



Farmland Protection Plan

Taylor Loftis
QNRC Chair





Background

- Established in 1988 by the Gaston BOC
- Identify environmental issues and recommend policies to the BOC
- 7 – member committee appointed by BOC

QNRC Members

Dr. Steve Tracy	CaroMont Pathologist
Kyle Lineberger	Cattleman, Gaston Farm Bureau Chair
Taylor Loftis, Chair	Air Quality Engineer
Dr. Mike McLeod	Belmont Abbey Biology Professor
Dr. Michelle Ellis	Science Curriculum Specialist
Johnny Denton	Civil Engineer
Jim Burke	Retired Natural Resources Agent

Gaston County Farmland Protection Plan

N.C. ranks second in nation in potential agricultural land lost by 2040

Based on current development rates, 1.1 million acres of ag lands will be converted

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North Carolina ranks second in the nation in potential agricultural land lost by the year 2040. Over the last 20 years, the landscape of North Carolina has changed. And, according to the latest report on farmland loss in the United States, the landscape could change even more dramatically over the next 20 years.





Benefits of Protecting Gaston County Farmland?

- Food security
- Local jobs and keeping money local
- Tourism / Education
- Creating a sense of community and open space
- Lower costs of services
- Environmental benefits

Gaston County

LOCAL FARMS AND FOOD PROFILE

DATA FROM 2017 & 2012 USDA CENSUS. MORE INFO AT GO.NCSU.EDU/AGCENSUS

2012-2017



2022 USDA census will be released in early 2024

FY 2021-2023 GASTON COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN



C2 Foster a culture of healthy living in Gaston County.

Description: Achieving a “culture of healthy living” means that every county resident has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Recognizing the differing health challenges that residents may face – due to factors such as pre-existing conditions, socio-economic status, risk factors, living conditions and life experiences – is crucial to providing services in an equitable way.

Strategic Initiatives:

- Provide effective health education by understanding diverse languages and cultures and adapting services so that residents understand and accept assistance.
- Increase access to healthy food options, nutrition education, and safe, accessible areas for physical activity and exercise.

Performance Targets:

- In partnership with Kinlegra Health and CaroMont Health, launch a locally controlled food enterprise (cooperative) by May 2021 in the Highland Community.
- Update the Gaston County Farmland Protection Plan by FY23 and include actionable measures aimed to support agriculture and expand availability of locally-grown fresh produce.
- Analyze and improve the effectiveness of health education efforts across diverse groups of residents.

Update the Gaston County Farmland Protection Plan and include actionable measures aimed to support agriculture and expand the availability of locally-grown produce.





2009 Farmland Protection Plan

- Approved by BOC
- Required by USDA in order for County farmers to increase access cost-share funding from:
 - **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**
 - **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
 - **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)**



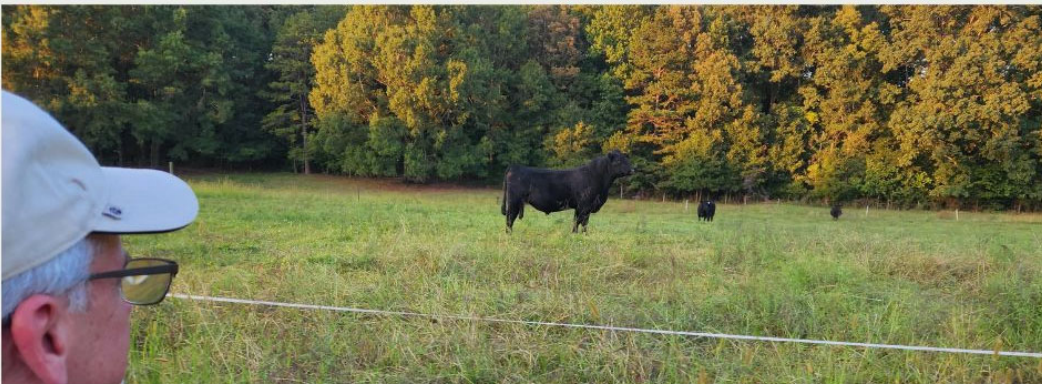
- A framework to assist the agricultural community and local governments in working together to support and enhance agriculture.
- The plan contained broad goals but lacked measurable outcomes.
- Some goals have been addressed but not in a systematic way.





Issues Facing Agriculture

- Rising input costs
- Opportunity to develop
- Scarce labor
- Aging farmers
- Limited markets
- Lack of community awareness



**“We know what
the problems
are.....**

**... but we need help coming
up with the solutions”**



2020 Guilford County *Farmland Protection Plan*

PRESERVING THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

2020 FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN



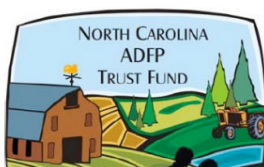
A Farmland Protection Plan for Davie County, North Carolina

Prepared for the Davie County Center of
North Carolina Cooperative Extension
by Smithson Mills Inc.

Lead Researcher & Editor: Taylor Sisk

July 2017

Funded by



Forsyth County Farmland Protection Plan

*Growing the Family Farm Economy
and Conserving Rural Character*





Next Steps

May 2023

Advise BOC / Get Input

June 2023

Form Steering Committee

August 2023

Community Meetings / Surveys

Fall 2023

Plan Revisions by QNRC / Soil and Water

Jan 2024

Present to BOC

2024

Incorporate into County Comprehensive Plan and UDO