



N.C. A&T Cooperative Extension's Hurricane Relief Impact

- Return on Investment for agricultural research and Cooperative Extension outreach is 20 dollars for every public dollar invested, according to the United States Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service.
- Agriculture is North Carolina's top economic endeavor, with 111 billion dollars in economic impact, according to North Carolina's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.



Debris six months post-storm at Manna Food Bank in Buncombe County.

- The University Farm and Cooperative Extension at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University have had a profound impact on Hurricane Helene relief. We have agents in some of the hardest hit counties, including Yancy and Buncombe counties. Our workers:

- Conducted search and rescue operations immediately after the disaster.
 - Coordinated early community relief efforts, such as distribution of food, water and heating fuel.
 - Donated supplies, such as emergency fencing and feed for livestock.
 - Advised local farmers on getting ready to produce a crop in 2025, including determining if their flooded land is suitable for growing.
 - Determined where reseeding is needed in landslides areas.
 - Worked with private organizations to obtain grants to assist farmers.
- Educated farmers, many of whom lost acreage, on new growing methodologies that will allow them to produce what they need to stay in business.
 - Assisted farmers with downed timber and suggested ways to utilize that resource, such as using the wood to rebuild barns.



- Our employees also have taken unpaid time to volunteer in these counties and help these farms, which really are small businesses, recover.
- With agents in Ashe, Buncombe, Avery, Watauga, Mitchell, Yancey, Alexander, Swain, Jackson and other counties in Western N.C., Cooperative Extension at N.C. A&T joined our partner land-grant NCSU Extension in these activities:

- Livestock agents in Buncombe, Watauga, Avery, and other nearby counties banded together to coordinate hay deliveries to farmers who had lost their feed for livestock.
- Extension agents assisted growers in obtaining the resources needed to reestablish their farms by connecting them with USDA's Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service as well as other agencies.
- They helped business owners in the region raise more than \$9,000 in cash donations and used the money to purchase fencing, plastic for vegetable beds, greenhouse hoops and other horticulture and agriculture supplies that washed away in the storm.



Storm damage in Watauga County, April, 2025.

- Agents distributed information on food safety, fighting mold, safely mixing baby formula with water and more. Some staff volunteered at distribution sites, giving out bottled water and helping people sign up for D-SNAP benefits.
- They developed programming to educate established farmers and new growers on new business models and potential new and specialty crops. The educational programs were designed to help growers be as successful as possible while growing on reduced acreage.

Efforts to combat the agricultural and economic damage caused by Hurricane Helene are ongoing even now, as our extension agents continue their work positively impacting their local communities.