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Fish On!
A newsletter for fee-fishing (catch-out) and carp pond operators to provide information for better management.

Western North Carolina Farmers Eligible for Funds

Awards totaling $675,000 over a 3-year period will be granted to western North Carolina farmers. Farmers who are interested contact your local extension agent by December 1 to discuss and research their project. Applications must be postmarked by January 23. Award recipients will be announced in February.

The grant will be provided by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, which will partner with Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) and the WNC AgOptions program to accept applications and monitor the recipients’ projects. Through this partnership, WNC AgOptions, a program established in 2004 and managed by NC Cooperative Extension Centers in the West District, will continue assisting mountain farmers transitioning from tobacco and other crops through 2011.

This grant was put in place to lessen the economic distress caused by soaring input and energy costs and the lingering effects of the state’s drought conditions. Current and former tobacco growers are the primary audience for the program; however, any farmers living in tobacco dependent communities are eligible.

In 2009, WNC AgOptions will award demonstration contracts valued at $3,000, $6,000, or $9,000 through competitive application and review process. Awards will total $225,000 each year within 17 western North Carolina counties and the Cherokee Reservation.

The ultimate impact is preservation of the family farm. Award recipients are encouraged to explore crop diversification, ways to replace lost tobacco income, and marketing and production techniques that demonstrate economic sustainability.

Examples of past WNC AgOptions projects include:

• Transition from tobacco production to ornamentals, berries, trout farms, or agritourism;
• Improvements of existing operations, including horse boarding, mum production, and choose-and-cut Christmas trees;
• Creative markets for livestock, including goats for invasive plants removal, grass-finished beef and naturally grown pork;
• Beekeeping, including integrated pest managements and queen-rearing;
• Native plants nursery start-ups; and
• Seasonal extension for vegetables.

Distributed in furtherance of the acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914. North Carolina State University and North Carolina A&T State University commit themselves to positive action to secure equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.
# VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT WORKSHOPS

Two workshops will be held across North Carolina to help producers understand how to apply for the USDA-Rural Development's Value-Added Producer Grants. This grant is targeted to producers planning to add a value-added enterprise to their farm. The grant Request for Proposal (RFP) for the 2009 cycle is expected to be announced by USDA in early 2009. More information can be found at [www.ncvalueadded.org](http://www.ncvalueadded.org) and at [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm).

The workshop date and times are:
- Monday, December 8, 1-5 pm, Burke County Extension Center, 130 Ammons Drive, Suite 2, Morganton
- Wednesday, December 10, 1-5 pm, Lee County Extension Center, 2420 Tramway Road, Sanford

The workshops are free and registration is not required. The workshops will provide valuable information to aid the application process. Attendance is not required to apply for a grant.

If you have questions, email Bruce Pleasant, USDA-Rural Development, Bruce.Pleasant@nc.usda.gov or Blake Brown, Blake_Brown@ncsu.edu

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## FEEP and REAP

The Farm Energy Efficiency Project (FEEP) is a program initiated by North Carolina Farm Bureau. The primary goal is to provide low-cost energy audits for farmers. These audits will highlight energy saving alternatives. The energy audits performed can be used to leverage United States Department of Agriculture Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Section 9007 grant. FEEP will provide 200 on-farm energy audits across NC.

To apply for FEEP, an **Interest Form** needs to be completed by March 31st. The Interest Form is a simple 1-page front and back form. The sooner you can get these forms in the better. March 31st is the absolute latest to get these forms in. To find out more about FEEP, you may contact Scott Welborn (scott.welborn@ncfb.org) 919-782-1705 x8209, NC Farm Energy.

Again, with the energy audit, you can apply for a USDA-REAP grant. REAP is a program to assist farmers and rural small businesses with energy projects. This program provides grants and guaranteed loans for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvement projects. Typically, projects must show a 20% savings in energy audit to score well enough to receive funding.

**REAP projects**

- must be for a pre-commercial or commercially available and replicable technology.
- must be technically feasible.
- must have sufficient revenue to provide for operation and maintenance.
- the applicant must be the owner of the project and control the operation and maintenance of the proposed project.
- must be located in a rural area.

To find out more about REAP, David Thigpen (david.thigpen@nc.usda.gov) 919-873-2065.
2008 Agricultural Water Use Survey
Make your voice heard and the facts known—we need your cooperation on this important survey

North Carolina farmers have the opportunity to document agricultural water use. Based on recent legislation passed in response to the ongoing drought, the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Agricultural Statistics Division, will be surveying farms in early 2009 to do just that.

The survey is important because basic water use information for agriculture is limited in most areas.

While public perception has been that agriculture water use is excessive, other regional surveys have provided facts that show agriculture water use is relatively small in comparison with industrial and non-agricultural water uses.

This survey will provide comprehensive, state-wide facts about agricultural water use so that informed policy decision can be made.

Individual farm data collected will be held strictly confidential by law.

Farms that participate will also be documenting their own agricultural water use needs which is important for ensuring future access.

Your cooperation on this survey is critical to provide accurate facts about agricultural water use.

Look for your survey form in January of 2009. The results will be made available no later than July 1, 2009 and will document agricultural water use during 2008.

Every North Carolina agricultural organization supports the 2008 Agricultural Water Use Survey.

For more information about the 2008 Agricultural Water Use Survey, contact
Herb Vanderberry, Director, Agricultural Statistics Division
1-800-437-8451

The use of trade named products is with the understanding that no endorsement is made to the exclusion of other equally effective products.

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