

---

North Carolina's pork industry has been in the news a lot lately, but not in a way that tells the true story of its contributions to our economy. While the industry has drawn attention as the subject of nuisance lawsuits, what has been consistently overlooked is the significant economic contributions the pork industry makes in terms of jobs and its role in producing safe and affordable food for consumers.

I consider the production of food and fiber to be admirable and certainly not a nuisance, and I want people across the state to understand how important agriculture, including the pork industry, is to our state. When we take our farmers and food production for granted, we stand to literally lose the hand that feeds us.

North Carolina agriculture and agribusiness is the leading economic driver to our economy, and most particularly in the rural areas of our state. The industry contributes \$85 billion to the economy and employs more than 680,000 people or a fifth of our workforce across the state. Animal agriculture makes up around 68 percent of total cash receipts, which reflects the significance of our pork, poultry and beef industry to the overall health of our economy.

Pork production is the second largest segment of North Carolina agriculture, with \$2.1 billion in cash receipts. That number does not even factor in the agribusiness multiplier from processing and distribution of pork products. North Carolina ranks second nationally in pork production, and our state is home to the largest processing facility in the world.

In our bigger cities, it is easy to lose sight of the impact agriculture has on our lives, but for many who live in rural areas of the state, its impact is felt every day. In rural areas, many people rely on agriculture and agribusiness for not only their food, but also their livelihoods. Agriculture and agribusiness money trickles down through the economy supporting other businesses that rely on the local farm economy. Agriculture means jobs – jobs on the farm, jobs in processing, jobs in transportation, jobs in marketing and jobs at local businesses where farmers make purchases.

Altogether, the pork industry supports 46,000 full-time jobs in North Carolina, and there are 2,100 hog farms in the state. Every one of these farms represents a small family business that is proud of its role in feeding their neighbors and the world.

---

The United Nations estimates we are going to need to increase food production by 70 to 100 percent by 2050 to meet the growing world food demands. In order to do this, we need to promote increased food production, not discourage it. We do not need to lose any farmers.

We are fortunate now to have access to an abundant and affordable food supply. That might not always be the case. It is important that the non-farming population understands where its food comes from and who produces it.

Agriculture is a challenging career on a good day. There are many things that farmers cannot control – the weather, the price they are paid for their commodities, the costs of the inputs needed to produce a crop, and even the rules and regulations they must follow.

In fact, the swine industry is one of the most regulated industries in the state.

Our pork industry is efficient, successful and responsible because of the commitment of our farmers and processors. I believe we should thank our farmers three times a day, every time we sit down and enjoy a meal they have provided.

I am proud of our North Carolina agriculture and agribusiness, and I am thankful for our pork industry.