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JoCo Grows Agriculture Initiative Promotes Strawberry Season

(Johnston County, NC - April 1, 2022) – The Johnston County Visitors Bureau in partnership with the NC Cooperative Extension Johnston County Center, and the JoCo Grows Agriculture Steering Committee, is working to bridge the gap between consumers and the farming community by executing several innovative marketing projects, holding public on-farm events, designing a cost share grant program, and engaging in educational outreach to support agricultural profitability and productivity for Johnston County farmers.

The committee was recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$111,900 from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (NCTTFC). This funding will support the JoCo Grows Agriculture Steering Committee’s efforts to market and gain awareness of the importance of agriculture in Johnston County.

As strawberry season approaches, immediate plans are being made for the first joint marketing effort, a Strawberry Harvest Season marketing campaign which will highlight eight strawberry growers in the county. Advertising will market on-farm activities for families, where to purchase locally grown strawberries, and on circulating educational materials. Events like this will remain a part of the grant initiatives through 2023 to introduce area farms to local and regional consumers.

Promotional plans include printed materials, radio ads, giveaways, digital and social marketing, public relations efforts, in-person events, and more. A unique web page has been set-up to promote strawberry season in the county: www.jocogrowsstrawberries.com.

“The JoCo Grows Agriculture Marketing Committee was formed in 2019 to include members of the farming and agribusiness community to discuss marketing efforts for on-farm events, buy direct, and pick-your-own, and to provide resources for marketing the agricultural assets of Johnston County,” stated Bryant Spivey, County Extension Director, Johnston County Cooperative Extension.

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (NCTTFC) was created to assist current/former tobacco farmers, former quota holders, persons engaged in tobacco-related businesses, individuals displaced from tobacco-related employment, and tobacco product component businesses in NC that have been affected by the adverse effects of the MSA. The NCTTFC can disburse funds through compensatory programs and qualified agricultural programs. For more information about NCTTFC visit their [website](#). To see the complete list of NCTTFC grant recipients [go here](#).

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