

# 2015 University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Combined Research and Extension Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results Review

Status: Accepted

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2015 University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Combined Research and Extension Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results Review

**State:** Tennessee

**Institution(s):**

- University of Tennessee
- Tennessee State University

**Type of Report ( Check all that apply )**

- 1862 Research
- 1862 Extension
- 1890 Research
- 1890 Extension
- Tuskegee Research
- Tuskegee Extension

**NPL Reviewers:**

- Eric Norland

**Report Overview Section (Required):**

| Acceptable                          |                          |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| YES                                 | NO                       |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Executive summary. (Suggested in Guidance)                             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Total FTEs are included for each appropriate institution of the Report |

**Comments:**

As described in the Executive Summary, the University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University (hereafter UT&TSU) extension and research programs serve the needs of Tennesseans. These two land-grant universities discover new knowledge and extend it to 6.4 million residents in order that they may improve their lives, achieve their aspirations, and strengthen their communities and local economies. This is accomplished with accomplished scientists doing groundbreaking research and networks of extension educators located in county offices across the state who plan, deliver, and evaluate programs that meet the needs of their clientele.

The UT&TSU research and extension programs have a significant economic impact to the state, estimated to be \$511 million in FY 2015. It is further estimated that every \$1 of public funds invested in Extension, \$8.25 was returned to the residents of Tennessee.

UT&TSU Extension expands its reach and impact through trained volunteers who, together with the professional staff, made more than 5.2 million direct contacts. While many of these contacts may have been repeat contacts, were they all unique contacts, these universities would be reaching more than 80% of all Tennesseans. Regardless, they have achieved a reach and penetration to the vast majority of residents in one way or another.

These institutions utilize a reporting system that they developed and which has been demonstrated to Extension leaders in 20 states and is considered to be a national model of extension accountability.

The priority research areas being pursued in Tennessee align with NIFA's national research priorities which demonstrates that NIFA has identified priorities that are relevant and important to its state partners. Several examples of research and extension accomplishments are documented in the Executive Summary and throughout the report. Of particular note is the very substantial growth in faculty, programs, and research facilities at TSU.

The Executive Summary provides a comprehensive overview and description of the UT&TSU research and extension programs and would enable any reader to quickly understand the breadth, nature, and impact of these institutions' programs.

**Merit/Program Review Process Section (Required):**

| Acceptable                          |                          |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| YES                                 | NO                       |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | At least one process has been checked (including other) (required) |

**Comments:**

UT&TSU have well-established peer review processes that have been in place for several years. In the case of UT, an external panel of program planning and evaluation experts from Virginia Tech and University of Maryland reviewed the plan of work and found it to be of exceptional quality. The TSU extension program consists primarily of an internal university panel that reviews plans of work and annual reports.

The UT AgResearch program underwent a formal week-long review in February 2014 with a panel of external deans and directors of other ag research stations. Supported by a 200+ page self-study, the panel produced a written report which included several recommendations. The report and recommendations were review and discussed at AgResearch meetings and have influenced the efforts to increase research productivity. Additionally, UT AgResearch utilizes an online workplan submission process that enables review, comments, and revisions of work plans. The TSU research program continues to use a process that has been employed for several years: each planned program is reviewed by an internal panel; faculty proposals are evaluated for relevance, scientific soundness and appropriateness of planned outcomes, and a College administrator meets with every project leader twice a year to monitor progress and require remedial action if needed.

**Stakeholder Input Process Section (Required):**

| Acceptable                          |                          |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| YES                                 | NO                       |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (a) Actions taken to seek stakeholder input that encourages their participation (Required) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (b) Method used to identify groups and individuals (Required)                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (c) Method used for collecting stakeholder input (Required)                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | (d) A statement of how collected input will be considered (Required)                       |

**Comments:**

1. ACTIONS TAKEN - UT&TSU Research maintain regular contact with stakeholders and consult with them on program priorities and what their needs are. TSU works with a wide variety of agriculture and natural resources industry, interest, and commodity groups to seek stakeholder input. UT Institute of Agriculture has formed three Regional Advisory Councils to help guide programs and priorities. These councils are organized geographically based on Extension's regions. By using the same regions as Extension there is a stronger likelihood that the research and extension needs are discussed and integrated into a discovery-application approach to serving stakeholders. Each UT AgResearch department has an advisory group. These departmental groups meet once or twice a year and review current research programs and make recommendations on future activities. Membership in these advisory groups are based on invitations from the Department head or center director.

2. METHODS USED TO IDENTIFY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS - The foundation for identifying members for advisory committees is training that all TN Extension Agents receive in selecting needs assessment strategies and in selecting advisory committee members. The selection process include attention to ensuring that members are chosen who represent diversity in all of its measure and demographics. UT AgResearch makes a particular effort to seek out and engage clientele who have participated in programs and are thus knowledgeable about them. TSU Research utilizes a variety of strategies in identifying stakeholders. Input is collected in face-to-face discussions or survey instruments. Additionally, feedback has been received from the use of social media platforms.

3. METHODS USED TO COLLECT STAKEHOLDER INPUT - The System for University Planning, Evaluation and Reporting (SUPER) tracks Extension's needs assessment efforts across Tennessee. In FY 2015 Extension conducted 87 different focus groups and 693 interviews with key informants. Those key informants were identified by asking Advisory Committee members and community leaders to suggest names. The key informant process is widely used throughout the Cooperative Extension System and is a proven and sound approach to broadening the solicitation of stakeholder input. One way that UT and TSU collect stakeholder input is through participation "UT&TSU on The Hill," an annual meeting with producers and farmers, industry group and legislators. Additionally TSU collects input through: direct contact. UT uses direct contacts through its AgResearch system and 10 regional extension websites, participation in various commodity groups and ag interest groups, and individual interviews. TSU collects most of its stakeholder input through either face-to-face interviews or survey instruments. Feedback is also received through social media platforms.

4. HOW INPUT IS USED - UT&TSU use stakeholder input to identify emerging issues, identify and prioritize issues to be addressed, and to redirect extension and research programs as needed. In FY 2015 stakeholder input was used to modify these programs:

- Childhood Obesity
- Agritourism and Community Economic Development
- UT Beefmaster
- Tennessee Value-Added Beef
- Nursery
- STEM
- Beginning Farmer and Rancher

**Planned Programs Section (Required):**

| Acceptable |    |  |
|------------|----|--|
| YES        | NO |  |
|            |    |  |

| Acceptable                          |                          |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| YES                                 | NO                       |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used Appropriate Logic Model Elements          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Input Dollars Expended on Each Planned Program |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Appropriate Knowledge Areas                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Appropriate Outputs for each Program           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Appropriate Outcomes for each Program          |

**Comments:**

UT and TSU have reported on the 13 planned programs in which they have conducted research and extension programs. These programs are focused on the highest priority needs to Tennesseans and their communities. These programs served a wide variety of stakeholder audiences: youth, families, communities and their leaders, agricultural producers, natural resource professionals, and consumers, to name a few. The logic model elements are appropriate and reflect the researchers' and extension educators' mastery of the issues and knowledge about the process of enabling adults and youth to make changes in their knowledge and behaviors. UT&TSU use a wide variety of extension program delivery approaches that are tailored to their audiences and how they learn, including face-to-face programs and the use of eXtension, with several educators active in Communities of Practice. UT and TSU AgResearch are expanding the boundaries of knowledge in agriculture and food production and the environment, and developing practical, problem-solving information that is useful to producers and landowners. Additionally, research efforts at UT have resulted in one patent application for a soybean variety. A large number of research publications have been produced which disseminate new findings for both producers as well as other scientists who use the findings to continue the research or initiate new directions. The quality of the program evaluation data demonstrates an on-going commitment to evaluation, both formative and summative.

**General Recommendations:**

UT and TSU continue to demonstrate their strong commitment to their federal partner by providing another very informative and comprehensive report on their activities, accomplishments, and impacts. The breadth and depth of the UT & TSU research and extension programs is noteworthy in its coverage of current and emerging issues and in meeting the needs of the residents of the state. The program evaluation efforts which enable these institutions to report on their program successes are evident in the construction of the logic model elements and in the Evaluation Results sections for each of the Planned Programs. This reviewer appreciates the effort and resources that are dedicated to effective program evaluations and encourages the leadership at both institutions to continue the investment of resources in order to be able to do so. This 2015 University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Combined Research and Extension Annual Report is APPROVED as submitted and reviewed. Thanks to all of the extension educators and researchers, staff, and administrators for the time and effort they devoted to reporting on their program successes.

**We hereby recommend NIFA acceptance of this Annual Report.**

Eric Norland /s/

NPL Signature

05/06/2016

Date