



# OUR STRATEGIC VISION

*A Summary of the Strategic Plan for the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service  
2014-2016*

## Our Strategic Planning Vision

*The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service's strategic plan and vision ignites a renewed organizational focus, invests in essential resources and creates an unprecedented level of service and access across the state to create economic, societal and intellectual prosperity for North Carolinians.*



## Goals

We began our journey with four goals guiding our efforts:

1. Define and focus on our most competitive and needed programs.
2. Strengthen our impacts and value to the citizens, the counties and North Carolina.
3. Create financial flexibility to align resources to priorities.
4. Develop a staffing model that aligns to our new fiscal reality, provides competitive salaries, and strengthens our workforce capacity and value.

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## MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

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The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service has a long, proud tradition of serving the citizens and communities of North Carolina. We have offices in every county and the Eastern Band of Cherokee, we live and raise families in every community, and we empower people and provide solutions across the state.

Extension celebrated 100 years of service this year, reflecting on our significant achievements, the difference we've made and the people who've changed the lives of North Carolinians. Celebrating the centennial of one of the nation's premier Extension organizations presented a unique opportunity not only to recognize our historical impacts, but also to evaluate our operations and envision long-term goals to improve how we serve our clients.

This strategic plan and vision is an initiative of N.C. State University. It does not reflect organizational changes on the part of N.C. A&T State University. We strongly value our relationship with N.C. A&T over the years, and we will continue as a strategic partnership to provide stellar service.

We are positioning Extension at N.C. State for long-term sustainability so we can provide more and better solutions in our core program areas to improve the lives, land and economy of North Carolinians. Budget cuts created challenges, but they also presented opportunities and incentives to better ourselves for our clients. Our plan was overwhelmingly driven by positive opportunities, and the results will benefit millions across the state.

We asked questions, engaged employees and stakeholders, and poured over data for 10 months to ensure that Extension will continue to create economic, societal and intellectual prosperity for the people of North Carolina for years to come. From this endeavor we crafted a vision for our future, and we're excited, proud and confident with what lies ahead.

***The next phase of our journey starts now. Together we move forward!***

Joe Zublena

Director of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service | North Carolina State University  
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**Joe Zublena**

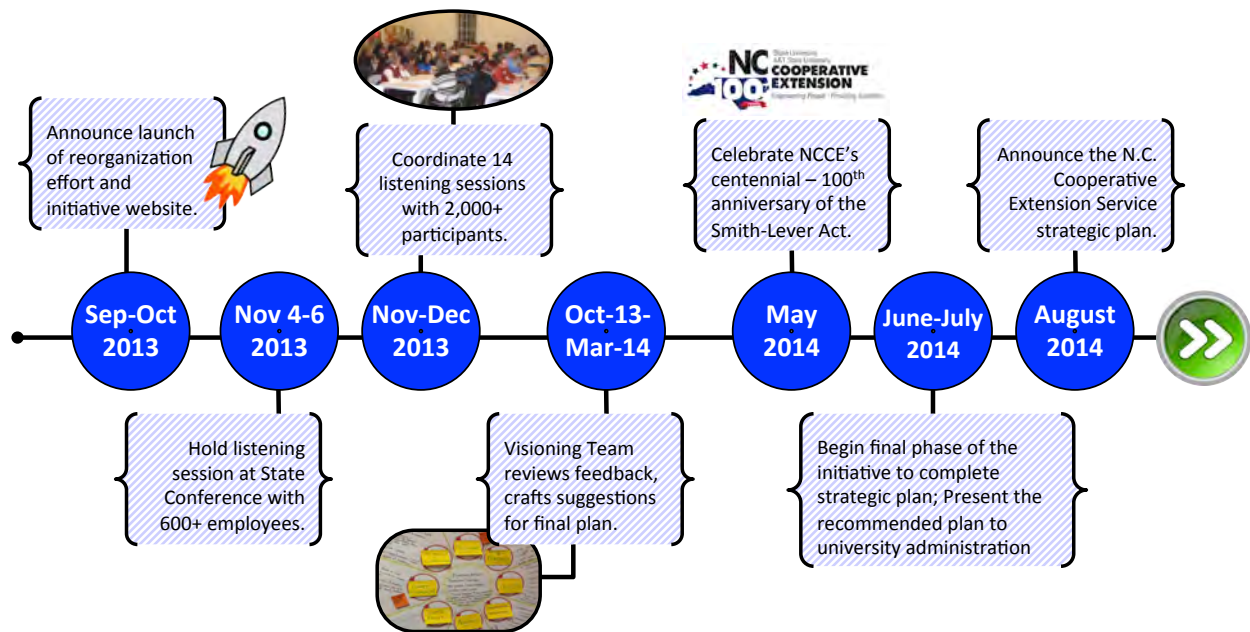
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# LISTENING & LEARNING

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## Who We Talked To

- ✓ Consulted with **8 state Extension systems** that have undergone change.
- ✓ Held **14 public listening sessions** across the state with **~2,000 attendees**.
- ✓ Appointed a **Visioning Team** made up of **~45 Extension employees and stakeholders** to assist in crafting the plan for our future.
- ✓ Polled **179 county commissioners/managers** to assess their needs.
- ✓ Engaged **more than 600 employees** at our State Conference in Raleigh.



## What We Heard

**“Return to your strengths...”** – Focus on Agriculture, Food & 4-H Youth Development.

**“We value Extension because you’re Knowledgeable, Unbiased & Trusted.”**

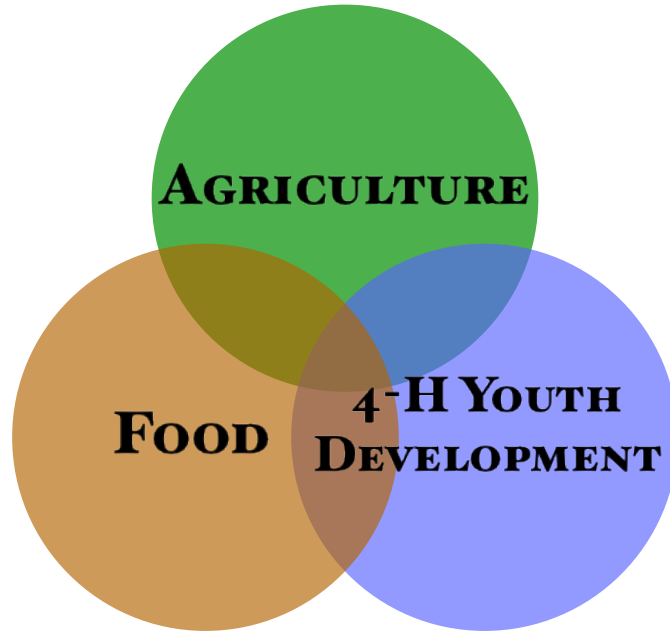
**“Enhance staff capacity and expertise...”** – Develop stronger connections between county agents and N.C. State Extension specialists.

**“Invest in High Tech, remain High Touch...”** – Create technological tools and web-based resources, but still provide unfettered client access to agents and specialists.

**“Extension is the best kept secret...”** – Strengthen communication and branding so people know who you are and that what you do is important.

# POSITIVE TRANSFORMATION

## Identify Core Program Areas



We are focusing our resources where we are most needed, best equipped to provide solutions and can make the most impacts on the state's communities and economy.

## Sub-Programs & Services

Each Core Program Area will include multiple programs and services of value. *The following list is not all-inclusive.*



Commercial & Consumer Horticulture	Community & School Gardens	STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math)
Traditional Agriculture	Food Safety	Leadership
Livestock	Food Preservation	Life Skills
Organic Agriculture	Nutrition & Health	Healthy Lifestyles
Local Foods		

## Build High Tech, Remain High Touch

1. We're investing in technology and creating web-based resources, while maintaining personal service and client access to our agents and specialists.
2. This 21st-century approach to education and collaboration will help our people sustain existing relationships and engage new audiences with Extension resources by:
  - a. Investing in modern technology for agents and specialists to help clients.
  - b. Providing tools and platforms to improve access to valuable online resources.
  - c. Supporting development of online Extension courses and interactive publications.
  - d. Implementing an online registration and event management system.



## Bolster Communications, Branding & Marketing

- ▶ Expand communication and branding efforts to increase external awareness and enhance our perception and value throughout the state.
- ▶ The Extension Service has been identified as a sub-brand of N.C. State's branding initiative, which will create unprecedented opportunities for the organization.
- ▶ Working together with N.C. State and other valued partners, including local governments and N.C. A&T State, we will build a stronger, more effective Extension for our people and clients.



## Strengthen Capacity & Collaboration

1. Create integrated Commodity & Issue-based teams that lead program growth, drive research innovation and cultivate stronger relationships to serve our clients better.
  - a. Made up of Extension specialists, agents, researchers and client representatives.
  - b. Work together to ensure clients and producers have access to/understanding of all key management options and opportunities.
2. Continue to build our mutually-beneficial partnerships with N.C. State, local governments, communities, N.C. A&T State and others to create a stronger Extension organization for our clients.
3. Align research, Extension and client resources to chart the future through a consortium of common benefit.
4. Affirm and grow our relationships with our volunteers.



## Enhance Staff Retention & Expertise

1. To provide the best solutions for our clients, we will employ and empower the best people.
2. Bolster employee satisfaction and create growth opportunities that help recruit and retain agents by:
  - a. Increasing starting salaries,
  - b. Improving the career ladder, and
  - c. Optimizing employee onboarding.
3. Enhance employee expertise by providing dynamic training and the technological tools they need to do their jobs, engage with the organization and be successful.

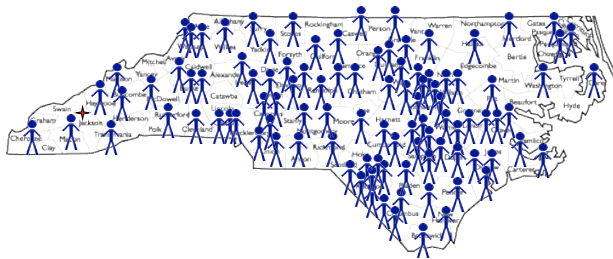
**We will implement our strategic plan  
from August 2014 through July 2016.**

# COUNTY STAFFING & SERVICE ACCESS

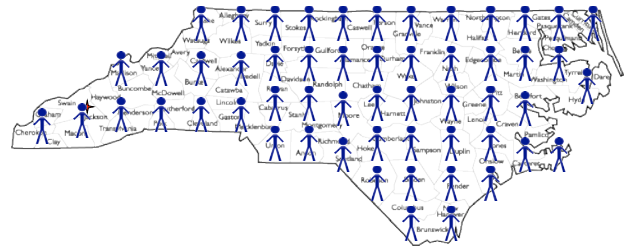
## Optimize Service Access Across the State

Going forward with the partnerships we've forged with local governments and N.C. A&T:

1. Maintain our presence in each of our 101 local centers (every county + Eastern Band of Cherokee).
2. Create a support system of expertise to provide solutions and exceed client needs.
3. Better align our resources, address staffing gaps and create more equitable service access across N.C. to support our core and exceed client needs.



**Disparate staffing allocation**



**More equitable service access**

### Incorporate 15 Additional Area Specialized Agents

#### **8 Area Specialized Commodity Agents** (\*Non-recurring funds)

2 Commercial Vegetable Agents

2 Commercial Ornamental Agents

1 Eastern Grain Agent

\*1 Dairy Agent

\*1 Forestry Agent

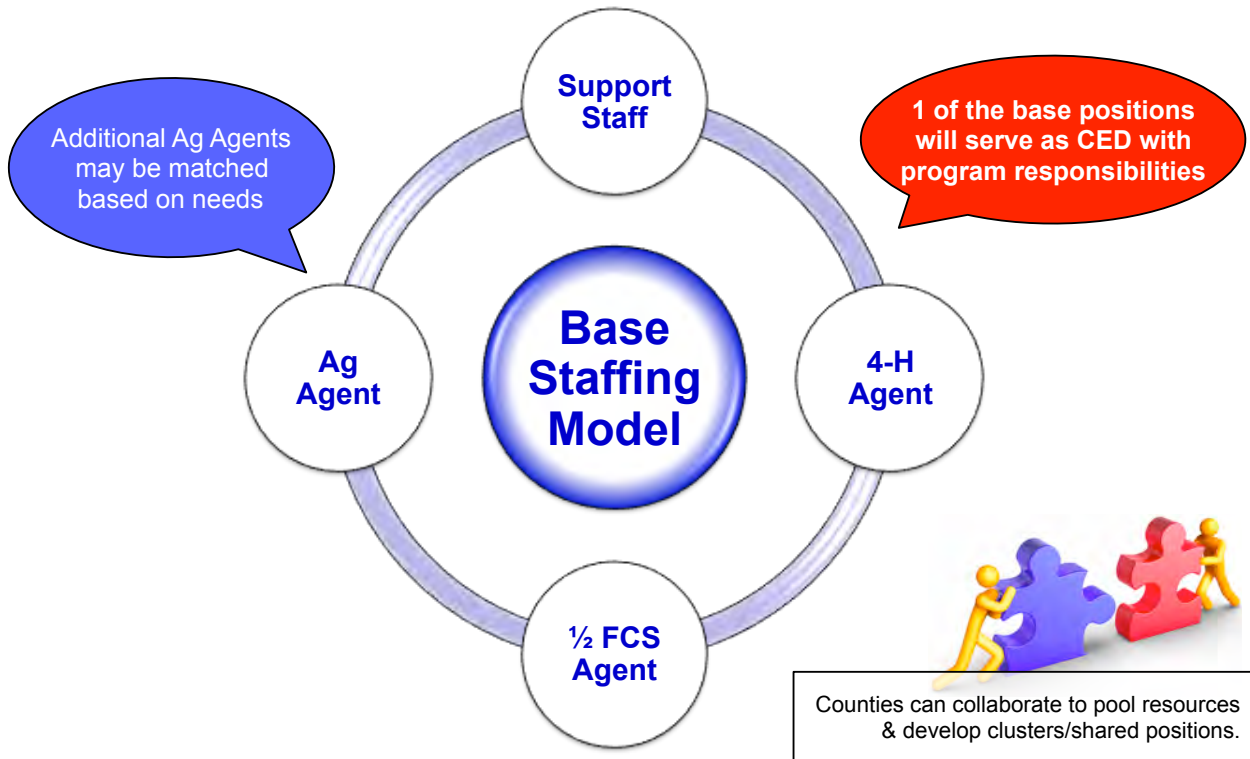
#### **7 Area Specialized Issue-based Agents** (\*Non-recurring funds)

\*5 Food Safety Modernization Act Agents

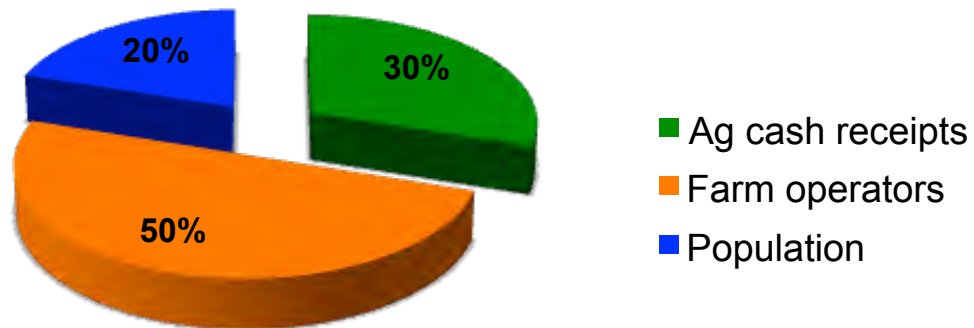
\*3 Consumer Food Safety Agents

## County Staffing Structure

- We are offering a base staffing structure to every county/local center.
- We are seeking an equal match from local governments on base positions (50:50 on single-county positions, 1/3 on two-county positions, etc.).



- Additional Agriculture agents will be strategically distributed throughout the state based on 1) the number of farm operators by county, 2) county population, and 3) agriculture cash receipts by county.





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# THE DIFFERENCE IS OUR PEOPLE

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*You empower people. You provide solutions. You improve lives.*

**THANK YOU!**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The N.C. Cooperative Extension Service's strategic plan and vision is a culmination of the time, expertise and dedication of many individuals. Without their help, we would not have been able to craft the strong, transformative vision that you see now. We extend our sincerest gratitude as we acknowledge these essential contributors.

## Strategic Visioning Committee

- Mary Lou Addor** – Organizational Development Specialist, Director - NRLI  
**Bob Bardon** – Assistant Dean of Extension and Engagement, College of Natural Resources  
**Andrew Baucom** – Agriculture-Field Crops Agent, Union Co.  
**Barbara Board** – Eastern Regional Program Coordinator, N.C. A&T Extension Admin  
**Lucy Bradley** – Urban Horticulture Specialist, Master Gardener Volunteer Program  
**Julie Brenman** – Consultant, FountainWorks  
**Tracy Brown** – Executive Assistant, Office of the NCCES Director  
**Travis Burke** – District Extension Director (NE)  
**Krista Caison** – FCS Program Assistant, Cumberland Co.  
**Ben Chapman** – Assistant Professor, Food Safety Specialist  
**Rhonda Conlon** – Director, Extension Information Technology  
**James Cowden** – District Extension Director (NC)  
**Elizabeth Dabney** – Executive Assistant, County Operations  
**Kristin Davis** – FCS Agent, Mecklenburg Co.  
**Tracy Davis** – FCS Agent, Rutherford Co.  
**Carolyn Dunn** – Head, Dept. of YFCS, Professor and Nutrition Specialist  
**Anne Edwards** – County Extension Director, Carteret Co.  
**Laurie Edwards** – Support Specialist, Organizational Development  
**Karla Frizzelle** – Support Specialist, ANR/CRD  
**Heather Gordon** – 4-H Agent, Jackson Co.  
**Stephen Greer** – County Extension Director, Moore Co.  
**Jim Hamilton** – County Extension Director, Watauga Co.

**Norman Harrell** – Agriculture-Field Crops Agent, Wilson Co.  
**Greg Hoover** – District Extension Director (SE)  
**Craven Hudson** – Executive Dir. of Development, 4-H/FCS  
**Robert Hyatt** – Davidson County Manager  
**Susan Jakes** – Associate State Program Leader - CRD, Extension Assistant Professor  
**Chris Jeffcoat** – Agriculture-Livestock Agent, Stokes Co.  
**David Jones** – Assoc. Professor, Agricultural Science Program Coordinator  
**Susan Kelly** – County Extension Director, Richmond Co.  
**Nikki Kurdys** – Payroll Coordinator, Extension Personnel  
**Cameron Lowe** – County Extension Director, Currituck Co.  
**Clinton McRae** – District Extension Director (SC)  
**Tom Melton** – Deputy Director, NCCES; Program Leader, ANR  
**Warren Miller** – Consultant, FountainWorks  
**Cheryl Mitchell** – Support Specialist, McDowell Co.  
**David Monks** – Assoc. Dean & Director, N.C. Agricultural Research Service  
**Justin Moore** – Extension Comm. Coordinator, Plants for Human Health Institute  
**Jeff Mullahey** – Head, Dept. of Crop Science  
**Matt Poore** – Dept. Extension Leader, Animal Science  
**Noland Ramsey** – Council for Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching (CARET)  
**Sheri Schwab** – Associate Director of NCCES, Director of County Operations  
**Carol Shields** – State Advisory Council  
**Dan Smith** – District Extension Director (W)  
**Mitch Smith** – County Extension Director, Pitt Co.  
**Becky Spearman** – Agriculture-Livestock Agent, Bladen Co.  
**Bryant Spivey** – County Extension Director, Johnston Co.  
**Marshall Stewart** – Director of College Strategy & Leadership, CALS  
**Mitzi Stumpf-Downing** – Interim Associate Dir., NCCES; Program Leader, 4-H/FCS  
**Mark Tucker** – County Extension Director, Forsyth Co.  
**Paul Westfall** – County Extension Director, Granville Co.  
**Spring Williams-Byrd** – County Extension Director, Burke Co.  
**Al Wood** – Agriculture Agent, Pasquotank Co.  
**Mike Yoder** – Coordinator, Emergency Programs; Horse Extension Specialist  
**Joe Zublena** – Associate Dean, CALS; Director, NCCES



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