

UT EXTENSION



The University of Tennessee has existed for 210 years, and UT Extension has been an integral part of the university and its land-grant mission for 90 of those years.

But even before Extension became official, UT agriculture professors were holding winter short courses and chartering trains to take university learning to Tennessee farm families. Tennessee was ready when Extension was funded in 1914.

From the beginning, the county farm and home agents were beloved by people in the communities they served. They brought the latest methods, materials, and information to better the lives of all Tennesseans, and they did so in an unbiased way, always anticipating and adapting to specific needs.

Today, using the latest technology, Extension reaches ever more diverse audiences and still seeks to better the lives of all Tennesseans.

UT Extension Agents Michelle Rankin, front, and Booker T. Leigh, right, with some of the people Extension assists in West Tennessee.

UT Extension maintains a strong local presence in each of Tennessee's 95 and the overall community. For 90 years their mission has remained constant. unbiased information as well as programs that are developed and delivered

Extension partnerships are underway across the state. At the Agricenter in Memphis, UT Extension agent Tim Roberts helps with tours and other events that bring the farm closer to home for thousands of Mid South students.



POND CREEK Watershed Project

Helping farmers improve water quality

Partnerships are what UT Extension is all about. In rural McMinn County, UT Extension initiated the Pond Creek Watershed Project to support farmers along the creek as they make changes to improve water quality. Led by Extension environmental soils specialist Dr. Forbes Walker of the Department of Biosystems Engineering and Environmental Science, the project brought together specialists from UT, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

"We've developed relationships with area farmers and have given them options and resources to prevent cattle waste runoff into the creek," said Extension Area Specialist Lena Beth Carmichael, coordinator of the Pond Creek Watershed Project.

"It's very important to let these farmers know that we're here to help. We're here to give them the resources and support they need to improve water quality." Carmichael says that options range from improving pasture management for erosion reduction to assistance in funding for expensive containment systems. "Our goals are to educate farmers and provide them with best management practices," she said. "Improving their farm management ensures their future success and improves water quality at the same time."



Extension Specialist Lena Beth Carmichael and graduate student Stacey Clark evaluate water flow along Pond Creek.

TEAMWORK with Legislature

Now, more than ever, Tennesseans facing social, economic, and technological changes need UT Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences Department. As a partner to the Tennessee Legislature, the department is helping to meet the needs of citizens in critical areas by developing and delivering programs that target important issues. Examples include the state-mandated First

Steps, a training program for Tennessee childcare workers, and Parenting Apart: Effective Co-Parenting, a program that more than 16,000 divorcing parents have completed to date. Expected to debut later this year is a pre-marriage counseling program that UT Extension specialists have initiated to increase the number of successful marriages.

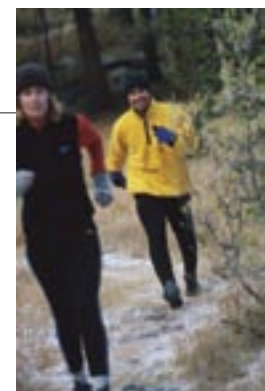


Tennessee SHAPES UP

Because Tennesseans mirror the national trend of being overweight and inactive, UT Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) agents and specialists have launched a statewide initiative called Tennessee Shapes Up.

The program takes aim at weight by focusing on personal goal setting and overcoming barriers that can keep people from achieving their goals. "Our focus is unique," says Dr. Betty Greer. "We teach people to recognize when they are eating in response to boredom, stress, frustration, loneliness, or unhappiness. This emotional eating is a reason many people consume too many calories. We also help people understand how to make healthy food choices and how to manage portion sizes."

County Extension offices are coordinating community walking groups through the Walk Across Tennessee program. And Extension's FCS program helped lead in the formation of the Tennessee Healthy Weight Network, a state-level coalition that is working to improve Tennesseans' health and diet.



For more about UT Extension, visit <http://utextension.tennessee.edu>.

counties, working to improve the lives of farmers, families, youth, Agents working one-on-one with citizens deliver research-based, in partnership with county, state, and federal agencies.

MASTER BEEF Producer Program

Tennessee ranks ninth in the nation in beef cows and fourth in cow-calf operations—in other words, beef is big business. Finding ways to add value to the state's existing cattle industry can generate significant returns. That's precisely the goal of several UT Extension initiatives.

Participants in the new Master Beef Producer Program predict the program could improve their annual returns by more than \$700,000. "If every producer associated with the state's 51,000 cattle operations were to realize similar predicted gains, producers could enhance their combined profits by more than \$100 million," said Dr. Emmit Rawls, a UT agricultural economist and coordinator of the Tennessee Beef Cattle Improvement Initiative. Regional initiatives such as The UT Ultimate Bred Heifer Program, now completing its fifth year, are having an array of impacts in the beef industry. More information about these programs is available from your local county UT Extension Office.

Center for Profitable AGRICULTURE

From agritourism to specialty preserves, the Center for Profitable Agriculture (CPA) has worked on more than 89 projects to boost the market potential of Tennessee products.

The CPA—a partnership between the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation and the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture—offers assistance at every step, from calculating break-even scenarios to developing marketing strategies, analyzing the customer base, determining traffic patterns, or evaluating the layout of products in a retail store. "We work with farmers and farm families to add value to farm resources," says Rob Holland, Extension specialist with the CPA.

Between 1997 and 2002, the number of Tennessee farmers involved in value-added agriculture through direct marketing increased nearly 26 percent. At the same time, the state saw a 34 percent increase in the total value of agricultural products sold directly to consumers, Holland says.

Jones Orchard, near Millington, already had a commercially inspected kitchen on the farm to turn its home-grown peaches, plums, pears, and berries into jams and jellies. CPA helped Juanita and Lee Jones conduct a marketing study, register the farm logo, and develop advertising materials, and gave input on developing a website. "The Extension service could not have been more helpful," says Juanita Jones. "I don't know what we would do if they weren't available."



TENNESSEE SAVES

Think of it this way: if the Tennessee Lottery is a predictably confident Hare, Tennessee Saves is the Tortoise. And we all know who won.

Tennessee Saves, a program administered throughout the state by UT Extension, offers proven tactics for individuals and families to increase their financial savings as well as no-nonsense advice for solving common money and credit problems. Their goal is to help Tennesseans save and build wealth by providing financial and savings education.

By forming partnerships with consumer advocates, government agencies, banks, and other businesses, Tennessee Saves has developed methods that include simple saving strategies, debt-repayment advice, minimum-deposit savings accounts, and campaigns to warn against consumer fraud. In some counties Tennessee Saves can even provide participants with a personal financial coach—a wealth coach!

Tennessee Saves is being implemented in nine Tennessee counties, and there are plans for a statewide kickoff early this year. Unsettling bankruptcy statistics across the state prompted this latest and most widely advertised program offered by Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences Department. In the past five years Tennessee has been either No. 1 or No. 2 in personal bankruptcies filed nationally.

Financial curricula and techniques developed by Extension have also been used to train workers in many state offices, including the Department of Human Services and the Tennessee Housing Development Agency. "These coalitions and partnerships with government agencies, community advocate groups and financial institutions are key to the success of our programs," says Dr. Dena Wise, UT Extension family economics specialist and Tennessee Saves coordinator.





4-H LIFE SKILLS

Young people need all the skills they can get to prepare for the challenges they will face as teenagers and as young adults. Tennessee 4-H has always taught important life skills, and today the program is using new approaches to foster positive youth development.

By emphasizing life skills in five areas—health/physical, personal/social, cognitive/creative, vocational, and citizenship/ethics—4-H is helping Tennessee youth build skills essential for adult success. “Each 4-H program is designed to strengthen youths’ skills in one or more of the five basic competency areas,” says State 4-H Leader Alice Ann Moore. “Through evaluation methods, we are able to show that because a child was involved in a specific 4-H program such as project groups or has participated in educational opportunities through 4-H, he or she developed skills essential for future success.”

Each year, more than 380,000 youth ages 9 through 19 participate in Tennessee 4-H through clubs, special interest groups, after-school programs, camps, and many other activities.



4-H ANIMAL SCIENCE Projects

“I don’t think there was ever a little girl between the ages of 8 and 18 who didn’t want a pony.”

That’s how Roger Elder of Blount County partially explains the popularity of the 4-H Horse Project, one of several animal science projects 4-H offers, and its most popular. Elder and his wife, Sandra, have been 4-H leaders for 28 years and have been named Horse Project Leaders of the Decade.

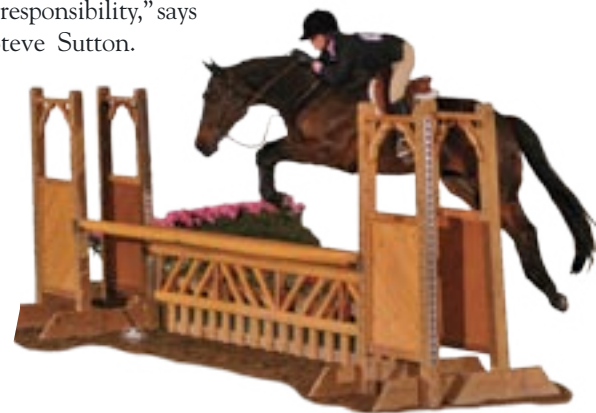
4-H’ers—boys as well as girls—are passionate about their animal projects. All family members usually become involved, from raising and showing lambs, calves, chickens pigs, and goats, as well as horses. The programs are not just about shows and contests. 4-H’ers learn about feeding, caring for, managing, selecting and showing their animals.

According to UT Extension’s Doyle Meadows, who coordinates horse shows and projects, there are 17,000 Tennessee 4-H’ers who take part in horse shows, judging, speech competitions, horse bowls and contests. Another 8,000 4-H’ers are involved in beef, sheep, swine, and dairy cattle programs. Students do not have to own an animal to take part.

“These programs teach youth about responsibility,” says State 4-H Extension Specialist Steve Sutton.

“As with all 4-H programs, youth learn about being good and responsible citizens. They’re learning skills for life.”

Elder says the bond a student forms with his or her animal is another part of why the 4-H animal projects remain so popular, year after year. “Many kids spend their entire 4-H career with one animal. They take care of it, and the animal is a buddy they can talk to.”



“It teaches good essentials, and there are lots of scholarship opportunities,” says Rachel Robinson, 15, of Alcoa, shown astride Franklin. “And I’ve met a bunch of great people.”

YOUTH VOICE

Responsible citizens are the lifeblood of every community. To help young people learn to be good citizens and become engaged in their communities, the Tennessee 4-H Program encourages its members to serve on local boards and committees. Through service on local governing structures, youth learn to work as equals with adults and have a role in determining outcomes or decisions on issues that concern them.

4-H’er Laura Duke served on a United Way allocations committee in Humphreys County. “Walking into that first meeting and being greeted by 15 adult faces was intimidating, to say the least,” Duke recalls. The overall experience, however, is one that she will value the rest of her life. “Until my service on the committee, I hadn’t realized the size and scope of needs of the people in our county. I had to use all of the skills I had learned to decide how to allocate a \$300,000 budget. It was very humbling to realize that the decisions made by the allocations committee would have a major impact on the lives of our citizens.”