



March 31, 2020

To our Small Farms Week Participants and Supporters:

Cooperative Extension at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University's Annual Small Farms Week is a celebration of small farmers who are the backbone of the state's agriculture industry. Small Farms Week offers us another opportunity to provide education and information to help small farmers prosper, to help the public understand the important role of small farms in our economy, and to demonstrate techniques and technologies that will define farming in the future.

Our theme for Small Farms Week 2020 is Inspiring Farmers, Sustaining Farms. Inspiration comes from knowledge – about new techniques, new markets, new crops, and so much more. Sustainability comes when farmers put that knowledge to work, giving them the chance to maintain and thrive, even in tough times. As we move forward into a new growing season, personal contact may be limited, but information and support from Cooperative Extension will not be. Small farmers comprise 80 percent of North Carolina's \$91.8 billion agriculture sector, and we are their partners in creating stronger, resilient farms and farming communities.

I extend my thanks to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), who planned to host our kickoff event, and to Harold and Nancy Long of Murphy, our 2019 Small Farmers of the Year, who illustrate the perseverance, innovation, and commitment to community that is so typical of small farmers. I would also like to thank our 2020 Small Farmers' Appreciation Luncheon speaker Jimmy Gentry of NC Grange, who has spent his entire career helping farmers and rural communities and educating future farmers.

In the coming weeks, we will share with our farmers and partners information about our 2020 Small Farmer of the Year as well Small Farms Week educational materials and information about Small Farms Week 2021, our 35th annual event. To stay in touch, please follow us on Twitter (@NCATExtension) or Facebook (Cooperative Extension at A&T).

Despite the immediate challenges we face, North Carolina's agriculture future is bright because of you and because of all of us working together. Once again, thank you for being part of North Carolina agriculture and for your support of Small Farms Week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosalind Dale".

Rosalind Dale, Ed.D.
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