

Wayne County Agriculture Highlights

- #1 industry in Wayne County, generating \$1.04 billion for local economy
- 5th best county in the United States to farm (Farm Futures Magazine, September 2005)
- 4th largest agricultural county in North Carolina
- Farms and Forestry make up 75% of total land mass
- There are 563 farms in Wayne County with an average size of 340 acres
- Agriculture represents 20% of county's total employment with 8916 jobs.
- 3rd largest tobacco producing county in the United States
- 5th largest turkey producing county in the United States
- 7th largest swine producing county in the United States
- Home of Mt. Olive Pickle Company, 2nd largest pickle company in United States
- Home of Goldsboro Milling Company, parent company of Butterball Turkey, largest producer of turkey products in the United States



Historical Overview

Agriculture is the leading industry for Wayne County and has been since the county was formed in 1779. The county is situated in the coastal plain of North Carolina and has excellent soils and a moderate climate which is conducive for agriculture production. Early agriculture included hogs, cattle, corn, and turpentine. By the mid 1800's, cotton was the major crop grown in Wayne county. By 1900 there were 39 cotton gins in Wayne County and two Cotton Mills (Borden Manufacturing Co. and Wayne Cotton Mills). The Naval Stores (Tar, pitch, and Turpentine) industry was also a significant industry in the mid 1800's. In the 1870's tobacco became a major business for the local economy as producers began to grow this lucrative crop and several markets were developed locally. In the mid 1900's, animal agriculture became a significant industry with turkey production increasing. In the 1980's swine production became a dominate factor in the agriculture economy for the county. Currently Wayne County is ranked forth in the state in agriculture income. The local farm industry is very diverse and includes: swine, poultry, tobacco, corn, soybeans, cotton, cattle, wheat, vegetables, ornamentals and numerous other commodities.



*1900 Casey Cotton Gin near present day
Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.*