

## ***“Cooperative Development Emphasis”***

A special program emphasis conducted by *the Center for Profitable Agriculture* and funded in cooperation with the Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development (KCCD) and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture

*Established in October 2003, the Cooperative Development Emphasis is a 15-month Extension program which combines resources and objectives from the Center for Profitable Agriculture, the Kentucky Center for Cooperative Development and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The program is envisioned to improve the understanding and application of cooperative development strategies, increase the consideration of cooperative efforts and improve the success of cooperative efforts by farmers. Specific program strategies include identification of a “cooperative development program leader,” conducting two mini-conferences, conducting one training session for agricultural leaders and educators, facilitating strategy sessions for two well-organized producer groups, disseminating cooperative development information via the Internet and conducting analytical work relative to the state’s pending “processing cooperative law.”*

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**Below is an update of the activities and progress on the “Cooperative Development Emphasis” as of April 1, 2004.**

**News Releases:** Six news releases have been developed and disseminated to announce various activities that have been conducted in the “Cooperative Development Emphasis.” The titles of these articles are: “Extension Personnel Complete Training in “Cooperative Winter School,” “Center Selects Two Farmer Groups as Cooperative Development Pilot Projects,” “Center Seeks to Identify Farmer Groups for Pilot Cooperative Development Project,” “Holland Named Leader of New Program Emphasis,” “Kentucky Specialists Lead Cooperative Development Presentation at Recent Tennessee Training” and “Grant Helps Center Launch New Program.”

**Winter School Participation:** Three UT Extension professionals recently completed a two-day training program in the Kentucky Cooperative Winter School program. The experience of the Tennessee delegates will be helpful as a training program planned for Tennessee.

**Pilot Projects Selected:** Two farmer groups have been selected as “pilot projects” of the Center’s “cooperative development emphasis.” The two groups are located in Hawkins County and Robertson County and will have focused attention and assistance from the Center as they consider and develop possible cooperative alliances, businesses and activities. A total of four meetings have already taken place with the groups.

**Tennessee Cooperative Processing Law:** Specialists in the Center have worked diligently to draft a “Commentary and Overview for the Proposed Tennessee Processing Cooperative Act.” The draft is 90 percent complete (as of this writing) and future publication is planned. The commentary will be used in the furtherance of education regarding the new law.

**Web Site:** A direct link on the Center’s home page has been devoted to a “Cooperative Development” page. This page contains a listing of News Releases, a printing of the program’s Scope of Work and Resource Materials. Under the “Resource Materials” button appears a listing of 27 useful cooperative development “links” and links to all of the USDA cooperative development resources.

**Information Disseminated:** The Center has recently taken advantage of unique opportunities to interact with farmers and agricultural leaders on the topic of cooperatives and cooperative development. Three group meetings have been held, two information packets and accompanying commentary have been assembled and one “organization evaluation” consultation has been developed.

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*“The Cooperative Development Emphasis is well established in the Center for Profitable Agriculture. We have a strong foot-hold on meeting each of the program objectives. We are assisting with real issues and we are learning about how to better develop cooperative efforts among farmers. The program is well underway.”*

Rob Holland  
 Program Leader for the “Cooperative Development Emphasis”  
*Center for Profitable Agriculture*