

## **DRB Workshop Series Summary: 2006 TAEP Producer Diversification Cost Share Program**

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The purpose of the *TAEP Producer Diversification Cost Share Program* is to **increase farm income in Tennessee** by encouraging producers to expand and improve their operations through production of diversified agricultural products. This initiative is funded through a state appropriation for farm programs as proposed by Governor Phil Bredesen and approved by the Tennessee General Assembly. The program is administered by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

### **Introduction**

To assist farmers with their applications, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture partnered with the *UT Center for Profitable Agriculture* to host a series of Producer Diversification Cost Share Program workshops, held during August and September, 2006.

The workshops contained three sections. The first section provided a discussion of grant programs. The second section gave an overview and explanation of the Producer Diversification Cost Share Program, including eligible activities and items. The third section focused on the application process, tips and strategies for applying, and how to compile a strong application.

The workshops were held as part of the Center's *Developing Rural Businesses (DRB)* Program, which focuses value-added agriculture development efforts on a 19-county region in Tennessee. The DRB Region is highlighted in the map below.



## Workshop Results

Three workshops were conducted within the DRB Region. These workshops were geographically distributed within the region. At each workshop, value-added entrepreneurs from surrounding counties were invited to attend. Information on the three workshops is provided in the chart below.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Participants</u>
August 24, 2006	Smith County	9
August 29, 2006	Overton County	17
September 7, 2006	Morgan County	18

Through the Producer Diversification Cost Share Program, the Tennessee Department of agriculture funded **seven** producer projects for a total of **\$11,093** within these three counties (Smith, Overton, Morgan).

Within the 19-county DRB Region, a total of **21** producers were approved to receive cost-share funding. This resulted in a total of **\$61,095** of cost share dollars distributed to farmers in the DRB Region.

## Workshop Overview

1. Grants 101  
This portion gave a general overview of grant, cost-share, and subsidy programs. The intent was to provide a firm understanding of application techniques in funding programs.
2. Overview of the Producer Diversification Cost Share Program  
This portion gave a broad overview of the cost share program, discussing rules and requirements as well as eligible costs and activities. Also discussed was the evaluation and scoring process for project applications.
3. Step-by-step application guide  
This final segment of the program gave a step-by-step process for filling out a cost-share program application. Included were tips and strategies for compiling a strong and competitive application.