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"Increasing the value of Tennessee's economy through new, expanded and improved processing and marketing of agricultural, aquacultural and forestry products as well as home-based industries"

Progress Report 28

April 2005

CPA Specialists Contribute to Variety of Program Inputs

From January to March 2005, Specialists in the CPA were involved in 9 teaching efforts, serving 265 people in the following counties: Davidson, Fentress, Giles, Knox and Madison. Our Specialists have written 4 departmental fact sheets and 6 news releases and also interacted with farmers and entrepreneurs across the state by participating in trade shows with the CPA exhibit in Knox, Montgomery, Robertson and Rutherford counties. In addition, 4 teaching presentations have been developed, 2 project reports completed and 40 information packets distributed. Our specialists also traveled the state participating in some 30 professional development activities. Topics of our outreach and educational efforts include:

- "Advertising 101"
- "Why Finish Beef on Your Farm"
- "New Cooperatives"
- "Marketing Grassfed Livestock"
- "Considering Biodiesel"
- "Alternative Ag. Internet Marketing"
- "Impacts of Direct Marketing"

Recent Farm Visits and Consultations

The CPA staff has participated in 18 farm visits over the last three months. The counties they visited were: Carroll, Carter, Gibson, Giles, Lawrence, Shelby, Tipton, Washington, Weakley and White. They also were involved in 47 consultations with clients, agents, specialists, and ag leaders from 22 counties.

CPA Delegation Attends

NAFDMA Conference

In February, through some specially-appropriated external funds, the CPA sponsored seven delegates to attend the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association



annual conference and trade show in Boston, Massachusetts. Delegates participated in three days of the week-long program where they participated in various workshops, seminars and keynote addresses on direct marketing, agritourism, on-farm retailing, merchandising, and customer service techniques.

Representing the Center (left to right):

Megan Bruch, Rob Holland, Pam Rye, Jerri Lynn Sims, Hank Delvin, Nancy Edwards and Allan Galloway.

Agritourism Initiative Accomplishments -

Continuing with efforts to build farm income through agritourism, the *Center for Profitable Agriculture*, in coordination with the Tennessee Agritourism Initiative, offered two "Agritourism Web Site Development and Marketing Workshops" during March. The workshops were held in Knoxville and Nashville. A total of 27 individuals participated in the one-day workshops which included sessions on the Internet and eCommerce, Web design principles, Web site planning, setting up a Web site, getting found on the Web and developing a Web site. Dr. John Toman, Director of Information Technology for the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, and Ms. Lynne Scott, IT Administrator and Web Design Specialist, served as instructors. Other Agritourism Initiative activities for the quarter included continued work on the agritourism guide for Tennessee farmers, planning for a tour during the annual meeting of Tennessee Association of Agricultural Agents and Specialists in April and coordination of sessions and speakers for the statewide conference to be held in November 2005.

Update on Our Grants and Contracts -

Numerous activities in the Center continue to relate to various grant and contract funded projects. CPA Specialists are finalizing a report of findings for the Ames Plantation under a contract with Informa Economics and completing an annual review of the "Self-Sustainability Project" for the Appalachian Spring Cooperative.

As part of a study on Hispanic market opportunities in Tennessee, Specialists began to analyze secondary demographic and behavioral data of trends in Hispanic markets and will soon be conducting surveys with Hispanic retailers in Bedford County. Utilizing other contract funds designated for value-added program development, the CPA recently sponsored 7 Tennessee delegates to attend the North American Direct Farmers Market Association annual conference in Boston and is coordinating a delegation to attend the National Value-Added Conference slated for Indianapolis, Indiana in June.

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Annual Summary for 2004 - Educational programs and services in value-added agriculture provided across the state by Specialists in the *Center for Profitable Agriculture* are numerous and continue to expand. During 2004, the Center continued its long-standing commitment to provide one-on-one assistance and general education outreach teaching in value-added agriculture. The primary programmatic inputs from three State Specialists in the Center have been grouped according to three classifications:

Farm Projects and Consultations

- 43 on-farm visits were conducted with 37 different farms
- 6 project analyses were completed
- 10 other farmer consultations were conducted

Publications and Teaching Tools

- 8 news releases were distributed
- 10 video/radio program interviews were taped
- 24 departmental information sheets were prepared
- 4 quarterly reports/newsletters were prepared
- 4 UT Extension publications were released

Outreach, Teaching and Training

- Teaching/instruction was provided at 53 different events in 23 counties and 3 other states to 2,310 contacts

Programs developed and administered by teams and individuals in the Center resulted in definite impacts at the farm level. One of the most significant impacts is the long-term value of the increase in knowledge and skills obtained by the more than 2,000 participants in outreach teaching by Center Specialists. Over time, the decisions made by these program participants based on their improved knowledge and skills gained from the Center's programs will result in various improvements at the farm level. In addition, approximately 16 Tennessee farmers and 3 farmer groups were directly impacted by one-on-one, project-specific evaluations and analyses. As a result, it is estimated that 8 value-added farm enterprises were added and are positioned to increase net farm income.

Program Spotlight: "Developing Rural Businesses" - We are still in the formative stages of building a strong foundation, network and infrastructure of support for the "Developing Rural Businesses" program. The first three months of 2005 included a variety of activities which have allowed for a solid development of the program. Our staffing objectives for the program have been met, a framework for the distribution of numerous education and information tools has been developed, contacts with many of our strategic partners have been made and contacts with actual project clients has already begun. The DRB program is taking shape and is well-prepared for a complete launch of services and educational outreach in June 2005. During recent months, meetings have been held between the CPA and program partners from Tennessee Technological University (TTU) and the Small Business Development Center located on the TTU campus. In addition, significant efforts thus far have focused on preparing program materials and delivery methods. March 8, 2007 has been set as the date for a value-added conference on the TTU campus in Cookeville, Tennessee. Anne Dalton has joined the DRB program as a part-time program assistant in January, and Ben Sanders has been selected to serve as the DRB program coordinator.

UPDATE ON COMPLETED PROJECTS:

Considering Packaged Corn, Marketing Hay and Wheat Straw Bales - There appears to be a small market for packaged corn as a squirrel or small wildlife feed. There is more demand for dried corn on the cob than whole shelled corn because of an abundance of whole shelled corn in some areas of the state and most retailers and consumers relate squirrel feed to dried corn on the cob. Special product attributes such as quality, hand-selected, farm grown and locally produced should be emphasized. Challenges will include increased labor and marketing costs as well as competing brands of similar products. When considering marketing hay and wheat straw, small square bales are preferred by most consumers. The bales should be bright in color, tight, clean and free of excess dust and mold. A growing number of horses and horse farms increase the demand for high quality, small bales of hay but this is a very competitive market to get into.

Transitioning a Historic Business to Today's Market - Decreased revenue and increased theft may be signs that a historic business needs to update its practices to survive in today's market. Writing a business and marketing plan in addition to keeping adequate records of finances and prices are critical steps in improving the management and direction of the business. Using promotional tactics and advertising may help encourage current customers to purchase more products and/or generate new customers. Managing traffic flow and parking areas may increase convenience for, and flow of, customers. Store layout, posted signs or cameras, locks on products and educating employees may help deter shoplifting and decrease the amount of thefts that may occur.