

MADISON COUNTY CENTER

Farmer Resources and Updates



NEW Produce Availability Service To Growers

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture is aware that farmers have seen disruptions in their normal distribution during this period of COVID-19 and social distancing. Retailers have seen panic buying patterns and are challenged to keep produce in stock and merchandised. If you are a NC grower of produce and looking to sell products that you don't have a market for, we want to know. We will be compiling information, from NC growers, to distribute to major retailers on a weekly basis. This is not to be used as an alternate for markets that you already have. This service is set up to help those who don't have markets to sell what they would normally. Call us weekly to update your availability and be listed in the distribution. This service will last until we no longer see a major need from the growers or interest from the retailers.

[Learn more information and find contact numbers](#)



How to use previous soil test results for yards and home gardens

RALEIGH -- The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Agronomic Services lab has scaled back its testing to a few core services, making home soil testing another casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic. But, homeowners may be able to use the recommendations from a previous year's test to maintain their yards and gardens.

"At this time, the lab is accepting only diagnostic soil samples from agricultural clients," said David Hardy, Soil Lab section chief. "Generally, soil testing is advised every 2 to 3 years. If you submitted soil samples to be tested in this timeframe, you can still use the recommendations from these past reports."

Old soil test reports issued can be found at the Agronomic Services website, <http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pals/>, where you will enter your last name in the search tool.

If lime was applied based on a report found at this website, it is unlikely that additional lime is needed for the upcoming growing season, Hardy said. Routine application of lime is never advised

since soil pH may be raised too high.

Previous soil testing reports would have provided a phosphorus(P) index reported as a P-I and potassium (K) index reported as a K-I. From these soil test levels, a fertilizer recommendation comprised of a specific grade or analysis (example = 5-10-5) and rate per 1,000 square feet was provided.

Nitrogen (N) is not analyzed by the lab for soil tests but it is needed seasonally to promote plant growth. A nitrogen level is provided in the recommended grade or analysis of fertilizer; in this example, it is the first number of the grade.

"Using these same fertilizer recommendations will provide satisfactory results for homeowners wanting to fertilize this year," Hardy said. Additionally, a homeowner's guide to understanding fertilizer is found here <http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/pdffiles/sfn8.pdf> .

If you have questions about an old report or need further advice, please feel free to contact the lab at 919-733-2655.



The Mars Hill Farmers & Artisans Market Saturday's - We are OPEN!!

*****New Market Hours: 10am-1pm *****

Please take a look at our website below for information on pre-orders as well as our guidelines as it pertains to COVID-19 and the market.

[Mars Hill Market Website](#)



Emergency mini-grant application now open for farmers!

Applications due April 26th at 6pm

As the impacts of COVID-19 continue to unfold day to day, RAFI-USA recognizes that farmers across the country are facing

extreme difficulties. To help lessen the financial toll of this outbreak, RAFI-USA is distributing emergency relief grants in the amount of \$500 for NC farmers who have seen drastic impacts to their business and household as a result of COVID-19. At this time we are only able to offer this funding to North Carolina farmers. To see if you would be a good candidate for this funding and access the application, please read the following information.

Purpose of Funds: The mini-grant funding is \$500 and is meant to lessen the immediate financial needs of farmers and their households. This means funds could cover expenses like food, medical bills, utility bills, etc. The funds are NOT meant to cover farm production expenses.

Eligibility: Currently we are only able to award funding to farmers in North Carolina. Depending on funding we may be able to expand this demographic range. If you are not in NC you can still fill out an inquiry form here in the event our funding increases.

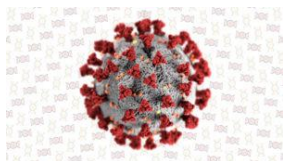
Priority Applicants: Because available funds are limited, we will prioritize farmers who 1) are severely impacted by COVID-19 to the degree that they are struggling to cover ordinary expenses, 2) are not able to access other federally-funded emergency relief funds (i.e. PPP), and 3) earn a substantial portion of their household income from farming. Because RAFI-USA's funds are limited, we ask that farmers carefully consider whether this emergency relief grant applies to their situation.

Application and Payment Process: The application for emergency relief funds is now live! There is an online survey ([link below](#)) or a word document version you can download, fill out, and email back to Craig at craig@rafiusa.org. Applications are due April 26th at 6pm. We expect to start distributing grant awards by early May.

Questions?

Contact Craig at craig@rafiusa.org if you have any questions about the grant, application, or eligibility.

[Online Application](#)



NC Extension COVID-19

Please tap the link below for updated resources for COVID-19 from NC State Extension. This page has the most recent information for farmers and agribusinesses from Extension, NCDA, and more... Check back regularly! And as always please feel free to contact us here at the Madison County Extension office by calling 828-649-2411.

[COVID-19 Portal](#)

[Read more N.C. Cooperative Extension news »](#)



NC State University and N.C. A&T State University work in tandem, along with federal, state and local governments, to form a strategic partnership called N.C. Cooperative Extension.