



## FUNDAMENTALS OF ON-FARM RETAIL: Promotion

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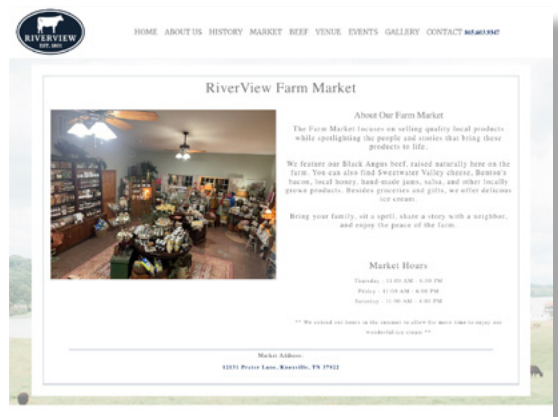
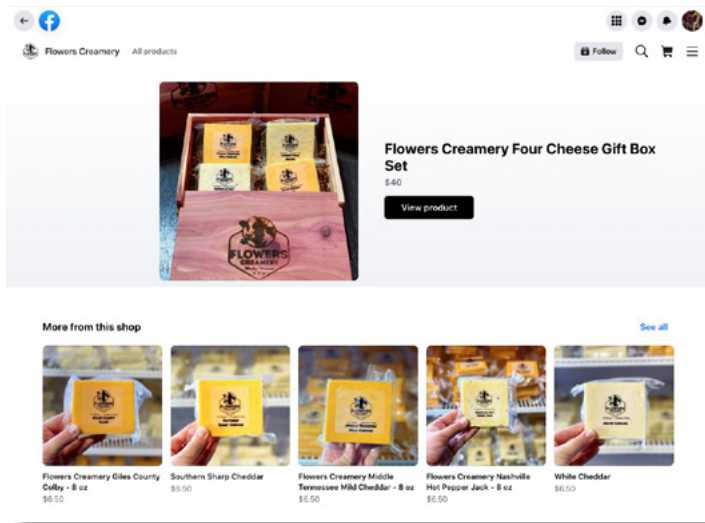
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This publication is part of a series developed with special considerations for on-farm retailing of value-added dairy products as part of the Southeast Dairy Business Innovation Initiative. Learn more at [valueaddeddairy.tennessee.edu](http://valueaddeddairy.tennessee.edu).

Promotion includes elements related to communications delivered to customers, such as digital channels and on-farm or offline advertising to promote products. Effective advertising and consumer awareness are key to enhancing retail patronage and increasing in-store sales (Levy et al., 2019). When considering promotion and advertising within an on-farm retail operation, some important ways for you to spread awareness about your business are developing and maintaining diverse channels such as a web and social media presence, signage, printed materials such as a brochure or rack card, and word of mouth.

Decisions regarding promotion and advertising should be based on where and how your target customers learn about products and services, your goals and budget/resources, and your brand image. All advertising should send a consistent message to consumers reinforcing your brand image.



## Digital Promotion

Over the last few decades, the use of digital promotion has grown drastically. Digital promotion methods may include farm websites and social media.

### Web Presence

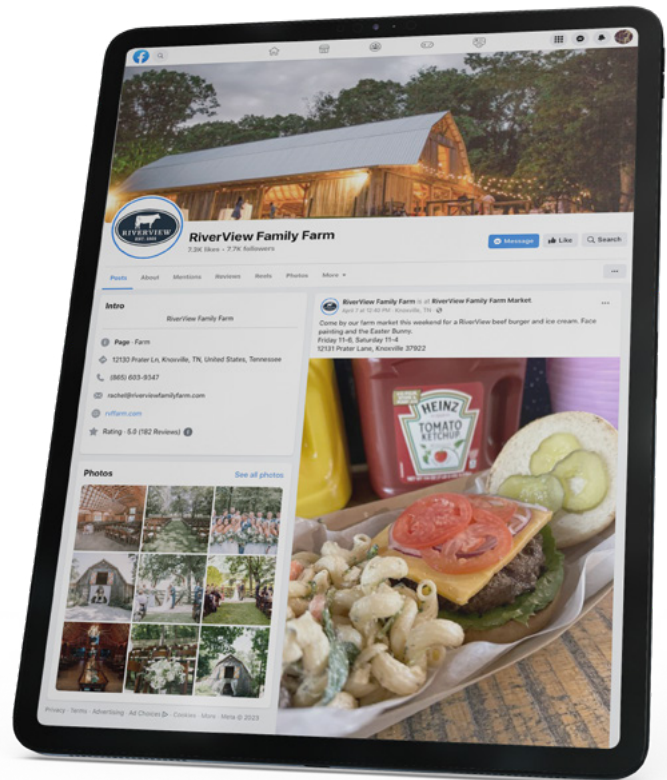
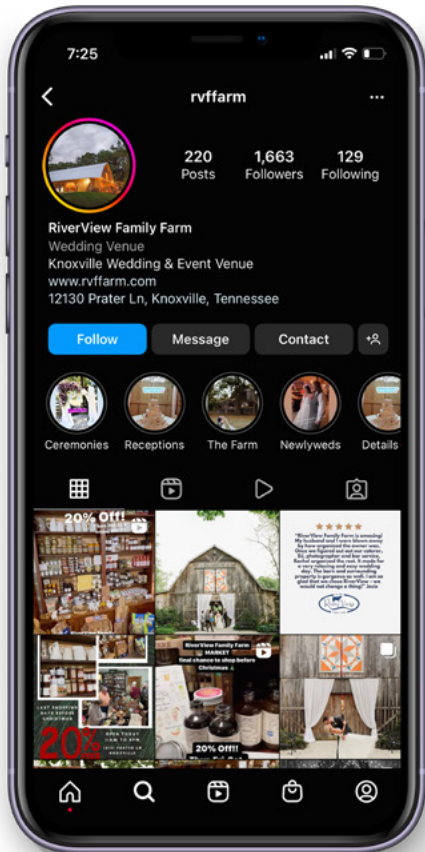
Types of advertising that will likely appeal to local product consumers include developing a strong web presence. Building a strong web presence will likely be an important component of advertising your on-farm retail store. Start with what is easiest to do, often a Facebook page. On it you can post pictures and give people enough information to get them to your sales location.

A more robust web presence can be established through a dedicated website for your farm or on-farm retail store. A dedicated website will be a valuable tool in helping customers learn that your store exists. To be effective, your website should communicate information to consumers planning to visit and provide an opportunity to share your story to help build an on going relationship with customers. It is important to clearly communicate what products you have available, directions to your store, store hours, how to contact you with questions, and any other information valuable to your customer. If you plan to ship a product, a website will be an important point of sale. If that is your plan, then you will need to have a system in place to handle orders and be able to quickly get them shipped.

While some producers may decide to hire someone to develop and maintain their website for them, user-friendly platforms (e.g., Shopify) are available that allow many producers the opportunity to develop their own site. Take some time to visit small business websites and talk to entrepreneurs to determine what may be the best option for you.

Once your website is established, you can increase visibility and traffic by submitting profiles to partner organization websites such as local chambers of commerce and tourism organizations, state promotional programs in departments of agriculture and tourism (e.g., Pick Tennessee Products), regional tourism organizations, local foods programs, etc. Connecting with these partners may also provide additional advertising opportunities through their apps, social media and other networks.





## Social Media

Advertising and promoting your on-farm retail store through social media can enhance customer engagement from existing customers and help to attract new customers to your store. It is a way to tell your story and to communicate your values. Choose social media platforms based on your target customers' use. You can learn about current trends in social media use from several sources such as the Pew Research Center ([www.pewresearch.org](http://www.pewresearch.org)).

One of the most important elements in advertising through social media is to remain consistent in posting frequency (Burkett et al., 2021). To generate interactive content among your audience, consider posting about farm activity (e.g., baby animals, making products) and focus on visual, rather than verbal, content. Try to be as interactive as possible through storytelling, and make it a point to follow and interact with other relevant accounts; contributors are likely to return interactions. Consider utilizing site features, such as hashtags and tagging to increase customer engagement (Burkett et al., 2021). While promoting a social media following is advised, remember that the goal is to enhance store sales rather than followers. It is more profitable to have a smaller yet loyal customer base than a large social media following of those who do not purchase. Since a consistent and unique brand voice (i.e., tone, personality) communicates authenticity to customers, consider assigning social media responsibilities to one designated person who is comfortable and passionate about your business and communicating online.



Example of in-store promotion to follow social media accounts



Example of on-farm retail sign.

## On-farm and Offline Promotion

Although digital promotion is vital to an on-farm retail operation, on-farm signage and printed marketing pieces also play an important part of promotion.

### Signage

As an important element of on-farm retailing, proper signage helps guide customers' experience of your farm while also reinforcing your brand. Roadside signs should be descriptive (e.g., farm market) so customers passing are familiar with the general offering. Additional information can be provided regarding store hours or contact information, but detailed information related to specific product offerings can be avoided. Spend some time observing local traffic flow to understand where signage may be best placed to attract a passing audience. Remember to ensure federal, state, county and/or city regulations are followed regarding roadside signage.

Some states offer special signage programs that may benefit on-farm retail operations. For example, the Tennessee Department of Transportation offers the Tourist Oriented Directional Sign Program for operations near state highways<sup>1</sup> and the Logo Sign Program at interstate exits.<sup>2</sup>

In-store signage can also be utilized effectively through clearly marked price signage placed near corresponding merchandise. Feel free to be creative with signage to reinforce your brand image; prices can be placed in picture frames and neatly handwritten. Use signage to add to your story. If it is your grandmother's recipe or your favorite flavor, say so. Additionally, consider other promotional signs, such as announcing bestsellers. This is especially important if consumers have many choices. Eliminating difficult decision-making can help nudge consumers in the purchase process (Schwartz, 2004). Feel free to try the effectiveness of different types of signage and gain customer feedback. You could also present social media and website links in-store through QR codes. This can further engage consumers even after they have left the store.



Example of in-store price signage.



Example of in-store signage.



<sup>1</sup><https://www.tn.gov/tdot/traffic-operations-division/traffic-engineering-office/sign-policy-design-and-programs/tourist-oriented-directional-signs.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.tn.gov/tdot/traffic-operations-division/traffic-engineering-office/sign-policy-design-and-programs/logo-sign-program.html>



## Printed Brochure or Rack Card

Some state and local partner organizations may provide opportunities to distribute brochures, rack cards or other printed materials. If there are any close to your farm, state tourism welcome centers may be a good place to request to have materials displayed to promote your on-farm retail market. Each state has different opportunities, requirements and processes. Tennessee producers can learn more about how they can access this opportunity at <https://industry.tnvacation.com/industrygeneral/welcome-centers>.

Material distribution services are also available that will deliver printed materials to stands in hotel lobbies or other tourist destinations. You may also work with other small businesses in your area that may have similar target audiences to display or share your materials with their customers (e.g., area bed and breakfasts or other short-term rental operators). Some customers may also be willing to take a brochure or rack card with them from the store to share with a friend.



Suggested carriers are FedEx or UPS. Please note that the Welcome Centers are not on a United States Postal route. Because of this, the USPS and some other couriers will not deliver. Contact your mail carrier for specific questions regarding this.

<p><b>1-55, SHELBY CO. (Memphis)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 3.10, Northbound <b>Freddie Hendley, Manager</b> Phone: 901-543-9966 Email: <a href="mailto:Freddie.Hendley@tn.gov">Freddie.Hendley@tn.gov</a> Shipping: 3910 Interstate 55 on the MS line Mile Marker 3.10 Memphis, TN 38116 Mailing (Envelopes Only): P.O. Box 16426 Memphis, TN 38186</p>	<p><b>1-40, SHELBY COUNTY (Clarksville)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 0.30, Eastbound <b>Ricky Smith, Manager</b> Phone: 901-543-6757 Fac: 901-543-6324 Email: <a href="mailto:Ricky.Smith@tn.gov">Ricky.Smith@tn.gov</a> Shipping/Mailing: 119 North Riverside Drive Memphis, TN 38103</p> <p><b>HOURS:</b> 7:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.</p>
<p><b>1-155, DYER COUNTY (Dyersburg)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 8.7, Eastbound <b>William Asgdon, Manager</b> Phone: 731-286-8323 Fac: 731-286-8324 Email: <a href="mailto:William.Asgdon@tn.gov">William.Asgdon@tn.gov</a> Shipping: 1155 East, 4 miles West of Dyersburg, mm 8.7 Dyersburg, TN 38024 Mailing (Envelopes Only): P.O. Box 84 Dyersburg, TN 38025</p>	<p><b>1-24, MONTGOMERY CO. (Clarksville)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 9.40, Eastbound <b>Don Townsend, Manager</b> Phone: 931-648-5509 Fac: 931-648-5510 Email: <a href="mailto:Don.Townsend@tn.gov">Don.Townsend@tn.gov</a> Shipping: 1-24 Northwest of Nashville on the KY line, mm 0.40 Clarksville, TN 37040 Mailing (Envelopes Only): P.O. Box 20187 Clarksville, TN 37040-0004</p>

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<p><b>1-24, HAMILTON CO. (Tiftonia)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 171.8, Eastbound <b>Jim Elbert, Interim Manager</b> Phone # (423) 821-3628 Fax# (423) 821-4895 Email: <a href="mailto:James.H.Elbert@tn.gov">James.H.Elbert@tn.gov</a> Shipping: 17180 Interstate 24 East Mile marker 171.8 Chattanooga, TN 37419 Mailing (Envelopes Only): P.O. Box 2037 Chattanooga, TN 37429</p>	<p><b>1-75, HAMILTON CO. (Chattanooga)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 0.7, Northbound <b>Leo Beto, Manager</b> Phone # (423) 864-6999 Fax# (423) 892-7723 Email: <a href="mailto:Leonoro.Soto@tn.gov">Leonoro.Soto@tn.gov</a> Shipping: 100 Interstate 75, North Mile marker 0.7 East Ridge, TN 37412 Mailing (Envelopes Only): P.O. Box 1615 East Ridge, TN 37412</p>	<p><b>1-26, UNICOI CO. (Erwin)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 46, East &amp; Westbound <b>Jackie Rains, Manager</b> Phone # (423) 743-4146 Fax# (423) 743-4239 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jackie.Rains@tn.gov">Jackie.Rains@tn.gov</a> Shipping/Mailing: 100 Fiddlers Lane Erwin, TN 37060</p>
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<p><b>1-26, UNICOI CO. (Erwin)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 100, Westbound <b>Renee Trammell, Manager</b> Phone # (423) 942-2633 Fax# (423) 942-5724 Email: <a href="mailto:Renee.Trammell@tn.gov">Renee.Trammell@tn.gov</a></p>	<p><b>1-26, UNICOI CO. (Erwin)</b> <b>WELCOME CENTER</b> Mile marker 100, Westbound <b>Renee Trammell, Manager</b> Phone # (423) 942-2633 Fax# (423) 942-5724 Email: <a href="mailto:Renee.Trammell@tn.gov">Renee.Trammell@tn.gov</a></p>	<p>Visit our website for more information on each Tennessee Welcome Center... <a href="http://tnvacation.com">tnvacation.com</a></p> <p><b>100% PROUDLY MADE IN AMERICA</b> <b>MADE IN TENNESSEE</b></p>
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Do you recommend Flowers Creamery?

Yes No

Rating · 5.0 (37 Reviews)

**Nathan Webb** recommends Flowers Creamery  
July 28, 2022 · 🌐  
Great milk and cheese! Locally made in Tennessee  
Gourmet cheeses · Speciality items · Knowledgeable staff  
👍 1 2 comments  
Like Comment Share

**Lisa Wildes** recommends Flowers Creamery  
April 4 at 6:07 PM · 🌐  
You're greeted by a big smile from Meredith first off. I'm close by & would rather buy my milk & eggs from there. I always leave with a couple of Pulaski Fried Pies 🍷  
👍 1 2 comments

**Niki M Callahan** recommends Flowers Creamery  
October 21, 2021 · 🌐  
I highly recommend visiting this creamery! The tour is wonderful and the cheese, milk and ice cream are amazing! 10/10!



**David McCollum** recommends Flowers Creamery  
October 6, 2021 · 🌐  
Enjoyed the quick visit today. The chocolate milk is the best I've had in years, went good with the strawberry fried pie and the sharp cheddar was delicious. I had some crackers in the truck and hate to say I ate half of one pack of sharp cheddar before I got home. I will be back.  
👍 1 1 comment  
Like Comment Share

**Morgan Meriwether Flowers**  
Thank you so much! I'm so glad you enjoyed everything!  
Like Reply ty

Write a comment...


**Gloria Tharp** recommends Flowers Creamery  
October 30, 2021 · 🌐  
Great company with former great neighbors  
👍 1 2 comments  
Like Comment Share

Write a comment...

**Darlene Breeding Mangrum** recommends Flowers Creamery  
July 1, 2021 · 🌐  
Best chocolate milk I have ever had! We get ours at the Wise Ant Bakery. Highly recommend every one to try it!  
👍 1 1 comment  
Like Comment Share

**Morgan Meriwether Flowers**  
Thank you!  
Like Reply ty

Write a comment...



**Flowers Creamery**  
10K followers · 445 following

Learn More Message Follow

Posts About Shop Mentions Reviews Reels More

**Intro**  
Farm Fresh Non-Homogenized Milk and Gourmet Farmstead Artisan Cheeses made with milk produced by our

Page · Cheese Shop

2734 Rhea Branch Rd, Ethridge, TN, United States, Tennessee

(931) 292-2455

morgan@flowerscreamery.com

flowerscreamery.com

Opening Soon

In-store pickup

Price Range · \$

Rating · 5.0 (37 Reviews)

Women-owned

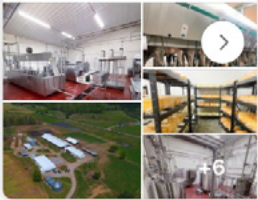
**Featured**

**Shop**

- Flowers Creamery Giles County Colby - 8 oz \$6.50
- Southern Sharp Cheddar \$6.50
- Flowers Creamery Middle Tennessee Mild Cheddar - 8 oz \$6.50

View shop

**Flowers Creamery**  
November 29, 2021 · 🌐  
Our world class 6000 sqft small batch artisan cheese and non homogenized traditional whole milk production facility.



**Posts** Filters

**Flowers Creamery**  
22h · 🌐  
Come see us today! 🍷 🍷

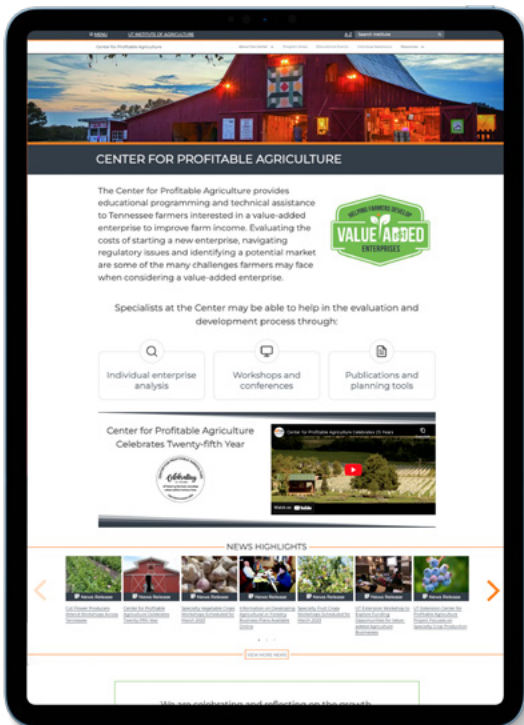
Photos See all photos

## Word of Mouth

Word of mouth remains the strongest form of promotion and can differentiate your on-farm retail store from competitors. Providing exceptional service by maintaining store operations and friendly customer interactions can be difficult for competitors to duplicate and fosters customer loyalty (Levy et al., 2019). The customer's experience is what they will remember long after the product they purchased is gone. Consider providing employees with branded apparel. Use employee-customer interactions as opportunities to educate consumers on product details. Ensure customer feedback is encouraged and accommodated. Remember you are in business for the customer and make yourself readily available and visible when customers enter the store. You can encourage word-of-mouth and e-word-of-mouth by collecting customer testimonials to include on marketing materials, asking satisfied customers to post reviews on social media and web platforms, and referring customers. A great example is from Flowers Creamery: <https://www.facebook.com/flowerscreamery/reviews>.

## Conclusion

In summary, while advertising dollars may be limited, it is important to remain strategic about where you spend your money to attract additional customers. A web and social media presence is vital to attracting an unfamiliar audience and reminding existing customers about how you can fill their needs. As you continue to invest in promotion and advertising, keep detailed accounts of where funds are spent and the potential gains from consumer traffic so you are better able to make future marketing decisions.



## References and Additional Resources

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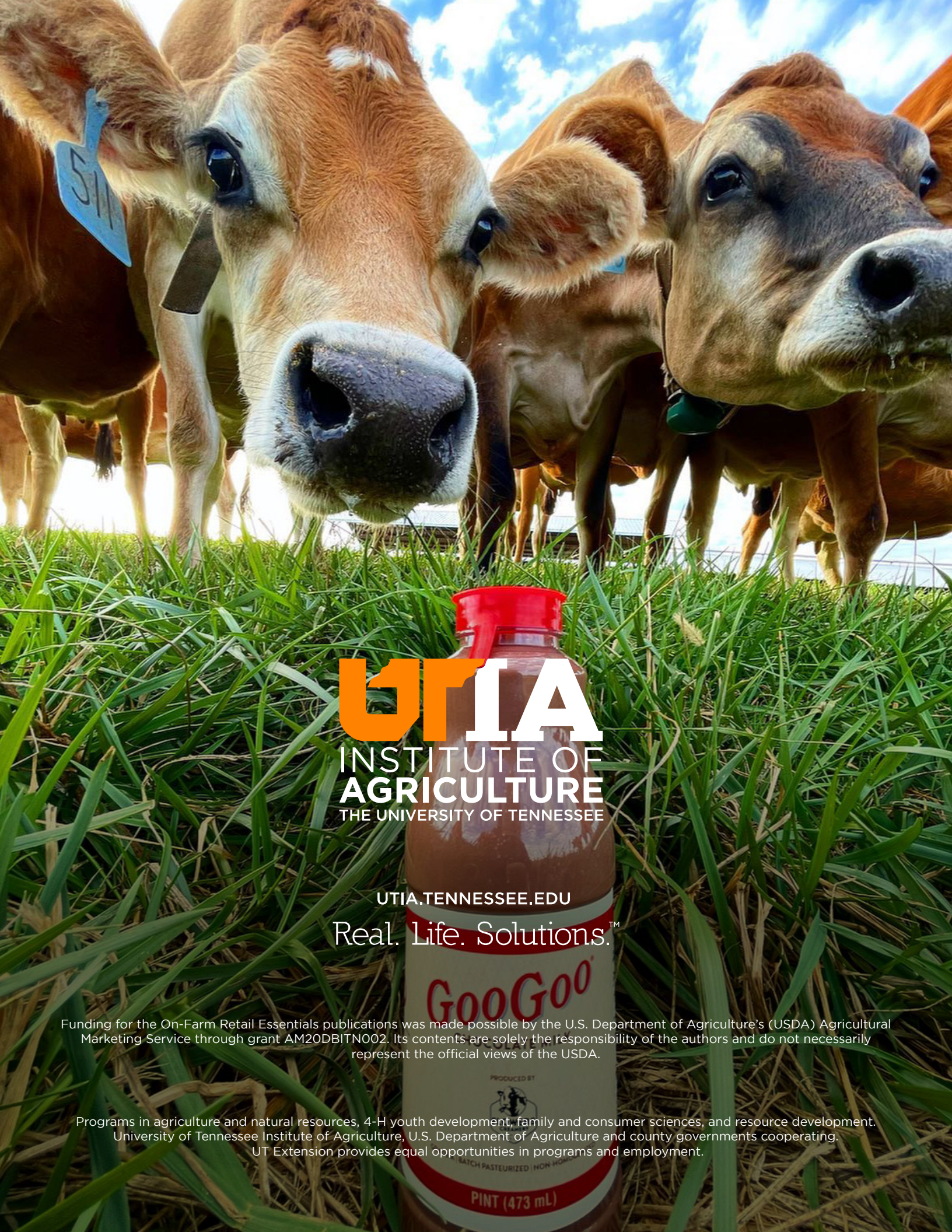
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Find these and other resources for value-added agriculture at [cpa.tennessee.edu](http://cpa.tennessee.edu).

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