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Progress Report - *Agricultural Development Center* The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

The *Agricultural Development Center* is underway and pleased to have dedicated faculty who provide direct support. Rob Holland, Michele Wilson and Kent Wolfe are devoting their total effort to the center, while other faculty shown below have a percentage of their time devoted to the center. In addition, other Extension and research faculty will be involved on a project-by-project basis.

- - - Ray Humberd



Alan Barefield



Brian Bond



Rob Holland



Greg Hulbert



Ray Humberd



Curtis Melton



Bill Morris



Michele Wilson



Kent Wolfe

- ✓ Key Positions Filled - - Between April and July, three of the center's positions were staffed. Rob Holland, former assistant area farm management specialist with the Agricultural Extension Service in the Smoky Mountain District, came aboard as the center's feasibility specialist in April. In May, Dr. Kent Wolfe joined the center as its marketing specialist. Kent served as director of research with The Gallup Organization, Inc. for the past five years in Atlanta. Michele Wilson joined the center in June as the principal secretary. Michele comes to the center from the Jefferson County Agricultural Extension office, where she has served as a 4-H program assistant since 1994.

- ✓ Center Accepts First Projects - - As of July 1, eight different projects had been accepted (or were pending acceptance) by the center. A team, including production, marketing and feasibility specialists, is currently evaluating, researching and analyzing each project. Nine specialists are currently involved in these projects. Activities by center faculty have included market analysis, feasibility evaluation, financial analysis, site assessment, production considerations, resource accessibility and preliminary research. All projects are at different stages of completion. The center is committed to providing each accepted

project with a formal written summary of its findings. This will include the results of a variety of analyses that will assist the client in the ultimate decision-making process and attempt to improve the likelihood of project success.

- ✓ Twenty-Four Project Applications Requested - - The center has chosen to evaluate potential projects through an “application process.” Application forms may be requested from the center or through the county Agricultural Extension Service office and will be mailed directly to the potential applicant. Once the application has been prepared and received in the center, faculty will evaluate the proposed project and make a decision regarding acceptance.

- ✓ Center Brochure Developed - - A tri-fold, color brochure has been developed, printed and distributed. Copies are available from each county Extension office. The brochure provides a general overview of the mission and vision of the center, explains the programs offered by the center, includes a list of the faculty associated with the center and provides a form to request a copy of the center’s application form.

- ✓ Involvement in Other Activities and Projects - -
 - Center faculty are pleased to be supporting the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, specialty food stores and speciality food producers in their consideration of a “**Tennessee Specialty Foods Association.**” Specialty food stores, gift basket companies and specialty food producers have a great “win-win” opportunity through a state association. Such an association would offer many positive attributes for the center, including better industry organization, greater market structure and enhanced resources.
 - The **Made In Tennessee** retail store and gift basket company has agreed to cooperate with the center as a real “Test Market” for qualifying products. It is expected that many of the center’s projects will involve some type of special-recipe, value-added food. **Made In Tennessee** has agreed to provide shelf space for products evaluated by the center and provide information concerning market acceptance and buying trends.
 - Center faculty have cooperated with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture’s “**Tennessee Match-Making Program.**” This program is designed to identify and “match” both users and suppliers of Tennessee agriculture-related products. Results of this program could improve efficiencies for both users and suppliers and may improve production possibilities for Tennessee farmers.
 - The Center is cooperating with Agricultural Economics & Rural Sociology “**Expanding Market Opportunities for Small Agribusinesses Via the Internet.**” This is a multi-year grant project through the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program.

- ✓ Presentations Made Across The State - - Opportunities to describe the *Agricultural Development Center* are welcome. Center faculty have informed more than 250 individuals of the programs and services planned by the center. In the last three months, presentations have been made at events in the following counties:

Sevier
Shelby
Hamilton

Knox
Cumberland
Davidson



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The Agricultural Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, age, national origin, sex or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture,
and county governments cooperating in furtherance of Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.
Agricultural Extension Service
Billy G. Hicks, Dean