

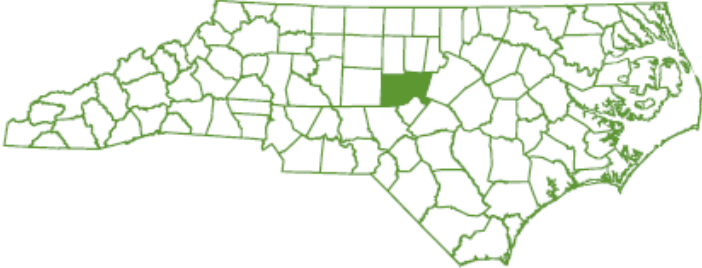


Agricultural Advisory Board

Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance

August 19, 2019

Agriculture in Chatham County

CHATHAM COUNTY						
Census of Agriculture - 2012		Crops - 2017	Acres Harvested	Yield	Production	Rank
Total Acres in County	436,696	Corn for Grain: Bu.	1,980	131	259,000	58
Number of Farms	1,138	Cotton: Lbs.: Production in 480 Lb. Bales	*	*	*	*
Total Land in Farms, Acres	111,778	Hay, Other: Tons	15,400	2.15	33,400	11
Average Farm Size, Acres	98	Peanuts: Lbs.	*	*	*	*
Harvested Cropland, Acres	21,708	Soybeans: Bu.	2,680	41	111,000	70
Average Age of Farmers	58.6	Sweet Potatoes: Cwt.	*	*	*	*
Average Value of Farm & Buildings	\$554,504,000	Tobacco, Burley: Lbs.	*	*	*	*
Average Market Value of Machinery & Equipment	\$53,493,000	Tobacco, Flue-Cured: Lbs.	*	*	*	*
Average Total Farm Production Expense	\$131,931	Wheat: Bu.	950	52	49,500	62
		Livestock		Number	Rank	
		Broilers Produced (2017)		20,200,000	16	
		Cattle, All (Jan. 1, 2018)		37,500	4	
		Beef Cows (Jan. 1, 2018)		14,900	2	
		Milk Cows (Jan. 1, 2018)		1,200	11	
		Hogs and Pigs (Dec. 1, 2017)		5,000	44	
		Layers (Dec. 1, 2017)		310,000	14	
		Turkeys Raised (2017)		*	*	
		Cash Receipts - 2017		Dollars	Rank	
		Livestock, Dairy and Poultry		119,911,359	21	
Crops		9,118,621	81			
Government Payments		48,260	89			
Total		129,078,240	31			

2018 NC Agricultural Statistics, NCDA&CS

- Agriculture and Agribusiness contribute \$129 million in annual total cash receipts.




Chatham County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance

- ▶ **North Carolina General Statutes Chapter 106
Article 61 Agricultural Development and
Preservation of Farmland**

Authorizes counties to undertake farmland preservation programs. Voluntary Agricultural Districts is one of those programs.



Chatham County Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance

- ▶ **The purpose** of the Ordinance is to promote agricultural values and the general welfare of Chatham County by increasing the identity of, and pride in, the agricultural community and its way of life, encouraging the economic and financial health of agriculture, horticulture, and forestry through protection from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms.
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Benefits to Farmers

- ▶ VAD sign can be displayed at qualifying farm to identify the farm, notify neighbors and educate the public.
- ▶ GIS mapping of qualifying farms and 1/2 mile buffer provides public notice, increasing awareness of the potential for activities including farm related noise, odor, dust, and farm equipment.
- ▶ Landowners in a VAD will not be required to connect to county utilities. Assessment fees will be waived unless the property is connected.
- ▶ No governmental agency may condemn participating farmland without requesting a public hearing to ensure full consideration of the impact of that action upon agricultural land.
- ▶ Enrolled farms benefit from higher ranking in Soil & Water Conservation District cost share programs.



Benefits to the Public


▶ **Economic benefit**

- ▶ NC agriculture contributes over \$84B to our state's economy and is expected to surpass \$100B in the year 2020 (NCSU, 2018).
- ▶ Agriculture and agribusiness remain significant in the Chatham County economy, contributing an average of \$129M in annual total cash receipts (NCDA, 2018 Ag Stats).
- ▶ An American Farmland Trust study showed that for every dollar in taxes received from working land, only 58 cents in services is paid by the government. However, services paid to residential development average \$1.15 per dollar of taxes received. Thus, it is a net gain of revenue for the tax base and an economic benefit for any county to preserve working lands.



Benefits to the Public

➤ **Quality of Life**

- Maintaining the agricultural industry in Chatham County allows citizens to purchase and consume products from local agricultural producers, contributing to our local economy and toward a lifestyle of healthy living.
 - Open green spaces of fields and woodlands contribute to clean air and water.
 - Rural working landscapes are an integral part of our heritage that must be preserved for future generations.
 - Rustic and bucolic landscapes attract and retain both people and industry to North Carolina.
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Comprehensive Plan

- ▶ Works toward these goals:
 - ▶ Preserve, protect, and enable agriculture and forestry.
 - ▶ Preserve the rural character and lifestyle of Chatham County.
- ▶ Agriculture Recommendation #1 - Increase education, outreach, and training (Plan Chatham, 2017, p. 94):
 - ▶ *Strategy 1.1*: Assist operators of existing farms that are contributing to the economy to remain in operation even when faced with pressures to develop the land for other uses. This act will:
 - ▶ “encourage participation in the Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) program” and
 - ▶ “raise awareness of the benefits of participating in VADs.”
 - ▶ *Strategy 1.2*: Require the disclosure of the presence of VADs and/or other working lands to potential homebuyers and other investors.




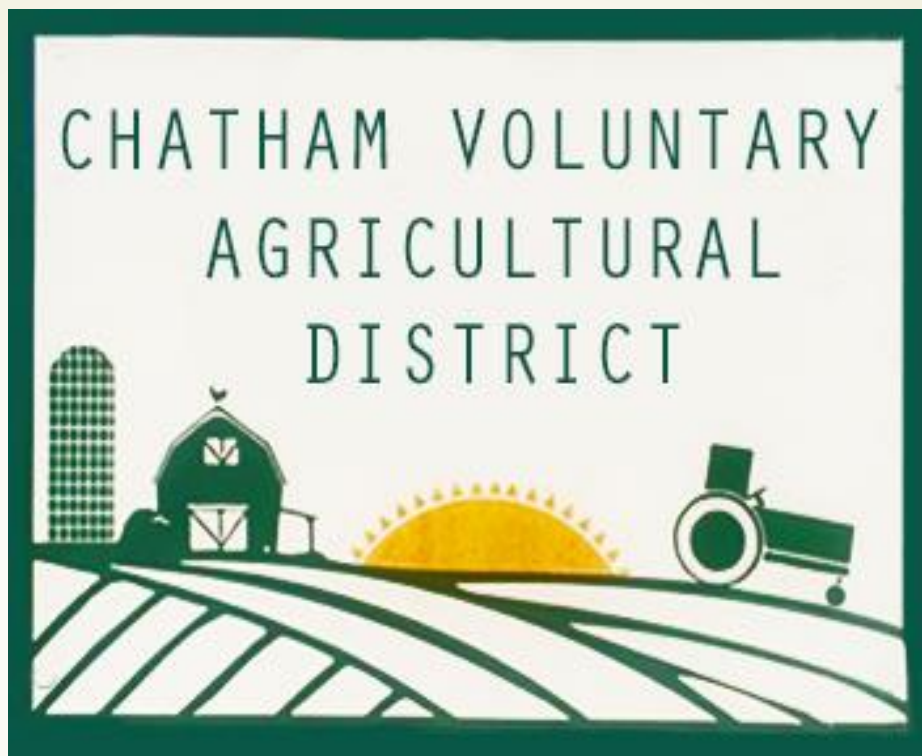
Summary

- ▶ **2001 Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance**
 - ▶ Established the Agricultural Advisory Board.
 - ▶ Set parameters for Voluntary Agriculture District program.
 - ▶ **2010 Farmland Preservation Plan adopted**
 - ▶ Intended to help retain farmland and boost the county's agricultural economy
 - ▶ Recommended strengthening the Voluntary Agriculture District Program
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Summary

- ▶ **2019 Voluntary Agriculture District Ordinance**
 - ▶ Reduces number of Agricultural Board Members from 15 to 9 and allows for non-voting *ex officio* members.
 - ▶ Simplifies qualifying farmland parameters to meet the baseline requirements established in NC General Statutes Chapter 106 Article 61. For example:
 - ▶ No acreage minimum
 - ▶ No PUV program enrollment requirement
 - ▶ No soil type quantity and capabilities requirement
 - ▶ Decreases the public record notice of proximity to qualifying VAD farmland from 1 mile to ½ mile which is in accordance with General Statutes.
 - ▶ Sets the ten year term and renewal process for participating farmland.
 - ▶ **If adopted, this revised ordinance will supersede and replace the 2001 Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance.**
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The success of this VAD program will foster the growth, development, and sustainability of family farms as well as increase public awareness of agriculture in Chatham County.