

# North Carolina Agriculture

Kaleb Rathbone

Assistant Commissioner, Western NC Agricultural Programs and Small Farms at North Carolina  
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services





# North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services



North Carolina  
Agriculture Commissioner  
*Steve Troxler*

## NCDA & CS Mission:

**To provide services that promote and improve agriculture, agribusiness and forests; protect consumers and businesses; and conserve farmland and natural resources for the prosperity of all North Carolinians.**

# The U.S. Agricultural Industry

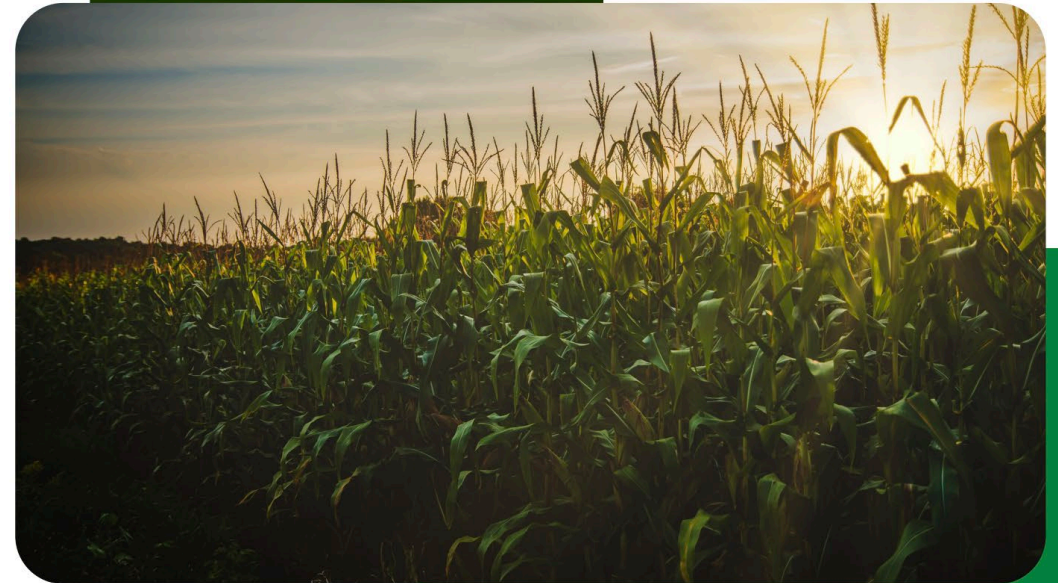
**\$1.264 trillion dollar industry (2021)**

1 U.S. farm feeds 166 people annually in the U.S. and abroad while only making up 1% of the U.S. population.

2 million farms make up America's landscape, and 98% are operated by families – individuals, family partnerships or family corporations.

Americans enjoy a food supply that is abundant, affordable and among the world's safest, thanks in large part to the efficiency and productivity of America's farm and ranch families.

The U.S. was the leading global agricultural exporter in 2020 with exports valued at \$147.9 billion.



# North Carolina Agricultural Industry



The N.C. agriculture industry — including food, fiber and forestry — is the third most diverse agriculture economy in the country, with more than 90 commodities and a robust animal agriculture presence that comprises nearly 70% of the industry.

- 45,000 farms
- #1 in sweet potatoes, tobacco and poultry/egg cash receipts
- #6 in livestock cash receipts
- #9 in all farm cash receipts

## Top 10 Commodities in NC

- |                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Broilers - \$3.6 billion       | 6. Tobacco - \$456.5 million          |
| 2. Hogs - \$2.2 billion           | 7. Corn - \$441.9 million             |
| 3. Soybeans - \$456 million       | 8. Sweet Potatoes - \$323.9 million   |
| 4. Chicken Eggs - \$451.5 million | 9. Cotton - \$276.6 million           |
| 5. Turkeys - \$674.9 million      | 10. Cattle & Calves - \$219.2 million |





# Economic Impact - N.C.

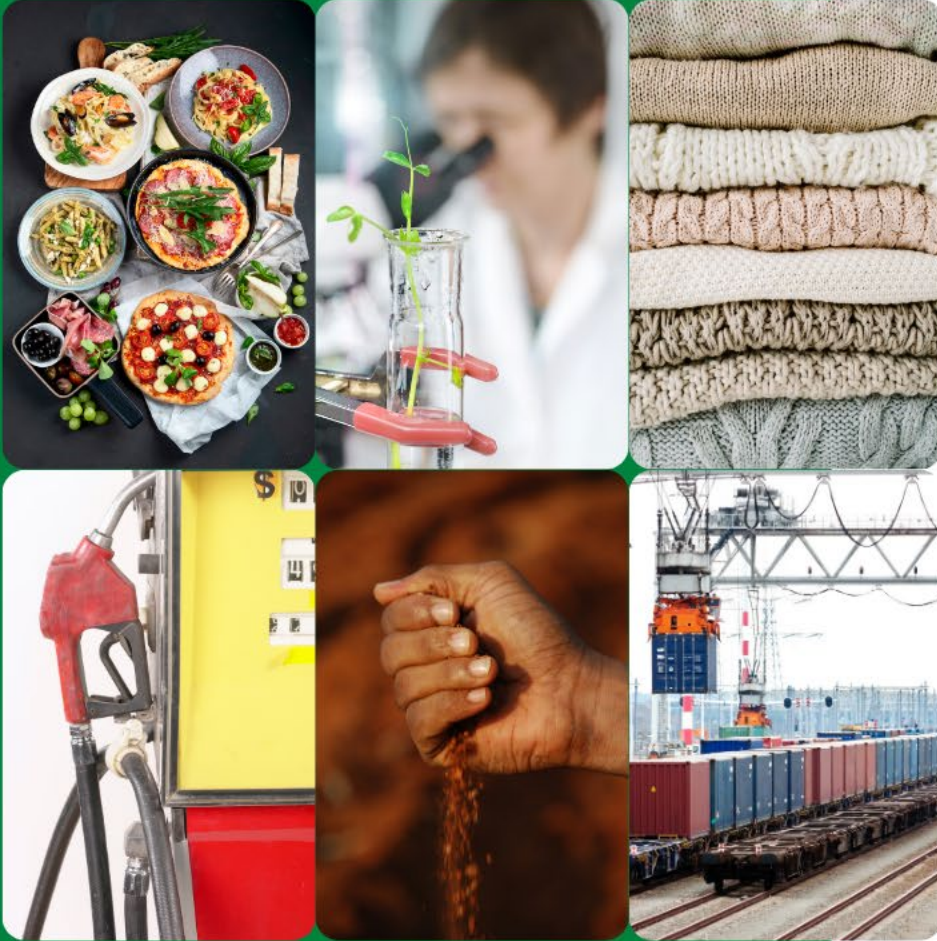


*Agriculture touches your daily life everyday in every way - made possible by our farmers, growers and makers here and NC and beyond.*

Agriculture is a 92.7 Billion dollar industry.

Agriculture and Agribusiness employees one in 6 people in the state totaling 772,000 jobs, or 17.5 percent of total jobs in North Carolina.

There are nearly 19 million acres of forest land, or approximately 60% of state's total land base.





# Agriculture and the Environment

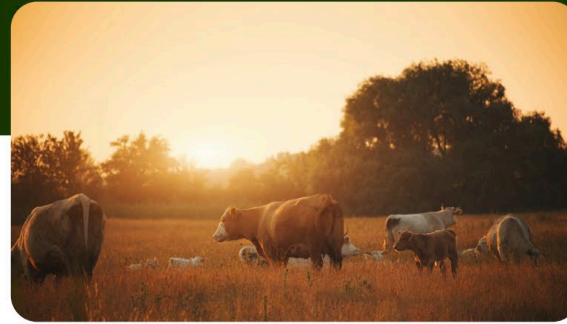
*Farmers are the true environmentalist, they have dedicated their life to the success of the soil.*



## Soil and Water

Healthy soil is the foundation of productive, sustainable agriculture. Managing for soil health allows farmers to work with the land to:

- Reduce erosion
- Maximize water infiltration
- Improve nutrient cycling
- Save money on inputs
- Improve the resiliency of their working land.



## Carbon Sequestration

Soil carbon sequestration in grazing lands provides a long-term alternative to mitigate atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions.

- Researchers have estimated that from 29.5 to 110 million metric tons of carbon can be sequestered annually in grazing lands in the United States (Follett et al. 2001).



## Land and habitat preservations

- Agricultural Conservation Easement
- Forest management focuses on managing vegetation, restoring ecosystems, reducing hazards, and maintaining forest health.
- More than 1/3 U.S. land is used for pasture - preserving habitats from Urban sprawl.

# Technology across the Agriculture Industry

*Cutting edge research and technology*

**Precision agriculture** is the science of improving crop yields and assisting management decisions using advanced technology tools to increase production, reduce labor time, and ensure the effective management of fertilizers and irrigation processes.

- Irrigation Water Management
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Yield monitoring and mapping
- Grid soil sampling and variable-rate fertilizer application
- Information management

## **Cutting edge genetic research and implementation**

- CRISPR gene editing
- Genetics and breeding in animal agriculture





# Opportunities for growth

The general consensus is that global agriculture production has to be increased by about 60-70 percent from the current levels to meet the increased food demand in 2050.

## Through:

Investing in research to increase yields, productivity, and breeding.

Capitalizing on precision agriculture to maximize farming operations.

Continuing to drive export opportunities for NC farmers.

Being a leader in policy, marketing, advocating, and education.

Continuing to put our farmers, growers, and makers first.



North Carolina Agriculture will continue to be a leader in Agriculture nationwide and globally.





# CONTACT



## Kaleb Rathbone

**Email Address**

kaleb.rathbone@ncagr.gov

**Website**

<https://www.ncagr.gov/>

**Location**

1001 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1001