UT Extension extends the knowledge and expertise of the University to the people of Tennessee through agents and specialists in all 95 counties of the state. Educational programs in 4-H youth development, agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, and resource development produce substantial returns to the state. Using research, questionnaires, observations, and sales records, an economic impact was estimated at more than $484 million from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012 for statewide educational programs.

Recurring Economic Impacts – over $270 million – 5,416 jobs created or maintained
Recurring economic values (increased revenue, increased savings, and one-time capital purchases) for up to two years after program:

Crop Variety Trials, Pest Control, and Irrigation
Tennessee farmers produce about 2.85 million acres of oilseed, grain and cotton crops. UT Extension crop variety testing data is used extensively by 80% of these farmers to select the seed that they use to plant their crops. Results from the variety testing program have helped farmers increase yields by identifying the varieties that will perform best in their farming operations. The higher yields have resulted in approximately $170 million in additional income annually to Tennessee farmers. Farmers reported $3.9 million in reduced pest control costs by following Extension recommendations for controlling insects, weeds, or plant diseases. Tennessee farmers increased the number of irrigated acres used for corn, cotton, and soybean production by 42,000 acres. Based on UT research, average yield increases from irrigation resulted in an additional $12.3 million in farm income. Based on an average cost of $900 per acre, Tennessee row crop producers in 2012 invested more than $38 million in their local economy by purchasing center pivot irrigation equipment.

4-H Centers
UT Extension operates three 4-H Centers across the state, providing summer camping and year-round educational experiences. The 4-H Centers are funded by user fees and provide an economic impact to the communities where they are located by employing staff and purchasing equipment, food, and supplies with a local annual impact of more than $2 million per location.

Forage Systems
UT Extension educated farmers on the benefits of warm-season grasses, clover, and stockpiling tall fescue. Extension also demonstrated hay storage and feeding methods to reduce waste and spoilage. A renewed emphasis was placed on broadleaf weed control. Tennessee farmers saved more than $33 million from better forage production, including following fertilizer recommendations, storage, and feeding practices.

Optimizing Beef Production
Tennessee beef producers depend on UT Extension’s expertise and unbiased services to optimize production and enhance profitability. Extension agents and specialists formulated 674 custom rations based on forage sample test results by the UT Soil, Plant and Pest Center. Past research has shown that each ration results in a mean savings of $1,125 in reduced annual feed costs. Tennessee beef producers realized $759,375 in reduced feed costs.

Optimizing Nursery, Fruit, and Vegetable Production
Tennessee nursery growers depend on UT Extension’s educational programs and plant, pest and soil diagnostic services to produce and market healthy crops. Growers realized more than $2.8 million in increased revenue or savings as a result of Extension recommendations. Tennessee’s commercial fruit and vegetable growers realized more than $493,600 in increased savings and revenue by following advice from Extension agents and specialists regarding variety selection, management, and marketing.
Community Leadership
Extension community leadership programs produced an estimated $1.3 million in increased revenue and capital purchases. Examples included assisting local charities to obtain grant funds and providing technical assistance to local organizations in making capital purchases.

Helping Horse Owners
Tennessee horse owners depend on UT Extension’s research-based programs for horse health and nutrition. In 2012, Extension agents and specialists focused educational programs for horse owners on feeding specific nutrient requirements for each class of horse, rotational grazing to increase forage production, vaccinations, dental care, and correct deworming practices. These practices helped 269 horse owners, owning more than 1,000 horses, to save a combined $2.1 million.

One-Time Economic Impacts – over $214 million
One-time non-recurring economic values

Nutrition Education
Family and Consumer Sciences nutrition education programs reach approximately two million annually through group meetings, worksite sessions, television, and radio programs. Nutrition education studies have found cost/benefit ratio of $1.00/$10.64. This translates to a return of over $144 million for the investment in UT Extension’s nutrition education programs for the state of Tennessee.

Health Literacy
Increasing health literacy and adopting healthy habits such as increasing exercise and participating in health screenings have shown to improve health and reduce the risk of many chronic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. For every dollar spent on UT Family and Consumer Sciences health education programs, $25 is saved on direct medical costs and indirect expenditures, resulting in a $48.4 million benefit to Tennessee.

Tennessee Saves
The Family and Consumer Sciences Tennessee Saves program teaches personal savings and financial management. 50% of participants increased their savings or investment, generating an annual estimated savings/investment of $4.4 million. In addition, 33% reduced debt an average of $208 per month, for a total estimated debt reduction of more than $1.1 million annually.

Tennessee 4-H Scholarships
UT Extension’s 4-H program is the largest youth development program in the state, serving more than 320,000 participants each year. Over 90 scholarships totaling $72,900 were awarded for travel and post-secondary education.

Better Beef Marketing
Experts estimate farmers earned an average of $8 per head more by managing cattle according to Extension’s beef quality assurance program and $25 per head by selecting bulls based on genetic potential. As a result of these programs, farmers realized $7.2 million in additional sales revenue.

Farm Financial Planning
UT Extension assisted farmers with preparing and implementing financial plans for their farms, increasing cash income by a combined $1.8 million this year.

Volunteerism
UT Extension agents and specialists managed volunteers for various programs and services. Volunteers extended the education offered by paid staff, and contacted over 800,000 additional Tennesseans through their service. Using the Independent Sector’s dollar value of a volunteer hour in Tennessee ($19.21/hour), the value of these volunteer efforts (358,092 hours served) was $6.8 million.

Cost-Benefit Analysis – $1 to $9.88
For every $1 in public funds invested in UT Extension programs, an estimated $9.88 is returned to the people of Tennessee.

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