



P.O. Box 27766
Raleigh, North Carolina 27611
919.782.1705

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Raleigh, N.C.
Permit No. 825

the LEADER



STILL FARMING

Patterson Farm, Inc.
@Patterson_Farm

We are working hard to keep your neighborhood Food Lion stores stocked with the freshest produce! 🍅

🍅 #StillFarming #FoodLion #ShopLocal #FarmFresh #NCProduce #NCAg #VisitNCFarms #VisitPattersonFarm



STILL FARMING



STILL FARMING

by Shawn Harding

Things change quickly. Just a few weeks ago we were focused on issues like trade, commodity prices, rural broadband, and mental health. To be clear, these are still extremely important issues to farmers and rural communities in North Carolina. But now it's nearly impossible to talk about anything other than the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our economy, our society, our businesses, our livelihoods, our way of life, and most of all the people around us: our friends, families, neighbors, and loved ones.

In this uncertain and unnerving time, I'm incredibly proud to see that farmers are #stillfarming. But I can't say I'm surprised. Farmers are a determined, driven bunch. They don't back down from a challenge; they roll up their sleeves and find a solution. And I am totally confident that the farmers of our state and nation will be a bright spot during these dark days, that they will show the American spirit that has made us the greatest nation in the world, and that they will be a crucial component in our eventual recovery from this immense tragedy. The work they do to provide safe, secure, and affordable food and fiber often goes unnoticed, but moments like this serve to underscore the security and opportunity they afford us on a daily basis.

To our farmers, I want to assure you that all of us at North Carolina Farm Bureau are still working too. You have a job to do, and so do we. The challenges we are facing may have changed, but our mission has not – to advocate for farm and rural families, whatever their needs may be. In the weeks and months ahead we know there will be challenges: labor, infrastructure, capital, and much more. Our entire staff will be working to give our members whatever they need to weather the storm ahead, and we will redouble our efforts on your behalf because we know you cannot. This is why we exist.

We are blessed to have had Farm Bureau leaders with the forethought, prudence, and pragmatism to prepare our organization for challenges like this. Our policy is our guiding principle. We are financially strong and structurally prepared to cope with whatever obstacles we encounter in the coming weeks and months. And we have leaders in every county throughout the state who are ready and willing to do whatever they can to ensure Farm Bureau remains strong and influential for years to come.

If you are reading this, you are most likely one of those leaders – of your family, your farm, your community, or otherwise. I want to emphasize just how important you

are. Being a leader is rarely easy – you have to make the best decision you can when the time is right, often with limited information. And then you pray you've done your best.

But there's more that we can do.

Support one another. Check in on each other and listen to what others are going through. We're all making difficult decisions and I can tell you from personal experience that a word of encouragement goes a long way. We're in uncharted territory and we all need the confidence to carry on leading.

“ A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent. ”

Douglas MacArthur

Trust. Have faith in the system, in other people, in our leaders. Set aside partisan politics and work towards the greater good. The day will come to scrutinize the decisions we've made, but today is not that day. I know it's not easy when we all have opinions, but at the end of the day someone has to lead.

I personally say thank you to all of our leaders: our President, Members of Congress, and Cabinet; our Governor, state representatives, and Council of State; and our county commissioners, mayors, and local leaders who have been thrust into something none of us have ever experienced. They deserve our respect for answering the call to lead in this time of crisis. In the end we are the United States of America, the most important word there is United, because that is what is needed most now, unity.

I also want to say thank you to each of you – as leaders, farmers, and people. I am grateful for all the work you are doing and I pray for your good health and good fortune. And I hope to see all of you soon.

