

Station Facts

The Piedmont Research Station is located in Rowan County, nine miles west of Salisbury. Originally established as the Piedmont Test Farm in 1904 near Statesville, the station was moved in 1954 to its present site on 1,044 acres. In 2004 the station celebrated “A Century of Progress” by hosting an event to recognize the achievements of the station’s first 100 years.

The station hosts an ECONET weather reporting station that feeds onsite data to the State Climatology Office headquartered at the Raleigh campus of N.C. State University and to the National Weather Service offices in the region.

Infrastructure

The structures and facilities at the Piedmont Research Station are varied to support the diverse research program. The dairy unit consists of a recently upgraded milking parlor with electronic equipment to track each cow as she enters the parlor to be milked. A station building was renovated into an on-site lab to aid researchers in collecting and analyzing data. The poultry unit has also been renovated and has been utilized in ovarian cancer research. The most recent addition to the station is a 22,500 square foot tunnel greenhouse aiding in the expansion of the horticulture program to include strawberries and tomatoes.

Events

The Piedmont Research Station hosts a variety of events each year. Field Days to share research projects include a small grain field day and a dairy field day. Other station events have included a Bio-fuels Workshop that shared the stations involvement in the production of biodiesel using a small on-site processing unit.

Research Programs

Research at the station is divided into four research units: dairy, poultry, field crops and horticultural crops.

Dairy Unit The 150 cow milking herd is utilized to investigate projects in nutrition, heat stress management, herd health, calf and heifer development and reproduction. Examples of individual



cow data collected electronically are daily cow weights, milking duration times, activity, conductivity of milk produced, hourly deep body temperatures of the cows as well as routine data collections such as milk produced and health status. The confined dairy is also involved in sampling young sires with several national semen companies.

Poultry Unit The poultry research program includes commercial layers, broiler breeders, broilers, and incubation. In addition to conducting the Layer Performance Management Test in North America, studies

include work in applied production practices and nutrition management. To accomplish this poultry research the station has housing for over 15,000 commercial layers, 8,000 broiler breeders, and incubation capacity to hatch more than 52,000 eggs at one time utilizing both multi-stage and single stage incubation. These facilities are able to evaluate the effects of a research project on a size and scale of a commercial poultry operation.

Field Crops Unit Traditional crops such as corn, soybeans, small grain, and forages are produced in a continuous no-till cropping system. Breeding work, evaluating new genetics for existing and potential markets, as well as applied production systems research make up the majority of the work at the Field Crop Unit. One additional aspect of the field crops is the production of feed for the dairy cows. Forage is produced both as a byproduct of the research program and as a rotational crop to remove the effect of a research treatment on the plot land. Because of the rolling nature of the soils on the station, forage production is an excellent method of making the land productive.



Horticultural Crops Unit An increase in the volume and intensity of the small fruit research led to the formation of the horticultural crops unit in 2005. Work is conducted on strawberries, blueberries and brambles. The research program in small fruit production can be divided into two primary areas; the production of fruit in nontraditional seasons and the development of production systems for the Piedmont area. Selections for adaptation to the mineral soils of the area are an important part of the program. To aid in this work a 22,500 square foot high tunnel has been constructed to investigate methods of extending the production cycle of strawberries and brambles.

Community Partnership

The Piedmont Research Station is a vital part of the agriculture community and provides a venue for numerous activities. The facilities are used by other state agencies for trainings and workshops such as waste management, small grain production, pesticide handling and emergency preparedness.

Educational programs including training sessions and tours are held on the station annually. 4-H, FFA and other youth programs use the dairy and poultry units to train and prepare students for judging events.

The Piedmont Research Station is working with local organizations such as soup kitchens and shelters to provide gleaning opportunities. The station also supports the local community through disaster relief efforts by providing manpower, equipment, storage space and other needed services.



Research Stations Division

Working together for one cause

Mission

To manage crop and livestock facilities that serve as a platform for agriculture research to make farming more efficient, productive, and profitable, while maintaining a sound environment and providing consumers with safe and affordable products.

Partnership

Agriculture research in North Carolina dates back to 1877, when state legislation established the N.C. Department of Agriculture along with “Experiment Stations” as a division of the department. Since that time, the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Research Stations Division, in partnership with N.C. State University, has established 18 statewide locations. Each facility has unique climate and soil conditions, giving researchers a living laboratory in which to investigate a variety of regional crops, forestry concerns, livestock, poultry, and aquaculture. The Division supports these studies by providing land, water, equipment, buildings, and staff who work around the clock to help build a stronger foundation for the future of agriculture.

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Piedmont

RESEARCH STATION

Rowan County



RESEARCH STATIONS DIVISION

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