

Sustaining Tennessee Farms with Value-Added Agriculture and Alternative Crops Agent In-service Evaluation Summary

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The *Sustaining Tennessee Farms with Value-Added Agriculture and Alternative Crops Agent In-service* was held November 19-20, 2019 in Maury and Giles Counties. The training included a combination of classroom sessions taught by eight Extension specialists and tours of six value-added agriculture enterprises. The in-service was funded by the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program and UT Extension Agricultural and Natural Resources and Community Development.

Thirty agents from across the state participated in the event. A total of 25 completed evaluation forms were returned for an 83 percent response rate. Copies of the agenda and evaluation form are included as appendices.

Agents were asked to rate the training overall on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1=Poor and 10=Excellent. A total of 20 agents gave responses to this question ranging from 8 to 10, with an average rating of 9.65.

Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge and understanding of several topics both before and after the training on a scale of 1=Low to 5=High. The change in knowledge was calculated by subtracting the “Before” rating from the “After” rating. The range in responses and average of responses for “Before,” “After” and “Change in Knowledge” for each topic are provided in Table 1. On average, knowledge increased between 1.16 steps for Livestock Processing and Meat Marketing and 2.60 steps for Resources Available from the Kentucky Center for Crop Diversification.

Table 1. Before, After and Change in Knowledge Ratings for In-service Topics

Topic	Before the Training		After the Training		Change in Knowledge (After-Before)	
	Range	Average	Range	Average	Range	Average
Trends in Value-Added Agriculture, Direct Marketing and Agritourism	2-4	3.04	4-5	4.56	1-3	1.52
Resources Available from the Kentucky Center for Crop Diversification	1-4	1.80	3-5	4.40	1-4	2.60
Hops Production and Marketing	1-4	2.24	3-5	4.04	0-4	1.80
Livestock Processing and Meat Marketing	2-4	3.16	3-5	4.32	0-3	1.16
Poultry and Egg Processing and Marketing	1-4	2.68	3-5	4.16	0-3	1.48
Grains for Brewing and Distilling	1-4	2.32	2-5	3.92	0-4	1.60

Agents were asked to describe how they planned to use the information learned in the training. Most responses related to answering questions or sharing information with producers and farmers market vendors. Responses are listed below:

- Inform the following groups: farmers market vendors, Amish/Mennonite producers, local municipalities.
- News articles, newsletters, individual visits with producers.
- I wish to share with producers and others who come into our office or call for assistance.
- I will be helpful to answer client questions.
- Get them help.
- Answer hemp questions.
- Help producers look for new diversification in their operations.
- Helpful with producers interested going into value-added business.
- Would be good to find value added projects for my county and producers.
- With producers interested in these products.
- Use to help clientele, share with producers and stakeholders.
- Answering questions on processing facilities and understanding the difference between USDA and non.
- Promoting programs from CPA to producers at home.
- Improving value-added ideas to grain producers.
- Will share with my producers, primarily farmers market vendors.
- Assist clientele with questions on these areas.
- Provide ideas to my local farmers.
- Use information with producers in agritourism. Better informed to answer questions in these areas.
- Consulting with clients.
- Take back to county many ideas especially grain milling and whiskey distilling and brewery.
- Giving advice to producers.
- Working with clients.
- Will use it when assisting producers with marketing concerns.
- Feel more comfortable discussing processing facilities.
- Share with producers, farmers market managers.
- Assist individuals interested in value-added enterprises.
- Anyway I can help our producers add value to their commodities.

Attendees were asked to provide suggestions on how the training could have been improved. Five comments related to training time with several indicating the first day should have ended earlier. Two people suggested moving the training to different parts of the state to get more ideas, while two others suggested turning up the heat in the classroom. Nine other positive comments about the training were provided.

Training Time

- Should have ended a little earlier on first day.
- Adjourn by 4 on first day.
- The first night was too long for me.
- Less class time.
- More time.

Move Around the State

- Excellent. I would assume it would move around Tennessee to get ideas from other locations. (2 comments)

Turn Up the Heat

- Maybe a little more heat in the 4-H dining hall. It was all great! (2 comments)

Positive Comments

- This was about as good a training that I can remember in nearly thirty years. Thanks!
- Presenters and visits were very good. Continue to teach material in class then follow it with hands-on /visits to producers.
- Excellent.
- Good.
- Great in-service! Let's do it again!
- It was really good.
- Wonderful experience.
- Excellent workshop!
- Great! Can't think of a thing!



Nathan Miller discusses proper egg sanitation procedures for direct to consumer sales and Department of Food Science resources on the bus between tour stops. (left)



Sam Kennedy provides a tour of Glendale Farm's on-farm poultry processing facility, pastured poultry operation and rotational grazing system. (right)



Dr. Aaron Smith teaches sessions on the economics and marketing of hops and hemp. (left)

Agents were asked to list three additional topics they would like to see covered in future trainings in order of greatest need. Table 2 lists topics suggested, the number of times each was listed by level of need/priority, the total number of times listed, and a calculated “Need Rating” (Need Rating = (3*Number of Rank 1)+(2*Number of Rank 2)+(1*Number of Rank 3). The greatest need for additional training seems to be with food manufacturing regulations and opportunities related to fruits and vegetables, sauces, etc. Forestry products and beginning farmer information were indicated to have the next greatest need. Vegetable production, fruit production/marketing, distilling/craft brewing, agritourism and farm labor/H2 worker information were all listed at least twice.

Table 2. Summary of Agent Needs for Additional Training Topics

Topics	Number of Times Ranked in Each Category			Total Number of Times Listed	Need Rating
	Rank 1 (Highest Priority)	Rank 2 (Next Highest Priority)	Rank 3 (Least Highest Priority)		
Food manufacturing (domestic/commercial kitchens, value-added fruits and vegetables)	4	2	1	7	17
Forestry products	3			3	9
Beginning farmer questions (including grants)*	2	1	1	4	9
Vegetable production	1	1		2	5
Fruit products/Blueberries/blackberries + PYO processing/marketing	1	1		2	5
Distilling/craft brewing	1	1		2	5
Agritourism/event venues		1	2	3	4
H2 worker information/farm labor		1	1	2	3
Value-Added Dairy	1			1	3
Marketing Grain products	1			1	3
Meat processing tours	1			1	3
Horticulture tours	1			1	3
CPA publications	1			1	3
Low capital input opportunities to enter ag	1			1	3
Farmers market information	1			1	3
Molasses/syrup		1		1	2
Traditional row crop operations		1		1	2
On-farm producers		1		1	2
Farm business		1		1	2
Small-scale profit opportunities		1		1	2
Other livestock/fish			1	1	1
Grass fed beef operations			1	1	1
Nursery production			1	1	1
Hemp outlook and other new small crops			1	1	1
More diverse crops besides hops or hemp - herbal			1	1	1
Revitalization of towns through ag enterprises			1	1	1

Example responses related to beginning farmer needs may be helpful in planning future events:

- I just bought a five acre farm. I have no farming background, but I want to make a profit to live off farm income alone.
- I just retired and bought some land. I want to farm but not something that takes up too much time or labor. And I don't want to make too much money that will affect my retirement pension.
- "I'm retired, now can I get grants to start my farm?" "I'm a veteran, how can the government help me start my farm."

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any additional comments and suggestions, which included the following:

- Awesome in-service. One of the best I have attended. Beautiful area and lots of great information to share with producers.
- Thank you so much for hosting this. Great tours and seamless planning. Also a great way for agents to get to know each other and specialists across the state (not just in their area).
- Great in-service. Thanks for lunch. Liked how tours were mixed with presentations and that tour stops built on one another. Really enjoyed the tours.
- Thank you! Everything was great! Food was wonderful. Thank you for travel and food.
- Food was great!
- Great in-service with lots of good information.
- Let's do it again!

Summary

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Thirty agents from across the state participated in the event with 25 returning evaluation forms (83 percent response rate). Agents were asked to rate the training overall on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1=Poor and 10=Excellent. The average rating from 20 respondents to this question was 9.65.

Respondents were asked to rate their knowledge and understanding of topics before and after the training on a scale of 1=Low to 5=High. On average, knowledge increased between 1.16 to 2.60 steps. Agents planned to use information learned to assist clients in their counties.

Agents reported the greatest need for additional training to be with food manufacturing regulations and opportunities related to fruits and vegetables, sauces, etc. Forestry products and beginning farmer information were indicated to have the next greatest need. Vegetable production, fruit production/marketing, distilling/craft brewing, agritourism and farm labor/H2 worker information were all listed at least twice.



Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development.
University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Appendix A
Sustaining Tennessee Farms with Value-Added Agriculture and Alternative Crops In-Service Agenda
November 19-20, 2019

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

Time	Topic	Speaker	Location
9:30am	Registration and Networking		W.P. Ridley 4-H Camp 850 Lion Parkway Columbia, TN 38401 (931) 388-4011
10:00 am	Trends in Value-Added Agriculture, Direct Marketing and Agritourism	Megan Bruch Leffew	
10:45 am	Kentucky Center for Crop Diversification Resources	Tim Woods	
11:45 pm	Lunch		
12:00 pm	Kentucky Center for Crop Diversification Resources	Tim Woods	
1:00 pm	Hops Production and Marketing	David Lockwood and Aaron Smith	
1:45 pm	Travel to Downtown Columbia		
2:15 pm	Tallgrass Meat Company Tour		Tallgrass Meat Company 510 N Garden St, Columbia, TN 38401 (931) 505-8202
3:05 pm	Depart to Walk to Asgard Brewery		
3:15 pm	Asgard Brewery Tour - Demand and Use for Local Hops		Asgard Brewery 104 E 5 th Street Columbia, TN 38401 asgardbrew.com
4:15 pm	Return to 4-H Camp		
4:45 pm	Hemp Economics and Marketing	Aaron Smith	W.P. Ridley 4-H Camp 850 Lion Parkway Columbia, TN 38401 (931) 388-4011
5:30 pm	Livestock Processing Feasibility	David Hughes	
6:15 pm	Dinner		
	SARE Update	Troy Dugger	
7:30 pm	Adjourn for the Evening		

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

**Please plan to ride the bus as we will have educational presentations on the bus between stops.*

Time	Topic	Speaker(s)	Location
8:00 am	Bus Departs for Glendale Farm Poultry Processing Regulations	Hal Pepper	Comfort Suites 1551 Bear Creek Pike Columbia, TN 38401
8:25 am	Glendale Farm Tour	Sam Kennedy/ Johnny Taylor	Glendale Farm 1551 John Finney Road Columbia, TN 38401
9:15 am	Depart *Will make a restroom stop Egg Sales Regulations Egg Sanitation	Megan Leffew Nathan Miller	
10:00 am	Light Hill Meats	Ben Neale	Light Hill Meats 3851 Cornersville Rd Lynnville, Tennessee
10:55 am	Depart		
11:10 am	Hickman Farms Millhouse	Jeremy Hickman	Jeremy Hickman 1651 Dodson Gap Rd Lynnville, TN 38472
11:50 am	Depart for Lunch		
12:00 pm	Lunch and Networking		Soda Pop Junction 141 Mill Street Lynnville, TN 38472
1:00 pm	Depart		
1:15 pm	Tenn South Distillery Tour		Tenn South Distillery 1800 Abernathy Rd. Lynnville, TN 38472
2:15 pm	Depart for Comfort Suites Q&A Complete Evaluations		
3:00 pm	Adjourn		Comfort Suites

Appendix B
Sustaining Tennessee Farms with Value-Added Agriculture and Alternative Crops
Agent In-service Evaluation Form

Please complete this form to help us evaluate the in-service and provide input for future events.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1=Poor and 10=Excellent), please rate the training overall.

Poor Excellent
 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 – 8 – 9 – 10

2. Please rate your knowledge and understanding of the following topics both Before and After the training.

Topic	Before the Training					After the Training				
	Low		High			Low		High		
Trends in Value-Added Agriculture, Direct Marketing and Agritourism	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Resources Available from the Kentucky Center for Crop Diversification	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Hops Production and Marketing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Livestock Processing and Meat Marketing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Poultry and Egg Processing and Marketing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Grains for Brewing and Distilling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

3. How do you plan to use the information learned during this event?

4. How could the in-service have been improved?

5. Please list three additional topics you would like to see covered in future in-service training sessions led by the Center for Profitable Agriculture/Value-Added Agriculture Workgroup. List in order of need with 1 being the greatest need. Please be as specific as possible.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

6. Please use the back of this form to provide additional comments or suggestions.