on the move


Small Farms Week
it's a growing business
March 20–26, 2005

North Carolina small farmers looking for guidance and support in their quest to remain viable would do well to study the examples set by some select Small Farmers of the Year.

Stanley Hughes, the 2004 Small Farmer of the Year, and Alex and Betsy Hitt, the 1995 Small Farmers of the Year, are all blazing trails for farm diversification. Hughes and the Hitts are examples of what Cooperative Extension leaders say is progressive farming — the kind that helps farmers recover from the changes in the tobacco program as well as weather competition from corporate farming.

As part of the 19th Annual Small Farms Week activities, coordinated through The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University and scheduled for March 20-26, Extension leaders are focused on programs and information to help farmers succeed. A session on the tobacco buyout is scheduled for the morning of the Small Farmers Appreciation Day on March 23, and various programs are offered throughout the week on strategies for alternative enterprises.

“The landscape of agriculture is changing,” says Extension Administrator Dr. M. Ray McKinnie. “The tobacco buyout has brought about another set of circumstances that small farmers are going to have to deal with. Now is the time for farmers to really sit down and think and look at what they do.

“Our obligation is to continue to explore niche markets and opportunities for small farmers to engage in. We have a responsibility to look into and explore novel ideas, whether they’re generated by farmers or scientists.”

For example, at the Hitts’ Peregrine Farm in Alamance County, the couple uses high tunnels to raise tomatoes. They also raise scores of vegetables and cut flowers, as well as pastured turkeys. The Hitts farm fewer than five acres, but are masterful in their use of crop rotation and other techniques that protect their crops from insects and disease, says Dr. John O’Sullivan, an Extension farm management specialist who works with the Hitts. O’Sullivan and McKinnie also commend the couple for the way they study market trends to gauge what they grow.

“Innovation and creativity are going to have to be the wave of the future and farmers will have to think of ways of capturing and producing enterprises that capture an opportunity in the marketplace,” McKinnie says.

The Farmer to Farmer Mentoring program, started last year to use area farmers as grass-roots experts in helping their peers is an innovation McKinnie cites for encouraging farmers to seek help they might not otherwise get. Another example is the work that goes on at Hughes’ Pine Knot Farms where, based on research outcomes at A&T, pastured hogs and chickens are being specially fed and bred and marketed to upscale restaurants. Hughes also raises collards, sweet potatoes, and organic tobacco.

“Stanley Hughes is a good example of a grower who keeps abreast of what’s current in the industry and goes one step further to explore what the next market opportunity might be and that’s where small farmers need to be,” says Dr. Keith Baldwin, a program leader and horticulture specialist who works with Hughes. “They need to be looking at what’s hot tomorrow, what they want to eat tomorrow, not just what they want to eat today.”

Small-scale agriculture, defined as land that produces $250,000 or less annually in gross income, accounts for about 95 percent of all farm land in the state. The 19th Annual Small Farms Week celebration recognizes the contributions and accomplishments of small farmers in North Carolina.

“Farming is going through some tough times.”

– Dr. M. Ray McKinnie

- In 2020, there were more than 9,250,000 African American-operated farms in the United States. There are fewer than 18,500 today. The current rate of agricultural loss by African-American farmers is over two times that of other American farmers.
- More than 80 percent of agricultural subsidies go to the top 30 percent of farms, and of that 30 percent, 2 percent alone get nearly 30 percent of those subsidies.
- In 2002, 63.7 percent of American farmers sold less than $10,000 annually; 15.5 percent sold $10,000 to $49,000 annually; 4.1 percent sold $50,000 to $99,000 annually; 9.7 percent sold $100,000 to $499,000 annually; and 6.6 percent sold more than $500,000 annually.

Source: Grace Factory Farm Project

Stanley Hughes, the 2004 Small Farmer of the Year.
Small Farms Week Schedule of Events  **March 20–26**

**Monday, March 21:**

**9 a.m.** – Kickoff in Orange County at the Schley Grange Hall in northern Orange County

**9:15 a.m.** – **Putting Knowledge, Marketing and Diversification to Work**
Two agricultural experts discuss integrated approaches for developing small farms as successful business models.

**Knowledge: University Research 2005**
– Dr. Keith Baldwin, program leader and horticulture specialist for The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University, talks about current research.

**Marketing and Diversification**
– Franklin County Farmer/Photographer Charles Gupton discusses how he successfully manages and markets his multiple farming interests, which include produce, beef-cattle, hog, chicken and other agricultural production.

**10:25 a.m.** – **Orange Oratory**
Successful Orange County farmers explain what inspired them to pursue new farm markets and how they manage their farms, while an Extension expert provides insight on new enterprises.

**Howard McAdams Jr., McAdams Farm**
– After making a transition from tobacco, this multi-generational farm now produces strawberries, vegetables, flowers and beef.

**Stanley Hughes, Pine Knot Farms**
– In addition to organic tobacco, Hughes also raises pastured poultry and hogs and produce. The 2004 Small Farmer of the Year shares his insight.

**Ken Dawson, Maple Springs Gardens**
– A mainstay at the Carrboro Farmer’s Market, this small farmer raises chemical-free produce and is also an organizer of a new Community Supported Agriculture enterprise.

**Karen McAdams**
– Orange County Extension Agent, McAdams, shares new agricultural enterprises.

**11:40 a.m.** – Lunch on site

**12:50 p.m.** – Video Presentation of the 2004 Gilmer L. and Clara Y. Dudley Small Farmer of the Year

**1 to 3 p.m.** – Tour of Maple Springs Gardens

**2 to 4 p.m.** – **Loaded Logs: Grow Mushrooms and Reap Cash**
Learn how easy it is to become part of the fast-growing mushroom industry, whose small farmers inoculate spawn into logs and let Mother Nature do most of the work. Take part in on-site demonstrations.

Presenter, Dr. Omon Isikhuemhen.

**Pender County Extension Center**

**Tuesday, March 22:**

**9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**
**A&T University Farm Show**
The campus’ largest classroom, the 568-acre University Farm, is the site of this new event on the roster of Small Farms Week activities. Farm suppliers and vendors will come here to exhibit their latest, state-of-the-art equipment and supplies. Factory representatives on site. Tour select farm demonstration sites and interact with A&T agricultural staff.

**5:30 p.m.** – The Agribusiness Council of North Carolina will host a reception with small farmers. **COLTRANE HALL**

**Wednesday, March 23:**

**Small Farmers Appreciation Day at N.C. A&T**

**8 to 9:30 a.m.** – Registration.

**10 to 10:45 a.m.** – **Tobacco Buyouts**
– Dr. Blake Brown, Associate Professor of Agriculture and Resource Economics, N.C. State University. A nuts and bolts presentation on the Tobacco Buyout program. A question and answer session will follow.

**11 a.m.** – **Legacy of the Leaf: A Roundtable Discussion on the Impact of the Tobacco Buyout**

**Presenters:**
– **Stephon Bowens, Land Loss Project,** discusses the implications of the tobacco buyout for heir property rights.

**Phillip Farland,** N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, talks to farmers about agency programs that help farmers make a transition to alternative crops.

**Dr. Keith Baldwin,** The Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A&T State University, offers updates on programs that help farmers learn how to grow and market alternative crops.

**12:30 p.m.** – **Small Farm Luncheon**

**Speaker** – **Dr. Claud D. Evans,** recipient of the first Patrick Madden Sustainable Agriculture Award presented last year by the National SARE Program of Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service.

**Pender County Extension Center**

**Outpost** – Posters in the Student Research Competition on view in the Stallings lobby. The competition is co-sponsored by the Gamma Sigma Delta agricultural honor society and the Agricultural Research Program of the SAES.

**Thursday, March 24:**

**1 to 2:30 p.m.** – **Research Roundtable: A Recap of the SAES Research in 2004**
Researchers from the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at A&T will discuss their alternative enterprises and production projects affecting the University Farm. The work being presented contributes to the financial well-being of small-scale farmers and rural communities.

**Carver Hall Auditorium**

**3 p.m.** – **Ribion Cutting and Open House for New Greenhouse**

Chancellor James C. Renick, Dr. Alton Thompson, dean of the SAES, faculty, staff and invited guests request the honor of your presence as they officially open the new Reid Greenhouse.

**Reid Greenhouse**

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*Check the webpage for updates to the schedule:

[www.ag.ncat.edu](http://www.ag.ncat.edu)*

*A $15 registration fee is required for the educational forum. Small farmers who have registered in advance are exempt. Registration deadline is March 15.*
Small Farms Week Registration Form

Each individual should complete a separate registration form. Check each of the events you will attend.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location/Time</th>
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<tbody>
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Name

City

State/Zip

Telephone Number

e-mail address

Affiliation (please check the appropriate box(es))

- [ ] Small farmer
- [ ] Cooperative Extension employee
- [ ] Agency Representative, Name agency
- [ ] Other, indicate name of group/organization
- [ ] Individual

To register —

- Fax this form to (336) 256-0810
- e-mail to deborahh@ncat.edu
- call (336) 256-0812
- mail to: Cooperative Extension Program, N.C. A&T State University, P.O. Box 21928, Greensboro, N.C. 27420
Robeson County farmer Lucius Epps is one of the success stories highlighted in The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T’s latest impact summary Solutions for North Carolina™. The premiere of the Solutions video — which complements a companion publication and Solutions on CD — will get under way at 9:30 a.m. in Coltrane Hall on Small Farms Day, March 23. Check inside for the complete Small Farms Week lineup, and a registration form.