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## Press Release

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### **Convenience Drives Opportunities for Value-Added Products**

“Convenience is shaping our future” is a quote from the 1800’s, but the words still ring true in today’s product development circles. According to Rob Holland, University of Tennessee Extension specialist with the Center for Profitable Agriculture, “Consumer surveys continue to show that convenience is a major criterion for food products.”

Holland says a recent study found that convenience rather than health is the primary concern on a shopper's mind when deciding on an evening meal. The top concerns when making evening meals include easy to make, satisfies hunger, requires little or no planning and can be prepared with available ingredients.

Holland points out that being mindful of the consumer's preference for convenience is often critical to the success of new value-added agricultural businesses and enterprises.

"Studies of retail store shoppers find that fast check-out and convenient payment options are a must," Holland said. "Even surveys of on-line shoppers show that consumers insist on having convenient ways to track the status of their orders. Other studies show that more convenient products increase the consumption of meat."

You don't have to look far to find examples of product and package innovations aimed at the convenient-minded consumer:

- Ready-to-eat cups of gelatin
- Tub barbecue
- Boxed casserole mix
- Portable meals in a bowl
- Pre-marinated and ready-to-cook meats
- Pre-cut vegetables and salads

In addition, the demand for convenience has resulted in retailers providing specially-marked, time-limited parking spaces for their “express shoppers” and is marked by the \$37 billion vending industry.

Holland cautions value-added agricultural businesses and enterprises to always consider consumer preferences when developing new products and business models.

Assistance is available from the UT Center for Profitable Agriculture. For more information,

contact the Center at (931) 486-2777 or by e-mail at [cpa@utk.edu](mailto:cpa@utk.edu).

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