

# A Look at North Carolina Agriculture



Capital: Raleigh

Population: 9,535,483

Founded: November 21, 1789 (12<sup>th</sup>)

State Bird: Cardinal

State Tree: Pine

State Flower: Dogwood Blossom

State Mammal: Gray Squirrel

State Dog: Plott Hound

State Insect: Honey Bee

State Shell: Scotch Bonnet

State Saltwater Fish: Channel Bass

State Precious Stone: Emerald

State Beverage: Milk

State Rock: Granite

State Reptile: Eastern Box Turtle

State Historic Boat: Shad Boat

Number of Counties: 100

Largest City: Charlotte - 731,424

Nickname: The Tarheel State

Number of Farms: 52,500

Average Farm Size: 160 acres

Total Farmland: 8.4 million acres



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## Climate & Soil

- North Carolina has a broad range of climate conditions due to its three distinct regions: the Appalachian Mountains, the Piedmont, and the Coastal Plains. This topographical variety along with the presence of the Gulf Stream off the coast, gives our state the largest climate variability of any state east of the Mississippi.
- The growing season growing season ranges from 130 days in the northern mountains to 242 in 270 days along the coast.
- The eastern 2/5 of North Carolina is characterized as coastal plain and tidewater. Moving west, the next 2/5 of North Carolina, about 200 miles wide, consists of a piedmont plateau. In the west, the land slopes upward from gentle to rugged rolling hills to the high southern Appalachian Mountains containing the Blue Ridge and Great Smokey Mountains.
- There are over 400 different soils in North Carolina. A variety of crops flourish on almost all of the soils in North Carolina if they receive proper management. Cecil soils occur on the largest number of acres of the soils with the type location in North Carolina. They make up 1,601,740 acres in the state. About half of the acreage is cultivated, and the rest is used for pasture or forest. The most common crops are small grains, corn, cotton, and tobacco.
- Monthly average temperatures range from a high of 88.3 degrees to a low of 27.3 degrees.

## Crops & Livestock

- North Carolina ranks number one nationally in the production of flue-cured tobacco and sweet potatoes; second in the production of Christmas trees; third in the production of cucumber and strawberries; and, fourth in the production of cucumbers and upland cotton. The greenhouse/nursery industry is the number crop producer in North Carolina, followed by tobacco, soybeans, corn, cotton, sweet potatoes, wheat, peanuts, blueberries, potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, and a wide variety of other crops.
- Broilers, hogs and pigs, turkeys, and cattle and calves are the main animals raised by North Carolina farmers. North Carolina's number one commodity (plant or animal) is broilers – chickens raised for their meat. North Carolina ranks second in the nation in the production of hogs and pigs, trout and turkeys; and, fifth, in the production of broilers.

## General

- The highest point in North Carolina is Mount Mitchell at 6,648 feet above sea level. The lowest point in North Carolina is at the shore where North Carolina meets the Atlantic Ocean; sea level.
- North Carolina had 52,400 farms in 2009. A total of 8,474,671 (2007) acres of North Carolina's land is in farms. The average size of a farm is 163 acres.
- North Carolina's agriculture industry, including food, fiber and forestry, contributes over \$74 billion annually to the state's economy, and accounts for 19 percent of the state's income and employs over 20 percent of the work force.