

SURRY COUNTY SCHOOLS

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Surry Central High School Hosts Poultry Lab Ribbon Cutting

On Monday, September 19, 2022, the Surry County School system and Wayne Farms celebrated the completion of the Poultry Lab at Surry Central High School. This ribbon cutting marks a new era for the Poultry Lab at Surry Central and the continued partnership between Surry County Schools and Wayne Farms.

Many Surry Central FFA Officers were in attendance, along with Surry County Commissioner Mark Marion, School Board Members Mamie M. Sutphin, Clark Goings, Dale Badgett, Melissa Key Atkinson, and those who assisted directly with the renovation project. The ceremony was also attended by representatives from Wayne Farms including Matthew Wooten, Nathan Pardue, and Lee Freeman, along with Andy VonCanon, Western Region Agricultural Education Coordinator for North Carolina FFA, Bryan Cave of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Gary York with WIFM Radio, and the Surry County Schools Central Office team.

The ribbon cutting featured remarks from FFA officers, Principal Misti Holloway, Board of Education Chairperson Mamie M. Sutphin, Matthew Wooten of Wayne Farms, Bryan Cave of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, and Superintendent Dr. Travis L. Reeves.

Renovations on the facility began in 2018, when the building was gutted in order to be outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment. The area where the poultry lab stands was once part of the larger Surry Central greenhouse structure and served as an animal science lab for years. Wayne Farms and Hog Slat, Inc. partnered together to make improvements to the existing structure as well as install industry-standard equipment. Through the company's partnership with Hog Slat, Inc., Wayne Farms secured new lights, temperature controls, fans, and louvers for the facility. Hog Slat, Inc. is the largest construction contractor and manufacturer of hog production equipment and produces swine and poultry units for family farms and large corporate entities. The Surry County Schools Maintenance Department was able to provide new insulation and electrical work for the project, along with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the renovation.

“This lab mimics current production practices and provides those who might not have an opportunity otherwise to learn how the poultry industry really works. This is a place where students can raise and care for chickens in order to gain irreplaceable hands-on experiences in a live animal setting. Although the classroom is a necessary part of any student's education, it is

impossible to learn what agriculture is truly about from a seat, a lecture, or a textbook. In this facility, my students will be able to gain a deeper insight into the cost and business realities of agriculture, the struggles, and successes that farmers face, and will also offer the opportunity for students to learn how much Surry County relies on agriculture and how the world depends on people like themselves who are willing to work hard and help others,” said Agriculture Education Teacher and FFA Advisor Sarah Johnson.

Superintendent Dr. Travis L. Reeves also commented on the renovated facility, “It is my belief that this facility will serve as an inspiration to our students and future farmers. This facility will give them the chance to test concepts, gain real-world knowledge, and expose them to career opportunities they may not have thought about previously. Agriculture is still the number one industry in Surry County and the state of North Carolina, making this project an investment in the industry's future.”

Surry Central High School is also the future location of a new Live Animal Lab, further solidifying the partnership between Surry County Schools and Surry Community College. The facility will be used by teachers at Surry Central High School in the Animal Science program and instructors at Surry Community College in the Animal Science degree program to offer hands-on instruction on raising calves, goats, piglets, and other small animals. Students from the high school and college will receive valuable training in the field of Animal Science in this cooperative lab.

Surry County Schools is thankful for the partnership between Surry Community College and all of the career opportunities that our students are being afforded through agriculture education. The district looks forward to watching this program “GROW!”