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## The Center for Environmental Farming Systems Celebrates 25 Years of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Work in North Carolina

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**Raleigh, NC:** Twenty-five years ago in North Carolina, amid rising concern about the impact of agriculture on the environment, a groundbreaking partnership was established. North Carolina State University, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services founded the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) at Cherry Research Farm in Goldsboro on Feb. 1, 1994.

The Center was dedicated to long-term, large-scale sustainable agriculture research and demonstration, the first such site in the state of North Carolina, and one of only a handful in the country. Then-NC Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Graham presided over the Center's launch. At the time, he said, "He or she who plants thorns can never get roses. We're planting roses today."

Non-profit organizations including NC Farm Bureau Federation, Land Loss Prevention Project, Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association joined with farmers and citizens to advise the process. Bringing together such diverse stakeholders to sit at the table and find common interests was a significant accomplishment, says CEFS Founding Director Dr. Nancy Creamer. "CEFS was a bridge-builder then, and we pride ourselves on being a bridge-builder now," she says.

CEFS soon became recognized not only for its unique founding partnership, but also for its contributions to large-scale and long-term field research. Over the years CEFS expanded its focus to include the entire food system, becoming a statewide program with community, non-profit, county government, state agency, and small and large business partners. It is now one of the nation's most important centers for research, extension, and education in sustainable agriculture and local food systems.

In honor of its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, CEFS will release a series of videos that highlight the impact the organization has had in North Carolina and beyond. Today, CEFS released the first video in the series, "Chapter 1: Founding Story". Watch the video and learn more about CEFS' 25th Anniversary at: <https://cefs.ncsu.edu/25th-anniversary/>

*The Center for Environmental Farming Systems is a partnership of NC State University, NC Agricultural and Technical State University and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. CEFS develops and promotes 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, please visit [www.cefs.ncsu.edu](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu).*

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