Perquimans 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, Perquimans County Center
- Perquimans County Board of Commissioners
- Perquimans County Manager
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- The citizens, farmers and agribusinesses of Perquimans County

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Executive Summary

Perquimans 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 on ways 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 37.8 percent of the county's value added total income. The agriculture sector also accounts for 12.9 percent of Perquimans County's total employment[1]. Perquimans County has the resources, natural and human, to ensure that agriculture can prosper in the future. The impact of agriculture in Perquimans County in 2012[2]:

*Agriculture and agribusiness contributed $87,810,647 in total income

*Perquimans ranked 9th in the soybean production

*Perquimans ranked 3rd in wheat production

*Perquimans ranked 17th in corn production

*Perquimans ranked 11th in cotton production

*Perquimans ranked 22nd in broiler production

*Perquimans ranked 85th in beef cattle production

*In total cash receipts from agriculture, Perquimans County ranked 39thth in the state[3]

County farmers surveyed, 63 percent, lacked sufficient land to expand or diversify their operations. Perquimans County farmers reported facing other critical issues, low commodity prices, export demand for products, land rental

rates, competition for land, available labor, and rising production input costs. The farmers are confronted by other challenges to their operations, such as aging farmer population, with the average age of farmers being 54.1 years old, and 88 percent not having farm transition plans. These issues present opportunities to enhance agriculture through education and 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. One hundred 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 Perquimans County Farm Preservation Plan based on information provided by farmers, agribusiness leaders and non-farm residents through personal interviews and surveys are proposed recommendations. The recommendations and action steps were developed to provide a guide for protecting and enhancing agriculture in Perquimans County. The success of this plan depends on the collaboration between local government, agricultural organizations, farmers, agribusiness and citizens of Perquimans County. The plan needs to be evaluated annually to celebrate accomplishments and add new recommendations as needed. The recommendations are:

1. **Support measures to protect and promote forest and farmland in Perquimans County.**
2. **Support the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD).**
3. **Develop and conduct programs to assist Perquimans County farm and forest landowners with farm transition planning.**
4. **Promote appreciation and awareness of the benefits of agriculture to Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans County, agriculture accounted for 12.9% of the county's employment in 2012. According to Mike Walden, in 2012 agriculture and agribusiness added $87,810,647 or 37.8% of the county's value added total income[5].

Perquimans County's leadership is cognizant of the importance of agriculture to the local economy and is supportive of an Agriculture Development Plan that addresses issues related to farm and agribusiness viability for the future. The goal of the Perquimans 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.

Overview of Perquimans County

Established in 1668, Perquimans County was part of the early settled Albemarle area of North Carolina. Located in the northeastern part of North Carolina, Perquimans County occupies land bordered by the Great Dismal Swamp to the north and the Albemarle Sound to the south.

Named for a Yeopim Indian term meaning 'Land of Beautiful Women,' Perquimans County abounds with natural resources. Yeopim is a derivative of the Algonquians and the Tuscarora[6].

The first church was organized in Perquimans County in 1672 in the town of Hertford.

Hertford, the county seat, was incorporated in 1758, sits on the banks of the Perquimans River. Early settlers were hunters and trappers, looking for a trading outpost when they established Hertford as a town. In the early 1900's Hertford was a busy lumber town because of its water and rail transportation. Agriculture has always been a leading industry in Perquimans County[7].

The county is known for its nearly 100 miles of shoreline which attracts hunters, fishermen and boaters. The shoreline is also attractive to residents who wish to live on the water.

Perquimans County Demographics

According to the US Census 2016 estimates, Perquimans County has a population of 13,335. This figure represents a very slight decrease from the 2010 census. The county is 74 percent white, 23 percent African American, and 2.7 percent Hispanic[8].

Perquimans has two incorporated areas of Hertford and Winfall. Other communities include Chapanoke, Belvidere, Durants Neck, and Snug Harbor.

Perquimans County is divided into five townships Belvidere, Hertford, Parkville, New Hope, and Bethel.

Map 1. Perquimans Township Map. Source: Perquimans County GIS

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. Perquimans County is designated as a Tier 2 county and remained in Tier 2 since 2007. North Carolina uses these designations to encourage economic growth through incentives in distressed counties. Perquimans' Tier status provides opportunities for certain grants and other incentives aimed at stimulating the county's economy[9].

In 2015, the median household income in Perquimans County was $45,208.00 compared to the state figure of $46,868.00. Seventeen percent of Perquimans' population is below the poverty level, which is slightly higher than the state's at 16 percent[10].

Thirteen percent or 641 working Perquimans County residents work outside North Carolina. Fifty percent or 2,404 residents work within North Carolina but outside Perquimans County. Thirty-seven percent or 1,792 residents work within the county. The unemployment rate is 6.4 percent, which is higher than the North Carolina rate of 4.2 percent[11].

Agriculture and agribusiness provided jobs for 12.9 percent of Perquimans County's working residents according to a study completed by Dr. Mike Walden in 2012[12].

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 land uses. The studies focus on three main land uses: commercial and industrial, working and open land, and residential. Agricultural and commercial land uses require few 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) require $0.35 for public services.
- Commercial and industrial land cost $0.29 for public services.

While similar impacts would be expected in Perquimans 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[13].

Infrastructure and Transportation

Perquimans County is connected to the Northeast Region by US Highway 17 and NC 37. These highways provide access to Interstate 70, Outer Banks, Albemarle Sound and Norfolk, Virginia.

The county is served by the Chesapeake and Albemarle Railroad that runs to the Port of Virginia. These 68 miles of track connect Hertford with the Chesapeake area of Virginia.

Perquimans County is located within 25 miles of two regional airports located in Edenton and Elizabeth City. The county is also within 90 minutes of the Norfolk International Airport which provides domestic and international passenger service.

Perquimans County has three water facilities located in Bethel, Winfall and Hertford. The county operates the Bethel and Winfall plants, and the town of Hertford operates the Hertford facility. Together the plants treat 2.66 million gallons of water per day. Municipal waste water is treated at all three facilities[14].

Education

A majority (84.9%) of the population of Perquimans 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, 17.4 percent of Perquimans county residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 28.4 percent in North Carolina[15].

The Perquimans County School System enrolls 1,800 students in one primary school, one grammar school, one middle school and one high school. These schools are served by 150 licensed personnel[16]. The county has no post-secondary educational institutions. The nearest colleges and universities are located in Elizabeth City, which are Elizabeth City State University, College of the Albemarle Community College and Mid-Atlantic Christian University. East Carolina University is within 90 minutes of Hertford, North Carolina.

Natural Attributes

In Perquimans County, as with all areas, natural resources are paramount in agricultural production. Perquimans County consists of 247 square miles of land and 82 square miles of water.

The Perquimans River flows north to south in the center of Perquimans County. The Little River flows north to south and is the east border of the county. The Yeopim River also flows north to south and forms the western border of the county. The county is also home to five major waterways which are Bethel Creek, Mill Creek, Godwin Creek, Yeopim Creek and Sutton Creek. The Albemarle Sound is the southern border of Perquimans County. This major body is approximately 50 miles long and varies in width from 5 to 14 miles. While mostly shallow, the deepest points in the Albemarle Sound are 25 feet. It is also part of the Intra-Coastal waterway[17].

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 and trees, and resident and commercial construction. The Soils Survey completed by USDA Soil Conservation Service for Perquimans and Chowan Counties have eight major soil associations which are:

1. Roanoke-Tomotley-Perquimans soils are nearly level, poorly drained soils that have a loamy surface layer with loamy or clayey subsoil. Most suited for crop land, this association is poorly suited for urban and recreational uses. Found in broad flats and in depressions, this association accounts for 37 percent of the soils in Perquimans and Chowan Counties.
2. Conetoe-Wando-Seabrook soils are nearly level, gently sloping; well-drained that has a sandy surface layer and a loam or sandy subsoil. Found on ridges and flats among small streams that flow into the Albemarle Sound and Chowan River. This association makes up 7 percent of the survey area. These soils are best suited for woodland and cropland.
3. Tomahawk-Echaw-Valhalla are nearly level and gently sloping, moderately well-drained, somewhat poorly drained and well-drained soils that have sandy surface layer and a loamy or sandy subsoil. Making up 6 percent of the survey area, these soils are best suited for cropland and woodland, with the Valhalla soils suited for most urban uses. This association is found on smooth and slightly rounded ridges along the Suffolk Scarp.
4. Dogue-Augusta-State soils are nearly level and gently sloping, moderately well-drained, somewhat poorly drained, and well-drained soils that have a sandy or loamy surface layer and a loamy or clayey subsoil. Making up 11 percent of the survey area, these soils are best suited for crops and woodlands. This association is found on smooth

ridges along small streams that flow into the Albemarle Sound, the Chowan River and the Perquimans River.

5. Portsmouth-Arapahoe-Cape Fear soils are nearly level, very poorly drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and loamy or clayey subsoil. Making up 23 percent of the survey area, this association is used mainly for cropland and woodland. This association is found on broad flats and in depressions.
6. Chapanoke-Yeopim soils are nearly level and gently sloping, somewhat poorly drained and moderately well-drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and loamy subsoil. Making up 4 percent of the survey area, these soils are well suited for croplands and woodlands. This association is found on smooth ridges and flats along small streams that flow into the Albemarle Sound and Perquimans River.
7. Chowan-Dorovan soils are nearly level, very poorly drained soils that are loamy and underlying by muck and soils that are muck throughout. Making up 9 percent of the survey area, these soils are found on the flood plains of the Chowan River, Perquimans River and the Albemarle River. The soils are poorly suited for crops, woodland and most urban uses.
8. Scuppernong soils are nearly level, very poorly drained and they have a surface layer of muck and mucky and loamy underlying material. This association makes up 3 percent of the county and is found in oval-shaped depressions and in the northern part of Perquimans County in the Dismal Swamp. If drained, the soils are suited to use for crops and woodland[18].

Water and Drainage Issues

Hurricane Matthew and other severe storms have created drainage issues in the rivers and streams of Perquimans County. Downed trees and brush have clogged these waterways. Efforts are underway to clear the debris and open up the rivers and streams to allow natural drainage of all Perquimans' land[19].

Forestry

Perquimans County forestland totals 71,631 acres, with 92 percent owned by private landowners. According to North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the

value of harvested timber in 2012 was $6,800,000 in Perquimans County. The total forest industry economic impact to Perquimans County was $4.8 million. Forty-two people are employed in the Perquimans County forest industry[20].

Boating

Recreational boating is one of the largest tourism activities in Perquimans County. Boaters are drawn to the rivers and the Albemarle Sound. The county and the town of Hertford are destinations for recreational boaters and have service and docking facilities available[21].

Perquimans County: the State of Agriculture

Agriculture accounted for 12.9 percent of Perquimans County's employment in 2012. According to Dr. Mike Walden in 2012, agriculture and agribusiness added $87,810,647 or 37.8 percent of the county's value added total income[22].

The number of farms in Perquimans County decreased from 2002 to 2012, according to the US Census of Agriculture from 193 in 2002 to 185 in 2012. The amount in total farmland in Perquimans County decreased from 94,458 acres in 2002 to 80,116 acres in 2012. The average farm size decreased from 489 acres in 2002 to 433 acres in 2012. Of the farmland in Perquimans County, crop land accounted for 72,423 acres in 2012[23].

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

- 22nd in broiler production
- 11th in cotton production
- 9th in soybeans
- 3rd in wheat
- 17th in corn production
- 85th in beef cattle

Perquimans County ranked 39th in the state of North Carolina total cash receipts from farm products produced and sold in 2015[24].

In a recent strategic planning process, the Perquimans County Economic Development identified the following priorities that may impact agriculture:

- Alternative energy
- Tourism
- Agriculture biotechnology[25]

Crops

Perquimans County, in 2012, 185 farms harvested crops from 71,724 acres. Receipts from crop sales totaled $59,200,000 in 2015. Production of major crops in Perquimans County in 2015 includes:

- Soybeans, 45,500 acres
- Wheat, 20,000 acres
- Corn, 11,700 acres
- Cotton, 9,800 acres[26]

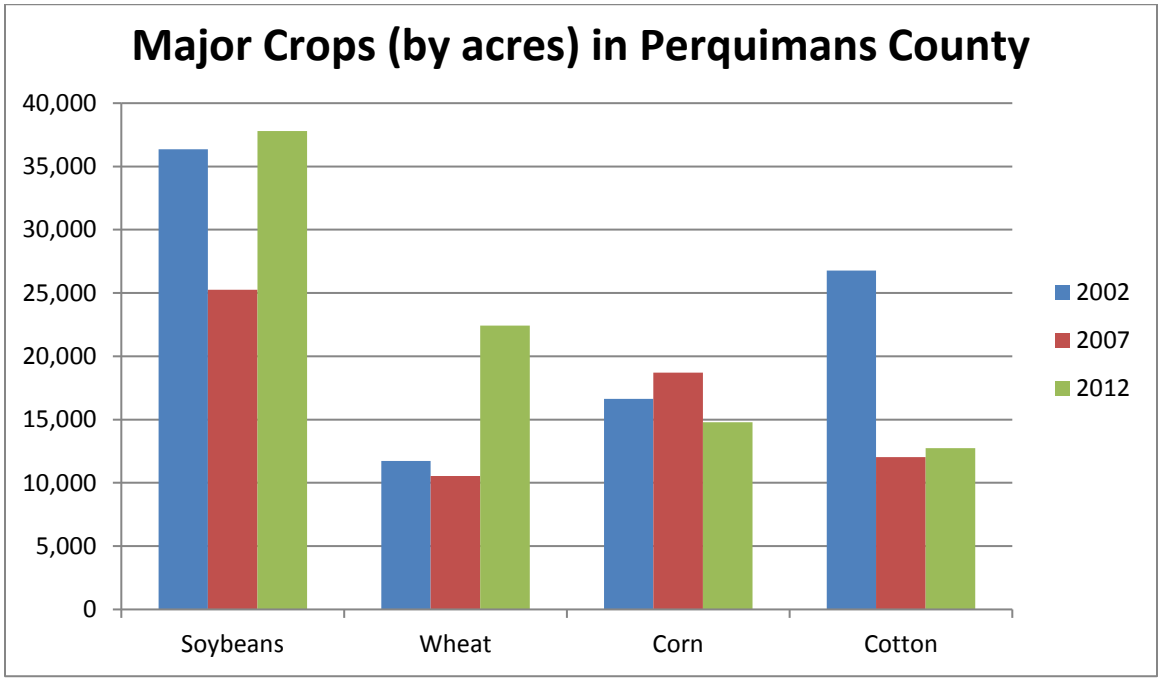

Figure 1 Major Crops by acres in Perquimans County, Source: 2016 NCDA Ag Statistics[27].

Livestock and Poultry

In 2015, Perquimans County farmers realized cash receipts from livestock and poultry of $48,980,801[28].

Number of cattle in 2015 was 700 in Perquimans County[29].

According to the 2012 US Census of Agriculture, Perquimans County had sixteen broiler farms with 10,900,000 chickens[30]. The county ranks 22nd in broiler production in the state[31].

Aquaculture

Perquimans County is home to two aquaculture enterprises. One of these farms grows crawfish and the other produces hybrid striped bass. According to Steve Gabel, Area Specialized Agent, Agriculture-Aquaculture, with North Carolina Cooperative Extension, estimates the combined annual income of these operations $25,000.00

Forestry

Perquimans County forestland totals 71,631 acres, with 92 percent owned by private landowners. According to North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the value of harvested timber in 2012 was $6,800,000 in Perquimans County. The total forest industry economic impact to Perquimans County was $4.8 million. Forty-two people are employed in the Perquimans County forest industry[32].

Farmer Demographics

The number of full-time farmers from 2002 to 2012 showed a decrease of 16.4 percent. The number of part-time farmers shows an increase of 26 percent during the same time period. The average age of farmers in Perquimans County was 54.1 years of age in 2012. Principal operators by gender were 179 male and 6 female in 2012. The majority of farm owners are white (217), while 22 were African American[33].

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

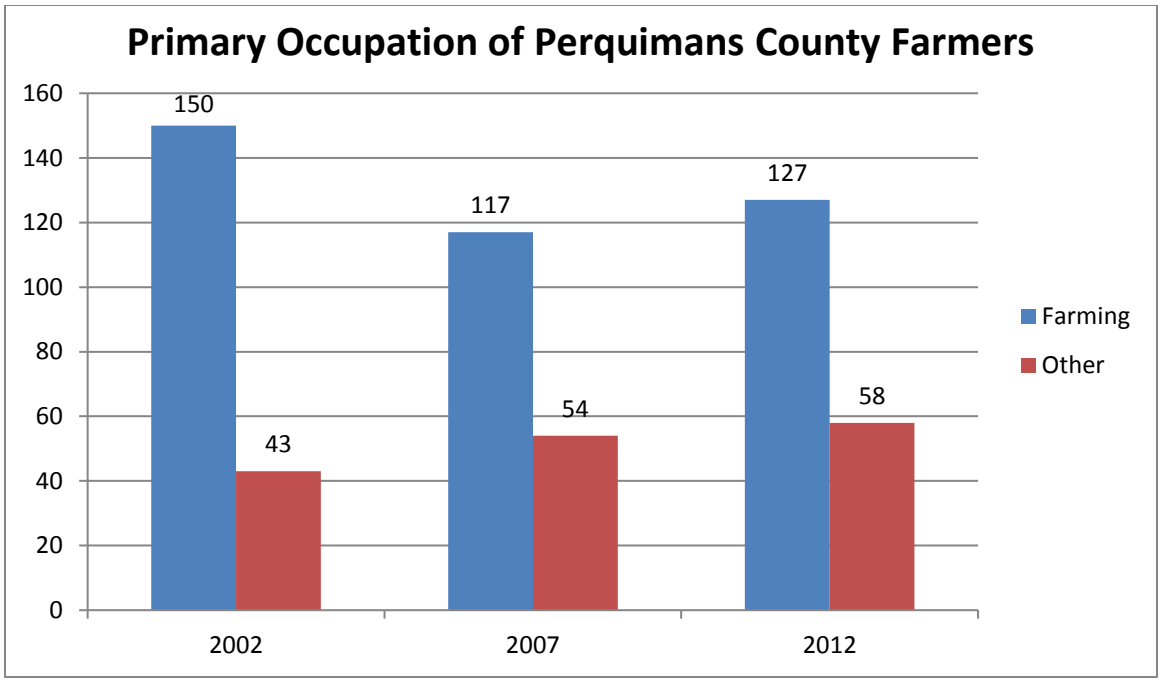

Figure 2: Primary Occupation of Perquimans County Farmers

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2012[34]

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 Perquimans County consisted of written surveys and interviews with three target audiences—agriculture producers, agribusiness owners and non-farm residents of Perquimans County. Surveys were distributed by the Perquimans County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

In addition, key leaders in Perquimans 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 Perquimans County from the perspectives 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.

Agriculture Producer Analysis

A review of the 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed that there were 185 farms in the county being cultivated by 179 male and 6 female operators. Perquimans County farmers are predominately white with 217 white and 22 African American operators. The average age of Perquimans farmers was reported as 54.1 years of age in 2012[35]. Farmers providing information for the Perquimans County Agricultural Development Plan represented operations form across the county. The average age of survey respondents was 60.25 years old.

According to the survey, the majority of the operations (75 percent) were defined as farm production only, and 25 percent as primarily farm production with some timber production.

Eighty-seven percent of Perquimans County farmers surveyed indicated that they had been in operation more than 20 years. Only 13 percent of respondents had been in operation 10 to 20 years.

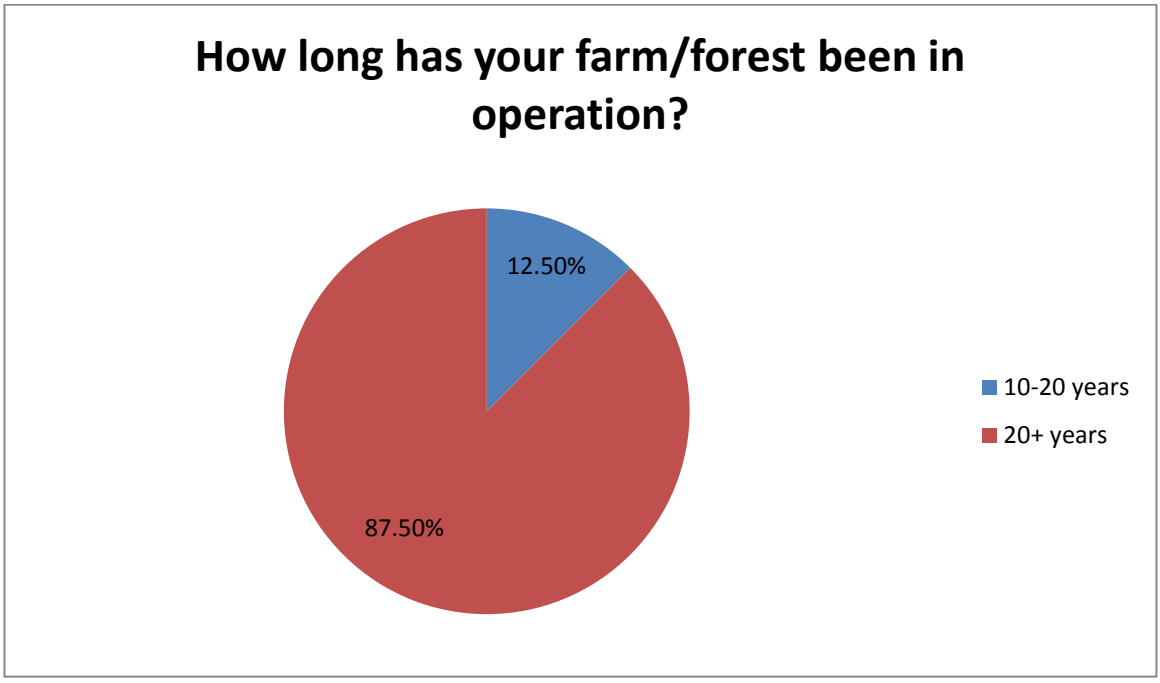

Figure 3. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

Almost 63 percent of the responding farmers indicated that their operations provided the majority of their household income. Of the farmers responding, less than 33 percent have expanded their operations during the last five years. Of those who wanted to expand but did not, listed the following reasons:

- Lack of available land to rent
- Low profit margin
- Age of owner/ operator
- High cost of equipment

Fifty percent of Perquimans' respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the current size of their operations.

Notably, 63 percent of farmers surveyed stated that they did not own sufficient property to expand or diversify their operation. This indicates the importance of and need for leasable land for operational expansion in Perquimans County.

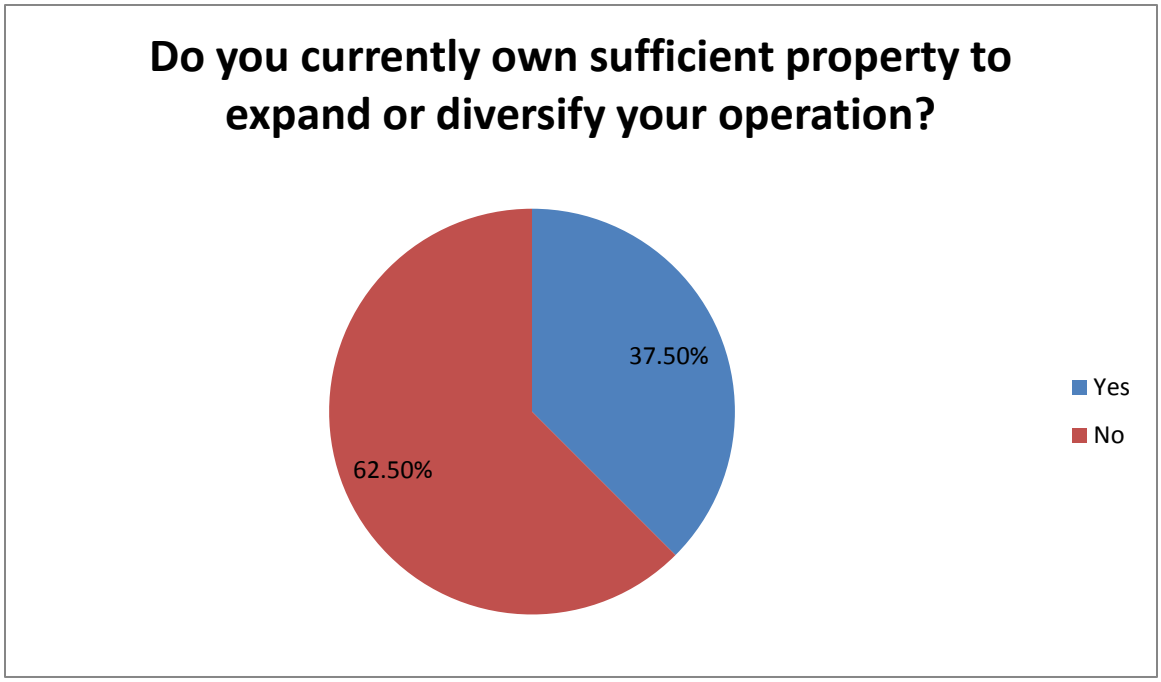

Figure 4. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

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

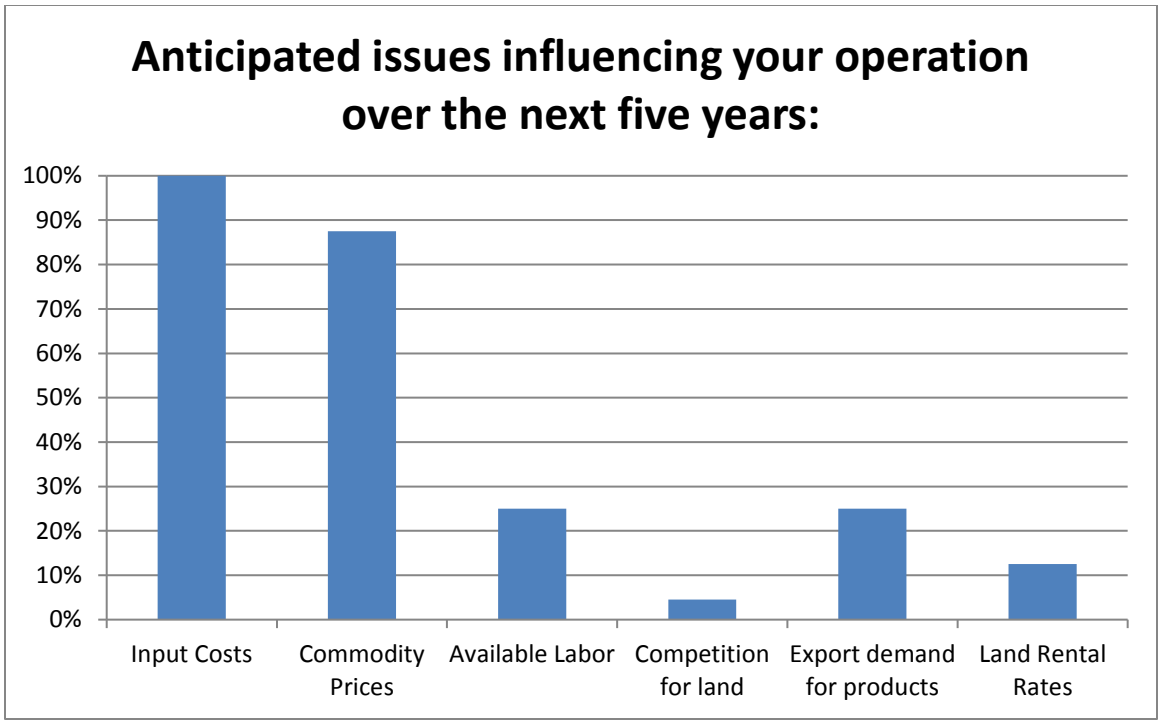

Figure 5. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

Additional information from the farming community indicated that upon retirement, nearly 75 percent of farmers expected to transfer the farm to family members for continued operation as a family farm (Figure 6). However, 88 percent do not have a farm transition plan. This indicates a need to have training for some farm owners on developing 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.

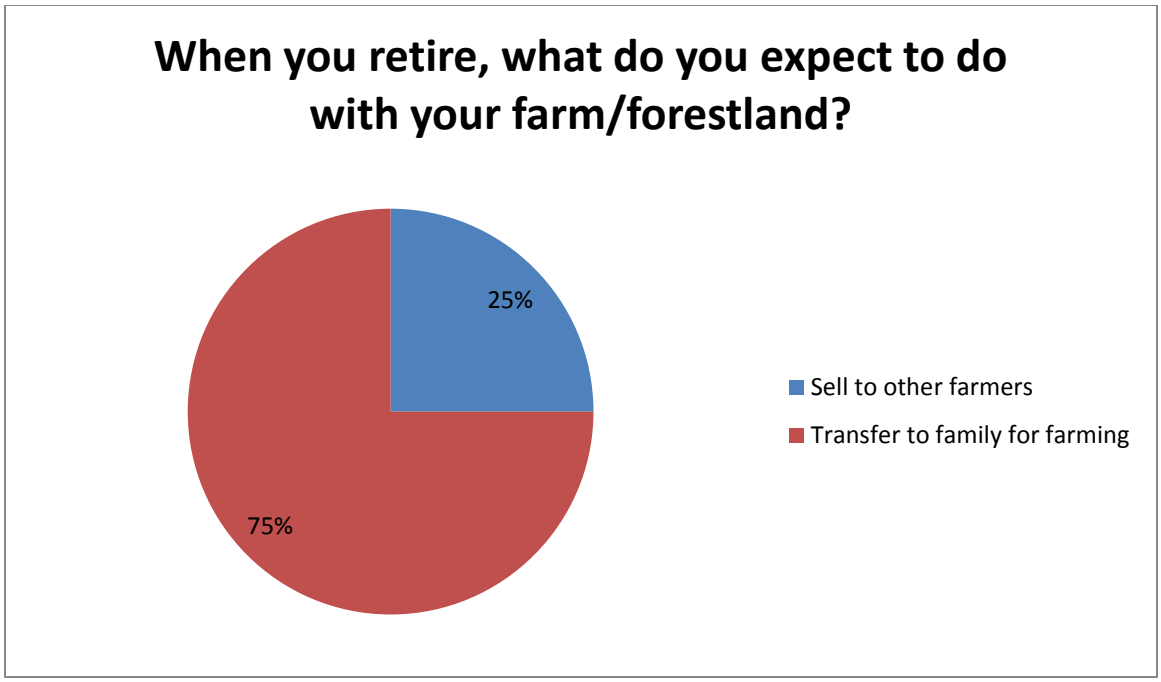

Figure 6. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

Perquimans 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. Eighty-six percent of survey respondents answered that they were enrolled in the PUV program. Almost 14 percent answered that they did not know whether or not their farmland was enrolled. 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.

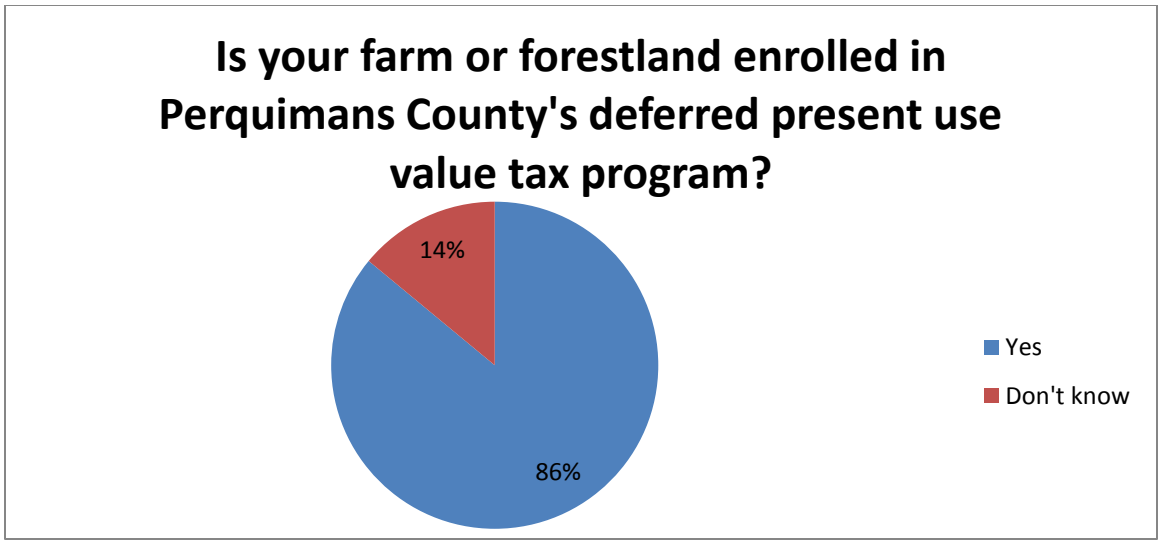

Figure 7. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

When Perquimans County farmers were asked to identify taxes that were impediments to their profitability, 87.5 percent listed federal self-employment taxes, 75 percent listed Federal Income Tax and 62.5 percent cited estate tax. (Figure 8)

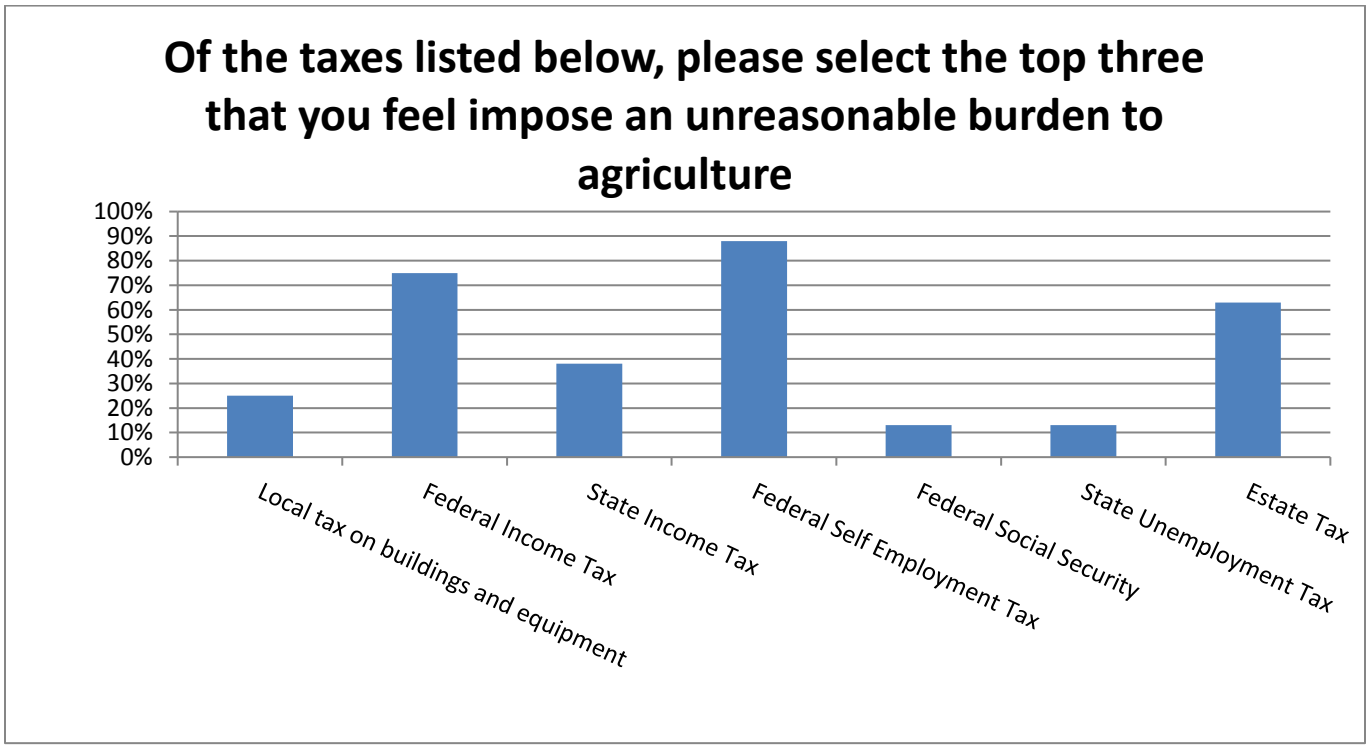

Figure 8. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

In 2012, the majority (91 percent) of forest land in Perquimans County was privately owned[36]. Forty percent of survey respondents have forest management plans, and 60 percent responded that they have no such plans. A forest management plan is a valuable tool for farmers and landowners to use these woodlands 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 indicates the need for the development of an educational program to inform and train landowners on the benefits of a formal forest management plan.

Only 14 percent of survey respondents have experienced problems with neighbors in regard to their farming operation. The only problems reported were trespassing and boundary conflicts.

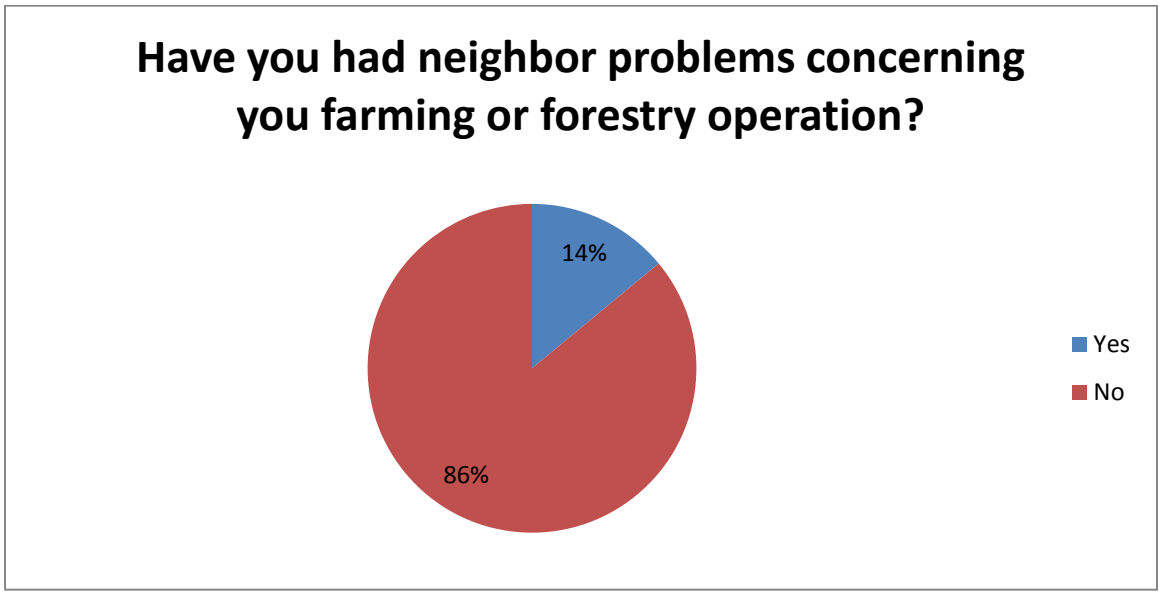

Figure 9. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

Perquimans County leaders enacted a Voluntary Agricultural District Program in 2009. One hundred percent of farmers responding to the survey were aware of the Voluntary Agricultural District program. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents have acreage in the VAD program. The county has not adopted an Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District program.

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

- Forward pricing and hedging 67%
- Direct to consumer marketing of products 33%
- Identifying and managing risks 67%
- Business website development 33%
- Estate planning/Farm transition 86%
- Federal and state contracts training 57%
- Timber management 57%
- Development of forest management plan 43%
- Longleaf Pine production 14%
- Marketing and sales promotion 50%
- Organizing buyer/seller groups 33%
- Diversifying through agritourism 17%
- Regional product branding 17%

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.

Perquimans County farmers who were surveyed and interviewed recognized the value of educating the non-farm public to the benefits of agriculture to the county. Eighty-eight percent of farmers surveyed were in favor of a program to increase non-farm residents' knowledge of the social and economic benefits of agriculture.

Perquimans 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.

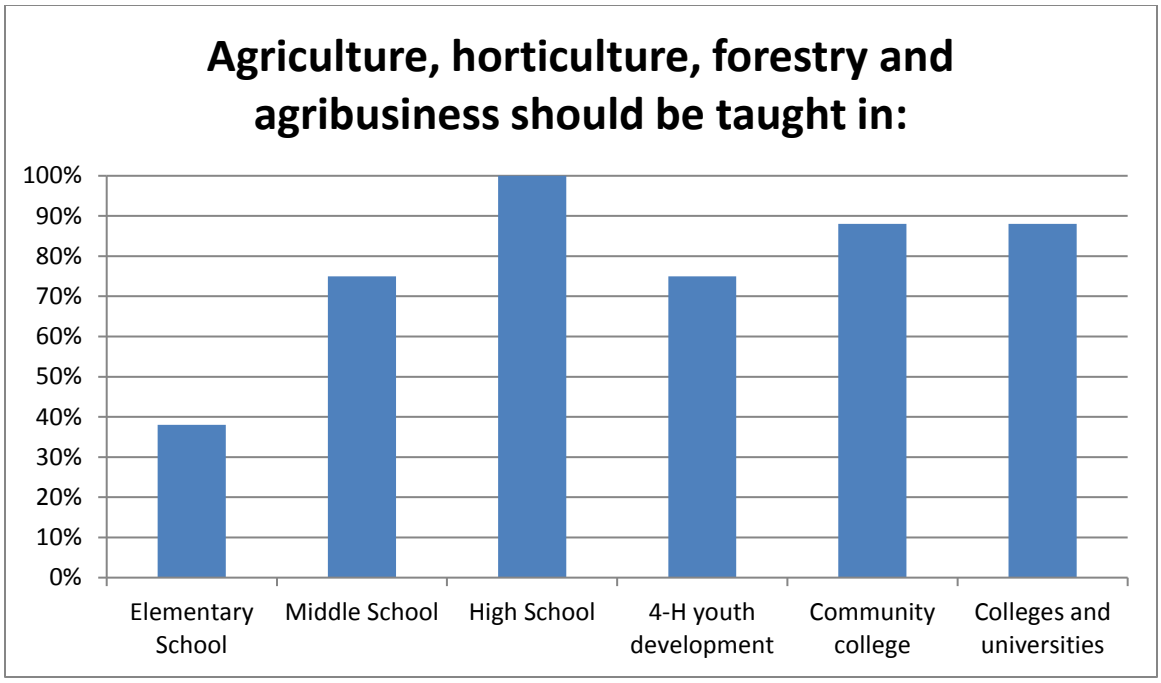

Figure 10. Source: Perquimans Producer Survey 2017

Surveyed farmers in Perquimans County (63%) were in favor of using 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 Perquimans 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 few had formal plans. Issues related to estate planning identified included no one in next generations to take over farming, equitable treatment of all heirs, and estate taxes.

- Solar and wind farms pressures resulting in loss of farmland.
- County government officials are supportive of agriculture and agribusiness.
- 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.

- Drainage issues due to damage from Hurricane Matthew result in flooding of low lying areas during rain events.
- Non-farm people building homes in agricultural areas.
- Lack of farmer representation on County Commissioner Board
- People moving in from other areas wanting to change things in Perquimans County.
- Federal regulatory restrictions on pesticides and other ag production processes.
- Lack of qualified labor for farming operations
- Lack of young people coming back to the farm
- Voluntary Agricultural Districts are an opportunity to preserve and protect farmland.
- Multiple markets for grain
- Expansion by contract animal operations
- Production of specialty crops such as sage
- Viable market for forest products
- Perquimans population is agricultural friendly
- Access to Raleigh and Virginia markets for produce
- Career opportunities for college graduates in agriculture
- Wind farms and Interstate highways

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. Examples of agribusinesses include feed dealers, seed processors, agricultural lenders, agricultural and crop consultants, produce marketers, and agritourism services.

Agribusinesses surveyed (100%) recognized that 75-100 percent of their business was generated from the farm community. 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, 50 percent of agribusinesses surveyed have increased the size of

their operations. One-hundred 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.

Agribusiness owners also noted trends in agricultural production that could have impacts on their operations including, but not limited to, a shift to more sophisticated farm operations, fewer small 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.

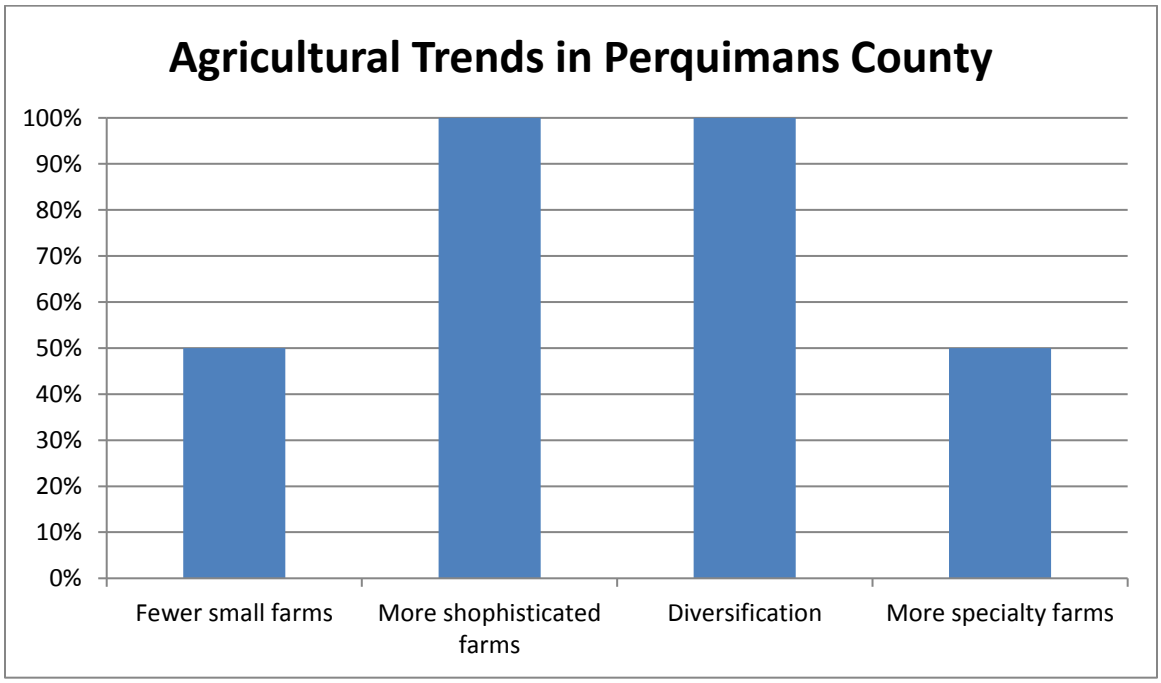

Figure 11. Source: Perquimans Agribusiness Survey 2017

Following is a list of challenges and opportunities expressed by the respondents that will have an effect on agriculture in the future.

- One hundred percent of agribusiness respondents identified farm transition and estate planning as a major issue in Perquimans 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 Perquimans County citizens on the impact of agriculture and agribusiness on the county's economic viability.
- One hundred percent of agribusiness respondents have no problems with labor issues.
- Fifty percent of survey respondents saw a need for consumer education on 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.
- Fifty percent those surveyed noted agritourism was a viable opportunity for agricultural expansion in Perquimans 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, fifty percent needed succession planning training and education on new technologies in farming.

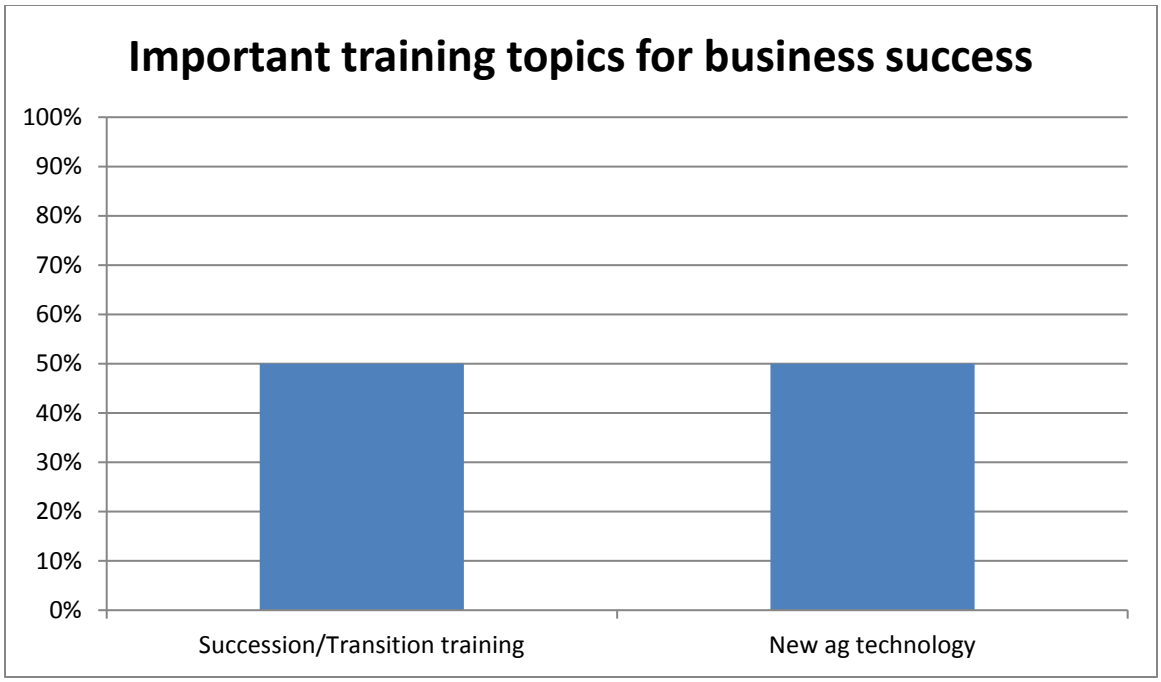

Figure 12. Source: Perquimans County Agribusiness Survey 2017

Perquimans County Agribusiness leaders also identified several challenges, threats and opportunities for farms and forests:

- Solar and Wind farms expansion taking valuable farm land out of production.
- Lack of public knowledge of agriculture and impact on Perquimans County's economy
- 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 movement is viable business opportunities for new and existing Perquimans County farmers.
- The lack of succession planning among farmers and land owners.
- EPA regulations are a threat to agricultural production and profitability.
- Loss of export opportunities for agricultural commodities produced in Perquimans County.
- Perquimans has a strong Cooperative Extension program with people willing to help agriculture and agribusiness.

- High input costs make it difficult to show a profit with low commodity prices

Agribusiness enterprise owners recognize the value of farming to the economy and environment of Perquimans County.

Non-Farm Resident Survey and Interview Analysis

Perquimans County is a small rural community with a strong agricultural base. The majority of the residents have lived there all their lives, while others are drawn to move to the county for waterfront living and associated amenities. The majority (83%) of survey respondents have lived in Perquimans County more than 10 years. Eighty-three percent live within a quarter mile of a farm or timber operation. A positive result of this close relationship with agriculture is that 75 percent are good neighbors. With this in mind, 83% have not experienced a problem. The only two problems reported were smoke and dust from neighboring farms, and packs of hunting dogs running on neighbor's property.

When asked about the state of agriculture as a viable industry in Perquimans County, 83 percent of respondents felt that farming is holding its own and has some potential for future growth. Seventeen percent said that agriculture is an expanding industry with significant growth potential in Perquimans County.

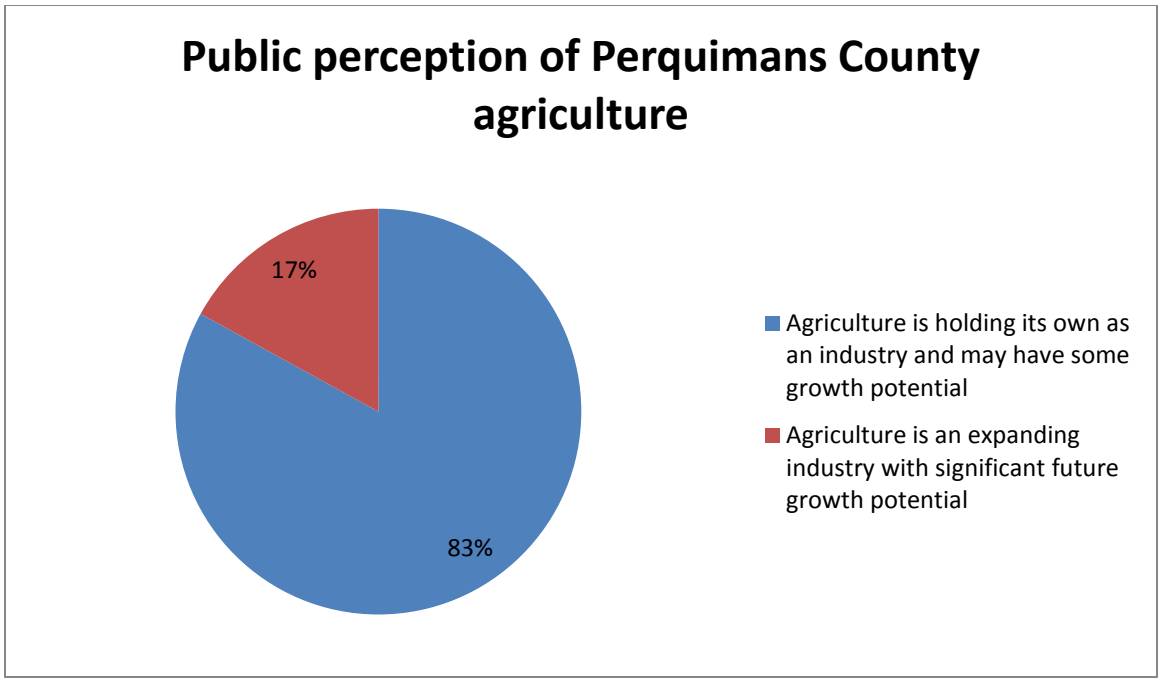

Figure 13. Source: Perquimans Non-Farm Resident Survey 2017

Perquimans County non-farm residents (50%) do not have a good understanding of the economic impact of the entire agricultural sector on the county's economy (Figure 13). The value of agricultural industry which in 2012, provided a total economic impact of $87,810,647 to Perquimans County. (Mike Walden)

One hundred percent of surveyed non-farm residents felt that Perquimans County should take steps to help preserve farms and forests. Eighty-three percent of respondents reported that they support local farming by purchasing local produce from farmers markets; pick-your- own operations, and road side stands. Eighty-three percent of non-farm residents say that they purchase plants from local greenhouses and nurseries. When buying local produce, the graph below represents how survey respondents verify the origin of the products.

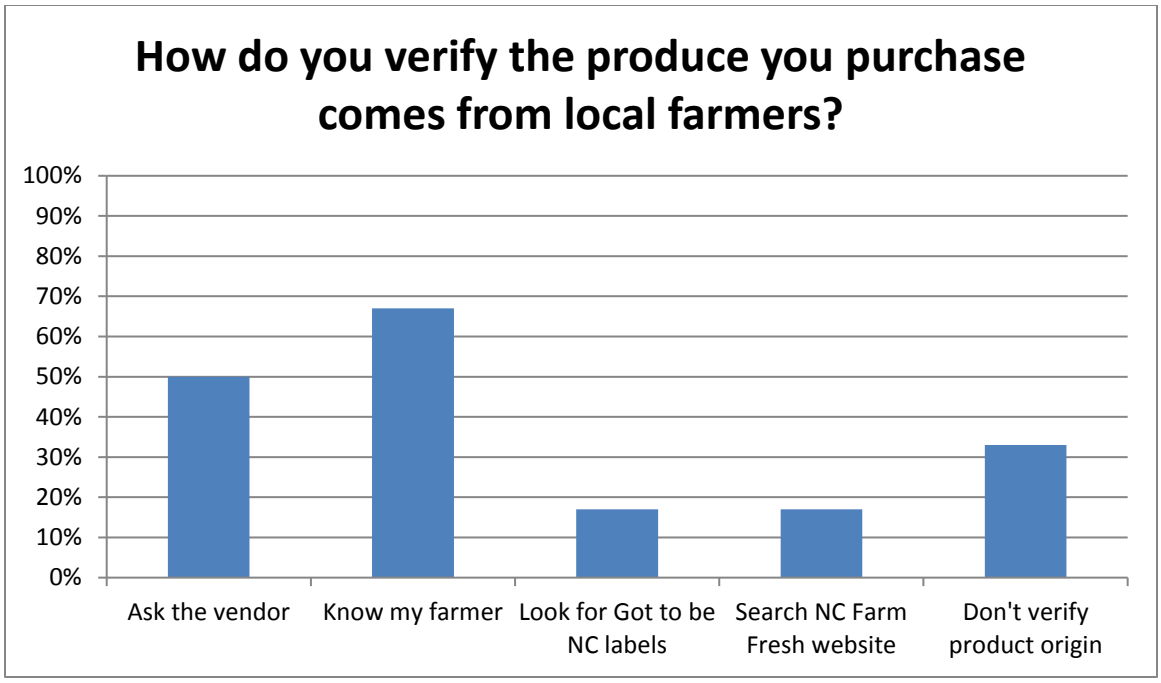

Figure 14. Source: Perquimans Non-Farm Resident Survey

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

- 100 percent agreed farms and forests enhance scenic beauty and open space
- 100 percent agreed farmers are good neighbors
- 83 percent agreed that local farmers deliver high quality products
- 100 percent agreed that farming has a positive impact on the environment
- 100 percent stated that farming and agribusiness are high technology businesses
- 67 percent agreed farming presents a good career for enterprising people
- 67 percent agreed that agriculture and forestry are viable career opportunities
- 67 percent believe that the price of most farm food commodities is relatively low
- 83 percent stated that tax breaks for farmers are important

- 100 percent would support farm and forest preservation efforts in the county
- 67 percent would support the use of government funds for farm and forest development

This information clearly illustrates that non-farm residents surveyed have a positive image of agriculture in the Perquimans County.

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

- Use of antibiotics in animal production
- Protect bees from crop dusting
- Long-term threat from solar and wind farms
- More people moving to county that don't understand agriculture
- People being elected to county government that don't understand agriculture
- Urbanization
- Aging population of farmers

Non-farm residents also listed the following opportunities for agriculture in Perquimans County:

- Good soil and climate
- Raising non-GMO corn
- Increase production through technology
- Utilize the proposed marine park for aquaculture if feasible

One respondent added, "Agriculture and forestry contribute to our culture. People value hard work, go out of their way to help a neighbor or a stranger, create a beautiful panorama of fields and forests, instill an understanding of good land stewardship, help children understand where food comes from and give us serenity from our surroundings. I value the land and those who work so hard to make it productive."

Recommendations

The major result of the Perquimans 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 affected by the plan as well as from other agricultural sources. The following recommendations are extrapolated from the data obtained through interviews and surveys of Perquimans County farmers, agribusinesses and citizens and data from USDA and NCDA&CS.

For this plan to be effective, Perquimans 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 Perquimans County.

Recommendation One:
Support measures to protect and promote forest and farmland in Perquimans County.

Though residents largely support agriculture, added education and understanding is needed. County officials should be informed of agricultural information affecting Perquimans County.

Action Steps

- Present the Perquimans County Agricultural Development Plan to the Board of Commissioners for endorsement and submit to NCDA&CS for certification.
- Work with Perquimans County Agriculture Advisory Board to oversee and manage the plan for the benefit of agriculture in the county.

- Utilize all available media outlets to inform county leadership and the public about agriculture.
- Educate farmers and landowners regarding available farmland preservation tools and incentives suited for Perquimans County.
- Educate landowners and farmers of the programs available through government agencies.
- Partner 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 Perquimans County Agricultural Advisory Board to informing and engaging them in county projects that will impact agricultural production.

Timeline:

Efforts to increase agricultural awareness and representation should begin in mid-2018.

Partnering Agencies:

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

Recommendation Two:
Support the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program.

Perquimans County has Voluntary Agricultural District ordinance that was adopted in 2009. However, more farmers need to be aware of the benefits of enrollment in VAD.

Action Steps:

- The Perquimans County Agricultural Advisory Board will provide leadership in promoting the Perquimans VAD ordinance.
- Educate farmers, landowners, developers and realtors on the benefits of the VAD ordinance.
- Assist landowners with understanding and enrollment in VAD.

Timeline:

VAD promotion is ongoing.

Partnering Agencies:

Perquimans Agricultural Advisory Board, Perquimans Farm Bureau Board, Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service, Perquimans County Tax Office, Perquimans County Register of Deeds, Perquimans County Economic Development, Perquimans County Planning and Zoning Department and Perquimans County Board of Commissioners.

Recommendation Three:
Develop and conduct programs to assist Perquimans County farm and forest landowners with farm transition planning.

The average age of farmers in Perquimans County was 54.1 years in 2012. According to surveyed farmers, none have formal 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.

Action Steps:

- Plan and conduct a series of workshops that uses a variety of specialists and agencies to provide information on farm transition and estate planning.

Timeline:

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

Partnering Agencies:

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

Recommendation Four:
Promote appreciation and awareness of the benefits of agriculture to Perquimans 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. Understanding agriculture will provide stronger relationships between producers and consumers as well as additional support local farms.

Action Steps:

- Promote agriculture awareness plan and determine all feasible delivery methods such as social media, speakers' bureau, print and broadcast media.
- Develop presentations that show the role of agriculture in Perquimans 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 continue in 2018.

Partnering Agencies:

Perquimans County Agricultural Advisory Board, Perquimans County Cooperative Extension, Perquimans 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 Perquimans Public 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 to the future of agriculture in Perquimans 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 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.
- 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 agricultural enterprises.

Timeline:

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

Partnering Agencies:

Perquimans County Cooperative Extension, Perquimans Public Schools, regional colleges and universities, Perquimans County Farm Bureau, Perquimans County farmers and agribusiness owners.

Recommendation Six:
Develop Technical, Business and Marketing Training for the Maintenance and Expansion of Agriculture in Perquimans County.

Perquimans 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.
- Encourage agencies to develop training on business planning that will enhance farmer knowledge about forward pricing and hedging, identifying and managing risks, marketing and sales promotion, direct to consumer marketing of products, business website development, regional product branding, diversifying through agritourism, and organizing buyer/seller groups, timber management, development of a forestry management plan, and selecting consulting foresters.

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

Partnering Agencies:

Perquimans County Cooperative Extension, University of Mount Olive Lois G. Britt Agribusiness Center, NC Forest Service, NCDA&CS, USDA Natural Resources and Conservation District, and Perquimans County Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

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Appendixes

Perquimans County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance

PERQUIMANS COUNTY
VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT ORDINANCE
Adopted by the Perquimans County Board of County Commissioners 11-2-2009

ARTICLE I
TITLE

An ordinance of the Board of County Commissioners of PERQUIMANS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, entitled, **"VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT "**

ARTICLE II
AUTHORITY

The articles and sections of this Ordinance are adopted pursuant to authority conferred by the North Carolina General Statutes sections 106-735 through 106-744 and Chapter 153A.

ARTICLE III
PURPOSE

The purpose of this Ordinance is to promote agricultural values and the general welfare of Perquimans County and more specifically, increase identity and pride in the agricultural community and its way of life; encourage the economic and financial health of agriculture, horticulture and forestry; and increase protection of farmland from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms. It is important that all citizens recognize the importance of agriculture to the economic and cultural life of the county.

This ordinance establishes a Voluntary Agricultural District Program that has the following benefits for participating farms and other county residents:

The program preserves and maintains agricultural areas within the county.

The program informs non-farming neighbors and potential land purchasers that the participating farm may emit noise, dust, smells, be the site of aerial pesticide applications in accordance with state regulations, etc. This may help avoid conflicts between neighbors.

Landowner participation in the program is voluntary and the landowner may terminate his/her participation at any time.

The program conserves green space and natural resources as the county's population and development expands.

The program helps maintain opportunities to produce locally grown food and fiber.

ARTICLE IV
DEFINITIONS

The following are defined for purposes of this Ordinance:

Advisory Board: Perquimans County Agricultural Advisory Board.

Chairperson: Chairperson of the Perquimans County Agricultural Advisory Board.

District: Voluntary Agricultural District as established by this ordinance.

Board of Commissioners: Perquimans County Board of County Commissioners.

ARTICLE V
AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

A. Creation

The Board of Commissioners shall establish an Agricultural Advisory Board to implement the provisions of this program.

B. Membership

The Advisory Board shall consist of no less than nine members appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

C. Membership Requirements

1. Each Advisory Board member, except those serving in an *ex officio* capacity, shall be a Perquimans County resident or landowner.

2. At least six of the members shall be actively engaged in farming, or has been actively engaged in farming in the past. Of the members actively engaged in farming, there shall be at least one such member from each agricultural district in Perquimans County. This determination shall be made without reference to *ex officio* members.

3. The members actively engaged in farming, as well as other members, shall be selected for appointment by the Board of County Commissioners from the names of individuals submitted by the Perquimans County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors, the Perquimans County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the USDA Farm Service Agency County Committee, and any other agriculture-related group or individual.

4. The remaining three at-large members shall be selected as follows: one member from the Board of County Commissioners, one member selected by the USDA agencies, and one member selected by the Perquimans County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. The names of these individuals will be submitted to the Board of County Commissioners for at-large appointments.

5. Additional members may be appointed to the Board in an *ex officio* capacity from the Soil and Water Conservation District Board, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the USDA Farm Service Agency, or other agencies, as deemed necessary by the Board of Commissioners. Members serving in an *ex officio* capacity shall neither vote nor count toward quorum requirements.

D. Tenure

The initial board is to consist of 3 appointees for terms of one year; 3 appointees for terms of two years; and 3 appointees for terms of three years. Thereafter, all appointments are to be for terms of three years, with reappointment permitted. Members will be eligible to serve two consecutive three-year terms, then rotate off for a least one year.

E. Vacancies

Any vacancy on the Advisory Board is to be filled by the Board of Commissioners for the remainder of the unexpired term from recommendations of the above groups.

F. Removal

Any member of the Advisory Board may be removed by the Board of Commissioners upon a unanimous vote of the Commissioners. No cause for removal shall be required.

G. Funding

The *per diem* compensation, if any, of the members of the Advisory Board may be fixed by the Board of Commissioners and funds may be appropriated to the Advisory Board to perform its duties.

H. Advisory Board Procedure

1. Chairperson

The Advisory Board shall elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson each year at its first meeting of the fiscal year. The chairperson shall preside over all regular or special meetings of the Advisory Board. In the absence or disability of the chairperson, the vice-chairperson shall preside and shall exercise all the powers of the chairperson. Additional officers may be elected as needed.

2. Determination of Procedure

The Advisory Board may adopt rules of procedure not inconsistent with this Ordinance or with other provisions of State law.

3. Advisory Board Year

The Advisory Board shall use the Perquimans County fiscal year as its meeting year.

4. Meetings

Meetings of the Advisory Board shall be held at the call of the chairperson and at such other times as the Advisory Board may specify in its rules of procedure, or upon the request of at least a majority of the Advisory Board Membership. A meeting shall be held at least annually and notice of any meetings to the members shall be in writing, unless otherwise agreed to by all Advisory Board members. Meetings shall be conducted in accord with the current Roberts Rules of Order. All meetings shall be open to the public.

5. Majority Vote and Quorum Requirements

All issues shall be decided by a majority vote of the members of the Advisory Board present, except as otherwise stated herein.

6. Records

The Advisory Board shall keep minutes of the proceedings showing the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent or failing to vote, indicating such fact, and shall keep records of its examinations and other official actions, all of which shall be filed in the office of the Advisory Board, and shall be public record.

7. Administrative

The Advisory Board shall work through the Perquimans County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service or the Perquimans County Soil and Water Conservation District for record keeping, correspondence, and application procedures under this Ordinance, and whatever services the Board needs to complete its duties.

I. Duties

The Advisory Board shall:

1. Review and approve or disapprove applications of landowners for enrollment of qualified farmland, horticultural land, or forestland in voluntary agricultural districts;

2. Make recommendations concerning the establishment and modification of agricultural districts;

3. Conduct public hearings;

4. Advise the Board of Commissioners on projects, programs, or issues affecting the agricultural economy and agricultural, horticultural or forestry activities within the county that will affect agricultural districts;

5. Review and make recommendations concerning proposed amendments to this ordinance;

6. Develop a draft countywide farmland protection plan as defined in N.C.G.S. §106-744 (e) for presentation to the Board of Commissioners;

7. Study additional methods of protection for farming, horticulture, forestry, and the attendant land base, and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners; and

8. Perform other agricultural, horticultural, and forestry-related tasks or duties assigned by the Board of Commissioners.

ARTICLE VI
CREATION OF VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

A. Regions

Perquimans County is hereby divided into five (5) districts based on the current established townships as defined below:

1. Belvidere.

2. Bethel.

3. Hertford.

4. New Hope.

5. Parkville .

B. Implementation

In order to implement the purposes stated in Article III, this program provides for the creation of voluntary agricultural districts which meet the following standards:

1. The District shall contain a minimum of ten (10) contiguous acres of qualified farmland; or

2. The District shall contain two (2) or more qualified farms within a township established under this ordinance.

All land enrolled in a township, defined in section A, above, shall be part of a single district. If a single farm has acreage in two or more townships, the farm shall participate in the district where the largest acreage is found.

C. Education

The county may take such action as it deems appropriate through the Advisory Board or other entities or individuals to encourage the formation of the Districts and to further their purposes and objectives, including the implementation of a public information program to reasonably inform landowners of the agricultural district program.

D. Addition and Withdrawal

1. Qualifying farmland in a township with an existing district shall be added to the district as herein provided.

2. In the event that one or more participants in the District withdraw and the acreage in the District becomes less than the minimum acreage required or results in the remaining land being noncontiguous, a voluntary agricultural district will continue to exist so long as there is one qualifying farm.

E. Display

The Districts shall be marked on county maps that shall be displayed for public view in county offices including, but not limited to, the offices of the Planning Department, Register of Deeds, Tax Department, Farm Service Agency, and Agricultural Building.

F. Renewal

Each conservation agreement shall renew automatically for an additional ten (10) year period at its termination date unless either the county or landowner gives written notice at least thirty (30) days prior to the agreement termination date.

ARTICLE VII
CERTIFICATION AND QUALIFICATION OF FARMLAND

Requirements

To secure county certification as qualifying farmland in a Voluntary Agricultural District, a farm must:

1. Be participating in the farm present-use-value taxation program established by N.C.G.S. §105-277.2 through §105-277.7, or is otherwise determined by the county to meet all the qualifications of this program set forth in G.S. 105-277.3 ;

2. Be the subject of a conservation agreement, as defined in N.C.G.S. §121-35, between the county and the owner of such land that prohibits non-farm use or development of such land for a period of at least ten years, except for the creation of not more than four lots that meet applicable county zoning and subdivision regulations. The property owner may voluntarily revoke this conservation agreement by submitting a written request to the Board in accordance with Article VIII;

3. Be managed, if highly erodible land exists on the farm, in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service defined erosion control practices that are addressed to said highly erodible land;

4. Be located in the unincorporated area of Perquimans County, except that the County may operate a program in an incorporated area of a municipality under agreement with that municipality.

ARTICLE VIII
APPLICATION, APPROVAL, AND APPEAL PROCEDURE

A. Application Procedure

1. A landowner may apply to participate in the Agricultural District program by making application to the Advisory Board, or the Perquimans County Center of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. The application shall be on forms provided by the Advisory Board. The application to participate in a district may be filed with the application for certification of qualifying farmland and must be approved by the Advisory Board.

2. An agreement to sustain, encourage, and promote agriculture must be executed by the landowner and recorded with the Advisory Board.

B. Approval Process

1. Upon submission of the application to the Advisory Board, the Advisory Board shall meet within thirty (30) days to approve or disapprove the application. The chairperson shall notify the applicant by first class mail of approval or disapproval of participation in the district.

2. Upon receipt of an application, the chairperson will forward copies immediately to the following offices which shall be asked to provide comments, if any, to the Advisory Board prior to the date set for the Advisory Board vote on the application:

   a. The Perquimans County tax assessor;

   b. The Perquimans County Soil and Water Conservation District office;

   c. The Perquimans County Center of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service: and

   d. The Natural Resources Conservation Service.

C. Appeal

If an application is denied by the Advisory Board, the petitioner shall have thirty (30) days from the date of notification to appeal the decision to the Board of Commissioners. Such appeal shall be presented in writing. The decision of the Board of Commissioners is final.

D. The Agricultural Advisory Board can make exceptions on an individual farm basis for farms that have not met the requirements of present use valuation based on the farm's importance in maintaining agricultural production in Perquimans County.

ARTICLE IX
REVOCATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS

A. Revocation and Enforcement

1. By providing 30 days advance written notice to the Advisory Board, a landowner of qualifying farmland within a Voluntary Agricultural District may revoke the Conservation Agreement or the Advisory Board may revoke the same Conservation Agreement based on noncompliance by the landowner, subject to the same provisions as contained in Article VIII(C) for appeal of denials. Such revocation shall result in loss of qualifying farm status and loss of eligibility to participate in a district. Aside from noncompliance by the landowner, neither the Advisory Board nor the Board of Commissioners shall revoke any Conservation Agreement prior to its expiration. If the Advisory Board shall revoke this Conservation Agreement for cause, the landowner shall have the appeal rights set forth in Article VIII(C). Transfers of land in a Voluntary Agricultural District due to death of the landowner, sale, or gift shall not revoke the Conservation Agreement unless the land no longer qualifies for the present-use-value taxation program or, in the event that there are water or sewer assessments held in abeyance, the new owner(s) fails to agree in writing to accept liability for those assessments in the event that the land is withdrawn either voluntarily or involuntarily from the district. Enforcement of the terms of a Conservation Agreement for land enrolled in a Voluntary Agricultural District shall be limited to revocation of the Conservation Agreement and the benefits derived therefrom.

ARTICLE X
WAIVER OF WATER AND SEWER OR ALL UTILITY ASSESSMENTS

A. No Connection Required

1. A landowner belonging to the District shall not be required to connect to, or be assessed fees related to Perquimans County water and/or sewer systems as outlined in N.C.G.S. 106-743.5.

B. Abeyance

1. Water and sewer assessments shall be held in abeyance, without interest, for farms in a District, until improvements on such property are connected to the water or sewer system for which the assessment was made.

C. Termination of Abeyance

When the period of abeyance ends, the assessment is payable in accordance with the terms set out in the assessment resolution.

D. Suspension of Statute of Limitations

Statutes of limitations are suspended during the time that any assessment is held in abeyance without interest.

E. Other Statutory Abeyance Procedures

Nothing in this section is intended to diminish the authority of the County to hold assessments in abeyance under N.C.G.S. §153A-201, or other applicable law.

F. Conflict with Water and/or Sewer System Construction and Improvements Grants

To the extent that this section conflicts with the terms of federal, state, or other grants under which county utility systems are constructed this section shall not apply. This section shall not apply to utilities that are not owned by the County unless the County has entered into an agreement with the entity(ies) owning the utilities and that agreement provides that this Ordinance shall apply.

ARTICLE XII
PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Purpose

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §106-740, which provides that no state or local public agency or governmental unit may formally initiate any action to condemn any interest in qualifying farmland within a District until such agency or unit has requested the Advisory Board to hold a public hearing on the proposed condemnation.

B. Procedure

1. Upon receiving a request, the Advisory Board shall publish notice describing the proposed action in the appropriate newspapers of Perquimans County within fourteen (14) business days of the request, and will in the same notice notify the public of a public hearing on the proposed condemnation, to be held within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request.

2. The Advisory Board shall meet to review:

   a. Whether the need for the project has been satisfactorily established by the agency or unit of government involved, including a review of any fiscal impact analysis conducted by the agency involved; and

   b. Whether there are alternatives to the proposed action that have less impact and are less disruptive to the agricultural activities of the District within which the proposed action is to take place.

3. The Advisory Board shall consult with the County Agricultural Extension Agent, the Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist, Soil and Water Conservation personnel, the County Manager, and any other individuals, agencies, or organizations deemed by the Advisory Board to be necessary for its review of the proposed action.

4. Within seven (7) days after the hearing, the Advisory Board shall make a report containing its findings and recommendations regarding the proposed action. The report shall be made available to the public prior to its being conveyed to the decision-making body of the agency proposing the acquisition.

5. There will be a period of ten (10) days allowed for public comment on the report of the Advisory Board.

6. After the ten (10) day period for public comment has expired, the Advisory Board shall submit a final report containing all of its findings and recommendations regarding the proposed action to the decision making body of the agency proposing the acquisition.

7. The total time period, from the day that a request for a hearing has been received to the day that a final report is issued to the decision making body of the agency proposing the acquisition shall not exceed sixty (60) days. If the agency agrees to an extension, the agency and the Advisory Board shall mutually agree upon a schedule to be set forth in writing and made available to the public.

8. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. §106-740, the Board of Commissioners shall not permit any formal initiation of condemnation by local agencies while the proposed condemnation is properly before the Advisory Board.

ARTICLE XIII
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

A Record Notice of Proximity to Voluntary Agricultural District

1. Computerized Land Records

Upon certification of qualifying farmland and designation of real property as a District, the Perquimans County Land Records System shall be changed to include a notice reasonably calculated to alert a person researching the title of a particular tract that such a tract is located within one aerial mile of a voluntary agricultural district.

2. Posting of Notice

The following notice, of a size and form suitable for posting, shall be located in the office of Register of Deeds, Planning Department, Tax Office, Inspections Department, and any other office or agency deemed necessary by the Advisory Board:

Notice To Real Estate Purchasers in Perquimans County

Perquimans County has established Voluntary Agricultural Districts to protect and preserve agricultural lands and activities. These districts have been developed and mapped by the county to inform all purchasers of real property that certain agricultural and forestry activities, including but not limited to pesticide spraying (including aerial application), manure spreading, machinery and truck operation, livestock operations, logging, and other common forms of farming and logging activities may occur in this district any time during the day or night. Maps and information on location and establishment of these districts may be accessed at the following locations: Planning, Tax, Register of Deeds, and Inspections offices.

3. Building Permit Registration

Persons applying for a building permit shall be required to sign the following statement that shall be maintained at the office of the Advisory Board:

I have reviewed the current Perquimans County Agricultural Districting map found in the Building Inspector's office. I understand that activities such as pesticide spraying (including aerial application), manure spreading, machinery operation, livestock operations, logging, and other common farming and forestry activities may occur at any time in these areas."

4. Limit of Liability

In no event shall the County or any of its officers, employees, members of the Advisory Board, or agents be held liable in damages for any misfeasance, malfeasance, or nonfeasance occurring in good faith in connection with the duties or obligations imposed by this Ordinance.

5. No Cause of Action

In no event shall any cause of action arise out of the failure of a person researching the title of a particular tract to report to any person the proximity of the tract to a qualifying farm or Voluntary Agricultural District as defined in this ordinance.

B. Signage

Signs identifying approved agricultural districts shall be placed along the rights-of-way of major roads that pass through or next to those districts at a distance deemed appropriate by the Advisory Board, or its administrative agent for the county's agricultural district program. There shall also be signage posted on major accesses into the county. Individuals with approved land in a district shall post that property. Placement of signage shall be coordinated with the North Carolina Department of Transportation where necessary.

C. Maps

Maps identifying approved agricultural districts shall be provided to the following agencies or offices:

1. Planning Department;
2. Register of Deeds;
3. Building Inspector;
4. North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;
5. Soil and Water Conservation District/NRCS;
6. Tax Department; and
7. Any other such agency or office the Advisory Board deems appropriate.

ARTICLE XIV
SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE AND ZONING ORDINANCE REVIEW

Developers of major subdivisions or planned unit developments shall designate on preliminary and final plats their understanding of the existence of a Voluntary Agricultural District(s) within one aerial mile of the proposed development.

ARTICLE XV
COUNTY LAND-USE PLANNING

A. Duty of the Advisory Board

It shall be the duty of the Advisory Board to advise the Board of Commissioners or the agency or office to which the Board of Commissioners delegate authority to oversee county land use planning, on the status, progress, and activities of the county's agricultural district program and to also coordinate the formation and maintenance of agricultural districts with the county's land use planning activities and the county's land use plan if one currently exists at the time this is enacted or when one is formed.

B. Growth Corridors

At such time as the county might establish designated growth corridors, agricultural districts shall not be permitted in the designated growth corridors, as delineated on the official county planning map without the

approval of the Board of Commissioners. Districts located in growth corridors designated after the effective date of this program may remain, but shall not be expanded within the growth corridor area without the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

ARTICLE XVI
CONSULTATION AUTHORITY

The Advisory Board may consult with North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and with any other individual, agency, or organization the Advisory Board deems necessary to properly conduct its business.

ARTICLE XVII
NORTH CAROLINA AGENCY NOTIFICATION

Annual Report to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

A copy of this ordinance shall be sent to the office of the North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Board of Commissioners, the county office of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, and the Soil and Water Conservation District office after adoption. At least annually the county shall submit a written report to the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services on the county's agricultural district program, including the following information:

1. Number of landowners enrolled;
2. Number of acres enrolled;
3. Number of acres certified during the reporting period;
4. Number of acres denied during the reporting period;
5. Number of acres for which applications are pending;
6. Copies of any amendments to the this Ordinance; and
7. Any other information the Advisory Board deems useful.

ARTICLE XVIII
LEGAL PROVISIONS

A. Severability

If any article, section, subsection, clause, phrase, or portion of this is for any reason found invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this.

B. Conflict with other ordinances and statutes

Whenever the provisions of this ordinance conflict with other ordinances of Perquimans County, this ordinance shall govern. Whenever the provisions of any federal or state statute require more restrictive provisions than are required by this ordinance, the provisions of such statute shall govern.

C. Amendments

This ordinance may be amended from time to time by the Board of Commissioners.

ARTICLE XIX
ENACTMENT

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners hereby adopts and enacts the preceding articles and sections of this Ordinance.

Adopted this the _____ day of _____, 20__.

Motion for adoption by _____ and seconded by _____.

PERQUIMANS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

_____
Chairman

ATTEST:

_____
Clerk to Board of Commissioners

Approved as to form:

_____
County Attorney

Perquimans County Producer Survey

Perquimans County Agricultural Producer Survey

1. Introduction

Your input is needed to create an Agricultural Development Plan for Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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.

Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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?	○	○

Perquimans County Agricultural Producer Survey

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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans County.

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

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

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

6. THANK YOU!

Your time and effort on this survey will help create an Agricultural Development Plan for Perquimans County. This plan will provide recommendations for both short and long-term strategies to support agriculture and forestry in Perquimans 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.

Perquimans County Agribusiness Survey

Perquimans Agricultural Business Survey

1. Introduction

Your input is needed to create an Agricultural Development Plan for Perquimans 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 Perquimans County. The general public, agribusinesses, producers and landowners are targeted audiences for this survey. Many of Perquimans County's agribusinesses are individual, independent operations with unique interests, needs and concerns. If the Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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.

Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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%

Perquimans 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)

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

Perquimans Agricultural Business Survey

5. TRENDS IN AGRICULTURE

1. What agricultural trends have you observed in Perquimans 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?

Perquimans Agricultural Business Survey

6. THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

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

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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

7. THANK YOU!

Your time and effort on this survey will help create an Agricultural Development Plan for Perquimans County. This plan will provide recommendations for both short and long-term strategies to support agriculture and forestry in Perquimans 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.

Perquimans County Non-Farm Resident Survey

Perquimans County Non-Farm Resident Survey

1. Introduction

Your help is needed to create an Agricultural Development Plan for Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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.

Perquimans 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 Perquimans County:

2. How long have you lived in Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans County should take steps to help preserve farms and forests?

◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Not sure

8. How do you support the agricultural economy of Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans 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 Perquimans County.

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

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

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

Perquimans County Non-Farm Resident Survey

3. Thank you!

Your time and effort on this survey will help create an Agricultural Development Plan for Perquimans County. This plan will provide recommendations for both short and long-term strategies to support agriculture and forestry in Perquimans 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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