

# MEMO

From: Rob Holland  
Director – *Center for Profitable Agriculture*

Re: USDA-Rural Development Funds Center's "GROW 10" Program

Date: August 25, 2008

We in the *Center for Profitable Agriculture* (CPA) are pleased to announce that funding from USDA Rural Development for a two-year program in our Center has been approved. The program is titled "GROW 10" and is designed to create, develop and implement a value-added training and outreach initiative which will provide technical assistance to farmers and value-added entrepreneurs who are considering or pursuing the development of successful private enterprises. We hope to have a full-time program coordinator for this project on board by January 2009.

The GROW 10 program will be implemented in a 10-county area of Tennessee with high unemployment and poverty rates, low median income and lower than average median household incomes. The 10 counties included in the initial project implementation are: Giles, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Lawrence, Lewis, Maury, Perry, Stewart and Wayne.

In pursuit of ultimate rural business development through the support and development of entrepreneurship, the primary objectives of the program are to 1) provide technical assistance, 2) identify, assemble and disseminate information on resources that are available to assist, foster and develop value-added enterprises and 3) coordinate training opportunities that supplement technical assistance.

Under the direction of the CPA and appropriate State and Regional Extension administration, a full-time UT Extension Specialist will be assigned to serve as the primary program coordinator and training provider. Two new educational resource materials will be assembled in response to specific business development needs in the program area. The primary educational focus of the overall program will be centered on direct marketing, farmers market development, agritourism and farm-to-market networks.

The program coordinator and collaborators will facilitate and provide "targeted" technical assistance through consultations with farmers and value-added entrepreneurs. One goal of the GROW-10 program is to provide technical assistance and educational training to 25 small business entrepreneurs in the targeted counties. The program coordinator will also facilitate and provide "general" technical assistance and educational training through group outreach efforts at conferences, county meetings, multi-county meetings and/or educational tours, reaching at least

350 entrepreneurs.