

NRCS A-3A75-4-22

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN THE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NAURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATIN SERVICE

AND

NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY

This memorandum of understanding (MOU) is between the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural resources Conservation Services, herein after referred to as the NRCS, and the North Carolina A&T State University, herein referred to as A&T.

I. Purpose:

The primary objective of this agreement it to forge a close working relationship between NRCS and A&T that fosters collaboration and cooperation in a joint effort to improve the use of natural resources in the nation as a whole, and particularly in North Carolina.

Both parties will achieve the activities herein through a commitment to working together for the benefit of both parties and the benefit to each organization's customer base that include the agricultural community as well as citizens through the U.S.

II. Background

The NRCS delivers USDA programs and provides technical assistant in natural resources conservation planning and implementation to a variety of producer groups including low income and minority producers. One of A&T major constituents is low income and minority producers.

A&T and NRCS have opportunities in the area of training to assist each other complete this ongoing task. A&T has classroom facilities, equipment, software, laboratories, and a library that can all be used to assist in the training of NRCS staffs and its conservation partners (e.g., conservation district supervisors and employees, state staffs, and technical service providers)

NRCS and A&T can engage in demonstrations and field studies on natural resource conservation areas that specialists and faculty with similar interest can investigate collectively.

A&T and NRC have faculty and specialist with similar education backgrounds, research experience, and applied scientific skills that can be used to address a multitude of complicated field situations. It would be beneficial to create short-term exchanges between employees from the two organizations, which would benefit the organizations as well as producers, students, and communities.

NRCS has a need to diversify its workforce and A&T has a diverse student population. Some A&T students study and conduct research on natural resource conservation topics, which often coincide with the mission of the NRCS. Student internships, auditing of NRCS training classes, and NRCS sponsored projects funding would benefit both organizations.

A&T has a working farm with modern facilities and farm equipment. NRCS will benefit from the use of this farm by being able to provide hands-on training to NRCS employees. NRCS can sponsor field studies that can serve as demonstrations to both NRCS trainees and also local and regional farmers. A&T's constituents will also benefit from this type of applied investigation. Finally, A&T faculty and students can also benefit academically by conducting scholarly research and publishing this information.

III. North Carolina A&T State University and the NRCS mutually agree to:

- A. Develop a joint committee to ensure the smooth operation of the partnership by recommending the effective use of the partnership's resources and activities that achieve mutually agreeable goals.
- B. Work together to develop joint scientific experimentation and demonstration on natural resource issues including soils, social issues, animal waste management, etc.
- C. Work together to investigate and to improve outreach efforts to different groups of producers, including diverse and low-income producers.
- D. Develop and implement effective training to NRCS employees in a variety of disciplines and a multitude of natural resource topics.
- E. Foster the exchange of professional A&T faculty and students and NRCS specialists in order to facilitate the interchange of ideas, scientific approaches, and familiarity with organizational missions and goals.
- F. Collaborate creatively to cultivate innovative approaches to natural resource issues including delivering Federal and state programs effectively, developing scientific approaches and procedures, and transferring conservation technologies to a wide variety of producer groups.

- G. Identify joint research needs and opportunities for field application of new technology through demonstration projects, as appropriate.
- H. Develop and implement specific plans of action for cooperative activities pursuant to items A through G, as needed.