

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden or indoor plants.



Resources for People with Disabilities

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) has provided a central place to share valuable information about COVID-19 to help people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families stay safe and healthy. Please visit the COVID-19 resource page on the NCCDD website (nccdd.org) and feel free to share with your community.

Please note that information about COVID-19 is constantly changing as updates occur, and it is important to get accurate information from reliable sources. For the most up-to-date and reliable COVID-19 information for North Carolina, please refer to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) COVID-19 website: www.ncdhhs.gov.

A Letter From Commissioner of Agriculture to the Agricultural Community

This letter was written by Steven Troxler, NC Commissioner of Agriculture, on March 19: Napoleon Bonaparte is often credited with the quote, "An Army marches on its stomach." With that, he acknowledged that food is one of the most essential elements to survival.

We are fortunate in North Carolina to have a strong agricultural industry, which means consumers have access to fresh, local foods. Agriculture and agribusiness represent our state's leading industry and while we continue to navigate through this unprecedented global pandemic, we remain focused on keeping farms, agribusinesses and allied industries operating with minimal interruptions. Many people in the state and beyond rely on our farmers and our agribusiness companies, and I know they are up to the challenge.

The food supply chain works in a well-established rhythm, with each sector from production to distribution playing a critical role in meeting consumer needs. We know successful production leans heavily on such essential partners as fertilizer manufacturers, ag chemical companies and potting mix makers. This outbreak will demand we remain flexible and adaptive – qualities that I know our agricultural community have called on time and time again.

Together we will overcome any obstacles we may face going forward. Please reach out if you have issues of concern. I can assure you we are continuing to monitor the changing landscape of this pandemic and what it means for our state.

At the department, we are:

- monitoring issues with H2A workers
- identifying essential functions of our labs with the focus on keeping ag moving forward, i.e.

- Agronomic Services nematode lab
- Food safety services
- communicating with federal and state agencies about agricultural concerns and needs. Specifically, we are asking the federal government to streamline its processes to make sure we can continue with our business/functions.
- offering what guidance we can to agritourism farms, wineries, farmers markets and roadside stands.

To keep everyone in the loop, we have a COVID-19 link on our homepage at www.ncagr.gov where we will provide departmental updates on what is open, closed, cancelled or rescheduled. I encourage you to check that link often to stay up to date.

Arm yourself with knowledge. There are many good resources available, including these from the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html; the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services at www.ncdhhs.gov; and N.C. State University at foodsafety.ces.ncsu.edu/covid-19-resources.

I know we will get through this. I pray for your well-being and safety.

Anson County's Local Food and Farms

North Carolina has one of the most robust farmers market networks in the country, with over 230 markets and roadside stands. With the closing of dine-in restaurants and more demand for meats and other store-bought foods, here is a list of some Anson markets and farms open and ready to fill the grocery gap:

- Browncreekcreamery.com (Order online and pickup at the farm in Wadesboro): hand-crafted farmstead cheeses; mild cheddar, pepper cheddar, curd and fromage.
- Chad Horne Farm, 704-695-2551 On-farm pickup in Peachland: ground beef, boneless stew beef, chuck roast, boneless ribeye steak, steak tenderloin, N.Y. Strip.
- Peaches and Cream, roadside stand at 2735 US Hwy 74W, Wadesboro: strawberries (soon!), vegetables, NC honey, homemade ice cream and cobbler.
- Rayfield's Meat Center, specializing in whole hog sausage, plus many other pork products. Recently added beef ribeye and ground chuck.
- Wild Hog Farms, porch pick-up or delivery from Wadesboro. Message Homestead & Hustle on Facebook: bulk sausage, Boston butt, tenderloin, smoked bacon, and smoked sliced ham.
- Greenefarmbeef.com in Peachland, NC. Beef sold by the cut, quarter (approx. 125 lbs), half (approx. 250 lbs), or whole (approx. 500 lbs). Please call 704-272-9098, or 704-221-5227 for more information or orders. Deposit may be required.

Even more Anson markets will open in the summer, including Lilesville's roadside stand at Centenary AME Zion Church, and the Anson County Farmers Market in mid-June. We'll keep you posted on seasonal markets at "NC Cooperative Extension – Anson County" Facebook page.

Also this summer, check out on-line products from Bountifulharvestfarmnc.com in Polkton, for a delicious selection of heritage breed poultry products. They are currently accepting pre-orders for late June.

Don't despair over the sight of bare shelves at the stores, consider "growing" your knowledge of local foods, farms, and markets of Anson County!

If you would like to add your farm to Anson's growing list of locally sourced food, please contact Anson's Horticulture Agent Aimee Colf at aimee_colf@ncsu.edu or 910-206-1224. The Express will continue to publish updated information. This article was submitted by Aimee Colf, Horticultural Agent at the Anson County Extension

Agricultural Events & Programs Canceled or Postponed

The following April & May 2020 agricultural events and programs have been canceled or postponed until further notice.

- Refuge Adventures (April 9-13) – CANCELED
- 4-H Volunteer Leaders Meeting (April 14) – TENTATIVELY
- District ECA Field Day (APRIL 28) – CANCELED
- Spring Paper Clover Campaign (April 29-May 10) – *CANCELED *This is a national event. We will not be participating as a group, but individuals can still go to the Tractor Supply in Wadesboro to purchase clovers.
- County Presentation, Fashion Revue (April 30) – CANCELED TENTATIVELY
- Talent and Creative Talent Show (April 30) – CANCELED TENTATIVELY
- DISC Training (May 1) – POSTPONED
- Leadership Anson/Ag Day (May 5) – POSTPONED
- Science Program at Refuge for Rockrest Elementary (May 7) – CANCELED
- Freezer Meals Class (May 20) – POSTPONED

Affordable Care Act Offers Hope During Coronavirus

Providing free help to those losing health coverage due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

NC Navigators are here to help! North Carolinians can call 1-855-733-3711 (toll-free) or visit ncnavigator.net to schedule a free over-the-phone appointment

March 23 marked the 10th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act's passage into law. Over the last ten years, the law has provided comprehensive, affordable health coverage for hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians.

North Carolinians who have lost their coverage due to the Coronavirus pandemic are eligible to enroll in coverage on HealthCare.gov, the health insurance marketplace established by the Affordable Care Act. This special enrollment period is available for a period of 60 days from the consumer's initial loss of coverage. Any Marketplace coverage will cover the consumer through the remainder of 2020 unless they enroll in other coverage. Those who have questions or need help enrolling in Marketplace coverage can call 1-855-733-3711 (toll-free) or visit ncnavigator.net to schedule a free, over-the-phone appointment with an NC Navigator.

"For 10 years, the Affordable Care Act has provided so many North Carolinians with the peace of mind that comes with health coverage," Mark Van Arnem, director of the NC Navigator Consortium, said. "As navigators, we are proud to have played a part in this effort and hope we can continue enrolling North Carolinians in affordable coverage for decades to come."

"This anniversary comes at a poignant time for the Affordable Care Act, as untold numbers of North Carolinians stand to lose their private health coverage due to the Coronavirus. We want to make it easy for folks who have lost coverage due to this pandemic to get covered. Call us or visit our website to book an over-the-phone appointment, or just to find additional Coronavirus resources. We are here to help. Time is limited for those affected to enroll, so it is important that folks act quickly," Van Arnem said.

Consumers can call 855-733-3711 or visit ncnavigator.net to schedule a free, confidential, one-on-one phone appointment with an NC Navigator.

NC Navigators are trained to help consumers enroll in coverage on HealthCare.gov. They can help consumers understand the details of the different plans, complete the enrollment process and determine their eligibility for financial assistance. Last year, nine in 10 North Carolinians who enrolled in coverage on HealthCare.gov received financial assistance, with the average premium being \$68.10.

In addition to residents who have lost coverage due to the Coronavirus, North Carolinians can still enroll in 2020 coverage on HealthCare.gov if they experience certain other life changes, like getting married or divorced, having a baby or adopting a child, moving, or losing health coverage. Learn more at: www.healthcare.gov/coverage-outside-open-enrollment/special-enrollment-period/.

NC Navigators are available throughout the year and can help consumers determine if they qualify for any Special Enrollment Period.

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Anson Family Optometric has cancelled all routine eye exams until further notice.

You should receive a phone call or text message from our office number if you have an appointment in the upcoming weeks ahead.

You may text our office number 704-694-3618 for non-routine eye care questions, or see our Facebook page for announcements.

Thank you, Anson Family Optometric, PLLC

CDC Health Reminder Release Today (3/17/2020): Healthcare facilities and clinicians should prioritize urgent and emergency visits and procedures now and for the coming several weeks. The following actions can preserve staff, personal protective equipment, and patient care supplies; ensure staff and patient safety; and expand available hospital capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Delay all elective ambulatory provider visits
- Reschedule elective and non-urgent admissions
- Delay inpatient and outpatient elective surgical and procedural cases
- Postpone routine dental and eyecare visits

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