

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009**

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HOUSE BILL 272

Short Title: Funds for Specialty Crops Program. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Braxton, McLawhorn (Primary Sponsors); Hill, Hughes, Spear, and Wray.

Referred to: Appropriations.

February 24, 2009

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE NORTH CAROLINA SPECIALTY CROPS
3 PROGRAM.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 Whereas, the North Carolina Specialty Crops Program is a statewide partnership of
6 the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and the
7 Marketing Division of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; and

8 Whereas, the Program began in the early 1990s as a local effort in the Kinston area
9 and then expanded statewide through funding from Golden L.E.A.F. and the Tobacco Trust
10 Fund; and

11 Whereas, the Program is now in need of long-term sustainable funding to ensure the
12 Program's future; and

13 Whereas, the Program is an entrepreneurial catalyst for rural development, reducing
14 risk to growers who want to diversify their crop base by eliminating less feasible alternatives,
15 and providing a systematic way of evaluating niche crops that otherwise would have limited
16 funding possibilities; and

17 Whereas, the Program is designed to spur economic development by identifying
18 potential new crops for North Carolina growers, determining whether these crops are suitable
19 for growing conditions in the State, screening for the best varieties and refining production
20 practices, developing markets for these new crops, developing new value-added products and
21 businesses, and educating both Cooperative Extension agents and growers about new crop
22 opportunities; and

23 Whereas, the successes of the Program include the development of the Sprite melon,
24 which grossed \$3,000,000 in annual sales, the Athena cantaloupe, which grossed \$16,000,000
25 in annual sales, the Red-fleshed seedless watermelon, which grossed \$10,000,000 in annual
26 sales, and others; and

27 Whereas, potential areas of exploration and expansion for the Program include
28 developing new markets for underutilized crops, developing high value nutraceuticals,
29 medicinals and natural dyes from plants, developing high value branded and organic crops,
30 breeding crops with greater nutritional value, developing season extending technologies to
31 expand the production and marketing window for crops, and other activities; Now, therefore,
32 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

33 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated to the Board of Governors of The University of
34 North Carolina the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the 2009-2010
35 fiscal year and the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the 2010-2011



1 fiscal year to be allocated to North Carolina State University for the support of the North
2 Carolina Specialty Crops Program.

3 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.