



CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



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IN THIS ISSUE . . .

A Message From the Director

Page 1

NACAA Recognizes Tennessee Ag Agents for Achievement and Distinguished Service Awards

Page 2

Center Staff Preparing for 25th Anniversary in 2023

Page 2

Webinar and Publication Highlight Changes to Food Manufacturing Regulations

Page 2

MarketReady Dairy Training

Page 3

Southeast Value-Added Dairy Conference Held in North Carolina

Page 3

Workshops Help Producers Consider Direct-to-Consumer Beef Sales

Page 3

Tennessee AgrAbility Project

Page 4

Ag Asset Mapping Exercises

Page 4

Southern SARE Meeting in Memphis

Page 5

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The summer months were filled with travel across the state for various field days, conferences, meetings, and farm visits. Recent subject matter focus has included value-added dairy, specialty crops, AgrAbility, grain bin safety training, county agricultural asset mapping, sustainable agriculture, and Tennessee Farm Bureau policy development meetings. In the past three months, we recorded more than 700 contacts at educational programs, farm visits, and meetings. We also invested a great deal of time and collaboration in assessing program needs and planning ahead for educational workshops, meetings, and conferences in 2023. We made significant investments in service activities including position search committees, conference planning teams, and industry service. We continue to stay busy helping farmers evaluate and develop value-added enterprises.



NACAA Recognizes Tennessee Agricultural Agents for Achievement and Distinguished Service Awards

The National Association of County Agricultural Agents conducted its annual meeting in West Palm Beach, Florida in July. Several UTIA staff were honored with the Achievement Award, which recognizes members with more than three years of work experience but less than ten. Honorees pictured left to right: Jenni Goodrich, UT Extension Morgan County; Sarah Orr, UT Extension Cocke County; Rachel Painter, Center for Profitable Agriculture. Also pictured are members receiving the Distinguished Service Award which recognizes members with more than ten years of service. Pictured left to right, starting in center: Chris Cooper, UT Extension Shelby County; Anthony Shelton, UT Extension Washington County; and Chris Hicks, UT Extension Smith County. Each of these agents and specialists has received these awards based on their record of accomplishments within their subject matter area and have been recognized on the region and state levels with the Tennessee Association of Agricultural Agents and Specialists.



Center Staff Preparing for 25th Anniversary in 2023



Staff members of the Center for Profitable Agriculture gathered recently for a group photo as they began to make plans for the 25th anniversary of the Center, to be celebrated in 2023.

Current staff members include Troy Dugger, Rob Holland, Megan Leffew, Kim Giorgio, Rachel Painter, and Hal Pepper.

Webinar and Publication Highlight Changes to Food Manufacturing Regulations

Tennessee's cottage food laws have gone through several changes over the years, with the most significant changes occurring July 1, 2022, with the implementation of the Tennessee Food Freedom Act. The legislation has:

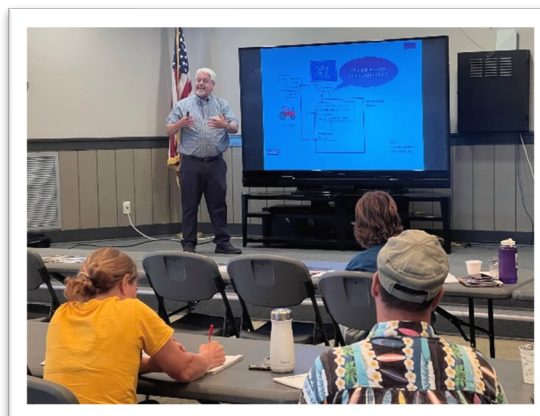
- Greatly expanded the products that can be processed at home and sold within the state—changed non-potentially hazardous to non-TCS (Time/temperature controlled for safety)
- Allowed third-party sales of products (i.e., through a retailer)
- Changed labeling requirements for all foods covered under the act
- Eliminated restrictions on full-time employees
- Allowed custom order sales over the internet or phone

To help small food manufacturers learn the details of these changes and potential risk management implications, the Center's Megan Bruch Leffew teamed up with Mark Morgan and Kyla Adkins to lead a webinar and develop an Extension publication with support from Tennessee Department of Agriculture partners. A total of twenty-nine people participated in the webinar live on July 12. Nearly 300 people have viewed the [webinar recording](#) made available via YouTube to date. The new publication, PB1909, is now available [online](#).



MarketReady Dairy Training

As part of the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative, the Center hosted a MarketReady Dairy Training in Spring Hill on August 16. The day-long workshop focuses on preparing value-added dairy producers to market products to restaurants, stores, institutions, and other outlets for resale. Tim Woods from the University of Kentucky led the workshop. Shep Stearns from UT Extension shared information about his experience in marketing to grocery stores and resources available through the initiative including funding opportunities. Debbie Ball, business consultant with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, provided information about department resources and arranged for Shelia Horvath from [Heavenly Treats 4U](#) and Ashlea Hogancamp with [Herban Market](#) to participate in a buyer panel. Six producers participated in the workshop.



Southeast Value-Added Dairy Conference Held in North Carolina

Hal Pepper and Megan Leffew represented the Center at the third annual Southeast Value-Added Dairy Conference held in Raleigh, North Carolina on July 13-14, 2022. The conference brought together fifty-five dairy industry stakeholders, producers, Extension professionals, dairy buyers, and other members of the value-added dairy community. Speakers covered a wide array of topics including product development, financial benchmarking for producers, innovations in packaging and processing, consumer perception of local dairy products, getting into retail space, best practices for social media, grant writing tips and tricks, and information about the upcoming round of subaward grants. Participants also had the opportunity to tour a local goat and cow producer-processor dairy and the North Carolina State dairy farm and creamery. The event was provided through the University of Tennessee's Dairy Business Innovation Initiative in collaboration with partner institutions and industry sponsors. Event organizers included UTIA's Liz Eckelkamp and Shepherd Stearns, along with North Carolina State University's Stephanie Ward and Brittany Whitmire, and Jennifer Hickerson from the Kentucky Dairy Development Center.

Workshops Help Producers Consider Direct-to-Consumer Beef Sales



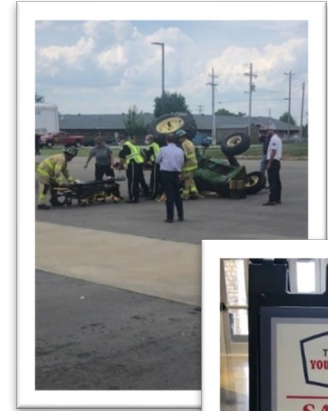
More than seventy people participated in two Pasture to Plate workshops in Columbia and Greeneville in August. The day-long workshop featured sessions on understanding consumers, regulatory considerations, finishing cattle effectively, meat quality, working with a processor, entrepreneur experiences, and Tennessee Department of Agriculture resources. The Center's Megan Leffew coordinated the workshops in cooperation with the South Central Tennessee Extension Team and Sarah Orr from UT Extension Cocke County. Speakers included Valerie Bass and Emily Haskew from the Tennessee Beef Industry Council, Dwight Loveday who is retired from UT Extension, Katie Mason and Charley Martinez from UT Extension, Wendy Sneed from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and Leffew.

Tennessee AgrAbility Project

In July, Troy Dugger and Joetta White, with the Center for Profitable Agriculture's AgrAbility team, and Sean Tormoehlen, former county Extension agent in Scott County, teamed with the Tennessee Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R) summer conference to conduct a farm safety awareness event. Approximately 150 YF&R members gathered to learn about safety measures regarding the PTO, chainsaw safety, mental health, and the importance of tractor seat belts. A grain bin safety and rescue awareness program was presented as was a tractor rollover and rescue situation. mock

Other events the Tennessee AgrAbility team has been involved in this summer include:

- Milan No-Till Field Day, AgResearch and Education Center at Milan
- Farmer and Rancher Stress Assistance Network Meeting: Southern Region
- Tennessee Farm Stress Summit held at Ellington Agriculture Center
- AgrileadHer Women in Agriculture Virtual Conference
- Steak and Potatoes Field Day, Plateau AgResearch and Education Center
- Tennessee State University Small Farm Expo, Nashville
- Beef and Forage Field Day, Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center, Spring Hill, Tennessee
- University of Tennessee Ag Day, UT Institute of Agriculture campus in Knoxville



Ag Asset Mapping Exercises

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 determine the benefits/assets it possesses and how these can be used to develop the local agriculture 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, recently worked with J C Dupree, county director of UT Extension Lauderdale County, and UT Extension Wayne County agricultural agent Megan Harris to complete this set of meetings in their respective counties. The leaders who chose to participate were asked to identify agricultural assets that could be used to support economic growth and development. 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 center on assessing the agricultural assets discussed in the initial meeting and the results of the data analysis calculations. A third and final meeting is conducted so participants can indicate the activities that would have the greatest potential for helping grow the local economy and resources provided to them to assist in reaching the final goals of the project. Funding for this project was provided by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.



Ag Asset Mapping Exercise in Wayne County with local leaders, Extension, and other partners.

View the final reports for [Lauderdale County](#) and [Wayne County](#).

Southern SARE Meeting in Memphis



Troy Dugger and Rob Holland with the Center for Profitable Agriculture recently collaborated with Jim Todd, UT Extension agent from West Tennessee, in hosting a professional development tour in Memphis on August 8 for some forty-eight colleagues from sixteen other states and territories in the Southeast. The tour was part of the Southern SARE advisory council annual meeting and state SARE coordinators training.

The training took place at three local sites including Jones Orchard, Agricenter International, and Knowledge Quest. Participants learned about sustainable agriculture research, sustainable marketing, sustainable production, and how agriculture has helped to revive an inner city community.

During the lunch session, attendees were treated to three Zoom presentations from one farmer and two Extension personnel relating their experiences in obtaining Southern SARE grant funds. David Wells, Davidson County producer, spoke on the producer grants received and his study focusing on farming multiple species of mushrooms. Dilip Nandwani, TSU Extension, discussed sustainable research projects completed on the TSU farm, plus the impact of plant spacing on yields of sweet potatoes produced organically. Katie Mason introduced the forage/fencing kits available in each UT Extension region allowing agents to use these in educational meetings and field days.



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