber sales in 2012 was $2.7 million. The total forest industry economic impact to Currituck County was $2.4 million. Thirteen people are employed in the Currituck County forest industry[28].

According to the NC Forest Ranger serving Currituck County, since 1997, 528 landowners have had forest management plans written for 34,793 acres. Approximately 1,247 acres have been commercially thinned or pre-commercial thinned. Since 2001, the Forest Service has assisted landowners in planting 4,210 acres and conducted 83 silviculture burns for 3,062 plans. Currituck County has 25,300 acres of non-industrial private woodland.

Commercial Fishing and Recreational Fishing

In 2015, the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries reported that 1,914,901 pounds of commercial seafood was landed in Currituck County with a value of $2,196,555. Also, in 2015, the Currituck Sound yielded 2,203,182 pounds of hard blue crabs, 52,034 pounds of southern flounder, 38,578 pounds of peeler blue crabs, 25,990 pounds of striped mullet and 19,193 pounds of catfish[29].

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries issued 2,048 Coastal Recreational Fishing licenses in Currituck County in 2016.

Hunting

Waterfowl hunting has been an important part of Currituck County's history for more than 200 years. At the turn of the 20th century, wealthy northern industrialists flocked to Currituck Sound for its natural migrating waterfowl habitat. Elaborate hunting clubs, such as the Whalehead Club near Corolla and the Pine Island Club were popular haunts for the wealthy hunters. Waterfowl hunting and its related activities such as decoy sales, hunting guides, lodges and restaurants, continues to be of great economic impact to Currituck County[30].

Currituck County: the State of Agriculture

Agriculture accounted for 7.6 percent of Currituck County's employment in 2012. According to Mike Walden in 2012, agriculture and agribusiness added $49, 522,814.00 or 8.4 percent of the county's value added total income[31].

The number of farms in Currituck County remained the same from 2002 to 2012, according to the US Census of Agriculture with 82 farms. The amount of total farmland in Currituck County increased from 34,802 acres in 2002 to 35,356 acres in 2012. The average farm size increased from 424 acres in 2002 to 431 acres in 2012. Of the farmland in Currituck County 32,144 acres were used in crop production in 2012[32].

According to the 2012 US Census of Agriculture, Currituck County had 12 fruit, nut and berry farms that had sales of $224,000.00. The sales from farms producing vegetable, melon, and potato were down by 63 percent from 2007 to 2012 totaling $252,000.00. The value of animal products grown in Currituck County in 2012 ($38,000) fell by 72 percent from 2007. In 2012, 16 Currituck County farms produced animals. This represents a 20 percent decline from 2007[33].

The horse industry is a vital part of the Currituck County agricultural economy and cultural heritage. In 2009, Currituck County was home to 1,080 horses with a value of $6,562,000.00[34].

County government owns and Currituck Cooperative Extension operates the Currituck County Rural Center which offers equestrian stabling and indoor and outdoor riding rings.

Farmers markets and roadside stands are an important part of the agricultural economy in Currituck County. Also, farms that sell directly to consumers increased from 2007 to 2012 by 14 percent with annual sales of $276,000[35].

Agriculture is an important element of Currituck County's economy and also impacts the state's economy and agricultural production. In 2015, Currituck County was ranked in North Carolina as follows:

- 22nd in corn production
- 29th in soybean production
- 26th in wheat production
- 95th in cattle production
- 85th in total agricultural cash receipts[36]

In March 2017, Currituck County's Economic Development Planning Session yielded the following opportunities related to agriculture:

- Strength of agricultural sector
- Farm to table movement
- Marketing local fishing catch
- Increased vocational training

Threats related to agriculture:

- Declining natural resources
- Political decisions affecting farming
- Development impact on natural resources

Crops

In 2012, eighty-two farms in Currituck County harvested crops from 31,292 acres. Receipts from crop sales totaled $16,768,946.00 in 2015. Production of major crops in Currituck County in 2015 included:

- Soybeans, 18,600 acres
- Corn, 10,000 acres
- Wheat, 7,300 acres
- Vegetables and Orchards, 214 acres

Figure 1 illustrates production acreages for each crop from 2002 to 2012.

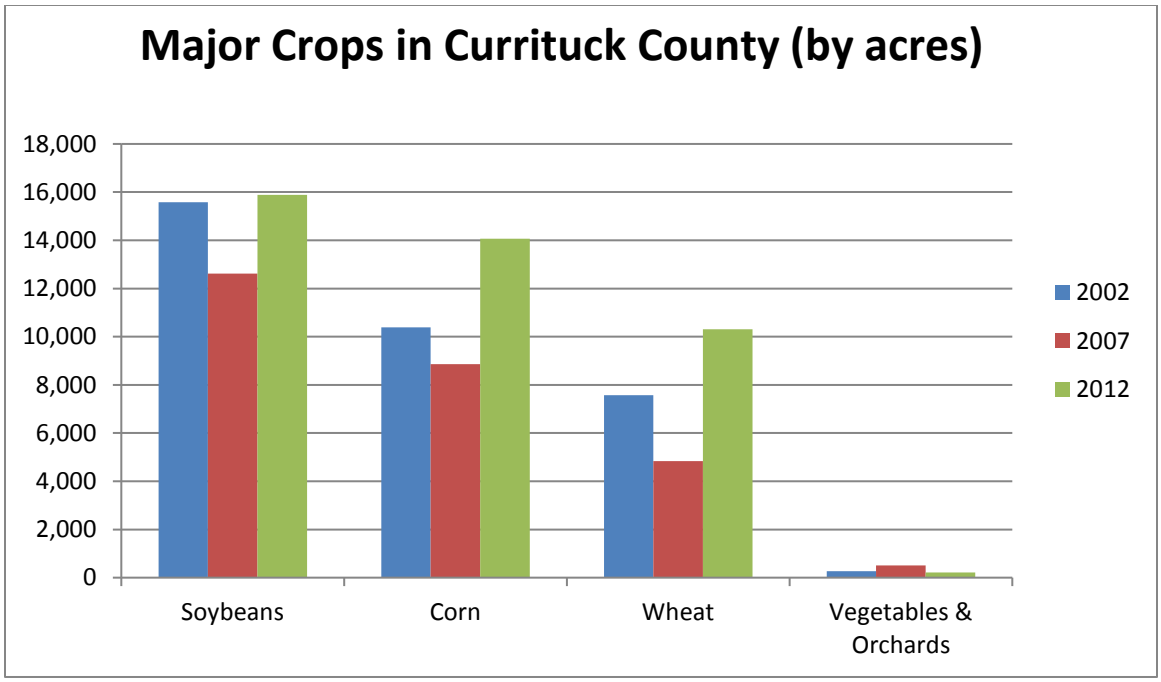


Figure 1: Major Crops in Currituck County (by acres)[37]

Livestock

In 2015, Currituck County farmers realized cash receipts from beef cattle of $139,051 ranking the county 99th in the state of North Carolina[38].

Forestry

Currituck County forestland totals 40,311 acres, with 96 percent owned by private landowners. According to North Carolina Cooperative Extension Forestry, the income from timber sales in 2012 was $2.7 million. The total forest industry economic impact to Currituck County was $2.4 million and thirteen people are employed in the Currituck County forest industry[39].

According to the North Carolina Forest Ranger serving Currituck County, since 1997, 528 landowners have had management plans written for 34,793 acres. Approximately, 1,247 acres have been commercially thinned or pre-commercial thinned. Since 2001, the NC Forest Service has helped landowners plant 4,210 acres and conducted 83 silviculture burns impacting a total of 3,062 forest management acres. Currituck County has 25,300 acres of non-industrial private woodland.

Farmer Demographics

The number of full-time farmers from 2002 to 2012 showed a decrease of 42 percent. The number of part-time farmers exhibited an increase of 64 percent during the same time period. The average age of farmers in Currituck County was 56.6 years of age in 2012. Principal operators by gender were 77 male and 5 female. The majority of farm owners were white[40].

Figure 2 represents principal farm operators' primary occupation—full-time or part-time. Data is shown for 2002, 2007 and 2012.

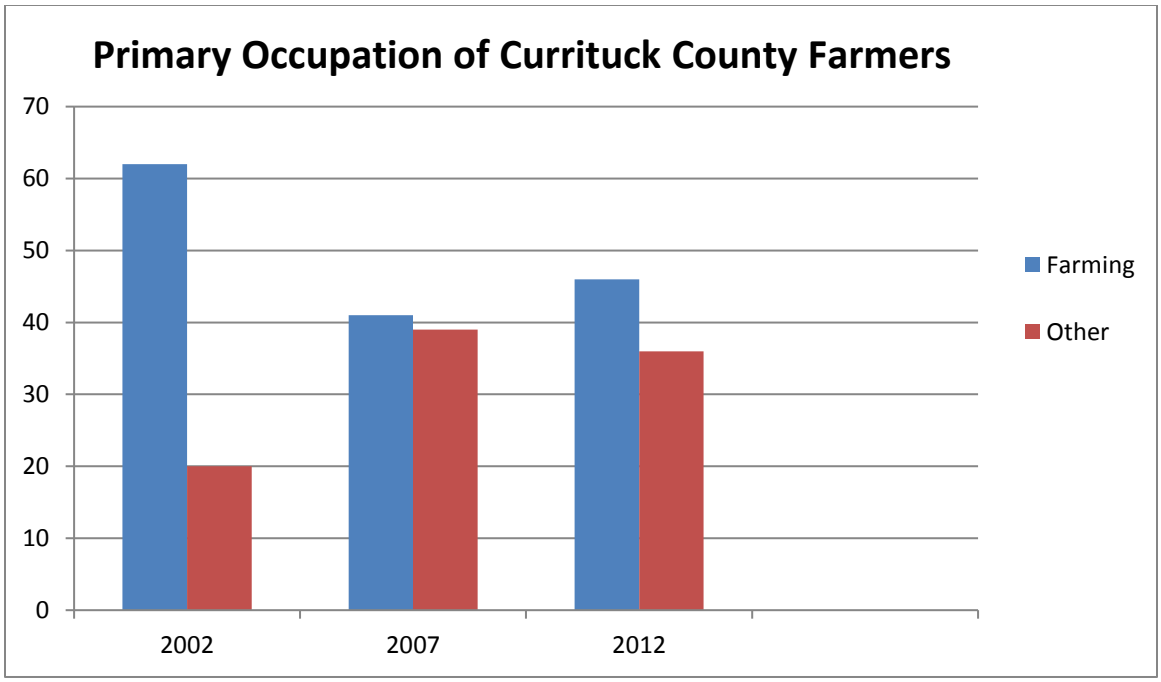


Figure 2: Primary Occupation of Currituck County Farmers[41]

Farm and Forest Protection Programs

(Compiled by John Bonham, 2009)

Present-Use Value Tax Program

Present-Use Value, or PUV, is a program established by N.C.G.S. §§ 105-277.2 to .7 and administered by the county assessor through which qualifying property can be assessed, for property tax purposes, based on its use as agricultural, horticultural or forest land. The present use value is the value of the land based solely on its ability to produce income. Qualifying property is assessed at its present-use value rather than its market value. The tax office also maintains a market value for the land, and the difference between the market value and the present-use value is maintained in the tax records as deferred taxes. When land becomes disqualified from the program, the deferred taxes for the current and three previous years, with interest, will usually become payable and due.

Basic Requirements

Minimum acreage of production land:

- 10 acres for agricultural use
- Five acres for horticulture use
- 20 acres for forest use

Production must follow a sound management plan.

Agricultural and horticultural land must have at least one qualifying tract that has produced an average gross income of at least $1,000 for the three years preceding the application year.

Forest land must be following a forest management plan.

Benefits

Protection from increasing land values that are based on development potential and the potential increase in property taxes

More information can be found at
http://www.dor.state.nc.us/publications/property.html.

Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VAD)

Established by N.C.G.S. §§ 106-737 to 743 and administered at the county level, Voluntary Agricultural Districts are designated areas where commercial agriculture will be encouraged and protected. The purposes of the districts are to increase identity and pride in the agricultural community and to increase protection from nuisance suits and other negative impacts on properly managed farms.

Requirements

Land must be enrolled in the Present-Use Value program or otherwise be determined to meet the qualifications of the program.

The landowner must enter into a revocable agreement to limit development for a 10-year period.

Benefits

• Notification to buyers of nearby property that they're moving into an agricultural area

• Abeyance of water and sewer assessments

• Public hearings on the condemnation of farmland

• Stronger protection from nuisance suits

• Representation by an appointed board regarding concerns on threats to the agricultural sector

Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts (EVAD)

Established by N.C.G.S §§ 106-743.1 to .5, an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District is a VAD formed of one or more farms that are subject to an IRREVOCABLE 10-year agreement to limit development. In return for the condition of irrevocability, the landowner receives the added benefits of being able to receive 25 percent of gross revenue from the sale of non-farm

products and still qualify as a bona fide farm, and being eligible to receive up to 90 percent cost-share assistance from the Agricultural Cost-Share Program.

Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a written agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization or public agency under which the landowner agrees to keep the land available for agriculture and to restrict subdivision, non-farm development and other uses that are incompatible with commercial agriculture.

Basic Requirements

Permanently foregoing the right to subdivide or develop the land being conserved. There will be other limitations on activities to preserve the land's productivity, environmental values and rural character. Cash payments in the range of $20,000 to $40,000 are needed to cover the costs of the transaction. These costs are for legal services, a survey, an appraisal, long-term stewardship services provided by the conservation partner and other miscellaneous activities. In some cases, grant funds will cover these costs.

Other Information

A portion of the property can be left out of the easement, thereby providing an area for future homes and other non-farm activities.

Agricultural activities, including forestry, are allowed under the agreement.

Despite the term "easement," access to the public is not provided by the agreement.

The value of a conservation easement is determined by a licensed land appraiser and is typically between 25 percent and 75 percent of the land's market value.

A periodic inspection of the property is required to ensure that development does not occur. This provision will be included in the agreement.

The agreement is recorded on the county's land records and runs with the title. All future landowners must comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Financial Benefits

If the conservation easement is donated, then the landowner will likely qualify for a federal income tax deduction and a state income tax credit. The value of these benefits depends on the appraised value of the easement and the income tax situation of the landowner.

A conservation easement also can be sold by the landowner through a transaction commonly referred to as a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE). Funds to purchase a conservation easement can be raised from private and government sources. North Carolina and the federal government have programs to purchase agricultural conservation easements. Funding through these programs is very competitive and will generally amount to a percentage of the easement's value. The tax benefits described above can be claimed for any of the easement's value above the purchase price.

Term Conservation Easements

Also called Agricultural Agreements, these agreements are similar to conservation easements but apply for a finite period of time agreed to by the landowner and conservation partner.

Transfer of Development Rights

A program set up by local units of government that utilizes conservation easements to preserve farmland by providing incentives to increase development density in a designated area. The program identifies the "sending area" where conservation is being encouraged and the "receiving area" where development is preferred. A landowner in the receiving area can purchase a conservation easement on a property in the sending area and receive additional density allowances. In North Carolina, counties must receive authorization from the General Assembly to develop and implement a TDR program.

Farm Transition Planning

Making careful plans for the transfer of ownership of farm property and assets from the current owner to the next can be enough to preserve a farm for decades. Many options are available when planning an estate or land transfer. Farm owners can increase the likelihood of a successful transition that maintains the viability of the farm by obtaining professional assistance early in the process.

Right-to-Farm Law

North Carolina has a state right-to-farm law (N.C.G.S. §§ 106-700 to 701(2006)) that protects farm and forestry operations from being declared a nuisance as long as they have been in operation for at least one year and are operated properly and without negligence.

N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund

N.C.G.S. § 106-744(c) established a trust fund to be administered by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The purpose of the trust fund is to provide monies to purchase agricultural conservation easements and to fund programs that promote the development and sustainability of farming, and the transition of existing farms to new farm families. Counties and nonprofit conservation organizations can apply for grants for these purposes.

Challenges, Opportunities and Trends: Survey and Interview Results

The methodology employed to access information, perceptions and attitudes related to agriculture and agribusiness in Currituck County consisted of written surveys and interviews with three target audiences—agriculture producers, agribusiness owners and non-farm residents of Currituck County. Surveys were distributed by the Currituck County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

In addition, key leaders in Currituck County from all three targeted groups were interviewed to better identify challenges and opportunities that exist in the county's agricultural segment. All descriptive statistics presented in this document were calculated using data obtained from these processes. Survey and interview information revealed pertinent information on the state of agriculture in Currituck County from the perspective of farmers, agribusinesses, and non-farm residents as well as from data sources such as USDA and NCDA.

The results identify specific challenges and opportunities affecting the future of agriculture in the county.

Agricultural Producer Analysis

A review of the 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that there were 82 farms in the county being cultivated by 77 male and 5 female operators. Currituck County farmers are predominantly white with 80 white operators and 2 African American operators. The average age of Currituck County farmers was reported as 56.6 years in 2012. Farmers providing information for the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan represented operations from across the county. The average age of survey respondents was 56.2 years, virtually the same as the 2012 US Census of Agriculture[42].

According to the survey, the majority of the operations (63.6 percent) were defined as primarily farming with some timber production with 27.3 percent as farming only. Other operators (9.1 percent) classified their operations as primarily timber production with some farm production.

Eighty-two percent of Currituck County farmers surveyed indicated that they had been in operation for more than 20 years. Only 18 percent of respondents had been in operation 9 years or less (Figure 3).

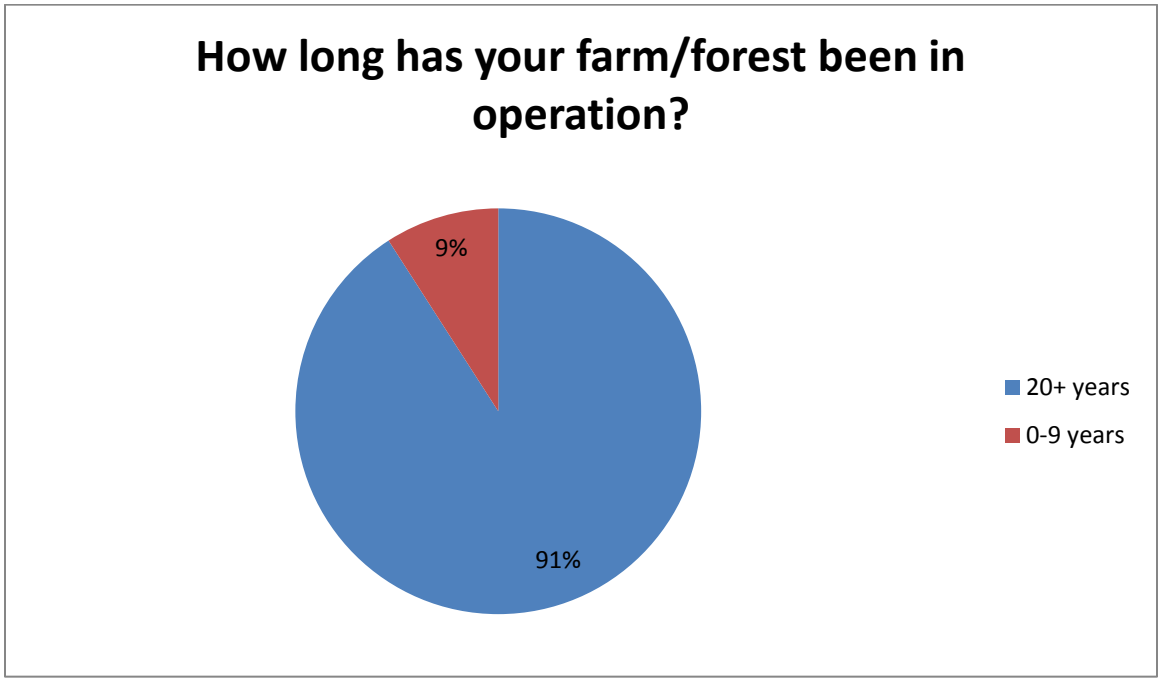


Figure 3. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

Almost 63 percent of the responding farmers indicated that their operations provided the majority of their household income. Of the farmers responding, less than 50 percent have expanded their operations during the last five years. Of those who wanted to expand but did not, listed the following reasons:

- High cost of equipment
- Lack of available land to rent
- Low profit margin
- Lack of available land to purchase

Notably, 45 percent of farmers surveyed stated that they did not own sufficient property to expand or diversify their operation. (Figure 4) This indicates the importance of and need for leasable land for operational expansion in Currituck County.

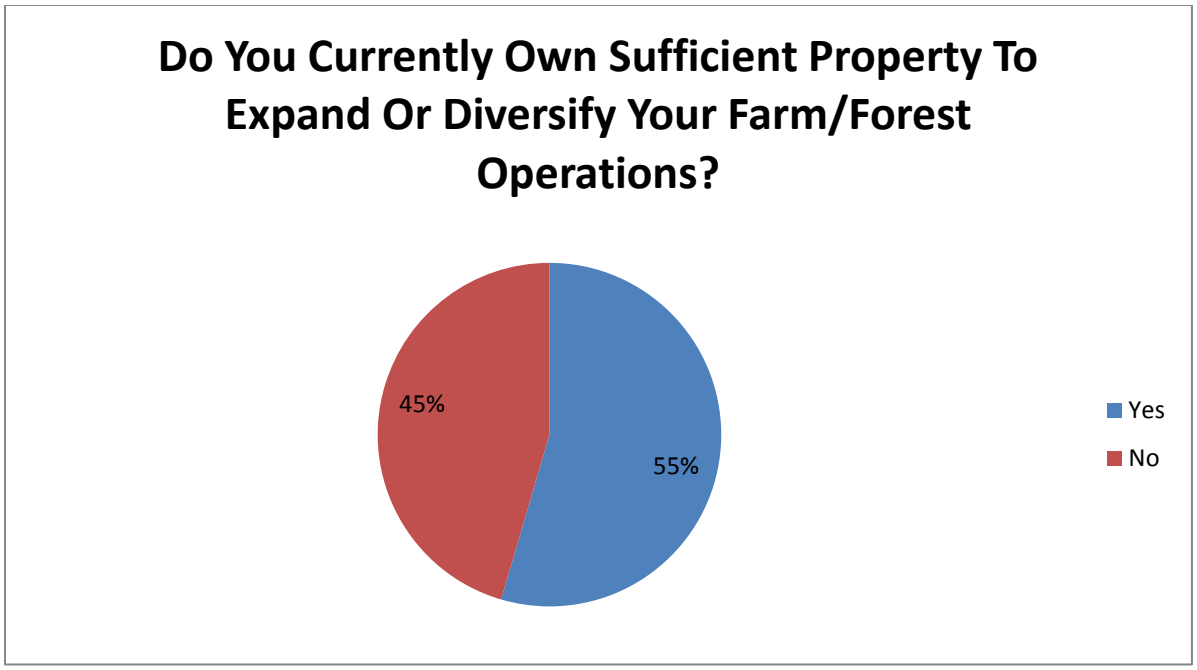


Figure 4. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

Farmers who participated in the surveys identified the most critical issues expected to influence future farming operations as commodity prices, development pressure, competition for available land, and production input costs. (Figure 5)

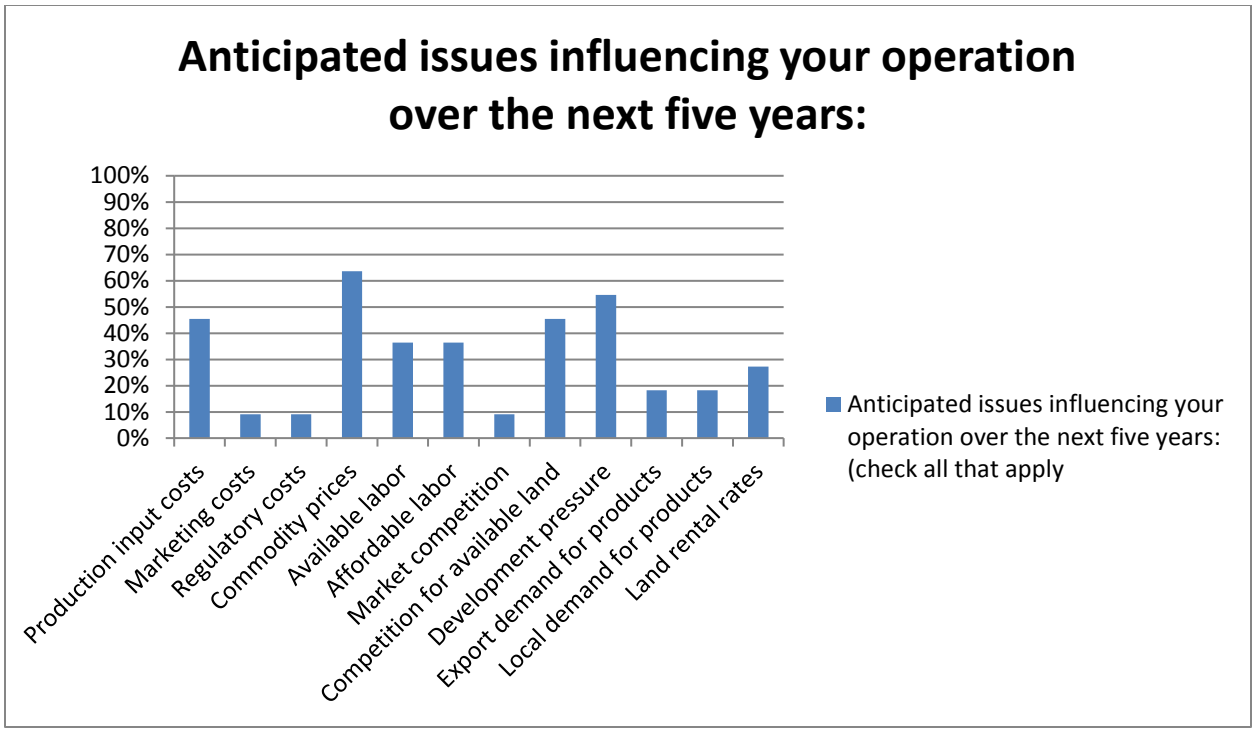


Figure 5. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

Additional information from the farming community indicated that upon retirement, nearly 91 percent of farmers expected to transfer the farm to family members for continued operation as a family farm (Figure 6). However, 36 percent do not have a farm transition plan. This indicates a need to have training for farm owners to develop effective farm transition plans. Family farms are the backbone of agriculture in North Carolina, educating farmers on how to pass their farms on to heirs or another generation of farmers is essential to the future of agriculture.

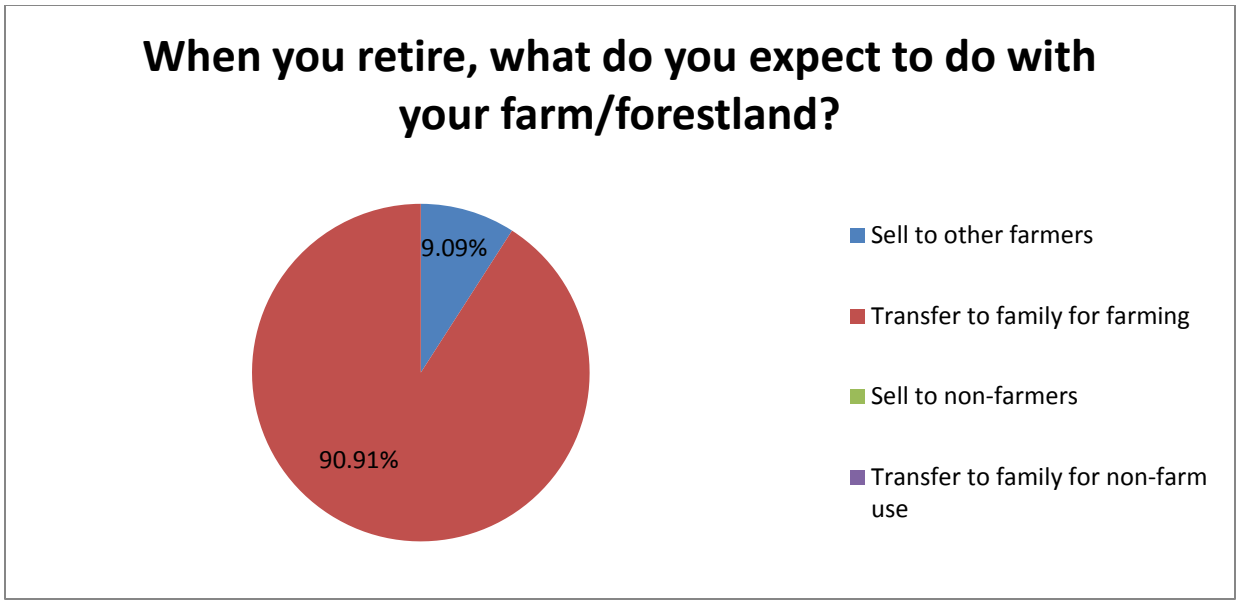


Figure 6. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

Currituck County offers a deferred tax program beneficial to farmers and landowners designated as the Present Use Value Taxation program (PUV). This program offers owners of forest land and those operating legitimate farms a deferred tax program based upon their present use in agriculture, horticulture, or forest land. Sixty-four percent of survey respondents answered that they were enrolled in the PUV program. Almost 36 percent answered that they did not know whether or not their farmland was enrolled. (Figure 7) These results indicate a definite need to educate all landowners on the benefits of the PUV program. While an increased knowledge of this program could result in additional land enrolled in the program and, in turn, reduce tax revenues, the cost of community services for agricultural land versus residential land shows that the revenue outcome still provides a net gain to the county coffers.

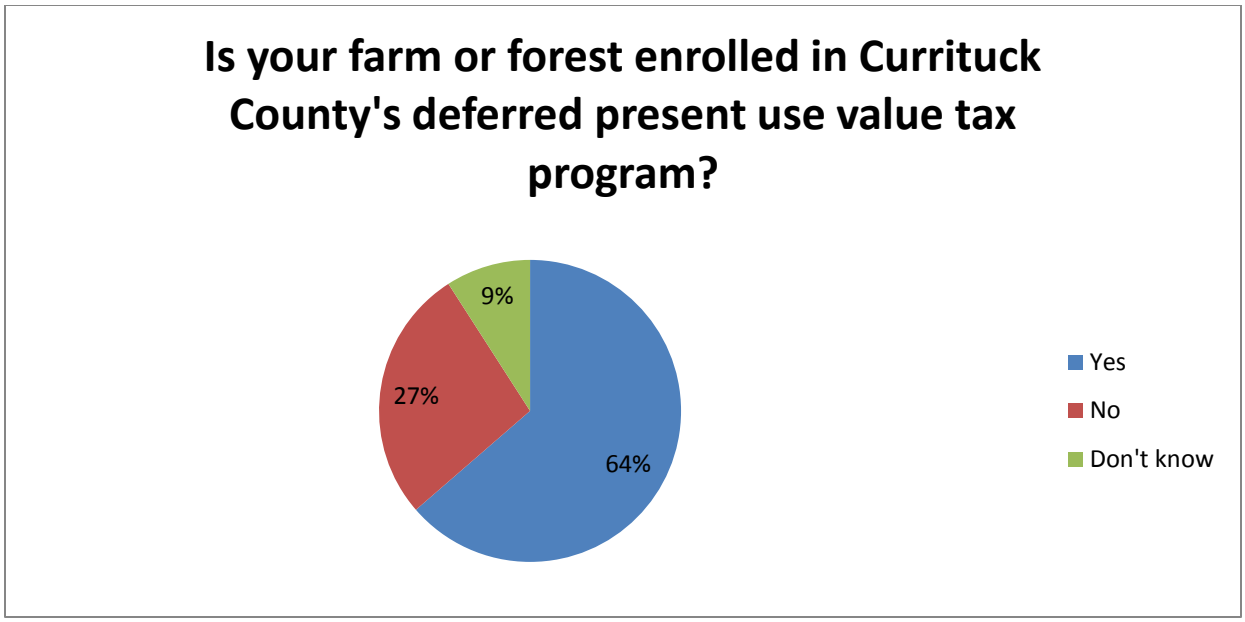


Figure 7. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

When Currituck County farmers were asked to identify taxes that were impediments to their profitability, 45 percent listed county real property taxes and 91 percent cited county property taxes on buildings and equipment as significant burdens on family farms. (Figure 8)

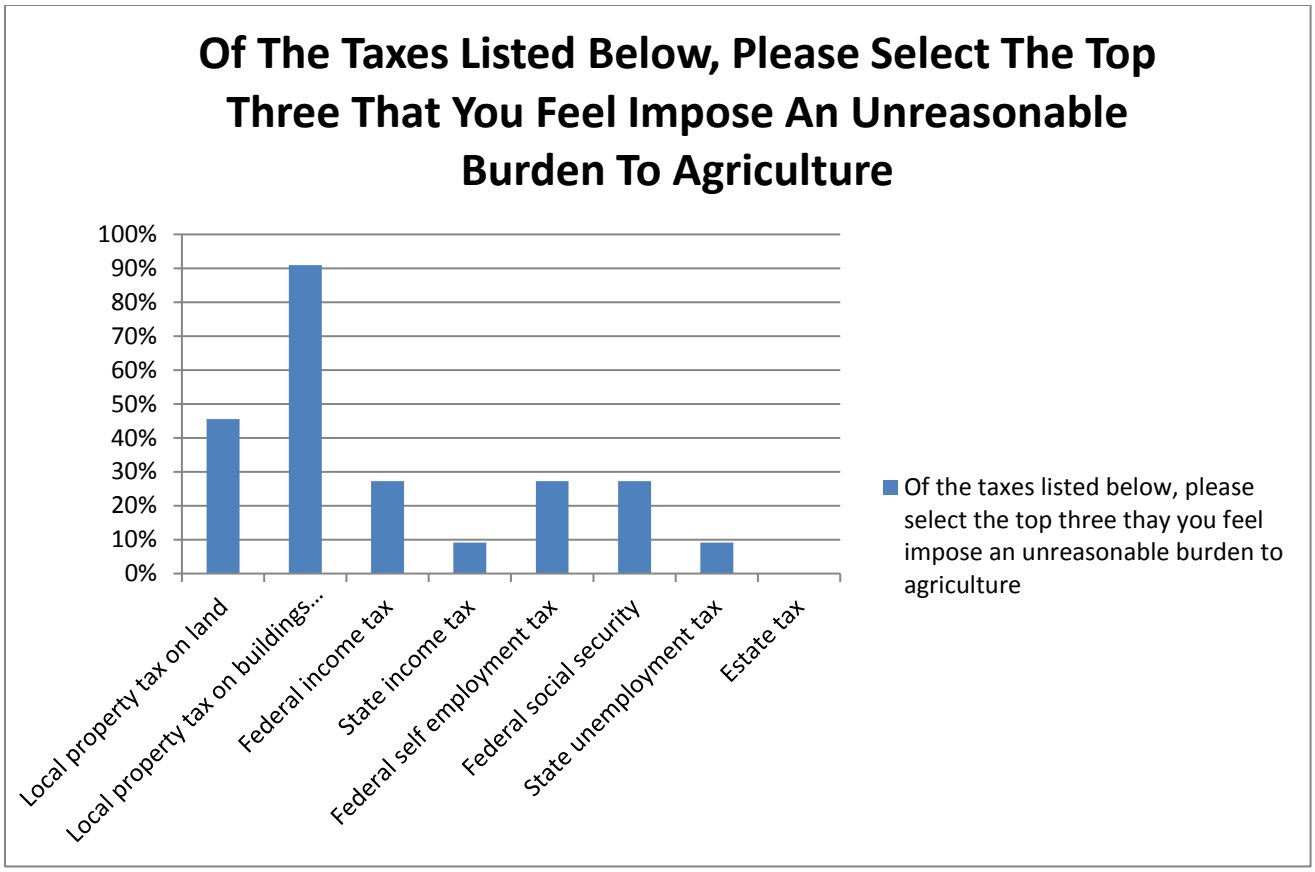


Figure 8. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

In 2012, the majority (96 percent) of the forest land in Currituck County was privately owned[5]. Fifty percent of survey respondents had forest management plans, and fifty percent responded that they have no such plans. A forest management plan is a valuable tool for farmers and landowners to use this resource for greater sustainability and profitability. Management plans are required for forest landowners to enroll properties in the county's Present Use Value program. The survey data indicated the need for the development of an educational program to inform and train landowners on the benefits of a formal forest management plan.

Fifty-five percent of survey respondents have experienced problems with neighbors in regard to their farming operation. (Figure 9) Of those experiencing problems, the issues centered on:

-Chemical use or application issues
-Boundary or trespassing conflicts
-Drainage issues
-Dumping/littering issues
-Noise complaint
-Slow moving vehicle complaints

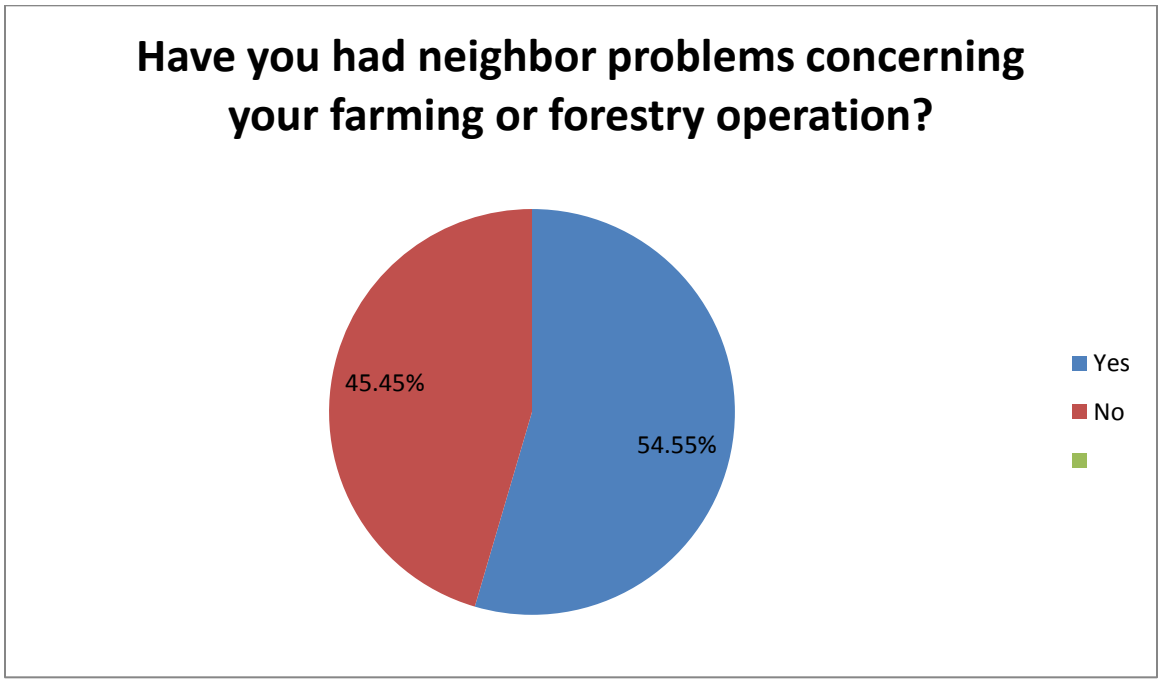


Figure 9. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

Additionally, farmers expressed a need for management, technical and marketing training on the following topics to enhance their operations:

- Forward pricing and hedging 64%
- Direct to consumer marketing of products 55%
- Identifying and managing risks 45%
- Business website development 36%
- Estate planning/Farm transition 73%

- Federal and state contracts training 73%
- Timber management 55%
- Development of forest management plan 36%
- Selection of consulting foresters 36%

There are multiple opportunities for training and education. This information should serve as a continuing guide for agencies and institutions involved in education within the county to develop plans for short-term and long-term training to serve the agricultural community.

Currituck County farmers (45 percent) showed no awareness of farmland preservation tools that could help them in their efforts to maintain their family farms. Currently, Currituck County does not have a Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance in place. The creation and adoption of a VAD ordinance and the endorsement of the Agricultural Development Plan by the county's leadership are essential steps to ensure support for the agricultural community.

These steps will also provide tools to assist producers as they navigate means to retain their family farms. Currituck County farmers who were surveyed and interviewed recognized the value of educating the non-farm public to the benefits of agriculture to the county. One hundred percent of farmers surveyed were in favor of a program to increase non-farm residents' knowledge of the social and economic benefits of agriculture.

Currituck County farmers and operators who responded to the survey stated that there is a definite need for agricultural education in public schools, 4-H and youth development, community colleges and other colleges and universities. Figure 10 shows the strong support for such programs, which illustrates the need to train youth in the importance of agriculture and the diverse agricultural career opportunities.

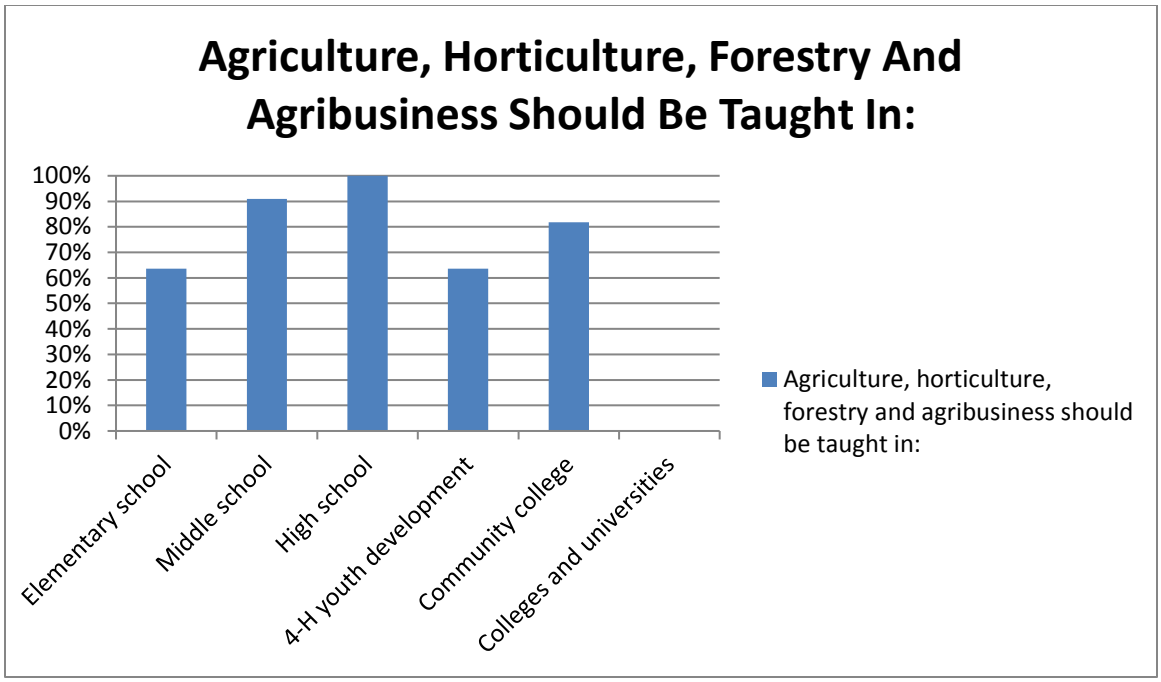


Figure 10. Source: Currituck Producer Survey 2017

Surveyed farmers in Currituck County were in favor of government funds to support agriculture and agricultural economic development in the county.

Interviews were conducted with a cross-section of farmers to obtain their opinions on the issues, challenges and opportunities impacting agriculture in Currituck County. The following were stated as issues that impacted family farms as well as the perpetuity and profitability of these operations:

- Need for farm and estate transition planning. All farmers interviewed recognized the importance of planning, but only two had formal transition plans. Issues related to estate planning identified included no heirs to take over farming operation, equitable treatment of all heirs, and estate taxes
- Housing and commercial development pressures. Farmers see the influx of new county residents particularly in the Moyock and lower Currituck areas of the county. Development is causing land prices to increase and making it hard for farmers to hold on to existing

farmland. According to one farmer, Currituck County issued more than 400 building permits between January and June 2017

- Lack of understanding among county elected officials and non-farm residents of the importance of agriculture to the economy and culture of Currituck County. County government is seen as pro-development.
- Drainage issues due to increased housing development. Drainage ditches are being filled in by housing developers resulting in flooding of agricultural land during rain events.
- High input costs. Farmers expressed concern over the expense of new equipment and technology. Low commodity prices make it hard to justify investments in new technology
- Voluntary Agricultural District. Currituck County does not have this program. Farmers feel the ordinance doesn't have enough benefits or protection to justify enrollment
- Traffic congestion during tourist season. It is difficult for farmers to move equipment on Hwy 158 during growing and harvesting seasons

Agribusiness Survey and Interview Analysis

Agribusinesses provide essential resources and services vital to the success and profitability of agriculture production services. Agribusinesses, just as any other business, provide jobs and employment, which stimulate the local economy. Agribusiness respondents represented feed dealers, agriculture and crop consultants, agriculture processors/distributors, produce marketers, agritourism operators, and horticultural services. Sixty-seven percent of agribusiness respondents have been in operation more than 20 years, while 33 percent were in business 10-20 years.

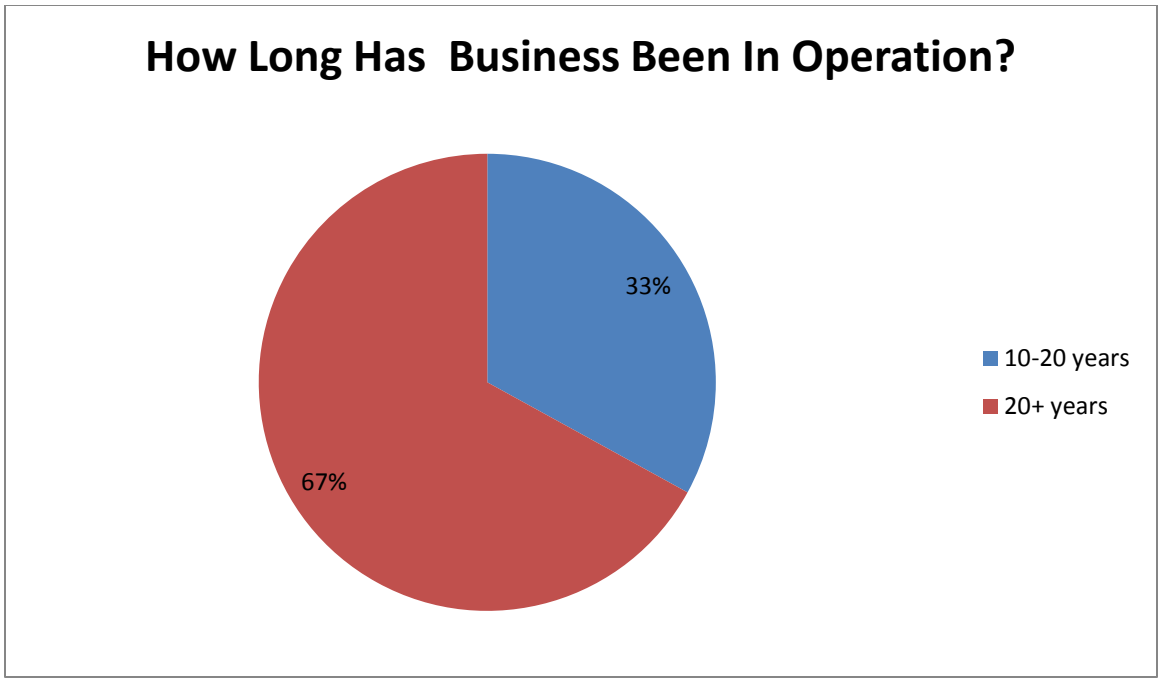


Figure 11. Currituck County Agribusiness Survey 2017

Agribusinesses surveyed (33 percent) recognized that 25-49 percent of their business was generated from the farm community. The majority surveyed (75 percent) indicated that the farm community was responsible for 75-100 percent of their business clientele. (Figure12) Though these agribusinesses offer agricultural services, many also provide services and products that meet the needs of non-farm residents and industries. In the last five years, 67 percent of agribusinesses surveyed have increased the size of their operations. The same percentage (67 percent) reported an increase of agricultural inventories and sales. As non-farm populations continue to grow, agribusinesses will continue to seek ways to service non-farm residents, which will provide additional support for these agribusinesses.

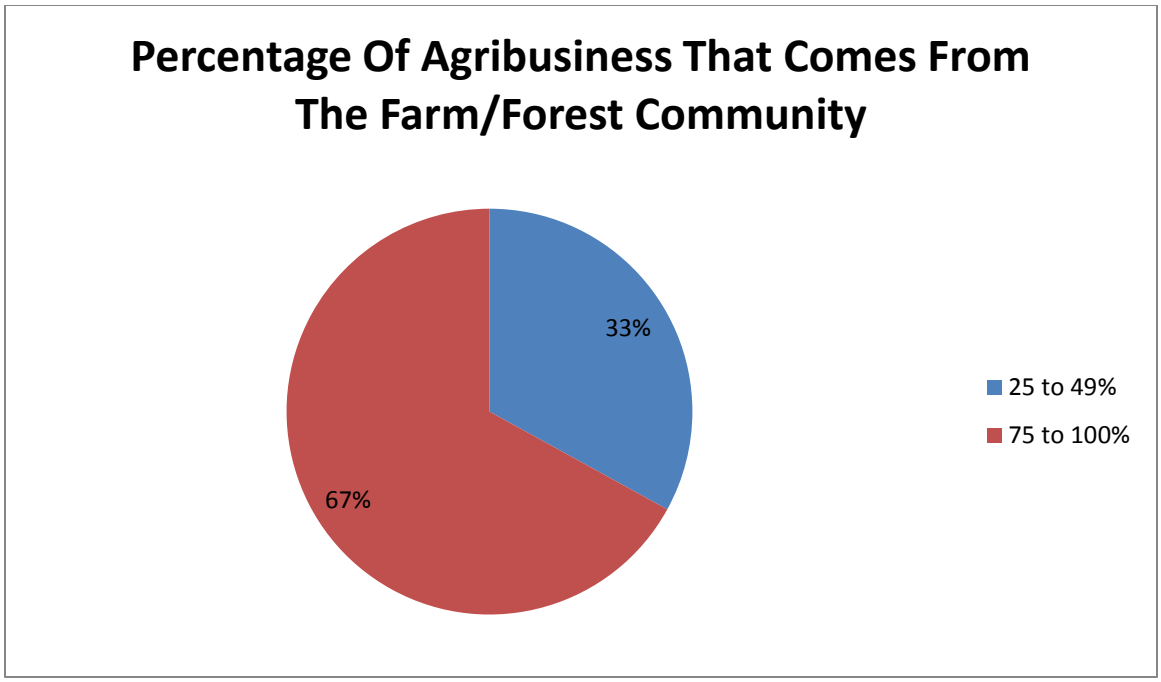


Figure 12. Source: Currituck County Agribusiness Survey 2017

Agribusiness owners also noted trends in agricultural production that could have impacts on their operations including, but not limited to, an increase in the number of small farms, a change to new types of farms, fewer large farms, more specialty and direct market operations, and more farm diversification. These trends are being driven by population increase, desire for farm value-added products and change in farm technology. (Figure 13)

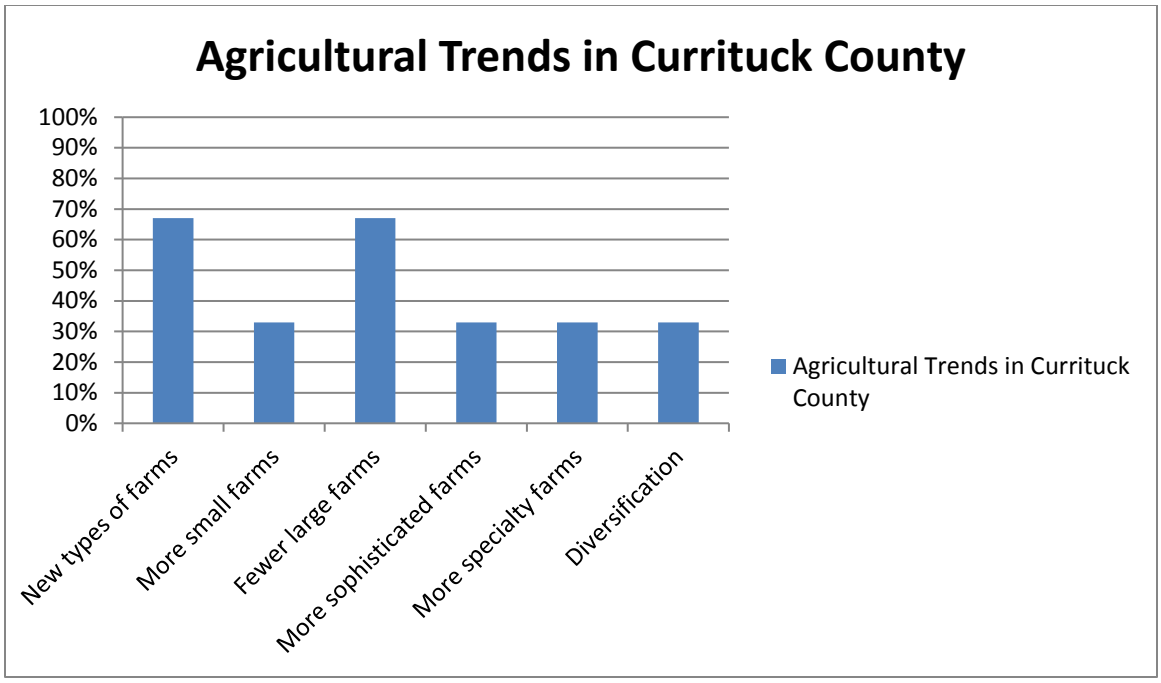


Figure 13. Source: Currituck County Agribusiness Survey 2017

Following is a list of challenges and opportunities expressed by the respondents that may be expected to effect agriculture in the future:

- One hundred percent of agribusiness respondents identified farm transition and estate planning as a major issue in Currituck County. They also expressed the need for professional assistance and training in transition and estate planning.
- One hundred percent of agribusiness respondents noted the importance of education of Currituck County citizens on the impact of agriculture and agribusiness to the county's economic viability.
- One hundred percent of agribusiness respondents have problems with labor issues, especially being able to provide required health insurance and other benefits.
- One hundred percent of survey respondents saw a need for consumer education on the economic impact of buying local.
- All of those questioned said that youth education in the field of agriculture is of great importance, and continued support of these programs in secondary and post-secondary schools is essential to the future of agriculture.

- All of those surveyed noted agritourism was a viable opportunity for agricultural expansion in Currituck County.
- One hundred percent of respondents believe that government funding should be used to promote agricultural development.

When asked what would provide additional assurance of success in their business, one hundred percent said succession plan assistance and education on new technologies in farming. Fifty percent saw the need for adequate financing to maintain or expand their businesses. (Figure 14)

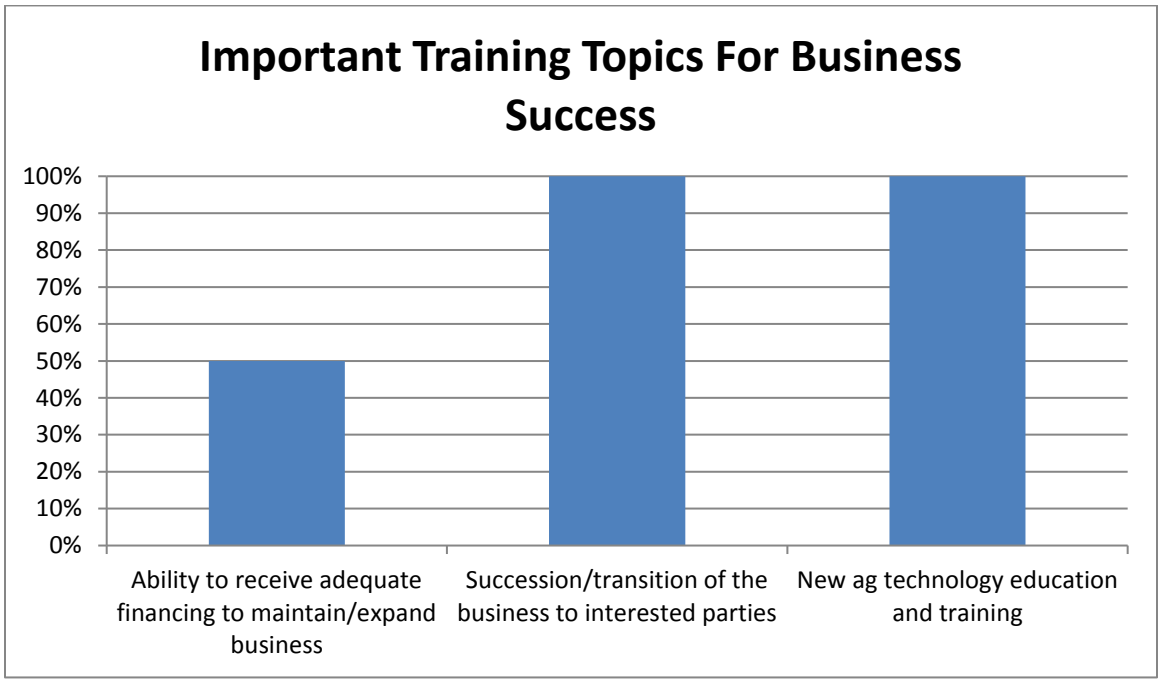


Figure 14. Source: Currituck County Agribusiness Survey 2017

Currituck County agribusiness leaders also identified several challenges, threats and opportunities for farms and forests:

- Threats from residential development, especially in the Moyock area from people moving from Chesapeake, taking valuable farm land out of production.
- Opportunities exist for the development of niche farming of produce and meat to supply Outer Banks restaurants and visitors.

- Lack of qualified labor force to work in agribusinesses. Also, agribusinesses have to compete with beach tourism ventures for summer employees.
- The cost of new agricultural technology, while necessary for efficiency, is squeezing profit margins for farmers.
- Increasingly, the general public doesn't know where their food comes from, nor do they understand how food is produced.
- Agritourism and the Farm to Fork movement are viable business opportunities for new and existing Currituck County farmers.
- The lack of succession planning among farmers and land owners.

Agribusiness enterprise owners recognize the value of farming to the economy and environment of Currituck County. Opportunities are limitless for developing new agricultural markets.

Non-Farm Resident Survey and Interview Analysis

Currituck County is home to people of diverse backgrounds. Some have lived in Currituck County their whole lives, others have chosen to relocate or retire in the rural county, and some have selected the county as their second home. The survey respondents represent an unbiased perspective of agriculture in the county. The majority that participated in the survey have lived in Currituck County 20 years or more. Seventy-one percent have lived near a farm or forest operation, with 86 percent currently living within one-quarter mile of a farm or timber operation. A positive result of this close relationship with agriculture is that 100 percent stated that farmers are good neighbors. With this in mind, 71percent had not experienced a problem with their farm or forest neighbor. When problems have arisen, the respondents listed the following:

- Crop dusting
- Traffic from timber harvesting
- Slow moving vehicles
- Drainage issues
- Pesticide use

When asked about the state of agriculture as a viable industry in Currituck County, 86 percent of respondents felt that farming is holding its own and has some potential for future growth. Fourteen percent said that agriculture has no potential for future growth in Currituck County.

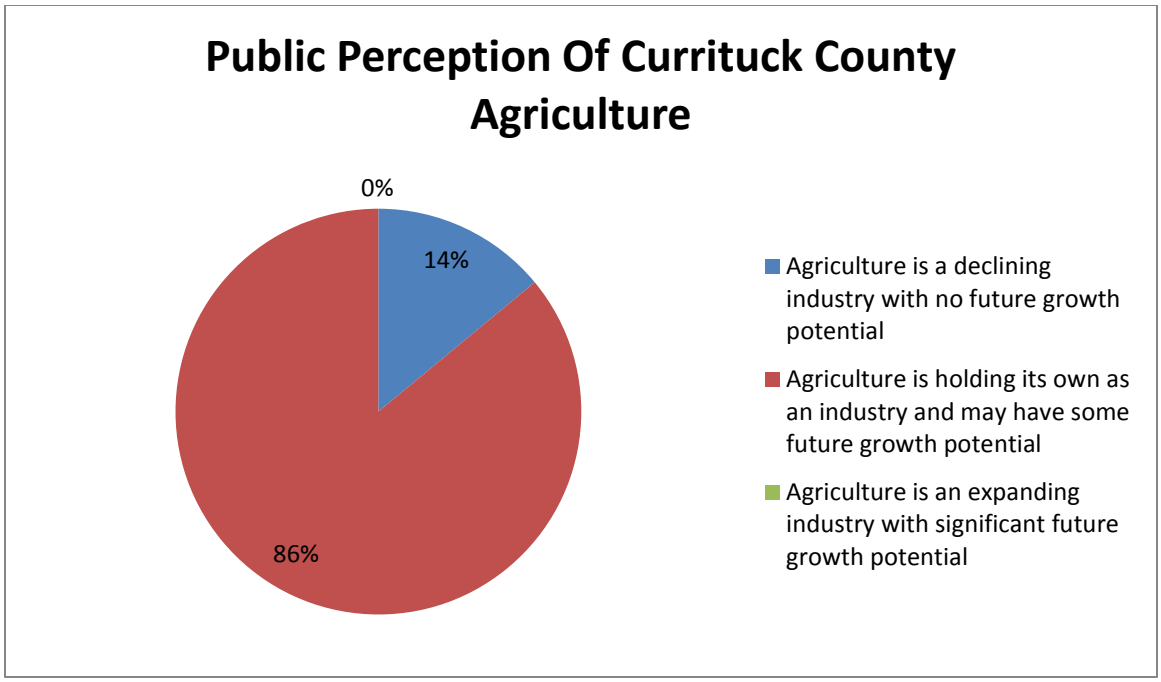


Figure 15. Source: Non-Farm Residents Survey 2017

Currituck County non-farm residents have a good understanding of the economic impact of the entire agricultural sector on the county's economy (Figure 15). The value of agricultural industry in 2012 provided a total economic impact of $49,522,814 to Currituck County[43].

One hundred percent of surveyed non-farm residents felt that Currituck County should take steps to help preserve farms and forests. Eighty-six percent of respondents reported that they support local farming by purchasing local produce from farmers markets; pick-your- own operations, and road side stands. Fifty-seven percent of non-farm residents say that they purchase plants from local greenhouses and nurseries. Conversely, only 43

percent have participated in agritourism activities such as corn mazes, pumpkin patches and hayrides.

The statistics below reveal non-farm residents agreement or disagreement with statements about agriculture in the Currituck County.

- 86 percent agreed farms and forests enhance scenic beauty and open space
- 86 percent agreed farmers are good neighbors
- 100 percent agreed that local farmers deliver high quality products
- 86 percent agreed that farming has a positive impact on the environment
- 100 percent stated that farming and agribusiness are high technology businesses
- 43 percent agreed farming presents a good career for enterprising people
- 71 percent agreed that agriculture and forestry are viable career opportunities
- 71 percent stated that tax breaks for farmers are important
- 100 percent would support farm and forest preservation efforts in the county
- 71 percent would support the use of government funds for farm and forest development

These statements clearly illustrate that non-farm residents surveyed have a positive image of agriculture in the county.

Personal interviews with non-farm residents substantiated the findings in the surveys. The interviewees were 100 percent in support of farmland preservation efforts in Currituck County and were in favor of using local government funding to ensure policies and programs that encourage the preservation of agriculture.

The following statements from non-farm residents in Currituck County revealed the following threats:

- Expansion of housing developments, subdivisions
- Increasing value of developed land as opposed to the value of agricultural land
- Aging farm population
- No incentives or grants to start a farm
- Increase in tourism
- Logging/deforestation
- Wildlife habitat destruction
- Drainage problems

Potential opportunities as seen by non-farm residents:

- Specialty farming
- Roadside markets
- Hunting
- Bio tourism
- Forest stewardship

Non-farm residents value Currituck County agriculture and are in favor of preserving and enhancing this vital economic sector. It is critically important to have a citizenry that is supportive of the preservation of the agricultural industry.

Recommendations

The major result of the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan is a set of recommendations with actions steps that, when implemented, will bring about desired change. These steps are based on input from the citizens effected by the plan as well as from other agricultural sources. The following recommendations are extrapolated from the data obtained through interviews and surveys of Currituck County farmers, agribusinesses and citizens and data from USDA and NCDA&CS.

For this plan to be effective, Currituck County citizen leaders, agencies and organizations must follow through with support and collaboration of these recommendations. This plan needs to be evaluated annually to keep it up-to-date and viable. The annual update will ensure that recommendations are being accomplished and new ones added as needed. Following are recommendations that can be used to maintain and enhance agriculture in Currituck County.

Recommendation One:

Support Measures To Protect And Promote Forest And Farmland In Currituck County.

Endorsement, certification and advocacy of the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan are critical to protecting and enhancing agriculture in the county. Once the plan is endorsed by the Currituck County Board of Commissioners and certified by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the county will receive priority status for funding from the NCDA&CS's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund for agricultural projects. Though residents largely support agriculture, added education and understanding is needed. County officials should be informed of agricultural information affecting Currituck County.

Action Steps

- Present the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan to the Board of Commissioners for endorsement and submit to NCDA&CS for certification.
- Appoint a Currituck County Agriculture Advisory Board to oversee and manage the plan for the benefit of agriculture in the county.
- Annually review the plan for progress and addition of any needed recommendations.
- Utilize all available media outlets to inform county leadership and the public about the plan's progress and success.
- Develop and implement an educational program for farmers and landowners regarding available farmland preservation tools and incentives suited for Currituck County.
- Educate landowners and farmers as to the benefits of Present Value Taxation and encourage enrollment.
- Encourage local government, economic developers, land developers, planners, the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management and the North Carolina Department of Transportation to work with the Currituck County Agricultural Advisory Board to engage and discuss county projects that will impact agricultural production.

Timeline:

County Commissioners should endorse the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan by April 2018. Efforts to increase agricultural awareness and representation should begin in mid-2018.

Responsible Parties:

Currituck County Agricultural Advisory Board, Currituck County Cooperative Extension, Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District, North Carolina Forest Service, Currituck County Economic Development, Currituck County Planning and Community Development, and Currituck County Board of Commissioners.

Recommendation Two:

Develop, Adopt And Implement Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) And Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) Programs

Currituck County does not have a Voluntary Agricultural District ordinance, and 55 percent of farmers surveyed are not knowledgeable about the benefits of farm preservation tools such as VAD and EVAD.

Action Steps:

- The Currituck County Agricultural Advisory Board will provide leadership in developing the Currituck County VAD ordinance.
- The Currituck County Commissioners will approve and adopt the Currituck County VAD ordinance.
- Design and implement a marketing plan using all available media to educate farmers, land owners, developers and realtors as to the benefits of the VAD ordinance.
- Have appropriate agency staff encourage and assist landowners with understanding and enrollment in VAD.
- After the adoption of a VAD, begin a preliminary study of the development of an EVAD.

Timeline:

Development of a VAD ordinance should begin after the adoption of the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan. Work should begin on the development during the third quarter of 2018.

Responsible Parties:

Currituck County Agricultural Development Advisory Board, in conjunction with Currituck County Cooperative Extension, will lead the process of creating the VAD ordinance. The following agencies will cooperate: Currituck Farm Bureau Board, Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service, Currituck County Tax Office, Currituck County Register of Deeds, Currituck County Economic

Development, Currituck County Division of Planning and Community Development and Currituck County Board of Commissioners.

Recommendation Three:
Develop And Conduct Programs To Assist Currituck County Farm And Forest Landowners With Farm Transition Planning.

The average age of farmers in Currituck County was 56.6 years in 2012. According to surveyed farmers, more than 36 percent do not have farm transition plans. Additionally, interviews with farm lending authorities showed lack of farm transition planning as a leading concern about the future of agriculture in the area. Ninety-one percent of farmers surveyed indicated a willingness to train an intern/young farmer within their farming operation to encourage the next generation to enter production agriculture.

Action Steps:

- Plan and conduct a series of workshops that use a variety of specialists and agencies to provide information on farm transition and estate planning.
- Develop an apprenticeship program in which young farmers work with experienced producers to learn more about agricultural production and gain more knowledge about transition opportunities.
- Identify farmers willing to investigate innovative strategies for farm transition with beginning farmers.

Timeline:

Farm transition workshops should start in the fall of 2018 and be repeated annually. In the spring of 2019, a study should be conducted on the feasibility and interest in a farm apprenticeship/mentoring program.

Responsible Parties:

Currituck County Agricultural Advisory Board, Currituck County Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Farm Bureau, Ag Carolina/Farm Credit, University of Mount Olive Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center and agricultural economic specialists.

Recommendation Four:

Promote Appreciation And Awareness Of The Benefits Of Agriculture To Currituck Elected Officials And Citizens.

Today, the majority of the general population is removed from farming and agribusiness. The public needs to understand the importance of agriculture to the local economy. Additionally, non-farm residents need to appreciate where food and fiber is produced. Respondents surveyed and interviewed voiced concerns that agriculture was not adequately represented on local governing bodies. Understanding agriculture will provide stronger relationships between producers and consumers as well as additional support for local farms.

Action Steps:

- Develop a comprehensive agriculture awareness plan and determine all feasible delivery presence such as social media, speakers' bureau, print and broadcast media.
- Conduct annual farm tour to promote Currituck County's diverse agricultural operations including forestry, row crop farming, road side markets, wine production, specialty crops and agritourism.
- Develop presentations that show the role of agriculture in Currituck County to be shared with civic, school and religious organizations.
- Expand and promote events that highlight the local foods movement.
- Involve 4-H and FFA members in the promotion of agriculture.

Timeline:

Efforts should begin after the adoption of the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan in 2019.

Responsible Parties:

Currituck County Agricultural Advisory Board, Currituck County Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, University of Mount Olive

Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center, USDA Farm Service Agency, Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District, and Currituck County Schools.

Recommendation Five:
Expand and Support Youth Agricultural Educational Programs.

Agribusiness leaders, farmers and non-farm residents were all in favor of youth agricultural education as an important component to ensure the future of agriculture in Currituck County.

Action Steps:

- Encourage youth to actively participate in all agricultural organizations such as FFA and 4-H in order to develop leadership skills and engagement in agricultural experiences.
- Support teacher training for the expansion of the NC Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom curriculum for primary and elementary students.
- Work with funders, both public and private, to provide needed resources for 4-H and FFA programs.
- Continue and grow 4-H youth agricultural programming at Currituck County Rural Center.
- Promote agriculture as part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) initiative in the public school system.
- Coordinate and promote summer high school and college internships with local roadside markets and other agricultural enterprises.

Timeline:

Coordinated programming efforts will begin in the spring of 2018 and continue as planned throughout the year.

Responsible Parties:

Currituck County Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Public Schools, Currituck Family YMCA, local and regional colleges and universities, Currituck County Farm Bureau, Currituck County farmers and agribusiness owners.

Recommendation Six:

Develop Technical, Business and Marketing Training for the Maintenance and Expansion of Agriculture in Currituck County.

Currituck County farmers expressed a need for training in numerous areas relating to changes, growth and opportunities in agriculture.

Action Steps:

- Develop an information network of support agencies and people who can assist new and existing farmers with training and knowledge as they plan and begin new enterprises.
- Conduct training on business planning that will enhance farmer knowledge about forward pricing and hedging, direct to consumer marketing of products, identifying and managing risks, diversifying through agritourism, marketing and sales promotion, and business website development.
- Offer training experiences in timber management, development of forestry management plans, and selecting consulting foresters.
- Facilitate grant writing training to help farmers apply for and secure state and federal contracts for their products.
- Educate farmers on the new revenue opportunities for food product sales and agricultural services for the growing population centers (Hampton Roads Metropolitan Area and North Carolina Outer Banks) adjacent to Currituck County.

Timeline:

Programming efforts will begin in late 2018. Schedules for trainings, workshops and conferences will be developed by members of the implementation team.

Responsible parties:

Currituck County Cooperative Extension, University of Mount Olive Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center, NC Forest Service, NCDA&CS, USDA Natural

Resources and Conservation District, and Currituck County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

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Appendixes

Currituck County Producer Survey

Currituck County Agricultural Producer Survey

1. Introduction

Your input is needed to create an Agricultural Development Plan for Currituck County. This plan will show the current state of agriculture and forestry, outline the challenges and opportunities for agriculture and forestry that exist, and develop recommendations to help maintain family farms and forests in Currituck County. The general public, agribusinesses, producers and landowners are targeted audiences for this survey. If the comprehensive strategies are to be meaningful, they need to be shaped by the input of the farm and forest producers. Your responses will help us to understand the needs of agriculture.

The University of Mount Olive received a grant from NC Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to create agricultural development plans for Chowan, Currituck, Pasquotank and Perquimans Counties. The Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center at Mount Olive College is directing the project.

Many challenges face agriculture such as a heightened awareness of the relationships between farm uses and other land uses. Farms and forests, when located adjacent to industries, military installations and communities, are considered "compatible use partners" and provide numerous benefits to the county and its residents. A comprehensive strategy will assist with the county's agriculture and land use policies and programs as well as develop these compatible partnerships. The Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan will provide that strategy.

The intent of this plan is neither to limit nor restrict landowners' rights and uses. The plan will increase awareness of agricultural development opportunities and appreciation of agriculture and forestry. The preservation of agriculture is important to the well being of family farms as well as to county and its economy. However, the ultimate decision of agricultural development rests in the hands of the landowners of farms and forests.

Please note that all information will be strictly confidential. Responses to the surveys will remain anonymous and are not identifiable. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

Thank you for your interest and participation. If you have additional concerns or questions please contact semory@umo.edu or 910-290-1002.

2. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER SURVEY

You should complete this survey ONLY IF you have income in excess of $1000 from the production of crops, livestock, or aquaculture OR if you own timberland OR if you receive income from renting farm acreage.

All information is STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL as referenced on introduction page.

Currituck County Agricultural Producer Survey

3. CURRENT STATE OF AGRICULTURE

Please tell us the type and the size of your farm/forest enterprise(s) in the following categories.

1. Please answer each item as appropriate for your operation:

How many total acres of land do you farm within Currituck County?

Of this total acreage farmed, how many acres do you rent?

If you are a landowner who rents your land to farmers, how many acres do you rent?

How many total acres of timberland do you own within Currituck County?

Of this total, how many acres are managed for timber production?

How many acres of farm and/or forestland do you manage outside of Currituck County?

2. Help us understand more about your operations. Please select the statement that best describes your operation:

- ◯ Timber production only
- ◯ Farm production only
- ◯ Primarily timber production with some farm production
- ◯ Primarily farm production with some timber production

3. How long has your farm/forest been in operation?

- ◯ 0 to 9 years
- ◯ 10 to 20 years
- ◯ 20+ years

4. What is your age?

5. Is farming/forestry your primary occupation?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

6. What percentage of your household income comes from your farm or forest operation?

- ◯ 0-24%
- ◯ 25-49%
- ◯ 50-74%
- ◯ 75-100%

7. Have you, in the past 5 years, expanded your farm or forest operations?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

8. If you did not expand, what were the primary reasons?
(Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ Satisfied with current size
- ☐ Age of owner/operator
- ☐ High cost of equipment
- ☐ Lack of available equipment
- ☐ Inability to obtain needed financing
- ☐ Low profit margin
- ☐ Market volatility and excessive risk
- ☐ Lack of available land to be purchased
- ☐ Lack of available land to rent
- ☐ Land is available, but too close to development to farm or manage
- ☐ Lack of available labor
- ☐ High cost of additional labor
- ☐ Personal or others reasons
- ☐ Environmental or other governmental restrictions
- ☐ Other (please specify)

9. Do you currently own sufficient property to expand or diversify your farm/forest operation?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

10. How much longer do you plan to operate your farm/forest?

- ◯ Less than 5 years
- ◯ 5 to 9 years
- ◯ 10 to 19 years
- ◯ More than 20 years

11. Of the issues listed below which do you anticipate to most influence your operation in the next five years: (Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ Production input costs
- ☐ Marketing costs
- ☐ Regulatory costs
- ☐ Commodity prices
- ☐ Available labor
- ☐ Affordable labor
- ☐ Market competition
- ☐ Competition for available land
- ☐ Development pressure
- ☐ Export demand for products
- ☐ Local demand for products
- ☐ Land rental rates

12. When you retire, what do you expect to do with your farm/forestland?

- ◯ Sell to other farmers
- ◯ Transfer to family for farming
- ◯ Sell to non-farmers
- ◯ Transfer to family for non-farm use

13. Do you currently have a farm transition plan/estate plan?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

14. Have you shared your thoughts of farm transition with your family members?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

15. If you have forestland, do you have a written forestry management plan to follow?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

16. Is your farm or forest enrolled in Currituck County's deferred present use value tax program?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Don't know

17. If your operation is involved in the production of produce, have you obtained Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification for your farm to assure food safety?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Do not grow produce

18. If you are a landowner, do you currently lease any of your property for:
(Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ Farming
- ☐ Military Training Operations
- ☐ Cell Towers
- ☐ Solar Farm
- ☐ Mining/Quarry
- ☐ Hunting/Fishing
- ☐ Do Not Lease
- ☐ Other (please specify):

19. If you do lease land, how many acres do you lease?

20. Have you had neighbor problems concerning your farming or forestry operation?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

21. If you answered yes to the previous question, what was the nature of the complaint? (Check ALL that apply)

- [ ] Manure application complaint
- [ ] Boundary or trespassing conflict
- [ ] Drainage issue
- [ ] Dumping/littering issue
- [ ] Impact of farming on wildlife
- [ ] Smoke or dust
- [ ] Noise complaint
- [ ] Slow-moving vehicle complaint
- [ ] Chemical use or application issues
- [ ] Adverse environmental impact of farming
- [ ] Other (please specify)

22. Please answer each question presented below:

	Yes	No
Are you aware of the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) program?	○	○
Do you have acreage enrolled in the VAD Program?	○	○

4. FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

Please answer the following questions about the future of agriculture and opportunities for agriculture.

1. Do you think local government funding should support agricultural development?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. The military presence in northeastern NC is important to the economy of the state as is agriculture. Do you feel there is opportunity for market-based compatible use incentives to be arranged between the military and farm and forest landowners?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. Do you think educating non-farming citizens about the economic and social contributions of farming/forestry will increase community support for farms/forests and improve your operating conditions?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

4. Of the taxes listed below, please select the top three that you feel impose an unreasonable burden to agriculture/agribusiness.

- ☐ Local property tax on land
- ☐ Local property tax on buildings and equipment
- ☐ Federal income tax
- ☐ State income tax
- ☐ Federal self employment tax
- ☐ Federal social security and Medicaid taxes for employees (payroll taxes)
- ☐ State unemployment tax
- ☐ Estate tax

5. Do you see agritourism as an expansion/diversification opportunity for agriculture and agribusiness in Currituck County?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

6. Is it important to promote agriculture and forestry as career opportunities?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

7. Agriculture, horticulture, forestry and agribusiness should be taught in: (Check ALL that apply.)

- ☐ Elementary school
- ☐ Middle school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ 4-H Youth Development
- ☐ Community college
- ☐ Colleges and Universities

8. Would you consider training an intern/young farmer within your farming operation to encourage the next generation to enter production agriculture?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Only if monetary incentives were provided.

5. TRAINING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Please answer the following questions about training and business development opportunities to maintain the viability of your farm or forest.

1. Select which of these potential trainings you would attend: (Check ALL that apply)

- [ ] Timber management
- [ ] Pine Straw Sales
- [ ] Longleaf Pine Production
- [ ] Development of a Forestry Management Plan
- [ ] Selecting Consulting Foresters
- [ ] None of the above

2. Would you attend training on business planning such as these: (Check ALL that apply)

- [ ] Direct to Consumer Marketing of Products
- [ ] Business Website Development
- [ ] Regional Product Branding
- [ ] Identifying and Managing Risk
- [ ] Diversifying through Agritourism
- [ ] Marketing and Sales Promotions
- [ ] Forward Pricing and Hedging
- [ ] Organizing Buyer/Seller Groups

Other (please specify)

3. Would you attend training on Estate Planning and Farm/Forest Transition?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

4. Would you attend training on how to apply for federal and state contracts for your products?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

5. Both opportunities and threats exist for agriculture and agribusiness in Currituck County.

Please list two threats you perceive to agriculture/forestry/agribusiness in Currituck County.

Please list two opportunities that exist for agriculture/forestry/agribusiness in Currituck County.

6. Please add any additional comments you may have about agriculture and forestry in Currituck County.

6. THANK YOU!

Your time and effort on this survey will help create an Agricultural Development Plan for Currituck County. This plan will provide recommendations for both short and long-term strategies to support agriculture and forestry in Currituck County. Once the plan is written, it will be presented to the county commissioners for endorsement. Once it is endorsed, it will be sent to NC Department of Agriculture for certification. When the plan is certified, the county will receive priority status for funding from NC Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

If you have any questions or would like more details, please contact Ed Emory at semory@umo.edu or at 910-290-1002.

Currituck County Agribusiness Survey

Currituck Agricultural Business Survey

1. Introduction

Your input is needed to create an Agricultural Development Plan for Currituck County. This plan will contain the current state of agriculture and forestry, outline the challenges and opportunities for agriculture and forestry that exist, and develop recommendations to help maintain family farms and forests in Currituck County. The general public, agribusinesses, producers and landowners are targeted audiences for this survey. Many of Currituck County's agribusinesses are individual, independent operations with unique interests, needs and concerns. If the Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan is to be meaningful, it needs to be shaped by the input of agribusiness owners.

The University of Mount Olive received a grant from NC Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to create agricultural development plans for Chowan, Currituck, Pasquotank, and Perquimans Counties. The Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center at Mount Olive College is directing the project.

Many challenges face agriculture such as a heightened awareness of the relationships between farm uses and other land uses. Farms and forests, when located adjacent to industries, military installations and communities, are considered "compatible use partners" and provide numerous benefits to the county and its residents. A comprehensive strategy will assist with the county's agriculture and land use policies and programs as well as develop these compatible partnerships. The Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan will provide that strategy.

The intent of this plan is neither to limit nor restrict landowners' rights and uses. The plan will increase awareness of agricultural development opportunities and appreciation of agriculture and forestry. The preservation of agriculture is important to the well being of family farms as well as to county and its economy. However, the ultimate decision of agricultural development rests in the hands of the landowners of farms and forests.

Please note that all information will be strictly confidential. Responses to the surveys will remain anonymous and are not identifiable.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Thank you for your interest and participation. If you have additional concerns or questions please contact Ed Emory at semory@umo.edu or 910-290-1002.

Currituck Agricultural Business Survey

2. AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS SURVEY

Please complete this survey ONLY if you own a business that is tied to agriculture, aquaculture and/or forestry through services, trainings, products, manufacturing, processing, etc.

All information is STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL as referenced on introduction page.

1. What type of agribusiness do you operate?
(Check ALL that apply)

- [ ] Feed dealer
- [ ] Equipment dealer
- [ ] Equipment repair
- [ ] Ag consultant
- [ ] Farm supply store
- [ ] Seed/fertilizer/lime/agri-chemical
- [ ] Nursery/greenhouse
- [ ] Other (please specify)
- [ ] Processor/distributor
- [ ] Veterinarian
- [ ] Logger or forester
- [ ] Dairy or other ag processor
- [ ] Landscape/horticulture
- [ ] Financial/insurance

2. How many people do you employ in Currituck County? (Please provide number of employees)

Full-time

Part-time

3. How long has this business been in operation?

- ◯ 0-4 years
- ◯ 5-9 years
- ◯ 10-20 years
- ◯ 20+ years

4. Approximately what percentage of your business comes from the farm/forest community?

- ◯ 0 to 24%
- ◯ 25 to 49%
- ◯ 50 to 74%
- ◯ 75 to 100%

Currituck Agricultural Business Survey

3. OVERVIEW OF LAST FIVE YEARS

Please help us understand what has occurred in your business in the LAST five years.

1. Have you increased your operation size in the last five years?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Have you added service area to hold or expand your market share in the last five years?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. Have you increased agricultural inventories and sales in the last five years?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

4. If you have NOT expanded in the last 5 years what are the primary reasons?
(Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ Satisfied with current size
- ☐ Loss of market share
- ☐ Lack of labor supply
- ☐ Age of owner
- ☐ Lack of financial capital
- ☐ Low profit margins
- ☐ Declining agricultural sales
- ☐ Lack of room to expand
- ☐ Regulatory obstacles
- ☐ Receivables collection problems
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Currituck Agricultural Business Survey

4. OVERVIEW OF NEXT FIVE YEARS

Please help us understand what you foresee for your business in the NEXT five years.

1. Do you expect to increase your operation size in the next five years?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Do you expect to increase the number of employees at your place of business in the next five years?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. Do you expect to add new product lines or services for farm/forestry operators in the next five years?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

4. Do you expect to add new product lines or services for non farmers in the next five years?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Currituck Agricultural Business Survey

5. TRENDS IN AGRICULTURE

1. What agricultural trends have you observed in Currituck County?
(Check ALL that apply)

- [ ] A change to new types of farms
- [ ] More small farms
- [ ] Fewer small farms
- [ ] More large farms
- [ ] Fewer large farms
- [ ] A shift to more sophisticated farm operations
- [ ] More part-time farms
- [ ] More specialty and direct market operations
- [ ] More diversification
- [ ] No significant changes
- [ ] Other (please specify)

2. Based on what you have observed, will you modify your business to adapt to these trends?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No

3. If yes, what modifications will you make?

Currituck Agricultural Business Survey

6. THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

1. Is transition/estate planning an issue facing agribusinesses in Currituck County?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Do agribusiness owners need assistance with transition/estate planning?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. Is it important that agriculture and agribusinesses be promoted as career opportunities?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

4. Is it important to have neighbor and/or community education about the importance of agriculture and agribusiness in Currituck County?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

5. Do you have labor issues at your business?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

6. If you answered yes to the above question, what issues do you face? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of qualified staff
- ☐ Lack of training opportunities for staff
- ☐ Lack of capital to hire staff
- ☐ Unable to provide required benefits such as health insurance, employment taxes, etc.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

7. Is there a need for consumer education on the economic impact of buying "local" in Currituck County?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

8. Is there a need for youth agriculture education to be taught in the schools of Currituck County?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

9. Do you see agritourism as an expansion/diversification opportunity for agriculture/agribusiness in Currituck County?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

10. For your business to succeed, what topics are most important to you?
(Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ Ability to receive adequate financing to maintain/expand business
- ☐ Succession/transition of the business to interested parties
- ☐ Training and education on new technologies that are being developed for agriculture/forestry
- ☐ Other (please specify)

11. Would you support county government funding of agricultural development?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

12. Both opportunities and threats exist for agriculture and agribusiness in Currituck County.

Please list two threats to agriculture/forestry/agribusiness.

Please list two opportunities that exist for agriculture/forestry/agribusiness.

13. Please add any additional comments you may have about agriculture and forestry in Currituck County.

7. THANK YOU!

Your time and effort on this survey will help create an Agricultural Development Plan for Currituck County. This plan will provide recommendations for both short and long-term strategies to support agriculture and forestry in Currituck County. Once the plan is written, it will be presented to the county commissioners for endorsement. Once it is endorsed, it will be sent to NC Department of Agriculture for certification. When the plan is certified, the county will receive priority status for funding from NC Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

If you have any questions or would like more details, please contact Ed Emory at semory@umo.edu or at 910-290-1002.

Currituck County Non-farm Resident Survey

Currituck County Non-Farm Resident Survey

1. Introduction

Your help is needed to create an Agricultural Development Plan for Currituck County. This plan will contain the current state of agriculture and forestry, outline the challenges and opportunities for agriculture and forestry that exist, and develop recommendations to help maintain family farms and forests in Currituck County. The general public, agribusinesses, producers and landowners are targeted audiences for this survey. Non-farm resident participation is essential to ensure that views on open space, values placed on farms and forests, and impacts of development are part of the plan.

The word "agriculture" in this survey refers to farms (row crops, livestock, fruits/vegetables, flowers/plants, aquaculture) and forests.

The University of Mount Olive received a grant from NC Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to create agricultural development plans for Chowan, Currituck, Pasquotank and Perquimmans Counties. The Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center at the University of Mount Olive is directing the project.

Many challenges face agriculture such as a heightened awareness of the relationships between farm uses and other land uses. Farms and forests, when located adjacent to industries, military installations and communities, are considered "compatible use partners" and provide numerous benefits to the county and its residents. A comprehensive strategy will assist with the county's agriculture and land use policies and programs as well as develop these compatible partnerships. The Currituck County Agricultural Development Plan will provide that strategy.

The intent of this plan is neither to limit nor restrict landowners' rights and uses. The plan will increase awareness of agricultural development opportunities and appreciation of agriculture and forestry. The preservation of agriculture is important to the well being of family farms as well as to county and its economy. However, the ultimate decision of agricultural development rests in the hands of the landowners of farms and forests.

Please note that all information will be strictly confidential. Responses to the surveys will remain anonymous and are not identifiable. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

Thank you for your interest and participation. If you have additional concerns or questions please contact semory@umo.edu or 9190-290-1002.

Currituck County Non-Farm Resident Survey

2. Non-Farm Resident Survey

Please DO NOT complete this survey if you are a farmer/timberland owner OR if you receive income from renting land for farming OR if you own a business primarily dependent on farm and timber customers. These individuals will be surveyed separately.

All information is STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL as referenced in the introduction.

1. Please tell us, by town and/or community, where you live in Currituck County:

2. How long have you lived in Currituck County?

◯ <5 years ◯ 5 to 9 years ◯ 10 to 14 years ◯ 15 to 19 years ◯ 20+ years

3. Please answer each question below:

	Yes	No
Have you ever lived near a farm or timber operation?	◯	◯
Have you ever owned or operated a farm or timber operation?	◯	◯
Do you live near (within 1/4 mile) of a farm or timber operation?	◯	◯
If yes, is that farmer or land owner a good neighbor?	◯	◯

4. When was the last time that you visited a farm or timber operation?

◯ Within the last year
◯ Within last 2 to 9 years
◯ More than 10 years ago
◯ Never

5. Which statement best represents your view of Currituck County agriculture?

◯ Agriculture is a declining industry with no future growth potential
◯ Agriculture is holding its own as an industry and may have some future growth potential
◯ Agriculture is an expanding industry with significant future growth potential

6. Can you estimate the size of Currituck County's agricultural industry?

◯ Less than $10 million
◯ $10 million to $99 million
◯ $100 million to $300 million
◯ Over $300 million

7. Do you feel that Currituck County should take steps to help preserve farms and forests?

◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not sure

8. How do you support the agricultural economy of Currituck County? (Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ I buy local produce at Farmers Markets, Pick-Your-Own farms, roadside stands, etc.
- ☐ I buy plants from local nurseries and greenhouses.
- ☐ I participate in agritourism activities such as corn mazes, pumpkin patches, hay rides, etc.
- ☐ I lease farmland and forest land for hunting and fishing
- ☐ Other (please specify)

9. How do you verify that the produce you purchase comes from local farmers? (Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ I look for the "Got to Be NC" labels
- ☐ I search on line at the "NC Farm Fresh" website
- ☐ I look for "NC Catch" labels
- ☐ I ask the vendor
- ☐ I know my farmer/producer and see where the products come from
- ☐ I don't verify product origin

10. Have you ever experienced problems with a farm or forest neighbor regarding any of the following? (Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ No problem
- ☐ Noise
- ☐ Odors
- ☐ Smoke/Dust
- ☐ Manure application
- ☐ Slow-moving vehicles
- ☐ Drainage issues
- ☐ Pesticide use
- ☐ Timber Harvest
- ☐ Irrigation
- ☐ Boundary/trespass issues
- ☐ Fencing/cattle loose
- ☐ Crop dusting
- ☐ Other problems such as dogs, personal, etc. (please specify)

11. If you had problems with a farm or forest neighbor, how did you resolve them?

- [ ] Called authorities
- [ ] Contacted the producer/landowner
- [ ] Mediation
- [ ] Nothing

12. When you dealt with the above issues, how did you feel about the resolution?

- [ ] I gained a better understanding of why the landowner/producer did the activities that upset me initially.
- [ ] The issue was not resolved
- [ ] Litigation was pursued
- [ ] I still do not understand why that activity is necessary

13. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: (PLEASE SELECT A RESPONSE FOR EACH ITEM PRESENTED).

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Farms and forests enhance the scenic beauty and open space of Currituck County	○	○	○
Farmers are good neighbors	○	○	○
Local farmers deliver generally high-quality products	○	○	○
Farming is positive for the environment	○	○	○
Tax breaks for farmers are important	○	○	○
Agriculture and farming are high-technology industries	○	○	○
The price of most farm food commodities is relatively low	○	○	○
Farming presents a good career for enterprising persons	○	○	○
Agriculture and forestry should be promoted as viable career opportunities	○	○	○

14. Would you support farm and forest preservation efforts in Currituck County?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

15. Would you support the use of county government funds for farm and forest development?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

16. Both opportunities and threats exist for agriculture and agribusiness in Currituck County.

What are two threats to agriculture/forestry/agribusiness that you see in Currituck County?

What are two opportunities that exist for agriculture/forestry/agribusiness in Currituck County?

17. Please add any additional comments you may have about agriculture and forestry in Currituck County.

Currituck County Non-Farm Resident Survey

3. Thank you!

Your time and effort on this survey will help create an Agricultural Development Plan for Currituck County. This plan will provide recommendations for both short and long-term strategies to support agriculture and forestry in Currituck County. Once the plan is written, it will be presented to the county commissioners for endorsement. Once it is endorsed, it will be sent to NC Department of Agriculture for certification. When the plan is certified, the county will receive priority status for funding from NC Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

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