



# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



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### Leading Off

It's 2021. Many of us can remember over two decades ago when Y2K was going to be such a major problem. That at the stroke of midnight on January 1, 2000, every electronic gadget would malfunction, and terrible things would happen. The good thing was these fears were never realized. We celebrated the year 2000, the turn of the century and the beginning of a new millennium. Due to the proactive measures intended to prevent the Y2K disaster, many nations were better off as a result of planning and investing billions in new computer technologies.

Well, what about 2020? In the world of Extension, we faced many changes due to the coronavirus pandemic with no time to plan. We shifted to less time in the office, less face-to-face meetings, less handshakes, less travel, more webinars, more time planning how to be creative in our programming and outreach, more time studying how we get our message broadcast and more time making sure our clients still know they can call on us for assistance.



Who knows how the changes we made in Extension this past year may turn out to be of great benefit to our organization, staff and clients? We saw the challenges adapted and implemented new plans to the best of our abilities.

Hats off to everyone. We in the Center for Profitable Agriculture continued to serve our clients through old and new methods. In spite of the pandemic, this past year proved successful. A few highlights include: 121 educational presentations made to 3286 participants; farm visits conducted in 33 counties; direct contact with 540 participants at two trade shows through our educational exhibit; consultations with 2463 people through the use of email, phone calls and direct mail; developed six new Extension educational publications; developed 27 fact sheets; submitted 11 new funding proposals/requests for a total of \$6,828,691; awarded new funding in the amount of \$6,824,749; and sent numerous email blasts to the Center's four email groups of value-added beef, farmers market, agritourism and value-added dairy clients.

Wishing everyone an incredible 2021!

## New Center Website Launched



A newly designed Center for Profitable Agriculture website was launched on December 17 as all of the UT Institute of Agriculture sites move from a SharePoint platform to WordPress. The site may be accessed at <https://cpa.tennessee.edu/>.

While the entire site has a new, fresh look, we are most excited about a new method of searching for resources on the site. Users may select “Resources” from the main navigation menu and then select a program area and/or topic, a previous educational event, or enter keywords to customize a search in our database of materials. A listing of resources such as publications, presentations, webinar recordings and website links will be provided based on the search.

Resources developed by the Center for Profitable Agriculture staff members as well as external resources are included. Resources will continue to be added to the database as new resources are developed or discovered. Access the resources page directly at <https://cpa.tennessee.edu/resources/>.

Users may also visit the Program Area page to find resources preselected for areas where Center specialists have developed special initiatives including agritourism, farmers markets, grapes and wine, specialty crops – hops, specialty crop profiles, value-added dairy, value-added food manufacturing, value-added meats and value-added poultry.

The new site was built by Tammy McKinley and Billy Williams from the UT Institute of Agriculture’s Information Technology Services. Support for the effort was provided by the Center’s Megan Bruch Leffew and Kim Giorgio. Questions about the website may be sent Megan Bruch Leffew at [mleffew@utk.edu](mailto:mleffew@utk.edu).

## How to Talk Farming: A Beginning Farmer’s Guide to Agriculture Words, Terms and Definitions

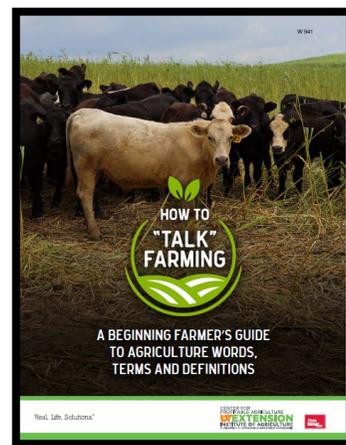
What’s the difference between a filly and a foal? What about tillage and no-till farming? What does “aquaponics” mean? These and many other questions are answered in a new publication from University of Tennessee Extension.

[How to ‘Talk’ Farming: A Beginning Farmer’s Guide to Agriculture Words, Terms and Definitions \(W 941\)](#) is a new publication developed to assist new and beginning farmers with terms and definitions used in the modern agriculture industry.

“Language is constantly changing, and that’s true in the field of agriculture as well,” states Troy Dugger, program coordinator the Center. “Farmers and producers who are new to agriculture or are just beginning in the field may struggle when they encounter unfamiliar terms. The goal of this publication is to decrease that possibility and introduce new terms in a digestible way.”

The publication contains approximately 200 terms and definitions from various agriculture sectors. Terms related to cattle production, small ruminants, horticulture, crop production and more are included. In addition to being a great resource for those new to farming, the publication may also be used by agriculture-focused educators across Tennessee.

“The list is certainly not exhaustive, and there are many words, terms and definitions used in agriculture that were not included. But the hope is that this document and the terms used in this guide will be a useful and valuable tool for those starting their agriculture endeavors,” adds Dugger. In addition to Dugger, the resource was compiled by Mitchell Mote, UT Extension Rutherford County; Andrew Griffith, Department of Agriculture and Resource Economics; and Kevin Rose, UT Extension Giles County.



## Helping Tennessee Farmers Evaluate and Implement New Enterprises and Market Strategies

Grant funding was received last spring to offer three types of workshops to help farmers evaluate and implement new enterprises and marketing strategies. Plans for these programs were altered from offering day-long, in-person workshops to webinar formats due to COVID-19. Funding and support for this program is provided by the Southern Risk Management Education Center, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. These workshops fulfill a Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP) requirement in agritourism, fruit and vegetable and value-added producer diversification sectors. Summaries of the workshops offered in 2020 are below.

**Exploring Agritourism for Your Farm** A virtual workshop consisting of four, two-hour sessions was held via Zoom in December 2020. Topics included an introduction to agritourism, getting started, resources from the State of Tennessee and Pick TN Products, marketing, creating the customer experience, financing your enterprise, regulatory considerations, risk assessment and management, and advice from an experienced operator. Instructors included Amy Ladd from Lucky Ladd Farms, Kacey Troup from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and Megan Bruch Leffew from the Center for Profitable Agriculture. A total of 55 people registered for the workshop. Participation ranged from 31 to 37 participants in each of the four sessions with 24 participants attending all four sessions. Educational materials were provided to registrants via email. Links to session recordings were also provided to participants.



As a result of the workshop 19 of 20 respondents (95 percent) indicated they increased their understanding of new enterprise or market opportunities and challenges and developed goals for implementing new or improved marketing strategies. Seventeen respondents (85 percent) indicated this Extension program helped them gain knowledge or skills to increase sales revenue, increase savings, reduce costs, or make one-time capital purchases.

Another virtual session of this workshop will be held in March 2021 and registration is still open at <https://tiny.utk.edu/CPAEvents>.



**Starting a Food Manufacturing Business in Tennessee** A virtual workshop consisting of four, two-hour sessions was held via Zoom in November 2020. Topics included business planning and getting started, food manufacturing regulations, food safety, working with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Consumer and Industry Services, resources from the State of Tennessee and Pick TN Products, marketing, financing your enterprise, pricing, other regulatory considerations, risk assessment and management, and advice from an experienced operator. Instructors included Nathan Miller from UT Extension Food Science, Mike Brown from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Chris Cheng from Hot Sauce Nashville and Megan Bruch Leffew from the Center for Profitable Agriculture. A total of 33 people registered for the workshop (registration was limited to allow instructors to provide quality service to participants). Participation ranged from 22 to 24 participants in each of the four sessions with 17 participants attending all four sessions. A three-ringed binder of materials was mailed to participants. Links to session recordings were also provided to participants.

As a result of the workshop 16 of 19 respondents (84 percent) indicated they developed goals for implementing new or improved marketing strategies. Eighteen respondents (95 percent) indicated this Extension program helped them gain knowledge or skills to increase sales revenue, increase savings, reduce costs, or make one-time capital purchases.

Two additional sessions of this virtual workshop are scheduled for January and April. Registration for these sessions are full at this time. Additional sessions may be added to the schedule at a later date.

**MarketReady** A virtual workshop consisting of three identical material overview two-hour sessions and a five-part series of advanced materials was launched in December 2020. The first of the overview sessions occurred on December 14 with the remaining sessions scheduled for January and February 2021. Topics for the overview session included communication and relationship building, packaging, labeling, pricing, supply, delivery, storage, invoicing, insurance, quality assurance, and marketing. Tim Woods with the University of Kentucky, the creator of the MarketReady Program, is the instructor for this series.



Thirty-one people registered for the first session with nearly one hundred registering across all three overview sessions. The first session had 23 live participants and 12 completed the post session survey. Of the 12 survey respondents, 100 percent increased their understanding of new enterprise or marketing opportunities and challenges. Ten participants (83 percent) developed goals for implementing new or improved marketing strategies and nine (75 percent) gained knowledge or skills to increase sales revenue, increase savings, reduce costs, or make one-time capital purchases as a result of this session.

Registration for the MarketReady program is currently full, but additional sessions may be added to the schedule at a later date.

### Tennessee SARE Program Virtually Hosts Southern SARE Outreach Team

The Tennessee SARE Program hosted (virtually) the Southern SARE outreach team in November of 2020. The outreach team was composed of Lee Meyer, 1862 university liaison, with the University of Kentucky; David Redhage, professional development program director and president of Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture located in Oklahoma; Candace Pollock-Moore, assistant director for Southern SARE; Brennan Washington, limited resource specialist, 1890 university liaison, with Fort Valley State University and Patrick Lillard, NGO representative on Southern SARE Administrative Council.



The outreach team conducted four meetings with county Extension agents, faculty and staff members, UT and TSU administrators and non-profit groups. The purpose of these meetings was to provide a better understanding of SARE, understand the needs, resources and interest of Tennessee as it relates to the opportunities for grants and collaborations with an emphasis on having more SARE grant proposals submitted from UT Extension, research, other agriculture professionals and producers. There are five basic grant programs available through Southern SARE including producer grants, on-farm research grants, graduate student grants, research and education grants and professional development grants. For more information on the Southern SARE grant programs, please visit: <https://southern.sare.org/grants/>

### Specialty Crops Profile – Garden Mum Production in Tennessee



The second of six proposed specialty crop profiles has been completed as a joint effort between the University of Kentucky’s Center for Crop Diversification (CCD) and the University of Tennessee’s Center for Profitable Agriculture. This second profile, “Garden Mum Production in Tennessee”, covers production systems and irrigation, marketing, planting and transplanting, pest management, harvesting and handling as well as economic considerations. Future crop profiles will be designed in the same manner. The development of these profiles is the result of a specialty crops block grant the Center received in 2019. The purpose in developing these profiles is to give specialty crop producers more information on specialty crops and to introduce them to the range of profiles the CCD has available. Other crop profiles to be developed in this series include cut flowers, mushrooms, cider apples and an overview of high tunnel production. Training for agents and producers regarding these and other crop profiles will be scheduled in 2021. Also, in the development stages is a website for specialty crops in Tennessee.

## Western Meat School



The Tennessee SARE Program provided resources for 16 county agents and specialists to participate in the Western Meat School. The school is an innovative learning experience for farmers, ranchers and others who will learn about all the aspects involved in the direct marketing of meat products. The six-week course covered topics on developing new markets for meat products, finishing ruminants for optimal gains and quality, proper animal handling and evaluation of a live animal, basics of meat processing, processing for specific markets and learning about developing and building a loyal customer base.

The school conducted classes with in-person locations in Oregon, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico, while allowing others to participate in an online format. Participants in the online format from UT Extension included specialists, Jared Bruhin, Liz Eckelkamp, Megan Leffew, Charley Martinez, Hal Pepper and Jessy Shanks; Extension agents from the Eastern Region, Jacob Boone and Shannon DeWitt; Central Region, Megan Harris, Chris Hicks, Dill Hughes, Scott Swoape, and Matt Webb; Western Region, Kenny Herndon and Mary Beth Neal and graduate student, Caitlin Samantha Zaring.



[UTIA.TENNESSEE.EDU](http://UTIA.TENNESSEE.EDU)

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Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.  
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.  
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.