

**Fw: [External] WSOC-TV inquiry**

SW

Smith, William

Fri 5/15/2020 11:14 AM

To: emily.jones@co.robeson.nc.us

here's number for WRAL - 72



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**From:** Smith, William <william.smith@robeson.nc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 13, 2020 3:19 PM  
**To:** Stolp, Mike (CMG-Charlotte) <mike.stolp@wsoc-tv.com>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] WSOC-TV inquiry

72 have tested positive - using April 29 as the 14 day period, 49 are considered to be recovered if no hospitalization occurred. Hospitalizations are difficult to identify as they may occur significantly after the actual testing.  
re: Smithfield

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**From:** Stolp, Mike (CMG-Charlotte) <mike.stolp@wsoc-tv.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 13, 2020 10:05 AM  
**To:** Smith, William <william.smith@robeson.nc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [External] WSOC-TV inquiry

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Mr. Smith –

Good morning. I wanted to see if you could please provide an updated number of positive COVID-19 cases in employees from the Smithfield plant in Tar Heel? Also do you have a number of those employees who have recovered?

Thanks,

Mike

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**From:** Smith, William <william.smith@robeson.nc.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 12:34 PM  
**To:** Stolp, Mike (CMG-Charlotte) <mike.stolp@wsoc-tv.com>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] WSOC-TV inquiry

make that 46 employees have tested positive who are Robeson County residents

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**From:** Smith, William <william.smith@robeson.nc.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 12:30 PM  
**To:** Stolp, Mike (CMG-Charlotte) <mike.stolp@wsoc-tv.com>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] WSOC-TV inquiry

43 employees have tested positive

**[External] Re: [Ext] FW: [EXTERNAL]Meat Processing Date for the Website**

TK

Tracey Kornegay &lt;tracey.s.kornegay@duplincountync.com&gt;

Fri 5/1/2020 1:36 PM

To: Layton Long &lt;layton.long@chathamnc.org&gt;; tduncan@bladenco.org; Battle Betts &lt;bbetts@arhs-nc.org&gt;;

Cc: hcain@leecountync.gov

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sorry i did not receive the original email - Butterball numbers are not correct - they have employees throughout a number of eastern NC counties - not for sure where those numbers are coming from

please, please in the future include the health directors - Rose, my CD nurse, is busy and might not have seen this email

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Tracey Simmons-Kornegay, PharmD  
 Health Director  
 Duplin County Health Department  
 340 Seminary Street  
 Kenansville, NC 28349  
 Email: tracey.s.kornegay@duplincountync.com  
 Office: 910-296-2130  
 Fax: 910-296-0252



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**From:** Layton Long <layton.long@chathamnc.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 11:55 AM  
**To:** tduncan@bladenco.org <tduncan@bladenco.org>; Battle Betts <bbetts@arhs-nc.org>; Tracey Kornegay <tracey.s.kornegay@duplincountync.com>; rwillard@wilkescounty.net <rwillard@wilkescounty.net>; william.smith@robeson.nc.gov <william.smith@robeson.nc.gov>; tcellen@wilson-co.com <tcellen@wilson-co.com>; Dennis Joyner (djoyner@stanlycountync.gov) <djoyner@stanlycountync.gov>; wrobinson@sampsonnc.com <wrobinson@sampsonnc.com>; pbrown@health.co.lenoir.nc.us <pbrown@health.co.lenoir.nc.us>  
**Cc:** hcain@leecountync.gov <hcain@leecountync.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: [Ext] FW: [EXTERNAL]Meat Processing Date for the Website

⏮ Reply all ∨ 🗑 Delete ⓧ Junk Block ...

Re: [External] Mac - Question

SW

Smith, William

Tue 5/19/2020 1:33 PM

To: mac cca <mac\_cca@bellsouth.net>

👍 ↶ ↷ → ...

food processing plants differ from meat processing plants - you are correct there are three meat processing plants and two non-meat. It only takes two cases to be an outbreak so you know 4. The fifth has not released any info but have had over 40 local cases...

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**From:** mac cca <mac\_cca@bellsouth.net>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 1:21 PM

**To:** Smith, William <william.smith@robeson.nc.gov>

**Subject:** [External] Mac - Question

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Bill: Thanks for your reporting to the Robesonian on COVID-19. What are the five meatpacking facilities. I know the three closest: Mountaire, Sanderson Farms, and Smithfield. Are those three of the five. Then there's House of Raeford - is that the same as Butterball - in Raeford? Then is the other either the facility in Columbus or Bladen County? If so, I don't know the name? I saw Campbell's Soup had a few but is that the fifth one you reference? Please clarify for me. I'm trying to finish up what I'm writing on the subject to try and get some national, not just state, common strategy that involves weekly testing of all employees for the virus, not just screening for the fever. I assume some virus testing has been done of all employees at some of these facilities but is it being done on a routine basis? I assume there's no state plan for weekly testing of all employees, or is there? Thanks for asking these questions. I'm not writing to be a "pain". I'm trying to get the information I need to inform what I am writing to get more serious intervention on this critical issue. I am fearful that we will keep climbing and pass even more of the urban areas and have a major, major crisis on our hands here given the combination of all of our vulnerabilities. Kindly, Mac

It is safe to say we have 10 more - many reports do not list worksites specifically so we do not truly know until we contact the employee.

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**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 29, 2020 2:02 PM  
**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] COVID-19 cases

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Hello Mr. Smith,  
Just following up with you. Have there been any new cases of Smithfield Tar Heel plant employees testing positive in Robeson county? Or any new cases that can be tied to the plant?

all the best,  
Karen

On Tue, Apr 28, 2020 at 9:04 AM Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)> wrote:  
Thank you so much for the update Mr. Smith. kindly, Karen

On Tue, Apr 28, 2020 at 8:24 AM Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**  
we have had 25 residents who work there test positive.

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**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 27, 2020 4:34 PM  
**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>  
**Subject:** [External] COVID-19 cases

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Hello William Smith,  
My name is Karen Rodriguez, I'm a reporter for Newsy. Bladen County recently announced positive cases of Covid-19 at the Smithfield Tar Heel plant. I was wondering if any of the cases in Robeson County can be tied to the Smithfield plant? If so, how many?

All the best,  
Karen

--

I hope you are well. Again following up, have there been any new positive cases in Robeson County of Smithfield Tar Heel employees since April 29th?

You mentioned that your health dept. is having to call the employees individually to confirm the place of work. Is the company working with you at all to track cases?

kind regards,  
Karen

On Thu, Apr 30, 2020 at 10:58 AM Karen Rodriguez

<[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)> wrote:

Good morning William,

Just following-up with you on the interview request and to confirm that in total there have 10 new cases in Robeson County of employees testing positive from Smithfield Tar Heel plant.

Thank you,  
Karen

On Wed, Apr 29, 2020 at 1:45 PM Karen Rodriguez

<[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)> wrote:

Do you have the time for an interview about what you and the Robeson County Health Department are experiencing right now?

On Wed, Apr 29, 2020 at 1:40 PM Smith, William

<[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

Using nurses from throughout the agency, several public school nurses who are assisting as well, and some health educators we are trying to stay abreast - we are ok for the short haul - the long haul is a completely different animal and we shall see.

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**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 29, 2020 2:27 PM

**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [External] COVID-19 cases

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Wow, that must be very difficult to track and find out. How is this outbreak impacting your health department? Do you have enough resources?

On Wed, Apr 29, 2020 at 1:22 PM Smith, William

<[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

Got it! thank you, and have there been any new cases related to Smithfield in Tar Heel?

On Fri, May 15, 2020 at 2:13 PM Smith, William

<[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

response

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**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, May 15, 2020 2:05 PM

**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [External] COVID-19 cases

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Hello William,

I hope you are well. What is the current number of confirmed cases in Robeson County of Smithfield Tar Heel employees?

Have there been any cases associated with the following plants:

Campbell Soup Company plant in Maxton - **1 at the very beginning; additional tests being processed**

Day Day's Skins & Cracklings in Marietta - **have not seen this identified as place of employment**

Mountaire Farms Inc. in Lumber Bridge - **72 cases**

Prestage Foods, Inc. in St. Pauls - **6 cases**

Sanderson Farms in St. Pauls - **5 cases**

**Steven Roberts Original Desserts has been added to outbreak list with 34 positives**

If, so how many cases in each of those plants have you confirmed? and are those cases all employees as well? **all listed as work related ie employee; unsure of expression confirmed as second test is not typically done to verify**

Thank you very much for your help,  
Karen

On Wed, May 6, 2020 at 10:52 AM Smith, William

<[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

The company is cooperative but the employee is obviously not allowed at work so contact is made elsewhere. The current number confirmed is 52.

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**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2020 11:16 AM

**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [External] COVID-19 cases

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Good morning William,

**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 18, 2020 12:07 PM  
**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] COVID-19 cases

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No worries! Bear with me too, I also forgot to ask about the following plants:

Larry's Sausage Co., Inc. in Fayetteville  
Martin's Pork Products, Inc. in Falcon  
Mickenzie Jerky, Inc. in Hope Mills  
Morty Pride Meats, Inc. in Fayetteville  
Vanguard Culinary Group, Ltd. in Fayetteville  
Xpress Prep, LLC in Fayetteville  
Butterball, LLC in Raeford

On Mon, May 18, 2020 at 10:46 AM Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

unaware of SCR in Fairmont; I reversed the numbers it is Mountaire 72 and Smithfield 59  
final answer - that's what I get for trying to recall...

**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 18, 2020 11:39 AM  
**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: [External] COVID-19 cases

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Got it! Thank you William, for the clarification.

I missed one plant --  
SCR International Corp. in Fairmont  
I hope you had a good weekend,  
Karen

On Fri, May 15, 2020 at 7:49 PM Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

Mountaire is 59 and Smithfield 72 - mixed answer up between two

Sent from my iPhone

On May 15, 2020, at 3:26 PM, Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)> wrote:

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Karen Rodriguez <karenrodriguez@newsy.com>

Wed 5/20/2020 12:36 PM

To: Smith, William

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Hey William,

Got it. Let me know if you determine which Butterball plant. I also wanted to ask you if you have a few minutes today or tomorrow for a phone call? We are currently working on a story that looks at the impact (if there is any impact) of meat processing plant outbreaks in counties where they are located but also surrounding counties. We'd like to talk with you about Robeson county.

kind regards,

Karen

On Tue, May 19, 2020 at 2:23 PM Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

I have one from Butterball but dont know which one (Raeford or Duplin County) - none of the rest have been indicated.

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**From:** Karen Rodriguez <[karenrodriguez@newsy.com](mailto:karenrodriguez@newsy.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 2:58 PM

**To:** Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)>

**Subject:** Re: [External] COVID-19 cases

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Hey William,

Just following up to see if you were able to check this last list I sent you:

Larry's Sausage Co., Inc. in Fayetteville

Martin's Pork Products, Inc. in Falcon

Mickenzie Jerky, Inc. in Hope Mills

Morty Pride Meats, Inc. in Fayetteville

Vanguard Culinary Group, Ltd. in Fayetteville

Xpress Prep, LLC in Fayetteville

Butterball, LLC in Raeford

Integra Foods, LLC in Bladenboro

Thanks!

Karen

On Mon, May 18, 2020 at 11:10 AM Smith, William <[william.smith@robeson.nc.gov](mailto:william.smith@robeson.nc.gov)> wrote:

**[EXTERNAL SENDER]**

I have not seen any of those listed but will double check.



**melissa.packer**

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**From:** Smith, William <william.smith@robeson.nc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 22, 2020 10:18 AM  
**To:** Melissa Packer; Beth Rowell; Tracy Jones  
**Subject:** Fw: [NCDPH.LHDirectors] [dph.section.chiefs] FW: HEADS-UP on Joint NCDHHS-NCDACS Press Release re: COVID-19 Guidance to Processing Plant; Notification of Outbreaks  
**Attachments:** ATT00001.txt

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**From:** ncdph.lhdirectors-bounces@lists.ncmail.net <ncdph.lhdirectors-bounces@lists.ncmail.net> on behalf of Benton, Mark <Mark.Benton@dhhs.nc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020 5:21 PM  
**To:** NCDPH.LHDirectors@lists.ncmail.net <NCDPH.LHDirectors@lists.ncmail.net>  
**Cc:** DHHS.dph.section.chiefs <dph.section.chiefs@lists.ncmail.net>  
**Subject:** Re: [NCDPH.LHDirectors] [dph.section.chiefs] FW: HEADS-UP on Joint NCDHHS-NCDACS Press Release re: COVID-19 Guidance to Processing Plant; Notification of Outbreaks

And in case you missed the actual release, here are links to it and to the guidance:

Press Release: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/north-carolina-leaders-act-protect-workers-food-processing-facilities> [ncdhhs.gov]

Guidance: <https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/documents/files/covid-19/Recommendations-for-Food-Processing-Facilities.pdf>

MTB

**From:** Benton, Mark  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020 11:52 AM  
**To:** Benton, Mark <Mark.Benton@dhhs.nc.gov>; NCDPH.LHDirectors@lists.ncmail.net  
**Cc:** DHHS.dph.section.chiefs <dph.section.chiefs@lists.ncmail.net>  
**Subject:** RE: [dph.section.chiefs] FW: HEADS-UP on Joint NCDHHS-NCDACS Press Release re: COVID-19 Guidance to Processing Plant; Notification of Outbreaks

UPDATE: Press release to be sent at noon.

**From:** [dph.section.chiefs-bounces@lists.ncmail.net](mailto:dph.section.chiefs-bounces@lists.ncmail.net) <[dph.section.chiefs-bounces@lists.ncmail.net](mailto:dph.section.chiefs-bounces@lists.ncmail.net)> **On Behalf Of** Benton, Mark  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020 7:55 AM  
**To:** [NCDPH.LHDirectors@lists.ncmail.net](mailto:NCDPH.LHDirectors@lists.ncmail.net)  
**Cc:** DHHS.dph.section.chiefs <[dph.section.chiefs@lists.ncmail.net](mailto:dph.section.chiefs@lists.ncmail.net)>  
**Subject:** [dph.section.chiefs] FW: HEADS-UP on Joint NCDHHS-NCDACS Press Release re: COVID-19 Guidance to Processing Plant; Notification of Outbreaks

Colleagues:

As you are all likely aware, we have received notification of COVID-19 outbreaks at five meat processing plants here in NC – the first of which was identified at Mountaire (Chatham County), followed by Smithfield Foods (Bladen), Butterball (Duplin), Pilgrim's Pride and Mountaire (Robeson). These outbreaks are unrelated to, but follow others in South Dakota, Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska and New Jersey.

Outlined below is a cut-and-paste of a draft press release we intend to issue this morning. It will be jointly issued by NCDHHS and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDACS). It has two chief purposes: releasing interim COVID-19 guidance for food processing plants (developed jointly by NCDHHS and NCDACS) and announcing the outbreaks here NC.

You'll be copied on the final press release when it is issued, but I wanted you to be aware of it and know what it was going to say prior to its release. Additionally, I ask that you keep my team alerted to any new plant outbreaks that may occur in your respective counties.

Thanks,

MTB

#### **North Carolina Leaders Act to Protect Workers at Food Processing Facilities**

Raleigh, NC – After witnessing outbreaks at food processing plants in other states and receiving reports of cases among workers in our state, North Carolina public and private leaders have come together to take swift action to protect workers here from COVID-19. The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDACS), local health departments, plant managers and corporate owners, community health centers and local hospitals are working together to keep workers safe and to help ensure the world's food supply remains stable.

Following consultation with the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NCDHHS and NCDACS developed interim guidance to help protect workers at food processing facilities from COVID-19. The interim guidance builds on previous CDC guidance for essential workers. It is not intended to replace any existing worker health and safety requirements of the US and NC Departments of Labor. Food processing facilities in North Carolina are regulated by the NC Department of Labor for industrial hazards, and the US Department of Agriculture and NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for food handling and safety.

There are currently outbreaks in five food processing facilities located in Bladen, Chatham Duplin, Lee and Robeson counties. An outbreak is defined as two or more positive cases. Local health departments are conducting outbreak investigations including contact tracing to determine who else may have been exposed. Health care providers and hospitals are ensuring that those who test positive for COVID-19 are connected to care.

"Agriculture and agribusinesses are on the front lines of this crisis just like hospital workers, first responders, grocery store staff, truck drivers and many more. Their work is different, but every bit as critically important," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "We are in contact with the companies, public health officials and our federal inspection partners. The companies are working to implement recommendations of the CDC and state public health and local officials to keep these facilities operating and producing a stable supply of safe and nutritious food."

Food processing plants report that they are doing temperature and symptom checks, encouraging sick employees to stay home, and implementing paid sick leave for those with COVID-19 or suspected of having COVID-19. They are also providing personal protective equipment and employing social distancing policies where possible. Strike teams composed of staff from NCDHHS, NCDACS, NC Department of Labor and local health departments and with virtual