



CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



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Leading Off

Leaders...what makes one a leader? Why would someone want to lead? What type of a leader makes the best leader? These are questions with varied answers. The qualities of a leader may certainly differ from person to person, as well as leadership styles. The youth programs in Tennessee, both 4-H and FFA, place great emphasis on developing leadership qualities in each member.

The 4-H motto, “To Make the Best Better,” is a statement of continual improvement of self, programs, and opportunities. It is also emphasized in the pledge by the four-fold development of the head, heart, hands, and health. FFA members ask in their opening ceremonies of each meeting, “Why are we here?” The recited group answer points toward leadership: “...and to develop those qualities of leadership which an FFA member should possess.”

Leaders are needed in every facet of life. Direction for organizations, businesses, and institutions is critical for each entity to be successful, and direction comes from someone willing to make a decision after looking at all alternatives.

Sometimes leadership positions are admired. However, there are times when tough decisions must be made, and the outcomes may not be popular among most employees, associates, or co-workers.

UTIA has been blessed with several good and positive leaders for many years. Recently, Tim Cross announced his decision to retire from his position as UTIA’s Senior Vice President and Senior Vice Chancellor. Tim served the University of Tennessee well for twenty-seven years. We will always be mindful of how he worked as a leader.



His positivity, his outlook on the future, and his ability to communicate his thoughts stand out about his leadership style.

Just recently, Mr. Jeff Aiken, Tennessee Farm Bureau President, decided not to seek re-election at the annual meeting to be held in December. Mr. Aiken has been a positive voice for agriculture as he served in his role as president the past six years. While Mr. Aiken has used service to define his role, the word leadership still comes to mind to describe what he has exemplified in his time as president.

As we look back on these two examples of leadership, in each case, they strived “To Make the Best Better,” and they certainly developed those qualities of leadership that the youth programs in Tennessee have emphasized for many years.

New Websites for the Tennessee AgrAbility Project and Beginning Farmers Program

Two program websites were launched in early September, the Tennessee AgrAbility Project, agrability.tennessee.edu, and the Beginning Farmer Program, beginningfarmers.tennessee.edu.

Potential clients are asked to visit these sites for program updates, contact information for staff members, and other information related to each of the projects. More updated information will be added soon with the hope that these sites can prove to be a beneficial resource for Extension agents and producers/clients.



Specialty Crops Virtual Lunch Series

A series of four specialty crops virtual lunch webinars were held in late July as trainings for Extension agents and producers. The webinars featured information on the crop profiles for Tennessee that have been prepared as a project with the University of Kentucky's Center for Crop Diversification along with other beneficial information on growing specialty crops in our state. These webinars can be accessed at the Center's website at cpa.tennessee.edu/specialty-crop-profiles. The webinars include:

- Pollinators and Specialty Crops—Jennifer Tsuruda, assistant professor, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology
- Marketing Specialty Crops—Alicia Rihn, assistant professor, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics
- Growing Cut Flowers in Tennessee—Rachel Painter, ANR agent, UT Extension Rutherford County
- Garden Mums in Tennessee—Lucas Holman, ANR agent and county director, UT Extension Wilson County

Specialty Crop Profiles



The fourth 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 fourth profile, High Tunnel Overview, covers types of high tunnels and tunnel management as it relates to temperature and ventilation as well as irrigation and pollination. Special thanks to Annette Wszelaki, UT Extension vegetable specialist, for serving as one of the reviewers of this publication.

The development of these profiles is the result of a Specialty Crops Block Grant received by the Center for Profitable Agriculture in 2018 and the final two will be ready soon. 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 and cider apples. For more information on specialty crops in Tennessee, visit the Center for Profitable Agriculture's website at cpa.tennessee.edu and click on program areas, then note the specialty crop profiles section.

Grain Bin Safety/Rescue Awareness Training



Recently two grain bin safety/rescue awareness trainings were held to train and educate rescue squad members and farmers on the dangers associated with grain bins in Tennessee. Thirty-one participated in the event held in July in Gibson County and fifty-four participants attended the training that took place in August in Smith County. The Tennessee AgrAbility Project works with the Tennessee Association of Rescue Squads (TARS) to conduct these trainings in Tennessee. Sponsors of each of these events allow the purchase of plastic turtle tubes and the medal great wall, equipment needed in the event of a grain entrapment. When an entrapment occurs, there is little time to waste. This training equips the local rescue squads to be better able to respond to this type of event. Evaluations of each of these trainings were extremely positive as this training was the first of its kind for many rescue squad members.



Tennessee AgrAbility and Occupational Therapy Students



Four students from the Tennessee State University Occupational Therapy Master's Degree Program chose to do their summer fieldwork with Tennessee AgrAbility. The students and Tennessee AgrAbility staff members spent time on Zoom sessions each Friday during the summer. Guest speakers for some sessions included Carla Wilhite, assistant professor of occupational therapy at the University of New Mexico, and Derrick Stowell, education and horticultural therapy program administrator for the UT Gardens and Department of Plant Sciences.

The big event was a field trip starting at the UT/TSU Extension office in Rutherford County. The tour guide, Rachel Painter, UT Extension agent in Rutherford County, took the group through the Extension office where staff talked about different programs that UT/TSU Extension offered, toured the farmers market and Master Gardener garden, and toured the raised bed garden at the Villages of Murfreesboro, an assisted living home. The group then fueled their stomachs and headed to Mr. Frank Beard's farm. Frank is a Tennessee AgrAbility farmer and showed students the lifts for his tractor along with words of wisdom. (See Mr. Beard's story at youtu.be/-tdDc-cPavE)

The summer program ended with a Zoom meeting the last Friday of July. The group viewed the National AgrAbility video, [The Next Mission](#) and [FVC-TN video](#).

For their class project and to benefit Tennessee AgrAbility, students chose to create a Twitter account with the handle @TNAgrAbility and to work on updating current Tennessee AgrAbility brochure. Both projects will help the Tennessee AgrAbility Project in its marketing efforts.

The summer of 2020 was the first time Tennessee AgrAbility was chosen by students for their field work, and it was all virtual due to COVID-19. This year's field work was more fun and educational as these students were able to make visits outside the classroom to learn more about those producers who continue to farm as they face physical challenges. This learning experience was shared with the entire occupational therapy master's program class members. Thanks to Tennessee AgrAbility staff member, Joetta White, for leading this effort with the TSU occupational therapy students.

2021 Northeast Rolling Workshop – Tennessee Agritourism Association



Two East Tennessee Extension agents participated in the 2021 Northeast Rolling Workshop conducted by the Tennessee Agritourism Association. Highlights of this four-day trip include visiting farms and attractions from the Butler Orchard in Germantown, Maryland, to the Unangst Tree Farm in Bath, Pennsylvania, including ten stops in between. The purpose of the trip was to visit the Pennsylvania and Maryland areas to learn from experienced specialty crop producers and visit the sites of many agritourism farms and farm markets. Melody Rose, Extension agent in Greene County, and Evangelon James, Extension agent in Bradley County, took advantage of the funding opportunity provided by the Tennessee SARE Program to participate and learn on this amazing journey. Melody and Evangelon already have ideas in place that will benefit their county programs in the areas of agritourism and farmers markets.

Southern SARE Producer Grants

The Southern SARE Producer Grant Program has been announced for this year with a deadline for proposals to be submitted by November 12, 2021, at 11 a.m. Central Time. The producer grants are open to individual farmers and ranchers or farmer organizations. At least \$1000 of annual income from the operation must be documented. The approved proposals will be announced in February of 2022. The maximum amount an individual producer can receive with this grant is \$15,000 over a two-year period. A farmer organization is eligible to receive a maximum amount of \$20,000 over a two-year period. Projects must include at least one cooperator, such as researchers, Extension agents, NRCS personnel, and others. One requirement of the grant is to conduct an outreach component at the end of the grant period. This outreach allows the farmer to share the project outcomes with other producers. More information about the Southern SARE Producer Grant can be found at southern.sare.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/producer-grants/.

2021 Value-Added Dairy Conference a Success

The first of three annual value-added dairy conferences was hosted July 21-22, 2021 in Bowling Green, Kentucky, by the Kentucky Dairy Development Council. There were seventy-six participants, with nine of those attending online. Speakers presented topics on business planning, marketing studies, national trends, processing plant layout, resources, and safety regulations. A panel discussion with processors and visits to Chaney Dairy Farm and Kenny's Farmhouse Cheese gave producers the opportunity to ask processors about the keys to success for their value-added dairy businesses. Next year's conference will be in North Carolina. The value-added dairy conferences are funded through a USDA Dairy Business Innovation Initiative grant.



Assistant professor Liz Eckelkamp moderates a panel of Kentucky value-added dairy processors.

Tennessee Department of Agriculture New Visual Dashboard

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is presenting data for their various programs in a new visual dashboard. The industry data may be helpful to farmers or industry partners. Examples of data include the number of enterprises listed by Pick TN Product category; licensing/inspections for agricultural inputs, beekeepers, dairy enterprises, food manufacturers and retailers, pesticides, plants; number of custom-exempt meat processing facilities; and impact data of the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Fund and Agriculture Enterprise Fund programs.

- Pick TN Program, TAEP and AEF - www.tn.gov/agriculture/department/tennessee-agriculture-interactive-data/business-development.html
- Licensing and Inspections - www.tn.gov/agriculture/department/tennessee-agriculture-interactive-data/licensing---inspections.html
- Custom Slaughter Operations - www.tn.gov/agriculture/consumers/food-safety/ag-farms-food-manufacturing-and-warehousing/ag-businesses-custom-slaughter.html

For questions about any of these programs please contact the Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Business Development Division at 615-837-5160 or the Consumer and Industry Services Division at 615-837-5534.



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