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The mission of the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association is to promote "real" Christmas trees through marketing and education. We will contribute to the success of the Christmas Tree Industry by providing ethical, professional, and visionary leadership.

Limbs & Needles

Keeping Christmas Real Since 1959

Volume 41 / No. 1

ISSN 1520-7145

Senior Editor.....Jennifer Greene
Technical Advisor / Text Editor..... Jim Hamilton
Design.....Aaron Burleson

Front Cover Photo: Spring planting of Fraser Fir.

The editors will not be responsible for the content of articles not written by them. Limbs & Needles will try to return articles and pictures if requested but will not accept responsibility if these items are misplaced.

Subscriptions are \$35 per year for members of southeastern Christmas tree associations and \$45 per year for all others.

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President's Message

Rodney Buchanan



Happy spring!

As I sit looking over the seedling's that we just planted in the clover and dandelions, I watch deer graze thru the older trees and reflect on the winter we just had. After the cold weather and the snow, I am glad that spring has arrived so I can get back out in the fields and do what I love. With the first wild flowers starting to bloom, it is a time of renewal; a time of looking forward to another year, being blessed making a living off the land, all while still having time to help friends and family. As usual, I'm sure everyone has been very busy this spring. I hope it has been a safe and productive season thus far.

It has already been a challenging year for the NCC-TA Executive Committee. As you are aware, our industry is experiencing many changes and much consolidation. With these changes, the NCCTA is experiencing challenges of its own. Over the past four years, NCCTA has seen a steady decline in funds each year. In 2014, we have already had to reassess the budget due to lack of projected income. Unfortunately, we had to make cuts to programs that we did not want to make. We decided to print only two issues of Limbs and Needles in 2014, but we hope to increase the print to three issues in 2015. Travel expenditures were cut, which means Jennifer has

to limit travel to farms, trade shows and events.

Office supplies and other print expenditures were also cut. Promotional budget cuts as well as semi-annual meeting budget cuts were also made. Your executive committee has put many hours of thought and discussion into finding ways for NCCTA to remain viable to its members while running on limited funding. I assure you that NCCTA will continue to serve the NC Christmas Tree Industry and you, our members, to the best of our ability....BUT WE NEED YOU! I feel this is a good time to ask all members to talk to your neighbors that aren't members of the association and share the importance of the NC Christmas Tree Association and our promotion of NC Fraser Fir: *The Perfect Christmas Tree*. The more members we have, the stronger we will be.

I feel we had a great winter meeting in Boone this year and I'm sure that we will have the same in Jackson County in September. I encourage each of you to take the time to come to the meeting and visit the other mountain region of NC Fraser fir. I hope to see you in Jackson County!

God Bless 🌲



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Executive Director's Report

Jennifer Greene

Throughout the past 55 years, the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association has evolved from an organization formed as a growers co-operative, to a dynamic association consisting of Fraser fir growers who are winning prestigious national contests with their 'Cadillac of Christmas trees'. Over the years, NCCTA has progressed along with the demands and changing needs of the industry and its members. It has become a valuable vehicle for promotion of NC Fraser fir and together, we have been able to meet and diminish a lot of our problems. Our success would have been much more trying had we approached this as individuals.

Through it all, I am convinced the association has been a tremendous asset to our industry. We are all com-

petitors of each other in the marketplace and we often compete for the same markets, but at the same time we have many of the same production problems. We have been able to meet and diminish many of the problems we have faced because we did it together as a group. Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success. Our success would have been much harder had we approached those circumstances as individuals.

I encourage each of you to remain strong, supportive and active in your state association. Take a moment to reflect on how NCCTA has helped you directly & indirectly, as a small business owner & as an individual, and then reflect on what you have contributed. I believe that what we experience in life is but what we throw into our universe. 🌲

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National News

Cline Church



Hope everyone is ready to enjoy some warm weather after the long cold winter we have had. NCTA is welcoming a new director. While he is not new to the association he is new in this role. Rick Dungey has been named Executive Director of the National Christmas Tree Association. Rick has been our public relations and marketing guru for several years. He understands the business and has a great passion for real Christmas trees. We welcome him to this new role.

Dustin McKissen, resigned as director to pursue a career opportunity involving owning his own business. We wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

NCTA is experiencing a slight increase in membership. We continue to strive to provide our members with advocacy and protection. We have reduced the Journal to two issues this year and continue to work on the website to provide information to members as well as the general public.

In 2014 NCTA will not hold a convention or conference, returning to the biennial format it traditionally had. However, in 2014 NCTA will hold its annual Tree and Wreath contest in conjunction with a regional event hosted by the Michigan Christmas Tree Association. This event will be held July 24-25, 2014. Further information will be available on the NCTA website. In 2015 NCTA plans to go back to the format of having the tree contest every 2 years.

We have had a series of webinars this Spring. The first one dealt with the Harris poll numbers involving sales during Christmas 2013. The numbers of real trees were steady while the sales of artificial trees were up slightly. The prices remain stale but show promising signs of increasing in 2014. The second webinar dealt with the legislative issues involving our industry, with immigration being a main topic as well as the new health care law which is heavy on everyone's mind right now.

The third webinar will deal with the USDA statistics. The publication of the Census of Agriculture has been delayed. When it is published, that webinar will be rescheduled. If you would like information on the

webinars and how to get involved, check out the NCTA website.

NCTA is continuing its focus on protection and advocacy, working to address issues that affect the present and future of our industry. Most of the time, this work takes place behind the scenes, through the tireless efforts of NCTA's volunteers and staff and in collaboration with other organizations who share our industry's concerns. It is the support and protection of the product that all members produce, no matter how many trees you sell. NCTA can make a difference on issues that affect our industry, but we need your help. Make your contribution to the Real Tree Advocacy Fund or Legislative Action Fund today by visiting www.christmastree.org or calling 636-449-5070. Thank you to everyone who has made their commitment in 2014! 🌲

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Legislative Update

Pat Gaskin

The new \$930 billion farm bill finally passed both houses in January after much wrangling over the Food Stamp Program and problems with Dairy Subsidies. It was signed by President Obama on February 7, 2014. Included in the bill, was the amendment that lifted the stay on the **Christmas Tree Research and Promotion Order or “Check-off,” and provisions for increased Specialty Crop Funding.

Specialty Crop Funding was increased from 230 million to 400 million dollars. Organic Ag Research and Extension was upped from 78 million to 100 million. The farm bill is especially important because Christmas trees have a specialty crop designation and the funding does not have to be approved every year.

Immigration

A legal stable work force continues to be a major issue for Agriculture. Faith, law enforcement and business leaders continue trying to convince House Republican members to move forward on immigration reform. The comprehensive reform bill that passed the Senate does not have wide support among house republicans who favor a more incremental approach.

Most pundits seem to think, maybe rightly so, that immigration reform will not come this year, but a few in house leadership positions have suggested that there may be a very small window right after the primaries to move some legislation to the floor. It goes without saying that there is a clear and urgent need for House members to address this issue.

Health Care

There are many who continue to hope that Congress will act to repeal and/or replace the Affordable Health Care Act (ACA) in 2014. In 2013, 40 bills to repeal the bill passed the house and have gone nowhere.

Even if you believe the ACA may be repealed, it is unlikely legislation could pass under the current Congress and Administration. New regulations would take more than a year, so expect the employer mandate to take effect in 2015.

Two Mandates are included in the health care bill, (1) the individual mandate and (2) the employer mandate. **In February 2014 we learned the Employer mandate for those who employ 99 or fewer full time-equivalent employees is, now deferred until January 1, 2016 - employers of 100 or more will still face the January 1, 2015 implementation deadline.**

Recently the federal government released new regulations that clarify the responsibility of the individual. Individuals, citizens and anyone else legally present in the United States must have minimal coverage to avoid paying a penalty. This includes H-2A and H-2B workers. The spring sign up period has passed but a second sign up period will offered in September, 2014.

Because of the major delay of the employer mandate and several other delays including these caused by the extremely difficult start-up of the online process to join, expect to see some more regulations and some significant level of guidance documentation from the federal agencies involved in Health Care. Because of the new 2015 deadline, employer penalties will not be assessed in 2014.

Important messages for Agricultural employers:

- It will be important that you keep very accurate wage and hour records for every employee for the full-year 2014. These are important not only to protect yourself in the event of DOL Wage and hour audits and for tax reporting purposes but will also provide the basis for the correct proper calculation of your full-time equivalent employee numbers to determine your employer mandate requirements. There is a formula for determining whether your seasonal workers are considered full-time equivalent workers.

- There is a formula for determining whether your seasonal workers are considered full-time equivalent workers.
- It is extremely risky to think about breaking your business into multiple entities to keep each under 50 employees without talking with experienced legal and tax council. The IRS has so much leeway to interpret “controlled group” provisions, meaning that the IRS has broad authority to proclaim such separate companies to be part of the same “controlled group” and the cost will be HUGE for those that are found to have done so with the intent of getting around the provisions of the Health Care Law. They may end up owing past years of coverage and penalties.
- In general there are no specific exemptions in the ACA for guest workers.

Health care coverage is terribly complex and very difficult to explain in a brief report. I encourage the NCCTA Board of Directors to have some qualified person present more information at our fall meeting.

Tax Laws

The Expire Act:

The Senate Finance Committee has approved a measure known as the Expire Act. The bill would provide for a 2-year extension of roughly 50 tax provisions which expired at the end of 2013.

U.S. House Ways and Means chairman Dave Camp held a hearing on business-related tax extenders on April 8. Unlike the Senate’s two-year extension, the House may make some provisions permanent while letting others expire for good. I will continue to watch for any movement on this issue.

IRS FICA Ruling:

The IRS Office of Chief Counsel has concluded that the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) extends to workers with both H-2A and H-2B status. The ruling determined that the tax code does not distinguish between those with H-2A and H-2B visas.

North Carolina Legislation:

The 2013 Regular session of the N.C. General Assembly adjourned on July 26, 2013., and will reconvene for the 2014 session(the short session) at 12 noon on Wednesday, May 14, 2014. Before adjournment, legislators approved a \$20.6 billion, two-year budget, named the **Appropriations Act of 2013**. Agriculture groups thought the session was a favorable one for our industry.

Governor Pat McCrory signed into law the **Tax Simplification and Reduction Act**. The bill reduces personal and corporate income taxes, eliminates the North Carolina estate tax and provides an agricultural sales tax exemption to farmers who have \$10,000 or more in annual gross income.

The **RECLAIM NC Act, HB 786** passed and was presented to the Governor for consideration, but was vetoed by him. The Governor’s veto was overridden in a special called session of the General Assembly. The bill changes the definition of employee in the State’s E-Verify law to mean “**an individual whose term of employment is less than nine months in a calendar year.**” In other words, farmers who employ seasonal workers for less than 9 months will not have to count those workers for purposes of determining whether they have to use the E-Verify program. 🌲

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LRP **long range planning**



Jeff Owen
Area Christmas Tree Extension Specialist,
NC State University

The NCCTA initiated a strategic planning process at the September 2013 board of directors meeting. John Wishon, the chairperson for the Long Range Planning Committee, proposed this process in light of changes that are occurring across the Christmas tree industry. As an immediate first step, an eleven-question survey was distributed to association members attending the September 2013 summer meeting in Crossnore. An online version of the survey was distributed to all association members in 2014. The survey was also shared with Christmas tree growers at county association meetings during the winter of 2014. As of the writing of this article, seventy-five responses have been recorded. This article summarizes those responses.

Growers were asked how long they intend to continue planting trees. Thirty-two percent of the respondents have either quit planting already or plan to do so in the next five years. Forty-six percent intend to keep planting trees for the next ten-to-twenty years. Twenty-one percent of responding growers plan to keep setting trees beyond the twenty year mark. Perhaps the most determined individuals were those who intend to keep planting “as long as I can” or “until I die.” Two thirds of the industry represents the future. This ratio is similar to survey results in 2004 and 2010, but with about a third of growers choosing to stop planting over an extended period of time, the overall number of growers continues to shrink dramatically.

Along similar lines, respondents were asked what their ambitions were for the future of their Christmas tree business. Thirty percent were planning to expand their business. Nearly half expected to maintain their business at its current size. Nineteen percent planned

to reduce or close their business. These responses can be seen in Figure 1. The difference in responses to this question compared to the tree planting question aren't necessarily contradictory, rather they represent different points in the life of a ten-year crop.

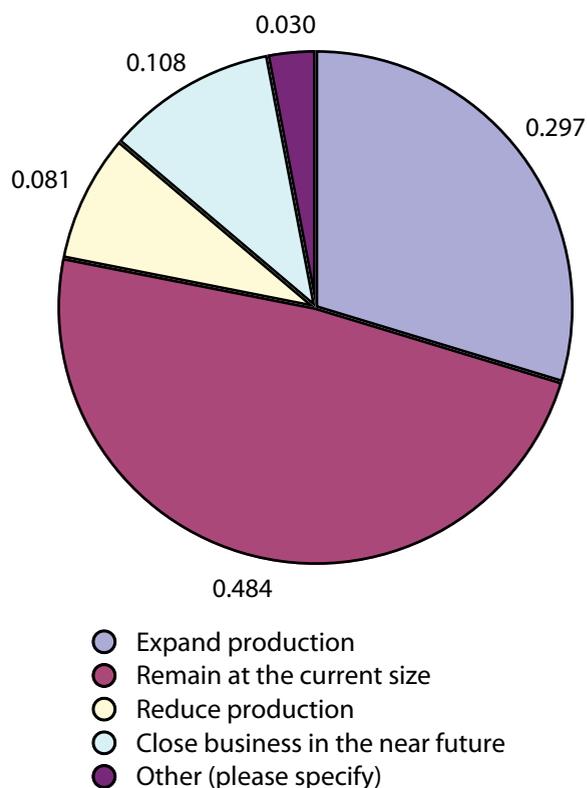


Figure 1. Respondent ambitions for the future of their Christmas tree business. Please check one of the following that best fits your ambitions for your Christmas Tree business.

When asked who they plan to pass their business on to, seventy-one percent of respondents indicated their children or grandchildren. When all relatives were included, this percentage jumped to over ninety percent. Seven percent of respondents also plan to include employees among their beneficiaries. About ten percent of growers have no one to pass their Christmas tree business onto. To some extent, this question identifies the potential future membership of the NCCTA. However, each business, family, and individual is so unique that this broad categorization misses the point. Still, if children and grandchildren are the majority of heirs, how are their needs different from current farm owners and how can the NCCTA be more relevant to them in the future?

When asked about family and business involvement in the NCCTA, nearly half of respondents reported that their spouses were members. However, involvement of children and grandchildren dropped to 26%. Employee involvement was recorded at 28%. Twenty-three percent of respondents reported membership of other relatives. There are many different factors that drive these numbers -many which have little to do with the association itself. Perhaps the central follow-up question to address is why a gap exists between the percentage of adult children who belong to the NCCTA and those who will inherit the farm.

When respondents were asked why family members chose not to join the NCCTA in an open-ended question, several themes emerged. Many didn't find the same benefit to meeting with other growers as their parent did. Some had issues with the cost of belonging to the association or the time it takes out of a busy life. All of these reasons make sense if they aren't as involved as their parent in running the Christmas tree business. These attitudes might change when they take the business over. A few declined to belong because the association "did not sell my trees." While this must be heard, at its core is a lack of understanding regarding the difference between promotion and sales. The NCCTA has never sold a single Christmas tree. Rather it has always provided visibility and connections and the means for growers to make their own sales. Several growers stated that family members did not belong because the association was

"just for the big growers." This is a theme that will be touched on later in this article. As the NCCTA plans for the future, these different opinions need to be carefully considered -- whether they require fundamental change or a clearer message to potential members.

Growers were asked to identify their *primary* customer base or market segment. Growers selling to Independent retailers were the largest segment at 39%. Growers primarily selling to individual retail lots, choose & cut, or garden centers tied roughly for second place each with about 15% of the respondent distribution. Growers selling primarily to non-profit groups, national chains, or regional chain stores tied for third-tier-ranking each with about 5% of the distribution. Keep in mind, this only represents what the growers identify as their dominant market, not the number of trees going to market, and not even all the markets a grower sells to.

The follow-up question on the survey explored perceived vitality of sales by market segment. When growers listed all segments they sell to, the number of growers selling to independent retail lots (58) was closely followed by those selling to garden centers and non-profits (49 and 48 growers respectively). When responses were grouped by increasing, decreasing, or flat growth trends (Figure 2), sixty to seventy percent of growers expect an increasing growth trend in the market segments they sell to — except for garden centers. Only forty-four percent of growers who sell to garden centers believe that those sales will be increasing. Confidence in regional chain stores, non-profit groups, and choose & cut segments is slightly stronger than that observed for national chains, independent retail lots, or grower retail lots. The greatest proportion of growers expecting a decrease in sales (16.7 %), is among the twelve growers who sell to national chains. However, a higher number of respondents (5 and 4) who sell to garden centers and non-profit groups expect to see a decrease.

Respondents were asked to rank their top three activities or services provided by the NCCTA (shown in Figure 3). Aligned with the primary mission of the NCCTA, promotion of NC Fraser fir was the highest ranked priority listed by over eighty percent of respondents. The second most frequently listed benefit was net-

“ We need to find ways to make each segment of our membership feel like the NCCTA is their own association.”

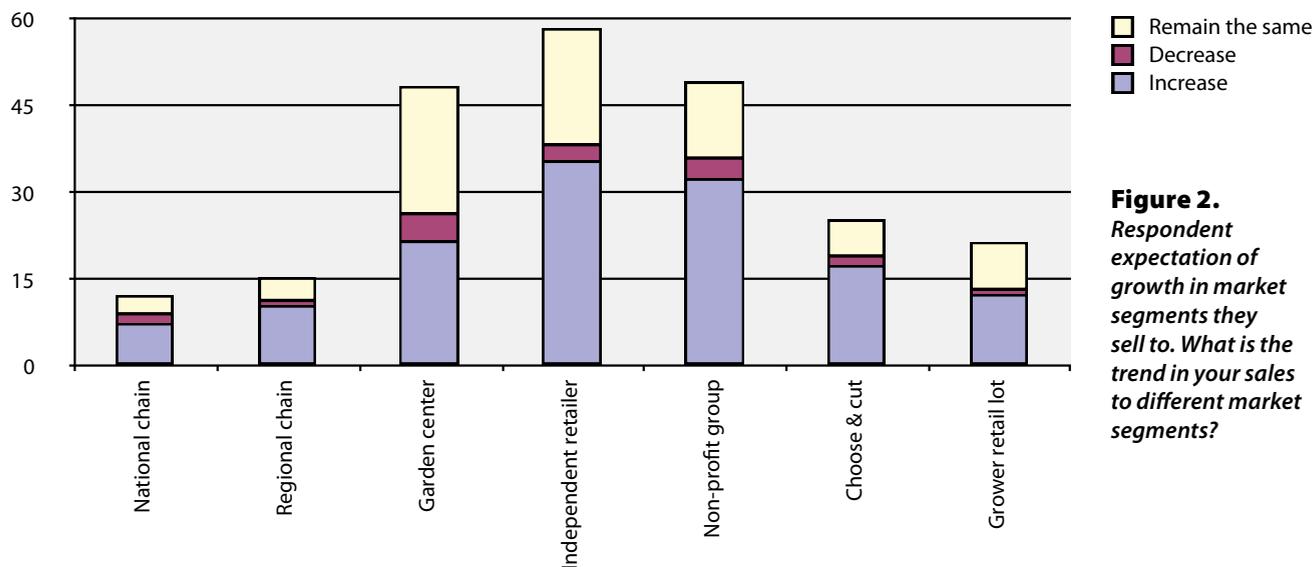


Figure 2. Respondent expectation of growth in market segments they sell to. What is the trend in your sales to different market segments?

working with other growers. Educational programs and information about regulation and policies were identified as a top priority by just under half of respondents. Opportunities to advertise their own business was identified as a top value by 30% of respondents. Fewer growers identified either farm tours or tree contests as one of their top three priorities.

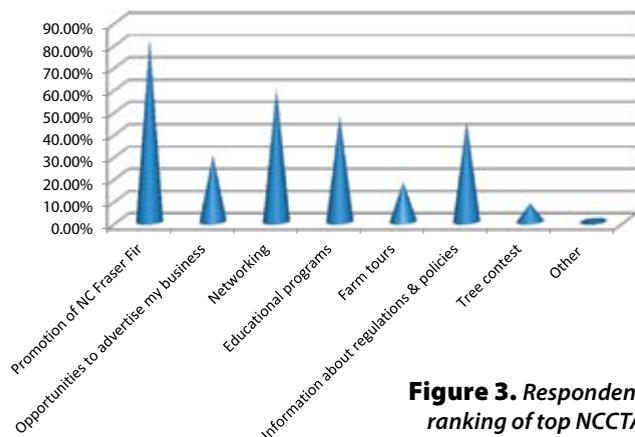


Figure 3. Respondent ranking of top NCCTA activities. What do you value most about the NCCTA?

When similar information was sought from respondents in an open-ended format, 65% of respondents identified promotion of “real” or “NC Fraser fir” Christmas trees and/or increasing market share as the primary mission of the NCCTA. Sixteen percent of respondents identified grower education as the primary mission of the association. Another 16% of respondents identified some aspect of help, support, or protection of and for growers as the primary mission. About 10% of responses touched on some aspect of regulation or political action. Other notable comments included “discouraging growers from

selling trees too cheap,” “educating the public about the environmental benefits of real trees,” and providing a “unified voice for farming issues.”

Finally, respondents were asked to rank major NCCTA promotional strategies. Results to this question are listed in Figure 4 (lower average ratings represent higher ranking). The website is clearly valued the most highly followed by point of sale materials. The online version of the Buy/Sell Directory was ranked higher than the print version. The print version of the Choose & Cut Guide was ranked higher than the online version, but not by much. Consumer trade shows were ranked slightly higher than nursery trade shows. Trade journal advertising received the lowest ranking. If the link between the website and online versions of the two directories are considered, support for the website and associated products is overwhelming. The ranking of these strategies doesn’t necessarily mean that low ranked items are eliminated. Rather it provides another reference point from which to set priorities and allocate funds.

This survey is just one step in the planned strategic planning process. During the 2014 winter meeting of the NCCTA, each break out group (major growers, wholesale/retail, choose & cut, and allied business) met and answered three questions. Questions addressed opportunities and threats facing the industry, what they want from their state Christmas tree association, and what does it take to attract new and/or younger membership.

Other efforts to collect information and opinions are currently underway. Association members have met with most of the county Christmas tree association boards of directors as external focus groups. Further, industry lead-

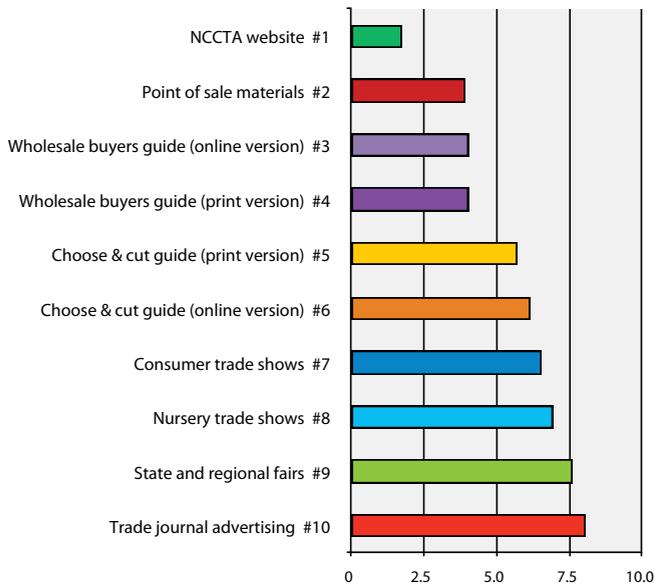


Figure 4. Respondent ranking of NCCTA promotional strategies. What are the most valuable methods of promoting NC Fraser fir that the NCCTA can engage in?

ers and major growers are being interviewed to capture both their historical perspectives and particular insights. Our goal is to process all these conversations this spring to guide discussions of the long range planning committee. If it all goes according to schedule we could have a draft strategic plan by the 2014 September meeting.

Perhaps the strongest initial response we have captured in both the focus groups and interviews is a sense that the association is primarily there to serve the “other” group. Small growers have a sense that the NCCTA serves big growers and big growers feel it is just the opposite. Reflecting both human nature and a common sense of alienation, this pattern goes to the heart of member dissatisfaction.

We need to find ways to make each segment of our membership feel like the NCCTA is their own association. As we consider both the survey data and feedback from groups and interviews, we need to consider the implications across our organization. We need to consider it in the way we conduct our summer and winter meetings, how our boards meet, what committees we have, how we spend our funds, and how we report back to our membership. By working with members’ sense of identity we can strengthen our association.

The NC Christmas tree industry is a small community. In some ways we work together, and in others, it is fierce competition. Hopefully, the NCCTA represents the best of how we work together. This strategic planning process is a key point where we can share ideas that will guide our industry for years to come. If ever there was a time to share your thoughts and get involved, this is it. 🌲

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FEEDING THE BEAST

Tips for surviving media interviews

By Brian Long

Public Affairs Director, N.C. Department
of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Talking to a reporter can be about as much fun as accidentally surprising a hungry bear. In either instance, there's the possibility you'll be mauled. But being the subject of a media interview doesn't have to hurt. In fact, talking to the news media can be beneficial to you and your industry. The media can be a valuable tool for communicating with the public and, subsequently, your customers.

When you talk to a reporter, you have the opportunity to humanize your business, to take it from an "it" to a "we." This can help you to build trust and credibility for your industry. Credibility and accuracy are crucial, particularly in a crisis. It's important that you communicate openly and honestly with the public. Unfortunately, this is something that too many companies and government officials forget about.

For media interviews, there are a few rules to live by:

- **Tell it first.**
- **Tell it all.**
- **Be factual.**
- **Be credible.**

In today's media environment, speed frequently trumps accuracy. When you combine that with the immediacy of social media and the rapid consumption of information, an error reported early can become a longstanding fact. Social media outlets are prevalent and powerful tools for communication. Members of the public have the ability to distribute information to their own audience using Facebook, Twitter, blogs and other social media.

You can survive an interview – and be an effective spokesperson – if you prepare. That means anticipating questions and developing a message that you want to convey to your audience. Preparing also means knowing the audience you want to reach. Remember, the reporter is not your audience. The readers, viewers or listeners are your audience. The reporter is your vehicle for reaching them. Also, think about your farm's identity and how



you want to present it. It needs to be genuine. Once you've done that, be yourself.

When it comes to messaging, communications experts often focus on the STARRC Principle:

- **Simple:** Have a simple message. Use words everyone can understand. Don't use jargon.
- **Timely:** Get your message out quickly.
- **Accurate:** It must be accurate. Use facts to support your message. Reporters often ask questions that require a speculative answer. Don't speculate; it just increases the potential for inaccuracy.
- **Relevant:** Your message must be relevant to the situation and circumstances.
- **Credible:** Be credible and believable. Don't make promises you can't keep; it's better to under-promise and over-deliver. Avoid saying "No comment." That just sounds like you're hiding something. Above all, tell the truth.
- **Consistent:** Be consistent with your message. Whether you're doing media interviews or responding to customers, you want to make sure your message is consistent throughout.

Before you do an interview, know the subject and limit your conversation to that subject. Set a time limit. If you are pressed for time, let the reporter know that upfront. You should also ask the reporter who else will be, or has been, interviewed for the story. This can provide clues about the balance of the story. If the subject of the story is controversial, you should expect it to include a source whose point of view differs from yours. During an interview, try to stay calm, and never argue with a reporter. Stay on the record, treating the conversation as if the camera and microphone are always on. And know when to stop talking. Reporters are good listeners; they'll let you keep talking. Answer their question and then stop. Resist the urge to fill the silence.

These are just a few of the principles I use when being interviewed. I hope you find them useful, too. 🌲



Semi-Annual Meeting, Tradeshow & Farm Tour

September 5 & 6
2014
Jackson County

Don't miss out on this year's summer meeting and the opportunity to come together and network with fellow growers, allied businesses and industry friends.



Friday, September 5

Business Meeting, Tree & Wreath Contest,
Trade Show - First Baptist Church Sylva

Friday Evening

Come out Friday evening to the Best Western River Escape in Dillsboro for good food and fun while enjoying a relaxing view of the Tuckasegee River!
Event starts at 6:00pm. Dinner served at 6:30pm.

Saturday, September 6

Jackson County Farm Tour

Early registration deadline is August 22, 2014.
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No **TAX** Time Like The Present

By Lawrence F. Byerly

CPA, Shareholder
Johnson Price Sprinkle PA
Boone, NC

By the time you are reading this I hope you have moved on from planting season and are starting to think about the next Christmas season, and your tax situation. Many of you may have already filed your 2013 returns and don't really want to think about taxes for a while. Others, of course, have filed an extension so taxes will continue to be a consideration. With that in mind, and for those not yet fully attuned to some of the tax law changes effective for 2013 and beyond, there will be some reminders as we go along in this article.

Depreciation Deductions

Perhaps the changes that would impact tree growers more than anything else, other than the special capital gains treatment available for the cutting of your trees, of course, are the changes in allowable depreciation deductions. Unless Congress does something to resurrect it for 2014, the 2013 tax year saw the last of the popular (and tax-saving) bonus depreciation. Being able to write off 50% of the cost of certain eligible new equipment purchased during the year was certainly a valuable deduction for tree growers.

Section 179

Another very popular depreciation-related deduction utilized by many tree growers is the Section 179 first-year expensing election. Until the end of 2013, this allowed taxpayers to elect to take an expense deduction

immediately for the full purchase cost of qualified property, new or used, up to a threshold of \$500,000 before reaching a phased reduction in the allowable amount. Unless Congress changes it, 2013 was the last year for that large limitation. The Section 179 election is still available for assets placed in service in 2014, so that's good. However, the limitation on that deduction is a mere \$25,000, just 5% of the 2013 amount. Growers may continue to utilize MACRS depreciation with the 200% and 150% declining balance methods still available, as well as the MACRS useful lives for assets used in the timber industry.

For those who live in North Carolina, effective with the 2013 tax year, the Section 179 deduction that was permitted on your Federal tax return was limited by two factors: first, an initial limit of \$25,000 was allowable, plus a second limit of only 15% of the Federal Section 179 deduction in excess of \$25,000. In other words, 85% of the deduction in excess of \$25,000 was not allowable for NC tax purposes in 2013. This limited excess amount will be allowed as a deduction, ratably at 20% per year, over the next five years. This difference in tax treatment between federal and state affects only 2013 since, in 2014, the maximum Section 179 deduction for both Federal and North Carolina tax purposes will be the \$25,000 amount.

Net Investment Income Tax

Many taxpayers were surprised to learn that their investment income in 2013 was subject to the new 3.8% Net Investment Income Tax, or NIIT. The NIIT applies to taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) of more than \$250,000 on a joint return (\$200,000 if single, \$125,000 if married filing separately.)

Please be aware of the fact that the capital gains from the cutting of your Christmas trees is not considered to be investment income, even though that tree income ultimately finds its way onto your Schedule D. That tree income is considered to be from the sale of property in your trade or business and therefore is not subject to the NIIT. Note that for most growers, the gain from the cutting of your trees should start out on Form 4797, Sale of Business Property, which then carries the gain amount to Schedule D. Those of you who may utilize your own tax program to prepare your returns should check to be sure that the capital gain from the cutting of your trees was not included in your NIIT, if it applied to you.

Capital Gains

Another tax rate factor to keep in mind is the higher 20% capital gains rate. If your capital gain income is enough to push you over the threshold for taxing your income at the highest bracket of 39.6%, then your capital gains, even those from the cutting of your trees, would be subject to the 20% tax rate, instead of the 15% rate for more moderate income levels (or 0% for significantly lower income levels). That 39.6% bracket goes into effect when taxable income for 2013 exceeds \$450,000 on a joint return (\$400,000 single and \$225,000 for married filing separately). The threshold is slightly higher for 2014 returns.

Estate Planning

As a final thought, I am aware of the fact that many of our tree growers have seen the value of their trees decline somewhat in a market where there is much competition and pressure from buyers on the selling price of your trees. Couple that with the fact that the real estate market is struggling to recover, and land values are still nowhere near where they were just a few years ago. While none of this has been good for growers, there is still some tax planning opportunity available to those of you who may be involved in estate planning and generational transition issues for getting your business transitioned to your children. The recent tax legislation made permanent the estate and gift tax credit equivalent of \$5,340,000 for each taxpayer for 2014. This enables those of you with estates smaller than that (twice that

for married couples) to pass on to the next generation a very large portion, if not all, of the value of your tree business. And right now, while business and land values have been depressed, there should be no better time to take advantage of being able to pass a greater portion of your estate (both acres and numbers of trees) to your children without incurring any gift tax. Once the children become the owners, the future appreciation in values, either from the land, or from the growth of the trees, is not a part of your estate. While no one likes to think about estate planning, it will become inevitable for all of us at some point in time. Certainly the person who said “there’s no time like the present” must have been thinking about lower values and larger exemptions. Take advantage of them both now before values begin to creep back up.

This article is a very broad overview of some tax law changes and tax issues that may affect certain taxpayers. It cannot be stressed too much that many of these issues are now even more inter-dependent and will require careful planning and consideration of their over-all impact on your total tax situation. 🌲

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DNA SEQUENCING

And Christmas Tree Research

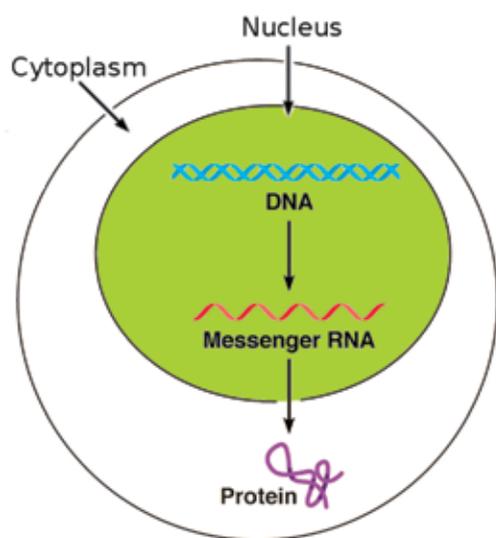


John Frampton & Ross Whetten

Department of Forestry & Environmental Resources
North Carolina State University

Background

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) contains the heritable information that guides the development and functioning of all living organisms including Fraser fir. Within cells, DNA is usually organized into linear structures called chromosomes. Human cells contain 23 pairs of chromosomes while Fraser fir cells contain 12 pairs. DNA exists as two long strands that are bonded together and entwined to form a double helix. A long chain of four different bases is attached along each strand: adenine (A), thymine (T), guanine (G) and cytosine (C). Each type of base in one strand forms a bond with only one type of base in the other strand; A only bonds to T and C only bonds to G. As a result of this complementary base pairing, all the information on one strand is duplicated on the other strand.



Genes in DNA produce mRNA which is used to produce proteins. Proteins help cells to function so that the tree can grow and develop normally.

Genes are sequences of DNA bases that produce messenger RNA (mRNA) which in turn is used to produce proteins. Proteins have a myriad of functions such as providing structural integrity, catalyzing chemical reactions, allowing signaling among cells, and serving as antibodies in the immune system. Generally, proteins determine specific physical traits such as the shape of a plant leaf, hair color, or disease susceptibility. The human genome has about 23,000 protein-coding genes. However, this only accounts for about 1.5% of the 3 billion base pairs in the human genome. Much of the rest of the human genome is believed to serve a regulatory function controlling where, when, and how much each gene is expressed.

Only since 2013 have complete genomes of conifers (Norway spruce, white spruce, and loblolly pine) been successfully sequenced. One reason is that conifer genomes are huge, from five to seven times larger than the human genome, i.e., 16 to 22 billion base pairs!

While we do not have a complete genome sequence for Fraser fir, we have, and will continue to obtain, libraries of Fraser fir DNA sequences. Sequencing is becoming ever more feasible because the technology is progressing so rapidly that the number of base pairs sequenced per dollar doubles every 10 months. As we accrue more Fraser fir DNA sequences, the recently published conifer genomes will be valuable as references, to help us better and more quickly understand our sequence data.

Genetic Variation

For most traits, genetics plays a large role in the variation we see among trees although some of this variation is caused by the environment (weather, site, etc.) and some is caused by management practices that you

as a grower can control (fertilization, weed management, shearing, etc.). Although “variety is the spice of life”, some variation, such as poor tree quality, is bad. We would like to reduce variation and improve quality.

Genetic variation can be differences in DNA sequence that changes the mRNA sequence which in turn changes the protein that is produced. In the extreme case, the protein is so abnormal that it does not function at all, but it may also be that the protein works, but just not as well. Genetic variation can also be differences in DNA sequence that change the amount of mRNA produced, which in turn changes the amount of protein that is produced. This might make the cell grow bigger, be more disease-resistant, or confer tolerance to an insect pest. Most of the differences in DNA sequence are “neutral genetic variation” that has no detectable effect on either the function of a gene or protein, or on the amount of gene expression. This type of DNA sequence variation can still be useful for some applications in breeding programs.

Different individuals carry different genetic variants, and those variants are passed on to offspring of crosses between the individual parents. Parental genetic variants appear in different combinations in the offspring, because each offspring inherits half of its DNA from each of its two individual parents. Following the patterns of genetic variants should allow identification of the parents of each individual offspring, as long as DNA “fingerprints” are available for both the parents and the offspring.

Christmas Tree Research Projects using DNA sequencing

The NCSU Christmas Tree Genetics Program is currently carrying out three research projects that use variation in DNA sequences of Christmas trees. Brief summaries of these projects follow.

Fraser fir “Breeding without Breeding” Study

The objective of this study is to use DNA sequencing to determine female and male parent trees of Fraser fir seedlings. Progeny seedlings from each of the 30 clones grafted in the N.C. Premium Fraser Fir Seed Coop’s Big Springs Seed Orchard in Ashe County are being grown in a greenhouse at the NCSU Horticultural Field Lab in Raleigh. DNA will be extracted and sequenced from needle samples of both the parents and progeny. The se-

quences will be analyzed to assign parent trees to each progeny. We know the female tree which can be used to evaluate the degree of our success. This technique is commonly referred to as “Breeding without Breeding” and 1) allows tracking pedigree of trees without the need for making control-pollinations, 2) enables identifying the parents of selected superior trees in

Post-doctoral scientists Lilian Matallana and Yusuf Kurt are carrying out this study. Funding is from the NCSU Christmas Tree Genetics Program and the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK).

Developing Phytophthora-resistant Fir Christmas Trees

The objectives of this project are to: 1) determine differences in virulence of specific genetic isolates of Phytophthora on various fir genotypes, and 2) develop DNA markers to rapidly select for resistant genotypes.

While the first objective does not involve DNA sequencing, it will help us better understand differences in virulence among the pathogen population. Seedlings of Fraser, momi, Turkish and Trojan fir seedlings were inoculated with six isolates of *P. cinnamomi* and two isolates of *P. cryptogea*. We are assessing disease development and have already learned that some isolates are more virulent than others on these fir species.

We are taking two approaches to developing DNA markers for Phytophthora resistance: 1) identifying genes expressed during Phytophthora infection of fir roots, and 2) finding DNA sequence variation associated with resistance. We are starting with Turkish & Trojan fir because these species have both resistant and susceptible trees to allow us to determine how genetic variation correlates with response to infection. Resistance markers will also allow us to identify Phytophthora resistance from needle samples collected from ongoing Turkish and Trojan fir field trials in the N.C. Mountains. DNA markers developed from Turkish and Trojan fir will then be tested on other fir species.

Graduate student, Will Kohlway, is conducting this research as part of his MS degree in functional genomics. Funding is from a N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services Specialty Crops Block Grant.

Development and Use of Genomic Tools to Improve Firs for Use as Christmas Trees

This is a large nation-wide project with the following objectives: 1) identify DNA markers with predic-

Parent Trees (30 clones)



N.C. Premium Fraser Fir See Coop,
Big Springs Seed Orchard, Ashe County

Seedling Progeny (n = 2500)



NCSU Horticultural Field Lab
Greenhouse, Raleigh

DNA sequencing will be employed to determine the mother (known) and father (unknown) parent of seedlings grown from orchard seed. This technology will save time and money, allow tracking pedigree without the need of control-pollinations, and enable parental identification of superior trees in Christmas tree plantations established from orchard seed.

tive power for desirable traits in true firs, 2) use DNA markers to accelerate production of trees with superior postharvest needle retention and resistance to *Phytophthora* root rot, 3) conduct surveys and focus groups to increase our understanding of consumer Christmas tree preferences and improve growers' ability to respond, and 4) educate and advise growers in genetic improvement

techniques, seed orchard establishment, and using improved genotypes to produce high quality Christmas trees desired by consumers.

We are in the second year of this five year project. So far our focus has been on searching for DNA sequences predictive of postharvest needle retention in Fraser, Canaan and balsam fir. During October, we collected



Research technician, Anne Margaret Braham and MS graduate student, Will Kohlway, inoculate fir seedlings with Phytophthora at the NCSU Horticulture Field Lab in Raleigh.

samples and extracted RNA from abscission zones, i.e., the areas where needles detach from the branch. We are currently waiting for our sequence data to come back from the UC Davis Genomics Center. Washington State University has collected *Phytophthora* isolates from all fir production regions of the country (including North Carolina) and will inoculate 6-8 fir species with 3-4 isolates from each *Phytophthora* species. We are also working with the National Christmas Tree Association on consumer surveying and are developing a “Genetic Improvement of Christmas Trees” web site.

This project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Specialty Crops Research Initiative and involves six collaborators: N.C. State University, Michigan State University, Penn State University, U.C. Davis,

Washington State University, and the National Christmas Tree Association.

Conclusion

Next-generation sequencing methods resulting from rapid technological advances has provided the opportunity to investigate ways of using DNA sequences to accelerate genetic improvement of Christmas tree species. The recent availability of complete genome sequences of several conifers will further enhance these efforts. We are just beginning this exciting era. More advances and opportunities for the Christmas tree industry are sure to arise as we move forward. Stay tuned. 🌲

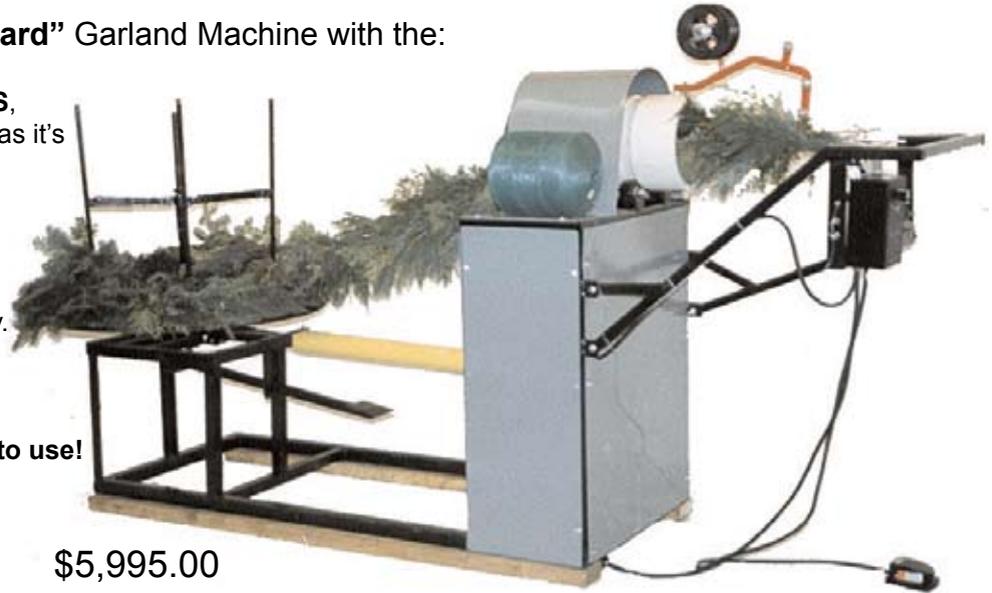
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Healthcare Reform

A Reflection on Open Enrollment

By Jan Noffsinger

PPACA Professional

Vice President of Health Insurance Operations

LifeStore Insurance



The first enrollment period for the well-publicized Affordable Care Act ended March 31, 2014 and the most popular headlines were the technological glitches and delays of the government's website, healthcare.gov. One of the most common difficulties was that based on your household income and the number of members of the household (dependents claimed on your tax return), some folks were told that they qualified for Medicaid. But in North Carolina, Medicaid was not expanded. So for many folks being sent to Medicaid instead of enrolling in the

ACA meant they had to go through the Medicaid enrollment process as well. And because North Carolina did not expand Medicaid, many were told they were not eligible.

Many people encountered more technological troubles on the website. If they called the Marketplace Call Center they also encountered long delays. Still, many people enrolled in plans they could actually afford for the first time ever.

In the small group market, carriers offered early renewals in 2013 allowing employers to extend their group

Continued on page 26

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coverage under the current plan design. Many groups opted for the early renewal, staving off compliance with the new plan designs that came with additional cost for enhanced coverage the government mandated.

So should a small employer discontinue coverage and send their employees to the Health Insurance Marketplace? The answer will vary depending on whether the employees have spouses and children, how much the employer contributes to the cost of employee coverage, and increases to renewing the group plan. One of the issues troubling employers is the rule that if one spouse has access to dependent coverage under an employer group plan, the other spouse is not eligible for a subsidy through the ACA. So some employers are trying to decide if they should eliminate spousal coverage so the spouse can receive a more affordable policy with a tax subsidy and perhaps cost sharing.

Each case will need a careful evaluation. Working with a broker who can guide you costs nothing and you can get help with making a decision to continue group coverage or eliminate the plan, or switch to an ACA-compliant plan design. If an employer eliminates coverage, a 45-day written notice must be given to all employees in the group. This will signal an open enrollment period of 60 days during which employees can enroll in a plan through the Health Insurance Marketplace to determine if they will be able to receive a tax credit or subsidy.

The next Open Enrollment Period will begin November 15, 2014 and run through February 15, 2015. Plans sold outside the Open Enrollment period must have a qualifying event like birth, adoption, marriage, moving to another state or loss of a group plan through a termination of employment or an employer decision to cancel group coverage. 🌲

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NCCTA Awards

Outstanding Service Award: Ellen Church



Ellen has been involved with NCCTA for the past 25 years. She is always willing to step-up and volunteer whether it be snacks, planning, set-up, clean up, registration or tending the NCCTA promotional booth just to name a few. During the NCTA Convention held in Asheville in 1998, Ellen worked very hard to make sure that North Carolina was well represented and the 2010 NCTA Convention was no different. Ellen served as the convention chair overseeing all the committees to make sure that once again, NC hosted a convention to remember. She spent countless hours planning and working with city officials in Winston-Salem to ensure that the convention was a success. As the NCCTA Treasurer, Ellen serves on the board of directors and the executive committee and is constantly involved in intensive planning, not to mention the additional various committees she serves on. Ellen consistently strives to better the association for its members and the industry by pledging her commitment to uphold the by-laws, obtain a balanced budget and meet financial goals.

Charles Fowler presented Ellen Church, NCCTA Treasurer, with the Outstanding Service Award.

Ellen Church accompanying her husband, Cline (NCTA president at that time), at the White House presenting the 2012 tree from Peak Farms.



Outstanding Educator Award: Dr. Jim Hamilton

Jim has served as the Watauga County Extension Director since his return to Watauga County in 2010. Prior to that, he served as an Extension agent from October 2002 to February 2005. Jim is a very innovative and passionate individual who is committed to serving the NC Christmas tree industry as well as helping people advance themselves through better living, better farming and better communities.

Since 2011, Jim has been the technical editor of *Limbs & Needles* and at the beginning of 2014 also took on the role of text editor. “His contributions to the magazine are inimitable and I enjoy having the opportunity to receive his input time and time again, issue after issue.” —Jennifer Greene

“Jim exemplifies Educator; he has an extensive knowledge that he uses daily as he works tirelessly to assist anyone and everyone with any problem they may have.” —Brian Chatham, Watauga County Soil & Water Conservation Technician

“Jim is always very responsive to farmers’ needs. He has shown initiative over the years to learn through first-hand experience and he isn’t afraid to jump into a project and get dirty. Jim was instrumental in the organization of the AgriSafe and Certified Safe Farm Programs that were held in Spring 2013 that demonstrated farmworker safety.” —Harry Yates

“Jim is always willing to go above and beyond and use his knowledge and experience to help those that





Jim addressing the workers at the farmworker safety day at Cline Church Nursery



Jim at the 2013 annual Watauga Christmas Tree Association summer meeting

are not in his immediate county. He is always there to offer encouragement.” —Rodney Buchanan

Just a few of Jim’s accomplishments include:

- PhD dissertation titled “The Dynamics of Labor in North Carolina’s Christmas Tree Industry” was published in 2004 under the direction of Dr. Fred Cabbage.
- Watauga County Center Blog: wataugaces.blogspot.com – An informative Blog for members from the Extension office to post information about their programs including Christmas trees.
- New radio show on WATA 1450AM on Mondays at 11:45 a.m. spotlighting different programs. You may listen to Jim with the initial program talking about Small Farms week at: <https://soundcloud.com/awilsonradio/watauga-extension-spotlight-1>

- Worked with Catherine LePrevost on Christmas tree farmworker toolkits
- Instrumental in the organization of the AgriSafe and Certified Safe Farm Programs that were held in Spring 2013 at Cline Church Nursery in Ashe County where over 250 participants attended and in Watauga County at Hawk Mountain Farm in 2012 with over 70 participants. Demonstrations included pesticide safety, health & first-aid, chain-saw safety, backpack sprayer maintenance, hazardous farm plants and critters, heavy equipment safety and local laws and customs.

Harry Yates presented Jim Hamilton, Watauga County Extension Director with the Outstanding Educator Award.



Environmental Stewardship Award: Wiley Gimlin

Environmental stewardship is an important component of Christmas tree production, ensuring that real farm-grown Christmas trees are the environmental choice over artificial decorations. Every year, the NCCTA chooses a farm to celebrate for their achievements in this area. This year, the NCCTA Farm Stewardship Award was awarded to Wiley Gimlin, owner and operator of Omni Farm in Ashe County.

Wiley carries on the tradition started by his father, Hal Gimlin, in the early 1970s. Hal was always looking for innovative, environmentally friendly ways to grow trees. Wiley's continuation of that tradition is the basis for Omni Farm being the recipient of the Farm Stewardship Award.

First of all, because of Wiley's interest in new ways of doing things, Omni farms is one of the first places folks think of as a cooperator for potential demonstra-

tion sites. Do you like being able to spray in the fall for Cinara aphids and get control of twig aphids the following spring? That initial research was conducted on Omni Farm. Need to know how to burn back flowers so that bees won't be in your trees when you have to spray? Again — done at Omni Farm. Hope to someday be able to use a product to get rid of developing cones in trees? You guessed it — Omni Farm is one of the study sites.

But the main reason why Omni Farm is an award winning example of an environmentally friendly Christmas tree farm is the wildlife habitat. Marketing many of his trees through garden centers and mail order, Wiley requires an excellent quality tree, but does so while providing habitat for wildlife. It really doesn't take exceptional efforts to be an environmentally friendly farm. Wiley does it by following the basics of scouting and good ground cover management. But the fruits of these



Monarch caterpillar feeding on milkweed in a field at Omni farm



Looking for a site to observe wildlife. Left to right: Brian Chatham, Dr. Ashton Drew, Kara Dziwulski, Jeff Owen and Travis Birdsell



Wiley Gimlin and Travis Birdsell checking out the bees at Omni farm, April 2014

labors have definitely paid off — not just in the production of beautiful trees — but for all the critters that call Omni Farm their home, as has been borne out by two recent studies.

One study, being conducted by Kara Dziwulski, NCSU wildlife graduate student, is documenting how rabbits and mice are using Christmas tree farms. Omni Farm was selected for a pilot study by Kara as she developed her research. We knew there was a lot of wildlife at Omni Farm because of cameras set up by Brian Chatham, soil conservation technician with Watauga County Soil and Water. This year, Omni Farm is one of four farms where Kara is catching rabbits and placing radio monitors on them to see how frequently they are in tree fields.

Another study carried out at Omni Farm involved answering questions from Ashe County beekeepers about the pesticides being used in Christmas tree farms. We also knew that tree farms, with all the flowering ground covers, were providing forage for bees. So how hard was it to keep bees in a tree field? There was only one way to find out! Put a hive in a field.

Knowing nothing about keeping bees — and being worried about the potential bad press that might come

out of a failed attempt — Omni Farms was chosen as one of the most likely farms where we could make it work. Wiley scouts, only applies insecticides when he has to, and he has great ground covers. That hive is still going strong after two years. We've only had to shut the bees up for a couple of days last spring when he was spraying with a high pressure sprayer right in front of the hive.

Omni Farm is also one of the sites where we've been observing pollinators since July 2012. To date, 33 different flowering plants have been observed in ground covers around Wiley's trees. These support many pollinators including Monarch butterflies and caterpillars and the black and gold bumblebee — both of which are becoming scarce — and lady beetles, hover flies and lacewings — all of which give Omni farm free pest control.

We all know it's not easy growing beautiful trees — especially in today's markets. But Wiley Gimlin demonstrates each day that it's possible while still being a benefit to wildlife and the environment.

Dr. Jill Sidebottom and Travis Birdsell presented Wiley Gimlin of Omni Farm, with the Environmental Stewardship Award.



Outstanding Public Official Award: Congressman Mark Meadows

Congressman Mark Meadows, representing North Carolina's 11th Congressional District, was recognized for his support of the Christmas tree industry. Congressman Meadows, along with his staff, have been very supportive to our industry's concerns and we recognize his efforts in assisting the Christmas Tree Industry and Agriculture. Once a small business owner himself, Meadows understands first-hand the importance of small business growth and the struggles that face us daily. We value and appreciate his and his staff's attentiveness to our industry's needs, as well as the participation in our semi-

annual meetings and farm visits. Congressman Meadows has been very supportive of the Christmas Tree Checkoff Promotion Order and his staff came to support our Trees for Troops event last November and helped load trees. We are proud to have a friend in Congressman Meadows to stand up for our needs as small business owners.

Wayne King, Senior Advisor to Congressman Meadows was present to accept the Congressman's award that was presented by Rodney Buchanan, NCCTA President.



Congressman Mark Meadows on a farm visit at Three Oaks, LTD in Avery County.



Congressman Mark Meadows talking to Avery County Extension Director, Jerry Moody, while on a farm visit in Avery County.

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Phytophthora Revisited

As observed from the rainfall records from Mills River MHREC, we beat the ten year average in every month last year except for September. And even then it was close. Phytophthora likes anaerobic conditions, and last year the majority of our fields experienced it. We estimated, in Avery, we received over 100 inches of rain for 2013. This amount of rain far exceeded our normal annual rainfall. Due to these wet conditions, Phytophthora fungus began to grow and attack our Frasers. Now that the ground has begun to dry out, the symptoms of the disease has begun to manifest itself. Sometimes it is apparent that a particular field should not have been planted, but that is not always the case. If you planted trees in a bottom area, or an area that is close to the creeks, then you have probably begun to experience root rot. The total loss of trees will probably not be known until late this summer, but trees will probably continue to die that long due to the environment being favorable for disease development and symptom expression. If you have trees that are go-to-market size, then it might, and we stress might, be cost effective to treat one year with a fungicide. If you have more than one year till harvest, it is probably not cost effective to chemically treat.

Some steps that you can take are to first and foremost channel the water away from your field. Make sure that any runoff does not run through your field, for this can create a favorable situation for the disease.

Make sure that your seedlings and transplants are clean.

Once you plant your trees take steps to protect the roots. Try to minimize any activity that can cause root

damage. This includes minimizing the use of pre-emergent herbicides, such as, simazine, planting the tree too deeply, overusing fertilizer, and allowing erosion to occur.

If you are using equipment in a field that is known to have Phytophthora, clean all equipment prior to moving or working in another field. This includes hand equipment, and even shoes. If one portion or section of your field is affected by Phytophthora, then you can work that section last and clean all the equipment that was used in that particular section.

Finally you can graft Frasers onto Turkish, Nordmann, or Momi rootstock. All of these species show some degree of tolerance to Phytophthora.

Another positive for us in 2014, is that we have experienced cold temperatures. These temperatures have been cold enough to inactivate spores of the pathogen in the soil. Basically, if the soil is 34 degrees then Phytophthora can be killed if the temperature stays there for 16 days.

As the temperature decreases the length of time it takes to “inactivate” the spores also decreases. It won’t kill all of the spores, but it will reduce the total amount of inoculum.

So if you have Phytophthora, maybe nature has helped you a little bit this winter by knocking back the amount of fungus present in your fields to cause more disease in 2014. 🌲

This article is reprinted with permission from the February edition of Ornamental News for Growers and Landscapers, published by the Avery County Cooperative Extension Center



Above: grown tree with phytophthora root rot; top: disease spreading across a field

Curtis “Spot” Ward Memorial Fund

The Partners, Managers and Employees of Happy Holiday Christmas Trees are honored to announce the establishment of the Curtis “Spot” Ward Memorial Fund. This Fund and Foundation will raise money for the advancement, promotion and research of the Christmas Tree industry NATIONWIDE.

Spot was a unique individual in the very diverse industry of growing and selling fresh cut Christmas Trees and greens. He had friends and relationships throughout the United States and Canada. He was an individual that everyone liked, respected, looked up to and often went to for advice on many issues the industry has faced over the years. Spot lived, breathed and slept TREES. Next to his loving family and his Harley, there was nothing in his life more important than his work and the people he worked with. The people at Happy Holiday Christmas Trees feel there is

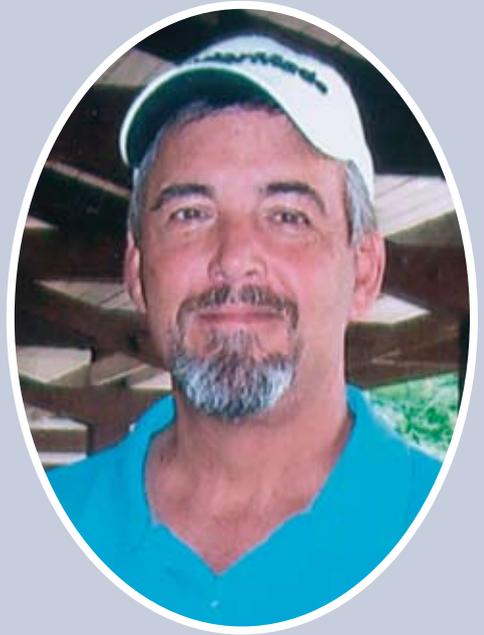
no better way to honor this great individual, his contribution to the tree industry and his memory.

To start the fund Happy Holiday is pledging \$25,000 and will match contributions up to \$25,000 for each year of its existence. The goal will be to raise over \$100,000 annually with donations from friends and colleagues both within and outside of the Christmas Tree Industry.

Joann Ward has been asked to be the Administrator of this foundation and she will be charged with making the final decisions on how the funds are to be spent each year.

The only restrictions will be that all of the funds must be spent for the benefit of the Christmas tree industry that Spot loved so much.

There will be much more information forthcoming and we hope that all of you will help to make this a worthwhile tribute to a GREAT individual. 🌲



Contributions may be sent to:

Curtis “Spot” Ward Memorial Fund
Joanne Ward, Administrator
PO Box 144
Minneapolis, NC 28652



Calendar of Events 2014

June 3

Board of Directors meeting

Watauga County Cooperative Extension Office

September 4

Board of Directors meeting

Best Western in Dillsboro

September 5-6

NCCTA Summer meeting

Jackson County

September 5-14

Mountain State Fair, Fletcher

October 16-26

N.C. State Fair, Raleigh

November 13-23

Southern Christmas Show, Charlotte

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| 2-2, PL+2) | 8-15" | \$725.00 | \$645.00 |
| (3-2, PL+2) | 10-18" | \$750.00 | \$670.00 |

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| (2-1, 2-2) | 15-24" | \$650.00 | \$600.00 |

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