

A photograph of a man in a cowboy hat and vest riding a horse, herding cattle on a dirt road. The background shows a lush green hillside with more cattle and two other people on horseback. The image has a semi-transparent dark overlay.

UTIA

INSTITUTE OF
AGRICULTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Real. Life. Solutions.TM

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

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On the front: As a cattle drive at the Middle Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center at Spring Hill demonstrates, precision livestock farming is not all about technology. Traditional herding by horseback reduces stress on the animals, which can lead to more accurate biometric data. Wes Gilliam, far left, and Claire Hunkler, middle, drive the cattle, as Kevin Thompson, center director, leads the way.



Greetings from the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture,

The mission and vision of UTIA is captured succinctly in our brand promise: Real. Life. Solutions. Recently, one of our stakeholders mentioned as he watched our faculty, staff, and students jump into action in the wake of Hurricane Helene, he saw Real. Life. Solutions. come to life before his eyes.

I am proud of the work we do every day here in Tennessee and the world. At the Flood Recovery Field Day in Limestone, our scientists demonstrated research to help make farmland productive again. Our experts are working to combat avian influenza. Researchers are testing precision agriculture technology at our AgResearch and Education Centers. Our 4-H centers are adding more STEM opportunities, and the Herbert College of Agriculture and the College of Veterinary Medicine are growing and attracting students who will lead the way in providing more Real. Life. Solutions. in the future.

Thank you for your support.

Keith Carver

UTIA Senior Vice Chancellor and Senior Vice President

OUR MISSION

Established in 1968, the statewide UT Institute of Agriculture is one of the few land-grant university institutes of its kind in the country. We are proud to improve life for Tennesseans and beyond—one discovery, one community, one classroom, one home, and one farm at a time. Through our Real. Life. Solutions. we create outstanding opportunities in agriculture, natural resources, and life sciences. We strive to be the model of how a land-grant university can positively impact the world, now and into the future.

Learn about our strategic plan, *Growing Greatness*:
utia.tennessee.edu/strategic-plan



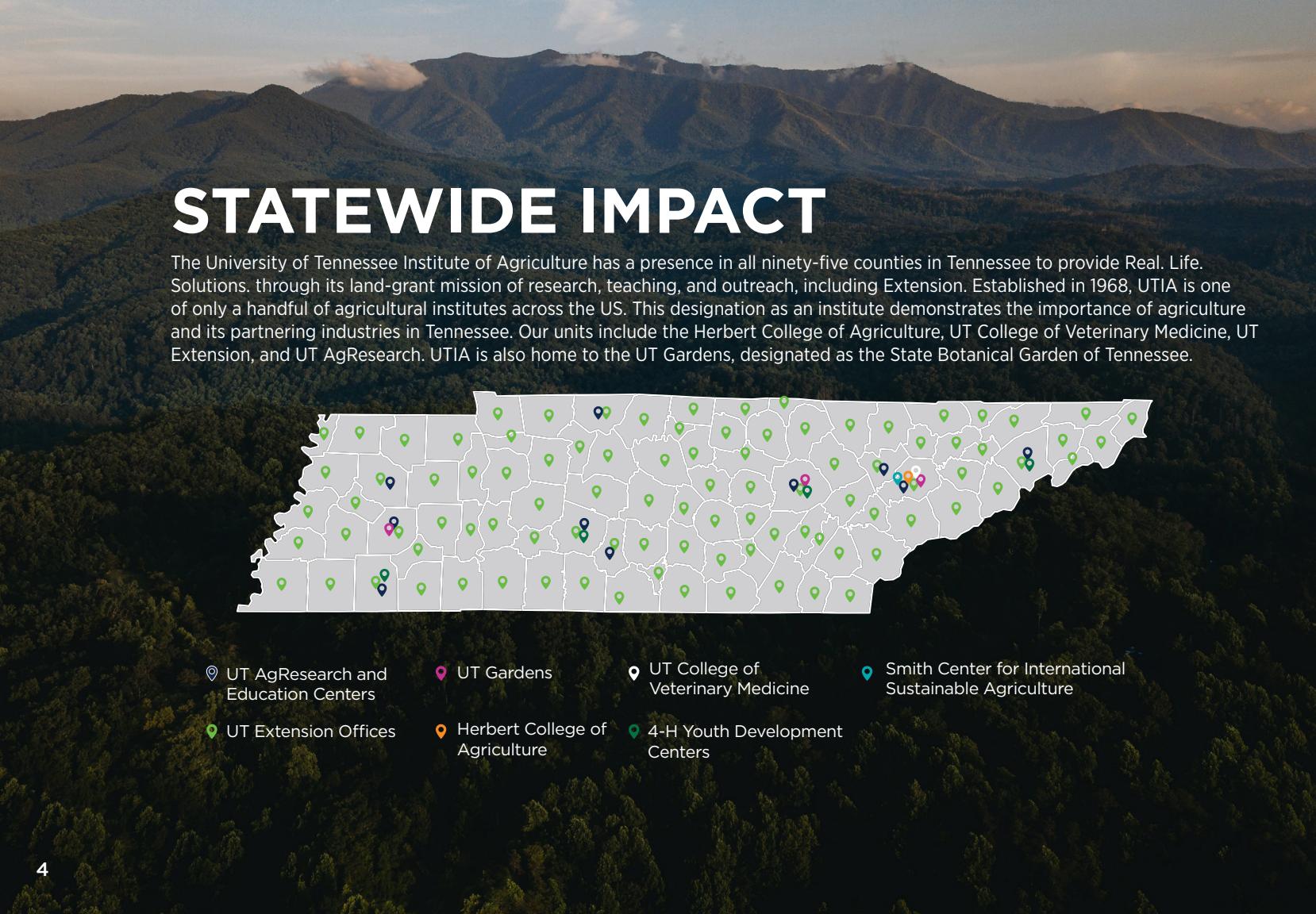
UT INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

HERBERT COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE

UT AgRESEARCH

UT EXTENSION

UT COLLEGE
OF
VETERINARY
MEDICINE



STATEWIDE IMPACT

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture has a presence in all ninety-five counties in Tennessee to provide Real. Life. Solutions. through its land-grant mission of research, teaching, and outreach, including Extension. Established in 1968, UTIA is one of only a handful of agricultural institutes across the US. This designation as an institute demonstrates the importance of agriculture and its partnering industries in Tennessee. Our units include the Herbert College of Agriculture, UT College of Veterinary Medicine, UT Extension, and UT AgResearch. UTIA is also home to the UT Gardens, designated as the State Botanical Garden of Tennessee.



UT AgResearch and Education Centers

UT Extension Offices

UT Gardens

Herbert College of Agriculture

UT College of Veterinary Medicine

4-H Youth Development Centers

Smith Center for International Sustainable Agriculture

HERBERT COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

1,813 Undergraduate Students

219 Master's Students

111 PhD Students

2,143

The largest enrollment in the college's history.

484

380 undergraduate and 104 graduate degrees were awarded in 2024-25.

UT COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

381 DVM Students

Master's Students

32 including 11 Dual DVM/MS and 4 DVM/MPH

43 PhD Students including 7 Dual DVM/MS

UT EXTENSION

\$8.6 MILLION

Volunteer Value

158,947 On-Site Visits

17.56 MILLION Digital Contacts

154,486 4-H Club Members

UT GARDENS

3 LOCATIONS

Knoxville, Crossville, and Jackson

100,000+ Visitors Each Year

UT AgRESEARCH

\$88,143,949 MILLION

Federal and state appropriations, publicly and privately funded research grants and contracts, gifts, endowments, and sales of commodities produced on the AgResearch and Education Centers. Sponsored research expenditures increased 60 percent over the past six years.

37,929 PATIENTS

Patient caseload of small, exotic, large, and field service animals in 2024-25. Total since opening in 1974: 1,596,875.



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EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN ACTION



Avian Influenza

Prevention remains the best defense for producers against highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1. Animal science professor and UT Extension poultry specialist Tom Tabler advocates biosecurity in the form of isolation, traffic control, and sanitation for producers large and small. During the outbreak in 2025, Tabler and Shawn Hawkins, Extension engineer and professor of biosystems engineering and soil science, were deployed by the US Department of Agriculture to help producers around the country to safely contain the spread of the virus. Meanwhile, a new One Health Initiative working group of experts from veterinary medicine, animal science, wildlife management, epidemiology, virology, diagnostics, agricultural engineering, and mathematical modeling are working to combat the global threat.



Flood Recovery Field Day

UT AgResearch scientists and UT Extension agents and specialists responded immediately in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, which devastated parts of East Tennessee in September 2024, and their work continues. The UTIA flood recovery initiative involves experts in plant and soil sciences; animal science; veterinary medicine; and agricultural leadership, education and communications. They presented their findings to assist producers at a special field day in August 2025 in Limestone, Tennessee. Efforts so far have included developing tools to quantify damage, securing forage for cattle, analyzing sediment and assessing the capacity for land to return to productive use, collecting and distributing supplies, providing emergency care for livestock and pets, and disseminating online resources for residents.

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RESEARCH

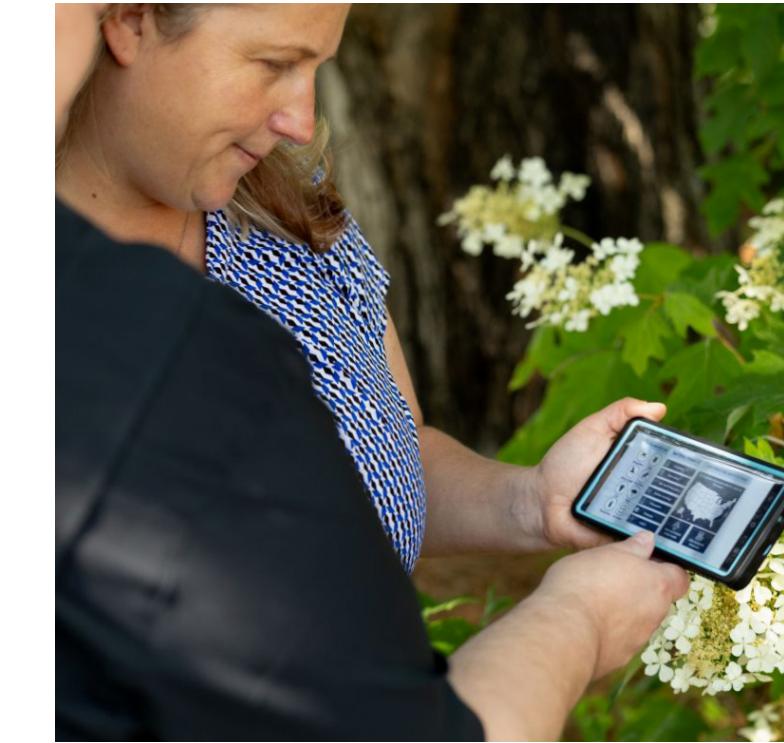


Farming for the Future

Farms across Tennessee face many challenges, and UTIA is developing and testing ways to help farmers and producers overcome barriers and increase profits. Precision agriculture, demonstrated at several UT AgResearch and Education Centers, is a way to produce more on fewer acres. Technology such as electronic feeding devices that measure feed intake, enteric GHG emissions, and weight and ear tags that monitor location and grazing help detect health issues early, which minimizes the need of medical intervention, enhances animal welfare, and increases production efficiency. Robotic milkers on dairy farms and drones and sensors for row crops also will reduce the need for manual labor. Today's students are learning about these smart technologies to carry on the farming legacy for generations to come.

Vector-borne Disease Resources

UTIA researchers, along with colleagues from across the United States, are leveraging knowledge and education to prevent disease carried and spread by mosquitos and other arthropods. The VECTOR library provides more than 1,400 educational materials from the nationwide Cooperative Extension System in a centralized database. It was created through the VectorEd Network and is available to anyone interested in information about disease prevention and control specific to Tennessee and surrounding areas.



Insight into Tree Genetics

Scientists now better understand the complex genome of the highly valued white oak, thanks to a team of researchers, including UTIA faculty. Their work provides insights into fundamental questions about plant evolution, tree breeding, and genetic improvements that could help forest managers plan for and address future forest resources.



OUTREACH



STEM Education Expands

A historic investment from the state is helping boost STEM learning at 4-H centers across Tennessee. Gov. Bill Lee proposed and the General Assembly approved \$45.5 million in funding to support capital enhancements at our four 4-H centers. Each center will have dedicated STEM facilities, increasing the number of students served a year from 5,000 to 6,000. In addition, 4-H is part of the launch of STEMOVEATE, a new program to bring more hands-on learning to sixth graders in twenty-one counties through a partnership with the UT-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education and UT-Battelle. The plan is to expand STEMOVEATE to all Tennessee sixth graders in 2026-27 and to seventh and eighth graders within five years. 4-H agents in Crockett and Overton Counties participated in a STEMOVEATE pilot program last year.

Farmland Protection

The Center for Profitable Agriculture has been tasked to provide landowner education as part of the Farmland Preservation Act, passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. Bill Lee in 2025. Under the law, farmers will be able to protect their land through permanent conservation easements. According to the UT Center of Farm Management using USDA CropScape data, Tennessee is losing an average of 9.8 acres of farmland an hour. By 2027, the total amount of land conversion, since 1997, is projected to be about 2 million acres.

A More Resilient Workforce

The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences partners with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development to provide job and career training through Skill Up Tennessee. Since its inception in 2018, Skill Up has helped more than 2,000 Tennesseans who receive Supplemental and Nutrition Assistance Program benefits. UT Extension is expanding these efforts with a nearly \$500,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to target residents with substance abuse disorder in twenty-seven East and Middle Tennessee counties through the Skill Up Tennessee Recovery Initiative.

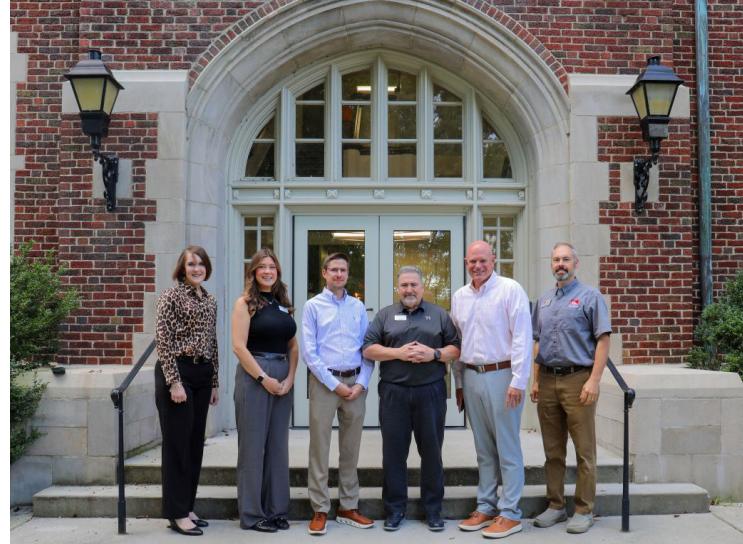
TEACHING



GROWING ENROLLMENT

The Herbert College of Agriculture set new records for enrollment in 2025. Herbert enrolled 2,143 undergraduate and graduate students, a 14 percent growth over the past four years. The college also awarded a record amount of more than \$1.2 million in scholarships. New academic programs on the horizon include outdoor recreation and parks management, agricultural bioinformatics, and fermentation sciences.

The UT College of Veterinary Medicine enrollment for the four classes of DVM students was 381 for fall 2025, and there were seventy-five master's and PhD students. Class size has increased by 20 percent over the last five years with plans to continue growing to meet the needs of our state. The college, home to the only academic veterinary medical center in Tennessee with on-site facilities, counts about half the veterinarians in the state as alumni, and around 70 percent of current students are Tennesseans.



Back-to-Back Winners

The last two winners of the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Collegiate Discussion Meet have been Herbert students. Callie Robinson, a junior in agricultural leadership, education and communications won in 2025, following Ella McLellan (BS animal science '24) the year before.



Leadership Summit Host

Tennessee Farm Bureau's Tennessee Leadership Summit has chosen the Herbert College of Agriculture as host of this prestigious event for the next three summers. High school students attend the summit to learn about agriculture and natural resources industries, develop leadership skills, and gain inspiration from leaders.

INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

Growing Global

Approaching its tenth anniversary, the Smith Center for International Sustainable Agriculture is expanding UTIA's global footprint. In 2025, the largest number of Herbert and College of Veterinary Medicine students ever completed an international experience, and faculty and staff visited fifty-one countries. UTIA also hosted international visitors from Algeria, Burkina Faso, Colombia, England, Germany, The Gambia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, Uruguay, and Zambia.

First-Year Program Launches

Fifteen first year students traveled to Costa Rica during the 2025 winter miniterm for the pilot project organized by the Smith Center and the Herbert College of Agriculture. The program focuses on first year students to engage them early in their academic careers. Students earned one credit for the course while learning about the challenges and opportunities facing the agriculture and natural resources fields. The project will expand to two cohorts in 2026.





FIELD DAYS

Field days held across the state give visitors a chance to interact with UTIA experts who provide Real. Life. Solutions. on the farm and in the garden. Approximately 1,000 visitors attended the thirty-fourth Summer Celebration in July at the West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center. Participants enjoyed a variety of educational presentations, UT Gardens tours, and vendors. The Milan No-Till Field Day will return in 2026. Hort, Hops, and Crops debuted in September at the East Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center's Plant Sciences Unit in Knoxville. The afternoon session of this first-time field day included a tour of the Organic Crops Unit.

PARTNERSHIPS

Apple Barn Hard Cider Company

A portion of sales from Sweet Traditions, a limited-release hard cider, supports future field trials and UT Extension programs that help Tennessee growers through the Don Collier Viticulture Fund. The cider is made with mountain-grown apples and red muscadine grapes grown in McMinn and Monroe Counties.



Farmer's Dog

The pet food company is sponsoring a two-year veterinary nutrition residency program in the College of Veterinary Medicine, home to the nation's leading veterinary obesity clinic. The sponsorship fully funds the training of a select resident in clinical nutrition under the mentorship of veterinary nutritionists Angela Rollins and Maryanne Murphy, who oversee the college's Veterinary Obesity Center.



Erlanger Life Force Air Medical

The UT College of Veterinary Medicine conducted a training exercise with a Life Force helicopter, simulating transport of a critically injured K-9 officer. This event marks a historic advancement in veterinary emergency medicine and law enforcement support in Tennessee.



TN AgVOLs

The Tennessee AgVets Opportunities on FarmLand Program, also called TN AgVOLs, empowers military veterans by equipping them with the tools to succeed in agriculture. Supported by a USDA grant, the program partners include the Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Council, Tennessee Farm Bureau, the Farmer Veteran Coalition of Tennessee, Fort Campbell US Army Garrison, and Tennessee Department of Agriculture with UT Extension's Center of Farm Management and TN AgrAbility and Tennessee State University's TN New Farmer Academy.



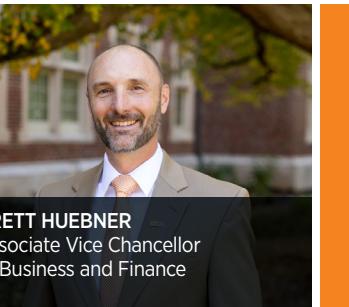
NEW LEADERS



DAVID WHITE
Dean of the Herbert College
of Agriculture



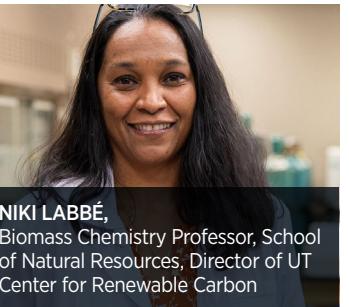
JUSTIN RHINEHART
Dean of UT Extension



BRETT HUEBNER
Associate Vice Chancellor
of Business and Finance



BLAKE BROWN
Associate Dean of Field
Operations for UT AgResearch



NIKI LABBÉ,
Biomass Chemistry Professor, School
of Natural Resources, Director of UT
Center for Renewable Carbon



JOHN SROCHAN
Distinguished Professor of
Turfgrass Science



Charles E. Wharton Institute
Professor Award

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

UT Knoxville Chancellor Innovation Award

UT System President Award



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