



Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program Report

Fiscal Year 2020

March 26, 2020

The Durham County Board of County Commissioners has approved an Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program and has allocated \$50,000 for the fiscal year. The programs purpose is to offer cost share grants to assist farmers along with promoting Agriculture Development and Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers in schools.

The County has a successful economic development plan that offers cash incentives to businesses that create jobs in the community. This incentive programs mimics the same outcome but is directed to support farms, new and beginning entrepreneurs and to support agriculture education in schools.

This program provides two types of grants:

Small grants for Agriculture Development in schools: Up to \$1,000.00

Grants for farmers: Up to \$5,000.00

An Agricultural Economic Development Grant Subcommittee has been selected to administer the grant program. It is made up of nine (9) members. The committee members evaluate each application using the ranking system that is outlined in the application.

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David Harris Chair/ Durham SWCD Board	Eddie Culberson Director of Durham SWCD
Ray Eurquhart Durham SWCD Board Associate Supervisor	Talmage Layton Farmland Protection Advisory Board member
Donna Rewalt NC Cooperative Extension Director	Tina Miller Farm Service Agency Director
Justin Page NC Farm Bureau member	Will Wilson Farmland Protection Advisory Board Chair
David Szczepankowski Farmer Foodshare Inc.	Michael Dupree Durham SWCD staff support



Soil & Water

Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program Farm Applications and Service Productivity Data

Program Data	FY18	FY 19	FY 20
Funding level	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Request for funding from applicants	\$ 53,901	\$ 62,325	\$ 172,959
Number of applications reviewed	16	17	26
Number of farm applications	11	13	22
Number of M/WBE applications (farms)	5	8	14
Number of farm projects funded	5	11	6
Percentage of M/WBE contracts awarded to farms	66%	73%	84%
Number of Farms requesting funding for Food Safety Compliance	6	7	10
Percentage of Infrastructure projects funded for wholesale readiness	100%	64%	80%
Number of projects funded for regulatory compliance (FMSA)	4	7	4
Number of farms pursuing GAP	4	4	3

Service Quality and effectiveness of the program and the extent in which it is meeting the objectives are summarized in the table below.

Outcomes	FY18	FY19	FY20
Number of jobs created (as reported by farms)		4	7
Number of projects that improved access/equity		4	2
Projects with food sales to Farmer FoodShare	0	1	1
Projects with food sales to local markets	5	10	6
Number of projects reporting an increase in sales		2	3

The grant funding has enabled the start up of our home processor kitchen and the sale of jams and baked goods. The acidified foods processing portion of the start up now has various pickled vegetable recipes approved by federal and state authorities and we are awaiting the last state inspection over the winter before legally selling those items.

I would estimate that 2019 sales increased 5-7% over 2018 because of our efforts associated with the grant and expect that to increase an additional 5-10% when the acidified foods production is fully operational.

We are currently unable to hire anyone.

The grant funding aided in helping us to bring value added products to the farmers market and will continue to pay dividends as the farm diversifies its offerings to become more sustainable.

Thank you,

Bob Alberson

Dandies Farm

Rougemont, NC



Increased Sales and diversifying income!

Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program

Thank you Durham Soil & Water for the life of water that you have given to UCAN's Catawba Trail Farm. The over arching results are the increase in access which creates pathways to equity for residents of Durham County. The grant funding from Durham County Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program (DCAEDG) enabled us to dig a well, thereby creating an abundant supply of fresh water. Prior to funding we were transporting water for our raised beds, had less than 13 community plot owners and only dreamed of an in-ground planting area, small fruit orchard and chickens. Access to water create sustainability, increase value and expand engagement.



Because of the DCAEDG Program we more than doubled in plot ownership, fenced an additional 3/4 acres for in-ground planting and fruit orchard, readied the farm for chickens and are able to grow enough produce to not only the support end hunger local food system but to also regularly participate at the North Durham Farmers' Market. Thank you for what you do to build equity! Delphine Sellars/UCAN



Increase in Access by doubling plot ownership!

Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program

Let us start by saying thank you. We are forever grateful to all of you for the support and growth you have given us. Our family and business have both grown in the recent years. The business growth has been a wonderful experience, and much of the success has been made directly possibly by you. What it has done for our family is even bigger, far more impressive, and will forever have an impact on the most beautiful soul I have known.

We have a baby girl, Streya. She will be one year old next month. This year, we have all been blessed with opportunity to work from home and spend this past year with our daughter. BOTH of her parents. Many parents sacrifice vital time with their rapidly developing children. Because of the growth from the grants, Sarah was able to leave her job, coming on full time for The Microgreenery and as Full Time Mom.

The previous year, the growth from the grant allowed us to increase production to the point where I could do it Full Time with partial assistance from Sarah. When we found out about Streya, I was excited for my role as the stay at home farm business dad. And I wished that we could grow just a little more, so that Sarah could join in this beautiful dream. And again, thank you. She did. We hired an employee to helpout with deliveries and planting for the first month Streya was home. Again, thank you.

We have expanded to more markets, and with the aid of the grant, we will be hiring a new marketing employee to attend additional markets, and add to the growth of our agricultural enterprise.

This years grant has allowed us to increase production further as we have expanded into the hemp industry.

In summary, the aid we have received has empowered us to turn a passionate vision and hobby into a growing business that supports a family of 3, and has created 4 jobs, 2 of which are full time. And most importantly, given us the opportunity to be fully immersed in our new child's growth. We are both able to spend so much time playing with and loving her. Her endearing nature, smiles, and laughter are unending, and we are forever grateful for the opportunity to nurture her.

With the most sincere appreciation,

Sarah & Rick Miller

The Microgreenery

Created new jobs and allowed parents to work from home with a newborn child!



Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program

Greetings from the Farm,

We would like to express our gratitude for the grants we have received from Durham Soil and Water. With the grant funding we have received we have been able to advance our business plan by 3 years. We have also seen an increase of 25% in our income as well as the potential for much more including being able to operate year round and hire 1 to 2 employees this year.

As a small family farm, we have been suffering with possible downsizing and significant income loss due to infrastructure damage. Our 3 high tunnels were crushed in an ice storm last winter and financially we were unable to repair them which would have greatly reduced our growing capacity and income. We have also been reliant on the rain as our only source of irrigation water which has its challenges... especially during the drought. Thanks to an additional grant, we now have a 360' well and a large packing shed. This allows us to run irrigation as well as water to our packing shed for proper harvesting, cleanliness and storage of crops.

With these grants we are very excited to ramp up our business this year and provide greater amounts of healthy, local food to our community.

Thank you all,

Nicole and David Owens

Durham Greens Farm

Created new jobs!



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With the grant approval and a good faith date of completion of required infrastructure improvements, our Grade A regulators

proceeded to permit haulers for the milk tanker, and licensed the tanker so we could begin hauling milk. This is great timing as we had run out of space on our farm to grow our herd - so our milk supply was limited. Having this option allowed us to help a former family dairy (at risk of losing their farm), restore their Grade A permit and milk our herd of cows. They have increased our herd and doubled our production. Side note: We have also helped them obtain their Animal Welfare Approved certification.

With increased sales that this volume of milk allows, we have hired three new team members to fill orders. They will also help with construction as our sales ramp up.

Without the grant, we would not be able to make the plant improvements or buy the equipment necessary to get this process approved by our Grade A regulators.

Bottom line is that we are now providing a growing supply of local dairy to our community, and can now help mitigate the failure of other at-risk dairy farms by turning their milk into value-added products as we grow the business, hire more and contribute to local food security.

Thank you so much for your support!!

Cindy Hamrick

General Manager

Carolina Culture

a division of Carolina Farmhouse Dairy,
LLC



Created new jobs and selling products to Durham Public Schools!

WG Pearson Elementary Science

The Ag Ed grant provided a chicken coop, feed, and bedding for our school. We now have 6 happy chickens that the students take care of all by themselves. They provide priceless learning opportunities and inquisitive moments throughout the school year in classrooms and in Garden & Engineering Club.



The Durham Public Schools Hub Farm purchased fencing and goats. The DPS Hub Farm is visited by thousands of students each year who learn about homesteading, gardening and environmental protection. This facility is within walking distance of Northern High School. & the Northern High FFA enrolled in animal science are responsible for caring for the animals. They learn about animal husbandry, animal judging and livestock production.



We used our grant we received to purchase a fence extension to allow the lambs our students raise on campus from January through April, nearly double the room. We were able to purchase solar-rechargeable cameras to monitor activity near the lamb pen. We also purchased several plastic pallets to elevate the lamb sheds about 3 inches due to the area being prone to flooding. This year we have a record high number of students raising lambs (8) and the entire school enjoys having the lambs out and being able to see them. One picture allows you to see the silver fence extension attachment and last years (5) lamb students. The other picture you can see the pallets under the sheds and the camera and solar panel with the (8) lamb students this year.



Thank you so much for allowing our program to be able to expand and improve!

Breanna Jackson Saunders
Animal/Veterinary Science Teacher
C. E. Jordan High School

The Jordan High School FFA has participated in the Central Piedmont Livestock Show through Lamb Showmanship for over 15 years. This annual Supervised Agriculture Experience allows students to raise, train, and care for a lamb over a 4 month period while they prepare to compete for a showmanship spot in the local livestock show. Although it may seem like the students are just raising an animal for fun, this particular SAE teaches the students record keeping, public speaking, and interpersonal skills such as teamwork, strong work ethic, and dedication to a project.

In the past 5 years, we have been able to reach 30 students through this project, some of them being repeat participants. We have been able to implement sustainable practices within our animal enclosure and these practices have opened up dialog about what we can do as a program to help with environmental concerns. Our solar paneled cameras and raised palleting system for the sheds have helped with our program tremendously, and we hope to always be considered when different opportunities arise.

Thanks for all that you have done to support our program!

Kelsie Sommerfeld

