

Sewing Strong Seeds, Reaping Strong Benefits: NC Chamber's 2019 Agribusiness Conference Delivers Big Yields

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This marks the second year that the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce has hosted a formal business conference dedicated to Agribusiness in North Carolina and beyond.

We were proud and privileged to participate in both. The North Carolina Department of Agriculture reports that Agribusiness contributes an estimated \$87 billion to the North Carolina economy, so it seems only fitting that the industry receives this type of attention and focus.

This year's conference featured distinguished and engaging panels focused on the future of agribusiness in North Carolina, funding in AgTech, legal liability and legal outlooks in agribusiness, and the hemp industry in North Carolina. It also featured greetings from the Consul General of Mexico, who spoke to the need for relations between Mexico and North Carolina relative to the significant Mexican labor force here, and also a keynote address from Brett Sciotto of Aimpoint Research, who spoke to his group's efforts to understand the farmer of the future. Senator Brent Jackson and Representative Jimmy Dixon, the respective chairs of the NC Senate and House Agricultural Committees, delivered a concluding legislative update.

Many themes permeated the conference, not the least of which was that agribusiness is as dynamic and fluid as any industry, and the farmer of the future (and those that service those farmers and sell their products) must be adaptable and open to change. This was bookended by the "Future of Agribusiness in NC" panel led by Dean Richard Linton of North Carolina State University, which addressed topics such as food messaging and the impact of technology, and the "Hemp in NC" panel led by our own Tyler J. Russell, which focused on the opportunities and challenges of hemp as a new commodity crop.

All in all, the conference was excellent, and we extend our many thanks to Ray Starling, NC Chamber general counsel and president of the NC Chamber Legal Institute, and all of the NC Chamber team who put it on for our state's benefit. We look forward to participating next year.

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