

Farmland Values and Farm Prosperity: Results from Your Community



Funded by grants from the USDA-CSREES Small & Mid-Sized Farms Program, National Research Initiative of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, grants #2005-35618-15647 and #2005-35618-15645.



Photo from J. Davis program

Farming is important to the economy in North Carolina



- Agriculture/agribusiness is the #1 industry in the state
- Farm sales were \$10.3 billion (2007)
- Makes up 17% of the workforce
- Accounts for 20% of the state's income

Graphic from NCDA&CS

North Carolina Leads the Nation in Loss of Farmland



North Carolina lost more than 600,000 acres of farmland from 2002 to 2007, according to the latest U.S. Census of Agriculture.

Graphic from J. Davis program

WNC is a Region in Transition



Small mountain farms...

giving way to development.



Photos by William Hamilton



Everyone says they want to save farms

Comments from the Etowah, Horse Shoe Small Area Planning Committee Report Meeting in February:

“One thing that we kept hearing was ‘maintain the rural character of my area’”

“the county needs to preserve the rural areas of the county where food is grown. The county should look to enhance the green space in the county because it is one of the most valuable resources in the county”

Photo by Jeanine Davis

Farmland Values Project

Led by Leah Greden Mathews

How the community and visitors to our area view and value farms.



Photo by J. Davis

Why don't more farmers protect their farms?



Photo from NCSU Communications

The simple answer is, many of them can't afford to.



A big part of the problem is that traditional mountain crops often aren't profitable anymore.



Photos from NCSU Communications and J. Davis program

FARM PROSPERITY PROJECT



North Carolina State University
 Land of Sky Regional Council
 Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project
 Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy
 American Farmland Trust
 Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
 Warren Wilson College

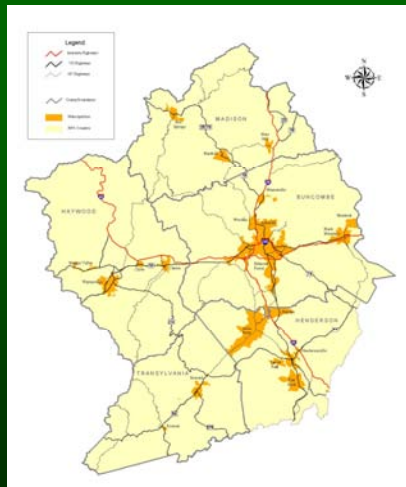


Photo from J. Davis program

We worked with the hypothesis that a “protected farm” includes not only the land, but a happy farmer and a profitable enterprise.



Photos from J. Davis program



Five County Study Area

Graphic from Land of Sky Regional Council

Multi-faceted approach



- Develop decision making tools to help farmers assess their situations and choose the best combination of new crops and farm protection methods for their farms.
- Provide educational opportunities for farmers, public officials, and communities.
- Put more staff into farm protection.
- Provide resources to keep/make farms viable businesses.

Photo by Jackie Greenfield

Three teams

- Farm protection
- Decision tools
- New crops



Photos by J. Davis and NCSU Communications

Thirty-Five Farmer Participants



- Served as our touchstone with reality!
- Participated in surveys, interviews, and focus groups.
- Tested our decision tools.
- In return, they got free admission to many educational programs, help with grant opportunities, and any help we could offer.
- Learned a lot about themselves, their farms, and how to plan for the future.

Photo from J. Davis program

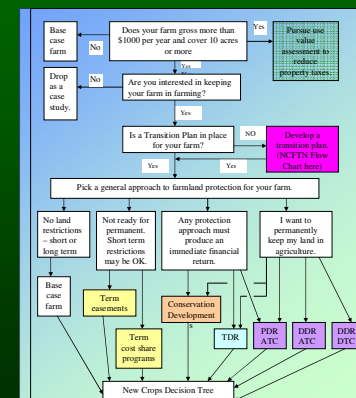
The Protection Team identified six protection methods as being most appropriate for this region

- Use value assessments
- Intergenerational transition assistance
- Farmland conservation easement
- Term restrictions
- Conservation development
- Combinations of above



Photo from J. Davis program

A decision tree was created to help farmers decide which method best suit their farms



Resource Material was Created

Local Land Trust Organizations

American Farmland Trust
 strives to help communities implement effective solutions to keep farming & ranching viable lands the impact of over-development, and strategically protect the best farmland.
 Coverage Area: National
 Contact: National Office 202.331.7300

Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy
 provides services to help landowners meet their conservation and financial goals while preserving their farms, farms, and natural land for future generations.
 Coverage Area: Henderson, Transylvania, and parts of Blount, Jackson, and Rutherford counties.
 Contact: Hendersonville office 828.497.3777

Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy works to conserve the unique plant & animal habitat, clean water, farmland, & scenic beauty of the mountains of western North Carolina and east Tennessee for the benefit of present & future generations.
 Coverage Area: Avery, Blount, Haywood, Jackson, Madison, Marshall, & Yancey counties in WNC; Carter, Johnson, & Union counties in east TN.
 Contact: William Hamilton w@lan@appalachians.org

The Facts about Protecting Your Farmland

- Farmland protection is not taxing. It is your decision about your land.
- There is a wide range of tools that can help you achieve your goals.
- Farmland protection can result in State and Federal tax benefits to direct payments, deeding on the program.
- The land can still be used for agriculture.
- You do not have to move off the property.
- Farmland protection tools can be tailored to suit your needs, often allowing additional income to farm retirement.
- The property can be passed on to heirs or sold to another party, with the knowledge that the land will remain a farm.

Keeping the Farm in the Family
 Farmland Protection Tools for North Carolina Landowners

A publication of the **FARM PROSPERITY PROJECT**

Farm Protection Staff were hired to work in the offices of:

- the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy
- the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy



Photos by William Hamilton

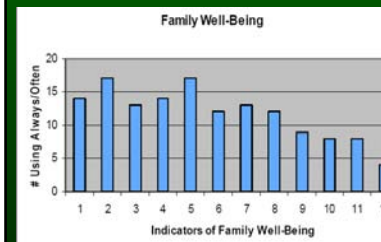
One Result:

SAHC completed 17 transactions in the Farmland Program since 2006, protecting 3,116 acres of land.



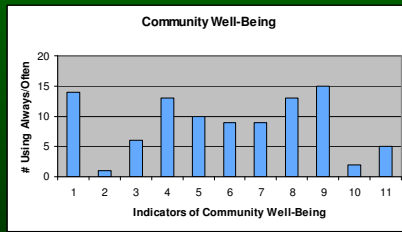
Photo from SAHC website

The decision tool team worked with 23 of our farm families to identify indicators of farm sustainability

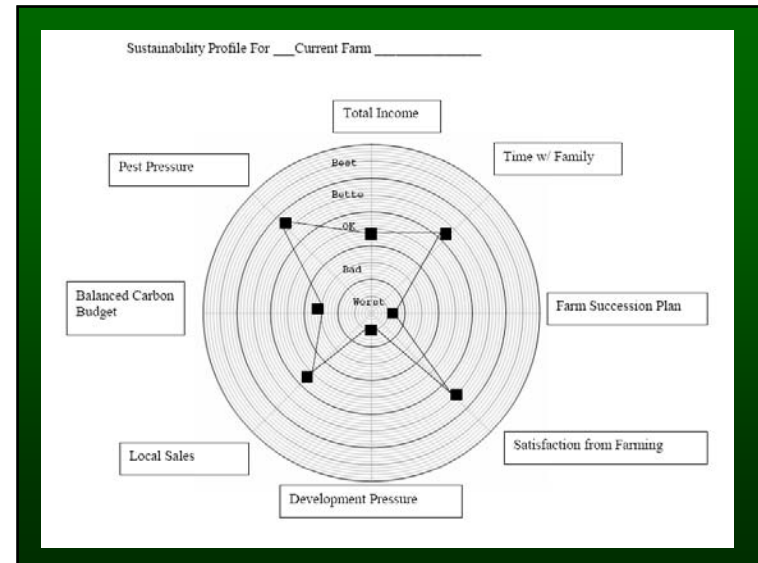


- Total Family Income**
- Total Farm Income**
- Farm Contribution to Total Income
- Farm Self-Supporting**
- Time for Family Activities**
- Family Health
- Satisfaction From Farming
- Ability for Farm Succession
- Family Education
- Community Activities
- Balance of Family/Other Farm Labor
- Balance of Family/Other Farm Residents

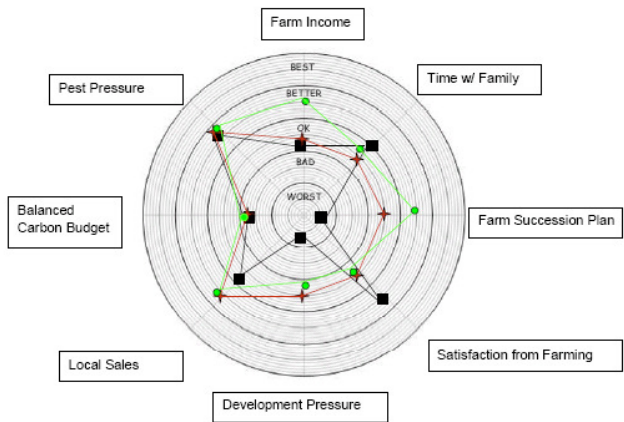
Farmers are concerned about how they fit into their communities



- 1) **Local Sales**
- 2) Farm Income/Average Income
- 3) On-Farm Jobs
- 4) **Local Purchases**
- 5) Cooperation w/Other Farmers
- 6) Cooperation w/Neighbors
- 7) Community on Farm
- 8) **Local Identity**
- 9) **Visual Appeal**
- 10) Smell Appeal
- 11) Sound Appeal



WNC Example: Options 1 + and 2 ●



The New Crops Team identified six new crop and agricultural enterprise areas as appropriate for this region

- Specialty fruits and vegetables
- Organic production of fruits and vegetables
- Specialty nursery crops
- Value-added enterprises
- Agritourism
- Specialty meats and cheeses

Photo by Jeanine Davis

The New Crops Team also developed decision tools

New Crops and Agricultural Enterprises Decision Assistance Tool

Agreements	Specialty Products	Value Added Products	Specialty Crops & Products	Organics	Conventional Crops & Products
Are you okay with having people on your farm?	Do you have greenhouse?	Do you have value added products?	Do you have the facilities needed?	Are you certified organic or willing to become so?	Do you have a market for your products?
Are you a good location for a public activity?	Do you have access to good water?	Do you have good transportation and business skills?	Will there be consumers for your products?	Are you willing to do paperwork and abide by the rules?	Is it legal to grow the crop of interest?
Do you enjoy working with the public?	Do you have capital to start a business?	Do you have capital to start a business?	Do you have the state regulations?	Could you make a profit without a price premium?	Do you have a source of seeds or planting stock?
Are you creative?	Do you have a good knowledge of the plants?	Are you creative and entrepreneurial?	Are you willing to do paperwork and abide by the rules?	Do you have the labor resources for your crop?	Do you have good fields to grow it?
Do you have good social skills?	Are you willing to do animal waste clean-up?	Are you willing to do paperwork and abide by the rules?	Do you have a market for your products?	Do you have the ability to organize?	
Can you make an additional profit?	Can you handle the stress?	Do you like to cook or follow a dieted process?	Are you willing to take on a 50/50 share long operation?	Do you have good fields to grow it?	Do you have good labor facilities?
Do you have packing, marketing, and delivery?	Are you willing to do animal waste clean-up?	Are you willing to do paperwork and abide by the rules?	Do you have the ability to organize?	Do you have labor to harvest your crop?	Do you have good fields to grow it?
Are you willing to take on the liability risk?	Do you have the basic technical skills?	Do you have the ability to organize?	Do you have good harvest facilities?	Do you have good packaging or sell channels?	Do you have good fields to grow it?
Are you able to promote your farm?	Do you have the basic technical skills?	Do you have the ability to organize?	Will you have adequate labor?	Do you have an environmental plan?	Do you have good fields to grow it?
Does your strong personal preference for the activity you want to do?	Are you willing to take a size animal business?	Do you have family members to help?	Can you find affordable sources of inputs?	Do you have access to organic supplies?	Do you have good fields to grow it?

Instructions: Working in columns, put a check mark next to each question that you can answer "yes" to. If you answer "yes" to every item in the column, put a star in the box at the bottom. Three categories that receive a star are enterprises that you are probably well suited for right now. If you have most of the boxes checked, you might want to consider that enterprise. If you have few boxes checked, that enterprise is probably not a good fit for you.

And created resource materials for farmers

Fall Opportunities for Direct Marketing Produce

Introduction

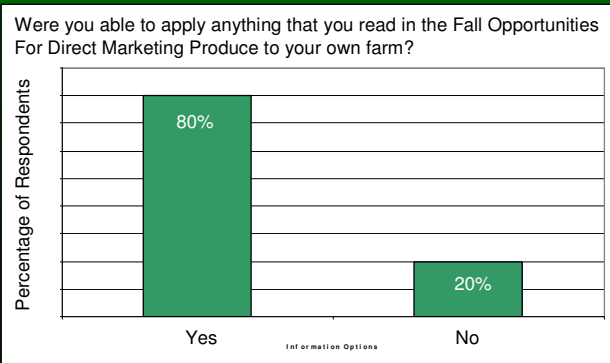
Do you know... I would be looking forward to it in the morning on the business of the evening. While having these opportunities to grow produce is a profitable market in the industry of the market.



Here are some traditional and some novel products that you can grow and sell next fall!

- Winter Squash:** Winter squash is a popular crop for the fall season. It is a hardy crop that can be grown in containers or in the ground. It is a good source of vitamins and minerals.
- Conventional Crops, Squash, and Other Field Crops:** These crops are all the same as the ones you are used to. They are easy to grow and can be sold in a variety of ways.
- Winter Squash:** This is a great source of vitamins and minerals. It is a hardy crop that can be grown in containers or in the ground. It is a good source of vitamins and minerals.

And then asked them if found the materials useful!



Conducted three years of field studies on organic and heirloom tomatoes



Photos from J. Davis program

We found that:



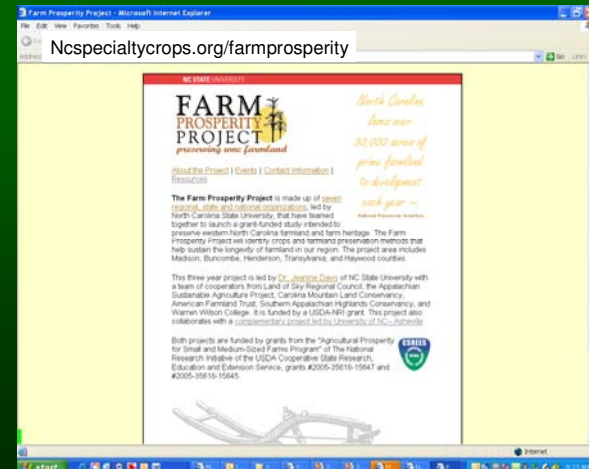
Organic heirloom tomato production is not cheap or easy to do, but can be highly profitable.

Two weeks ago we submitted a large grant proposal to identify better varieties and production methods.



Photos by Jeanine Davis

Created a website which will be totally updated as this project comes to a close.



Expected Impacts

- People will understand that farms are businesses and if they are not profitable, they can't continue to exist.
- New tools will be available to help farmers make informed decisions about the futures of their farms.
- Farmers, public officials, and communities will be better informed about the issues related to farms.
- New alliances will exist between farm advisors, land trusts, and scholars.

Photo by Jeanine Davis

This is the future of agriculture in western North Carolina



Photo of Justin Dillingham in Barnardville in Buncombe Co. by Amy Hamilton

For more information:

- Websites:

<http://ncspecialtycrops.org/farmprosperity>

<http://www.unca.edu/farmlandvalues/>

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