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# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

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Content from April - June 2025



# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



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## Center Programs Represented at TFBF Women's Conference

The Center for Profitable Agriculture was represented once again this year in Lebanon at the annual Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation Women's State Leadership Conference.

The conference was held on April 26 at the Farm Bureau Expo Center at the Wilson County Fairgrounds. Extension specialist Megan Leffew participated in the event. A total of 256 individuals were in attendance.

## Zoonotic @ the Zoo Event Held in Knoxville in April

An educational program meant to provide agritourism operators with biosafety information was recently held in Knoxville. A collaboration between the UT Center for Profitable Agriculture, the Tennessee Agritourism Association, and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the "Zoonotic @ the Zoo" event was held on April 29, 2025, at Zoo Knoxville.

The educational event featured speakers from the Tennessee Department of Health, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, and Zoo Knoxville. A total of forty-eight individuals were in attendance. Educational sessions covered various topics, including how to mitigate the spread of zoonotic disease via animal interactions, as well as resources relevant to agritourism operators who provide animal interactions as part of their value-added enterprise.

**Top Right:** Extension specialist Megan Leffew discussing the program agenda with participants.

**Bottom Right:** Samantha Beaty, Tennessee State Veterinarian, listens to questions after a presentation at the event.





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## 2025 Farmers Market Vendor Boot Camp Webinars

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The Center for Profitable Agriculture hosted a seven-session Tennessee Farmers Market Vendor Boot Camp webinar series in February and March of 2025. With more than 309 total participants, topics included marketing, regulations, and resources for farmers market vendors.

Participation during the live sessions averaged a total of forty-four attendees with more than 540 total YouTube views across all sessions at the time of publication. The teaching team included Matt LeRoux (Cornell University), Mel Haas (Tennessee Department of Health), Billy Trout (Tennessee Department of Revenue), Extension assistant Alaina Boyd (UT Center for Profitable Agriculture), Trevor Hunt (USDA NRCS), and a panel of industry partners from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

Session recordings may now be accessed on the Center's YouTube Channel at <https://tiny.utk.edu/FMBC25>.

## New Extension Specialist Positions Coming to Center

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The Center's team is thrilled to announce that CPA has received additional funding to expand the number of Extension specialists involved in our programming.

The center plans to fill three new Extension specialist positions to support the core mission of value-added agriculture and UT Extension's landowner education program.

In addition to the three new Extension specialist positions coming to the Center for Profitable Agriculture, UT Extension's new "Landowner Education" program will introduce a new agricultural law position in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics. All four of these new positions will work collaboratively to support the "Landowner Education" program.

This is an extremely exciting time of growth in the life of the Center for Profitable Agriculture. Our team looks forward to expanding our reach and the impact of our programs across the state.





## Dugger and Giorgio Accept New Responsibilities at CPA

As of July 1, 2025, Troy Dugger will be stepping out of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program Assistant role which he has had since 2018 and will be taking on greater program responsibilities in the area of value-added dairy and value-added enterprise development.

Kim Giorgio will be taking on the role of SARE Program Assistant. Kim is a former Administrative Specialist in the Center and will continue her work with the SARE program on a part-time basis.

Since both Troy and Kim have extensive experience in the Center and are already familiar with their new roles, a quick and seamless transition is planned as both will still be involved in many aspects of the Center's overall operation.

**Top Right:** Troy Dugger.

**Bottom Right:** Kim Giorgio.



## National June Dairy Month Kickoff Held at Ellington

The 2025 Tennessee National June Dairy Month kickoff event was held at Ellington Agricultural Center on May 30. Extension assistant Alaina Boyd represented the Center at this year's event.

The kickoff is held each year as a collaboration between The Dairy Alliance, UT Extension, and the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. Program activities included a luncheon, updates from the Dairy Alliance, as well as from the TFBF Ag in the Classroom program.



**Above:** Steve Lee (McMinn County dairy farmer) addresses the crowd in Nashville.



# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



## CPA Represented at AgVOLs 2025 Kickoff in Clarksville

The Center was recently represented at the 2025 kickoff workshop for the AgVOLs program held in Montgomery County on May 10.

AgVOLs (AgVETs Opportunities on FarmLand) is a grant that focuses on assisting veterans and transitioning service members into agriculture through internships, workshops, and educational opportunities in Tennessee.

Extension specialist Liz Mooneyham spoke with the twenty-seven workshop attendees about the services that CPA can provide to beginning or established value-added enterprises.

## 2025 Bradley County Farmers Market Annual Kickoff

Extension specialist Liz Mooneyham spoke on marketing success for farmers market vendors at the Bradley County Farmers Market Annual Kickoff Meeting on June 3, 2025.

Twenty-eight program participants learned about how to leverage effective signage, psychological pricing, booth design, and sampling requirements in their farmers market vendor strategies.



**Above:** Extension specialist Liz Mooneyham discussing farmers market vendor strategies for success in Bradley County in June.





## Green Industry Field Day Held in Knoxville in June

The Center was recently represented at the Tennessee Green Industry Field Day held in Knoxville on June 12. The field day was a joint effort hosted by the UT Institute of Agriculture and the Tennessee Nursery and Landscape Association. Troy Dugger, program coordinator in the Center, was in attendance.

Extension personnel and industry professionals who attended the event were able to learn more about herbaceous and woody plant care and turf management. An update on UTIA's nursery research progress was also provided.

The program consisted of three guided walking tours in the UT Gardens followed by a series of presentations from UTIA personnel and industry leaders in the afternoon. Program presentations centered on an economic update of the green industry, soil microbial health, labor challenges, and a panel discussion on the turf industry.



**Top:** Green Industry Field Day participants on UT campus.



**Bottom:** Presentations on relevant industry topics were provided by UT Extension and UTIA personnel at the Green Industry Field Day.



## Interactive Map - Center Quarterly Activity by County

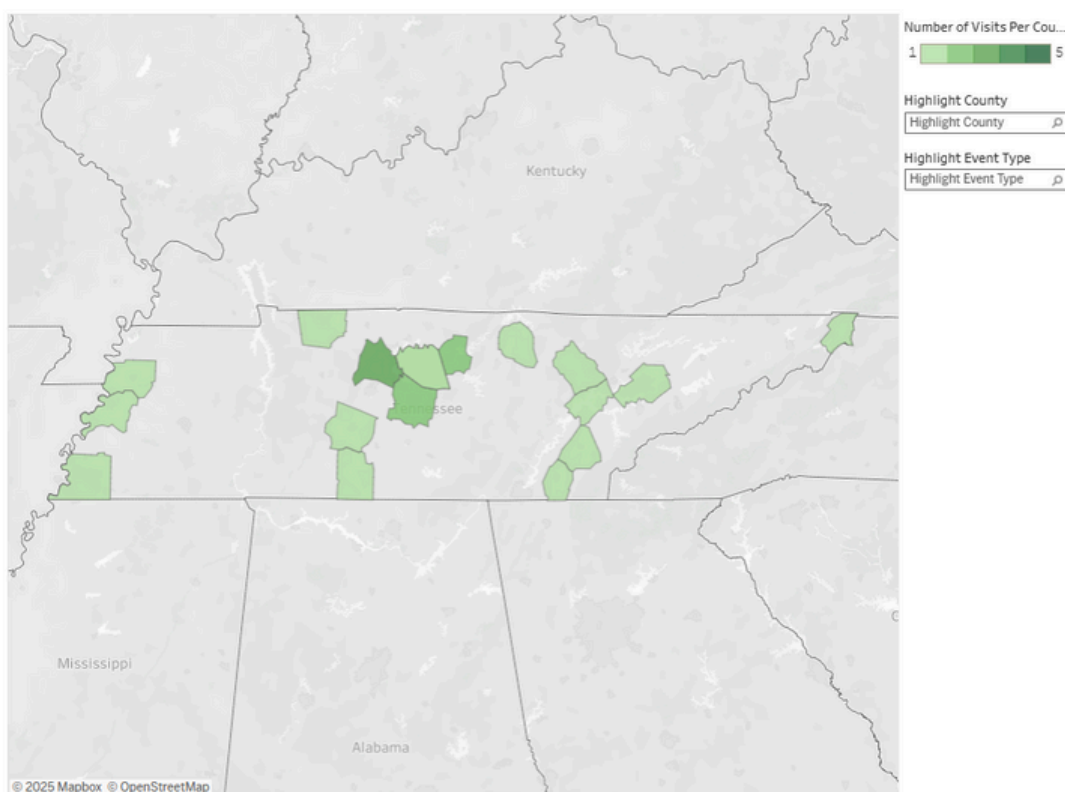
An interactive map highlighting the Center for Profitable Agriculture's activity (including all exhibits, farm visits, and in-person presentations or teachings) by county visited from April to June 2025 is now available.

A total of ten farm visits were conducted during the quarter across nine counties. A total of fourteen in-person teachings or presentations were held across nine counties with three Zoom teachings offered by Center staff during the quarter. The Center's exhibit was featured at two trade shows or industry events during the quarter.

Click [here](#) to access the interactive Tableau visualization shown below (if viewing in PDF format). A new browser window will open after you follow the link. You may hover over each shaded county to learn more information about Center activities for this quarter once the link opens in a new window.

### Summary of Center for Profitable Agriculture Activity from April - June 2025 by Tennessee County

(includes exhibits, farm visits, and in-person teachings or presentations)







# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



## In Memory of Former Center Director Dan Wheeler

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Center staff were saddened by news of the passing of Dan Wheeler on Tuesday, March 25, 2025. Mr. Wheeler became the first full-time director of the Center for Profitable Agriculture in 2002, providing strong leadership amid the relocation of the Center from Knoxville to Middle Tennessee. Mr. Wheeler forged the Center's partnership between UT Extension and the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation (TFBF). He was well known for his gentle strength, his humble approach, his collaborative spirit, and his keen ability to listen. He was an encourager, connector, and teacher with a strong work ethic, sense of humor, and strong faith. We remember him well for his keen ability to make quick connections with people and his attention to their story, their background and their interests. He made people feel special.

Mr. Wheeler was raised on a family farm in the Crab Orchard community of Cumberland County. He was a 1964 graduate of the University of Tennessee, where he earned a bachelor's degree in Animal Science and was a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity. His professional career began in 1965 with the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, where he served as an agent for the Farm Bureau Insurance Companies in Marion and Sequatchie Counties. He later worked as a regional field service representative for the Cumberland Plateau and Chattanooga areas. In 1969, he was promoted to assistant director of Organization at the Farm Bureau's Columbia headquarters, focusing on membership acquisition and organizational service. In 1973, he was named Assistant to the President and Director of Organization. By 1980, Mr. Wheeler became the organization's lobbyist to the state legislature and was appointed Chief Administrative Officer in 1990. In January of 1995, he was appointed by Governor Don Sundquist as the 32nd Commissioner of Agriculture. He concluded his career as the Director of the Center for Profitable Agriculture from 2002 to 2007.

We are thankful for the leadership he provided to our Center and for the friendships he developed with our staff, colleagues, and clients. He made lasting impacts across the state, in the agricultural community, and in the fiber of our Center. Mr. Wheeler will be missed by many.



## In Memory of Former Center Director Dan Wheeler Cont'd



**Top Left:** Dan Wheeler pictured in his office at the Center for Profitable Agriculture circa 2003.



**Bottom Left:** Dan Wheeler pictured with Extension specialist Megan Leffew and current Center director Rob Holland at the Center's twenty-fifth anniversary event held in Columbia in 2023.



# CENTER FOR PROFITABLE AGRICULTURE QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT



## 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.