The Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP) is announcing new options and changes that will better assist Tennessee farmers in diversifying, expanding, and improving their farming operations.

A recent review of the program aligns with Governor Bill Lee’s priority of advancing rural economic development. He supports TAEP and understands the value it brings to our agricultural producers statewide.

In March, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture conducted a survey of TAEP participants and ag industry partners to gain feedback about current program offerings and ideas for the future. More than 2,400 people responded, with representation from all 95 counties in Tennessee.

The department also formed an advisory committee of 20 farmers from a variety of ag sectors statewide to identify opportunities for program improvements.

Changes take effect **fall 2019**
Guided by survey responses and input from the committee, as well as priorities determined by TDA, **TAEP changes for 2019 include:**

1. A new cattle herd health program aims to improve the health, reputation, and profitability of Tennessee cattle. Participating farmers will implement a preventative herd health protocol for beef and dairy cattle.

2. In partnership with the University of Tennessee, the new cattle genetics online tool assists in determining a bull’s eligibility for TAEP.

3. To ensure more long-term investments, the verification period has increased. Applicants must utilize equipment and structures reimbursed with cost share funds for a minimum of five (5) continuous years from the date of purchase.

4. The Hay Storage program will not be offered for the 2019-2020 program year. This will allow the launch of the new Hay Equipment program with hay production as the focus. Eligible items for cost share include hay mowers, mower-conditioners, tedders, rakes, and balers. Participants must meet minimum requirements of 100 head of cattle, 150 head of goats or sheep, or 100 acres of hay in production.

5. The renamed Working Facility Structures program features the Working Facility Cover for existing livestock working equipment, as well as the Permanent Working Pen for receiving, separating, weaning, or holding livestock.

6. The Grain Storage program is now called Row Crop Solutions. Cotton has been added as an eligible commodity. New items include drive-over scales, stationary fuel tanks, GPS displays and receivers, grain bin rescue tubes, and no-till drills. The maximum reimbursement has increased to $20,000.

7. Application B for Producer Diversification has been simplified and shortened to ease the application process.

8. The maximum reimbursement for Application C for Poultry Growers has increased to $10,000. New items include ventilation fans and LED lights for retrofitting, along with feed bins, poultry house trolley systems, and litter management equipment.

9. The lifetime reimbursement limits for commodity sheds, grain bins, and livestock working facility covers have been removed.

Established in 2005, TAEP is a cost share program that assists agricultural producers in making long-term investments on Tennessee farms and in rural communities. For every dollar the state awards to an eligible farmer, an estimated $3.89 is generated in the local economy. Since its launch, TAEP has invested more than $168 million in more than 57,000 producer projects, affecting every single county in Tennessee.