

AG NOTES
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FARMERS MARKET

The Farmers Market will continue on regular schedule during the Walking Horse Celebration. The market is held on Thursday afternoons at the Pavilion next to the big blue water tower at the Celebration Grounds in front of Calsonic Arena.

We've had a really good selection of vendors each week, and we expect that to continue as the market continues. Produce in good supply, baked goods, eggs, jellies and jams, honey and other items have been in demand, and we look for more in-season vegetables to come to the market.

The starting time is 2:30 pm, with no early sales as long as vendors are setting up. Come to the market on Thursdays and help yourselves to some good products.

AG ENHANCEMENT

I now have the application packets for the Tennessee Ag Enhancement Program from the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. The TDA program has been a popular aid to farmers as they use the cost-share funding to accomplish operation changes that improve production, processing, and overall efficiencies on the many farms across the state.

There are three different packets. Packet A is for farmers who want to apply for a wide range of projects such as livestock equipment, livestock genetics, livestock solutions, dairy solutions, permanent working structures for livestock, row crop solutions, etc. The definitions and rules for eligibility for applicants and their projects are in the packet.

The Packet B is for horticulture, agritourism, fruit and vegetables, honey bees, organic food production and value-added products. Be sure to study the project proposals and how this section works.

Packet C is for our commercial poultry growers. This is a limited and specific project list and applies to our broiler growers and related pullet/hen operations. This program is a big help in this county with our larger number of producers.

These packets are available at the office here at 2105 Midland Road in Shelbyville. Come by and pick one up. The information is also available at the TAEP website at <https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/farms/taep.html>

Remember that the application period is the week of October 1-7, not before nor after. You may apply online during this time or complete a paper application and have it postmarked during this time. Most importantly, read the details in the packets or online.

BEEF QUALITY ASSURANCE

As most folks refer to this certification as BQA, a current certification from the Tennessee Cattlemen Association is required at the time of application for the Tennessee Ag Enhancement Program.

I do these certifications at the office by appointment when I'm here. If you plan to apply for the first time, or if you have a BQA certification and it expired last year or before, we need to discuss your needs and get this done. PLEASE DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE APPLICATION TIME. Let's do this now or during September. Contact me by email at jteague1@utk.edu or by phone at 931-684-5971.

THE CELEBRATION

It's here. It'll start this week. It's special to me. I came to this town the first time in a horse van and helped with horses all week long, staying at the barn and taking my showers in the old grooms' quarters.

We ate fabulous meals all week long as we tailed gated at the barns, went to sales during the day, worked horses early morning, showed them at night, and I was so impressed by the customs of the times. Whittling cedar sticks, which led to trading knives, seeing the crafts and stuff for sale, listening to the conversations between horse traders at the old warmup ring, eating donuts, and on and on. So many farmers of the day had a brood mare or two and raised those good foals and yearlings that would become the show horses of later days.

That was in 1971, and I never dreamed of living here then. Ten years later, we had moved here. Since 1971, we've only missed two years, and we were having little ones those two years. Of course, Melody has been to many more than I, and her mother has never missed a year.

We'll be there. This is a huge event for our community. We need to support it and the folks involved in it. The horses are a work of art, the people are precious to us, the history is a part of us.

See you there over the next two weeks!