



Center for Environmental Farming Systems Announces over \$2.5 million in Competitive Grant Funding to Support Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

October 31, 2014: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Nancy Creamer, CEFS Director, 919-515-9447 or ncreamer@ncsu.edu

RALEIGH, NC: Researchers at the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) have received 3 separate grants totaling more than \$2.5 million since July 2014 to support research and education at CEFS' 2000-acre research farm in Goldsboro and on farms across the state.

In September, CEFS researchers were awarded \$1,415,833 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture Organic Research and Extension Initiative for "*Evaluation of the Milk and Meat Residues of Organic Therapies for Mastitis*". Mastitis is a common disease in dairy cows and is usually treated with antibiotics.

CEFS researchers will evaluate three commonly-used herbal organic mastitis products to determine if any residues remain in the milk and meat of treated cattle. "We're trying to help organic farmers continue to provide safe milk and meat to consumers by providing them with more information about the products they can use," said Dr. Keena Mullen, the project's lead investigator.

The project will culminate with short training courses and online seminars to share the research with farmers and other industry stakeholders. The study includes investigators Drs. Steve Washburn and Keena Mullen of NC State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences as well as Drs. Kevin Anderson and Ronald Baynes from NC State's College of Veterinary Medicine and Dr. Sharon Mason of Campbell University.

Also in September, CEFS researchers were awarded \$995,710 from the USDA's National Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Innovation Grants program for "*Improving Soil Health on Pasture-Based Livestock Farms in the Southeastern US*". The funding will allow CEFS researchers to implement diverse forage systems on 9 private farms and 6 research stations in North Carolina and Georgia, with the goal of evaluating soil nutrient distribution and improvement in soil health.

The project will help expand the scale and geographic reach of the *Amazing Grazing* program, a CEFS-based initiative that provides educational opportunities and hands-on training to help livestock producers understand their farm as a dynamic ecological system and maximize benefits associated with raising their animals on pasture. Investigators from NC State include Dr. Matt Poore from the Animal Science Department, Dr. Miguel Castillo from the Crop Science Department and Dr. Alan Franzluebbbers from USDA and the Soil Science Department.

In July, CEFS researchers were awarded a \$103,784 grant by the Walmart Foundation and administered by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Center for Agricultural and Rural Sustainability for “*Sustainable Soil Management Practices for Strawberries: Diverse Approaches for Facilitating Adoption*”. The research builds on previous work conducted by NC State’s Dr. Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, Dr. Gina Fernandez and PhD student Amanda McWhirt to evaluate soil management practices – like compost, summer cover crops and beneficial soil inoculants – that simultaneously promote soil health and fruit yields with the goal of promoting the long-term sustainability of strawberry production systems in the southeast.

The grant will help continue this research and fund the expansion of the project to include multiple statewide on-farm research projects and extension activities aimed at increasing awareness and the use of sustainable soil management practices on North Carolina’s strawberry farms. North Carolina ranks third in the U.S. in strawberry production in terms of harvested crop value.

CEFS Director Dr. Nancy Creamer said, “We are very excited to receive this level of support for our innovative production systems research that assists growers across the state in implementing more sustainable practices on their farms and ranches.”

The Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) is a partnership of North Carolina State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. CEFS’ mission is to develop and promote just and equitable food and farming systems that conserve natural resources, strengthen communities, improve health outcomes, and provide economic opportunities in North Carolina and beyond. For more information about CEFS please visit <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/>.