

# Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

## Agriculture 1927 (Part 3)

Established in the mid-1700s, farmers in Bucklesberry and greater La Grange have continually contributed to the economic success of Lenoir County. A recent 2017 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) census assessed the market value of crops, livestock, poultry, and other farm products. Data indicated Lenoir County was among the top agricultural producing counties in North Carolina and the nation.

Sales totaling \$311.4 million catapulted Lenoir County to eighth among the one hundred counties in the State. Nationally, Lenoir County outperformed 93% percent of the 3,077 counties across the country that produced similar agricultural products.

This extraordinary achievement is not a recent development. Almost a century ago, USDA published a report in 1927 about agriculture in Lenoir County. Authors R. C. Journey and W. A. Davis described a flourishing farm community, albeit on a smaller scale:

"Sweet potatoes are produced on nearly every farm, mainly for home use, as are also [Irish] potatoes, cabbage, collards, and other garden vegetables. Most of the farmers have fruit trees and grapevines."

"Most of the farmers keep from 10 to 20 hogs, which furnish meat for the home or for sale locally, but many of the tenants have neither hogs nor cows. The hogs are mainly Duroc-Jersey, Poland China, Hampshire, and Chester White or crosses of these breeds. Many farmers specialize in raising hogs and sell from 50 to 150 a year. Thirty carloads were shipped to Richmond, VA. for sale during 1927. The hogs are fed according to the recommendations of the State extension service and area marketed cooperatively."

"There are many more dairy cattle than beef cattle in the county, many of the farmers keeping from 1 to 4 milk cows. The cows are Jerseys, Guernseys, and Holsteins, or crosses of these breeds. About 40 purebred dairy sires are on the farms. The 28 dairies in the county sell their products to residents of Kinston, and to ice cream plants located there. Much of the dairy feed is shipped in, but approximately 75 percent of the dairymen produce about 75 percent of the feed they use. The feed is mixed and fed in accordance with the suggestions of the State extension service."

"There are a few herds of sheep and goats, and nearly every farmer keeps chickens and other fowls."

"Some areas are in permanent pasture. Carpet grass and Lespedeza compose the favorite pasture mixture, about 8 pounds of carpet grass seed and 20 pounds of Lespedeza being sown to the acre."

"About 50 percent of the land area of this county is cleared and devoted to agriculture. The proportion of land under cultivation bears a direct relation to the character of the soil and to drainage conditions. The farmers recognize the adaptation of certain soils to particular crops. Norfolk fine sandy loam and its deep phase and Norfolk sandy loam are considered well suited to the production of bright leaf tobacco. Norfolk fine sandy loam and Norfolk sandy loam are also highly prized as cotton soils. Okenee loam and Okenee sandy loam are well suited to corn. Dunbar fine sandy loam gives good yields of cotton, corn, and soybeans." (pp. 4-5)

More from the 1927 *Soil Survey of Lenoir County, N.C* will be shared in an upcoming Bucklesberry article.