

# F.B.I. FREEZER BEEF INSTITUTE

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## PROGRAMMATIC NEED

Marketing farm raised calves directly to consumers has gained interest among cattle producers in Tennessee in recent years. This increased interest was only compounded by frustrating market prices as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and a lack of beef on grocery store shelves which caused consumers to turn to their local farmers. While many resources were available on direct marketing, regulations for the sale of live animals and beef products, and label requirements to be legal, information on producing a calf that met consumer preferences was lacking. F.B.I. Freezer Beef Institute was developed to educate producers on how to raise and feed calves from weaning to harvest to meet this need.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for F.B.I. Freezer Beef Institute is both cow/calf producers and stocker/backgrounder operators. Producers that were completely new to freezer beef production, already selling live animals for custom harvest, and those selling retail meat cuts were targeted to gain knowledge about production methods to improve the quality of calves harvested directly off the farm. Majority of attendees were cow/calf producers (Figure 1.).

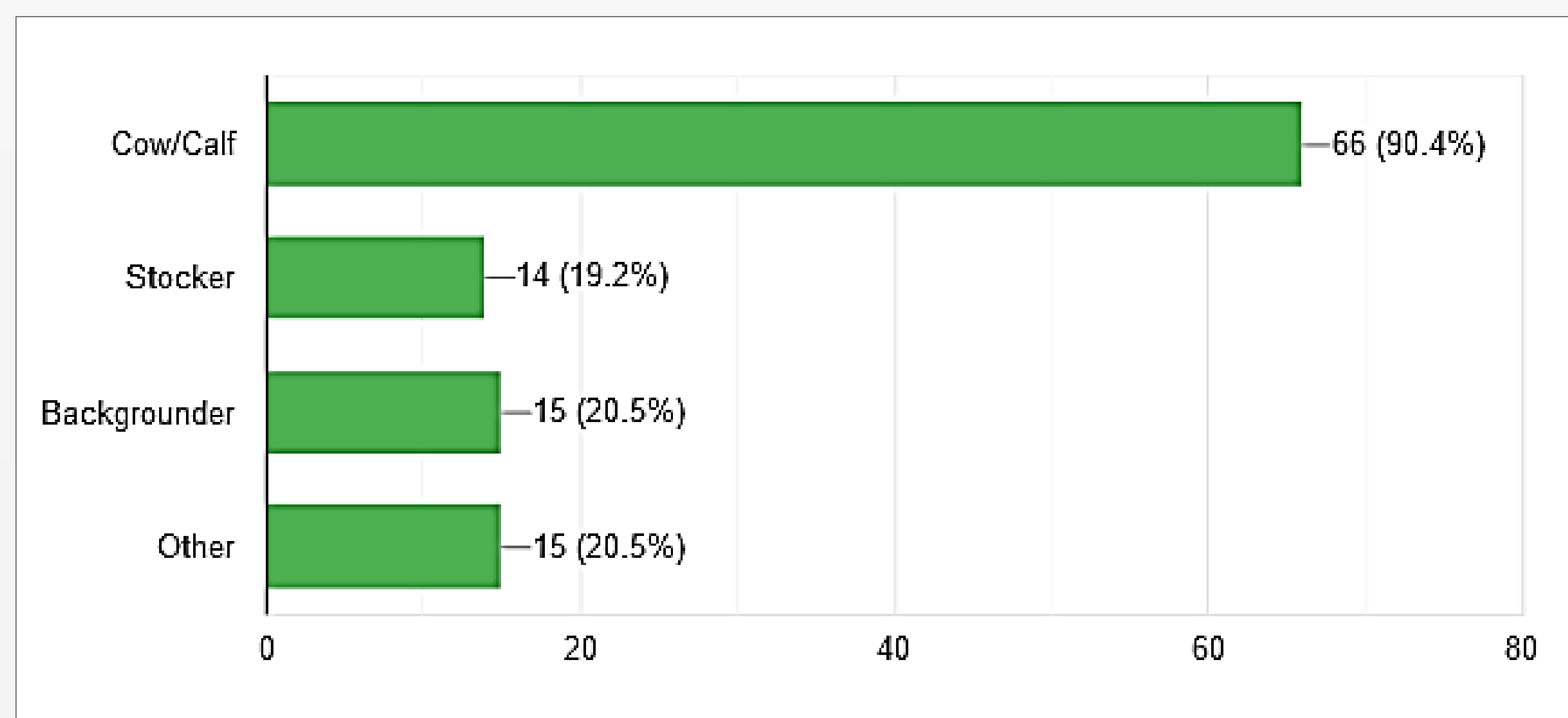


Figure 1. Distribution of Attendees by Operation Type

## PROGRAM DELIVERY METHOD & DEMOGRAPHICS

F.B.I Freezer Beef Institute was delivered in three evening sessions via a webinar format. There were two speakers each evening covering a total of six topics throughout the course. Each session was recorded to be used as future resources for producers. The application of virtual delivery allowed program reach to a wider audience including seven states and two countries for a total of 146 participants (Figure 2.).

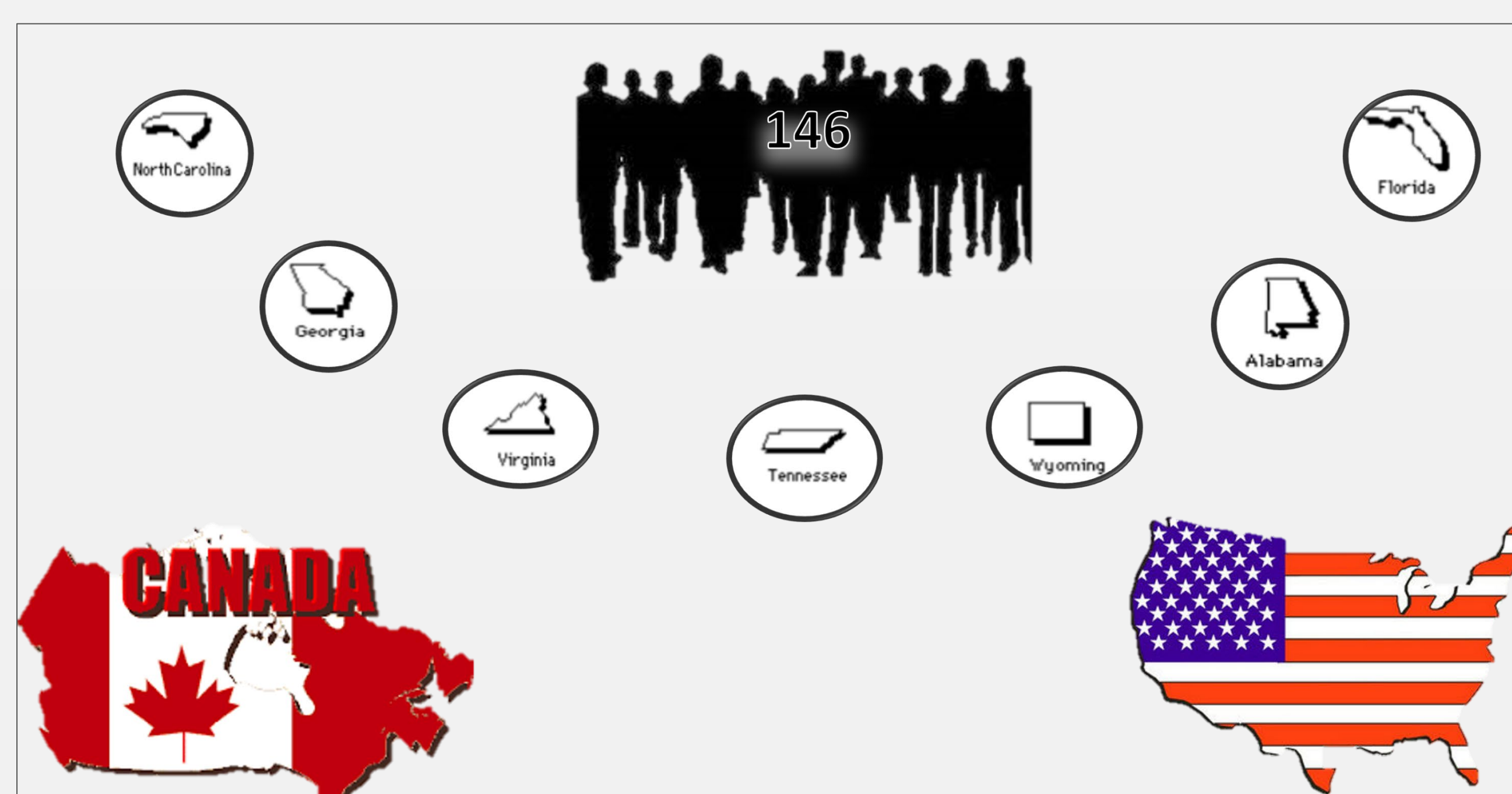


Figure 2. Participant Demographics

## TOPICS & SPEAKERS

F.B.I. Freezer Beef Institute was a multidisciplinary, collaborative effort with guest speakers considered to be experts in their field.



**Dr. Katie Mason**  
UT Dept. of Animal Science  
Feeding Freezer Beef



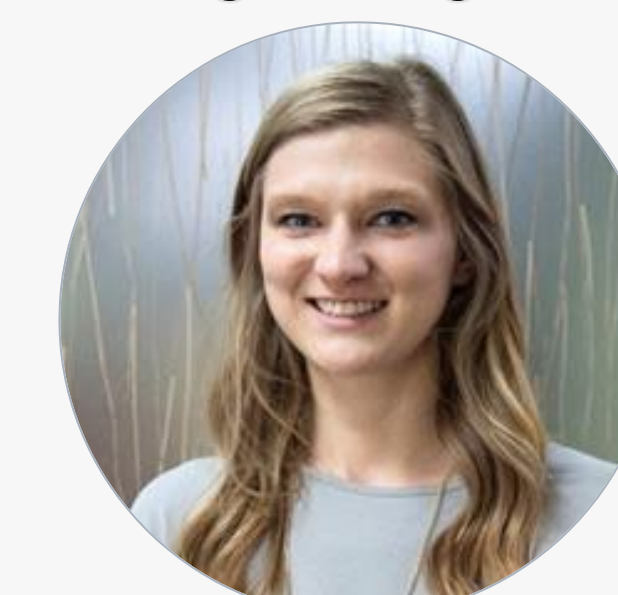
**Megan Bruch-Leffew**  
Center for Profitable Agriculture  
Marketing & Regulations



**Dr. Andrew Griffith**  
UT Dept. of Agriculture Economics  
Budgeting Considerations



**Sarah Orr**  
UT Extension  
Selecting the Right Calf to Feed



**Jessica Gardner**  
UT Extension  
Beef Product Storage Methods



**Dr. Dwight Loveday**  
UT Dept. of Food Science  
Carcass Quality

## PROGRAM IMPACTS

Producers surveyed (n=73) reported a 25% increase in knowledge about selecting the right calf to feed for freezer beef production and a 27% increase of knowledge for both marketing and budgeting. Nearly half (49.3%) of surveyed participants plan to make changes to their nutrition program in the coming year.

**Reported Economic Impact:**  
**\$210,000**



## KEY POINTS LEARNED ABOUT TN FREEZER BEEF PRODUCTION

1. 80% of participants have either never feed calves for freezer beef production or fed less than 15 head.
2. Approximately 70% are marketing a whole or half beef in live animal form to consumers, while only 31% are selling retail cuts.
3. Most producers (71%) are raising freezer beef for personal consumption, for immediate family members (33%), and for other customers (59%).

## PROGRAM CONTACT

To access F.B.I. Freezer Beef Institute resources, visit <https://tiny.utk.edu/FBI>. For questions, email Sarah Orr at [sorr6@utk.edu](mailto:sorr6@utk.edu).

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