



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **N.C. Mountain State Fair canceled for 2020**

*Fair was scheduled to be held Sept. 11 -20*

FLETCHER – As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty of conditions come September, the N.C. Mountain State Fair will not be held in 2020. The fair was scheduled to take place Sept. 11 through 20.

“I would like nothing better than to NOT be making this announcement today,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “The Western N.C. Ag Center and the Mountain State Fair are important to the community. Both are cultural and economic forces and I am aware of the significant contributions they make. I am heartbroken for the small businesses, family farms, competitors and exhibitors impacted by this decision.”

The decision to cancel this year’s fair was based on the following:

- Safety and health of visitors and staff,
- Current situation with the percentage of COVID-19 tests coming back positive,
- the state only being in Phase II of reopening
- social distancing measures limiting the size of gatherings remaining in place,
- and the long-term financial health of the Western N.C. Ag Center

Fair officials have determined that to socially distance the fair and follow CDC recommendations would result in a very scaled-back experience. “The fair is a magical place that is meant to offer an opportunity to temporarily escape the day-to-day,” Troxler said. “The lights, the smells, the food, the rides, the music and the fairgoers come together to make it a memorable experience. To offer anything less than a full experience and our very best efforts shortchanges everyone.”

The decision to cancel is being made now to avoid incurring expenses for an event that may not be able to operate. The Mountain State Fair costs over \$1 million annually to put on. The fair would have to commit over \$500,000 in contracts and expenses by the end of July to operate a fair this year. To date, 76 events scheduled to be held at the WNC Ag Center have cancelled, which has resulted in a significant loss of income.

“Agriculture remains the heart of the fair and we remain committed to having a junior livestock show,” said Troxler. “We will be announcing details about these shows once they are worked out.

“I have also asked staff to come up with ideas for events that we may be able to host at the Ag Center in place of a fair. I hope we can couple any events with a canned food drive because the issue of hunger never takes a break, and in fact the need is greater because of this pandemic.”

The fair is already planning a comeback in 2021. “To say 2020 has been a year of disappointment is an understatement,” Troxler said. “My commitment to the people of Western North Carolina is that we will work even harder to put on the best Mountain State Fair ever when we return in 2021.”