

Damages from Hurricane Helene to Farms in Yancey County

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Hurricane Helene and the rain events that proceeded the storm resulted in unprecedented damages to Yancey County residents, including the agricultural community. Every major community within Yancey County was impacted by the storm. Yancey County Manager, Lynn Austin, shared two days following the storm that all county infrastructure, aside from US 19E had been damaged beyond function. US 19E also had damage of concern at two different key bridges located at Riverside and Newdale. Major damages were inflicted along all 4 major rivers (Cane, South Toe, North Toe, Toe). Major damages also occurred along almost all named creeks and streams, and also along most unnamed streams. Most, if not all, of the prime farmland in Yancey County is located along these waterways and was impacted. Many fields and much of the farm infrastructure will probably never be recovered without extensive repairs. These repairs will come at a high cost that will most likely not be feasible for farmers without outside assistance. The impacts of this storm have the potential to be catastrophic to agriculture in Yancey County for many years to come.

This document shows examples of damage that many farmers are facing in the county and probably similar examples of damage that is seen on farms all throughout the impacted counties in Western North Carolina. Many of these pictures were not taken in the most impacted areas within Yancey County.

Unprecedented Flooding



Damage to Fields and Crops



Damages to Farm Infrastructure



Damages to Fences and Pasture Land Out of the Flood Zone (Wind Damage)



Storm Debris



Landslides- Damages to Farms, Fields, Streams, Fences, and Infrastructure
Some estimate more than 1000 landslides in Yancey County



Hay Losses- Present and Future



Pictures cannot really describe the scale of damage to Yancey County, and other surrounding counties. I would welcome anyone that would like to visit farms, visit with farmers, and residents impacted by the storm. Yancey County and other counties impacted by Helene need all the support and assistance that can be available. This is truly and unprecedented disaster, never before seen in our area. Please feel free to contact me for any follow up or additional information about the impact of Helene in Yancey County.

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