

Tobacco Trust Fund Awards \$2.6 Million In Grants

By Administrator

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The N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (NCTTFC) has awarded nearly \$2.6 million through 18 new grants for agricultural and economic initiatives across the state. The grants place a high priority on projects that address ways to train people for new careers, stimulate the agricultural economy, help farmers with innovative ideas, and strengthen the sales of local foods. “Our Commission strives to fund the very best projects that will benefit farmers and their communities across the state,” said Bill Teague, Chairman of the NCTTFC. “We are very confident that by working with our partners these projects will make a significant impact on North Carolina agriculture.” The \$2.6 million supports projects that help farmers with facility enhancements, in addition to educational opportunities for high school and college students. These projects assist with innovative on farm projects, increase leadership skills and offer operational strategies that will help farmers increase farm income. One project this year includes a partnership with the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to study the production of malting barley. Another project partners with the NC Agromedicine institute to evaluate and develop strategies to decrease farm accidents.

In addition to the grants awarded, the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission renewed their partnerships with several cost share programs. Agricultural Reinvestment Fund, AgOptions and AgVentures provide micro grants directly to the farmers to support increasing farm profitability.

The NC General Assembly created the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission in 2000 to lessen the financial impact to farmers and tobacco-related businesses caused by the sharp decline of tobacco in the agricultural economy. The commission’s original funding was established through tobacco industry annual payments as a result of the Master Settlement Agreement. Its current funding comes from a set appropriation of funds. Since 2002, the NCTTF has awarded more than 340 grants to public and nonprofit agencies that meet the goals of strengthening the rural and tobacco-dependent economies of North Carolina.

For more information and a list of grant recipients, visit the NCTTFC website at www.tobaccotrustfund.org.