Build a Better Future
The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service...helping you build a better future.

From the fertile cotton fields of the West Tennessee delta to the mountainous ridges of the Smoky Mountains, Tennesseans face a constantly changing, complex environment. Never has the need for education been greater.

As an off-campus educational program of The University of Tennessee, the Agricultural Extension Service reaches Tennessee citizens where they live, work and play. No other part of the higher education system in Tennessee is in every county...working with local government, community leaders, families and individuals to solve problems and improve their quality of life. No other organization in the state is so well qualified to bring research-based information about agriculture, community resource development, home economics and youth development to Tennessee citizens.

In the 1990s, Extension’s priorities include:

* **Agricultural production efficiency and sustainability**: Extension faculty help Tennessee’s agricultural producers to be competitive in the production and marketing of food and fiber. Goals for the industry include long-term, efficient, competitive, profitable and environmentally sound businesses.
Our emphasis is on helping farmers select enterprises to effectively use their resources and management skills; introducing and teaching sustainable technologies through on-farm demonstrations; and improving production through innovative methods in cultural techniques and livestock management practices.

**Environmental stewardship:** The environment affects everyone. Two key issues are solid waste disposal and water quality. Extension faculty teach consumers how to reduce solid waste through reuse, recycling and composting; increase Tennesseans’ awareness about the sources of water pollution and how we can help protect and improve water quality; and educate producers about the proper application, handling and disposal of pesticides and fertilizers to safeguard our water supply.

**Family stability, strength and wellness:** Many Tennessee families are in crisis. Personal bankruptcies, lack of formal education, difficulty in finding affordable housing, poor nutritional practices and an increase in single-parent households make surviving a struggle. Extension faculty are teaching consumers how to make sound decisions about the wise use of their resources; educating Tennesseans about health-promoting
behaviors, such as diet and exercise; and encouraging individual development to help people achieve their full potential.

**Food safety and nutrition for health:**
Extension’s educational programs include providing information to both farmers and consumers that contributes to the safety and quality of our food supply; educating food processors, handlers and consumers about proper methods to minimize food-borne illness and food spoilage; and teaching limited-resource citizens about the importance of maternal and infant nutrition, health-promoting practices and food preparation and safety.

**4-H youth development:** 4-H, the youth development program of the Extension Service, has a tradition of helping young people help themselves. In the ‘90s, Extension faculty are educating Tennessee youth in the five competency areas which have been identified as essential for adult success. These are: health competence, personal competence, creative competence, vocational competence and citizenship/leadership. Encouraging 4-H youth to “learn by doing,” Extension faculty help them gain critical skills to become capable, responsible and caring citizens.
Leadership development: Leadership training develops a volunteer ethic and spirit fundamental to American society. Extension staff teach leadership through several programs: More than 15,000 4-H volunteer leaders work with youth in Tennessee each year; Family Community Leadership has more than 2,900 trained volunteers who teach leadership development; and the master gardener program trains volunteers in specialized techniques, then provides opportunities for those volunteers to teach others.

Management: Most small and family businesses that fail during the first two to three years do so because they lack proper management skills. Improved management helps not only individuals, but develops a stronger Tennessee economy. Extension’s MANAGEMENT program is a leader in farm and financial management education. Extension faculty teach decisionmaking skills about how to most effectively use available resources.

Marketing: Although everyone is a consumer of agricultural products, fewer and fewer people understand how our food is produced or the complexity of the food and fiber industry. Extension’s role is to encourage utilization of improved marketing decisions, to assist farmers and business owners in developing market alternatives for their products and to help consumers understand how the agricultural economy works.
Natural resources: Tennessee’s abundant natural resources are one of our greatest assets. Forests cover more than one-half of the state, and the forest industry provides employment for one out of every 10 Tennesseans. Hunting and fishing also contribute $1.1 billion annually. Extension’s programs help citizens improve the management, marketing and use of our natural resources; create public awareness about natural resource policies and their implications; and educate Tennesseans about the values of natural resources for recreation, tourism and community use.

For educational information on these and other topics, contact your local county Extension office. The Agricultural Extension Service office phone number is listed under County Government in your phone directory.