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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 42

October 2008

Agent Training Sessions Off to a Great Start

– In conjunction with the statewide Value-Added Agriculture Priority Program Team, specialists in the Center are conducting two days of training for County Agents and Area Specialists in each Extension region this fall. The first regional training was conducted in Jackson on September 10 and 11 when 34 folks received information on food and meat marketing regulations, agritourism enterprise development, the Tennessee Farm Fresh program, new enterprise analysis and farmers market development. The Jackson training also included on-site tours to the West Tennessee Farmers Market and to an agritourism enterprise. Agents evaluated the training favorably stating that the information presented covered topics needed.

Program Success Featured in Poster Session at National Meeting

- During the 2008 annual meeting of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) in Greensboro, North Carolina, Megan Bruch and Rob Holland both presented posters in the annual poster contest for Extension Educational Programs and Applied Research. Bruch presented a poster titled "The Tennessee Agritourism Initiative" which highlighted the educational efforts and related impacts of the initiative to help farmers add value to their farm resources and stimulate rural economic development through agritourism. Holland presented a poster titled "Charting A New Course" which showcased a series of three fee-based workshops conducted in Wayne County in 2007.

A Message from the Director –

Update on Staffing:

We in the Center currently have three vacant staff positions we are searching to fill. Our Center has a good track-record of program implementation and impact – it is exciting to think about adding three new people to our team to continue and expand the educational programs and initiatives of the Center. We are searching for an Extension Assistant to lead the GROW-10 program, and we look forward to filling two Extension Specialist positions, one focusing on marketing and one focusing on financial analysis. I certainly want to thank the many colleagues of our Center that have agreed to serve on the search committees for these vacancies. Filling these positions with qualified individuals is important, and I'm appreciative of the number of folks that have agreed to help evaluate applications and assist in identifying top candidates. I greatly appreciate the many ways that Kim Martinez and Megan Bruch have helped fill-in the gaps and maintain our programs while we search to fill the vacancies. Even during the recent months of being short-staffed, we have maintained the momentum of our programs and continued to meet important needs. We certainly look forward to completing our staffing plan in the months ahead.



Rob Holland, Director - *Center for Profitable Agriculture*

Agritourism & Direct Marketing Featured at Milan No-Till Field Day

- The Center participated in the Milan No-Till Field Day on July 24 by exhibiting in the trade show and offering an educational tour stop on "Agritourism and Direct Marketing." The tour stop included four different presentations including: "Agritourism in Action - Lessons from an Agritourism Entrepreneur" by Rose Ann Donnell of Donnell Century Farm Adventures, "Agritourism and Direct Marketing Resources from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture" by Pamela Bartholomew of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, "Tennessee Farm Fresh – A New Marketing Program for Direct-Marketers" by Tiffany Mullins of the Tennessee Farm Bureau and "Tips for Direct Marketing Success" by Megan Bruch of the Center.



Educational Workshops Planned for December - The Center for Profitable Agriculture will offer workshops for farmers who market agricultural products direct to consumers in four locations in December. Called "Direct Farm Marketing for Success," the workshops will be held December 10 in Spring Hill, December 12 in Jackson, December 16 in White Pine/Morristown and December 17 in Crossville. Topics will include how to increase sales by developing effective product displays, how to develop repeat customers by providing excellent customer service and experience and advice from experienced direct farm marketers. These workshops are being developed in cooperation with the Tennessee Farm Fresh program, a joint effort to promote sales of fresh and local farm products direct from farmers by the Tennessee Farm Bureau and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

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Center Recognized for Best Extension Publication – Rob Holland and Megan Bruch were recently named as the recipients of the 2008 Dutch and Marilee Cavender award for the best Extension educational publication in the UT Institute of Agriculture. The award was presented by the Dean of UT Extension, Dr. Tim Cross, at the Institute's annual awards luncheon in Knoxville. Their winning publication was published in 2007 and titled "A Guide for Considering and Developing a Farmers Market in Tennessee." The publication is distributed through each county Extension office across the state and is available for download at the Center's Web site (<http://cpa.utk.edu>). Extension Dean Tim Cross noted that the award committee described the publication as a "classic 'how-to' approach for communities to start these agribusinesses." The award-winning publication chronicles the increasing interest in farmers markets across the state -- from local governments, community leaders, growers and consumers -- and takes the reader through a step-by-step process of the decision that must be made in order for a market to succeed. Cross added that "judges cited the material as well-organized and written with timely information that could lead to real economic growth for communities." The award is named for Dutch Cavender, former Director of the UTIA Communications Department, and his wife Marilee. The award was established by the Cavenders to recognize excellence in the development and publication of educational materials produced by professionals in the UT Institute of Agriculture.



Center Clients Participate in "How Farmers Learn" Focus Group for Multi-state Research Study – On September 22, 14 value-added entrepreneurs and participants in the Center's educational programs traveled to the CPA headquarters in Spring Hill and provided input about how farmers learn. The focus group was part of a multi-state research project investigating the methods that farmers and Extension clientele acquire and utilize educational information. The study is coordinated in Tennessee by state Extension specialist Joseph Donaldson – who also served as moderator for the group discussion. Input from the focus group will be summarized and released as part of the overall research project results. A special thank-you is extended to all of those who participated in the focus group.

Governor Gets Update on Center Accomplishments – During the annual "Ag Day" at the Tennessee State Capital in Nashville, CPA Director Rob Holland spent some time discussing the Center's mission and accomplishments with Governor Phil Bredesen. Governor Bredesen visited the CPA's exhibit at the legislative plaza and discussed value-added enterprises and a variety of the Center's educational programs.



Center Awarded USDA Grant from Rural Development – On September 17, USDA Rural Development State Director Ruth Tackett joined CPA Director Rob Holland to announce \$199,901 in Rural Development funding to establish GROW-10, a farm-based small business development program in ten middle Tennessee counties. The presentation was held at Limoland Farm in Giles County where owner Carol Gordon and her family have been developing creative ways to increase farm income through innovative business practices. "Small business is the backbone of healthy, diversified local economies because they create jobs and new opportunities for other entrepreneurs," said Tackett. "By providing a wealth of technical and financial assistance through programs like this, the staff at the Center for Profitable Agriculture provides a great resource for farmers and entrepreneurs. And as a result, they help grow sustainable economic success in rural communities across the state." CPA staff will work directly with farmers and entrepreneurs to provide technical assistance, business training and other assistance to help develop new small business opportunities for local producers. Counties participating in the GROW-10 program are Giles, Hickman, Houston, Lewis, Maury, Perry, Wayne, Lawrence, Humphreys, and Stewart. These counties are being targeted by CPA because their economies have been particularly hard hit by natural disasters, from drought to tornados, and ongoing changes in manufacturing over the last several years. "The GROW-10 project allows us to offer specialized educational programs and services to farmers and entrepreneurs who come up with ways to add-value to agricultural products," said Holland. "Because of the funding support from Rural Development, we are able to focus on the specific needs of these innovative businessmen and women in this region." Additional participants in the check presentation ceremony include (from left to right in the photo) Joe Pearson, Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation; Glenn Myers, Rep. Lincoln Davis' Representative; Holland; Tackett; Carol Gordon; and Faye Rogers, USDA Rural Development Area Director.

