

ORANGE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

Meeting Date: January 22, 2009

Action Agenda  
Item No. 4-g

**SUBJECT:** Grant Submittal to the Tobacco Trust Fund for the Farm Enterprise Incubator at the WC Breeze Family Farm Extension & Research Center

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**DEPARTMENT:** Economic Development & Cooperative Extension

**PUBLIC HEARING:** (Y/N)

No
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**ATTACHMENT(S):**

**INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Brad Broadwell, 245-2325  
Noah Ranells, 245-2330  
Fletcher Barber, Jr., 245-2050

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**PURPOSE:** To request BOCC authorization for staff to submit a grant proposal to the Tobacco Trust Fund for the Farm Enterprise Incubator at the WC Breeze Family Farm Extension & Research Center.

**BACKGROUND:** The development of new farm enterprises and diversification of existing farm operations can be challenging and pose considerable financial risk. However, there are many opportunities for production and marketing of farm products produced by local farmers. With modest, yet critical, County funding of \$10,000 in FY 2007-08, the PLANT @ Breeze Farm Enterprise Incubator was initiated. An additional \$10,000 has been allocated for FY2008-09, with plans to leverage these funds to obtain additional grant funds.

Through a strong effective interdepartmental collaboration, Cooperative Extension and Economic Development developed and implemented a series of eight Wednesday evening workshops in January and February of 2008. With strong support from the local community, attendance was 45 to 50 aspiring farmers for each of the workshops of the 8-week training series. Local farmers were involved in presentation and discussion at each workshop, along with a local, regional, or state farm related specialist. Following the workshop series, participants who wanted to farm land at the Breeze Farm were required to complete a business plan. If approved, these individuals were able to contract for prepared planting beds and grow their own crops. Seven farm enterprises participated in 2008.

Given the success this past year, Cooperative Extension and Economic Development have identified the need for additional funds to support this project and expand the program activities. Therefore, staff requests authorization to submit a grant proposal to the Tobacco Trust Fund for approximately \$275,000. The application deadline is February 16, 2009. Funds from this grant may be used to provide for a mentor farmer, operating funds, and enhanced outreach to Latino

and other underrepresented groups. Additionally, new initiatives in permaculture, as well as fruit and berry production, may be facilitated with these funds.

The PLANT @ Breeze Farm Enterprise Incubator is a successful part of the concept plan for the WC Breeze Family Farm Extension and Research Center. It was agreed to at a fall 2006 joint meeting of Orange County representatives and administrators from the North Carolina State University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Implementing the concept plan for the WC Breeze Family Farm Extension & Research Center is guided by the Breeze Planning Committee, composed of Orange County Cooperative Extension and Economic Development staff as well as three representatives from NC State University. There was agreement by this committee to submit a grant proposal to further develop the Incubator Component of the Breeze Concept Plan.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** There is no financial impact associated with submitting this grant proposal. There is no local match required. However, the existing County funding coupled with the commitment of County staff do enhance the County's position for this competitive grant opportunity. Staff resources in Cooperative Extension and Economic Development will continue to be dedicated to guiding activities at the Breeze Farm.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** The Manager recommends the Board authorize staff to submit the grant proposal to the Tobacco Trust Fund for the Farm Enterprise Incubator at the WC Breeze Family Farm Extension & Research Center.