

DIRECTORY
2017 – 2019

North Carolina Tobacco
Trust Fund Commission

Agricultural
Leadership
Development
Program

NC STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Agriculture
and Life Sciences

North Carolina Tobacco
Trust Fund Commission

Agricultural **Leadership Development** Program

Agricultural Leadership Development Program Team:

Blake Brown, Director

W.K. Collins, Assistant

Lanny Hass, Facilitator

Joy Morgan Fleming, Facilitator

Rhonda Sutton, Facilitator

Carolyn Bunn, Administrative Assistant

Dale A. Hill, Volunteer, Brazil Study Tour

Linda Andrews, Volunteer, Washington, D.C.
Study Tour and Texas Study Tour

The social, economic and political changes affecting agriculture and rural communities pose a challenge to farmers and rural leaders. It is important that potential leaders in agriculture be identified and trained to assume leadership roles. They must be prepared to bridge the gaps between rural and urban interests, to participate actively in issues affecting agriculture and to foster unity among agricultural interests.

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission

Agricultural Leadership Development Program of NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is designed to prepare about 30 selected outstanding young agriculturalists per class for such challenges.

Support comes from an endowment from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, commodity and farm organizations, related agribusinesses and personal contributions.

The participants represent diverse agricultural enterprises in North Carolina, averaging mid-career. Each class takes part in 50 days of training over two years. There are eight seminars in Raleigh, a legislative study tour to Washington, a study tour to Brazil and local and domestic study tours. In Brazil, participants observe agricultural production and marketing strategies of a major U.S. agricultural competitor. The domestic tours provide participants an opportunity to observe production of diverse agricultural commodities and related agribusinesses and to understand how producers deal with environmental issues.

Participants in the program focus on important agricultural issues they have identified for North Carolina and their communities. Training focuses on the following areas:

- Mastering Self
- Mastering an Understanding of Agriculture's Environment
- Mastering Relationships
- Managing Social and Organizational Action
- Enhancing Participants' Understanding of Global and National Aspects of Agriculture

Throughout the program, leaders from government, commodity groups, farm organizations and related agribusinesses interact with the participants on issues and leadership opportunities.



Sarah Marie Arthur

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Sarah Arthur is the owner of Sarah Arthur LLC, an agricultural crop consulting company serving many farmers in several eastern North Carolina counties. Sarah oversees and actively participates in all aspects of her operation, including crop scouting, soil sampling and treatment advising. Sarah tailors her services to each farmer's unique needs and works diligently to provide them with useful information that will enable them to make smarter decisions about their crops, their fields and their businesses. She is passionate about ensuring and improving the longevity of her growers' operations, from both economic and environmental standpoints.

Both of Sarah's parents have roots in Midwest farming communities. When they settled in North Carolina, they established and operated a peach orchard and produce business in Craven County, which Sarah worked in while growing up. Sarah graduated from New Bern High School and went on to earn a bachelor's degree in biology from Saint Andrews College in Laurinburg, N.C. Sarah later obtained her Certified Crop Advisor certification from the American Society of Agronomy. Sarah has one daughter, Daisy Marie.

Sarah is firmly entrenched in agriculture and cares deeply about farming as a sustainable way of life. She desires to be a strong advocate not only for her clients but also for North Carolina and the southeast region of the U.S.

Among the current issues Sarah sees nationally and locally are:

1. The lack of sound agricultural knowledge and education among the general public.
2. The loss of agricultural land.
3. The sustainability of tobacco farming in North Carolina.



Jeffrey Hunter Chandler

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Jeff Chandler is Director of the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Mills River, N.C. Jeff provides leadership for the 397 acre center that supports faculty directed field, laboratory and greenhouse research. The center is home to 12 faculty from the departments of Horticultural Science, Entomology and Plant Pathology, Applied Ecology and NC State Extension in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences as well as programs in the College of Natural Resources and the College of Sciences. Core research crops at the center are apples, ornamentals and tomatoes. Other crops include corn, soybeans, peaches, vegetables, hops and caneberries.

Jeff has bachelor's degrees in animal science and poultry science and a master's degree in crop science, all from NC State University.

Jeff's wife, Amy, is a Certified Registered Nurse with Henderson County. They have four children, ages 9-15. They are active members of Mills River United Methodist Church.

Jeff serves as President of the Research Center Administrators Society, Co-chair of the research committee of the North American Raspberry and Blackberry Association, and Secretary of the Mills River Partnership.

Jeff sees three community needs as follows:

1. Availability of labor for agriculture.
2. Environmental stewardship of soil and water resources.
3. Educating consumers about agriculture and how that relates to the food choices they make.



Michelle Pace Davis

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Michelle Pace Davis is a fifth-generation member of Pace Family Farms in Clayton, N.C. She is helping to continue the family farm by adding diversification to the tobacco farm by adding agritourism through u-pick strawberries and pumpkins. She works to help connect community members combining both farmers and people with urban-type interest.

Michelle has a bachelor's degree in agriculture education with a concentration in agricultural business from NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Before transferring to NC State, Michelle attended Johnston Community College in Smithfield after graduating from Clayton High School.

She serves as the Johnston County Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Rancher Chair where she helps coordinate meetings and community service projects for the group. Michelle also serves on the Farm City Week Committee with Johnston County Cooperative Extension.

Michelle sees three community needs as follows:

1. Urbanization with the loss of farm land in her area.
2. Farm safety as it relates to farmers, farm workers and citizens on the roads.
3. Agriculture literacy to help bridge the disconnect of the stereotypical farmer.



Jared B. Day

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Jared B. Day is currently the John Deere Precision Ag Specialist for the southeastern United States. Jared focuses the majority of his time leading the development and delivery of marketing, sales and agronomic solution implementation to company employees, channel partners and customers. Jared specializes in specific products and technology that support a farming system including agronomic, process and product knowledge and experience. Jared enjoys and is active in the John Deere Peer Mentoring Program.

Jared has a bachelor's degree in agriculture & environmental technology while also minoring in agriculture business management from NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Jared currently sits on the BAE Curriculum Advisory Committee at NC State as well as the John Deere Tech Program Curriculum and Support Committee at Wake Technical Community College. Jared also serves and is a board member of the North Carolina Vegetable Growers Association.

Jared sees three community needs as follows:

1. Adapt to a competitive world market through the means of new technology and agronomic advancements.
2. Manage a booming population growth resulting in additional demands on water and other vital resources.
3. Local agriculture to remain relevant and in business by learning how to adapt to change and diversify with new trends in farming practices, all while reviving old ones.



Katie Spangler Earl

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Katie Earl is the District Program Coordinator of the Cleveland Soil & Water Conservation District in Shelby, N.C. Katie is the county's staff person who designs and delivers agricultural and natural resources educational programs in Cleveland County. Katie teaches about how to become better stewards of the land and our natural resources, as well as the importance of agricultural awareness in here community. She works closely with farmers and local producers on conservation projects that will help them increase efficiency and also help them protect their resources.

Katie also works alongside her father on their family's commercial cattle operation, Fieldstone Farm.

Katie has a bachelor's degree in leadership studies, human resource management and communication with a concentration in advertising and public relations from Peace College. Katie serves on the Advisory Council Board for the Cleveland County Cooperative Extension Service and is on the Cleveland County Cattlemen's Association Board. Katie is also a board member and member artist at Buffalo Creek Gallery in Shelby, N.C.

Katie sees three community needs as follows:

1. The lack of ag education in our schools and inadequate support to the ag-based programs that do exist (FFA and 4-H).
2. Food safety regulations that are time-consuming and cost-prohibitive to small growers, preventing growth in the fruit and vegetable industry.
3. The public's perception of agriculture and its role in our economy.



Susan Weaver Ford

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Susan Ford's Johnston County, N.C., farm operation includes 75 acres of tobacco, 75 acres of cotton, 125 acres of soybeans, 100 acres of wheat and 8 acres of peas.

Susan graduated from NC State University with a bachelor's degree in business management with a minor in English. Susan also has her MBA from West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Susan is a board member for the Tobacco Farm Life Museum. Susan is also an active member of Holly Springs Official Free Will Baptist Church in Kenly, N.C. where she is a Sunday School Teacher, Youth Leader and Assistant Clerk.

Susan's husband, Brian, is a Special Education Teacher and Head Baseball Coach at North Johnston High School. They have been married for 14 years and have three children, Camden, Peyton and River.

Susan sees the following issues in her local community:

1. Availability of local labor willing to perform farm labor.
2. Hurricanes and other natural disasters causing erosion of farm land.
3. Sustainable agriculture.



Travis Gardner

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Travis Gardner is Branch Manager for Helena Chemical's full service retail location in Fremont, N.C. Travis is responsible for a sales territory and managing daily operations for fertilizer, chemicals, seed and seed treatment.

Travis attended NC State where he received his bachelor's degree in agronomy, crop science. He also has completed a strategic agrimarketing class at Purdue University.

Travis' wife, Kristy, received her bachelor's degree in accounting from NC State and is a Financial Analyst at Novo Nordisk Pharmaceuticals in Clayton, N.C. Kristy and Travis have two children who attend Princeton School – a daughter, Peyton, who is a junior and a son, Caleb, who is in the 8th grade. Travis is an Eagle Scout, and a member of the Crop Protection Association of N.C. and the Plant Food Association of N.C. Travis completed the Karl Best Leadership Program in Wayne County. Travis and Kristy actively serve at Princeton Baptist where he is currently Deacon Chair and is on various committees, including disaster relief efforts when needed.

Travis expects the leadership program to allow growth in life skills that will improve his leadership abilities in all aspects at home, profession and church.

Community needs that Travis sees as important are:

1. Diminishing farmland.
2. Adults who will not commit to involvement in organizations.
3. Kids who do not have firm direction and foundation for life.



Edward L. Gregory, Jr.

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Edward Gregory is a Risk Management Specialist with the Risk Management Agency-USDA. As a Risk Management Specialist, Edward serves America's agricultural producers through effective, market-based risk management tools and solutions to strengthen the economic stability of agricultural producers and rural communities by providing world-class agricultural risk management products, tools, education and outreach.

Edward has bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural education from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University's College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

Edward is a member of the North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Advisory Board, Gamma Sigma Delta, Agriculture Honor Society and assists with the N.C. Farm Bureau's Wake County Young Farmers and Ranchers Program.

Edward sees three community needs as follows:

1. Agricultural awareness in the community.
2. Local, state and federal budgetary and policy restraints.
3. The preservation of family-owned small farms.



John E. Hammond

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John Hammond is an International Marketing Specialist with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS). John works with North Carolina companies to develop export trade opportunities for agricultural commodities and products. John's responsibilities include the promotion of Christmas trees, cotton, craft beer, forestry products and horticulture.

John earned his bachelor's degree in horticultural science from NC State University. John has built his career working to promote and advance the agriculture and horticulture industries in North Carolina and beyond.

Previously, John worked with the Horticulture Marketing Section at NCDA&CS to promote nurseries, floriculture, turf grass, pine needles, Christmas trees and honey in domestic markets. Prior to joining NCDA&CS, John was the owner of a landscape contracting and tree care firm. John has worked as a manager for a farm and landscape supply company, worked in nursery production research and golf course management. John is an ISA Certified Arborist, N.C. Certified Plant Professional and former N.C. Registered Landscape Contractor.

John sees three community needs as follows:

1. Confront immigration in a way that is fair and serves the interests of citizens and immigrants.
2. Develop bilateral trade agreements that are equitable, profitable and advantageous for all partner countries.
3. Continued research and development of green energy technology.



Brooke Harward

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Brooke Harward is a beef cattle producer and livestock marketer from Stanly County, N.C. The Harward family runs a 750-head commercial beef cow/calf operation where they sell both feeder calves and replacement females. Calves are sold in truckload lots off the farm going to all-natural beef producers or through the feeder calf sale programs at the Harward's stockyards. Brooke, along with her four sisters, also runs Harward Sisters, an 80-head registered seedstock operation. Harward Sisters raises bulls and heifers to sell as breeding animals to commercial producers or show heifers to local youth. Brooke also works in the office at her family's two livestock auction markets as well as the Harward's livestock video auction. Brooke works with cattle producers and buyers to help market cattle in the Carolinas and Virginia.

Brooke graduated from NC State University in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in agricultural business management with a minor in accounting. Brooke currently serves in leadership positions for the Stanly County Cattlemen's Association and the N.C. Charolais Association as well as serving on the board for the N.C. Angus Association and the N.C. Cattlemen's Association. She also helps with local livestock showmanship events and activities.

Brooke sees three community needs as follows:

1. Improve the public perception of food and agriculture through increased education to urban areas.
2. Address the increasing costs and difficulties for beginning farmers.
3. Loss of farmland due to urban development.



Morgan Howard

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Morgan Howard farms in Lenoir County in collaboration with her father, Butch Howard. The family farming operation, Down East Farms, consists of 2,000 acres of corn, 2,000 acres of soybeans, 1,075 acres of wheat and 1,000 acres of cotton. In addition, Morgan is also an owner/shareholder in Quality Equipment LLC.

Morgan received her bachelor's degree in plant and soil sciences from NC State University and expects an MBA degree from the University of Mount Olive in December 2017. While at NC State, Morgan was an active member of the Agronomy Club and Alpha Delta Pi Sorority.

Morgan believes that to be an effective leader one must continually evolve in the ways of thinking and doing. Morgan's aim is to improve her management skills by more clearly communicating her vision, goals, intentions and expectations in day to day operations. Morgan also would like to further build and nurture her employee and business relationships by encouraging, growing, accomplishing and sustaining high performance.

Morgan recognizes the following issues in her community:

1. Lack of infrastructure and development as well as career limitations contribute to continued population loss.
2. Technology limitations make it exceptionally challenging for individuals and businesses to grow, prosper and compete in the economy today.

Additionally, Morgan believes the lack of interest in agriculture as a business venture is directly related to the amount of revenue needed to operate a farm today.

Morgan also believes there is a lack of government programs encouraging younger generations to seek careers in the agriculture industry.



Forrest C. Howell

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Forrest Howell is part of the Howell Farms family farming operation in Beaufort County. The farm is managed by his grandfather, father and two uncles. Forrest works with his two cousins and his two younger brothers. The farm produces 3,000 acres of corn, 3,000 acres of wheat and 3,000 acres of soybeans.

Forrest has a bachelor's degree in agricultural science with minors in agroecology, ag business, crop science and leadership from NC State University. Upon graduation, Forrest returned to NC State to pursue a master's in entomology where his research focused on the efficacy and value of neonicotinoid seed treatments used on corn and wheat in North Carolina. Forrest's research has led to useful information for growers in eastern North Carolina and Virginia. Howell Farms is a shareholder at the Coastal Carolina Cotton Gin. Forrest is a member of the Entomological Society of America, a member of the North Carolina Entomological Society, a lifetime member of the National FFA Organization, a member of N.C. Farm Bureau and member of Bath United Methodist Church.

Forrest expects the leadership program will help him to become a better advocate for agriculture in his community. Forrest hopes the diverse group of people with whom he will come in contact in this program will share some of same challenges that he faces on his farm.

Among the issues Forrest sees impacting his community are:

1. Rapid changes in technology.
2. Government mandates and regulations.
3. The ever-growing disconnect of the public from the agriculture community.



Matthew Daniel Keen

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Matthew Keen helps manage a family farming operation in Wayne, Sampson and Duplin counties. The diversified family farming operation is known as Strickland Farming Partnership. Their operations consist of 200 acres of tobacco, 600 acres of sweet potatoes, 700 acres of cotton, 1,100 acres of corn, 1,300 acres of soybeans and 100 acres of pickles contracted with Mt. Olive Pickle Company. In addition the farm also contract-grows 120,000 turkeys annually and 8,600 head of finishing hogs for Prestage Farms.

Matthew attended Wayne Community College from which he received an associate's degree in agribusiness technology in 2007. Matthew also has a 4-year-old son, Cooper, who attends Wayne Country Day School.

Matthew sees three community needs as follows:

1. Farmland preservation.
2. The need for better rural internet services.
3. Over-populated school systems.

Matthew hopes that the leadership program will help him to improve his leadership skill and allow him to recognize his full potential to be a better manager on and off the farm and to bring more insight to the community and farming operation.



Ryan Lambert

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Ryan Lambert is a Sales Representative for Coastal Agrobusiness in Benson, N.C. He is responsible for a sales territory that covers parts of Nash, Johnston, Wayne, Duplin and Lenoir counties. Through his experience in horticulture and background in row crops, Ryan works with area farmers to ensure they are employing the latest information brought forth through research studies from local universities and bring cutting edge technologies that will allow farmers to operate as efficiently as possible. Because each farm is different, he works consultatively based on each farm's goals to help increase sustainability and profitability.

Ryan has a bachelor's degree in horticultural science from NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and a minor in biological sciences. Additionally, he has an MHS from NC State University, which he attended through the Elizabethan Gardens Assistantship Program.

Ryan sees three community needs as follows:

1. Finding a resolution for the declining farm economy and the gradual decline in the local tobacco industry.
2. Solving the ever-pressing issue of the urban/rural interface and the need to produce higher yields on less acreage.
3. The changing size, structure and turnover of local farms.



Jeremy Lee

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Jeremy Lee is a Commercial Loan Officer for Carolina Farm Credit in Conover, N.C. He is a dedicated lender who assists producers with multiple types of financial needs for their Agricultural operations, including loans, leases and operating lines of credit they may need to make their businesses successful. Jeremy also works along with his family on a cow-calf and commercial poultry operation. He and his wife, Victoria, also have a small herd of commercial beef cattle.

Jeremy has a bachelor's degree in agricultural science from NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, as well as minors in animal science, agricultural business management and leadership. He expects to graduate in December 2017 with an MBA from Appalachian State University.

Jeremy serves as Chair of the Catawba County Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Program, is on the Board of Directors for the Catawba County Farm Bureau, is Executive Vice President of the N.C. Cattlemen's Association and is a member of the Board of Directors for the N.C. Cattlemen's Association. Jeremy serves as a member of the Catawba County Agricultural Advisory Board, appointed by their county commissioners. He is also very active with his local Catawba Valley Cattlemen's Association, where he serves on the Scholarship Selection Committee.

Jeremy sees three community needs as follows:

1. Agricultural resource availability.
2. Educating the general population about agriculture.
3. The effects of government regulation on trade policies and/or agreements.



Trey Liverman

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Trey Liverman is from Tyrrell County and is a Sales Representative for Coastal AgroBusiness Inc. covering northeastern North Carolina. Trey is also very much involved with the family farm. Liverman Farms is a grain farm that raises corn, soybeans, wheat and milo. The farm is located in the Blacklands in eastern North Carolina. Trey attended NC State University where he received an associate's degree in both agriculture business management and general agriculture.

Trey serves on the Tyrrell County Soil & Water Board, The Albemarle RC&D commission, the ABC Board and as an officer for the Tyrrell Volunteer Fire Department. He plays guitar in a praise band and leads Praise & Worship at Gum Neck Church of Christ.

Trey sees these three community needs:

1. Rural areas have a lack of access to the internet.
2. Understanding proper farming techniques and practices.
3. The loss of farmland to green energy, i.e. solar panels.



Suzanne Hodge Malloy

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Suzanne Hodge Malloy is from Robeson County and has been a Loan Officer with Cape Fear Farm Credit since 2014. She is the Assistant Branch Manager of the Lumberton Office, serving farmers in Robeson County. Her husband, Mac Malloy, is an Extension Field Crop Agent with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center. They have twin sons, Ian and Walt, and a daughter, Anna Marie. Their family has a small farm operation consisting of corn, wheat and soybeans. They also recently started a field-grown tree nursery.

Suzanne graduated from NC State University in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in biological sciences. She also earned an MBA from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Suzanne has served as the President of the St. Pauls Chamber of Commerce and was awarded the Dan McCormick Memorial Award for "Outstanding Contributions to the St. Pauls Community." Suzanne currently serves on the Hoke County Cooperative Extension Advisory Board and the Robeson County Farm Bureau Women's Committee. She is an active member of Lumber Bridge Presbyterian Church.

Suzanne sees three community issues as follows:

1. The general public's lack of education about agriculture.
2. The increasing average age of the farmer with no interested successor to take over.
3. Shrinking profit margins for row crop farmers with high input costs and low commodity prices.



Billy McDaniel

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Billy McDaniel is a Partner in Hickory Meadows Organics and Fishing Creek Ag Corporation, located in Whitakers, N.C. Billy has worked to transition portions of the family farm into organic production on which he grows organic tobacco, sweet potatoes, soybeans, squash and cucumbers. Along with the organic crops, Billy also grows conventional peanuts, corn, soybeans, wheat and cotton. A part of his farm has been in the family for more than 250 years, so he is entrenched in the community and in farming.

Billy holds a bachelor's degree in agronomy from NC State University with a concentration in crop production. He is a member of the Nash County Young Farmers and Ranchers. Billy and his partners were the 2015 recipients of the Innovative Young Farmer Award. He has also participated in the Tobacco Short Course sponsored by NC State as well as the Executive Farm Management Program.

Billy sees some of the community needs as follows:

1. Because food is one of the basic human needs, it is imperative that farmers produce a safe and healthy supply.
2. The challenge to produce more for a growing population while having less acreage due to the loss of valuable farmland.
3. Bringing farmers and agriculture-related businesses together to help produce and market their products.



Jillian Allmond Mickens

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Jillian Mickens is the Owner of Open Door Farm in Cedar Grove, N.C. She runs the day-to-day operations of the farm including managing crewmembers, executing planting schedules and harvests and selling product into the community. Open Door Farms produces organically-grown vegetables, cut flowers and duck eggs on 2.5 acres of intensively managed land. She sells produce year round at the Carrboro Farmers Market and Chapel Hill Farmers Market and through various wholesale markets including all Weaver Street Market locations. Jillian hopes that her farm can be a learning place for new and beginning farmers and the public at large. She engages these groups through one-on-one interactions during farm tours and via social media.

Jillian has bachelor's degree in zoology and biology with a nutrition concentration from NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Additionally she has a master's degree in public health in nutrition from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She serves on the board of the Carrboro Farmers Market and participates annually in the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association's Piedmont Farm Tour. She and her husband Ross were named Beginning Farmers of the Year by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association in 2016.

Jillian sees three community needs as follows:

1. Teaching the public where their food comes from and engaging with local producers.
2. Increasing access to higher-wage jobs in small communities.
3. Increasing access and knowledge around healthy eating to improve the health of everyone.



Pattie D. Mills

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Pattie Mills is Co-Owner and Business Manager of J.P. Davenport & Son Inc., a family-owned agribusiness in Pitt County, N.C. After spending more than 14 years in various corporate finance and HR positions, Pattie returned to Greenville, N.C., in 2011 to oversee the financial operations of the family business. J.P. Davenport farms 3,500 acres of tobacco, peanuts, cotton, corn, soybeans and wheat. The business also includes a seed conditioning facility, fertilizer/chemical sales division and an agri-supply store.

Pattie holds a bachelor's degree in business from Wake Forest University and an MBA with a concentration in finance from NC State University. Pattie is currently participating in the Executive Farm Management Program through NC State.

Pattie serves on the Executive Committee for the North Carolina Seedsmen's Association and chairs the association's Scholarship Committee. She is also a board member of the Pitt County Development Commission.

Pattie and her husband, Dustin, live on the farm with their daughters, Layne and Emmy. Pattie is passionate about volunteering in the community through Oakmont Baptist Church, her daughters' school and Emmy's Girl Scout troop.

Pattie believes that there are several issues facing her community today such as

1. The impact of poverty on Eastern North Carolina's economy.
2. Challenges with agricultural labor.
3. The decline in the family farm.
4. The importance of sustainable land management.



Farrell V. Moose

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Farrell Moose is the Nursery Manager and Propagation Specialist for Mellow Marsh Farm, a wholesale nursery in Silk Hope specializing in the production of regional native plants for use in wetland mitigation, stormwater management, stream restoration and other green infrastructure projects. Farrell oversees the wild collection of seed and propagation of over 200 species of plants native to the Southeast region and manages production of over 500,000 trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants annually.

Farrell's family has farmed in Cabarrus County, N.C., for over two centuries. He is a Certified Plant Professional and holds a Stormwater Maintenance Certification from NC State, as well as an MFA and BFA in painting from Boston University and Western Carolina University, respectively. He serves as the President of the Board for the Chatham Mills Farmers' Market and is a member of the Environmental Review Advisory Committee for Chatham County, the North Carolina Association of Environmental Professionals and the North Carolina Nursery and Landscapers Association. Farrell lives with his wife and two daughters on a farm in Chatham County.

Farrell sees three community needs:

1. Educating both citizens and members of government about protecting our limited water resources and ensuring the role of science and common goals in a politically polarized environment.
2. Finding new roles and markets for local flora with the goal of weaving functioning ecosystems into our increasingly urbanized state.
3. Researching and fostering new and innovative careers in agriculture that will ensure another generation of farmers has viable employment options in North Carolina's agricultural sector.



Michael Mulier

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Michael Mulier, a resident of Cumberland County, is the Agricultural Representative for Moody Dunbar Inc. at the Dunn, N.C., production facility. Moody Dunbar Inc. is the nation's largest processor of bell peppers, roasted peppers and pimientos and is also a major canner of high-quality sweet potatoes. Michael works with about 75 farmers in eastern North Carolina to purchase the highest-quality bell peppers and sweet potatoes available for processing and canning for sales and distribution all over the United States. Michael works with farms of all sizes, from 25 acres to 20,000 acres.

Michael graduated from NC State University in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in agricultural business management and a minor in leadership in agriculture and life sciences. He also has a variety of certifications from several universities including NC State University and Louisiana State University.

Michael is very active in his hometown of Stedman by helping cook for numerous benefits throughout the year. He is on the Board for the Stedman Farmers Appreciation Day, as well as an industry representative with the United States Sweet Potato Council and the North Carolina SweetPotato Commission. Michael is very active in the booster program at Cape Fear High School.

Michael sees three community needs as follows:

1. Agricultural labor reform including an expansion of labor certification programs H2A and H2B.
2. Lack of younger leaders in school activitie.
3. Agricultural awareness and the difference between conventional and organic crops.



Jared Porter

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Jared Porter is a Partial Owner of Porter Farms Inc and The Farm at Brushharbor LLC – two family-operated farms in Cabarrus County. Jared manages approximately 1,000 acres including hay, beef cattle, a poultry layer operation, a pullet operation and a swine farm. In addition to the livestock raised on Porter Farms, Jared also owns and operates an agritourism venue where weddings are held. Jared works to conserve the land and make it profitable for his large family as well as educate farm visitors on modern farming and land conservation.

Jared has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Appalachian State University. Prior to returning to the family farm full-time, he was a Community Police Officer with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department for eight years.

Jared serves on the North Carolina Pork Council Board of Directors. He is also a member of North Carolina Farm Bureau.

Jared sees three community needs as follows:

1. Preserving farmland in our growing community and state.
2. Having leadership and experience for farmers to provide a voice to political leaders.
3. Encouraging leaders and policy makers in the community to join together on a common goal of protecting and preserving farmland while educating consumers and youth about modern farming and how it benefits everyone.



Jonathan Renn

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Jonathan is the Owner/Manager of Renn Farms LLC in Franklin County, N.C. He is a third-generation farmer which consists of growing tobacco, soybeans and wheat.

After graduating from Louisburg High School, Jonathan started his career farming. Jonathan would accompany his father in Knoxville, Tenn., for 15 burley tobacco seasons. Jonathan served as a volunteer fireman for 25+ years and was also on the Board of Directors. Jonathan is a member of Liberty Christian Church where he serves on numerous boards and committees. Jonathan also serves on the local Farm Bureau Board of Directors and was elected to be on the County Office Committee at the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Jonathan is on the board of the Tobacco Grower's Association of North Carolina, where he serves as treasurer.

Jonathan is very passionate about growing quality tobacco and crops. As a reflection of that, he was awarded Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year early in his career.

Jonathan sees three community needs as follows:

1. A reliable source of labor for farmers.
2. The outlook for the sustainability of tobacco farming.
3. Crime in his community.



Franklin Exum Scott

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Frank Scott is a ninth-generation farmer, working alongside his father, uncle and brother. Together they operate Scott Brothers Inc., growing 250 acres of tobacco, 75 acres of sweet potatoes, 300 acres of corn, 300 acres of cotton, 400 acres of soybeans and a 50-head brood cow herd producing top quality show cattle. Frank is a student of his crops, believing intensive scouting and innovative ideas are crucial to produce higher yields off fewer acres, which he believes is key to farm profitability in today's agricultural markets.

An NC State University graduate, Frank holds a bachelor's degree in plant and soil science (agronomic business) and a minor in horticulture. While at NC State, Frank was actively involved in Alpha Zeta Honors Fraternity and the Agronomy Club. He currently serves on the board of directors for the Tobacco Farm Life Museum and the Wilson County Young Farmers Association.

Frank sees several issues in his community, including:

1. Lack of self-supportive funds for local infrastructure.
2. Increasing debt margins in the agriculture community.
3. Lack of non-agrarian job opportunity to retain millennials in the community.



Katherine Drake Stowe

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Katherine Drake Stowe is the Research Coordinator for the North Carolina Soybean Producers Association. In this role, Katherine uses her skills to help soybean growers improve their productivity and profitability by leading the association's research efforts, serving as the liaison between research partners and soybean farmers and communicating results from sponsored research to growers.

Katherine grew up on a small family farm in Pinetops, N.C., where a love and appreciation for agriculture were instilled in her from an early age. Katherine attended NC State University where she received a bachelor's in chemistry and master's and doctoral degrees in crop science. Katherine now resides in Holly Springs, N.C., with her husband, Sadler.

Katherine has a passion for serving the farmers of North Carolina and contributing to the success of the agriculture industry across the state. She hopes the leadership program will increase her understanding of issues facing North Carolina agriculture and help her develop skills to be a valuable spokesman for North Carolina farmers.

Community issues Katherine is concerned about include:

1. Educational opportunities for rural students.
2. Educating the general public about agriculture and science.
3. The lack of an adequate workforce for labor intensive jobs.



Wilson Talley

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Wilson Talley is a Service Technician for Talley Farms in Stanfield, N.C. Wilson is responsible for 30 contract commercial farms, producing antibiotic-free turkeys to insure that the growers have adequate supplies and they are maintaining exceptional environments to produce healthy turkeys. Wilson stays in contact with each of the growers and makes weekly visits to every farm.

Wilson has a bachelor's degree in poultry science and minors in feed milling and agricultural business management from NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Wilson sees three needs of concern within his community:

1. Educating the general public about how their food is raised and produced.
2. The cost of farmland rising due to urban development.
3. Increasing labor cost with stagnant commodity markets, making it a challenge to hire.



Tonya Taylor

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Tonya Taylor is the North Carolina Coordinator of the Black Family Land Trust. She proudly executes a mission that is dedicated to the preservation and protection of landowner assets of African-American and other historically underserved populations. As a beginning farmer who is also a certified beekeeper, Tonya intends to utilize her skills in the development of her apiary, All Things Honey.

Tonya has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies with a focus on nature in human culture from Bates College and a Certificate of Permaculture from the ECOSA Institute. She completed the Extension Master Gardener Training in Durham County and is a graduate of the NC Cooperative Extension NC Farm School.

Tonya serves as Chair of the Future Leaders of Conservation, the advisory board to Conservation Trust for North Carolina. She is also a member of the Hugh Hammond Bennett Chapter of the Soil & Water Conservation Society.

Tonya believes pressing community needs include:

1. Addressing heirs' property as a significant cause of land loss and countering its effects with resolution and asset management.
2. Sustaining and/or increasing the number of women of color farm operators.
3. Addressing food deserts and economic insecurity.



Hunter Thomas

Roxboro, NC 27573

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Hunter Thomas is the crop specialist for Thomas Family Farms in Person County, N.C. At Thomas Family Farms, he assists his father and uncle in the production of traditional row crops including corn, wheat, soybeans and tobacco. In addition, the family-owned farm has an independent hog operation and an organic portion. Hunter's primary responsibilities lie in the planting, spraying and harvesting of their grain crops.

Hunter has a bachelor's degree in agriculture science and minors in agriculture business management, crop science and forestry science from NC State University.

Hunter serves as a Supervisor for the Person County Soil and Water Conservation District. He is also Vice President of his local Young Farmers and Ranchers chapter.

Hunter sees three community needs as follows:

1. Building grower and consumer relationships in the community.
2. Preserving productive farmland in the wake of development.
3. Educating and engaging upcoming generations on the significance of agriculture.



Charlie Wilkinson

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Charlie Wilkinson is a Buying & Grower Relationship Manager for Altria, based in Richmond, Va. Charlie has worked with the Altria family of companies for 10 years in various roles in domestic and international leaf procurement. Charlie currently leads a team that manages the tobacco grower relationships for Philip Morris USA's domestic flue-cured and Pennsylvania and Maryland's burley tobacco grower base. His group communicates performance and compliance requirements to the grower base, measures growers' performance against those metrics and provides training to achieve these requirements.

Charlie has a bachelor's degree in agronomy and a master's degree in crop science, tobacco, from NC State University. He serves on the N.C. Tobacco Foundation Board.

Charlie sees the three largest challenges facing the agriculture community as:

1. The increasing regulatory and compliance burden placed on growers.
2. Immigration reform and the associated challenges and costs of sourcing a reliable and compliant labor force.
3. Urbanization which reduces the amount of arable land and increases the opportunity for conflicts between growers and the non-ag community.

Previous Leadership Program Participants from North Carolina Classes

1984-86, 1986-88, 1989-91, 1992-94, 1996-98, 1999-2001,
2002-04, 2005-07, 2008-10, 2012-14 and 2014-16

Jamie Ager	Fairview, N.C.
Jack J. Allen, Jr.	Greenville, N.C.
W. Theodore "Ted" Allen	Winterville, N.C.
William Andrews	Fuquay-Varina, N.C.
Linda Andrews	Fuquay-Varina, N.C.
Andrew Arnold	Washington, N.C.
John Ashe	Reidsville, N.C.
David Askew	Elm City, N.C.
Amanda Aycock	Louisburg, N.C.
James Barbour	Clayton, N.C.
John Barnes	Spring Hope, N.C.
Brandon D. Batten	Four Oaks, N.C.
Charlie Batten	Four Oaks, N.C.
Stan Biconish	Fuquay-Varina, N.C.
Scott Bissette	Spring Hope, N.C.
John Bizic	Winterville, N.C.
Bill Blackman	Wilson, N.C.
Mark Blevins	Bolivia, N.C.
Jonathan Bone	Nashville, N.C.
Donnie Boyette	Kenly, N.C.
Art Bradley	Rocky Mount, N.C.
Phill Bradley	Sanford, N.C.
Preston Britt	Lumberton, N.C.
Jeffrey Broadaway	Monroe, N.C.
Talmadge Burgess Jr.	Henderson, N.C.
Andrew Burleson	New London, N.C.
David Burns	Laurel Hill, N.C.
Bill Cameron Jr.	Raeford, N.C.
Ann Camden	Raleigh, N.C.
Kelly Carlton	Wilson, N.C.
Billy Carter	Eagle Springs, N.C.
W.L. Carter Jr.*	Scotland Neck, N.C.
Ryan Cahoon	Fairfield, N.C.

John Clapp	Greensboro, N.C.
Michael Clapp	Gibsonville, N.C.
Scott Clayton	Cedar Grove, N.C.
Jody Clemmons	Supply, N.C.
Eileen Coite	Goldsboro, N.C.
Rodney Coleman	Wilson, N.C.
Tiffanee Conrad	Rockingham, N.C.
James Crews	Oxford, N.C.
DeShon Cromartie	Hillsborough, N.C.
Kelli Dale	Fuquay-Varina, N.C.
Amy Dalrymple	Sanford, N.C.
Tommy Dalrymple	Sanford, N.C.
David Davenport	Greenville, N.C.
Charles Davenport	Greenville, N.C.
Lawrence Davenport	Greenville, N.C.
Max Denning	Benson, N.C.
Kevin Dixon	Reidsville, N.C.
Sam Dobson	Statesville, N.C.
Chadwick Docsh	Ayden, N.C.
Dennis Durham	Four Oaks, N.C.
Jack Edmondson Jr.	Maury, N.C.
Julie Edwards	Bladenboro, N.C.
Scott Edwards	Bladenboro, N.C.
Dave Elkin	Warsaw, N.C.
Angelo Enoch	Burlington, N.C.
Robert Fann	Salemburg, N.C.
Elizabeth (Beth) Farrell	Cary, N.C.
John Fleming	Halifax, N.C.
Joy Morgan Fleming	Zebulon, N.C.
Robert (Rob) Fleming	Scotland Neck, N.C.
Elizabeth Foster	Roper, N.C.
Allison Fowler	Cornelius, N.C.
Daniel Fowler	Roanoke Rapids, N.C.
Jennifer A. Gasque	St. Pauls, N.C.
Mike Gaster	Sanford, N.C.
Walt Gerard	Washington, N.C.
Howard Gentry	King, N.C.

Richard Goforth	Monroe, N.C.
Steve Grady	Mount Olive, N.C.
McRay Greene Jr.	Walnut Cove, N.C.
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Matt Grissom	Henderson, N.C.
Ben Haines	Elizabeth City, N.C.
Bobby Ham	Snow Hill, N.C.
Stacy Ham Thomas	Snow Hill, N.C.
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Miles J. Hamrick	Shelby, N.C.
Farrah Hargett	Monroe, N.C.
Charles Harrell	Stantonsburg, N.C.
Norman Harrell	Lucama, N.C.
Norris Harrell	Macclesfield, N.C.
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David Haynes	Dobson, N.C.
David Heath	Dover, N.C.
Caroline G. Hines	Selma, N.C.
David Hinnant	Kenly, N.C.
Casey L. Hinnant	Garner, N.C.
Kenneth Hinnant	Kenly, N.C.
Der Xiong Holcombe	Statesville, N.C.
Russell Horton	Hurdle Mills, N.C.
Chase Hubbard	Asheville, N.C.
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Josh Hudson	Newton Grove, N.C.
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John Isley	Reidsville, N.C.
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Major Ivey	Mount Olive, N.C.
Rouse Ivey	Mount Olive, N.C.
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Kevin Johnson	Pikeville, N.C.
Lendy Y. Johnson	Rolesville, N.C.
Teresa Johnson	Mocksville, N.C.

Tony Jones	Mount Olive, N.C.
Thomas Joyner	Rocky Mount, N.C.
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Sandy Langdon	Dunn, N.C.
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Summer Lanier	Wallace, N.C.
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Donny Lassiter	Conway, N.C.
Mark Lassiter	Conway, N.C.
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A.K. Leach Jr.	Raeford, N.C.
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Susan Leggett	Nashville, N.C.
Cody Lewis	Fuquay-Varina, N.C.
Dan Lewis	Orrum, N.C.
Steve Lilley*	Williamston, N.C.
Stephen C. Lilley Jr.	Williamston, N.C.
Dwight Little	Durham, N.C.
Craig Lovette	Lumberton, N.C.
Lex Mann Jr.	Washington, N.C.
Gregory Manning	Nashville, N.C.
Brandon Marshall	Engelhard, N.C.
Dana H. Massey	Mebane, N.C.
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Milton Sawyer Jr.	Greenville, N.C.
Dewey Scott	Lucama, N.C.

Linwood Scott III	Lucama, N.C.
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Wiley Stancill	Ayden, N.C.
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Manley Stovall	Sandy Ridge, N.C.
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Clint Strickland	Salemburg, N.C.
Reginald Strickland	Mount Olive, N.C.
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Jay Sullivan	Faison, N.C.
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Victor Swinson	Mount Olive, N.C.
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Kent Turlington	Coats, N.C.

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Kerry Venable II	Belews Creek, N.C.
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Brandon Warren	Clinton, N.C.
Brian Warren	Newton Grove, N.C.
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Richard Whitaker	Climax, N.C.
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Larry Wooten	Raleigh, N.C.
Bryant Worley	Princeton, N.C.
Harold Wright	Bladenboro, N.C.

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North Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association Inc.
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