

## Our past, your future: 100 years of transforming Tennessee

Calendar year 2010 marks a century of University of Tennessee Extension and 4-H in Tennessee.

That's 100 years of educational outreach and service to the state's farmers, families and youth to enhance their quality of life.

Extension and 4-H in Tennessee predate the passage of the 1914 Smith-Lever Act through which Congress established

a national network of professional agricultural agents and family and consumer scientists to help in the education and economic development of rural America. In 1910, two individuals were employed as county-based agents to help with cotton production and home canning, and in early 1911 the movement to

help rural Tennesseans on the farm and in the home spread to six West Tennessee counties. On July 1, 1914, some 20 county agents, 22 home demonstration agents and eight additional staff and faculty were organized under the Smith-Lever Act as part of the University of Tennessee Division of Extension.

Today, as the outreach unit of the UT Institute of Agriculture, UT Extension operates an office in every county and delivers educational programs using research-based information to farmers, families, youth and communities in both rural and urban settings. Educational programs range from gardening and landscaping to nutrition, animal health and family money management. The programs are available to all county residents, often at no charge.

"For 100 years Extension agents have represented a two-way link between Tennesseans and university specialists, scientists and researchers," says Dr. Tim Cross, dean of UT Extension. "That special relationship and the education and economic development that it fosters are the hallmarks of Extension," he said.

"Last year UT Extension had more than 4.8 million contacts with Tennessee citizens and the overall economic impact of these activities returned more than \$343 million in estimated economic benefits," Cross said.

In announcing a yearlong Centennial Celebration of Extension and 4-H to faculty and staff, Cross emphasized the importance

of commemorating 100 years of the organizations' combined service to the citizens of the state. "While the economy continues to show little to no growth and additional state budget reductions are likely, a centennial only happens once in an organization's history," he said. "Recognizing this unique opportunity, we will observe our Centennial throughout 2010, acknowledging the anniversary during our everyday programs. We will acknowledge the many impacts we have made while being good stewards of our financial resources."

He hopes the celebration will also serve to increase awareness of UT Extension programs and therefore expand their outreach to new audiences, including youth.

With the help of local adult volunteers, Extension's 4-H youth development program helps young people from 9 to 19 develop self-esteem, leadership and citizenship skills and gain knowledge in a wide range of subjects. From health to public speaking or photography or GPS tracking, 4-H programs supplement traditional learning with directed projects that encourage advanced education. With nearly 302,000 members statewide, Tennessee has one of the largest 4-H

memberships in the nation.

In addition to school-based and local activities, three 4-H camps throughout the state offer youth summer camping experiences and school-based outdoor science educational programs.

Throughout 2010, UT Extension and 4-H will celebrate the organizations'

first century of accomplishments. What might those include? Just one example from the agronomic perspective is how Extension education and better farming practices have helped increase yields of corn in Tennessee from 25 bushels per acre during the early part of last century to an average of 139 bushels per acre in 2009. USDA statistics record that total corn production in the state was the same in 2009 as it was in 1910 (80.6 million bushels versus 82 million bushels). However, in 2009 only about one-fifth of the land

was needed to produce a similar harvest (about 3.3 million acres in 1910 versus about 590,000 acres in 2009). Cross says each county will offer local activities that will offer individuals a chance to join the celebration.

He hopes to involve all state residents in Centennial celebration events. "We will be integrating our celebration into our ongoing programs at the club, county and state levels all year long," he said.

"Everyone's invited!" Formore information about UT Extension activities, contact the local county UT Extension office, located at 302 South Third St., Union City, at 885-3742.

Information about the UT Extension Centennial can be found online at <http://utextension.tennessee.edu/100years>.

**Obion County History**  
Though the Extension Service was not officially established until 1914,

many counties hired agents to do work in several of the Tennessee counties before then.

Records indicate that J.B. Skinner became the first agricultural agent in Obion County in 1911. In 1917, Eva P. Luther was hired as the first home economics agent. Both of these positions carried 4-H responsibilities.

On Oct. 13, 1913, the first farm school meeting, which was free and open to the public, was held. It was conducted by J.C. McAmis who worked with the agriculture program in the county.

The first 4-H event was held in conjunction with the county fair in 1929. The fair was hosted by the Lions Club and neighboring counties were invited to place prize of a \$50 war bond during a regional home demonstration competition in the 1960s. The visitors stayed in the homes of Obion County 4-Hers. They

record book to receive an award. Prizes were \$200 in cash and expense-paid trips. They also had a canning contest of eight categories from tomatoes to soup. The first prize was \$1.

Mrs. Claude Berry, Mrs. A.L. Burrus and W.M. Boyds were the 4-H Club leaders at the fair.

It was not until 1945 that Graham P. Wright was hired to work as the first full-time 4-H agent. That year, Obion County was only one of the 12 counties in the state to have a full-time 4-H agent.

Four years later, Dorothy Hay was hired as a home economics assistant Extension agent to work with the 4-H Club full time. She added cooking and canning to 4-H. Ms. Hay and Wright led 4-Hers in judging teams and county fair events.

Currently, Tim Smith, Extension agent and director, is responsible for the adult agriculture programs and also is the administrator of the office. Benita Giffin is in charge of the Family and Consumer Science for adult audiences and the Tennessee Nutrition Education Program. Jan Allison is the administrative support assistant for all agents in the office. Una Baker has responsibilities with the youth in 4-H groups fourth through 12th grades. The newest Extension agent is Adam McCall. He has responsibilities of 75 percent adult agriculture and 25 percent youth activities. He is a native of Dyer County.

The office, which is located at 302 South Third St. in Union City, is open weekdays from 8 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. It is closed New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Good Friday, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the week of Christmas.

For more information, call 885-3742.

### Obion County Agents

Extension agents who have served Obion County include J.B. Skinner (1911-13), J.C. McAmis (1913-17) C.E. Carter (1917-17), Eva P. Luther (1917-21), T.H. Dougherty (1918-19), Gilbert L. Cleland (1926-34), Cora Lynn Lowe (1929-31), Erin Tice (1932-43), Franklin Yates (1934-40), T.B. Garth (1941-55), Bennie L. Jones (1943-47), Graham P. Wright (1945-48), Ruth Holmes Osborne (1947-51), Dorothy Hay (1949-51), Marvin W. Belew, (1949-52), Angie Worley (1951-55), Carolyn F. Pritchard (1951-52), James T. Guill (1952-54), Betty J. Bell Carpenter (1953-56), James W. Workman (1954-59), Richard H. Pearson (1955-57), Cora S. Livingston (1955-66), Frances H. Perry (1956-57), Thomas C. McCutchen (1957-63), Charlotte P. Lake (1957-59), Wanda J. Wilson (1959-60), Joseph Leon Dixon (1959-61), Richard W. Couch (1961-63), Claire T. McCollum (1961-93), Guy E. Robbins (1963-64), Joseph M. Martin (1963-83), James T. Guill (1964-66), Doris E. Mitchell (1966-68), Charles "Charlie" Grooms (1966-97), Cheryl B. Matthews (1968-71), Retta A. Christopher (1971-78), John S. Woolfolk (1973-75), Sammy P. Elgin (1975-78), Robert F. "Bob" Montgomery (1978-97), Loretta Sparr (1979-84), Amy Diane Henderson (1984-86), Timothy R. Smith (1985-present), Benita G. Giffin (1988-present), Michele Sides (1994-96), Lauren Walters (1996-97), Gerald Claywell (1997-98), Amy Higdon (1997-98), Dwight Melton (1998-99), Gwen Joyner (1998-2003), Eric Walker (1999-2000), Gretchen Rozeboom (1999-2000), Ranson Goodman (2002-08), Una Baker (2005-present) and Adam McCall (hired Jan. 4, 2010).

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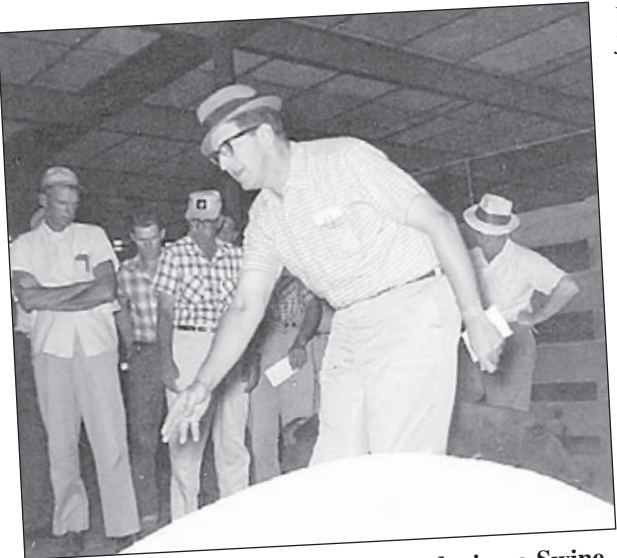
Harry Bushart (right) of near McConnell showed Extension agent Tom McCutchen his labor-saving hog-feeding operation in the 1960s. A nearby mill and mixing machine delivered the feed through two overhead augers to four feeders in Bushart's pig parlor.



Ann Huey of Obion County won the first-place prize of a \$50 war bond during a regional home demonstration competition in the 1960s.



The University of Tennessee Extension Service is celebrating 100 years of serving the citizens of this great state. The Obion County office, located at 302 South Third St. in Union City, is open weekdays from 8 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. It is staffed by Extension agents (from left) Adam McCall, Benita Giffin and Una Baker, administrative support assistant Jan Allison and Extension agent and director Tim Smith. For information on programs offered by the local Extension office, call 885-3742.



Bill Tanner explained grading hogs during a Swine Field Day in July 1962.



The active Junior Livestock Association in 1964 was headed by (seated, from left) Mary Dee Garrigan of Woodland Mills, reporter; Jim Sowell of Woodland Mills, vice president; Donna Neill of Rives, secretary; (standing) Dicky Jones of Obion; Larry Harris of Hornbeak; Ronnie Moore of Troy; Bob Miller of Obion; and Dale True of Dixie community.



University of Tennessee Extension agent Tim Smith showed 4-Her Terry Dozier the proper techniques of archery during an Obion County 4-H summer camp held in the 1980s at the Buford Ellington 4-H Center in Milan.

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