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Press Release

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Ag Growth Initiative Supports Diversified Agriculture

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture has announced the second round of the Tennessee Producer Diversity Cost Share Program. The program seeks to build farm income in Tennessee through the production of diversified agricultural products. Diversified agricultural products include, but are not limited to, agritourism, bees, fruits, vegetables, goats and sheep, horticulture, organics, value-added products, and viticulture.

Ben Sanders, a specialist with the University of Tennessee Center for Profitable Agriculture, says the program can provide vital assistance to qualifying farmers.

Tennessee farmers can apply for reimbursement of 35 percent cost share for activities or items within several funding categories. A farmer may be eligible for cost share assistance up to a maximum of \$10,000 for the fiscal year. Eligible activities fall into three categories:

1. Farm infrastructure – installations that facilitate the production of diversified agricultural products,
2. Marketing and promotional efforts that benefit the expansion or improvement of diversified agricultural operations, and
3. Specialty equipment – specialized tools and equipment that aids in the production of diversified agricultural products.

Applications are available online from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Market Development office at www.picktnproducts.org and from county University of Tennessee Extension offices. Applications will be accepted from July 1 – September 30 and evaluated on a competitive basis.

In the first year of the program, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture funded 152 projects totaling more than \$645,000. This initiative is funded through an appropriation for farm programs in the state's budget as proposed by Governor Phil Bredesen and supported by the Tennessee General Assembly.

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