

County backs agriculture

🕒 July 11, 2018 👤 Sampson Independent 📁 Local, News, Top Stories 💬 0

By Chris Berendt - cberendt@clintonnc.com





Ronnie Jackson, owner of Clinton Truck & Tractor and president of Sampson County Friends of Agriculture, urges county commissioners to support Sampson agriculture, in light of recent legislative matters. The board unanimously obliged. - Chris Berendt|Sampson Independent

Following last month’s battle at the state level over N.C. Farm Act of 2018, the Sampson Board of Commissioners on Monday unanimously adopted a resolution supporting agriculture, attesting that “farmers provide the food, fuel and fiber for our state and our country.”

Ronnie Jackson, owner of Clinton Truck & Tractor and president of Sampson County Friends of Agriculture, spoke to the issue during Monday’s board meeting. He discussed the stringent regulations under which farmers have to operate. They utilize the best known technology to get rid of waste and reduce any odor, he noted, and should not be forced to fight lawsuits as they make a living supporting their families and communities, while feeding the populous.

The Farm Act, also known as Senate Bill 711, protects livestock farmers from lawsuits that complain of nuisance. It became law last month, following the Legislature’s override of a veto by Gov. Roy Cooper.

“Agriculture is what we do here,” Jackson said. “Sampson County is one of the biggest agriculture counties in the Southeast, and really

WEATHER

Clinton, NC

78°

9:24 pm EDT

Clear

Earn 40,000 points. Act now – get away faster. Southwest Learn more

ADVERTISEMENT

PITBULL TAX IN TRANSCRIPTS

AdChoices

Bankruptcy Dischargeability Report

Customizable IRS Transcripts Reports

VIEW SAMPLE

CIRCULARS

Academy

50% OFF ALL SWIMWEAR

Hover for Circular

petco

Wholesale Warehouse

Hover for Circular

NAPA

SAVE 20% OFF

Hover for Circular

DOLL

BIGGEST DEAL FRIDAY IN JULY EVER

Hover for Circular

the whole United States. The pork industry is really a vital part of that.”

The Friends of Ag president gave commissioners a brief history lesson, starting with B.T. Lundy’s arrival in the heart of Sampson from Pennsylvania some 70 years ago. Lundy Packing Company was established and, from then, Sampson served as “the epicenter of the pork industry,” Jackson said.

But recently, he said, the industry has “come under attack.”

Sen. Brent Jackson, R-Sampson, was the chief sponsor of the the N.C. Farm Act, which he said puts teeth back into the law and enforcing the protections intended since the right to farm was passed in 1979.



SB 711 was supported by agribusiness industry after lawsuits filed against pork producers from residents uncomfortable with odors from facilities.

“This legislation comes in response to the hundreds of politically motivated and frivolous lawsuits that have threatened to bankrupt many farmers,” Sen. Jackson said.

Cooper maintained that agriculture was vital to state’s economy, but added that property rights are important as well.

“North Carolina’s nuisance laws can help allow generations of families to enjoy their homes and land without fear for their health and safety,” Cooper stated during his veto message.

Laws must be balanced for businesses and property owners, so all can be protected.

“Giving one industry special treatment at the expense of its neighbors is unfair,” he said.

Cooper’s veto was swiftly followed by the override.

Sen. Jackson said overriding the veto “sends the clear message to our family farmers and rural communities that they have a voice in the legislature and that this General Assembly intends to give them the respect they deserve.”

David Kelly, the Environmental Defense Fund’s senior manager for N.C. Public Affairs, however, held that the Farm Act takes North Carolina backwards.

“It strips families of the ability to defend their rights to clean air, clean water and a healthy place to live and work,” Kelly said.

He said progress has been made alongside farmers, agriculture groups and agribusinesses toward solutions to advance the agricultural economy and protect natural resources and public health. The organization believes the nuisance provisions in SB 711 will only serve to further divide communities and undermine that progress.

Ronnie Jackson and others rallied in Raleigh in a “stand with hog farmers” in the afternoon prior to Cooper’s veto.

“These people are doing everything they’ve been told to do. The hog industry in North Carolina is one of the most tightly-regulated things that go on in the state,” said Jackson.

He urged the board to adopt the resolution supporting “our agricultural community.”

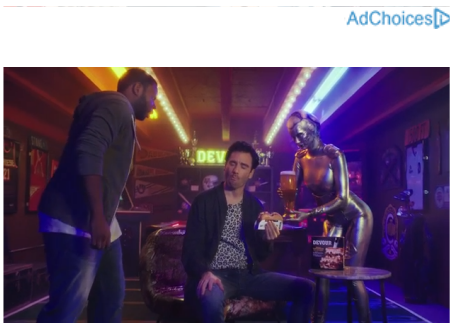
Agriculture and agribusiness is the number one industry in North Carolina contributing \$85 billion to the state’s economy. Nearly half of Sampson’s land is farmed and more than half of the county’s employment is linked to agriculture, ranking it atop the state in farm cash receipts.

“Our nation enjoys a food supply that is abundant, affordable and among the world’s safest, thanks in large part to the efficiency and productivity of North Carolina’s farmers,” the county’s resolution read. “Agriculture touches the life of everyone, whether it be in our daily meals or the clothes we wear.”

County officials said it is estimated that food production will have to increase by at least 70 percent by 2050 to meet the growing world food demands, while farmland is being lost “at an alarming rate” as it gets progressively more difficult to recruit and retain farmers willing to work the land.

ADVERTISEMENT

NATIONAL VIDEO



More videos:



MOST COMMENTED

- City school board needs to get priorities right
1 comment · 2 days ago
- Garland woman charged in fatal stabbing
2 comments · 1 day ago
- Board votes 75 times on leadership
1 comment · 3 days ago

ADVERTISEMENT

“We need to support our agricultural industry and our farmers, and encourage a safe and abundant food supply,” the county stated in its resolution.

Board chairman Clark Wooten thanked Ronnie Jackson and others for rallying support for the Farm Act and for farmers. He noted that the industry has come a long way from the days of a family farm on every corner of Sampson. There are less farms, and those farms are subject to a great deal of oversight regarding every aspect of operations, notably waste management. They use technology developed at N.C. State University in disposing of waste and reducing odor and impact to adjoining land, the chairman said.

“They’ve tried every way in the world to find a better way, and they haven’t been able to identify one,” said Jackson. “Now they’re being sued because of that, and it’s really a sad thing.”

Amid Farm Act kerfuffle, board OKs pro-farmer resolution

By Chris Berendt
cberendt@clintonnc.com

Managing Editor Chris Berendt can be reached at 910-592-8137 ext. 2587.



Managing Editor Chris Berendt can be reached at 910-592-8137 ext. 2587.

Top Searches | Roseboro House Fire 07/ | Mugshots



« **PREVIOUS**
Mural approved for Newton Grove

NEXT »
CHS basketball jamboree this Saturday



PITBULLTAX™ SOFTWARE

AdChoices



The Leading IRS Tax Resolution Software for CPAs, EAs and Tax Attorney

VERSION 4.0 UNVEILED

Learn more

ADVERTISEMENT

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER TRAVEL

This sale is taking off.

One-way as low as*

\$69

SALE



*Seats/days/mkts lmted; restrictions & blackout dates apply. Book 7/09-7/20.

Southwest

Book now