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## Press Release

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### **Location a Major Factor for Value-Added Agricultural Products**

Competition – that is the harsh reality facing most new value-added agricultural products. To compete with the convenience of grocery stores, farmers’ markets and farm stands must offer consumers more than business-as-usual.

Competition for consumer dollars always exists, and it goes beyond that of a close substitute product. Despite the advantages of fresh, local and home-grown produce and products, Rob Holland, University of Tennessee Extension specialist with the Center for Profitable Agriculture says, “Competition with grocery stores is often a major obstacle for farmers’ markets, farm stands and pick-your-own farms.”

A survey of patrons at the six major farmers’ markets in Tennessee looked at the distances traveled from homes to grocery stores and to farmers markets. The study revealed that grocery stores are at a great advantage over farmers’ markets in terms of location and convenience. Farmers’ markets have double-distance hurdles compared to grocery stores and other direct outlets. The average distance from a resident’s home to a grocery store was 3.2 miles, while the average distance to a farmers’ market was 9.25 miles.

Though location is only one possible factor in a consumer's shopping decision, it carries with it associated factors of convenience and cost. According to Holland, farmers’ markets and farm stands can offset the disadvantage of location with other features such as price, quality, selection and service. It is essential, however, that these features be clearly promoted and advertised to potential and current customers.

For more information on value-added agriculture, contact your county UT Extension agent, or visit the CPA’s website at <http://cpa.utk.edu/>.

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