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*Figure 1: Photo Credit – Featured Guest Speaker, Lineberger Maple Springs Farm*

## **Cleveland County Announces Agritourism Workshop in Partnership with Cooperative Extension and Farm Bureau**

**SHELBY, N.C.** - Cleveland County Government, Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau, and other community partners have joined together to offer the first ever Agritourism 101 Workshop on Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 8:30 PM at the Cleveland County Schools Staff Development Center in Shelby.

Agritourism is an increasingly popular industry that can diversify and help sustain local farm businesses. Examples of agritourism include seasonal events (corn mazes and harvest festivals), farm stores and stands, pick-your-own operations, educational classes and camps, farm stays and tours, and more.



This workshop is designed to introduce new and experienced farm operators to opportunities for hosting visitors to increase revenues, diversify income streams, and keep family members engaged in the agricultural enterprise.

**Speakers include Debbie Hamrick, Director of Specialty Crops with NC Farm Bureau, and a panel of experienced agritourism operators including:**

- Olivia Pearson - Riverbend Creamery in Lincolnton
- Rodney Willis – Willis Farms in Belwood
- Allison Lockridge – SonRidge Farm in Kings Mountain
- Ethan Lineberger – Lineberger Maple Springs Farm in Dallas

**During the event, participants can visit with representatives from:**

- Ag South Farm Credit
- Cleveland County Farm Bureau
- Cleveland County Planning & Zoning
- Cleveland County Small Business Center
- Cleveland County Soil & Water Conservation
- Cleveland Community College Animal Science Program
- NC Cooperative Extension
- NC Farm Link
- NC Forest Service
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Visit Cleveland County

**Registration is \$10 per person (\$5 for students) and includes a meal, sponsored by AgSouth Farm Credit. There are three ways to register:**

- a) Register and pay online at <https://bit.ly/agritourism-101-workshop>.
- b) Register and pay by phone by calling Cleveland County Farm Bureau at (704) 482-2436
- c) Register and pay in person at Cleveland County Farm Bureau, 1503 W Dixon Blvd, Shelby, NC 28152

Registrations after March 6<sup>th</sup> are not guaranteed a meal, so be sure to register early.

In addition, Cleveland County Cooperative Extension is seeking feedback from local farms to gauge interest in offering an educational series on agritourism ventures. Please express interest by filling out a short survey at: <https://forms.gle/J2DmLeDiY2uuhLXQA>.

Two randomly selected farmers who fill out the survey will receive a \$50 gift card from Cleveland County Farm Bureau.