



Statement of NC-ADAPT Work Group Co-Chairs Concluding Ag, Forestry Adaptation Summit

R.C. Hunt, a Wilson County pork, cattle, fish and crop producer, and Chip Miller, a Mt. Gilead timberlands manager and past president of the North Carolina Forestry Association, are the co-chairs of NC-ADAPT, an agriculture and forestry work group that held a day-long summit in Raleigh Tuesday to forge a consensus among sector leaders on adaptive management planning to meet the challenges posed by changing climactic conditions. The following is a joint statement issued by the co-chairs at the summit's conclusion.

As farmers, ranchers and foresters who make their living off the land, we are already witnessing the effects of changing conditions and recognize that more attention to adaptive management planning is required.

The work group's mission over the past year has been to explore the impacts of increasingly extreme weather events and changing climatic conditions on the agricultural and forestry sectors of North Carolina and determine whether we as producers were adequately prepared for what is coming. Our conclusion: Preparation is needed and the state as a whole would benefit from the development of a comprehensive adaptive management strategy for the state's two biggest industries - agriculture and forestry.

We are not alarmists. We are pragmatists who appreciate the multiple arenas in which adaptive management must be applied in order to maintain vibrant farming and forestry operations - changing climatic conditions being one of many. Today's summit brought together farmers, ranchers, forest managers, conservationists, business leaders, government officials and academics to share the work group's findings and flesh out recommendations that offer a roadmap for constructing a plan that will improve the resiliency of our state's agriculture and forestry sectors.

Going forward, agricultural and forestry stakeholder sub-teams will be formed to develop recommendations for inclusion in an adaptive management strategy report (NC-STRAT) that will identify priority actions and initiatives needed to help producers adapt and improve resiliency. The report will be widely circulated to farm, forest, conservation, finance, risk management, financial, higher education leaders and organizations; policy makers and government agencies; and other interests for discussion and comment. At the same time, a producer outreach and engagement program will be developed to generate and sustain peer-to-peer dialogue among grower leaders. By this time next year, our plan is to issue a final strategy report and then recruit farm and forestry organizations to use the report to help integrate climate-smart agriculture programming into their work plans.

We are confident that our agriculture and forestry industries will use sound scientific approaches to build on their long record of growth and accomplishment, and rise to successfully meet the challenges we face over the next several decades.

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