

Growing Agriculture Conference - 2015

MORNING KEYNOTE - **Jennifer Niceley** lives and works on her family's multi-generational farm, Riverplains, in Strawberry Plains. Working with her parents, uncles and siblings, she is helping to restore health and sustainability to the land where she grew up, with grass-based livestock production and organically grown, non-GMO, open-pollinated corn. In addition to the hands-on farming, she co-owns and operates the food truck Mister Canteen, serving the produce and meats grown on the farm.

9:00-12:00

Public Ag Servants. Friendly, knowledgeable, helpful! This describes our public agriculture servants, those state and federal government representatives who help farms through a diversity of programs that may surprise you. Take the opportunity to hear what they do and how they can help you and your farm. This panel will feature the following area resources:

*Debbie Ball, Director of Marketing with the TN Dept. of Agriculture.
Matthew Christian, Farm Loan Officer with USDA-Farm Service Agency
Megan Leffew, UT Extension Center for Profitable Agriculture
Patty McCloud, NRCS District Conservationist for Grainger/Hamblen*

Choosing crops for profit. What should I grow? Where should I sell? In this session participants will hear about the process of growing smart for different markets, from planning to selling.

*Matt Dobson, Boone Street Market & Preservation Farms
Chick Fish, Appalachian Harvest & Fish Farms
Dusty Saylor, Pleasant Valley Farms*

Farm Business and Financial Planning. This will be a discussion on the importance of taking the time to plan when you start your ag business...and continuing to evaluate your farm throughout the years. You will learn about financial benchmarks to compare your farm to over time. Lastly you will be introduced to the University of Tennessee Extension MANAGE program and what it has to offer your farm!

David Bilderback, UT Extension

Getting started with livestock. Learn how to put your best hoof forward when starting a livestock operation, small or large, with Webb Flowers. Webb will refer more to beef cattle, but he can answer questions about getting started with other ruminants, including sheep, goats, and dairy cattle. He can also answer questions about pasturing poultry and pork.

Webb Flowers, Grazing Specialist, Clinch Powell RC&D / NRCS

Direct marketing strategies. You may grow a great product, but it's not always easy to find customers. Whether you're isolated in a rural area with limited local markets or trying to sell farm products in a competitive area, you need a creative approach! In this workshop, you'll learn how to apply classic

marketing thinking to the local food and farm customer base. Learn practical, doable marketing steps - finding your niche and connecting with customers.

Hollis Wild, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

Certified farming. What's in a label? If you are considering becoming certified under Organic, Animal Welfare, Naturally Grown, or another labelling service, hear from these growers about their positive and negative experience with labels and certifications. Discussion will be on how a certification helped them farm, market, and keep records.

*Elizabeth Malayter, JEM Farm
Chris Wilson, Clover Creek Farm*

GENERATIONAL FARMING & FAMILY ROLES Panel with Jennifer Nicely (Riverplains Farm, Strawberry Plains), Dusty Saylor (Pleasant Valley Farms, Jonesborough), Ethan Myers (Myers Farm & Pumpkin Patch, Bulls Gap)

12:00 - 1:30 LUNCH

KEYNOTE - Ken Givens was appointed Tennessee's Commissioner of Agriculture by Governor Phil Bredesen in 2003. He served as Commissioner for seven years. Before that he was a State Representative for 14 years. He was first elected to the state House of Representatives in 1988, and he served as chairman of the House Agriculture Committee from 1997 to 2002. He was the House of Representatives' designee to the Tennessee Tobacco Farmers Certifying Board, which administered Phase II tobacco settlement funds for growers. During his 14 years in the House, Givens was instrumental in passing key farm legislation including a measure to ensure the ability of existing farm operations to expand under Tennessee's right-to-farm law. He also sponsored important legislation regarding forest management and dairy farming. He hails from Rogersville, where he continues to operate a tobacco and cattle farm. Aside from his professional accomplishments and service to the state, Givens is well known for his storytelling!

1:30 - 4:30

Farm Surfing. For farmers directly marketing products to consumers or offering agritourism activities, if you aren't on the Web, you aren't. This session will introduce you to some basic marketing opportunities on the Web and tips to help you get started.

Megan Bruch Leffew, Center for Profitable Agriculture

Putting Soil Health First. Led by Tennessee's new Soil Health Specialist, the workshop will start with a demonstration of soil infiltration and slaking. Mike will then show how farmers can improve their soil and provide them with the potential of better yields while conserving their natural resources.

Mike Hubbs, TN Assoc. of Conservation District's Soil Health Specialist

Land Access: Leasing agreements, real estate considerations – We will discuss the basic concept of leasing agreements. We will look at the different types of leases and cover the basic information that should

always be included in a lease. There will also be first hand opinions give from a farmer whom leases farmland.

*David Bilderback, UT Extension;
Jimmy McAllister, farmer*

Extending the Season. Have you ever wished you could just have more time? You may be able to gain an extra few weeks to your growing season and a few extra dollars to your profit. Make the “off” season your new “on” season with techniques such as hoop house and tunnels.

*Tera Bunch, Walters State
Elizabeth Malayter, JEM Farm Rogersville,
Weyman Fussell, Washburn*

Winds of Change in Agriculture: 3-bits. Snapshots. Sustainability? Julie Walker will offer her real-world perspective on how proper groundwork, persistence, and a flexible vision are the roots of long-term sustainability for farm of any size, complemented by the magic ingredient of 'that undefinable something.' Questions to be addressed include: A.. "Just what is sustainability, anyhow?" B. "Is it more about the 'Agri' or more about the "Culture?" and C. "Am I willing to become an AgVocate?".

Julie Walker, Agrivoice consulting

PUBLIC FARMS - Agritourism for farms in the 21st century Panel - with Pat Lynch (Farmhouse Gallery & Gardens, Unicoi) and Vera Ann Myers (Myers Farm, Bulls Gap)

CONSULTANTS - Available for one-on-one appointments, sign up on site the morning of the conference

Matthew Christian, Farm Service Agency. The USDA-FSA makes and guarantees loans to family farmers and ranchers to promote, build and sustain family farms in support of a thriving agricultural economy.

Gary Moore, Land Trust for Tennessee, leads the land trust's farmland protection efforts in middle and east Tennessee. He will be available to talk about conserving farm and forest land with conservation easements. Before joining The Land Trust, Gary spent 37 years with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Roy Settle, First Bank and Trust Agricultural Lending. Roy Settle worked on tobacco farms and a dairy while in high school and college before serving with SCS/NRCS in field positions across Tennessee. From 1994 to 2012 he led the Appalachian RC&D Council in Northeast TN in projects ranging from conservation education, agri-tourism, business development and promoting locally grown and manufactured products. Since 2012 he has served as an Agricultural Loan Officer with First Bank & Trust in NE TN, SW VA and Western NC.

Julie Walker, Agrivoice consulting, can consult on your farm's marketing and venture development.

EXHIBITORS

USDA - Farm Service Agency

First Bank and Trust, Agricultural Lending

USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

Appalachian Sustainable Development

Appalachian Harvest

Rooted in Appalachia

Appalachian RC&D Council - the Quilt Trail

Local Foods Promotion for NE TN and SW VA

Walters State Community College

UT Extension MANAGE Program

UT Extension Center for Profitable Agriculture

Land Trust for Tennessee