

# Washington County attends workshop aimed at women farmers



By Michaela Slagle-Saylor, district office manager, Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District

The Appalachian Resource Conservation and Development Council hosted a wonderful workshop to help teach and equip women landowners and operators with the skills, knowledge, and tools to preserve farmland. The class was directed by former NRCS Chief Operations Officer Dana York and was titled Women Preserving Farmland For The Future.

Kinsley Graves, a soil conservationist for Washington and Unicoi Counties, gave a presentation on how to create an on-farm resource inventory checklist, how a conservation plan for a farm is developed, and how to apply for programs. Kinsley led a mock interview with facilitator, while Dana demonstrated what to expect with a farm visit. Kinsley and Dana explained the resource

concerns, practices, enhancements, and other details of programs pertaining to the example farm used. Kinsley and Dana also talked about what tools are available to help and how the planning process worked. Michaela Slagle-Saylor, the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation district office manager, discussed how the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Agricultural Resources Conservation Fund helps to implement best management practices on farms. Other speakers — all who were women professionals in their respective



fields — including Tennessee Department of Agriculture TAEP Coordinator, Farm Credit Rural First, First Bank and Trust, Farm Bureau Insurance, USDA Rural Development, USDA Farm Service Agency and UT-TSU Extension.

The class was attended by more than 30 women from Northeast Tennessee. There was a wide variety of agriculture and farming background, experience, and interest represented in the demographic present.

These participants were able to network and create connections with other women, problem solve and start the conversation about what the next generation of the family farm will look like

and be made aware of assistance that is available to them. This training helped women feel more secure by providing information about long term sustainability and by providing information of how to overcome barriers that are so often faced by women in agriculture.