Tennessee Extension Advisory Council

2015 Council Members

Mr. Richard Brown
County: Putnam
Representing: Central
Term: 2015-2017
Area: 4-H

Richard Brown grew up in the Upper Cumberland area of Middle Tennessee. His family has been involved in agriculture for generations. Richard participated in 4-H as a youth and has an appreciation for the youth program. Richard spent the early part of his career managing Hyder Burks Pavilion at Tennessee Tech University. He was responsible for managing the Pavilion staff and coordinating events that included livestock shows and sales, training sessions, meetings, etc. These events included hosting the Tennessee State Sheep Expo as well as other 4-H activities. In May 2005, Richard joined the Tennessee Livestock Producers to assist in Beef Alliance and Genetic Development. He travels across the state visiting with beef cattle producers providing assistance to improve the quality of beef cattle and improve marketing opportunities for beef cattle. He has worked closely with several aspects of Extension’s beef cattle educational program. Richard and his wife, Tina, have two daughters and work on the family farm in the Putnam/Overton County area raising Angus and commercial beef cattle.

Ms. Mary Lou Burch
County: Grainger
Representing: Eastern
Term: 2014-2016
Area: FCS

Mary Lou Burch has been an active partner with UT Extension for years. She has contributed to the success of the Family and Community Education Clubs in Grainger County, in the Eastern Region, and Statewide. She has served in various roles on all levels with the latest being State FCE president. Mary Lou has served on the TNCEP coalition and participated in several programming activities. She has also been an active 4-H volunteer for 16 years. She has served on the local FCS advisory committee and participated in the FCS focus group, as well.
Mr. John Butler

County: Dyer  
Representing: Western  
Term: 2014-2016  
Area: ANR/ CED

John grew up on a diversified farm in Dyer County and was active in FFA. John attended Mississippi State University where he earned a BS in Animal Science. Following graduation, John was hired by Cargill and quickly rose up the ranks to a manager position in Alabama. Upon hearing of his dad’s intention to sell the family farm and retire, John moved back home and assumed ownership and control of his long-time family farm. Today, John farms nearly 3,000 acres in Dyer County, including a complete row crop operation and a 500 head herd cow/calf operation.

John is an active supporter of agriculture in Tennessee, being active in Farm Bureau in his community, region, and state. John has been an outspoken proponent of UT Extension, particularly the 4-H program. Through John’s leadership and persistence, a committee was formed to promote and support the idea of a new 4-H center in West Tennessee to replace the Buford Ellington 4-H Center in Milan, which closed in 2009.

Mr. Mack Carter, Jr.

County: Hardeman  
Representing: Western  
Term: 2014-2016  
Area: Agriculture

Mack Carter, Jr. grew up on a small farm in Shaw, Mississippi. He received a bachelor’s degree in Physical Science and Biology from Mississippi Vocational College and a Masters of Science degree in Chemistry from Fisk University. He later received a Masters of Business Administration degree from Michigan State University. Mack held numerous executive positions at Chrysler until his retirement in 1999. He and his family then moved back to Hornsby, TN. He has served as the President of the Southwest TN Landowners Interest Group and a USDA Farm Service Agency loan officer. He currently serves as a board member of the Hardeman County Chamber of Commerce and is the Mayor of the city of Hornsby.
Mrs. Lucy Deal
County: Coffee
Representing: Central
Term: 2014-2016
Area: FCS

Lucy grew up on a farm in Coffee County as one of six children. For years, her mother was an active Home Demonstration Club member. Coffee County Extension has been a part of most of Lucy’s life. Currently, Lucy lives with her husband, Charles, and her daughter, Mindy. She retired 10 years ago after 36 years of teaching, the last 28 of which were spent as an elementary school librarian. She also taught Sunday school for 20 years.

Lucy’s favorite retirement activity is participating in FCE, local, county, region, and state. Lucy’s three sisters and daughter are all members of the same local club, as well. Lucy also enjoys participating in three county quilt guilds, where she has served as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Guild community service projects include: a quilt for every family receiving a Habitat for Humanity house, and a quilt for each sick child and family residing at the Ronald McDonald House in Nashville. In addition, Lucy personally makes and donates two hand-crafted quilts each year. An avid supporter of the local county fair, Lucy exhibits between 174 to 200 items every year in flowers, garden produce, crafts, baked goods, canning/food preservation, and quilt categories.

Mrs. Brooke Glover Emery
County: Dyer
Representing: Western
Term: 2014-2016
Area: FCS

Brooke Glover Emery has been engaged with Family & Consumer Sciences and Extension her entire life. The child of a farmer and UT Martin Professor, Brooke’s parents met at 4-H camp in Milan. For the past 20 years, Brooke has been actively involved with Extension program Planning and Delivery. In 2007, she was recognized with the Friend of 4-H Award.

Brooke created Mall Mania, a 4-H youth consumer education event held at the Dyersburg Mall, which she has managed for 12 years. This event won a national award from the Retail Merchants Association. Brooke also has a genuine interest in serving the community, especially families challenged with circumstances, economics, and disabilities. She has helped found the Disaster Recovery Service and the Dream Factory of Dyersburg, Inc.

Married to Mr. Joe Emery, Senior Vice President of Security Bank, the couple enjoys three daughters who are members of Dyer County 4-H. Brooke is also a Marketing Assistant Professor at Union University.
Mr. Matt Fennel  
County: Dyer  
Representing: Western  
Term: 2015-2017  
Area: 4-H

Matt was born and raised in Obion County, Tennessee. Matt was a very active 4-H member and participated in numerous local, state, and national events. Matt attended UT Martin, where he majored in Agricultural Business. Matt was active in collegiate 4-H, FFA, and his fraternity, Alpha Gamma Rho. After graduation, Matt worked as an insurance agent for Farm Bureau. In 2012, Matt changed roles and began his current position as Field Representative for Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. In this role, Matt is involved in many 4-H and Extension events and activities across West Tennessee.

Ms. Claire Garrell  
County: Marshall  
Representing: At Large  
Term: 2013-2015  
Area: 4-H

Claire is currently serving as the 2012-2013 Tennessee 4-H Secretary. She has been in 4-H for the past 6 years and has participated in the Public Speaking/Communications Project. Claire is a senior at Cornersville High School.
Mrs. Heather Griffin

County: Chester
Representing: Western
Term: 2015-2017
Area: FCS

Heather Griffin is a native of West Tennessee and attended college at Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tennessee. She graduated with honors and a degree in Physical Education. Immediately following graduation, Heather worked for six years as a science and physical education teacher in Chester County. Beginning in 2007, Heather assumed responsibility for leading the Coordinated School Health program in Chester County. In that role, she has been very successful in grantsmanship and education, and was awarded the Chester County Volunteer of the Year award in 2011. She has been a very active partner with UT Extension during her entire career in Chester County.

Ms. Kathy Hopkins

County: Anderson
Representing: Eastern
Term: 2013-2015
Area: 4-H

Kathy serves as the hospitality director for the Girl Scout Council of the Southern Appalachians. Her food service, nutrition, and horticulture background allows her to create, implement, and assist in programs for the Girl Scout members that teach them life skills and much needed nutritional information. Recent programs such as From the Ground to the Table, and Culinary Journeys are part of where her time and energy is spent. Serving the food service needs of members (GSCSA has 13,835 members) and the non-member guests at the various GSCSA properties is also part of her responsibility. Her passion for making a difference in today's youth has been put to use by serving as a member and chair for the TN 4-H Volunteer Leaders, serving as member and president of the Knox County 4H Volunteer Leaders, and serving as 4-H volunteer leader for the Smoky Mountain Home School Club.
Mr. Sam Latham

County: Davidson
Representing: Central
Term: 2015-2017
Area: TSU

Sam Latham is CEO of ONYX Marketing Group, LLC and the editor and publisher of ONYX tn, a monthly magazine published by OMG, targeted to African Americans living in the Greater Nashville community. After graduating from Tennessee State University with a BS degree in Biology, Latham began his career teaching high school biology at Cameron High School in Nashville. While at Cameron, he was recruited by Marketing Resources of America to join the New York-based company to enter a management and marketing development position at the company's Nashville location, serving Tennessee, Kentucky and Alabama. Within a year, Latham was promoted to manager of the 3-state division. As part of his development, he entered the MBA program at the University of Tennessee, Nashville (now Tennessee State University). Latham finished one year of the two year program due to the time requirement following his decision to start his own publishing company. However, he continued to attend workshops and seminars related to marketing and management, staying abreast of current knowledge and best practices in the field. Latham is involved in many community and civic endeavors in the Nashville area. He serves as a volunteer tutor for inner-city kids and is the advisor for the Fisk University student newspaper.

He was born and raised in Sweetwater, Tennessee. Latham is married to Adrienne, the Alumni Director at Fisk University. Together, they have three children and five grandchildren.

Mr. Bobby Love

County: Warren
Representing: Central
Term: 2015-2017
Area: ANR/CED

Mr. Love is a nursery grower, cow-calf producer, and row crop producer on a 500 acre farm in Warren County. Mr. Love repeatedly follows University of Tennessee Extension recommendations for his practices, which he learns from the Extension Master Beef Program. He was the first farmer in the area to sow crabgrass as forage. With ties and involvement with Farm Bureau, the Caney Fork Rural Electric Cooperative, Nursery Associations, and other local organizations, Mr. Love has a keen mind with regard to issues, concerns, and needs of the Agricultural community. Mr. Love has the knowledge and abilities to offer solid, sound, and prudent advice that can further Extension programming.
Mr. Eric Trent McVay  
County: Shelby  
Representing: Western  
Term: 2014- 2016  
Area: Agriculture  

Trent McVay was born and raised in Shelby County and was very active in the 4-H Club during his elementary and high school years. He participated in livestock and forestry judging, public speaking, and livestock shows. Mr. McVay and his wife Donnie own and operate a farm that includes beef cattle, a peach orchard, and vegetables. He has grown and marketed fruits and vegetables for the past 20 years. Mr. McVay earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education (Aug 1978) and a Master’s Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision (Dec 1982) from Memphis State University. Mr. McVay retired from Shelby County Schools in June 2008, after serving for 30 years as an educator. During these years, he served as a band director, an assistant principal, a vice principal, a principal, and Director of Intervention and Alternative Services. Mr. McVay is presently serving on the Governor’s Advisory Board for Alternative Education (Tennessee) and the Board of Directors of Alliance Healthcare Services.

Mr. Gary Moore  
County: Williamson  
Representing: Central  
Term: 2015- 2017  
Area: ANR/ CED  

Gary has been involved in agriculture and farming all of his life. He began in production ag by raising crops such as corn, wheat, soybeans, tobacco, hay, and a commercial truck farming operation. He also had a beef cattle herd and a small swine operation. After high school, he attended MTSU, where he received a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Agriculture, majoring in Plant and Soil Science. Following graduation from MTSU, he began a career with the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service. He worked and retired from the NRCS with 37 years of service in the conservation of natural resources on many farms across the state as a district conservationist in many counties. Immediately after retiring, he began and currently holds a full time job with The Land Trust for Tennessee in the area of farm and farmland conservation and protection with once again statewide responsibilities.
Ms. Debby Morgan
County: Union
Representing: Eastern
Term: 2014-2016
Area: 4-H

Debby Morgan and her husband, both former Extension personnel, serve as 4-H Volunteer Leaders in Union County and have done so for the past 15 years. Those involved in 4-H are able to participate in the sheep project through the “lease a sheep” opportunity that the Morgans provide. Debby believes in 4-H as a way to involve youth in leadership and citizenship learning as well as skill building. Debby has knowledge and skills that she is happy to share with the Extension program.

Ms. Gayle Quick
County: Tipton
Representing: Western
Term: 2015-2017
Area: 4-H

Gayle Quick is a 4-H volunteer leader in Shelby County. She and her family live on a small farm in North Shelby County. She began serving, as an assistant coach for the Shelby County 4-H Forestry team. She was dedicated to this team and helped them reach their goal of becoming not only State Champions but also, the 2012 National 4-H Forestry Invitational Champions. She has represented the Shelby County Volunteer Leaders Association as a member, as their Secretary and in 2014 began serving as the President. Gayle has seen her three children grow in many ways due to their involvement in the 4-H program. She believes that helping children get involved in 4-H and assisting the 4-H agents where they need assistance, will help 4-H continue to change lives for the better.

Ms. Connie Rigsby
Council Co-Chair
County: Cannon
Representing: Central
Term: 2013-2015
Area: FCS

Connie currently serves as the director of the Saint Clair Street Senior Center in Murfreesboro. She has previously worked as executive director of the Cannon County Senior Citizens Center in Woodbury, TN. She held this position for 11 years. In addition to this she is serving as the president of the Tennessee Association of Senior Centers.
Ms. Tonya Rooks
County: Hamilton
Representing: Eastern
Term: 2015-2017
Area: FCS

Since 2009, Tonya Rooks, as a passionate advocate for underserved communities, has generously given her time and talent to many service-based organizations. She currently works for First Things First as a Recruiter/case manager and facilitates a focus group to help individuals break barriers so they can become self-sufficient. She also attends Cleveland State Community College, majoring in social work/human services. In 2012, Tonya graduated from the City of Chattanooga’s Neighborhood Leadership Institute, and also, she received the Impact Award from United Way. She has worked for Eastdale Family Dentistry as a recruiter, signing low income families up for dental hygiene services and transportation. She also served as President of one the city’s largest low income housing sites bringing resources to help strengthen families. She currently serves on the Hamilton County Health Department Preventive Health Board and on the board of Tennessee Department of Transportation’s construction project for I27. Tonya Rooks lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Ms. Sharon Suggs
County: Davidson
Representing: Central
Term: 2014-2016
Area: FCS

Sharon is the Nutrition Coordinator for Metropolitan Action Commission (MAC) and Adjutant Professor with Tennessee State University (TSU), Didactic Program in Nutrition and Dietetics and Foodservice Management, Department of Family & Consumer Sciences College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences. She administers a comprehensive nutrition services department with MAC: Head Start, Summer Foods, Before and After Care, and Nashville Aftercare Zone Alliance (NAZA) programs. She is an advocate of a healthier lifespan by promoting stakeholders’ understanding, knowledge and capabilities that can transform their lifestyles and impact their families and communities. Sharon has thirty-seven years in the profession of community, K-12 education, higher education and corporate nutrition and foodservice management and continues to create and promote vital pioneering health and well-being programs for change to stakeholders. Ms. Suggs is a graduate of TSU with an Eds. Administration and Supervision in Higher Education and a graduate of Alabama A&M with a MS and BS in Nutrition and Food Service Management.
Jamey Tosh is a partner of Tosh Farms. Jamey’s day-to-day roles at Tosh Farms involve management responsibilities with crops, genetics, and breeding (boar stud, gilt development barns, and sow units). Jamey completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Business from the University of Tennessee at Martin in December 2002 and has returned to the farm full-time. In ten years of farming, Jamey has won numerous awards including the West Tennessee Star Farmer award, the Henry County Young Farmer award twice, and the State Swine Production Entrepreneur Award, as well as the American FFA Degree in 2001. Jamey is active in the community, serving as the swine chairman and past president of the Henry County Fair Board, 4-H Alumni, vice president for Henry County Young Farmer and Ranchers for several years, and is an instructor at Murray State University teaching Swine Science. Jamey married his wife, Kathrine, in 2009. They have two sons, Brayden and Coleton.

Mr. James Tosh
County: Henry
Representing: At Large
Term: 2015-2017
Area: ANR/ CED

Mr. Jamie Weaver
County: Coffee
Representing: Central
Term: 2015-2017
Area: ANR/ CED

Mr. Weaver owns and operates Weaver Farms which is a diversified farming operation in Coffee and Franklin Counties. The operation consist of row crops, beef cows, retail pork, sweet corn, pumpkins, and grape vineyard. Jamie is very involved in several agricultural organizations, church, and the Coffee County Highway Commission. Before returning to the farm, Jamie graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in Animal Science where he was involved with several organizations on campus. Jamie grew up being very active in both 4-H and FFA. Jamie and his wife, Ashley, have two children, Sarah and Elliott.

Ms. Connie Wright
County: Rhea
Representing: Eastern
Term: 2015- 2017
Area: 4-H

Chair of Rhea County Agricultural committee. Connie has raised Angus beef cows and was a 4-H member in Tennessee. She is married to Tim with one daughter.
Current Ex-Officio Members

Dr. Thomas W. Broyles
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Dr. Broyles currently serves as the 4-H Youth Development State Program Leader with Tennessee State University (TSU) College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences. Dr. Broyles provides statewide leadership working with 4-H county agents and state faculty as a program leader of an 1890 land-grant institution. Prior to taking this position in 2013, Dr. Broyles was a faculty member in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at Virginia Tech. Also, at Virginia Tech, Dr. Broyles served as the Director of the Virginia Governor’s School for Agriculture. Dr. Broyles earned a B.S. in Animal Science from Virginia Tech, an M.S. in Vocational Education from Virginia Tech, and a Ph.D. in Career and Technical Education from Virginia Tech.

Dr. Roy Bullock
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In 2000, as a result of a Memorandum of Understanding between Tennessee State University and The University of Tennessee, Bullock was assigned to lead and coordinate the development of a proactive state small farms educational program. This assignment provided a 60/40 percent split between TSU and UT respectively. Dr. Bullock holds the rank of Extension Professor. In addition to his small farm responsibilities he serves in many other capacities to include: Agriculture program leader for county operations; Co-Chair of the 5th & 6th National Small Farms Conference; Leader for TSU Specialty Crops located at the Agricultural Research and Education Center in Cheatham County; member of the TSU Extension Leadership Team; 1890 Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Committee; TSU Extension Program Council; Joint TSU/UT Program Leaders Planning Committee; Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE) State Coordinator; Southern Region IPM Advisory Board/Steering Committee; Chair, Tennessee Small Farms Committee composed of members from various state and USDA federal agencies. Prior to his work with the small farms program, Bullock served The University of Tennessee as an Associate Professor and Extension Weed Scientist.
Dr. Robert Burns
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Robert serves as Assistant Dean and State Program Leader for UT Extension Agricultural and Natural Resources and Resource Development programs. In this position he supports the efforts of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture academic departments, the Soil Plant and Pest Center, the Center for Profitable Agriculture and the 95 county Extension offices across Tennessee in their Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources program planning and delivery efforts. Prior to serving as Assistant Dean, Robert served as an Extension Specialist at the University of Tennessee and at Iowa State University where he conducted applied research and extension programming focused on animal manure and agricultural waste management.

Dr. Richard Clark
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Dr. Richard Clark is the Assistant Dean and Department Head for 4-H/ Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications at the University of Tennessee. His academic, administrative, and extension career has spanned a variety of institutions including Virginia Tech, The Pennsylvania State University, The Ohio State University, Rutgers University, and the University of Illinois. His most previous position was the Associate Director for the Agriculture Education Program and the Interim Assistant Dean and Director of 4-H Youth Development at the University of Illinois Extension. While in that position, he assisted with designing a strategy to expand the international component of the programs by both introducing a global perspective in local 4-H programs and increasing the involvement by faculty and staff in international experiences. Clark became involved in professional collaborations in Canada, Cuba, Palau, and China. Clark also taught many undergraduate and graduate level courses, among other achievements. Clark looks forward to improving the University of Tennessee Extension 4-H programs as he takes on his new role with the Department.
Dr. Tim Cross

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Dr. Tim Cross serves as Dean of University of Tennessee Extension. Cross, an agricultural economist by training, has served as a faculty member at UT and other institutions. He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees at Oklahoma State University in 1980 and 1982, respectively, and served as an instructor of agricultural economics, marketing and policy at Fort Hayes State University before pursuing his doctoral degree at Oregon State University. After receiving his Ph.D. from Oregon State in 1991, Cross continued to serve on the faculty of that institution until 1994, when he came to UT as an associate professor of agricultural economics with the UT Agricultural Extension Service. Cross was responsible for developing and delivering educational programs concerning the economics of livestock management, animal waste management, forage production, and sustainable agriculture. By 1998 he had achieved the rank of professor, and in 2001 was named as assistant dean of UT Extension. In 2006 he earned the title of associate dean. As a UT administrator, Cross has been instrumental in establishing and maintaining partnerships with other units of the Institute and the University, external organizations, state and federal agencies, and other groups.

Dr. Frank Hale

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Frank is an Entomology Professor for the University of Tennessee Extension with statewide educational programs for the management of insect and mite pests of horticultural plants [turf (sports turf, sod, golf course, and landscape), ornamental plants (nursery, landscape, greenhouse, interiorscape), fruits (small fruit and tree fruit), vegetables (greenhouse and field grown)] and tobacco. Since 1992, he has provided entomological support for UT and TSU Agricultural Extension Agents in all 95 counties. Frank is the Coordinator for Plant Pest Diagnostics at the Soil, Plant and Pest Center (SPPC) in Nashville. In that capacity, he also works closely with the National Plant Diagnostic Network to increase the diagnostic capabilities at the SPPC. An important educational outreach for pests and diseases of plants is the award winning SPPC Facebook page. The Social Media Team for the SPPC
composed of Dr. Alan Windham, Dr. Hale, Dr. Darrell Hensley and Debbie Joines were recipients of the 2015 Southern Region IPM Center Friends of IPM – Bright Idea Award. Invasive pests are a serious problem in Tennessee and across the country. Frank is serving as State Survey Coordinator for the Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey which is a cooperative agreement between the USDA APHIS and UT to conduct state surveys for exotic pests, diseases and weeds of concern.

Dr. Latif Lighari

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Dr. Lighari serves as the Associate Dean for Extension for the College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences at Tennessee State University. In this capacity, he assists the Dean of the College and Administrator for Extension in the day to day operation of the TSU Extension Program. He works with the UT/TSU Extension Program Leaders, UT Extension administration, UT Extension Regional Directors and UT Regional Program leaders to plan, implement, evaluate and report on the TSU Extension Plans Of work as well as annual impacts reports. He is also responsible for the programs, personnel and the budget management of the TSU Cooperative Extension Program. Prior to this job, he served as the Director of South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service and the Associate Dean of the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences at South Dakota State University. He has also served as the Associate Administrator of TSU Extension program (2000-2008), the District Extension administrator, the County Extension Coordinator and the County Extension Agriculture/4-H Agent (1984-2000) with the University of Connecticut Extension system. Before joining the Cooperative Extension Service, he taught vocational agriculture in Missouri.

Mrs. Hilda W. Lytle

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Hilda serves as County Director and Family & Consumer Science (FCS) Agent for UT/TSU Extension in Warren County. In this capacity she oversees an Extension staff of six along with responsibilities in FCS. Her major programming areas are health & safety and nutrition where she teaches classes for arthritis exercise, managing chronic conditions, healthy lifestyles, and nutrition education. She is a partial recipient of the Tennessee Nutrition & Consumer Education Program grant and serves as county lead agent in
cooperation with a nutrition program assistant. Hilda has been with Extension for over 30 years and continues to enjoy helping individuals, families, agencies, and businesses excel in their endeavors.

Mr. David Perrin

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David Perrin has been employed with UT Extension since 1984. He currently serves as the Eastern Region Agriculture Program Leader directing both adult and 4-H youth programs. Previous positions include Smoky Mountain District Agriculture Program Leader, Area Farm Management Specialist and Area Extension Agent. He received a B.S. and M.S. degree with The University of Tennessee Knoxville in Agricultural Mechanization. Prior to his Extension career, he served as a production supervisor with Ralston Purina Company. He is a 2014 graduate from the LEAD21 Land Grant System Leadership Program.

Dr. Chandra Reddy

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Dr. Reddy currently serves as the Dean and Director of Research/Administrator of Extension for the College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences (CAHNS) at Tennessee State University (TSU), a position he has held since 2008. In this position, he provides vision and leadership toward the pursuit of the land-grant mission of TSU, and has spearheaded extraordinary growth in the CAHNS. During his tenure, the college’s research outlays have expanded from $18 million to $55 million, Extension’s presence has expanded from 11 counties to 40, and several new academic and research facilities have been added or are in the process of being constructed. An agronomist by training, Dr. Reddy completed his Ph.D. and post-doctoral work at the University of Florida, and has since held positions with both Purdue and Alabama A&M. Recognized both nationally and internationally for his scholarship and administrative efforts, Dr. Reddy is the recipient of a number of honors and awards, including the 2008 George Washington Carver Agricultural Excellence Award, an honorary degree from the Tennessee FFA, a 2012 House Joint Resolution from the Tennessee State Legislature recognizing his contributions to TSU, an appointment to the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and
Economics (NAREEE) Advisory Board by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, and being named a Fellow of both the Soil Science Society of America and the American Society of Agronomy.

Ms. Izetta Slade

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Ms. Slade has worked in both the public and private sectors and has many years of strategic planning facilitation experience, working with higher education institutions. She has also worked with business and local government agencies to provide strategic planning, program facilitation, event planning, performance and organizational consulting, and other learning design services. Izetta is not the Interim Director of Extension Evaluation and Staff Development and Interim Human Resource Office for UTIA. She earned her B.S. in Business Administration from the University of South Carolina and an M.S. in Education from Texas A&M University. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Learning and Leadership at The University of Tennessee--Chattanooga.

Ms. Leslie Speller-Henderson

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Leslie Speller-Henderson serves as Family & Consumer Sciences Program Leader and Extension Specialist with the Tennessee State University (TSU) College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Sciences in the area of Nutrition Education and Food Safety. Mrs. Speller-Henderson provides statewide leadership working with Family and Consumer Sciences county agents and state faculty as a program leader of an 1890 Land-grant institution. She coordinates two federally funded programs: the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed). In addition, she facilitates educational outreach workshops to help individuals, families, agencies, organizations and communities identify and solve healthy food choice challenges. She teaches undergraduate food and nutrition courses at TSU and has taught at Nashville State Community College. Mrs. Speller-Henderson has a BS degree in foods and nutrition from Tennessee State University and MS degree in nutrition and hospitality management from Alabama A&M University.
Dr. Laura Stephenson

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Dr. Laura Stephenson joined UT Extension after 25 years with University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension. The veteran academic administrator is the Assistant Dean for UT Extension heading the Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) department. She received her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Home Economics Education and Vocational Education from Eastern Kentucky University and earned her Ph.D. in gerontology from the University of Kentucky.

The UT Extension’s Family and Consumer Sciences department includes faculty specialists and agents working in such areas as health, housing, parenting, money management and nutrition throughout the 95 counties of Tennessee. She previously served as Assistant Director for FCS Extension Programs at the University of Kentucky where she also was an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Family Sciences. She has been involved in a number of educational outreach projects such grandparents raising grandchildren, community engagement throughout the lifespan and a recycling effort to reduce waste in landfills.

Dr. Ben West

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Ben West serves as the Western Region Director for the University of Tennessee Extension, where he provides oversight for a unit encompassing 175 employees scattered across 31 counties in western Tennessee. Before taking this position and moving back to his home state of Tennessee in 2010, Ben was an Associate Professor and Extension Coordinator in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at Mississippi State University. Also at Mississippi State, Ben served as the National Outreach Coordinator for The Berryman Institute, where he developed and coordinated continuing education programs for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other organizations nationwide. Ben earned a B.S. in natural resources management at the University of Tennessee-Martin, an M.S. in wildlife from Virginia Tech, and a Ph.D. in wildlife from Utah State University. Ben has been an active member of his profession, having served on the review board for the Journal of Extension, as Associate Editor for the Wildlife Society Bulletin, President for the Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society, and chair of two national conferences.