

Water legislation flowing through N.C. House of Reps

The Water Resources Improvement Act of 2009, which would establish a new cost-share program for landowners, has been floated in the N.C. House of Representatives.

At publication deadline, however, HB 1337 had been approved by the House Water Resources and Infrastructure Committee and sent to the House Appropriations Committee for further consideration.

N.C. Rep. Pryor Gibson sponsored the legislation, which he said has been needed for years.

"Two years ago we got serious about North Carolina's long-term water use," Gibson said.

It remains to be seen how the state's budgetary dilemma will impact this water legislation, but Farm Bureau has been fiercely advocating the bill.

"It represents a pragmatic approach to solving North Carolina's long term water needs," said Mitch Peele, NCFB senior director of public policy.

The bill creates a water resources cost-share program to assist landowners, including farmers, to increase or preserve water storage capacity, develop and improve surface and groundwater supplies and implement water conservation and efficiency practices.

Only landowners in North Carolina can qualify for assistance under the program, which is limited to 75 percent of the average cost of each project. Program funding is limited to a maximum of \$150,000 per year per applicant.

Farm Bureau continues to encourage volunteer leaders to keep up the communication in support of HB 1337 and in opposition to the Water Resources Policy Act of 2009 (SB907/HB1101).

"We are leading the fight for water rights and reasonable legislation that would help farmers and landowners implement best management practices to improve water resources for the future," Peele added.

Farm Bureau and 4-H



NCFB President Larry Wooten, center, recently hosted a group of 4-H students and advisers at the state office in Raleigh. The N.C. 4-H Association's Congress will hold the organization's official 100-year anniversary celebration July 21 at the N.C. State Fairgrounds in Raleigh.

For 100 years in North Carolina, 4-H has been guiding and teaching youngsters to grow up using their heads, hearts, hands and health.

And 4-H membership has helped mold many of North Carolina Farm Bureau's smart, honest and hard-working volunteer leaders and will almost certainly shape the leaders to come.

That's why NCFB not only celebrates 4-H's accomplishments over the last 100 years, but its Board of Directors has pledged \$250,000 over the next five years toward the program's continued efforts.

At the state and county level, NCFB's support goes back decades.

"It's a great youth development program," NCFB President Larry Wooten said. "I feel very strongly that Farm Bureau and 4-H make a good team, and I feel we have a responsibility to help a good youth organization."

See 4-H page 2...

Michael J. Martin, executive director of the 4-H Development Fund, said 4-H has plans to put NCFB's gift to good use.

The money will be used to support North Carolina 4-H Association programs and events, such as agricultural leadership and advocacy training, animal training skills development, public speaking practice challenges, and many other opportunities.

Today, 4-H programs serve more than 204,000 youth between the ages of 5 and 19 in N.C. and is the state's largest out-of-school youth development program. While over the years 4-H programming has expanded and kept up with the times, it has never left its agricultural and rural roots.

Martin said NCFB has been a valuable partner in the counties and at the state level, and 4-H is grateful and proud to stand with NCFB.

"The relationship at the county level is really the key to the strength and success of probably both our organizations," Martin said.

Wooten himself is a product of 4-H and said there was no day more important in his young life than the day of the 4-H meeting, "4-H and Farm Bureau, it's just a good fit."

For more information about the North Carolina 4-H Centennial Homecoming July 21 at the N.C. State Fairgrounds, please visit www.nc4h.org.

Changes to state pesticide rules adopted by N.C. Pesticide Board

Several new pesticide record-keeping rules went into effect May 1 following approval by the N.C. Pesticide Board.

The new rules involve recording the ending time of applications, the recording of daily applications and how long growers must maintain records.

The changes reflect recommendations of the 2008 Governor's Task Force on Preventing Agricultural Pesticide Exposure and implement the requirements of Senate Bill 847.

Growers making applications that fall under the scope of the federal Worker Protection Standard must now add the actual "end time" of application to the records under the change. This is in addition to the "time of the application" that is required to be posted before the application takes place under the current WPS regulations.

Also each day of application must be recorded as a separate application record. After application information has been displayed for the appropriate time (30 days after the restricted-entry period expires), the application information must now be maintained for a period of two years. This coincides with the USDA requirements for restricted-use pesticides.

Also effective May 1, aerial applicators must record the year, month, date and time of day when each pesticide application was completed for every pesticide application. Additionally, each day of aerial applications must be recorded as a separate record.

The commercial ground applicators regulation addressing the same issues for restricted-use pesticides became effective April 1.

Revised record keeping forms may be downloaded from the Structural Pest Control and Pesticides Division's Web page, www.ncagr.gov/SPCAP/pesticides/Cmfo.htm#RecordKeeping, or from your local Cooperative Extension Service.

Applicators requiring assistance with these or any pesticide regulations, may contact the NCDA&CS Pesticide Section at (919) 733-3556 for help.

ACTION REQUEST

N.C.'s DWQ has scheduled the following public hearings this month to receive comments on the proposed water monitoring rule detailed on page 4 in this issue:

June 9—7 p.m. Iredell County Center, Statesville.

June 11—7 p.m. James Sprunt CC, Kenansville.

June 15—7 p.m. Archdale Building, Raleigh.

June 18—7 p.m. Martin Community College, Williamston.

PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN ONE OF THESE HEARINGS!

<http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/aps/monitoringpetitionnotice.htm>

**THE
VOICE
OF AGRICULTURE®**

North Carolina Farm Bureau (NCFB) is the unified, statewide Voice of Agriculture®. Working through our grassroots organizations to enhance and strengthen the lives of rural North Carolinians, we strive to build strong, prosperous agricultural communities. We are a private, non-profit, grassroots organization that has been actively promoting farm and rural issues since 1936 through legislative and policy initiatives, member services, field representation, agricultural education, public relations and other programs.

North Carolina Farm Bureau
5301 Glenwood Ave.
Raleigh, NC 27612
(919) 782-1705
www.ncfb.org | leader@ncfb.org

General Assembly's urban powerbrokers need rural information

North Carolina Farm Bureau is working harder than ever to preserve agriculture's seat at the table of discussion in the current long session of the General Assembly.

As the state's population has continued its climb, North Carolina's rural importance is growing more unfamiliar to those in the state legislature.

Today, 85 percent of the decision-makers on Jones Street hail from the state's 15 urban counties, with a significantly smaller segment of the representation hailing from a farm background.

Much legislation has been rolled out this session that underscores the legislature's tremendous need to understand the importance of protecting agriculture.

For example, one proposal recommends an overhaul of the state's sales tax that would lower the tax on goods, but includes taxes on many services that have not previously been taxed.

North Carolina farmers would see changes to the sales tax exemptions for non-depreciable agricultural purchases for farmers with more than \$1 million in gross receipts. The state would stand to make an additional \$50 million in tax revenue off of farmers by this provision.

Additional revenue would also come from a \$.15

per pack hike on cigarettes, at a time when a recent federal increase is already starting to be felt in the tobacco industry.

The legislature is also considering two bills, which NCFB opposes, that shift water policy. SB 907 and its House companion HB 1101 cut into water rights. The bills call for permitting of private water users of more than 100,000 gallons per day, as well as calling for regional water control rather than local.

Urban legislators, however, don't always overlook the importance of agriculture. NCFB depends on the many urban legislators who seek new opportunities for renewable energy, protecting the agriculture research stations, protecting water rights, protecting the present use value tax system, and shielding agriculture from the efforts of animal activists who would interfere with how farmers and ranchers make decisions about care for their animals.

As these bills are discussed and debated, legislators need to hear from farmers about the impact of legislation on agriculture.

Stay in touch with lawmakers and keep an eye out for Action Alerts. Together, we are the Voice of Agriculture® in North Carolina and in the General Assembly.

Peanut Advisory Committee digs into legume issues

North Carolina Farm Bureau's Peanut Advisory Committee's most recent meeting was held in Williamston. Members discussed the state of their industry, heard the latest news from Congress and the General Assembly and talked about peanut-related events and issues.

Dan Ward gave a report from American Farm Bureau's annual meeting where he said the peanut committee discussed the possibility of taking advantage of green payments for rotating crops.

Peanut growers are sitting on a supply of peanuts as they head into the growing season. Growers had record yields last year, but the salmonella outbreak scared consumers away from buying. There might be some opportunities to sell excess peanuts for biofuels or to school nutrition programs, Ward said.

He also said the committee decided against making any comment on the recent salmonella outbreak, which was attributable to conditions in a processing plant and was unrelated to the growing process. However, it does support continued food

safety efforts and USDA's role in them.

Committee chairman Mike Belch gave out copies of a letter Republican Sen. Pat Roberts and Democrat Sen. Blanche Lincoln sent to Senate Budget Committee members Kent Conrad and Judd Gregg, expressing their opposition to cuts to direct payments found in President Obama's budget and efforts to reopen the 2008 Farm Bill.

Ward also said he traveled to New York for a National Peanut Board promotional event at Grand Central Terminal where growers and manufacturers handed out peanut snacks to passersby who had the chance to meet growers and learn more about the many benefits of peanuts and the safe methods growers and many responsible manufacturers use. They also introduced their new slogan, "Peanuts: Energy for the Good Life." At the end of the day, the group made a donation of food and money to the Food Bank for New York.

At the time of the meeting, many peanut companies had not yet set prices for contracts.

Public hearings set for proposed water monitoring rule

There are four public hearings scheduled this month on a water monitoring proposal that could cost livestock farmers a minimum of \$2,430 each year to collect samples of questionable value.

See the Action Request on page 2 of this newsletter for hearing dates and details. NCFB opposes this proposal.

“We have several concerns with the proposed monitoring rule including whether this monitoring is needed; will this effort produce any useable results under scientific analysis or just boxes of useless data; how the results will be used by DWQ and the public; and the tremendous cost to farmers,” said Anne Coan, N.C. Farm Bureau’s director of environmental affairs.

The proposed rule is the result of two Waterkeeper Alliance petitions filed with the state’s Environmental Management Commission (EMC). The environmental group’s petitions asked the EMC to adopt rules requiring all permitted animal operations to monitor potential water quality impacts.

The petition for rulemaking process is a legal mechanism by which any resident can request the adoption or revision of a rule. The EMC had the option to grant the waterkeeper petition, deny it, or grant it with modifications. As part of the May 2008 EMC meeting, the EMC granted the petition, but modified it by not accepting the rule as proposed by the environmental group.

Instead the EMC directed the staff of the N.C. Division of Water Quality to use an alternate draft rule that the DWQ staff prepared in response to the petitions.

In addition, the EMC directed DWQ staff to convene a stakeholder group of farm, livestock and poultry organizations, which included N.C. Farm Bureau, and environmental groups to further discuss the issues before bringing another set of draft rules back to the EMC in November 2008.

The monitoring proposal has requirements for surface water monitoring at all nondischarge and NPDES permitted animal operations and for groundwater monitoring at these farms under special circumstances. All monitoring results will be public information.

The following is a brief summary of what the proposed rule would require:

- Surface water sampling that includes three sampling events per year.
 - Three water samples to be taken at up to three locations each year (nine per sampling event).
 - Groundwater monitoring that is consistent with current DWQ risk-based assessment policies. This generally means monitoring would be required if groundwater contamination is found offsite and the farm is suspected as a possible contributor.
 - Allows, on a voluntary basis, monitoring coalitions (groups of farmers banding together to take samples at representative locations).
 - Waste discharge monitoring that mirrors the current NPDES animal operation general permit (what to monitor if the facility has a discharge).
 - Includes visual observations of subsurface drains (such as tile drains).
 - Annual reporting requirements.
 - Implementation spread out over time by basin or watershed, starting with river basins that have impairment, such as watersheds in the Neuse.
- “Farm Bureau opposes this rule. If the EMC determines monitoring is necessary, any monitoring should be done as a scientific watershed-based study by university researchers that have experience with agricultural and animal operation monitoring,” Coan added. “There should not be a monitoring requirement by individual farmers or by monitoring coalitions. If needed, a scientific study would yield better, more accurate and useable results at less expense.”

Important Crop Insurance Dates Approaching

Acreage reporting deadlines:

June 30: Corn, grain sorghum, cotton, soybeans, flue-cured tobacco and peanuts.
July 15: Burley tobacco and sweet potatoes.

Please remember that Acreage Reports must be completed and signed by the above dates. An accurate accounting of all planted and unplanted acreage is needed to determine coverage for the 2009 crop year.

U.S. Ag Secretary asks for farmer comments on animal ID program

The United States has an incredibly prosperous agricultural industry. Our livestock and poultry are among the healthiest in the world. However, even with all the preventative measures the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) already has in place, animal disease can still strike.

A disease event can have far-reaching consequences, impacting more than just farmers with sick animals. A disease event also affects other farmers and the livestock industry through movement and international trade restrictions. Not only do the farmers' communities feel the economic pinch, but so does the entire country. In these times of economic uncertainty, we must do everything in our power to help ensure that any animal disease events that do happen are contained effectively so things can go back to business as usual—as quickly as possible. The best way to do this is through animal disease traceability.

While there are costs associated with a traceability system, these costs are far less than the costs of dealing with a major disease outbreak like foot-and-mouth disease without the tools animal health officials need. The U.S. already has a program for animal disease traceability, the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). As the program stands now, around 35 percent of the country's farmers are participating. Much work has been done over the past five years to engage farmers in developing a national system they could support. However, many of the original concerns that were raised—such as cost, impact on small farmers, privacy/confidentiality and liability—continue to cause debate.

In order to provide the level of animal disease traceability we need in the U.S., changes must be made that will increase the level of participation in NAIS. Today, I am asking farmers and stakeholders to engage with USDA in a more productive dialogue about NAIS. Now is the time to have frank and open conversations. We need to work collaboratively to resolve concerns and move forward with animal disease traceability. The dialogue brings two goals to mind: 1) sharing accurate information about the current program, and 2) discussing how to work together to resolve or reduce issues of concern while creating a system which farmers can support.

The main issues of concern are well documented, so I am specifically seeking your ideas or suggestions on how to resolve these concerns, as well as any new concerns you have. To facilitate the dialogue, USDA has launched a feedback page on the NAIS Web site. Producers and stakeholders are encouraged to visit www.usda.gov/nais/feedback.shtml to provide their suggestions and comments. We are also in the process of scheduling a series of public dialogue sessions throughout the country. We will keep you updated as details for the sessions are finalized. I encourage your participation in this process.

The information and ideas you provide will assist me in making decisions about the future direction of animal disease traceability in the United States. It is my goal that we develop a workable way to address the country's existing traceability gaps BEFORE an animal disease event occurs.

Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

American Farm Bureau position on National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

AFBF supports the establishment and implementation of a voluntary national animal identification system capable of providing support for animal disease control and eradication. AFBF continues to monitor four major issues that will impact the success of such a program:

1. **Cost**—AFBF is concerned about how much animal identification will cost and who will pay the price. We believe an increased share of funding should be provided by the federal government to reduce the financial burden on producers.
2. **Confidentiality**—More clarity is needed regarding who has access to the data used in the NAIS, and how producers can be assured protection from unintended use of the data they submit. Congress should pass legislation to ensure the privacy of producers' information submitted to the NAIS from access by competitors, activist groups and other governmental agencies not directly associated with animal health protection.
3. **Education**—AFBF believes that producers must understand both the purpose and the procedures of participating in the NAIS. We encourage additional federal resources to be directed toward outreach and information to encourage producer participation.
4. **Liability**—Producers must be appropriately protected from the consequences of the actions of others, after their animals are no longer in their own control. AFBF believes producers are much more likely to participate in a voluntary program if there is liability protection.

"This is a more expansive USDA and a USDA that understands the significance of local production as much as it understands the significance of large-scale production. Those are both very important." U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

FIELDNOTES

by Larry Wooten, NCFB President

Haulin' Ag Handbook

North Carolina Farm Bureau enjoys a good working relationship with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Most recently, our collaboration with the North Carolina Highway Patrol has been geared toward helping Farm Bureau members decipher the laws that apply to them when they are transporting agricultural products or equipment from farm to farm, farm to market or market to farm.

North Carolina Farm Bureau's *Haulin' Ag* handbook is a result of our ongoing efforts to smooth out the many regulatory bumps and potholes that exist along the state's agricultural highways and rural

routes.

The handbook was designed to fit in the glove box of your farm truck and other vehicles so that it can be readily available to be used as a quick-reference guide to assist you in preventing or responding to traffic stops by law enforcement agencies.

For the sake of utility, *Haulin' Ag* reduces many state and federal highway laws (as of December 31, 2008) to their essence, but it is not intended as a comprehensive explanation of all the transportation laws that may impact the farmer.

Some of the topics covered in the handbook include hauling hazardous materials, transportation of farm workers, securing cargo, vehicle and load weights and many others. We hope you find it useful.

For a copy of the printed *Haulin' Ag* handbook, contact your county field representative. For the most up to date version, view the handbook online at www.HaulinAg.org.



6

NCFB's Policy Review Day is scheduled for Aug. 6 at the N.C. State Fairgrounds.

NORTH CAROLINA FARM BUREAU LEADER

North Carolina Farm Bureau
5301 Glenwood Ave. (27612)
P.O. Box 27766
Raleigh, NC 27611

Return Service Requested

PRESORTED FIRST CLASS

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT NO. 3307

CHARLOTTE, NC



**IN THIS
ISSUE:**

P2 ACTION REQUEST

**P3 GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

**P4 DWQ PUBLIC
HEARINGS**