



# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



## A Message From Our Director

It is nice to pause and reflect on our work during the first quarter of 2023. We certainly "hit the ground running" in January. We launched the month by welcoming Alaina Boyd and James Harlan to the Center's staff. We also got busy teaching and hosting numerous workshops, webinars, and conferences.

We enjoyed connecting with a record attendance at the Pick TN Conference and the second annual Farm and Ferment event. We travelled the state for many specialty crop workshops and conducted more than 380 consultations on topics ranging from food regulations and meat marketing to enterprise feasibility and product labeling. We also stayed busy with various in-service training sessions for Extension agents, the Dairy Business Innovation Initiative and the AgrAbility project.

In total, we have provided forty educational presentations to more than 1,800 contacts in a variety of educational sessions in 2023.

We also kicked off our year-long celebration of the Center's twenty-fifth anniversary. Stay tuned for more ways to help us celebrate our anniversary in the months ahead. Speaking of anniversaries, this issue of our quarterly progress report marks a milestone-this is our 100th quarterly update in our twenty-five-year history.

We enjoy our work and we are pleased to provide quarterly updates, highlights and reports on our activities and impacts. We appreciate the support and interest we have received from readers, supporters, colleagues and farm families over the past 25 years and from 100 issues of this report. Be on the lookout for our 101st report. . . July will be here soon. In the meantime, I hope our paths cross soon.



**Rob Holland**

Center for  
Profitable  
Agriculture  
Director



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*Keep up with us online!*





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## CPA Celebrates 25 Years



 **WATCH NOW**

*Help Us Celebrate*

Watch our 25th  
anniversary video using  
the link above!





## Farm and Ferment

UT Extension and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture hosted the second annual Tennessee Farm and Ferment at the Rutherford County Extension office in Murfreesboro with approximately 200 people in attendance in January 2023.

This was the second annual meeting to bring brewers, distillers, winemakers, and industry partners together with farmers for a day of learning and networking. Tennessee Farm and Ferment also included a tradeshow this year, with vendors spanning the agricultural, beverage manufacturing, and hospitality industries.



## TN Dairy Producers Association Meeting

The Tennessee Dairy Producers Association Annual meeting was held in Lebanon at the James E. Ward Agricultural Center on January 20. UT Extension Dean Dr. Ashley Stokes addressed the crowd followed by a presentation from Elizabeth Eckelcamp, Extension specialist and assistant professor in the Department of Animal Science. Eckelcamp discussed the Southeastern Dairy Business Innovation Initiative resources available to Tennessee dairy producers.

Value-Added Agriculture Extension assistants James Harlan and Alaina Boyd represented the Center and networked with industry leaders at this event.





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## NAFDMA Agritourism Convention and Expo

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The 2023 North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association Agritourism Convention and Expo was held in Austin, Texas in February. CPA Extension specialist Megan Bruch Leffew and Extension assistant Alaina Boyd accompanied eleven dairy producers from Tennessee and surrounding states including Kentucky to the convention. These producers were recipients of the 2023 Value-Added Dairy Professional Development Scholarship made possible by the Southeastern Dairy Business Innovation Initiative. Representatives from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the Tennessee Agritourism Association were also in attendance.

Leffew and Boyd attended the "John Stanley Retail Experience" led by John Stanley of Chesnut Brae Farm in Perth, Australia, that included a day of travel to retail locations including Buc-ee's, a popular Texas-based gas station chain, to analyze retail and marketing strategies that could be adopted for agritourism operations.

## Sustainable Agriculture Inservice Training

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Held in February 2023, the Southern SARE Sustainable Agriculture Inservice Training hosted a total of twenty-one Extension Agents and six students from the Herbert College of Agriculture. The purpose of the training was to help participants learn more about sustainable agricultural practices and encourage them to use these ideas in their county extension programs. This event featured classroom training and tours of local farms based in Davidson County. The classroom portion of the training was held at the Central Region Extension Office located on the campus of the Ellington Agricultural Center in Nashville. Kevin Ferguson of the UT Center of Farm Management along with CPA staff members Rachel Painter and Troy Dugger addressed attendees before an additional presentation was given by members of Cul2vate.

Additional visits were made to the Nashville-based Galena Garlic Company and Honeytree Meadery. Galena Garlic markets olive oils, spices, and other products made from garlic. Honeytree Meadery specializes in sustainably sourced honey from their own apiary to produce local blends of mead made available out of their brick-and-mortar location in East Nashville. As the final portion of the two-day training, participants attended educational presentations at the Pick TN Conference in Franklin. Attendees participated in the Pick TN Conference by participating in various educational seminars and interacting with other industry representatives.



## Pick TN Conference

A total of nineteen Extension personnel from ten departments, centers, and counties provided presentations and information at the recent Pick TN Conference in Franklin. More than 880 participants enjoyed networking opportunities, a sixty-vendor trade show, short courses, tours, and a selection from more than 130 break-out sessions at the three-day conference.



## Chronicling Tennessee's Specialty Crop Landscape

Workshops and educational resources on cut flowers, fruits, and vegetables have been developed and offered for producers and Extension personnel statewide as part of a Specialty Crop project funded in part by the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. A series of three educational workshops were each offered on the production and marketing of cut flowers, vegetables, and fruits respectively across the first quarter of 2023. More than 550 producers attended the three series of workshops. The cut flower presentations were also delivered at the Pick TN Conference in Franklin in February, with an additional sixty-eight producers in attendance for the cut flower sessions.







## Tennessee Farm Bureau Welcomes New UTIA Leader

Tennessee Farm Bureau hosted a Meet-and-Greet session with newly-appointed UTIA Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President of UTIA, Dr. Keith Carver, in February. Carver and his wife, Hollianne, welcomed attendees and discussed his goals for UTIA and its strong partnership with Farm Bureau moving forward. Carver officially began his role with UTIA on March 1st, 2023.

Carver is pictured below with CPA and UT Extension staff members alongside Tennessee Farm Bureau President Mayberry inside the Tennessee Farm Bureau Headquarters in Columbia, Tennessee.

Pictured L - R Front Row: Extension specialist Megan Bruch Leffew; Maury County Extension director Starla Hardin; Extension Assistant Alaina Boyd; Hollianne Carver; UTIA SVC/SVP Keith Carver; TFBF President Eric Mayberry; Center for Profitable Agriculture administrative assistant Kim Giorgio; Center for Profitable Agriculture director and Extension specialist Rob Holland.

Pictured L - R Back Row: UT Extension Assistant Dean Justin Rhinehart; Central Region Extension director, Chris Hicks; Center for Profitable Agriculture Extension assistant James Harlan; Center for Profitable Agriculture program coordinator Troy Dugger.





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## Vines to Wines Spring Inservice Training

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Through a partnership with the Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance, Center for Profitable Agriculture marketing specialist Rachel Painter facilitated an in-service training on February 9 and 10 at Century Farm Winery. UT Extension Madison County agent Celeste Scott and the Extension Fruit and Vegetable Workgroup assisted with hosting the training. At the event, fifteen Extension agents and specialists learned about producing and marketing grapes and wine.

## 2023 TN Grain & Soybean Producer Conferences

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The annual Middle Tennessee Grain Conference and West Tennessee Grain and Soybean Producers Conference were respectively held in January and February of 2023. Extension specialist Rachel Painter attended the Middle TN Grain Conference held in Tullahoma at the UT Space Institute. Extension assistant James Harlan attended the West TN Grain & Soybean Producers Conference in Dyersburg in February. The conference addresses emerging crop production issues each year. Both events provide ample networking opportunities for both Middle and Western region crop producers and Extension staff alike as industry representatives and officials come together for educational breakout sessions and strong tradeshow at each event.



## Barley Production and Marketing Meeting

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The Center collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and Tennessee Craft Brewers Guild to host a meeting for farmers and brewers to learn more about producing and marketing barley in Tennessee. This meeting is a part of a larger effort, called Farm to Tap, which brings awareness and education for farmers, brewers, and consumers about using locally-sourced ingredients in craft beer in Tennessee. The meeting included presentations by Tyson Raper, associate professor and UT Extension Cotton and Small Grains specialist, Aaron Smith, associate professor and crop marketing specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, and a producer panel discussion led by Rachel Painter, marketing specialist with the Center.





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## Tennessee AgrAbility

The TN AgrAbility program assisted Tennessee State University in planning, conducting, and evaluating the 2023 Agriculture Veteran Boot Camp held at Ellington Agriculture Center. The purpose of the boot camp is to encourage all military veterans and active-duty soldiers who are interested in agriculture as a career, to learn about the resources Extension, Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and other partners in agriculture in Tennessee have available to them.

Speakers included Chandra Reddy, of TSU; Charlie Hatcher, Commissioner of Agriculture; Eryn Bell and Kevin Ferguson, UT Center of Farm Management; USDA personnel; Troy Dugger, Center for Profitable Agriculture; Kacey Troup, TDA; John Ferrell, Franklin County Extension; and Eileen Legault, and Joetta White with TN AgrAbility and Tara Janssen, with the STAR Center in Jackson. Eileen, Joetta, and Tara provided a demonstration of small hand tools and equipment that would benefit farmers who suffer with some physical limitations while farming. Tours of local farms in Montgomery and Maury Counties were held on the final day of the boot camp for the twenty participants in this year's event.





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## *Questions?*

Contact Alaina Boyd at  
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us at [tiny.utk.edu/cpa!](http://tiny.utk.edu/cpa!)



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.