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# *The North Carolina Farm to School Program*

- *North Carolina Farm to School Cooperative*
- *NCDA & CS Food Distribution and Marketing Divisions*



*USDA Agricultural Outlook Forum  
Washington, D.C.*

# “What Co-ops Can Do For Rural America”

- **Let’s Take a Look at our North Carolina Farm to School Program and the North Carolina Farm to School Cooperative**

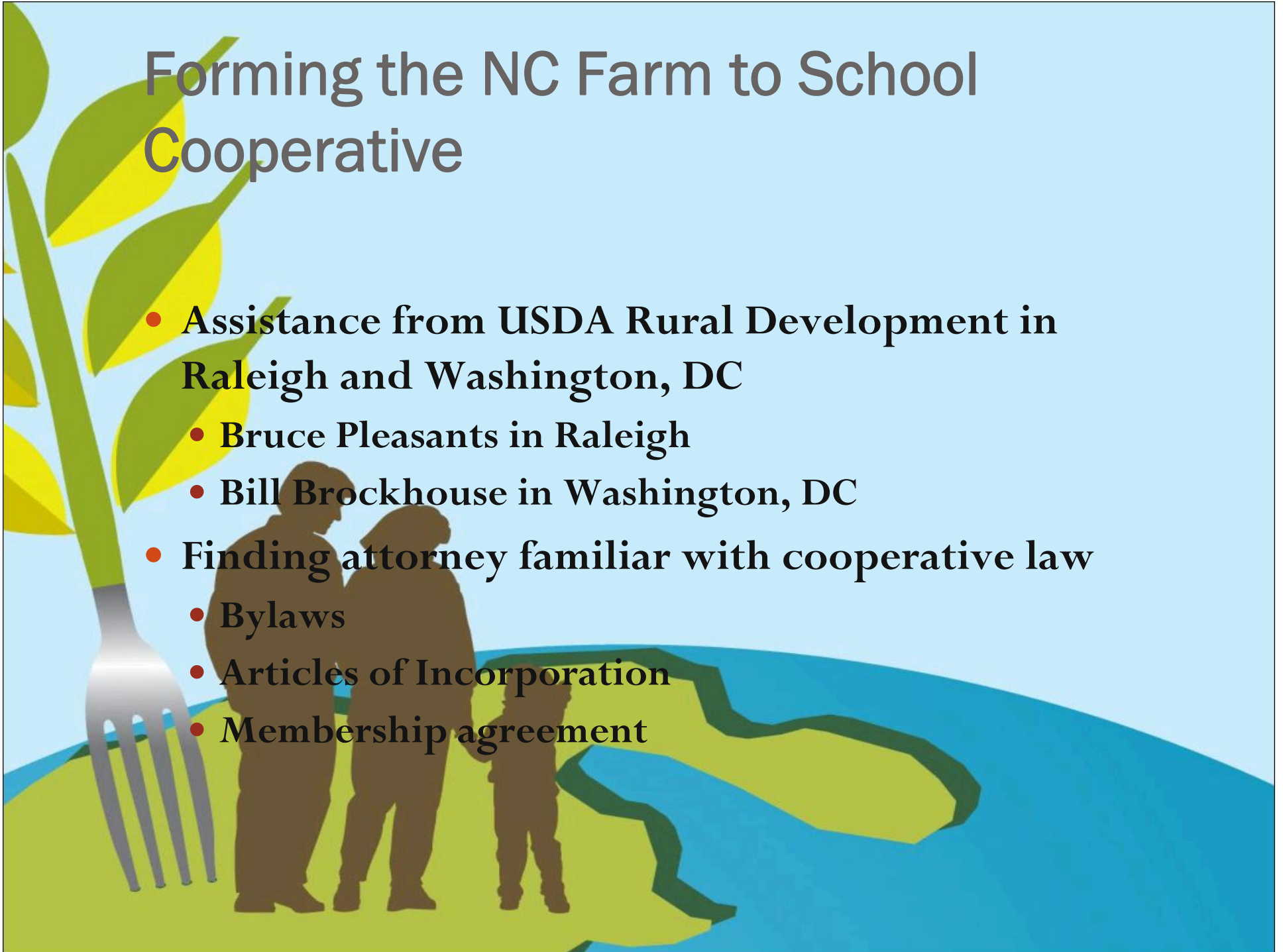


# Brief History of NC Farm to School Program

- Started in 1998 with partnership between NCDA and DOD
  - Test markets in school districts with apples from Western NC
- The program was successful and grew each year up until 2007 when DOD closed produce field buying offices and bid out their produce business to private industry
- 2009 NCDA assisted the NC Farm to School Cooperative in getting established
- 2009 was most successful year with close to \$700,000 in produce sales to NC school districts

# Forming the NC Farm to School Cooperative

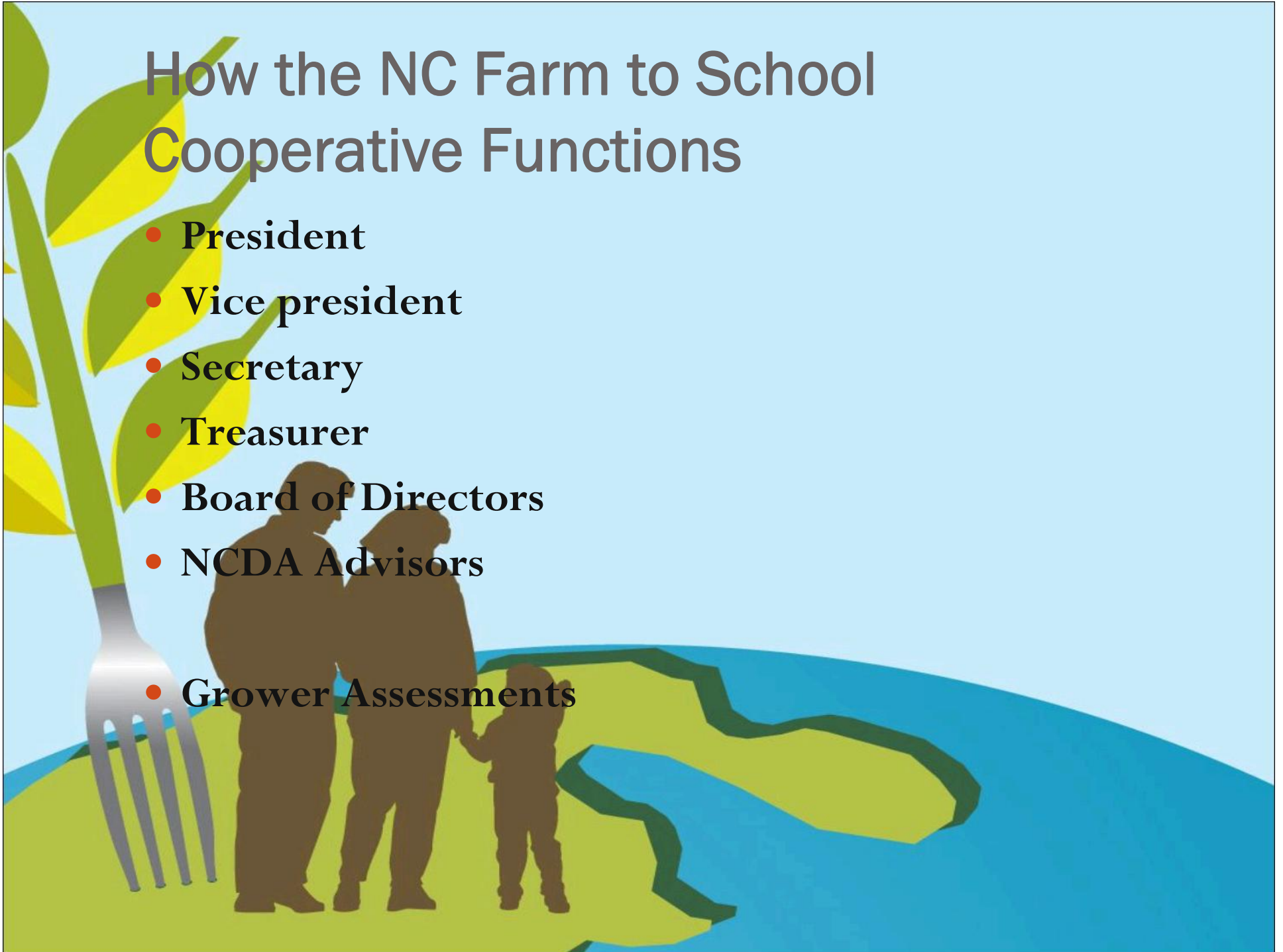
- Assistance from USDA Rural Development in Raleigh and Washington, DC
  - Bruce Pleasants in Raleigh
  - Bill Brockhouse in Washington, DC
- Finding attorney familiar with cooperative law
  - Bylaws
  - Articles of Incorporation
  - Membership agreement





# How the NC Farm to School Cooperative Functions

- **President**
- **Vice president**
- **Secretary**
- **Treasurer**
- **Board of Directors**
- **NCDA Advisors**
- **Grower Assessments**



# Reasons for forming the NC Farm to School Cooperative

- Easier to work with an organized group of growers
- Many fruit and vegetable commodities and multiple suppliers of each commodity involved in the NC Farm to School program
- Schools in North Carolina must provide opportunity for bids for their business
  - When pricing is involved concerning agricultural products, cooperatives provide protection by Capper-Volstead Act
  - NC Farm to School Cooperative submits bid for the schools business
- Growers work together better when they are associated with the same organization



# Partnerships Involved

- **NC Farm to School Cooperative**
- **NC Department of Agriculture**
  - **Food Distribution Division**
  - **Marketing Division**
- **NC School Districts**
  - **Approximately 70 districts participate regularly**





# NCDA & CS Food Distribution

- Hauling statewide
- Distribution centers....Cold storage
- Working relationships with NC child nutrition directors
- Experience with USDA food programs



# NCDA & CS Marketing Division

- Working relationships with farmers
- Knowledge of grower capabilities
- Experience with NC commodity associations
- Experience with grants
- Experience in promoting
- “Got to Be NC” Goodness Grows in NC program



# NC Farm to School Cooperative

- Growers from the coast to the mountains
- 3rd most diverse agriculture state in U.S.
- State of the art facilities
- Traceability
- Strong commodity associations
- GAP
  - NCDA GAP program
    - assistance to get growers certified
    - NCDA will pay up to \$600.00 for 1st time audit for farm



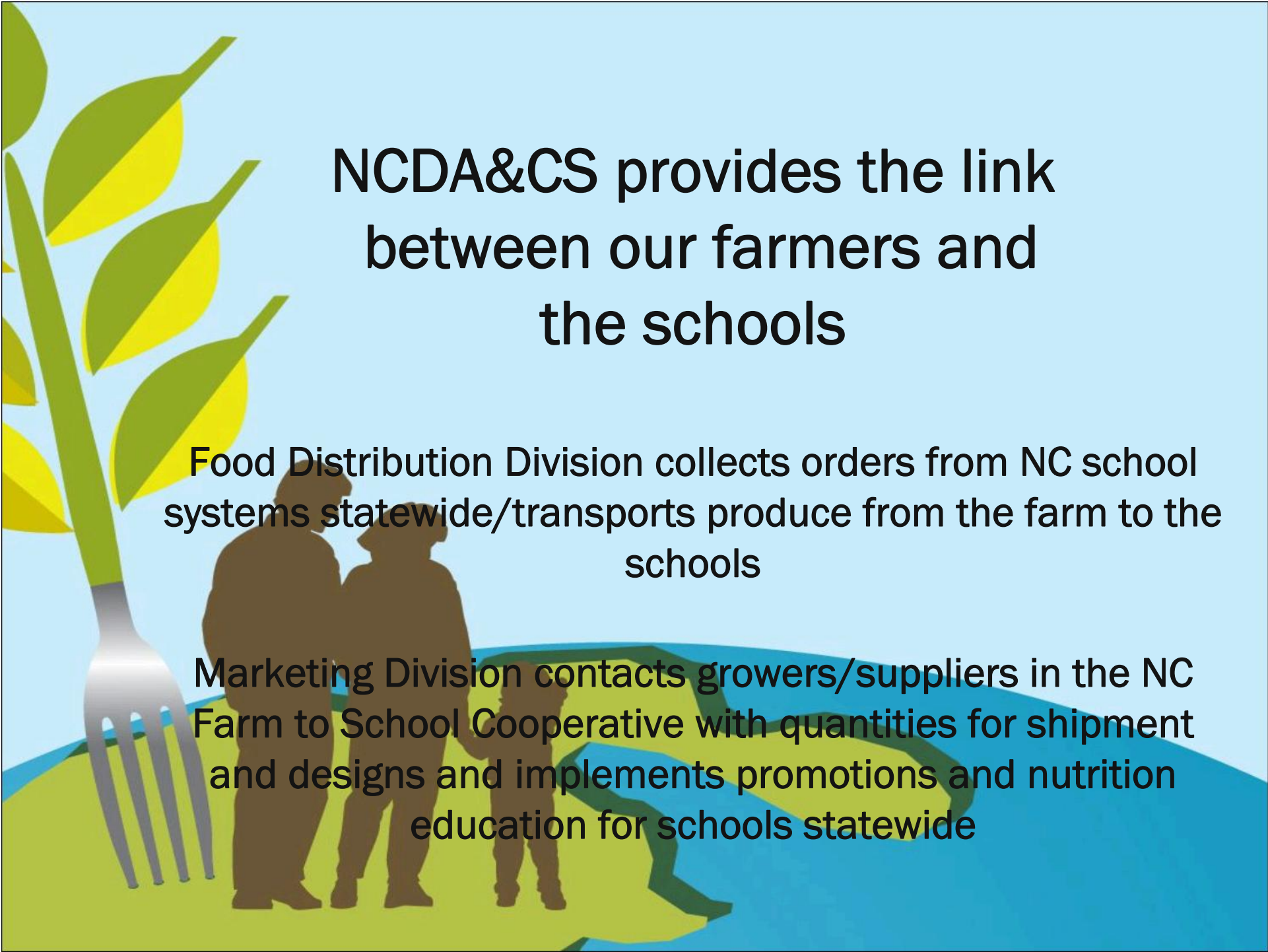




# NC School Districts

- **Child Nutrition departments**
  - Menu planners for their school district
  - Produce buyers for their school district
  - Pride in buying local from North Carolina growers
- **Most districts participate in Farm to School**
  - Some that do not participate face logistical challenges
- **Face challenges of budget shortages that limits amount of produce they can purchase**





# **NCDA&CS provides the link between our farmers and the schools**

**Food Distribution Division collects orders from NC school systems statewide/ transports produce from the farm to the schools**

**Marketing Division contacts growers/suppliers in the NC Farm to School Cooperative with quantities for shipment and designs and implements promotions and nutrition education for schools statewide**




## Buying Locally

- Trend that is sweeping across this country
- Safer – cheaper

## Define Buying Locally

Different organizations define local grown differently

- Communities
- Counties
- State



We offer nineteen different items grown in NC to our schools August through June

**Seedless Watermelons**

**Cantaloupes**

**Tomatoes**

**Grape Tomatoes**

**Apples (six varieties)**

**Green & Red Cabbage**

**Sweet Potato Sticks**

**Broccoli Crowns**

**Sweet Potatoes**

**Strawberries**

**Blueberries**

**Cucumbers**

**Apple Slices**

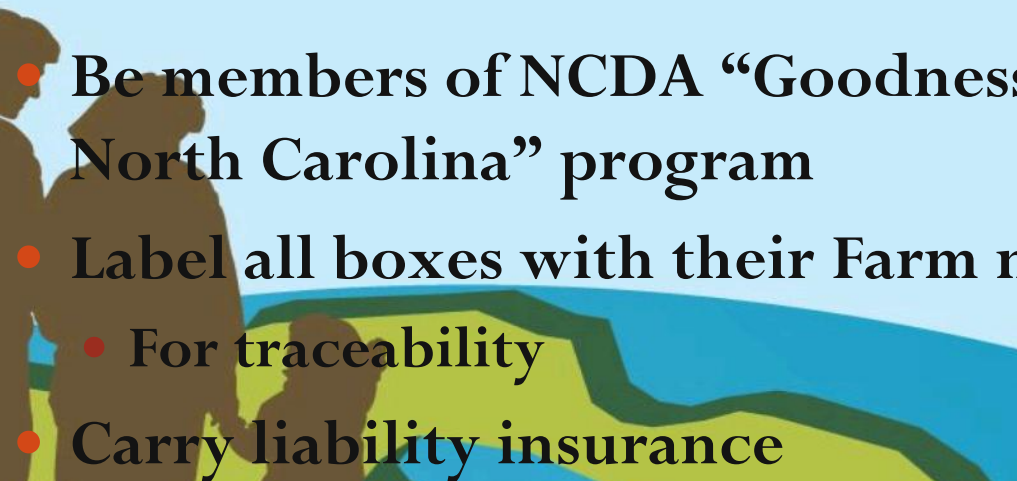
# 2009-2010 NC Farm to School schedule of deliveries

- *Week of August 31, 2009:* : Watermelons, cantaloupes, tomatoes, grape tomatoes, cucumbers
- *Week of September 14, 2009:* : Grape tomatoes, tomatoes, cantaloupes, cucumbers, apples (Gala, Gold)
- *Week of September 28, 2009:* : Apples (Red delicious, Fuji or Jonathan)
- *Week of October 12, 2009:* : Apples (Rome, Jonagold), Kennebec Potatoes
- *Week of November 2, 2009:* : Broccoli crowns, sweet potatoes, cabbage (red, green), pink lady apples
- *Week of December 7, 2009:* : Broccoli crowns, sweet potatoes, cabbage, (red, green), pink lady apples
- *Week of January 11, 2010:* : Apple slices, sweet potatoes
- *Week of February 8, 2010:* : Apple slices, sweet potatoes
- *Week of March 8, 2010:* : Apple slices, sweet potatoes
- *Week of April 26, 2010:* : Strawberries
- *Week of May 3, 2010:* : Strawberries
- *Week of May 17, 2010:* : Strawberries
- *Week of May 24, 2010:* : Strawberries, blueberries
- *Week of June 21, 2010:* : Blueberries



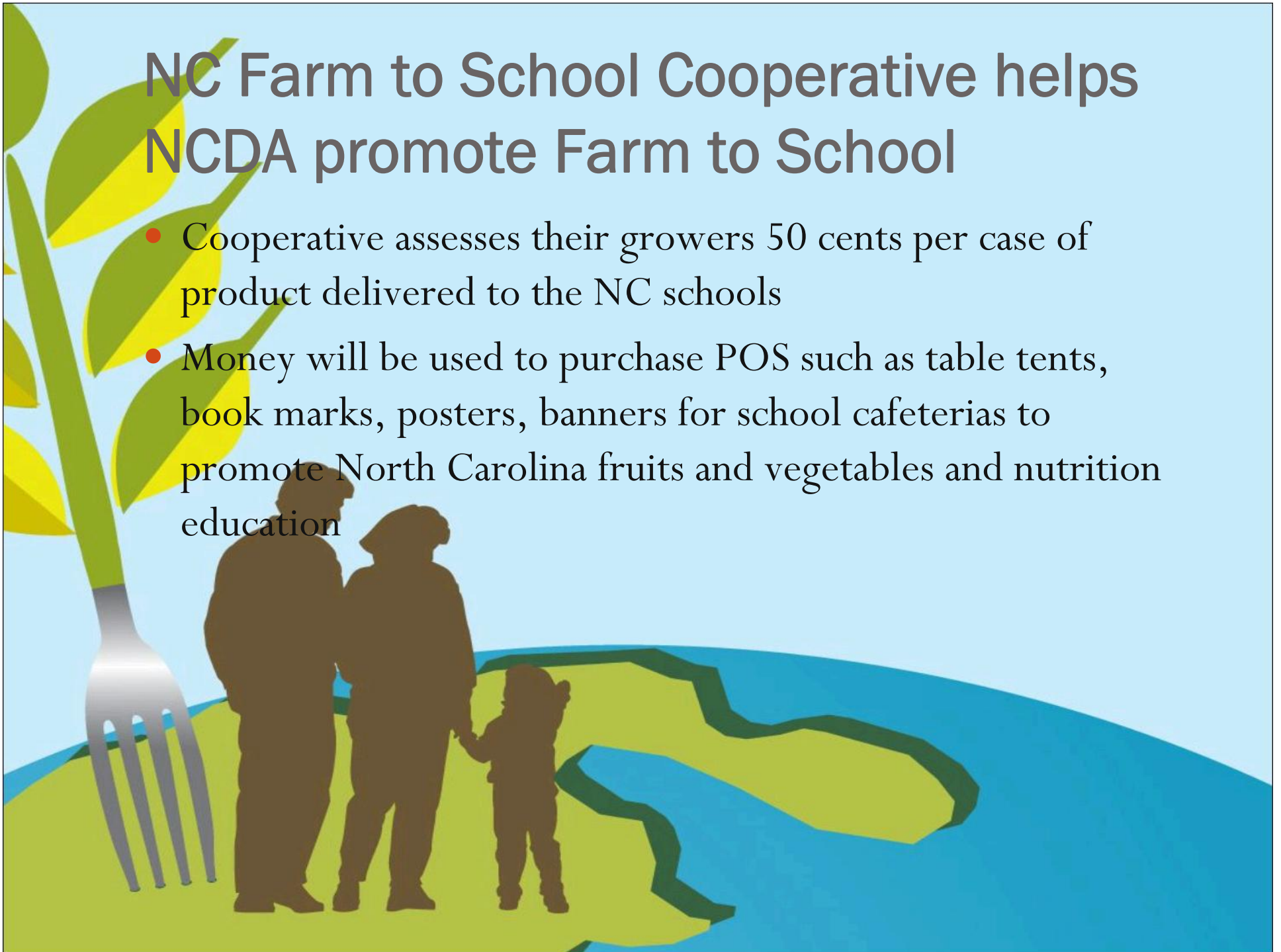


# Our farmers are required to:

- Be members of NC Farm to School Cooperative
  - Be GAP Certified
  - Be members of NCDA “Goodness Grows In North Carolina” program
  - Label all boxes with their Farm name
    - For traceability
  - Carry liability insurance
- 

# NC Farm to School Cooperative helps NCDA promote Farm to School

- Cooperative assesses their growers 50 cents per case of product delivered to the NC schools
- Money will be used to purchase POS such as table tents, book marks, posters, banners for school cafeterias to promote North Carolina fruits and vegetables and nutrition education



# Table tents for Cafeterias



**NC Produce**  
is Coming to School

Fresh From A Farm  
Near Your School.

[ncfarmtoschool.com](http://ncfarmtoschool.com)

The graphic features a central pink schoolhouse with a bell tower. A grey path leads from the schoolhouse to the foreground where several anthropomorphic produce characters are standing. From left to right: a red tomato wearing a yellow hat and holding a blue book; a green cucumber with a leafy top; a strawberry with a green leafy top; a purple eggplant; a green bell pepper; and an orange carrot. The background shows rolling green hills under a blue sky with a smiling sun.



**NORTH CAROLINA**  
Farms to School  
Cooperative, Inc.

fruits & veggies  
**more**  
matters.

get to try  
**NC**  
FARM TO SCHOOL

**Did You Know?**

Strawberries are an excellent source of Vitamin C and help to heal cuts and scrapes on your body.

Apples contain pectin which helps in food digestion. An apple a day helps to keep tummy aches and doctors away!

Sweet potatoes are packed with Vitamin A which keeps eyes & skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.

Watermelons are big and round but not too fattening to eat! They have potassium that keeps your muscles working hard for you.

[ncfarmtoschool.com](http://ncfarmtoschool.com)

The graphic features a central pink schoolhouse with a bell tower. To the left of the schoolhouse are three logos: the North Carolina Farms to School Cooperative, Inc. logo (a red apple outline), the 'fruits & veggies more matters.' logo (a green figure holding a colorful bouquet), and the 'get to try NC FARM TO SCHOOL' logo (a green outline of North Carolina). Below the schoolhouse is the text 'Did You Know?' followed by three paragraphs of text about the benefits of strawberries, apples, sweet potatoes, and watermelons. At the bottom is the website address 'ncfarmtoschool.com'. The background is a simple landscape with green hills and a blue sky.

# Posters for Cafeterias

**NC Produce**  
is Coming to School

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[ncfarmtoschool.com](http://ncfarmtoschool.com)

**Did You Know?**  
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Apples contain pectin which helps in food digestion. An apple a day helps to keep bunnies away and doctors away!  
Sweet potatoes are packed with Vitamin A which keeps eyes & skin healthy and helps to protect against infections.  
Watermelons are big and round but not too heavy to eat! They have proteins that keep your muscles working hard for you.

**Logos:**  
NORTH CAROLINA Farm to School Cooperative, Inc.  
fresh & simple more matters.  
got to be NC FARM TO SCHOOL





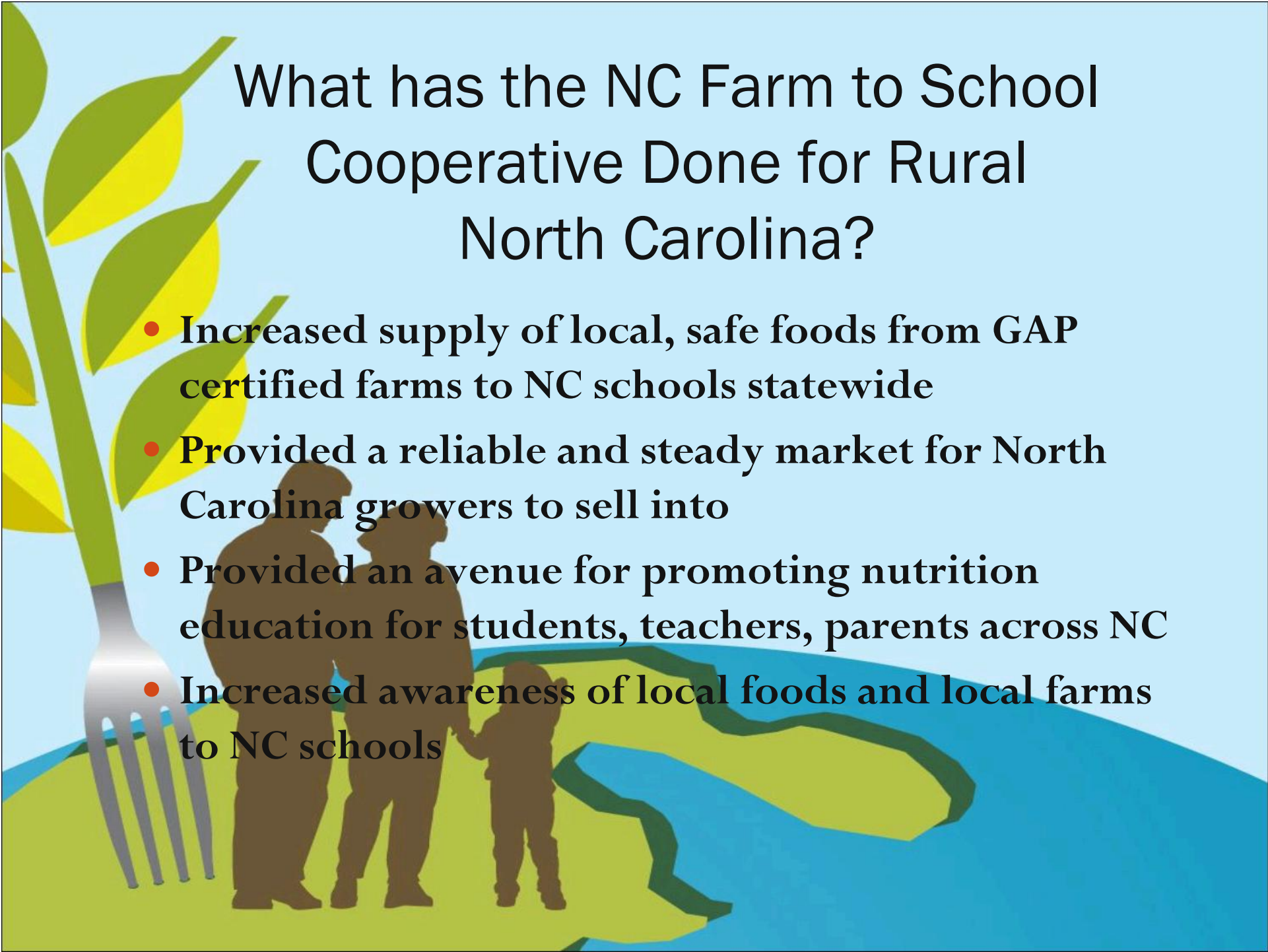
[www.ncfarmtoschool.com](http://www.ncfarmtoschool.com)

- **Links to NC Commodity Association websites**
- **Lesson plans**
- **Coloring pages**
- **Classroom fieldtrips to farms promoting agri-tourism**
- **Information for Child Nutrition Directors**

# Banners for Cafeteria

- Specialty Crop block grant money was used to purchase banners in 2007





# What has the NC Farm to School Cooperative Done for Rural North Carolina?

- **Increased supply of local, safe foods from GAP certified farms to NC schools statewide**
- **Provided a reliable and steady market for North Carolina growers to sell into**
- **Provided an avenue for promoting nutrition education for students, teachers, parents across NC**
- **Increased awareness of local foods and local farms to NC schools**

The background features a stylized illustration. On the left, a green stem with yellow and green leaves rises. In the center, the silhouettes of three people (two adults and a child) stand on a green hill. To the right, a blue body of water is depicted. A large, silver fork is positioned on the left side, its handle extending upwards and its tines pointing downwards. The overall scene is set against a light blue sky.

*For more information please contact:*

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*Gary Gay*

*NCDA & CS Food Distribution - 919-575-4490*

**[www.ncfarmtoschool.com](http://www.ncfarmtoschool.com)**



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Washington

