



P.O. Box 1819
Spring Hill, TN 37174-1819
(931) 486-2777

"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 43

January 2009

Financial Analysis Position

Due to current budget reduction guidelines for the entire UT system, the search to fill the vacant Extension Specialist Financial Analysis position in the Center for Profitable Agriculture has been put on hold. The search committee for this position is still active in hopes that their search will be resumed in the near future. The search committee members are Megan Bruch, Roy Bullock, John Campbell and Rob Holland.

Marketing Specialist Position

The search committee for the Center's Marketing Specialist position is scheduled to convene in mid-January to review application materials from candidates for the position. This position is partially funded from external grant sources and the search remains open. Search Committee members are Tammy Algood, Megan Bruch, Richard Groce, Rob Holland, Anthony Tuggle and Dan Strasser.

Farmland Preservation Conference

In October, Megan Bruch and Rob Holland made a presentation titled "Mutually-Beneficial Opportunities from Farmers Markets, Agritourism and Shared-Use Food Processing Facilities" at the Tennessee Farmland Legacy Conference. Approximately 70 conference participants attended the session which highlighted successes and constraints for various value-added ventures with mutual benefits for farmers and their local communities. The conference was held at the Montgomery Bell State Park near Dickson.

A Message from the Director – As I look back over the recent months, I realize that many of our program efforts have too-often been overshadowed by the economic and budget ills we're facing. The budget issues and economic concerns have certainly taken a significant amount of our time and attention. However, we've rolled with some punches, navigated through some obstacles and kept our program efforts at the forefront. We conducted workshops for 130 *Tennessee Farm Fresh* members and others interested in direct marketing at four workshop locations across the state, and we provided a two-day training to 56 Extension agents in three different locations. We coordinated a three-day educational bus tour for 54 agri-entrepreneurs introducing new ideas from 11 other enterprises in three different states. We consulted some 65 farmers through farm visits, telephone calls, e-mails and direct mail. We distributed information to more than 500 folks at trade shows, via our Web site and directly. We conducted presentations at 12 different events reaching some 300 people. We recently finalized new project proposals for \$50,000 in external funding and implemented various aspects of four grant projects that already bring more than \$300,000 of external funds to our Center.



In light of the serious budget issues we face, the coming months offer us the opportunity to reflect on the program accomplishments we've had in the past three months, past year and the past decade. Such success provides us great hope for the future impact-potential of our efforts and strengthen the foundation of our future program platform.

On another very positive note, I am pleased to welcome Amy Ladd as part of the CPA staff beginning in January. Amy will be serving as coordinator of our GROW-10 program. Although she will be spending a great deal of time in the counties that make up the GROW-10 area, Amy's headquarters office will be here at the Center in Spring Hill. Amy will be able to apply practical management and marketing experience as well as knowledge from her own agritourism operation to this position, and we look forward to her leadership for the program.

Rob Holland, Director - *Center for Profitable Agriculture*

Update on GROW-10 Program – Officially announced by USDA Rural Development on September 17, 2008, the "GROW-10" program will create, develop and implement a value-added training and outreach initiative in a 10-county area of middle Tennessee. A coordinator for the program will provide leadership to this multi-county effort. During recent months, Kevin Rose, Wendel Smith, Megan Bruch and Rob Holland served on the search committee to fill the coordinator position which will run for two years beginning in January 2009. One goal of the GROW-10 program is to provide technical assistance and educational training to 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. Program efforts are slated to be launched in January 2009.

continued on back - - - >

Amy Ladd Welcomed as GROW-10 Coordinator – Amy Ladd will join the CPA staff in mid January to serve as the coordinator of the GROW-10 program. Amy and her husband Jason operate a small farm in the Eagleville community of Rutherford County where they are involved with agritourism. Amy has a BS degree in Business Administration and a MBA, both from MTSU. Amy also has prior experience as a real estate agent and in management and marketing of private businesses. As GROW-10 coordinator, Amy will soon be conducting initial planning meetings with County Extension Agents and other program partners, preparing program promotional materials and planning educational programs in the GROW-10 counties.



Agritourism in Action Educational Bus Tour – The 2008 Agritourism in Action Educational Bus Tour, funded in part by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and coordinated by the Center for Profitable Agriculture, was held November 11-13, 2008. A total of 54 participants visited 11 agritourism operations in Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana. The tour allowed participants to network with agritourism operators who participated on the tour or served as hosts, gain ideas about new products and attractions and learn how to better manage and market their operations. The photo at right shows the tour delegates gathered around the “monster slide” at Honeysuckle Hill Farms in Springfield, Tennessee. A complete summary of evaluations from the tour can be found on the CPA Web site at <http://cpa.utk.edu/pdf/files/cpa156.pdf>.



Direct Farm Marketing for Success Workshops – Direct Farm Marketing for Success Workshops were held in four locations across the state in December with a total of 130 participants. The workshops were developed by the Center in coordination with the Tennessee Farm Fresh (TFF) program. Topics on the agenda included direct marketing fundamentals, customer service, developing effective product displays and an overview of the TFF program. The teaching team included Ramay Winchester from the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development, Tammy Algood and Megan Bruch from UT Extension, and Tiffany Mullins from the Farm Bureau. The workshops were funded in part from the TFF Program through an agreement among the Farm Bureau, Tennessee Department of Agriculture and the Center.



Center Specialist Presents at TSU Field Day – A "Fall Vegetable and Agritourism Field Day" was held October 17 as part of Tennessee State University's Third Friday series at the TSU Research and Extension Demonstration Farm in Ashland City. Farm Manager, Chris Robbins, coordinated the event which attracted more than 40 participants. The Center's Megan Bruch assisted in identifying session topics and speakers. She also presented two sessions at the field day called "Agritourism 101" and "Adding Value to Fruits and Vegetables."

Successful Agent Training Session Concluded – In November, a team of 10 presenters and instructors wrapped up a tour of value-added agent training sessions conducted in Jackson, Murfreesboro and Greeneville. In post-training evaluations, agents provided very positive evaluations of the training with an average overall rating of 8.8 (on a scale of 1 to 10). “Presenters from different agencies,” “open discussions,” “practical examples,” and “hands-on portions” were cited as some of the best parts of the training. The sessions provided detailed training in food packaging and meat marketing regulations, retailing techniques, fruit and vegetable production possibilities with market opportunities as well as updates for agritourism and farmers market ventures.

