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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 38

October 2007

### Career Dedicated to Tennessee Agriculture Highlighted at Retirement Reception for Dan Wheeler:

On July 25, numerous friends and colleagues gathered at the Tennessee Farm Bureau headquarters in Columbia to honor Dan Wheeler for his 40-plus year career in Tennessee agriculture upon his recent retirement as Director of the *Center for Profitable Agriculture*. Wheeler was recognized, honored and roasted by Tim Cross, Joe DiPietro, Charlie Goan, State Representative Tom Dubois, Waymon Hickman, Rob Holland and Lacy Upchurch. Wheeler was presented with an engraved-glass desk plaque, an official proclamation from the Tennessee General Assembly, a set of new children's golf clubs and a cash gift for a retirement vacation. Many thanks to Dan for his dedication to Tennessee agriculture and his leadership to the *Center for Profitable Agriculture* – best wishes to he and Carol.

### Third Quarter Summary of Teaching and Outreach

During July, August and September, Specialists in the Center provided teaching at 8 workshops/seminars in 6 different counties. These outreach efforts had a total audience of 516 people. Specialists also submitted 3 pre-proposals for funding, prepared 5 project idea summaries for external funding and attended 5 professional development events. CPA specialists conducted 5 on-farm visits and had more than 50 additional educational consultations by phone, email, direct letters and dissemination of information packets.

### Holland Named Director of Center:

During September, Interim Dean of UT Extension, Dr. Charles Goan announced the appointment of Rob Holland as Director for the *Center for Profitable Agriculture*. Holland joined UT Extension in 1993 as an Area Specialist in farm management. In 1998, he was appointed Assistant Extension Specialist in the Agricultural Development Center, which became the *Center for Profitable Agriculture* and moved from Knoxville to Spring Hill in 2002. Since 2002, Holland has served as a Financial Analysis Specialist for the Center and has authored numerous publications, news articles, and teaching curricula. He has helped to develop project reports and feasibility summaries for many farmers and value-added entrepreneurs across the state, evaluating ideas ranging from specialty food products to agritourism enterprises.

In the announcement, Goan praised Holland's appointment. "I am confident that Rob will provide excellent leadership and will continue the good work that the Center has become known for in the state, in the region, and nationally." Goan also voiced the University's appreciation for the continued partnership with the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation to support the Center. "The partnership between UT Extension and the Farm Bureau is serving our clientele well. With Rob's guidance, we look forward to new projects, opportunities, and ideas that the Center will generate in the years to come."

Lacy Upchurch, president of the Tennessee Farm Bureau, echoed Goan's sentiments. "We are excited that Rob Holland has accepted the position as the new director for the *Center for Profitable Agriculture*," Upchurch said. "We have had a great opportunity to serve the agricultural industry of our state as a partner with UT in offering the programs available through the Center. Since its early beginnings, Rob has been an important part of the many value-added successes that the Center has implemented on Tennessee's farms. We look forward to many more under Rob's leadership."

Holland praised his co-workers and CPA partners in his first statement as director, saying, "I am excited to provide leadership to a great team of co-workers and to our exceptional partners with other agencies." Holland holds a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from UT Knoxville and a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Business from UT Martin. His work has been recognized with awards at the state, regional and national levels.

### Value-Added Enterprise Ideas Submitted by Farmers to CPA for Analysis:

The Center has recently accepted three new value-added projects for analysis – these projects were submitted to the Center for consideration by farmers through the project application process. Coincidentally, the three new projects represent each of the three Extension regions. One project requires a market evaluation for packaged hardwood charcoal and will be lead by Marketing Specialist Megan Bruch. Another project calls for a complete business analysis for a horse farm events and activities enterprise and will be lead by Marketing Specialist Jennifer Dutton. Dutton will also spearhead an analysis for a direct meat processing and beef marketing project in West Tennessee.

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**Value-Added Priority Team Completes First Planning Session:** After months of telephone calls, e-mails, conference calls and other communications, the Value-Added Priority Team conducted an initial planning meeting on June 27 at the Putnam County Extension office in Cookeville. Fourteen Priority Team members provided input and participated in brainstorming sessions to help establish parameters for the team's work. The team reviewed the results of a needs assessment which was conducted in February 2007 and began to discuss specific objectives for the coming years. The priority team is assembled with the charge of providing *proactive leadership for the planning, developing, implementing and reporting of Extension's educational programs in value-added agriculture in Tennessee.*

**Planning Team Assembled for 2008 Value-Added Agriculture Training for Extension Agents:** During July, eight members of the Value-Added Priority Team formed a committee to plan and implement a training program for Extension agents in 2008. The committee is planning to conduct a two-day training program in the Fall of 2008 in three different locations (West, Middle and East Tennessee). Topics currently planned for the training include Developing Farmers Markets, Retailing Techniques, Agritourism, Buy-Fresh, Buy-Local Initiative, Food Regulations and Meat Marketing Regulations.

**Priority Team Begins to Develop Web-based Listing of Value-Added Resources:** Among the first activities of the Value-Added Agriculture Priority Team is the assembly of a listing of pertinent web-based resources related to value-added agriculture. Priority team member Jennifer Dutton is providing leadership to this activity. More than 12 topics have been identified as main categories for various listings. Development of the listings of value-added resources will be pilot-tested with four of the main topics and a lead-author has been identified for the four topics to be piloted.

**Team Assembled to Develop Definition of Value-Added Agriculture:** A committee of the Value-Added Agriculture Priority Program team was recently assembled to develop a guiding definition for "value-added agriculture" to frame the programs and activities for the team. This committee is scheduled to meet during the coming months charged with submitting a proposed definition by December 1. Members of the committee are Annette Wszelaki, Bill Morris, David Lockwood, Rob Holland, Alan Galloway, John Campbell, Jennifer Dutton and Megan Bruch.

**Center for Profitable Agriculture Featured at Field Days and Other Events:** The Center was featured across the state at various field days and other teaching events this summer. The CPA exhibit was featured at the trade show of the "Tobacco and Forage Field Day" at Greenville, at the "Hay Day" in Spring Hill and at the "Steak & Potatoes Field Day" at Crossville. The CPA exhibit was also featured with UT alumni, friends and supporters at "Ag Day" on the UT campus in Knoxville in September. The Center and value-added agriculture were also featured at the annual meeting of the Giles County Farm Bureau, the Tennessee Entrepreneurship Conference in Murfreesboro, the Middle Tennessee Soil Conservation District Meeting and the Farm Bureau County Presidents Conference.

**"Value Added Agriculture Perspectives with Rob Holland" is new feature in the Cumberland Business Journal:** Beginning in October, the Cumberland Business Journal (CBJ) will feature a regular guest column on value-added agriculture by Rob Holland. The CBJ is a periodical for business and community leaders in a 15-county area of Tennessee's Upper Cumberland region.

**Holland Completes Leadership Maury:** The Center's Rob Holland was recently among a 21-member graduating class from Leadership Maury – a community leadership development program implemented by the Maury Alliance. Since October of 2006, the class participated in monthly leadership development exercises, local tours and listening sessions on local topics such as industry development, public safety, health care, agriculture, government and education. The class also developed a local initiative to support various public and private assistance programs in the County. "Participation in this program was a great experience which provided numerous opportunities to meet community leaders, learn more about Maury County, past and present, and to enhance my awareness of and connection to our local community," Holland said.

## UPDATE ON COMPLETED PROJECTS:

**Preliminary Assessment of a Diversified Direct-Marketing and Agritourism Enterprise Idea** – Some producers consider value-added ideas such as direct-marketing and/or agritourism when looking at ways to sustain family operations. With many options and opportunities to add value, it may be difficult to narrow down ideas into something that can be analyzed and implemented effectively. Trying to implement too many options at once may stretch or break an operation's financial and human resources. Large-scale operations often attribute their success, in part, to starting small and growing over time as resources can be made available.