

Summer | 2025



Ag Carolina **FARM & COUNTRY**



Ag Carolina
FARM CREDIT

AgCarolina FARM & COUNTRY

AgCarolina Farm & Country is published once a year for stockholders, directors and friends of AgCarolina Farm Credit, Agricultural Credit Association.

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Message FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

When I reflect on our farmers and rural communities, one word consistently rises to the forefront: grit. Defined as the drive, stamina, and fortitude to push through any challenge or obstacle until success is achieved, grit perfectly captures the spirit of those who dedicate their lives to agriculture.

We recognize that these are challenging times. Rising costs, unpredictable trade dynamics, volatile weather patterns, and the relentless demands of agricultural life all contribute to a difficult and uncertain season. Yet, for over a century, AgCarolina Farm Credit has stood alongside our members—navigating these cycles together—and we remain steadfast in our commitment to do so for generations to come. The financial strength and power of our local cooperative affords us the opportunity to provide dependable financial support for agriculture and rural communities year in and year out.

At AgCarolina, we strive to reflect the same grit and determination that define our farmers and rural communities. Their resilience, passion, and work ethic inspire how we operate as an organization. It is their example that guides us, and strength that fuels our shared purpose of serving agriculture and rural communities, yielding a more prosperous future for all.

We have a talented group of professionals who are passionate about serving our members and rural communities. The local relationships we build with our members are foundational



EVAN KLEINHANS

to what we do. It is through these deep relationships that AgCarolina is able to add value to our members.

As your local lending cooperative, in addition to providing loans for farms, businesses, homes and land, our commitment remains to continue to provide resources and programs that support and help our members grow their success. Initiatives such as Women in Ag, AgBiz, and Rural Resilience are just a few examples of how we aim to invest in and uplift our members. As their lending partner, we recognize the importance of offering educational resources along with events that encourage — something that is reflected in the pages that follow.



Investing in our communities and the future of agriculture remains a cornerstone of our mission. Through grant programs that help turn aspirations into achievements, we are proud to play a role in shaping the next generation of agricultural leaders. This edition highlights our scholarship initiative that continues to reveal the bright futures ahead for both our students and the industry we serve.

As a cooperative, AgCarolina is owned and governed by our members. When AgCarolina makes a profit, that money goes to one of two places--it is either reinvested in the cooperative for the collective good of its members or it is returned to its members in the form of patronage, equitably reducing the effective interest rates for all eligible members. As your local cooperative, delivering a strong patronage is important to the AgCarolina Board of Directors, association, and members. In 2024, The patronage refund for the Association was \$48.5 Million and average interest rate reduction of approximately 1.76%. We are eager to continue to deliver meaningful patronage dollars to members.

Your Association remains in extremely strong financial condition. In recent years, the merger allowed AgCarolina to diversify its loan portfolio and combine capital from two strong associations. Coupling the merger with an increase in earnings in recent years, patronage rates have increased. Going forward, we expect patronage in the future to moderate back down to more normal levels.

AgCarolina has been successful in profitably, growing our loan portfolio over the last three years. As the Association grows, a portion of our profits must be retained to sustain that growth. This investment helps to secure future income streams and prudently manage risk. The Board of Directors and management team remain committed to the mission of providing constructive credit and financial services that help our members to grow one local relationship at a time.

Thank you for trusting us to be your lender in both times of difficulty and bounty. We plan to continue to provide the service and dedication that you've come to trust. Together, we hope to overcome challenges and exhibit grit to achieve success. A bright future lies ahead.

Sincerely,

Evan Kleinhans

President and Chief Executive Officer



Shared PURPOSE

SERVING AGRICULTURE AND RURAL COMMUNITIES,
YIELDING A MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR ALL

Mission

PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE CREDIT AND FINANCIAL
SERVICES TO GROW THE SUCCESS OF OUR
MEMBERS, ONE LOCAL RELATIONSHIP AT A TIME

AGCAROLINA FARM CREDIT REWARDED MEMBERS WITH 2024 PATRONAGE DISTRIBUTION

AgCarolina Farm Credit celebrated another successful patronage distribution to its members of their local lending cooperative. The all-cash patronage paid directly to members was \$48.5 million, providing members with an interest rate reduction of approximately 1.76%.

"Sharing our profits with members effectively lowers borrowing costs within our agriculture and rural lending cooperative. For 2024, our patronage refund translated to an average interest rate reduction of 1.76% for members," states Evan Kleinhans, CEO of AgCarolina Farm Credit. "This clearly demonstrates the unique financial advantages of partnering with a local cooperative."

Kleinhans continues, "We deeply appreciate our members for choosing us as their local lending partner. Your trust and support enable us to continue providing valuable financial benefits, such as delivering strong patronage refunds."

“

"AgCarolina is easy to work with", states Judd Hyde, an AgCarolina Farm Credit member from Spring Hope, NC. Hyde continues, "We are thankful for the simple loan process and knowledgeable AgCarolina team. Our loan officer, Clay Whitley, has been an incredible resource for us, providing valuable financial advice to us when we need it. We have told a lot of people about AgCarolina and the benefits of being a member of this cooperative."

Alongside the all-cash patronage distribution, AgCarolina branches hosted celebrations on Patronage distribution day, March 25th 2025. Members who attended the branch celebrations were entered to win the grand prize, a Kubota RTV520. AgCarolina partnered with Louisburg Tractor to give this year's recipients, Judd and Kimberly Hyde, the RTV.

AgCarolina Farm Credit is committed to serving its members and local agricultural communities across eastern North Carolina. Delivering strong patronage refunds is one of the many benefits of being a part of their local lending cooperative.



AgCarolina partnered with Louisburg Tractor to give this year's recipients, Judd and Kimberly Hyde, the RTV.



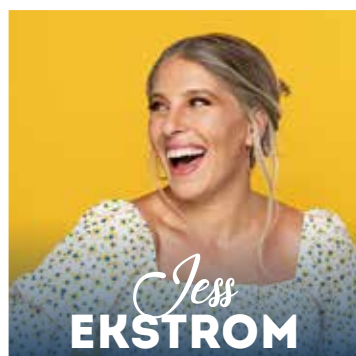
WOMEN IN AG CONFERENCE— A CELEBRATION WITH MOTIVATION AND CAMARADERIE



The AgCarolina Farm Credit Women in Ag Conference is a chance for ladies in the agricultural industry to come together to rejuvenate, be motivated, and most importantly to be reminded that they are not alone. Women in Agriculture play such an important and special role.

“In a world where women in agriculture often walk a unique and challenging path, the conference AgCarolina created stands as a moment of empowerment. Your commitment to fostering sisterhood and building a supportive community has made an impact on all who attended,” said Paige of Jessup Insurance Group, who attended the event.

This year’s event featured three keynote speakers from across the country—Kiah Burchett, Kylie Epperson, Kiah Twissleman and Jess Ekstrom. These women motivated attendees and made them feel seen, no matter what they were going through.



Held at The Farmer’s Daughter at Walston Pond, The Women in Ag Conference took place in March of this year. AgCarolina is so thankful for all the women who took time to celebrate begin a lady in this industry and to invest in themselves too. Approximately 32.5% of farmers in North Carolina are female, and we are committed to recognizing this demographic.

“
This conference was so amazing! Thank you for all AgCarolina does to support us financially and emotionally. It was a perfect day!
stated Kim, an AgCarolina Member.

Here’s to strong women. May we know them. May we be them. May we raise them.



The Women in Agriculture conference is held annually in March.

Scan the QR code to follow for date announcements and learn more about how AgCarolina invests in women in ag.



MENTAL HEALTH

48 percent of rural residents and farmers say they are personally experiencing more mental health challenges than they were a year ago.

Farming is stressful in the best of times, but between weather, fluctuating commodity prices, trade, and other pressures, farmer stress and suicide rates have steadily increased since the 80's. While our farmers have more grit and fortitude than most, having to continually be strong can be isolating and exhausting. It's important that our farmers know they don't have to go it alone. Support for farmers is available.

As Linda Hunt with AgKnow said, "Addressing the mental health of our farmers isn't optional—it's essential."

From local to national, there is support for our farmers and their families. AgCarolina Farm Credit offers free, confidential support services for members. My Group, a third-party service, offers resources for many matters such as:

- counseling services for grief
- stress management
- marital/relationship issues
- trauma, anger management
- depression/anxiety
- family conflict
- alcohol/substance abuse

AgCarolina is committed to supporting our members through trainings, education and conversations, we hope to make a difference in the health and success of our communities. Through these efforts, we want our farmers to know they are not alone.

Locally, the NC Agromedicine Institute focuses on creating a safer and healthier life for farmers, fishermen, foresters, their workers and their families through research, prevention/intervention, and education/outreach. Some of their focus areas are stress management and mental health. The Institute is a partnership between East Carolina University, North Carolina State University, and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. They work with those in the agricultural community, businesses, health care organizations, and other organizations to identify risks for farmers.

At a national level, Rural Resilience is a free, private, online training course to help farmers and their families cope with the rising stress they face.

*To our farmers and ranchers:
we see you, thank you,
and support you.
You are not alone.*



Scan QR code to learn more about any of these programs, or visit www.agcarolina.com/resources/community-support.

Growing Goodness

AgCarolina Farm Credit is committed to supporting our rural communities. Annually, as a part of this support, the association has an application-based grant program. The grant program focuses on the following four areas: education, environment, technology, and quality of rural life. Grant recipients can be awarded up to \$5,000 per year with this program.



EDUCATION



ENVIRONMENT



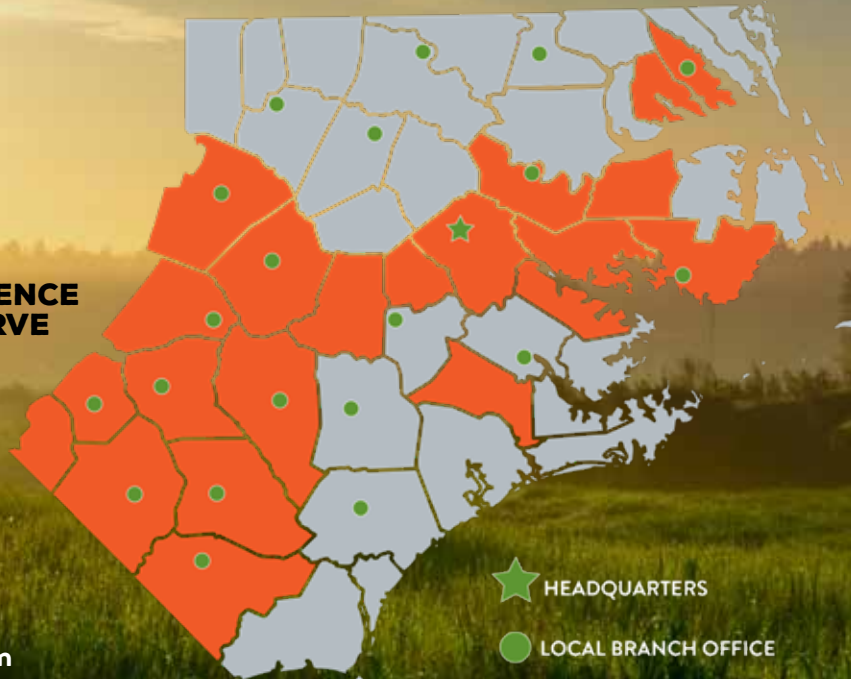
TECHNOLOGY



QUALITY OF
RURAL LIFE

\$50,000 AWARDED IN 2024 TO 16 DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS IMPACTING 20 NC COUNTIES

**2024 COMMUNITY GRANT
PROGRAM MAKING A DIFFERENCE
IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE**



Counties positively impacted by
2024 Community Grant Program



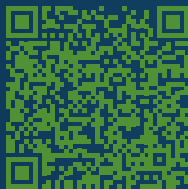
HEADQUARTERS



LOCAL BRANCH OFFICE



"Our FFA would like to give a heartfelt thanks to AgCarolina for supporting our livestock program with the grant you gave us. With the grant we were able to purchase a popper for transporting animals to our shows. So far, it has helped us travel all over North Carolina & Virginia. While attending the shows we were able to sharpen our skills and the students were successful in showmanship. We are so thankful for your support." -Karen Glass, FFA Advisor



**To learn more or apply for this year's AgCarolina Grant
Program, scan the QR code**

Apply by October 15, 2025

From the Classroom to the Call

HOW TWO GRANT RECIPIENTS ARE GROWING THEIR COMMUNITIES

FUELING THE NEXT GENERATION

Terra Ceia Christian School, located in Pantego, NC, is the home of a growing FFA chapter. Focusing on educating the future generation of agricultural leaders, the FFA chapter has seen an increase in students interested in their livestock program. With the increase in participation, the more students they have traveling and learning how to raise and show livestock. The chapter requested the grant in order to purchase a truck transport box, also known as a "popper" in the livestock world. This allows the students to safely transport livestock to various livestock show competitions in and out of state. Our grant also allotted the funds for them to add a pen to keep the animals in.



GRANTING SAFETY: INVESTING IN RURAL RESPONSE

The Snow Hill Rural Fire Department, located in Greene County, was a 2024 grant recipient. Their grant request focused on the quality of rural life as they sought out this grant to purchase rescue equipment. Located in a large farming community, the department needed to expand their off-road emergency response. The equipment purchased with the grant allows them to be able to safely transport injured citizens from field to road.

"Our department is grateful for AgCarolina funding a project to better serve our community. This grant has helped improve our off road emergency response to meet the agriculture needs."

- Todd Whaley, Snow Hill RFD Fire Chief



New Member Resources

DISCOVER THE MEMBER PORTAL

Members have access to an exclusive library of online resources through the **Member Portal** of the Farm Credit Knowledge Center!

The **Member Portal** offers two comprehensive resources: **AgHub Learning Portal** and **Agricultural Business Toolkit**. These resources provide valuable information on general agriculture, commodities and agricultural business management.



The AgHub Learning Portal is a one-stop-shop for credible resources and information related to commodities and agriculture. Whether you're an agriculturist looking to expand your knowledge or seeking resources within your chosen industry, the AgHub offers a variety of videos, templates, worksheets, forms, reputable resource links and much more.



The Agricultural Business Toolkit is a library of resources specifically designed to aid in the management of agricultural operations. The toolkit covers the most frequently requested information related to planning and managing an agricultural operation. With video tutorials, downloadable worksheets and templates, check sheets and additional resource links, you'll find applicable assets that you can adopt and utilize as you manage your business.

SCAN ME!



To learn more, scan the QR code or visit **AgCarolina.com/Resources**.

Log in with the information below.

Website URL: <https://farmcreditknowledgecenter.com/agcarolina/>

Password: FarmerStrong24!



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KNOWLEDGE CENTER
[AgCarolina.com/Resources](https://farmcreditknowledgecenter.com/agcarolina/)

AG BIZ PROGRAMS ONLINE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

AgCarolina Farm Credit offers educational opportunities to individuals before or during their business venture. The AgBiz courses consists of AgBiz Planner and AgBiz Basics. Within each program, the participant completes online educational modules and partners with a loan officer. This program is a free opportunity for members.



Apply online
BY AUGUST 15TH

<https://www.agcarolina.com/resources/educational-opportunities/ag-biz-courses>

AGCAROLINA FARM CREDIT ANNOUNCES 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

AgCarolina Farm Credit recently named their 2025 scholarship recipients. For 2025, AgCarolina Farm Credit distributed over \$21,000 in local scholarships to deserving students that are committed to leadership, agriculture and rural communities.

All scholarships distributed support academic excellence, community involvement and leadership for students committed to central, eastern, and southeastern North Carolina agriculture and rural

communities. Scholarship opportunities include high school graduates, N.C. 4-H, N.C. FFA, college students attending a HBCU or Historically Minority Serving Institution, NC Community College students, and specific institutions such as: NC State University, University of Mount Olive, North Carolina A&T University, and North Carolina State University Agricultural Institute.

2025 AGCAROLINA FARM CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS INCLUDE:

FFA & 4-H SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Gary (Bryson) Fuller-Granville Co. - FFA
Lilah Byrum- Chowan Co. - 4H
Ashtyn Worthington- Columbus Co. - FFA
Kamryn Graybeal- Wilson Co. - FFA
Carmela Rossi – Wake Co. - FFA
Avery Jones-Sampson Co. - FFA

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE RECIPIENTS

Lilah Byrum- Chowan Co.
Coley Sasser- Bladen Co.
Emma Bailey- Pasquotank Co.
John Skinner- Warren Co.
Jay Roberts- Perquimans Co.
Linsey Peterson- Sampson Co.
Micah Boseman- Nash Co.
Aaron Pait- Bladen Co.
Hayden Boney- Sampson Co.
Gavin McClenny- Duplin Co.
Samantha Boswell- Johnston Co.
Sidney Lanier- Pender Co.

NC COMMUNITY COLLEGE RECIPIENTS

Samantha Boswell- Johnston Co.
Joshua Hobbs- Sampson Co.
Tanner Woodard- Johnston Co.

HBCU RECIPIENT

Corey Scott- Wake Co.

AgCarolina scholarships awarded through NC State University, University of Mount Olive, North Carolina A&T University, and North Carolina State University Agricultural Institute are scored and selected by the associated University or program and announced by the partnership institutions once awarded.



LILAH BYRUM
Chowan County



COLEY SASSER
Bladen County



EMMA BAILEY
Pasquotank County



JOHN SKINNER
Warren County



JAY ROBERTS
Perquimans County



LINSEY PETERSON
Sampson County



AARON PAIT
Bladen County



HAYDEN BONEY
Sampson County



GAVIN MCCLENNY
Duplin County



SAMANTHA BOSWELL
Johnston County



SIDNEY LANIER
Pender County



MICAH BOSEMAN
Nash County



BRYSON FULLER
Granville County



ASHTYN WORTHINGTON
Columbus County



KAMRYN GRAYBEAL
Wilson County



CARMELA ROSSI
Wake County



AVERY JONES
Sampson County



JOSHUA HOBBS
Sampson County



TANNER WOODARD
Johnston County



COREY SCOTT
Wake County

SWEET REWARDS FOR LEE'S BEES ABOUND WITH FAITH AND PASSION



Dr. Jeffrey Lee has had a passion for bees from an early age. He had his first hive at age 13 and never lost the delight in being a “bee shepherd” as he calls it.

Dr. Lee now owns Lee's Bees, a thriving pollination rental and honey business in Mebane, NC and Jamesville, NC. Although his passion never waned throughout the years, his journey to his current occupation has not been without struggles. Certainly, though, the rewards have been sweet.

Dr. Lee went to college for chemistry and biology at Pepperdine and Duke. After college, he started working in the North Carolina pharmaceuticals industry. After a few years, he realized he would always have a boss if he stayed in his line of work. And so, he bet everything on bees, selling everything he had and maxing out every credit card. He took out a home equity loan and bought bees.

The process to purchase land to house the bees and build a workshop began. AgCarolina was the only lender that would consider lending Dr. Lee the money for his venture.

“I’ve always been appreciative of that [the loan for Lee’s Bees] because when I was very young in the business, they were willing to loan me the money,” said Dr. Lee.

Dr. Lee was specifically interested in locations where he could make Tupelo honey. Tupelo honey is known for its rarity and flavor. It comes from the blossoms of the tupelo tree (*Nyssa aquatica*). The flavor is fruity, with a bit of citrus floral. Jamesville was an area where Dr. Lee could produce the sought-after Tupelo honey. The bees make the special honey in April near the Tupelo swamp.



Today, Lee's Bees has 2,000-3000 colonies (~85 million bees) that are moved throughout the year to various locations across the country to find flowers for the bees to eat. Some bees are rented out to farmers to pollinate crops like almonds in California, blueberries in Maine, cranberries in Wisconsin, and watermelons and squash in NC. Some bees continue to travel around the state, producing honeys such as Sourwood, Gallberry, Wild Flower, Clary, Sage, and the Water Tupelo.

“It’s a leap of faith whenever you go into a business on your own, and you’re relying on an insect to pay all of your bills,” said Dr. Lee.

After betting it all on bees, his passion and faith have carried him to some sweet rewards.

“I believe God has groomed me for this position,” Dr. Lee said. “I have faith that as long as I try to bring glory to God, everything will work out.”

**Scan QR Code
to watch the
full video here!**



This fall, AgCarolina Farm Credit will participate in The Farm Credit Fly-In with The Farm Credit Council on Capitol Hill. This event is an opportunity to underscore the importance of Farm Credit's mission on Capitol Hill. AgCarolina Directors and team members hold conversations with Congressional Leaders and share stories about Farm Credit, leaving a strong and positive impression with policymakers and other important stakeholders. A marketplace reception is held each year featuring Farm Credit member products. This year, AgCarolina will feature Lee's Bees local honey as we connect the importance of agriculture to our leaders on Capitol Hill.

AGCAROLINA FARM CREDIT PHOTO CONTEST

CONTEST GUIDELINES:

Photos must be taken within AgCarolina Farm Credit's territory. We hope you will continue to amaze us with those picture-perfect moments capturing the country life in North Carolina.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Members, employees, and friends of AgCarolina Farm Credit are invited to enter our 2026 Calendar Photo Contest. You must be 18 years of age to enter the contest.

PREFERRED IMAGES:

- Photos must have horizontal orientation.
- Each photo must have an entry form and be submitted via AgCarolina's website.
- Email submissions will not be accepted.
- No more than three (3) entries per individual will be accepted.
- Images that include front view faces will not be included in the photo calendar.

All images, used or unused, will become the property of AgCarolina Farm Credit. No images will be returned.

DEADLINE:

All entries must be received by **August 1st**.

CASH PRIZES AWARDED:

- 1st Place - \$300
- 2nd Place - \$200
- 3rd Place - \$100

Photos not placing but included in calendar - \$25

Winning entries will be featured in the 2026 AgCarolina Farm Credit Calendar, AgCarolina's social media, and online at www.agcarolina.com.



2024 COVER IMAGE, FEATURE PHOTO FOR JANUARY AND COVER OF THIS PUBLICATION
Greg Smith
Pitt County



FEATURE PHOTO FOR AUGUST
Claire Hageman
Jones County



FEATURE PHOTO FOR OCTOBER
Denise Worley
Johnston County

TO ENTER:

The entry form can be downloaded from our website at agcarolina.com

If you have any questions, please call 800-951-3276, or inquire by email to marketing@agcarolina.com.

SCAN QR CODE OR GO TO AGCAROLINA.COM TO SUBMIT AN ENTRY



KIDS CORNER





Craft time

- Print out a pig on paper.
- Have children use sponges or brushes to paint mud on pig using chocolate pudding or paint.
- Tip: if you put the paper in a gallon bag with some paint and seal it, kids can do "no mess" painting through the Ziploc.

FARM FACTS *Did you know?*

- The average dairy cow provides 7 gallons of milk each day.
- Soybeans help make paint, lotion, candles, and shampoo!
- The biggest tractor is called "Big Bud 747". It was built in Montana, weighs 45.5 tons empty, stands 14 feet tall, 28 feet long and 20 feet wide.
- Pigs roll in mud to keep cool and make sure they don't get sunburnt.



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Greenville, NC 27834

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Check out WHAT'S AHEAD

PULL for YOUTH

Sporting Clays

SUPPORTING NORTH CAROLINA FFA AND 4-H

Friday, October 10, 2025

Drake Landing | Fuquay-Varina, NC
3146 Chalybeate Springs Rd | Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526

9:30 AM Registration | 10:00 AM Start Time
\$100 per shooter



VETERANS LUNCH

Thursday, November 6
11 AM - 2 PM

AgCarolina is proud to honor those
who've served by providing a
complimentary BBQ lunch.

PRIME BBQ

403 Knightdale Station Run
Knightdale, NC 27545

McCall's BBQ & Seafood

139 Millers Chapel Road
Goldsboro, NC 27534

with proof of a Veteran I.D.



ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FORUM

Friday, December 5
9:30 AM - 3 PM

AgCarolina Greenville Office
636 Rock Spring Rd. Greenville, NC 27834

AgCarolina invites you to an economic
outlook forum featuring renowned
ag economist Dr. David Kohl, Dr.
Blake Brown, and Senior Atmospheric
Scientist, Matt Reardon