



# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



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### Leading Off

In another article within this newsletter, you will find information about the celebration of the National Agriculture Day, recognized on March 23, 2021. There are some statistics found in that article and one of those statistics is something that everyone in agriculture has heard and quoted over the years. Even though the statistic changes every few years, it is a set of numbers that brings a sense of pride to those involved in production agriculture.

This statistic says that one farmer feeds 165 people. Sixty years ago, the number was twenty-five. So, let's take a moment to do a little math. If the population of the United States is approximately 330 million people today and one farmer feeds 165, amazingly the math says it takes two million farmers to feed our population. In 1960, the population of the United States was 180 million. If one farmer fed twenty-five people in 1960, it would take 7.2 million farmers to feed our nation. It is truly amazing when you look at these numbers.



This made me think about something. It made me think about the word “satisfied.” I do not think this word is a bad word in any sense. We all want to be satisfied with our station in life and what we have accomplished. But think about it in these terms: What if the agriculture community became “satisfied” in 1960? What if the agriculture community said, “One farmer can feed twenty-five people—isn't that enough?” What would have been the results?

Simply put, if this had happened, and the agriculture community became content with their work and advancements, we would need 13.2 million farmers today just to feed our nation. I am not saying that it would not be a good thing to

have more farmers, and we know we can certainly use more. But the point is, the agriculture industry was not satisfied; through a number of innovations and changes, the farmer has become so efficient at producing goods for all of us, providing a safe food supply and keeping things at a reasonable cost.

So, as we continue to work in our careers, attend school, or lead within our communities, it is good to be satisfied with accomplishments. But we should not let that satisfaction lead us to complacency and a lack of motivation to accomplish other goals.

If the agriculture community had done this in 1960, there may have not been a need to recognize March 23, 2021, as a celebration for National Agriculture Day.

## Grain Bin Safety Demonstration

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The Tennessee AgrAbility Project teamed up with the Lower Middle Tennessee Priority Planning Team (LMTPT) and the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads (TARS) to conduct a two-day grain bin safety demonstration at the Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center in Spring Hill on March 12 and 13. Thirty farmers and rescue squad members from Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Marshall, Perry, and Wayne counties took part in the safety demonstrations. Brian Robinson, TARS training coordinator, led the group in all training modules.



Accidents in grain bins do happen, and once they do, there is little time to respond. This demonstration, which included classroom and hands-on training, helps to train farmers and rescue squad members on what they need to do to keep these accidents from becoming a tragedy. This training was the first of its kind in the area, and the Tennessee AgrAbility Project looks to continue to have these events across Tennessee. This training was made possible with funding from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture along with the help of Brian Robinson and other volunteers. County agents in the participating counties raised over \$40,000 through local sponsorship funds to present each county rescue squad with the great wall and rescue tubes to assist in grain bins extractions.

Surveys completed listed the following comments about the training:

- This was a very good training! It was very much needed and timely.
- This was a great class. I go to a lot of classes throughout the year and this one was by far the best one.
- Continue to conduct these trainings across the state.

Links to media coverage of the event includes:

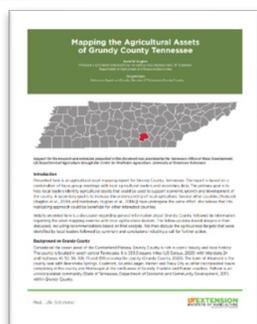
[Video news release](#) by Charles Denney, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

[Podcast](#) by Lee Maddox, Tennessee Farm Bureau (Look for grain bin safety on the page)

[Video news release](#) by RFD-TV

## Agricultural Asset Mapping—Grundy County

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The agricultural asset mapping exercise begins with a county agent who is willing to host meetings and a group of local agricultural leaders who are eager to look at their county to make note of the benefits/assets the county possesses. Troy Dugger, program coordinator with The Center for Profitable Agriculture, along with David Hughes, professor and Greever Endowed Chair in Agribusiness Development in the UT Extension Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, and Creig Kimbro, county director for UT Extension Grundy County, recently completed this exercise with a group of agricultural leaders in the crown jewel of the Cumberland Plateau, Grundy County. Funding to make this mapping exercise possible was secured through the USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG).

The leaders who chose to participate were charged to identify agricultural assets that could be used to support economic growth and development in Grundy County. Another goal of the process was to help increase the knowledge, understanding, and awareness of agriculture in the local community. Once all assets have been identified by the group of leaders a second meeting was scheduled to look at the follow-up data-based analysis and make recommendations based on this information.

The final report for Grundy County was just completed with all information compiled in Extension publication [\*W 991 Mapping the Agricultural Assets of Grundy County Tennessee\*](#).

## **Tennessee Young Leaders Conference**

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The Tennessee Young Leaders Conference was held on February 19 and 20, at the Drury Plaza Hotel in Franklin. The conference is hosted by the Tennessee Council of Cooperatives and the Tennessee Young Farmers and Ranchers. The Young Leaders Conference gives an opportunity to the cooperatives throughout the state to educate young leaders in various communities about the benefits of cooperative business. Over 150 young leaders and guests attended the 2021 conference.

Some of the highlights from this year's conference included: leadership training, an update on policy and other issues with Stefan Maupin and Kevin Hensley with Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, presentation on mental health from Misty Leitsch with the Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, discussion on farm security with Julie Giles and Laura Vaught, and keynote addresses from Tennessee State Representative Lowell Russell, Keith Carver, Chancellor of UT Martin, and Ashley Stokes, Dean of UT Extension.

Special Recognition from the Tennessee Council of Cooperatives Board was given to U.S. Representative John Rose. Rose is currently serving his first term in Congress and represents the sixth district. He serves on the House Financial Services Committee. Rose remains the owner and president of Boson Software, and before serving in Congress, he served as Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture and chairman of the Tennessee State Fair Association.

The weekend concluded with the Ag in the Classroom and John Willis Memorial Auction. The Friday afternoon tours were not held this year due to COVID-19 precautions, but it is hopeful these can return for the 2022 event.

## **Dugger Presented with Award for 35 Years of Service**

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During the Young Leaders Conference in February, the Center's very own Troy Dugger was presented with an award for 35 years of service. Dugger started work with UT Extension in January 1985 in Hickman County. He began his career as a 4-H youth development agent, then served as an adult agriculture agent before becoming the county director for UT Extension Hickman County. Dugger left Hickman County to join us at the Center in July 2018 as a program coordinator. A fond memory for Dugger, as he reflects on his time with Extension, is having the opportunity to serve as co-chair of the fundraising committee when the 2018 annual conference of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents was held in Chattanooga. Troy says, "It gave us a chance to share what we do with agriculture in our state to members across our nation and show how UT, TSU, and all of our partners work together."

Pictured left to right: Rhedona Rose, Rob Holland, Troy Dugger, Ashley Stokes, and Jeff Aiken.



## SARE

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The newest episode of SARE's *What is Sustainable Agriculture* animation series illustrates how producers can use cover crops to improve productivity and sustainability. In just a few short minutes, [Cover Crops and Soil Health](#) outlines how cover crops can build soil structure, protect water quality, suppress pests, and improve a farm's bottom line. Combining cover crops and reduced tillage can also help farmers:



- Manage soil nutrients
- Reduce erosion and compaction
- Improve water holding capacity and infiltration
- Reduce input costs
- Increase yields

*Cover Crops and Soil Health* is now available for viewing and sharing at [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org) and on [YouTube](#). Farmers, ranchers, educators, and other agricultural professionals may download or embed the video without modification into websites or other noncommercial educational presentations. The entire *What is Sustainable Agriculture* series is also [available on YouTube](#). This video series was produced through a collaboration of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and Pixeldust Studios.

## Specialty Crops in Tennessee

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Visit our new website at [cpa.tennessee.edu](http://cpa.tennessee.edu) and click Specialty Crop Profiles under Program Areas. We are working to provide more information on specialty crops to growers and beginning farmers in Tennessee. At this site you will notice the first two crop profiles have been developed in a cooperative effort with the University of Kentucky Extension's Center for Crop Diversification (CCD). These two profiles are culinary herb production in Tennessee and garden mum production in Tennessee. Shortly the third crop profile will be added as it will address growing cut flowers in Tennessee.



Secondly, on this site, we have included and continue to work on a list of specialty crop profiles that have been needed by growers in our state. Currently, there are twenty profiles listed that are direct links to the CCD with their profiles on each of these crops. Additional links will be added as needed.

Lastly, we have a direct link to the CCD: [www.uky.edu/ccd](http://www.uky.edu/ccd). Specialty crop growers will find a vast array of information that will be helpful as they search for production information, small- and large-scale budgets on various vegetable crops, and price reports.

A variety of specialty crops are grown within Tennessee. These tools are provided as information to these growers. Within the next two years, more information will be available on this site relating to specialty crops in Tennessee.

## Southern Risk Management Grant Workshops Continue in 2021

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Additional educational programs were offered virtually in the first quarter of 2021 as part of the Southern Risk Management Education Center Grant titled *Helping Tennessee Farmers Evaluate and Implement New Enterprises and Marketing Strategies*.

Thirty-four participants joined in January for Starting a Food Manufacturing Business in Tennessee. The series included four two-hour sessions, and sessions were taught by the Center's Megan Leffew, UT Extension Department of Food Science professor Mark Morgan, and TDA business consultant Mike Brown. During the last session, Chis Chang from Hot Sauce Nashville shared lessons learned from his journey to becoming a food manufacturer and advice for producers. Check out his business at [www.hotsaucenashville.com](http://www.hotsaucenashville.com).

In January and February, participants in the MarketReady webinar series learned from moderator Tim Woods from the University of Kentucky and numerous special guests on several key business function topics such as packaging and labeling, insurance and business communication, quality assurance, logistics, and marketing. Over 60 participants tuned in each week for the virtual advanced topic sessions of the MarketReady series after participating in an overview session covering the basics of MarketReady key business functions.

In March, seventy producers participated in a webinar series on exploring agritourism for the farm. Four two-hour sessions were taught by Leffew, Amy Ladd from Lucky Ladd Farms, and TDA business consultant Kacey Troup.

Participants in these workshops have reported increased understanding of new enterprise or market opportunities and challenges and have developed goals for implementing new or improved marketing strategies.

These workshops also fulfill a Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP) requirement in the **Agritourism, Fruit and Vegetable and Value-Added Producer** Diversification Sectors. Information and registration for future sessions can be found online at [cpa.tennessee.edu/educational-events-2](http://cpa.tennessee.edu/educational-events-2).

These workshops are made possible, in part, through a Southern Risk Management Education Grant supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2018-70027-28585. Additional support provided by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

### ***CPA Info #385 Feasibility Analysis Spreadsheet for Starting a Livestock Slaughter and Processing Enterprise in Tennessee Published in February***

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CPA Info #385 titled *Feasibility Analysis Spreadsheet for Starting a Livestock Slaughter and Processing Enterprise* was published in February 2021 by Jared Bruhin, David Hughes, and Hal Pepper. The info sheet explains the background and usefulness of the spreadsheet tool developed by the authors. The spreadsheet tool was developed using data from CPA Info #289 titled [\*Feasibility of a Federally Inspected Custom Livestock Processing Facility in Tennessee\*](#). The spreadsheet allows individuals to evaluate their own estimated costs, revenues, profitability, and ultimately the long-term feasibility of building and operating a livestock slaughter and processing facility. People interested in working with specialists and using the spreadsheet for their own preparations can fill out the Individual Assistance Project Application form [on the Center's website](#). To learn more about the spreadsheet and its uses, check out [CPA Info #385](#).

### ***A Day for Agriculture***

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March 23, 2021, National Agriculture Day, is organized by the Agriculture Council of America. The ACA is a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in agricultural, food, and fiber communities, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public's awareness of agriculture's role in modern society.

There are many reasons to devote a single day to celebrate agriculture. Everyone needs to understand the value of agriculture and how it reaches every individual in our daily lives. It is important that we all understand how food, fiber, and renewable resource products are produced; that we recognize and value the role agriculture plays in maintaining a strong economy; that we appreciate how agriculture and the agriculture industry provides safe, abundant, and affordable food products; and that we consider the many career opportunities available in the agriculture industry.

Think on these facts: Small family farms account for ninety percent of all US Farms; farming and related industries employ 21.6 million people, making up eleven percent of the total US employment while adding over \$1 trillion to the US economy; Americans spend just 6.4 percent of their household income on food, the lowest rate in the world.

Today, every American Farmer feeds more than 165 people; over six times the number it fed just sixty years ago. American agriculture is doing more and doing it better than it ever has. With the increase in population, there is more

demand for the food and fiber we all enjoy. As has always been the case, the American farmer will meet and exceed the expectations placed on his/her shoulders. A salute to the farmer and agriculture is well deserved; not just one day out of the year, but every day on the calendar.

A portion of the information within this article was provided by Agriculture Council of America



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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.