

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE BILL 1731

Short Title: Equine Agricultural Agents. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Hill; Alexander, Cole, Faison, Langdon, and Walend.

Referred to: Agriculture, if favorable, Appropriations.

April 19, 2007

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO ESTABLISH SEVEN REGIONAL
3 EQUINE AGRICULTURAL AGENTS AND TO REQUIRE THE NORTH
4 CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE TO REPORT TO AND
5 WORK WITH THE NORTH CAROLINA HORSE COUNCIL ON THE
6 IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRESS OF THE EQUINE AGRICULTURAL
7 AGENT PROGRAM.

8 Whereas, the 9.2 million horses, 1.92 million horse owners, and
9 approximately 1.4 million full-time jobs represented by the United States horse industry
10 make it a significant contributor to our nation's economy; and

11 Whereas, adding approximately \$63 billion in indirect and induced revenue to
12 the \$39 billion in direct economic impact yields an industry that contributes roughly
13 \$102 billion annually; and

14 Whereas, when considering the hundreds of secondary industries that support
15 and cooperate with the horse industry, an even greater economic effect is realized; and

16 Whereas, North Carolina is home to an estimated 257,000 horses that are
17 supported by an estimated 65,000 horse owners and contribute approximately \$1.1
18 billion annually to the State's economy; and

19 Whereas, in support of this dynamic horse industry, North Carolina State
20 University has developed one of the premier 4-H horse programs in the nation, with
21 over 19,500 equine projects and has demonstrated its ability to provide quality
22 education for horse owners through the Extension Horse Husbandry program; and

23 Whereas, North Carolina State University added two equine researchers to its
24 facility in 2006, exemplifying its desire to establish excellence in equine research and
25 undergraduate education; and

26 Whereas, in 2005, the Cooperative Extension program at North Carolina State
27 University undertook a revitalization project to enhance its service to the State; and

28 Whereas, throughout the process administrators have evaluated goods and
29 services, business models, personnel, and marketing strategies, and it has become

1 apparent that equine programming at the county and local levels could be improved
2 through the introduction of district area specialized equine agents; and

3 Whereas, these district area "specialists" would be charged with overseeing
4 both adult and youth programming in each of the seven Cooperative Extension districts;
5 and

6 Whereas, since approximately one-half of the current county extension agents
7 have been hired within the past five years, the presence of a district area agent would
8 lend stability to educational programs during times of agent turnover; and

9 Whereas, the concept of the district area specialists is not new, since the
10 poultry industry previously requested that five district area agent positions be funded by
11 continuing funds, and those positions were distributed such that the production and
12 marketing needs of the industry were met; and

13 Whereas, today those five poultry positions have demonstrated their
14 effectiveness in meeting the industry's needs; and

15 Whereas, Cooperative Extension also utilizes district area agents in support of
16 the dairy industry; Now, therefore,

17 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

18 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Board of
19 Governors of The University of North Carolina the sum of eight hundred forty-two
20 thousand dollars (\$842,000) for the 2007-2008 fiscal year and the sum of seven hundred
21 thirty-four thousand three hundred eighty-eight dollars (\$734,388) for the 2008-2009
22 fiscal year to be allocated to the North Carolina Cooperative Extension
23 Service/Extension Horse Husbandry in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at
24 North Carolina State University to establish seven district area equine specialist
25 positions, one statewide administrative assistant, and to implement and administer the
26 program.

27 **SECTION 2.** In order to increase the competitiveness of North Carolina
28 agriculture, the agents established under this act shall provide an efficient and effective
29 resource to sustain and build the growing equine economy within North Carolina,
30 including helping equine owners preserve farmland, maintain open space, and increase
31 the use of other agricultural services and products.

32 **SECTION 3.** In order to revitalize rural North Carolina and enhance the role
33 that the equine industry plays in preserving our rural culture, the agents hired by these
34 funds shall work directly with the North Carolina Horse Council (NCHC). The North
35 Carolina Horse Council represents the interest of all equine owners and enthusiasts in
36 the State. As such, the seven agents shall provide support to the Council via educational
37 programming, organization, and information. Such agents shall work in conjunction
38 with the NCHC regional and district representatives in all 100 counties.

39 **SECTION 4.** The district area equine specialist program funded under this
40 act will enhance the health and management of all equines. The Extension Service is
41 the State's major source of impartial, science-based information that horse owners need
42 about recommended practices for improving the health and well-being of their livestock.
43 The State's livestock industries and commodity producers need assistance in adapting

1 their technologies or practices. Funds allocated by this act shall be used for education
2 and technology improvements within the equine industry.

3 **SECTION 5.** The North Carolina Horse Council and the North Carolina
4 Cooperative Extension Service shall design the program to:

- 5 (1) Increase public awareness of the growing economic impact of the
6 equine industry;
- 7 (2) Educate the public in practices of care of and maintenance of equines
8 in both rural and urban areas;
- 9 (3) Assist in developing standards, regulations, and management plans;
10 and
- 11 (4) Organize equine events and programs and other activities as identified
12 by the Extension Horse Husbandry Office and the NCHC.

13 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2007.