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MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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TDA Offers Incentive to “Beef Up” Cattle Sales

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Adding value and protecting livestock health are good reasons for producers to market their cattle through “age and source” and “preconditioning” programs. Now there's another reason.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA) will pay producers up to \$500 for marketing their cattle through a USDA approved age and source verified program and state approved preconditioning program announced Agriculture Commissioner Ken Givens.

Producers will be paid \$5 per head of cattle sold or marketed through an age and source verified program and an additional \$5 per head if the animals were certified preconditioned, up to \$250 for each program.

“Today's livestock buyers, and ultimately the consumer, want to know where their meat comes from and how it's been produced,” said Givens. “With age and source verification and pre-conditioning programs, cattle buyers know that they're getting animals that have been properly cared for and that meet certain standards.”

“With these payments, we want to encourage better cattle management and to ensure that Tennessee cattle producers have access to domestic and international markets where age and source verification is fast becoming a standard.”

Age and source verification is a marketing tool that producers can use to assure cattle buyers of the origin and maximum age of their cattle. Producers who enroll in an age and source verification program are responsible for keeping records on their cattle as part of an auditable process.

Preconditioning is a program where producers agree to perform certain best management practices such as vaccinations, weaning, castration, parasite control and dehorning for improved cattle health and quality.

The new cattle marketing incentive program is in addition to cattle genetic and handling facilities cost share incentives funded through the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP). The TAEP was proposed by Governor Phil Bredesen in 2005 and funded by the Tennessee General Assembly to improve cattle production, encourage farm diversification and safeguard livestock health in Tennessee.

Producers interested in enrolling in an approved age and source or preconditioning program can contact their local University of Tennessee Extension office, or contact TDA by calling (615) 837-5189. A list of approved organizations is also available online at www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/enhancement, then select “Value Added Cost Share” link.

To qualify for a payment, producers must live and farm in Tennessee and register their livestock premises with the National Animal Identification System. Premises registration is free, and forms are available at most local farm-related agencies and service locations. Registration forms can also be downloaded from TDA's Web site at www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/tpis.

Producers must also be certified under the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Program, a two-hour educational course on cattle management and care sponsored by the Tennessee Cattlemen's Association. Certification is \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members. More information on BQA classes is available by contacting the association at (615) 896-2333 or info@tncattle.org, or by visiting their Web site at www.tncattle.org.

Producers who have sold or marketed cattle through a USDA approved age and source verified program since July 1, 2006 are eligible to receive a payment.

Producers can file for a payment by filling out an Age and Source/Preconditioning claim form with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture. Forms are available online at www.tennessee.gov/agriculture/enhancement, then select "Value Added Cost Share" link. To request a form by phone, or for more information call program coordinator Dan Bond at (615) 837-5189 or email Dan.Bond@state.tn.us.

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