

Ag Column
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Value-Added Classes Scheduled

Farm families continually explore ways of making their farms profitable. Much of these involve adding value to products they produce on their farm. Check out the classes below:

Aug 28 Backyard Poultry 101 – Greene Co

Aug 28 Direct Marketing and Making \$ - Johnson Co

Aug 29 Sales Tax, Business Lic, Insurance, and \$ Sources for Value-Added Producers – Sullivan Co

The idea of value-added products came along as the long history of tobacco production changed dramatically. A little trip down memory lane tells us tobacco was once a part of the everyday life of local farm families in Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. Most people grew a small acreage of tobacco. Tobacco helped families meet their daily needs. They could count on this annual from the sale of their tobacco around Christmas each year. Many people in the baby boomer generation paid their way through college with money from tobacco. If you grew up growing tobacco, you were sure to have become familiar with all of the many chores such as growing a plant bed, setting the crop, chopping out weeds, topping, cutting, and hanging in the barn. Oh, we definitely can't forget all of those cold days in the barn stripping the leaves and baling them for market. While all of this was extremely hard work, large families made some great memories and children were raised to be responsible and productive citizens through hard work. Well, I digressed a little as memories flashed back from my younger days.

In 2003, you may remember the tobacco buyout. While some farmers still grow tobacco locally, the number of producers is far less than it was prior to the buyout. Without tobacco, value-added products started to emerge. For example, small fruit growers starting making jams and jellies. Corn mazes and wedding barns were products of this area as well. To help farmers, UT Extension and the Center for Profitable Agriculture is conducting several classes to improve profitability of small farms. All of these programs are free and offer a meal for attendees.

Call the UT-TSU Extension Sullivan County Office at 423-574-1919 for more information about these FREE programs. There will be a FULL COUNTRY Breakfast at the Sullivan County Program. Please register by Tuesday, August 22 so meal arrangements can be completed.