



CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



Progress Report 93, July 2021

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Leading Off

As we see things moving back to a more normal time, we look forward to visiting more with clientele, Extension agents, and industry partners as well as conducting more face-to-face meetings. We learned a lot in virtual sessions and can see this mode of communication being used in the future as an efficient way of conducting a portion of our work; but being able to travel, visit, and conduct educational meetings will be a refreshing change.

Recently in our Center, programming has continued to be offered virtually. This spring, Megan Leffew led Exploring Agritourism for Your Farm, an eight-hour training designed to assist farmers in understanding what it takes to evaluate, develop, and market an agritourism operation. Topics included an introduction to agritourism, industry trends, creating the customer experience, business planning, regulatory considerations, liability, and insurance for agritourism operators. Assisting with these workshops were Amy Ladd of Lucky Ladd Farms and Kacey Troup with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. A second workshop will be held in August.



Starting a Food Manufacturing Business in Tennessee was also led by Megan Leffew this spring. These virtual sessions were for producers interested in adding value to their farm products by food processing. This workshop helped farmers understand how to evaluate, develop, and market a food manufacturing business in Tennessee. Items discussed included business planning, food manufacturing regulations, food safety, marketing, financing, and business and sales taxes. Mark Morgan, UT Extension and Mike Brown with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture assisted in providing information to participants. This program will also be presented in August and registration is open.

A third virtual workshop was conducted and led by Jared Bruhin, Megan Leffew, and Tim Woods with the University of Kentucky. The MarketReady workshop is designed to help farmers learn what it takes to market their products directly to restaurants, grocery stores, and other wholesale channels. The MarketReady program was developed by a team led by Tim Woods at the University of Kentucky.

For more information on these programs and to register for any upcoming workshops, please visit cpa.tennessee.edu/educational-events-2/

UT Business and Online Marketing Project for Farmers Among the Nation's Best



**SOUTHERN
EXTENSION
RISK
MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION**

A project led by the Megan Leffew and Hal Pepper has received two awards for excellence in risk management education. The project was recently named one of three 2020 Southern Risk Management Education Center (SRMEC) Projects of Excellence and was also awarded the 2021 Extension Risk Management Education Center (ERME's) Outstanding ERME Project for the Southern Region.

The Business Planning and Online Marketing Education for Tennessee Farmers project provided educational opportunities to help participants manage financial and marketing risk by developing business plans and implementing cost-effective online marketing strategies. The project targeted Tennessee farmers involved in value-added, direct marketing, and agritourism enterprises. Funding for the project was provided through a USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant administered through the Southern Risk Management Education Center.

The ERME Outstanding Project award was established by the ERME centers to recognize an outstanding project from each of the four regions across the country each year.

Megan Leffew, project director, along with representatives of the other award-winning projects, were invited to make brief presentations at the Virtual 2021 Southern Agricultural Economics Association Annual Conference in February and the Virtual 2021 Extension Risk Management Education National Conference in late March. The project team and major collaborators included:

- Megan Leffew, project director, UT Extension, Center for Profitable Agriculture
- Hal Pepper, project co-director, UT Extension, Center for Profitable Agriculture
- Adam Hopkins, team member, formerly area farm management specialist with UT Extension Eastern Region, now with UT Extension Sevier County
- Les Humpal, team member, UT Extension Central Region, area farm management specialist
- Danny Morris, team member, formerly area farm management specialist with UT Extension Western Region, now with UT Martin, Department of Agricultural Economics
- David Yates, team member, UT Extension Eastern Region, area IT specialist
- Jade Clark, AgLaunch Initiative
- Pete Nelson, AgLaunch Initiative
- Joey Mehlhorn, UT Martin, Department of Agricultural Economics
- Ross Pruitt, UT Martin, Department of Agricultural Economics
- Rachna Tewari, UT Martin, Department of Agricultural Economics

Marketing Specialist Update

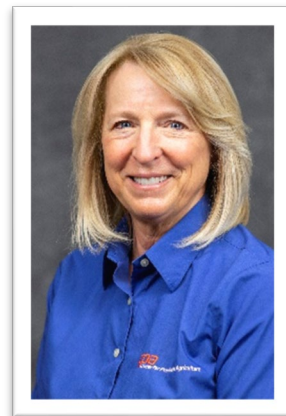
After serving as a marketing specialist in our Center for the past two years, Jared Bruhin resigned in early July to pursue a career in East Tennessee. Jared gave leadership to programs relating to value-added agriculture marketing, farmers markets, wineries and vineyards, direct farm marketers, and value-added enterprises. We wish Jared and his wife Lynsey all the best in their move to Knoxville.

So What's in a Name?

So, what's in a name? Everything it seems. The Center for Profitable Agriculture's Kim Giorgio submitted the winning name from almost 300 other entries in a contest throughout the UT System to create a name for the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) project.

The winning name—DASH, which stands for Dynamic Administrative Systems for Higher Ed—will allow multiple business functions in the areas of finance, human resources, and payroll to be combined into one source system. The name will exemplify the speed and responsiveness the new cloud-based system will bring to the university. DASH will replace the IRIS system which had its beginning in the early 2000s with financial modules, human resources, and payroll.

Kim's efforts in winning this contest netted her a \$250 Amazon gift card. Congratulations to Kim on her award-winning name!



Retirement of Roy Bullock



Roy Bullock announced his retirement from TSU Extension on May 1, 2021. A retirement luncheon was held for Bullock in Nashville with many co-workers and friends in attendance. Bullock began his Extension work as an agronomist with the University of Georgia in 1983 and remained on the Georgia staff until 1991 when he joined UT Extension as an Extension associate professor in weed science. Bullock then began work with Tennessee State University in 2000 as an Extension professor and agriculture and natural resources team leader for small farms and IPM. He has served recently as the agriculture program leader with Tennessee State University. Bullock was recognized by Southern SARE at his retirement with a certificate noting his 20+ years of work and service to the Southern SARE program. Bullock mentioned that now in his retirement, he plans to wake up early, enjoy a cup of coffee before returning to bed to finish his night's rest. We wish Roy all the best in his retirement!

Pictured, from left to right, Rob Holland, UT Extension interim assistant dean, director of the Center for Profitable Agriculture, and state SARE co-coordinator for UT Extension; Roy Bullock, TSU retiree and agriculture program leader; and Troy Dugger, program coordinator with the Center for Profitable Agriculture and state program assistant for SARE.

Farmer Veteran Coalition of Tennessee

TN AgrAbility joined with the Farmer Veteran Coalition (FVC) of Tennessee for their one-year celebration as a state chapter. This celebration took place at the UT Extension Rutherford County office on May 8. Activities for the day included networking with many agricultural agencies, sharing ideas related to various farming practices, hearing about the state of the chapter, and an introduction of the leadership for Tennessee FVC. Ron Bridges, US Army veteran, is currently serving as president; Jameson Griffiths, US Marine Corps veteran, serves as vice president; Amanda Lovingood, veteran family, is secretary; and Bob Parker, US Army veteran, serves the coalition as treasurer. To learn more about FVC in Tennessee, please visit tennessee.farmvetco.org.

Central Region Grazing School/Agent In-Service



Twenty-one UT Extension Central Region agents attended the Grazing School In-Service held at the Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center on June 14. Classroom activities focused on grazing management and making a forage plan while the hands-on activities included determining forage availability, stocking rate, forage allocation, and a look at the various types of equipment that can be used in setting up an electric fence. Katie Mason, assistant professor in the Department of Animal Science and Matt Webb, director of UT Extension Marshall County, led the educational program discussions.

This grazing school was sponsored by the Southern SARE Program. Plans are to develop this program for presentation to other Extension regions during the next year. As a part of the program, each region and Mason were provided with a forage kit consisting of various materials needed to build paddocks for rotational grazing of livestock. UT Extension county agents will have the opportunity to use these kits in their livestock and forage educational programs.

SARE Producer Grants

A call for proposals for the Southern SARE producer grant will be released in September. These proposals will be due in November with the successful proposals awarded in March of 2022. The funding cycle will begin on April 1, 2022, and will continue for a two-year period. Producer grants have a maximum funding level of \$15,000. All grant proposals should address production and marketing issues that promote sustainable agriculture. They must include at least one cooperator, such as another farmer, Extension agent, researchers, or USDA personnel. Each project proposal will include an outreach component that allows the farmer to share information and outcomes with other members of the farming community. For more information on this and other grants with Southern SARE, visit southern.sare.org/grants/

Tennessee AgrAbility



"Thank you is not enough." Those were the first sounds Tennessee AgrAbility staff member Joetta T. White heard as she exited her truck to visit Dennis Martin, a livestock producer from Wayne County who had received a new Polaris UTV two weeks earlier. After an accident in 1997, Martin was left with mobility issues. With assistance from Tennessee AgrAbility, the Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and Disability Rights Tennessee, Martin received his UTV in May 2021, which will be used for farming rather than recreation. He stated, "This is a necessary farm tool for me, not like the ones I see running up and down the road for recreational purposes."

With the help of the UTV, Martin is now able to travel everyone on his farm with his large toolbox in tow. Megan Harris, UT Extension Wayne County agriculture and natural resources agent, has been a help to Martin as well. Since he had trouble using the soil sample probe due to gripping issues, Megan came to the rescue and helped gather dirt for his soil samples.

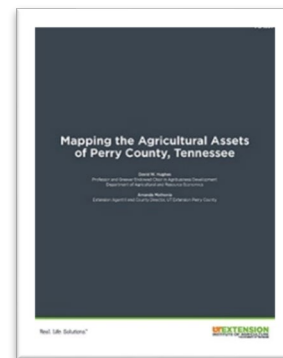
"He had to show me all the compartments with everything he had in each one and the bed of the UTV had all his fencing tools," stated White. Before receiving his UTV, Martin would have to use his tractor and put all his equipment in the bucket. If he hit a bump while driving over the terrain, some tool would inevitably fall out.

"What brought tears to my eyes," said White, "was when he said he mentioned to his wife that, if anything ever happened to him, the UTV was to be given to a farmer who had physical challenges to help him or her on their farm."



Agricultural Asset Mapping–Perry County

The agricultural asset mapping exercise is a collaborative effort between UT Extension county personnel and local agricultural leaders, both eager and willing to determine benefits and assets the county possesses and how these can be used to develop the county and local economy. 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 Amanda Mathenia, county director for UT Extension Perry County, recently completed this exercise with a group of agricultural leaders in Perry County. Funding to make this mapping exercise possible was secured through the USDA Rural Business Development Grant. The leaders who chose to participate were charged with identifying agricultural assets that could be used to support economic growth and development in Perry County. Another important goal of this process is to help increase the knowledge, understanding, and awareness of agriculture in the local community. Once all assets have been identified a second meeting is scheduled to look at the follow-up data-based analysis and make recommendations concerning this information.



The final report for Perry County was recently completed with all information compiled in Extension publication **PB 1891 Mapping the Agricultural Assets of Perry County, Tennessee.**

Specialty Crop Profiles



The third of six proposed specialty crop profiles have been completed as a joint effort between the University of Kentucky's Center for Crop Diversification and the University of Tennessee's Center for Profitable Agriculture. This third profile, Cut Flower Production in Tennessee, covers production systems, pest management, harvest and storage, and labor and economics. This profile also includes a worksheet for cut flowers in assisting with variable and fixed costs and a table with cut flower options for Tennessee which should be useful to agents and producers.

Special thanks to Rachel Painter of UT Extension Rutherford County, Celeste Scott of UT Extension Madison County, and Natalie Bumgarner, associate professor and UT Extension residential and consumer horticulture specialist for serving as reviewers to this crop profile.

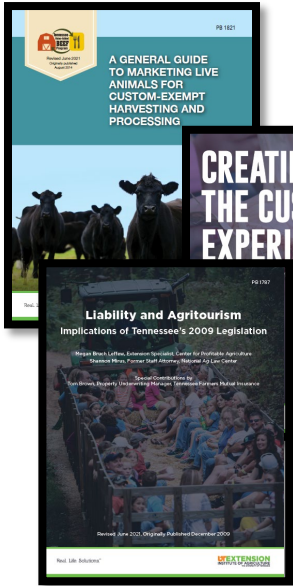
The final three crop profiles will be designed in the same manner. The development of these profiles is the result of a Specialty Crops Block Grant received by the Center for Profitable Agriculture in 2018. The purpose in developing these profiles is to give specialty crop producers more information on specialty crops and to introduce producers to the range of profiles available through the Center for Crop Diversification. Other crops to be developed in this series include mushrooms, cider apples, and an overview of high tunnel production. For more information on specialty crops in Tennessee, please visit the Center for Profitable Agriculture's website at cpa.tennessee.edu and click on program areas, then note the specialty crop profiles section.

Updated CPA Info #342 Resources for Beginning Farmers in Tennessee

CPA Info Sheet #342 Resources for Beginning Farmers in Tennessee has been updated and is currently on the Center's website. This resource sheet lists forty websites that have educational and financial information to assist the beginning farmer. This resource is useful in planning considerations when selecting enterprises, evaluating costs and returns, understanding regulations, developing a business plan, and identifying funding opportunities. Some of the resources were developed specifically for Tennessee farmers, and others are intended for use by farmers in all states. While this list is not all-inclusive, it has proven useful to Extension agents and others working with beginning farmers in Tennessee.



Publications Update



Liability and Agritourism, Implications of Tennessee's 2009 Legislation PB 1787 was recently updated. This publication contains the text of the Tennessee agritourism liability law and looks at some of the implications of this legislation for agritourism operations in the state of Tennessee.

A second publication was also revised, PB 1821 A General Guide to Marketing Live Animals for Custom-Exempt Harvesting and Processing. With growing interest in local meats and value-added beef, this publication will be of great assistance to Extension agents, producers, and consumers.

Finally, Creating the Customer Experience has been developed into a publication and is now PB 1890. This publication provides tips for agritourism operators to better understand the experience economy, the view from your customer's perspective, creating the customer experience, and how to tell your story.

Visit the Center website at cpa.tennessee.edu and look under the resources tab for all our publications and info fact sheets.

Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) Awards Update

As part of a grant from the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service received in 2019, the UT Department of Animal Science and the Center for Profitable Agriculture have teamed with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to support eligible Tennessee dairies as they seek to modernize and diversify their operations.

The first round of Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) applications for value-added dairy projects in Tennessee was completed this past February. Eight excellent projects totaling \$165,033.60 were awarded to dairy producers. Brief descriptions of these projects are as follows:

- Hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for a small-scale processing facility to make cheese and yogurt from goat milk.
- Print an exploratory marketing run of pint-sized ice cream containers to expand the current reach of a value-added dairy business and offer cow ice cream products at cooperating partner stores and the existing farm store.
- Purchase a food processor, food slicer, and vacuum sealer to utilize cow cheese trimmings and package products.
- Purchase a cook and smoker oven to create a smoked cow cheese product and purchase a cheese grater to utilize (shred) cheese trimmings into a saleable product.
- Purchase a batch freezer to expand current cow ice cream production and meet a new demand for wholesale pints of ice cream at farmers markets and grocery stores.
- Purchase a vat pasteurizer to run small batches of flavored cow milk and ice cream to meet seasonal demand.
- Hire a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for a small-scale dairy processing facility to make bottled milk, cheese, and/or ice cream from cow milk.
- Purchase a vat pasteurizer to increase processing capacity and expand into new goat dairy products (bottled milk, yogurt, and aged cheeses) and purchase a cheese table with accessories to add a new aged cheese product.

Approximately \$62,000 is still available for subawards to individual Tennessee dairy businesses, and the application period for the second round of grant submissions is now open through July 15. The Tennessee Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives Application is available at tn.gov.

To qualify for a grant, dairy businesses must use the funds to improve their operations in one of the following three areas:

- Modernization, specialization, and grazing transition on dairy farms.
- Value chain and commodity innovation and facility and/or process updates for dairy processors.
- Dairy product development, packaging, and/or marketing.

Dairy businesses are businesses that develop, produce, market, or distribute dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt, and more. Each applicant can apply for a maximum of \$25,000 per application until all funds are awarded.

Dairy businesses in Tennessee, Kentucky and North Carolina will be able to apply for a pool of multi-state DBII funding soon. The multi-state DBII application form should be in place by the end of summer.

Value-Added Dairy Conference July 21-22

Through a grant received from USDA Agricultural Marketing Service last year, an annual value-added dairy conference will be held for three years. The first Value-Added Dairy Conference will be conducted July 21-22, 2021, in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Participants will have the option to participate in-person or online. Presenters from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, the University of Tennessee, Pennsylvania State University, and other supporters of the value-added dairy industry will present topics on food safety, business planning, market trends, and more. There will also be tours of creameries in the area.

Register for the conference online at vad-con-21.questionpro.com. The registration fee is \$20 for in-person attendees and \$15 for virtual attendees. The conference will be held at Holiday Inn University Plaza & Sloan Convention Center in Bowling Green. Call 270-745-0088 for room reservations and ask for the Value-Added Dairy Conference block rate.

For more information, contact Liz Eckelkamp at 865-974-8167 or email eeckelka@utk.edu.



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