

News

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

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NC tobacco growers pass referendum with landslide vote

On Nov. 19, tobacco growers across the state voted overwhelmingly in favor of The North Carolina Tobacco Research Check-off Referendum, passing it by more than 92 percent.

The Tobacco Research Check-off is a self-assessment program by which growers support tobacco research and education by allocating 10 cents per 100 pounds of flue-cured and burley tobacco sold.

Since its inception in 1991, the program has raised nearly \$300,000 a year to support tobacco-related projects at North Carolina State University.

"The tobacco check-off funds have resulted in many important developments for the state's burley and flue-cured tobacco farmers, including variety development, improved nitrogen management, advanced curing technologies, and breakthroughs in pest and disease management," said Dr. Johnny Wynne, dean of N.C. State's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Federal funding for tobacco research ceased in 1994, and state support has declined in recent years due to budget deficits, so this year's referendum is more important than ever, according to Keith Oakley, president of the North Carolina Tobacco Foundation and state check-off coordinator.

"This referendum is critical for North Carolina tobacco growers to remain competitive in the world market," Oakley said. "By voting to continue this self-help program, the state's tobacco growers are making an important investment in the future of tobacco production, research and education in North Carolina."

The check-off funds are collected at buying stations by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and then allocated to N.C. State by the North Carolina

Tobacco Research Commission. The referendum is held every six years and must receive two-thirds of the vote in order to pass.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/advancement/09TobaccoReferendum.htm>.

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