



## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

*Ellington Agricultural Center*

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The Tennessee Department of Agriculture's mission is to serve the citizens of Tennessee by promoting wise uses of our agricultural and forest resources, developing economic opportunities, and ensuring safe and dependable food and fiber.

The department helps expand markets for farm and forest products through promotions and industry development activities. The department provides an array of valuable consumer services from food safety and fuel quality assurance to pesticide regulation and environmental monitoring. Forestry services include landowner assistance, wildfire suppression and state forests management while water quality programs encourage and promote stewardship of our natural resources. The department's mission is fulfilled through the four major program areas of Administration & Grants, Forestry, Market Development and Regulatory Services.

### Tennessee Agriculture

Tennessee's top agricultural products include cattle and calves, hardwood lumber, poultry, nursery stock, soybeans, cotton, dairy products, corn, tobacco, hogs, fruits and vegetables, hay and wheat. Agricultural production alone generates more than \$2.5 billion annually in farm cash receipts. Food manufacturing, marketing and distribution, forestry-related industries, equine, and other agricultural products make the economic impact much greater.

International trade has a significant impact on Tennessee agriculture as exports of raw agricultural commodities generally total more than \$750 million annually. Agricultural and forest products are leading state exports with about \$2.0 billion in exports of both raw and processed products.

Farming and forestry dominate Tennessee's landscape with farm production occurring on 84,000 farms. About 11.6 million acres, or nearly half the state's land area, are in farms. Crop sales account for more than half of the total farm cash receipts while livestock accounts for the remainder. Forestlands total 14.4 million acres. Tennessee's forests produce millions of board feet of hardwood and softwood lumber, with timber sales topping \$381 million in 2005. Tennessee is a leading manufacturer of hardwood lumber, flooring, log homes and pencils.

With a temperate climate and abundant water supply, Tennessee farmers produce a variety of food and fiber products which help Tennessee live up to its official slogan, "America at its best."

In and around hillsides, in the shadows of mountains, and along the fertile river valleys of East Tennessee are the forests, beef cattle, and dairy, tobacco and vegetables farms so well suited to this terrain.

Middle Tennessee is made up of a dish-shaped basin rimmed with mountains to the east, sloping off to rolling hills westward and bordered on either side by the Tennessee River. The rolling pasturelands make beef cattle, horse and dairy farms

practical for the region. A variety of row crops also flourish in Middle Tennessee, as does the “world’s nursery capital” in Warren County.

West Tennessee is lush flatland created by the Mississippi River’s ancient flood plains. This delta region traditionally has the state’s largest production of soybeans, wheat, corn, cotton, and sorghum. West Tennessee’s famous river city, Memphis, has long been known as a major commodity transportation hub.

## History

In 1854 the Bureau of Agriculture, as the department was then known, was established as the first state agency. It was organized primarily to promote agriculture through fairs and livestock expositions. The original agency had a staff of nine—the governor and eight others who met twice a year to transact state business. The Bureau of Agriculture was discontinued during the Civil War but was reorganized in 1871. In 1875, the state legislature created the Bureau of Agriculture, Statistics and Mines. The duties of immigration were also added to the responsibilities of the commissioner of agriculture for a brief period. In 1923 the name was officially changed to the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA).

Ellington Agricultural Center, the former estate of 1920s financier Rogers Caldwell, has been the home of TDA since January 1961. The 200-acre center, located in Nashville, is named for Buford Ellington, former governor of Tennessee who served as commissioner of agriculture from 1952-56. TDA was the first state department of agriculture in the nation to be located on a working farm.

## Services

**Administration and Grants**—Administration includes the department budget, legal services, personnel and public affairs. Administrative staff works with legislators and industry representatives to ensure that programs have adequate statutory authority, staffing and clerical support. Other programs within administration include the Agricultural Crime Unit, Boll Weevil Eradication, Commodity Distribution, Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service and Water Resources.

**Agricultural Crime Unit (ACU).** The ACU provides law enforcement and investigative support to the department’s regulatory and forestry programs. The eleven-officer unit works closely with other state and local law enforcement agencies on matters ranging from animal health and food safety to pesticide regulation and wildfire arson investigation. The unit supports the department’s homeland security activities and provides facility security planning and implementation.

**Boll Weevil Eradication.** The Boll Weevil Eradication Program is a cooperative effort among the Tennessee and Southeastern Boll Weevil Eradication Foundations, TDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to rid the state of one of the costliest agricultural pests in history. The multi-year initiative to spray and monitor for boll weevils is primarily funded by cotton producers. The program is reaping substantial economic and environmental benefits by making farmers more competitive and reducing their reliance on cotton insecticides.

**Commodity Distribution.** The department administers the USDA’s food distribution program for schools and institutions participating in the National School Lunch Program. As all food purchased by the USDA for this program must be of domestic origin, the program supports American farmers while providing nutritious food to schoolchildren. The department also administers the USDA’s Emergency Food Assistance Program, which helps supplement the diets of low-income, needy persons

by providing them with emergency food and nutrition assistance at no cost. In program year 2005-06, more than 33 million pounds of food valued at \$25.3 million were ordered by the department for Tennessee's public and private schools, residential child care institutions, nonprofit charitable organizations, and agencies serving the needy.

*USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee Field Office.* The department maintains a cooperative relationship with this USDA agency to provide timely, unbiased statistics and analysis of farm production in Tennessee.

*Water Resources.* The restoration and protection of Tennessee's streams, rivers and lakes and the conservation of natural resources are the objectives of Water Resources. Funding is provided through the Agricultural Resources Conservation Fund and the federal Clean Water Act, Section 319. Grants are made through local governments, soil conservation districts, nonprofit groups, universities and other state agencies to fund corrective measures within watersheds. The goal is to reduce nonpoint source pollution, or chemical and soil runoff, to the state's waters. Funds also are provided for a variety of educational projects such as farm field days, public service announcements, workshops and seminars. The program provides support for the state's watershed assessments of water quality. The section also reviews and approves waste system plans and nutrient management plans in cooperation with the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) permitting process of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

*Forestry* — Tennessee's forests provide recreational opportunities, a diverse and stable forest-based economy, and a complex ecological system that yields timber, clean air and water, natural beauty, and critical wildlife habitat. Forests cover 55 percent of the state and support a \$21.7 billion forest products industry and more than 184,000 jobs. All of these forest benefits support Tennessee's quality of life.

The long standing mission of the Division of Forestry is "to protect, conserve, manage and efficiently utilize the forest resources of Tennessee." Division services include fire prevention and suppression, water quality protection, forest health protection, rural forestry assistance, tree improvement and seedling production, utilization and marketing, urban forestry, forest inventory, conservation education and state forests management.

*Landowner Assistance.* The Division provides technical advice and assistance to private, non-industrial landowners in forestry practices including timber and wildlife management, water quality protection, forest health and reforestation.

*Fire Protection.* The Division of Forestry has primary responsibility for wildfire suppression statewide. The department controls more than 1,700 wildfires each year, saving timber and personal property valued in the tens of millions of dollars. The agency works to prevent fires by issuing outdoor burning permits and through education and law enforcement. The Division provides wildfire training, grants and surplus federal property to volunteer fire departments.

*Seedling Nursery & Tree Improvement.* The Division produces about six million pine and hardwood seedlings for timber production, wildlife habitat improvement, and erosion control. Working with the University of Tennessee and other organizations, the Division develops genetically superior stock capable of producing up to 30 percent more usable wood per acre.

*Forest Health Protection.* Foresters monitor native as well as exotic insect pests and diseases through a variety of aerial and ground survey techniques, provide information to the public, and take action to control or slow the spread of certain forest pests. Foremost of these are the gypsy moth, the southern pine beetle, oak decline and mortality, and more recently the hemlock woolly adelgid.

*Urban Forestry.* The urban forestry section provides urban tree management assistance to communities through federally funded grants administered by the division. This section also administers the Champion Tree, Tree City USA and TreeLine USA programs.

*Forest Products Utilization.* Forest products demand and harvested timber volume and value are monitored in the state. A directory of the state's wood-using industries is maintained, and better utilization practices are promoted to extend the state's forest resources.

*Water Quality Protection.* Protection of water quality during forestry operations is a priority. Partnering with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, foresters inspect logging sites for compliance with state water quality regulations and the use of forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). Division foresters also train and advise loggers in the application of forestry BMPs.

*Forest Inventory and Analysis.* Certified inventory foresters take precise and detailed measurements on tree growth, quality, health and utilization at pre-determined locations across the state to provide an annual update on the condition of Tennessee's forests.

*State Forests.* Fifteen state forests totaling 164,111 acres are managed for a variety of public benefits including recreation, wildlife, unique features, timber, and water quality. In 2002, Tennessee became the first southern state to have its state forests system "certified" by an independent auditor. Certification verifies that forest management practices are employed in accordance with strict environmental, social and economic standards.

| State Forest      | Acreage | County                                |
|-------------------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| Bledsoe           | 7,032   | Bledsoe, Cumberland, Van Buren, White |
| Cedars of Lebanon | 7,961   | Wilson                                |
| Chickasaw         | 12,751  | Chester, Hardeman                     |
| Chuck Swan        | 24,279  | Campbell, Union                       |
| Franklin          | 6,789   | Franklin, Marion                      |
| John Tully        | 2,132   | Lauderdale                            |
| Lewis             | 1,165   | Lewis                                 |
| Lone Mountain     | 3,591   | Morgan                                |
| Martha Sundquist  | 2,001   | Cocke                                 |
| Natchez Trace     | 36,672  | Benton, Carroll, Decatur, Henderson   |
| Pickett           | 19,737  | Fentress, Pickett                     |
| Prentice Cooper   | 24,681  | Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie          |
| Scott             | 2,827   | Scott                                 |
| Standing Stone    | 8,350   | Clay, Overton                         |
| Stewart           | 4,143   | Stewart                               |

**Market Development** — With its prime geographical location, transportation infrastructure, and production capacity, Tennessee is poised to fully participate in the expanding world market for agricultural products. Market Development's mission is to maximize economic opportunities for Tennessee agriculture through innovative marketing programs and promotional services.

*Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program.* The TAEP was created in 2005 to help improve cattle production and to encourage diversification and innovation on Tennessee farms. Market Development provides cost share assistance to farmers for investment in key areas of agriculture with the goal of increasing farm income. In addition to cattle genetic improvement, cattle handling equipment, and hay storage facilities, the division also provides cost share assistance to farmers for organics, specialty livestock, grape production, fruits and vegetables, honey, agritourism and many other developing areas of agriculture.

*Agricultural Industry Development and Recruitment.* Marketing efforts focus on increasing income for farmers and forestland owners and new jobs, which enhance income both locally and statewide. Emphasis is on recruiting new businesses including alternative fuels, emerging biotechnologies, and expanding existing industries in food manufacturing and in the forest products industry.

*International Marketing.* Efforts are aimed at building opportunities for Tennessee producers and processors in world markets. Special emphasis is placed on marketing of food products, fruits and vegetables, horticultural products, and livestock. Cooperative marketing activities are conducted in conjunction with the Southern United States Trade Association and other agricultural trade organizations to increase overseas sales of a variety of Tennessee agricultural products including nursery stock, livestock as well as processed food products. Recent trade missions have targeted marketing opportunities in China, Germany and France and reverse trade missions from Ireland and Mexico.

*Agritourism.* An ongoing statewide Agritourism Initiative is aimed at increasing income for Tennessee farmers and their communities. Primary partners include the Tennessee Departments of Agriculture, Tourist Development, Economic and Community Development, Transportation, and the University of Tennessee Center for Profitable Agriculture with USDA Rural Development. Outreach efforts also include assistance to local governments and chambers of commerce interested in agritourism development. A vital part of this program is alerting consumers and potential tourists about farm-direct crops, like apples, pumpkins, or strawberries—and entertainment opportunities and activities, like corn mazes or crop festivals. The ultimate goal is to increase farm income and make a positive impact on rural communities in our state by identifying and promoting existing agri-tourism operations, and developing additional farm-based venues.

*Pick Tennessee Products.* Market Development's domestic services focus on disseminating updated information through the division's Web site, [www.picktnproducts.org](http://www.picktnproducts.org). The aim of the promotional campaign is to increase consumer awareness of high quality, locally grown and processed food, and other products. Participation in the program by Tennessee manufacturers, growers, and retailers results in increased sales of Tennessee products as consumers learn to recognize and choose products featuring the "Pick Tennessee Products" logo.

*Tennessee Ag Tag.* The specialty license plate funding the Tennessee Agricultural Development Fund pays thousands of dollars annually to agricultural organizations across the state for projects involving agricultural or forestry market development, public awareness, information, and education. Ag Tags serve as traveling billboards for the "Pick Tennessee Products" promotion and have helped unify the state's agricultural industry with a single positive image.

*Market News Service.* Market Development assists farmers in the areas of price discovery and in packaging through Livestock Grading Services. Fruit and vegetable grading is provided through a joint program with USDA.

*Agricultural Fairs.* Fairs are a tradition and the department proudly supports some fifty agricultural fairs and livestock shows held each year throughout the state. In addition to showcasing the best of Tennessee agriculture, these events are a source of education, community pride and enjoyment. More than 3 million people attend a fair in Tennessee each year.

*Tennessee Agricultural Museum.* The museum is the department's outreach program to provide school children and adults an appreciation for agriculture's importance—past and present. About 25,000 visitors each year view the museum's 2,600 artifacts and participate in educational activities.

**Regulatory Services** — Regulatory Services is responsible for checking the quality of agricultural inputs for the benefit of farmers and assuring the quality of agricultural outputs for consumer protection, public safety and a fair marketplace.

**Animal Diagnostics.** The C.E. Kord Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory provides a variety of diagnostic services in support of animal disease detection and animal health regulatory programs. Services range from animal export and import health certification to diagnostic support for practicing veterinarians, individual farmers and companion animal owners.

**Agricultural Inputs.** This section ensures the safety and effectiveness of agricultural products for all Tennesseans. Animal feed, seed, fertilizer and agricultural lime products are inspected for proper labeling, and analyses are performed to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

**Animal Health.** TDA is the common denominator between state and federal regulators, private veterinarians and livestock industries for animal disease surveillance, diagnosis and protection. Increased monitoring for potentially devastating animal health problems is part of the department's ongoing emergency planning and Homeland Security efforts. A portion of Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program funding is helping to improve and protect livestock health in the state through expanded diagnostic services, animal identification, increased access to veterinarian care, and through the promotion of livestock health management practices and record-keeping to increase the marketability of Tennessee livestock.

**Dairy.** TDA inspects dairy farms, dairy plants, milk transport trucks, dairy and trade product distributors, and milk samplers. Every dairy product offered for sale must be registered with the department.

**Food and Drug.** All retail food stores are inspected at least twice yearly. Food manufacturers, warehouses and distributors are also inspected. Other responsibilities include shell egg inspections, bottled water regulations, custom slaughterhouse inspections, hazardous substance inspection and labeling, nutritional labeling, and the enforcement of state tobacco laws regarding sales to minors.

**Laboratory Services.** The L.H. "Cotton" Ivy Laboratory provides quality analytical data in a safe, timely and efficient manner. The laboratory consists of biological services, including animal diagnostics and food microbiology; chemical services, comprised of toxicology, food residue services, and environmental monitoring; and feed, seed, and fertilizer testing.

**Pesticides.** TDA registers all pesticides, administers certification and licensing exams for commercial and private applicators, inspects and regulates pest control businesses, as well as monitors the state's groundwater supply. The department also enforces agricultural pesticide Worker Protection Standards to ensure farm worker and pesticide applicator safety.

**Petroleum Quality.** The department verifies accurate octane rating labeling and the exclusion of harmful impurities in petroleum products.

**Plant Certification.** Nursery, greenhouse and plant dealer certification programs ensure the continued movement of healthy, pest-free plant material in interstate and international trade. The phytosanitary condition of plants coming into the state is also monitored. Some of the pests of major concern include gypsy moths, imported fire ants, Japanese beetles and boll weevils—all of which threaten Tennessee's forests, nurseries and major crops.

**Weights and Measures.** Commercially used weighing and measuring devices such as fuel pumps, scales and liquid propane gas meters are tested for accuracy and related requirements. Inspections are also conducted to ensure proper labeling, correct packaged product net quantity and price scanner accuracy.

## Related Boards and Commissions

**State Soil Conservation Committee** — In 1939 the Tennessee General Assembly passed the Soil Conservation District Act, creating the State Soil Conservation Committee. The committee assisted with the formation of soil conservation districts in all 95 counties, and today it continues to provide overall guidance and leadership to the state's soil and water conservation efforts. The committee advises the Commissioner of Agriculture and helps develop the state's plan for controlling agricultural-related nonpoint source pollution. Other duties include assisting the supervisors of soil conservation districts in carrying out their programs, coordinating such programs and assisting with watershed treatment programs.

**Tennessee Forestry Commission** — This seven-member panel appointed by the governor with three ex-officio members provides guidance on program and policy development regarding forest resource programs of the department. The commission advises the Commissioner of Agriculture and the Governor on matters pertaining to forest protection, management, reforestation and related educational activities. Other responsibilities include reviewing the annual forestry budget and submitting an annual report of program accomplishments.

**Tennessee Tobacco Farmers Certifying Board** — Created by the General Assembly in 1999, this board was authorized to develop plans for distributing Tennessee's share of the National Tobacco Growers Settlement Trust, commonly known as Phase II, to the state's burley tobacco growers and quota owners. The fourteen-member board consists of the Governor, Commissioner of Agriculture, State Attorney General, two legislative members, two congressional members, three to six tobacco farmers, and one distinguished citizen appointed by the Governor. In 2004, federal legislation passed which voided funding for Trust; however, the board will remain active until the terms of the Phase II agreement expires in 2014.

### Commissioner Ken Givens

Tennessee Department of Agriculture

**Commissioner Ken Givens** was appointed by Governor Phil Bredesen and became Tennessee's 34th commissioner of agriculture on Jan. 18, 2003. Givens is a native of Rogersville where he grew up in dairy, beef cattle and tobacco farming. He is a U.S. Army veteran and holds a bachelor's degree in history and political science and a master's degree in political science from East Tennessee State University. 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 took a special interest in school health issues, sponsoring and passing legislation that created pilot programs for the model school health initiative, now expanded statewide. In April 2004, Governor Bredesen named Givens Chairman of the Governor's Task Force on Methamphetamine Abuse to develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing the manufacture, trafficking and abuse of the drug, which has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of homegrown meth labs. Givens serves on the Tennessee Homeland Security Council, representing the department in animal health, chemical use, food safety and other security matters. He is past-president of the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture (SASDA) and currently serves as president of the Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA). As commissioner of agriculture, he also serves on The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees, the Board of Regents for the State University and Community College System, and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission.

