

Agriculture has always played a vital role in the state of North Carolina. It remains our state's largest industry, employing over twenty percent of our workforce and representing twenty-five percent of our economy. North Carolina is also a national leader in research and education efforts in the fields of agriculture and environmental science, much of it conducted at the Triangle's prominent research institutions.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I have secured funding for agricultural research that directly benefits farmers and ranchers in the Fourth District, in North Carolina, and across the nation. I have also supported efforts to ensure that agricultural production is consistent with protecting public health and the environment, including the development of sustainable agriculture methods and standards.

Over the past decade, our awareness about the food we eat has grown tremendously. We think more carefully about where our food comes from, how it's grown, and the way in which it is produced. You can see the evidence of this through the ever-growing numbers of farmers markets in the Triangle and around the country, the restaurants that tout locally grown ingredients, and new neighborhood gardens across the region. Over the last ten years, the number of farmers in North Carolina's Fourth District has actually increased in response to strong demand and improved local infrastructure.

I have been proud to support federal investments in the changing face of agriculture, including efforts to make local farmers' markets more accessible to low-income communities and programs to help farmers transition to new, more sustainable crops and farming methods. I was pleased to help secure funding for the Piedmont Food and Agricultural Processing Center located in Orange County, a regional processing center that will help serve and promote local agriculture in the surrounding 22-county area. I have also supported efforts to modernize the Food and Drug Administration's food safety efforts, while ensuring that small producers are not unfairly impacted by federal food safety standards.

Additionally, in today's global economy, we must ensure that farmers are able to adapt to new challenges, such as the rising cost of energy, the need for an effective foreign worker program, the threat of new diseases and pests, as well as new opportunities, such as expanded trade in the international marketplace. As Congress continues to debate these issues, I will keep the interests of North Carolina's farmers in mind. For a list of local projects and research I have secured funding for, [click here](#).

