

A green tractor is shown in a field, partially obscured by a semi-transparent green overlay. The tractor is facing forward, and its large rear wheel and smaller front wheel are visible. The background shows a line of trees under a bright sky.

Farmland Preservation

Henderson County
Board of Commissioners – December 4, 2023



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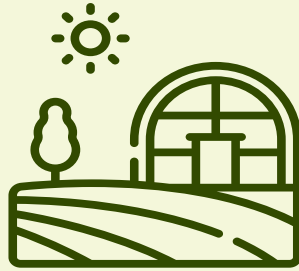
Why Farmland Preservation



What is Farmland Preservation



Farmland Preservation Funding



Why Farmland Preservation?

Farmland Loss in NC

- North Carolina is the second-most threatened state for farmland loss
 - 732,000 acres of agricultural land converted between 2001 and 2016
 - *78% of agricultural land was converted to low-density residential uses*
- North Carolina is projected to lose over 1 million acres of agricultural land by 2040
 - Loss of nearly 20,000 jobs
 - Loss of 9,000 farms
 - Loss of \$1.25 billion in farming output

Agriculture in Henderson County

- Agriculture (including managed forests) covers 26% of land in the County (60,000 acres)
 - Nearly a \$1 billion industry
 - Approximately 4,000 jobs



Farmland Loss in Henderson County

- Henderson County lost 2,058 acres of agricultural land between 2020 and 2023
 - The County lost 1/3 of orchard land between 2002 and 2017
- Example causes of farmland loss include low-density residential and commercial development, growth of utility services



Why Preserve Farmland in Henderson County

Quality of life & rural character

The infographic features a central vertical green line. To its left are two rounded rectangular boxes: a light green one at the top and a dark green one at the bottom. To its right are two dark green rounded rectangular boxes, one at the top and one at the bottom. At the base of the vertical line is a thick, dark brown horizontal bar.

Food production & security

Agribusiness & agritourism

Economic & employment benefits



What is Farmland Preservation?

Agricultural Conservation Easements

- Purchase of Agricultural Easements programs (PACE) permanently preserves agricultural lands from future residential, commercial, or industrial development.
 - Voluntary, incentive-based program
 - Binding agreement recorded at Register of Deeds
 - Provides an alternative to restrictive land use
 - Property remains in private ownership
 - Reduces conflict between agricultural uses and other uses
 - Preserves agricultural land for future generations
 - Allows land to remain in Present-Use Value

Wake County, NC

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

- Wake County has lost **22,964 acres** of agricultural land (~20%) since 2014
- To protect the nearly **700** farms within the County, a **Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance** was created using three different preservation tools



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

- Permanently protect and conserve land for agricultural uses
- Better integrate policies of government that may conflict with farmland protection
- Reduce land conflicts between agriculture and other uses
- The easement is a recorded deed in which the landowner enters an agreement with the Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Binding agreement stays with the property even as it changes ownership and is regularly monitored by our staff and Advisory Board
- Tax benefits may include tax incentives, federal income tax reduction and estate tax deduction

Haywood County, NC

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Haywood County utilizes the **Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund** (ADFPTF) to create **Agricultural Conservation Easements** on farmland, horticultural land, and forestland. There are currently **over 20** ADFP Agricultural Conservations Easements within the County.

The County also uses **Voluntary Agricultural Districts** (VAD) and **Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts** (EVAD) under their Farmland Preservation Ordinance.

The Haywood **County Soil and Water Conservation District** is responsible for the general Farmland Preservation duties. The County **Agricultural Advisory Committee** approves and disapproves applications for the VAD and EVAD programs.

- Haywood County has over **64,000 acres** of farmland
- Over **700** farms
- Produces over **\$17 million** from livestock, dairy, and crops

- Farms Enrolled in VAD: **88** (5,896,30 acres)
- Farms Enrolled in EVAD: **24** (1,720,70 acres)





Questions?