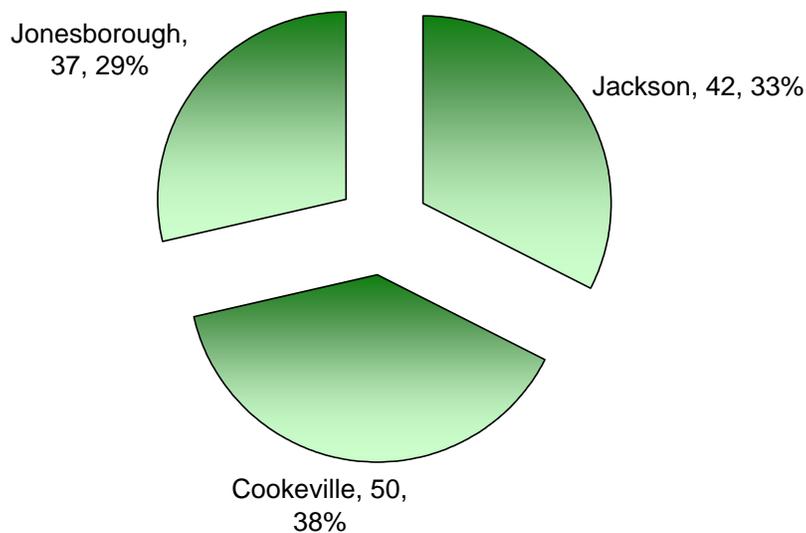


2007 Regional Agritourism Workshops: Evaluation Summary

Megan L. Bruch
Marketing Specialist
Center for Profitable Agriculture

The 2007 Regional Agritourism Workshops on *Marketing Tools and Techniques* were held on February 28 in Jackson, March 9 in Cookeville and March 15 in Jonesborough, Tennessee. Total attendance for the workshops numbered 129 participants with 42 in Jackson, 50 in Cookeville and 37 in Jonesborough (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Attendance by Workshop Location



The workshops were made possible by an agreement with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture with funds provided from the sale of agricultural specialty license plates (the “Ag Tag”)¹. Additional support for the Cookeville workshop was provided by USDA Rural Development as part of the Center’s Developing Rural Businesses program taking place in a 19 county area in the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee. Registration fees of \$10 per registration also generated funds for the workshops.

¹ Funds generated from “Ag Tag” sales are returned to the agricultural community in the form of grants for youth programs, market development projects and other agricultural activities. Additional information about Tennessee agricultural products and the “Ag Tag” is available at the Tennessee Department of Agriculture’s promotional Web site, www.picktnproducts.org.

The workshops were organized by Megan Bruch, marketing specialist of the *Center for Profitable Agriculture* with the cooperation of Chuck Danehower, Jerri Lynn Sims, Alan Galloway and Alice Rhea, UT Extension Area Farm Management Specialists. Dan Strasser of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture joined Bruch as a speaker at all three events and helped host the events. Tennessee Department of Tourist Development (TDTD) specialists, Cindy Dupree and Marty Mabry, joined the program to talk about the departments marketing tools in Jackson. Derrick Smith of TDTD covered these topics in Cookeville, and Dave Jones, also with TDTD, demonstrated the tools in Jonesborough. Representatives of the Tennessee Agritourism Association, Jeff Alsup, Johnny Ring, Vera Ann Myers and David Black, shared information about their association as part of the program as well. Networking among participants was encouraged at breaks and lunch.

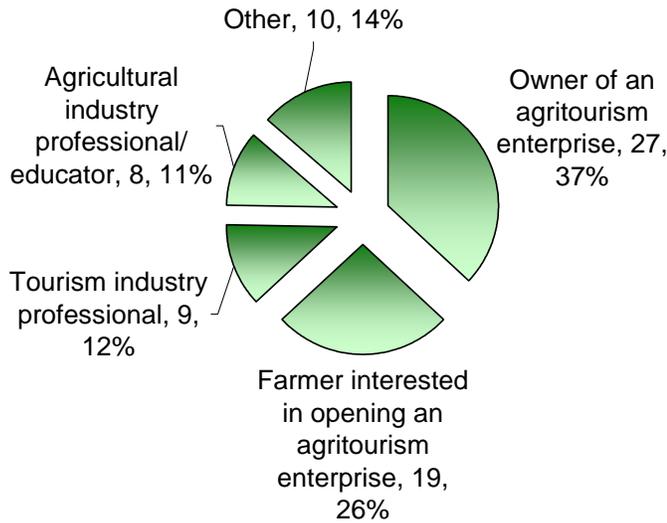
Workshop attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form at the end of the events. Seventy-four forms were returned for an overall response rate of 57 percent. Responses from each workshop location accounted for one third of the total responses. A sample of the form is included as Appendix A.



Attendees at the Jackson workshop networking during a break.

Respondents were asked to select a category that best described their role and interest in agritourism. Twenty-seven respondents (37 percent) were owners of agritourism enterprises (Figure 2). Another 19 respondents (26 percent) were farmers interested in opening an agritourism enterprise. Tourism industry professionals accounted for nine respondents, and eight agricultural industry professionals or educators responded. Ten others did not fit in any of the given categories.

Figure 2. Role and Interest of Participants in Agritourism



Respondents were asked to rate each workshop session on its effectiveness in providing information needed to enhance the success of their enterprise or in assisting clients. Responses were requested on a scale of 1=Not Effective to 5=Very Effective. Average ratings for all sessions ranged from 4.35 to 4.50 and are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Ratings for Workshop Sessions

Session Title	Average Rating
Key Concepts for Successful Marketing	4.50
Managing TNvacation.com Listings	4.49
Using the Tennessee Department of Tourism News Bureau and Writing News Releases	4.46
Brochure Design, Development and Distribution	4.40
Update on the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Programs	4.35
An Introduction to the Tennessee Agritourism Association	4.35

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they gained knowledge and skills during the workshop to better market their agritourism enterprise or assist clients in better marketing their enterprises. All 74 respondents who answered this question indicated they had indeed gained marketing knowledge and skills.

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not they had gained knowledge and skills to assist them in increasing financial returns from their enterprise or to assist clients in increasing financial returns. Seventy-two of 73 or almost 99 percent of respondents indicated they had gained knowledge or skills to improve financial returns.



Attendees listening to a session at the Jonesborough workshop.

The evaluation form invited respondents to provide suggestions on how to improve the workshops and other comments. Fifteen respondents provided suggestions for improvement and several others provided comments. Comments and suggested are listed by category in Table 2.

Table 2. Comments and Suggestions by Category

Category of Comment	Comments/Suggestions
Workshop Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ More breaks, shorter in length. Just need to stretch. ◆ Work through lunch. ◆ Have a microphone for people asking questions so everyone can hear. ◆ If only one microphone, repeat questions so all can hear. ◆ Give out all handouts ahead of time. ◆ Less food. ◆ Food was wonderful! Time management – excellent. Good info. Good networking.
Session Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Internet should receive more emphasis on pros-cons of use. Local Web pages promoting local goods. ◆ Start by discussing what CPA does and hold a “brainstorming” session to share added income ideas. ◆ It answered many of our questions as to what services are available. The only improvement I could suggest would be to have in-depth coverage of the electronic communication areas. Have that in the morning and give it more time. The Tourism Department is very important to our projects. ◆ Add some clients to speak on their successes and failures and why it failed. ◆ More success stories ◆ More input from actual agritourism operators. Agritourism operators giving sessions on their actual experiences. ◆ Possibly have an existing agribusiness testimonial. ◆ Need a field trip to a successful farm with agritourism activities after the workshop.
Selection of Additional Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Great workshop! Thanks. ◆ Workshop was presented in a professional manner and considered excellent. ◆ Very well put on. I hope to see more like this in the future. ◆ Very good workshop. Thanks for the handouts. ◆ Excellent. ◆ It was great!

Summary

The 2007 Regional Agritourism Workshops on *Marketing Tools and Techniques* reached 129 participants across the state. Workshop sessions were well-received by evaluation form respondents rating all session at 4.35 or higher on a scale of 1=Not Effective to 5=Very Effective. The workshops increased the respondents’ marketing knowledge and skills and in knowledge and skills to improve financial returns to agritourism enterprises. Several suggestions were received to assist in planning and implementing future events, and several positive comments about the workshops were provided by evaluation form respondents.

Thank you to Kim Martinez, Principle Secretary for the Center, for her assistance with data entry from completed evaluation forms.

**Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.**

Appendix A
2007 Regional Agritourism Workshops: Marketing Tools and Techniques
Evaluation Form

Please help us to evaluate this workshop and plan for future events by completing this evaluation form.

1. Please indicate which of the workshops you attended?

March 9th, Cookeville March 15th, Jonesborough

2. Which of the following terms best describes your role and interest in agritourism? (Please check only one.)

- Owner of an agritourism enterprise
 Farmer interested in opening an agritourism enterprise
 Tourism industry professional
 Agriculture industry professional/educator
 Other (Please specify.) _____

3. On a scale of 1 (Not Effective) to 5 (Very Effective), please rate the effectiveness of each session in providing information needed to enhance the success of your current or potential agritourism enterprise or in preparing you to serve clients on agritourism issues. Please circle NA if you did not attend the session.

<i>Session</i>	<i>Not Effective</i>					<i>Very Effective</i>	<i>Did Not Attend</i>
a. Key Concepts for Successful Marketing	1	2	3	4	5		NA
b. Brochure Development, Design and Distribution	1	2	3	4	5		NA
c. Update on the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Programs	1	2	3	4	5		NA
e. Using the Tennessee Department of Tourism News Bureau and Writing News Releases	1	2	3	4	5		NA
f. Managing TNvacation.com Listings	1	2	3	4	5		NA
h. An Introduction to the Tennessee Agritourism Association	1	2	3	4	5		NA

4. During this workshop, did gain knowledge and skills to better market your agritourism enterprise or assist clients in better marketing their enterprises?

Yes No

5. During this workshop, did gain knowledge and skills that will assist you in increasing financial returns from your enterprise or to assist clients in increasing financial returns?

Yes No

6. How could this workshop have been improved?

7. Please write any additional comments or suggestions on the back of this form.

Thank you for your participation.