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FIRST TAKE

# HOW 'BOUT THEM APPLES?

BY CAROLINE MAAS

Step aside, peaches — apples are fall's favored fruit, with peak harvest in North Carolina from mid-August to October. While the state's apple production is small compared with cooler climates such as Washington and New York, festivals and pick-your-own orchards attract thousands of apple and cider enthusiasts. North Carolina was the ninth-largest apple-producing state in 2017, led by Henderson County — about 5,000 acres of orchards grow Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Rome Beauty, Gala and other varieties. At least 28 cideries have popped up across the state. "Just like craft beer, new makers are coming into the market constantly," says Tony Haywood, marketing specialist at the N.C. Department of Agriculture. ■

## WISE APPLES

# 100 MILLION POUNDS

Total 2017 N.C. apple production. Half were marketed as fresh apples; most of the remainder were earmarked for processing applesauce, juice and other products.



### HENDERSON IS THE STATE'S BIGGEST APPLE-PRODUCING COUNTY.\*

**HENDERSON: 3,559 ACRES OF ORCHARDS**

WILKES: 207 ACRES

ALEXANDER: 148 ACRES

HAYWOOD: 47 ACRES

MITCHELL: 42 ACRES



# 5,000

Acres of apple orchards in the state in 2017

Worldwide, China far outpaces other countries in apple production. Global market volume is expected to total **77.3 MILLION METRIC TONS** in 2017-18.

**CHINA: 44.5 MILLION**

**EUROPEAN UNION: 10 MILLION**  
*(Poland and Italy are top growers)*

**U.S.: 4.7 MILLION**

**TURKEY: 2.8 MILLION**

**INDIA: 2.3 MILLION**



With more than 70% of the state's apples grown in Henderson County, it's fitting that Hendersonville hosts the **N.C. APPLE FESTIVAL**. The 72nd annual event takes place Sept. 1-4. Started as an apple-blossom celebration, the state's longest-running festival moved from Saluda to Hendersonville at the end of World War II. The downtown event sponsored by Asheville Regional Airport typically attracts about 275,000 people, but this year, organizers expect a bigger turnout due to the World Equestrian Games, which kick off Sept. 11 in nearby Tryon. The family-friendly festival features 15 local apple growers, a road race and kids' carnival.

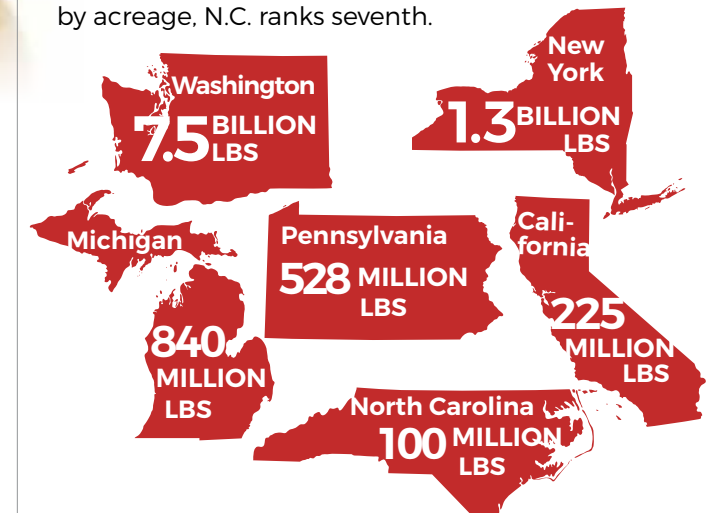
PROVIDED BY CIDERFEST



Started in 2013, **CIDERFEST** is the largest fundraising event for the Green Built Alliance, an Asheville-based nonprofit that advocates for sustainable building design. About 2,000 people are expected at the Oct. 18 festival in Asheville, according to Cari Barcas, Green Built's community engagement director. "It helps us reach people with our mission: educating people on how green building can help inside our homes and outside of our homes." At last year's fest, about 20 cider, mead and apple-wine makers offered more than 70 beverage varieties. Another 20 vendors provided food and nonalcoholic drinks. Tickets run \$15 to \$55, and the event offers live music, a kids' zone and eco-friendly activities.

## TOP STATES FOR APPLES

North Carolina was the ninth-largest apple-producing state in 2017. When measured by acreage, N.C. ranks seventh.



sources: USDA, N.C. Department of Agriculture  
\*2012 Census of Agriculture, Cleveland County not disclosed