



NC AgVentures Grant Opportunity for Individual Farm Operations

We are pleased to announce a new grant opportunity offered by the NC Cooperative Extension Service and funded through the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. This grant program was designed to strengthen agriculturally dependent families in communities that were impacted by the downturn of the tobacco economy. The program will award an average of \$5,000 to \$10,000 but will allow applications up to \$15,000 with strong justification to producers who have innovative ideas to diversify, expand, or implement new entrepreneurial plans in their operations. *To learn more about the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission please visit: <http://tobaccotrustfund.org/>*

Grant Awards

NC AgVentures will award a minimum of 20 grants to agriculturally dependent families in the following counties: *Martin, Wilson, Pitt, Edgecombe, Nash, Forsyth, Stokes, Surry, Rockingham, and Yadkin County*. Each county will award at least one grant, if one or more **qualifying** applications (i.e. earning sufficient points to qualify for a grant) are submitted from each county.

Grant winners will be asked to:

- Provide at least 10 percent of the funding request (approximately \$1000)
- Submit an Interim and a Final Report, plus copies of receipts for project expenditures
- Keep accurate production and financial records on the project and supply a copy of those records at the completion of the project
- Provide quarterly updates and discuss projects with an Extension representative either at the farm or by phone. (A minimum of one farm visit is required.)
- Complete final income and expense reports of project results, plus a survey that provides feedback about the program and results of their project
- Allow Extension to include the recipients' projects in public relations, outreach, demonstration and education in 2014 or future years
- Complete the project by December 1, 2015
- Plan a project demonstration to share what was learned
- Provide a summary of the project one year after completion

Recipients will recognize NC AgVentures and the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission as the funders/supporters of the project in all materials/marketing/advertising used to promote the project (NC AgVentures will provide appropriate logos and usage guide).

Eligibility for individual grants

- Grant applicants should be agriculturally dependent, earning at least 50% of their personal income from their farm operation.
- Grant proposals should present a new direction or opportunity to diversify, expand or implement new entrepreneurial plans for their farm operations.
- Grant proposals from former/current tobacco growers or former quota holders receive a higher priority.
- Individuals who have previously received grant funds sponsored by the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission are not eligible to apply.

How are the applications reviewed?

The NC AgVentures review panel will include NCSU employees and other experts who are familiar with agriculture, agribusiness, entrepreneurship and the local community. Applications will be ranked according to a numerical scoring system that evaluates the strength of the project to meet the grant criteria. Proposals will be read and scored by three reviewers.

Grant proposal criteria *(It's not necessary for applicants to meet all criteria to receive a grant.)*

- Does the project benefit current or past tobacco growers?
- Will the project increase income?
- Will the project increase or maintain employment opportunities?
- Has the proposal been adequately researched?
- Is the budget realistic?
- Does the applicant have the skills to complete the project or have they identified technical assistance to help them implement a successful project?
- Does the project present a new direction or opportunity to diversify, expand or implement new entrepreneurial plans for their farm operations or the community?
- Will the project become self-supporting or enhance your ability to keep farming?
- Does the project maintain or increase the number of acres used for food production?
- Does the application include two reference letters or letters of support?

Applications

You may download a copy of the application and complete the form on your computer using Microsoft Word or you may print out a hard copy and fill it out by hand.

Application materials are available online at www.agventures.ces.ncsu.edu.

To receive a hardcopy by mail contact Jackie Murphy Miller at:

Jackie_miller@ncsu.edu or phone 919-628-0163.

Early Bird Review (December 9, 2014)

Applicants may request an advance review of their proposals for feedback by an Extension agent. Email the proposal AS SOON AS POSSIBLE but no later than December 9, 2014. Applicants may be contacted for additional questions or for personal interviews during the review process.

Deadline for submitting the final application: 5:00 PM December 17, 2014

NC AgVentures Application 2015 for Individual Farm Operations

Completed applications must be received by mail on or before 5:00 PM December 17, 2014. Please, only one application per farm.



Project Title _____

How much money are you requesting? _____

Funding match leveraged from other sources? (10% required) _____

Applicant Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Physical Address if different _____

City _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **Cell** _____

Email _____

In what county is your farm located? _____

Percentage of personal income generated from your farm operation? _____

Do you or the farm business carry liability insurance? YES NO

Will this project create an opportunity for a new generation of farmers? YES

Are you a former Quota Holder? YES NO

Are you a current or former Tobacco Grower? Former Current Neither

Do you have a N.C. Department of Revenue E-595EA Tax Exemption number? YES NO

Project Summary

Give us a clear and detailed description of the project and how it will fit into your current farm operation. *Will this be part of a transition to a different operation such as turning tobacco fields into strawberry fields; or are you incorporating new strategies to make the operation more efficient, initiating a new marketing plan or creating a value-added product?*

If you were not able to get the full grant amount, how would you modify your project?

Provide a timeline of steps to complete your project. *Grant award checks usually arrive in early March. What can you complete between March and December 2015?*

February: Grant award contracts will be sent to grant recipients

March: Grant award checks mailed to recipients

April: _____

May: _____

June: Begin to prepare quarterly reports

July: Quarterly reports due July 1, 2015

August: _____

September: _____

October: _____

November: Begin to prepare final reports

December: _____

January: Final reports are due Jan. 17, 2015

Tell us a little about the history of your farm. *Is it a family farm and how does your family feel about the farm? Was tobacco ever grown on the land? How many acres are currently being used for food production? How many workers are employed fulltime? How many workers are currently employed on a part time or seasonal basis?*

Tell us a little about yourself. *Describe your farm and off-farm experience. What skills do you have that will be useful to the successful completion of your project? How long have you been farming? How did you come with this idea? Have you seen anything similar and where?*

Why do you believe this project can be successful? *What research have you done to determine if this project will work?*

Describe your marketing plan

1. Will you be selling directly to the public or will you be using indirect markets such a food co-op, hub, retail food store, restaurants or other?
2. Describe how you will promote or advertise the product or services.
3. How is your product or service different from other farming operations in the area?
4. How would you describe your competitive advantage?

Measure your success: Give us an estimate of what you believe the break-even cost and profit will be once the project is implemented.

- *If you will be growing produce then look at the cost per acre to determine your break-even cost.*
- *If you are creating a value-added product or a service, consider your time and the value (\$\$) of your time in addition to the cost of consumable supplies such as packaging to determine your break-even cost.*

Food Safety: What steps are you taking to reduce the risk of food contamination? Some examples would include: are you taking a pickling class are you keeping a log, are you planning to be certified? *(This question may not apply to every project proposal.)*

Items paid for with funds from other sources, include your 10% match on this table.

Items or services	Funds from other sources
Total	

Items contributed in-kind (The grant review committee looks favorably on project proposals that have found way to stretch a dollar such as sharing equipment, exchanging labor etc.)

Items or services	In-kind contributions
Total	

Three year vision: Most new projects take 3-5 years to get up to speed. After your project has been implemented, what is your vision for 2016 and 2017? Will you build on this project or develop new markets? Please describe how your farm operation will grow in 2016 and 2017.

Project Impacts Table (Please estimate)

Category	First Year	Second Year	Third Year
Number of acres in food production, produce or livestock?			
Number of jobs sustained?			
Number of workers re-employed?			
Number of new jobs created?			
Number of new part-time or seasonal jobs?			
Volume of Product Sold			
Estimated new income			

Lessons learned: Grant recipients will be asked to share information about their project and what they have learned, with other farmers in the community. This sharing of information could include demonstration field days, articles, one-on-one mentoring, Cooperative Extension workshops, etc. If your grant proposal is selected please describe how you would share information about your project and lessons learned.

Technical Assistance: Who is the local Cooperative Extension Agent that will be working with you on this project?

Name _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please list any other people that will be providing assistance or guidance with your project. You may submit up to two letters of support that clearly state what assistance they are providing. For example you might seek help with marketing strategies from the Small Business center at your Community College. You will receive extra points for the letters, but they are not required.

Name

Affiliation

Phone/Email

The Deadline for Applications is 5:00 PM December 17, 2014

(Anticipated date for notifying the winners is February 20, 2015.)

Electronic applications can be saved to PDF and emailed to Jackie_miller@ncsu.edu

Paper applications should be mailed to:

NC AgVentures, NC Cooperative Extension
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
NCSU Campus Box 7653
Raleigh, NC 27695 (Do **not** ask for a signature; the mail goes to a campus box)

Checklist:

- Completed application packet
- Reference letters or letters of support (No more than 2)
- Additional information materials that would be helpful to the reviewers such as brochures, photos, blueprints, equipment quotes etc.
- Read, sign, and attach the *No Overdue Taxes and Conflict of Interest Form attached to the end of this application. (This form needs to be notarized. Many banks offer notary services, or ask your Extension Agent for help in locating a notary.)*

Please do not use binders or notebooks for mailed applications.

Letters, and additional materials, should be scanned and emailed with application.

Signatures

Applicant's Signature:

Signed by (Please Print):

Date: _____

Note: *The grant funds are considered taxable income. If you are awarded the grant you will be required to fill out a W-9 form requesting an Employer Identification Number for your business or your Social Security Number. We will file a 1099-Miscellaneous with the IRS in the name of the check recipient at the end of 2015. Check with your tax account to determine the best way to handle the grant funds.*

**State Grant Certification – For Individual Sub Grantees
No Overdue Taxes¹ and Conflict of Interest**

1 G.S. 105-243.1 defines “Overdue tax debt. – Any part of a tax debt that remains unpaid 90 days or more after the notice of final assessment was mailed to the taxpayer. The term does not include a tax debt, however, if the taxpayer entered into an installment agreement for the tax debt under G.S. 105-237 within 90 days after the notice of final assessment was mailed and has not failed to make any payments due under the installment agreement.”

_____ **[Insert Date of Certification]**

To: NC TOBACCO TRUST FUND COMMISSION & NC AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION, INC.

Certification:

I certify that I, _____ **[Insert Your Name]**, do not have any overdue tax debts, as defined by North Carolina G.S. 105-243.1, at the federal, state, or local level. I further certify that I will not use funds awarded by this grant to satisfy any subsequent tax obligations.

Additionally, I _____ **[Insert Your Name]**, certify that I do not have any personal and/or professional relationships with the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc. and/or any of its’ employees or governing Board, as defined by North Carolina G.S. 143C-6-23(b) (c), that have been used to in any way influence the potential of an award or an official award of funds to me. I further understand that a false statement made is in violation of North Carolina G.S. 143C-6-23 and such false statement would be a criminal offense punishable as provided by North Carolina G.S. 143C-10-1.

Sworn Statement:

I, _____ **[Insert Your Name]** certify that I am a resident of

_____ **[Insert Name of Town or City]** in the State of North Carolina. I also acknowledge and understand that any misuse of State funds will be reported to the appropriate authorities for further action.

[Signature of Individual]

Sworn to and subscribed before me on the day of the date of said certification

[Signature of Notary]

My Commission Expires: _____