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Blooms bring value to N.C. farmers

RALEIGH - April showers bring May flowers, the childhood rhyme goes. In North Carolina, flowering plants represent the state's fastest growing agricultural segment, generating \$182 million in sales.

More than 1,000 different floriculture plants are grown in the state and farmers in 97 out of 100 counties in North Carolina reported significant farm income from floriculture.

“North Carolina ranks sixth in the nation for floriculture production and our growers raise more than 637 acres of outside plants and have more than 20 million square feet of greenhouse space devoted to floriculture,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “We’re second in poinsettia production and in the top 10 in azaleas, orchids, Chrysanthemums, hostas and more.”

To highlight the variety and strength of this industry, Gov. Mike Easley has named May as Floriculture Month.

More farmers are selling directly to the public through roadside stands, on-farm nurseries, farmers markets and through the Internet. The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services also offers Web listings, maps and other information at www.ncfarmfresh.com. Listings can be searched by business type, county of production and more.

Additional information on the industry is available at www.ncfga.org, the Web site of the N.C. Commercial Flower Growers Association, and the NCDA&CS Web site, www.ncagr.com.

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