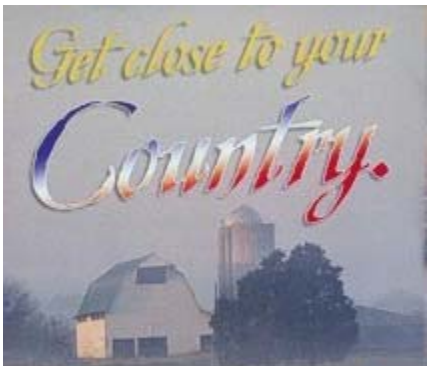
2004 Regional Agritourism Workshop Series: Evaluation Summary



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The Tennessee Agritourism Initiative sponsored four regional workshops during February and March of 2004. A total of 338 participants attended the events with 50 in Jackson, 117 in Franklin, 106 in Morristown and 63 in Crossville as shown in Figure 1.

Workshop participants were asked to complete forms evaluating the effectiveness of the workshops and to provide information to direct future programs. A total of 178 evaluation forms were completed and collected at the four workshops.

Franklin workshop attendees listen to Joe Gaines of TDA.

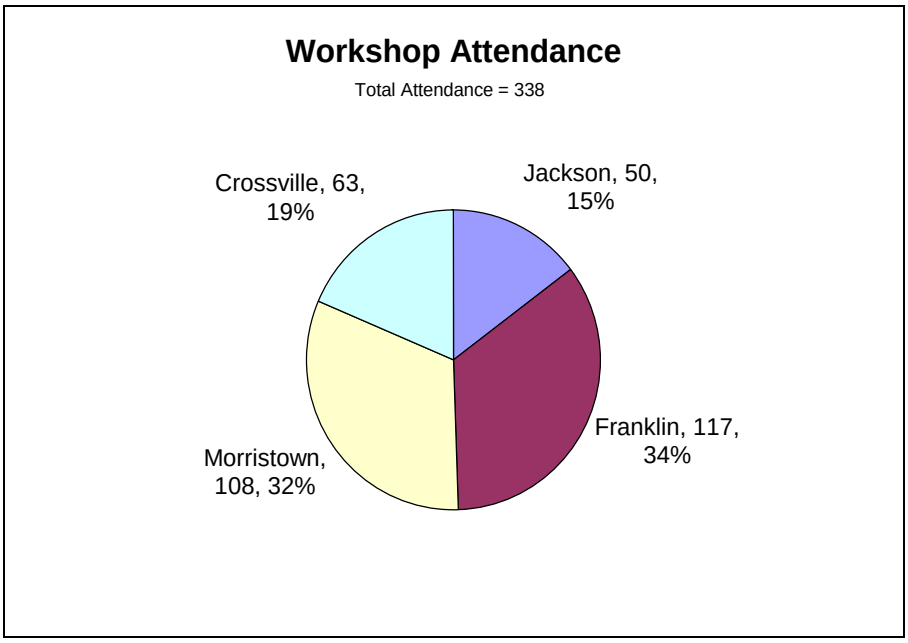

Figure 1: Workshop Attendance

Figure 2 shows the number and percent of evaluation forms completed by workshop location. The most forms, 75, were collected from the Franklin workshop for a 64 percent response rate from attendees at that location. Forty-five forms were collected from the Morristown workshop for a 42 percent response rate. There were 30 and 24 forms collected from Jackson and Crossville locations for response rates from attendees of 60 and 44 percent, respectively. This document summarizes the responses collected on the evaluation forms.

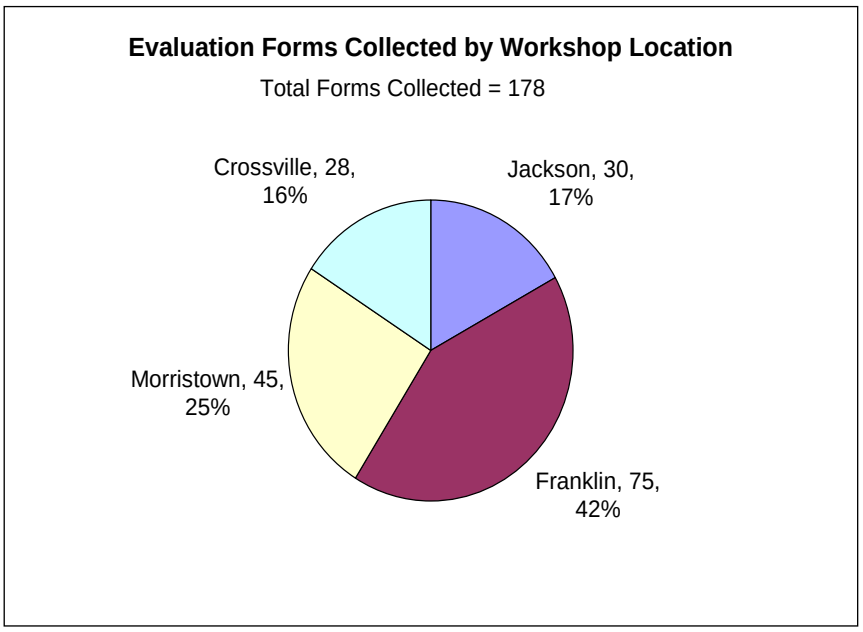

Figure 2: Evaluation Forms Collected by Workshop Location

Evaluation Data Analysis

Data from all of the workshop locations were aggregated. Most of the findings reported in the remainder of this document are from analyses of the aggregated data. When results from individual locations are given, they will be clearly identified.

Jackson workshop attendees took advantage of time to network and share ideas with each other.

Respondents were asked to choose one term from a list of terms that best described their profession. One-third of respondents, 55 people, indicated that they were owners/operators of an agritourism enterprise. Another quarter of respondents, 44 people, indicated that they were an agricultural producer interested in opening an agritourism enterprise. Agriculture professionals, such as Extension agents, made up 22 percent of respondents while 14 percent indicated that they were tourism professionals, such as an employee of a Chamber of Commerce or tourism organization. Five percent of respondents selected the *Other* category. Figure 3 illustrates the breakdown of respondents by profession category.

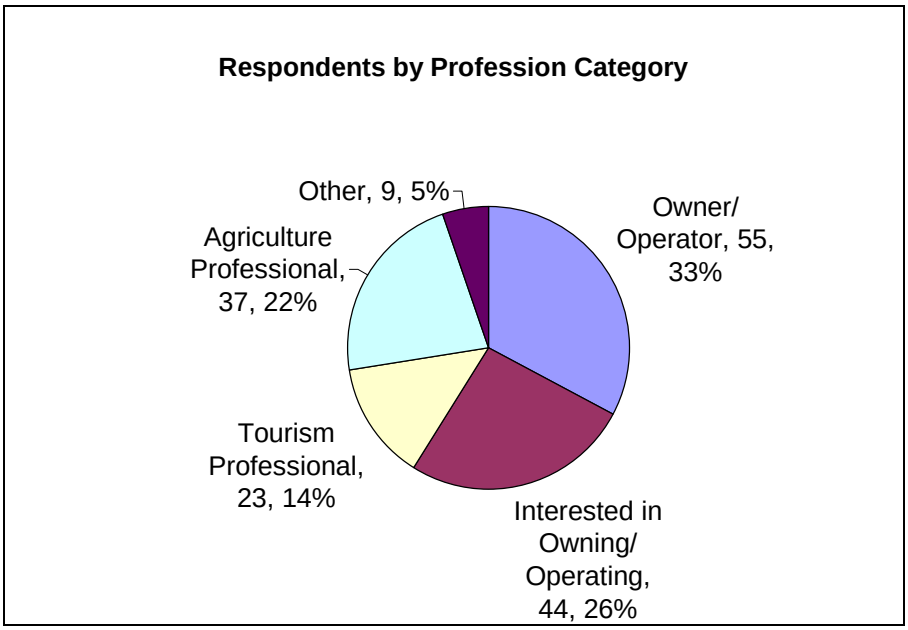

Figure 3: Number and Percentage of Respondents by Profession Category

Stanley Trout of TDA with *Agritourism Success Story* speaker Pam Killion of Flippens Fruit Farm.

Participants were asked to rate the effectiveness of each session and the workshop overall in providing information needed to enhance the success of their current or potential agritourism enterprise or in preparing them to serve their clients on agritourism issues. The ranking scale ranged from 1 (Not Effective) to 5 (Very Effective). Average effectiveness rankings for the sessions ranged from 3.82 to 4.71. The workshop overall received an average ranking of 4.34. Figure 4 shows the average effectiveness ratings for each session and the workshop overall.

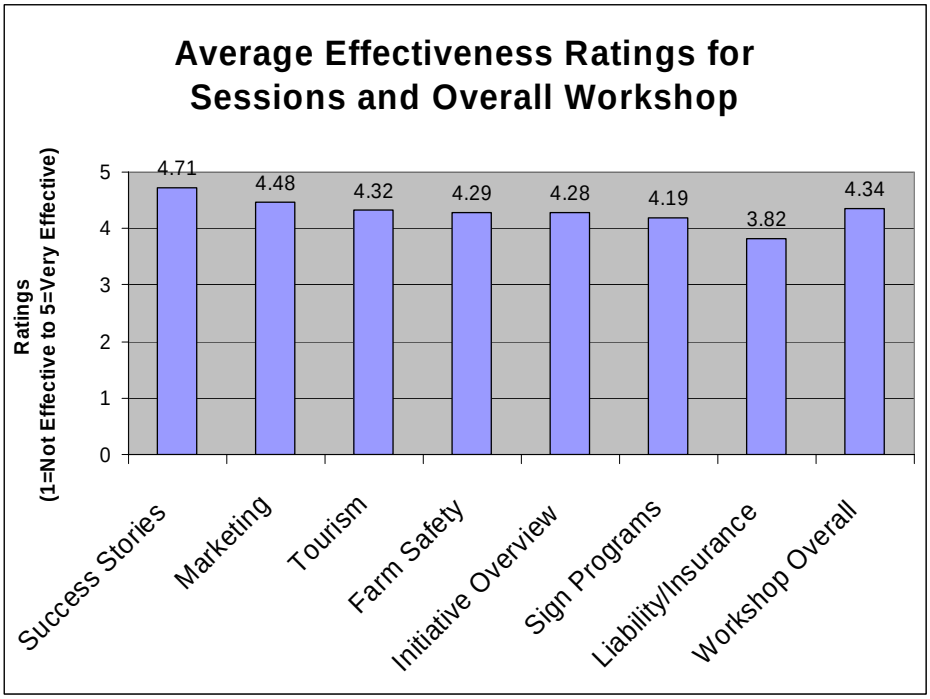

Figure 4: Average Effectiveness Ratings for Sessions and Overall Workshop

Some differences in average effectiveness ratings were given in each workshop location. The average rankings for participants at each location are shown in Table 1. The workshop overall received its highest average rating of 4.429 at both Jackson and Crossville. The lowest rating of the workshop overall was 4.254 at Franklin. *Agritourism Success Stories* received the highest average rating at all locations except Crossville, where the M*arketing* session garnered the highest rating.

Table 1: Average Effectiveness Ratings by Workshop Location

Jackson	
Success Stories	4.800
Farm Safety	4.500
Marketing	4.429
Liability/Insurance	4.409
Initiative Overview	4.321
Tourism	4.238
Sign Programs	4.000
Overall	4.429

Franklin	
Success Stories	4.685
Marketing	4.320
Farm Safety	4.211
Tourism	4.200
Initiative Overview	4.164
Sign Programs	4.121
Liability/Insurance	3.311
Overall	4.254

Morristown	
Success Stories	4.773
Marketing	4.610
Tourism	4.526
Initiative Overview	4.297
Sign Programs	4.242
Farm Safety	4.186
Liability/Insurance	4.067
Overall	4.375

Crossville	
Marketing	4.741
Success Stories	4.593
Initiative Overview	4.519
Farm Safety	4.444
Sign Programs	4.407
Tourism	4.370
Liability/Insurance	4.296
Overall	4.429

Respondents were asked to comment on how they planned to use information they learned at the workshops. Responses were grouped according to comment topic and counted. The responses are summarized in Table 2. Example comments are included in quotation marks under each topic.

Table 2: Planned Use of Workshop Information

Topic	Number of Comments
Assist agricultural producers/agritourism operators • "To assist growers in my county area in making good decisions about their business."	30
Improve/expand existing operation • "This workshop will help improve on [our] agritourism enterprises and increase our profitability."	23
Marketing • "Plan to use strategies learned to better market our event."	17
Establish agritourism enterprise • "To help establish an agritourism business."	16
Insurance and safety • "Getting better insurance, safety proofing premises."	15
Promote agritourism • "To promote agritourism."	14
Network with organizations and people • "Interacting with local tourism agency."	12
Signage • "Call TDOT for signage-double check."	8
Funding • "I plan to do investigating in more grants."	3
Conduct workshops in other areas • "Plan to promote similar workshop in local county."	2

From a list of 13 options, participants were asked to choose the five topics that they would like most to be included in future workshops. *Website development* was selected the most often, by 107 people. *Market planning* and *brochure development* were selected by 89 and 85 people, respectively. *Business planning* and *licenses and permits* followed with 78 and 75 people selecting these categories. *Visitor relations* was chosen by 62 people, and *risk assessment/management* was selected by 59. Forty-eight attendees selected *tax issues*, and 47 chose *financing*. H*uman resources/personnel management*, *zoning* and *parking/traffic management* were selected by 29, 26 and 12 people, respectively. Respondents could also choose to provide suggestions for topics not given in the list. Suggestions for other topics included: liability, regulatory hurdles, partnering with other ventures, incorporating, festivals, tourism ideas, sponsorships, success stories, co-op honey processing and packaging facility, organic certification and Department of Health regulations, funding ideas, need for county road improvement help, new ideas for ventures, publicity, types of attractions, and example stories. The number of people selecting each topic is illustrated in Figure 5.

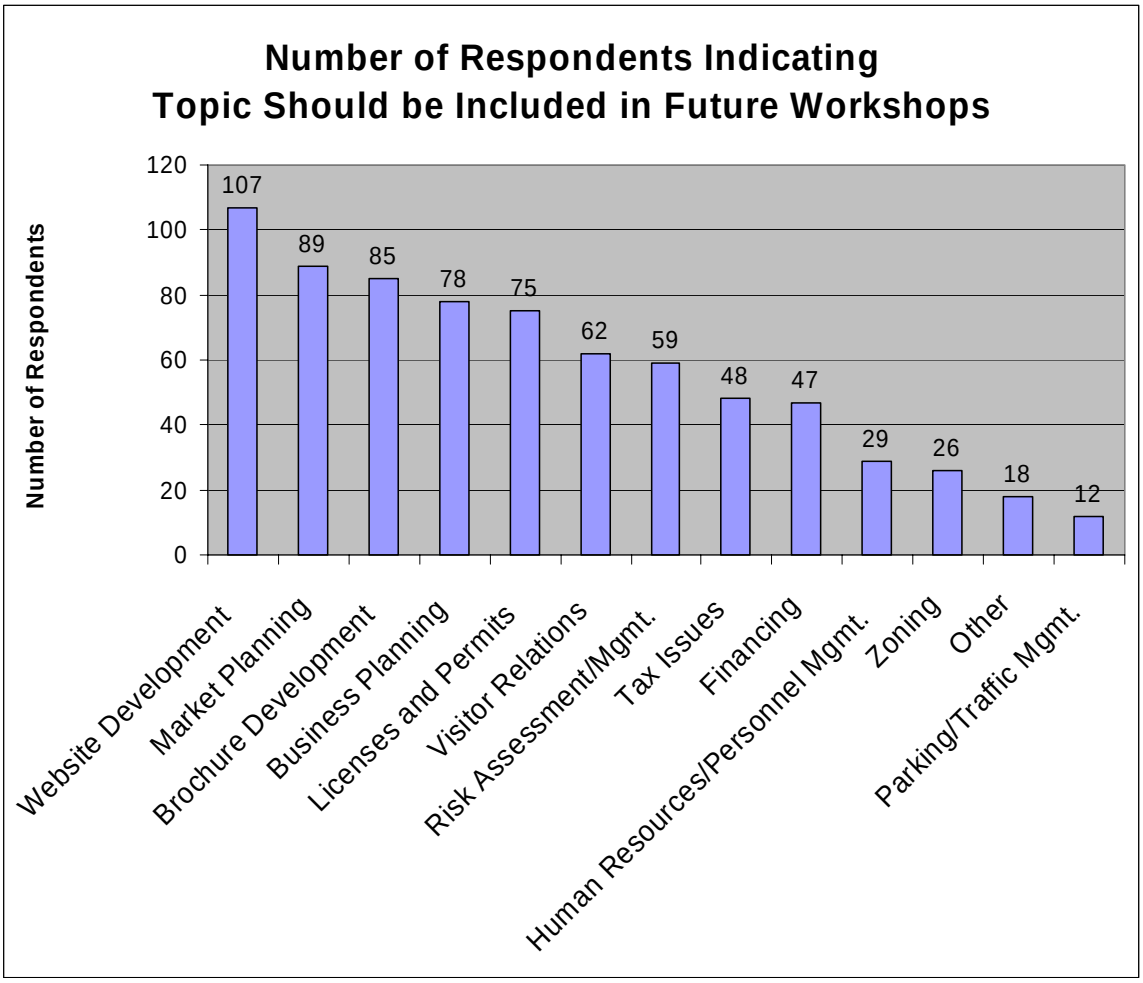

Figure 5: Number of Respondents Indicating Topic should be included in Future Workshops

It is interesting to consider differences in selections of topics for future workshops by workshop location. Certain topics may be of more or less importance in some areas of the state than in other areas of the state. In theory, the percentage of people selecting a topic in each location (out of all of the people who selected that topic) should correspond to the percentage of evaluation forms collected at that location. For example, since 17 percent of evaluation forms were collected in Jackson, as shown in Figure 2, then it can be expected that 17 percent of all people selecting topics to be included in future workshops were at the Jackson location. If this is not the case, the topic may be of more or less importance to the attendees at the Jackson workshop relative to other locations.

Table 3 illustrates the difference in actual selection rates (% of people who selected the topic at each location) and expected selection rates (% of evaluation forms collected at each location). A positive percentage indicates that more people than expected selected the topic in that location. A negative number indicates that less people than expected selected the topic. A zero indicates that the expected number of people selected the topic.

Results are notably different for several locations and topics. *Licensing and permits, risk assessment/management* and *tax issues* seem to be topics in more demand for people at the Franklin workshop relative to other locations. People in Morristown selected *visitor relations, human resources, zoning, parking/traffic management, market planning* and *financing* as topics they would like included in future workshops more so than people at the other locations. *Website development, brochure development* and *business planning* were selected within +/- 4 percent of expected selection rates at all locations, indicating relative consistency in demand for the topics across all locations.

Table 3: Differences in Actual and Expected Selection Rates of Future Topics

TOPIC	DIFFERENCE IN ACTUAL AND EXPECTED SELECTION RATE			
	Jackson	Franklin	Morristown	Crossville
Website Development	0%	**2%**	0%	-2%
Market Planning	-1%	-6%	**5%**	**2%**
Brochure Development	-4%	**0%**	**4%**	-1%
Business Planning	**1%**	-2%	-2%	**3%**
Licenses and Permits	-5%	**14%**	-9%	0%
Visitor Relations	**1%**	-11%	**12%**	-1%
Risk Assessment/ Management	-2%	**12%**	-5%	-6%
Tax Issues	-7%	**18%**	-10%	-1%
Financing	0%	-8%	**5%**	**3%**
Human Resources	**4%**	-18%	**13%**	**1%**
Zoning	-17%	0%	**17%**	-1%
Parking/ Traffic Management	0%	0%	**8%**	-8%

Finally, participants were provided space on the evaluation form to provide any additional comments or suggestions about the workshop. These comments were also grouped by category and counted. Table 4 summarizes the comments by category and includes some examples.

Table 4: Additional Comments or Suggestions

Topic	Number of Comments
Great experience • "This was one of the most effective so far. Great job!"	9
Thank you • "Thanks - very good day!"	7
Suggest participant/speaker contact list • "Would have liked a list of participants."	3
Success stories best part/Include more success stories • "The best part was the success story. Thank you."	4
Insurance section could be improved • "More informed, better knowledge of insurance."	4
Provide presentation handouts • "It would have been helpful to have printed versions of the presentations."	3
Farmer organization is a good idea • "Great idea to have an agritourism association!"	3

Additional comments included:

- "Do the 2-3 day conference with trade show."
- "2-3 day conference will not attract farmers. Very hard to "get off the farm."
- "Point out that one does not need to be computer savvy in order to have a web presence. Some ISP's provide this for businesses."
- "Would love to know what types of agri-business was represented here today. Maybe set up a barter list (I have/am looking for). Would also love to hear how folks have found money for their enterprises. What's hot, what's not. Trends for the future."

Implications

- A total of 338 people from across the state attended the 4 regional agritourism workshops.
- According to participants, the information learned will be used to improve existing agritourism operations, assist clients with their operations, plan for new agritourism operations and promote agritourism to tourists.
- Participants gave an average rating to the workshops of 4.34 out of 1 (Not Effective) to 5 (Very Effective).
- The initiative partners gained valuable information on topics that attendees would like most to be included in future workshops. The results indicated some differences in demand for topics by location.

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