

## THE YEAR AT KDA

# Agriculture Department Becomes “More Than You Know”

Eight years ago, when Billy Ray Smith first became Commissioner of Agriculture, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) served mostly regulatory functions, focused on commerce or public safety as often as agriculture.

Back then, about 75 percent of the Department’s duties consisted of statewide inspection of various commercial services, equipment and products – some directly connected with agriculture and foods, some with a more remote association.

Today just as then, KDA inspects amusement rides, limestone, grocery price scanners, and industrial scales of all sizes, among many other inspection missions. Now, however, KDA’s primary mission benefits Kentucky farmers much more directly. Now KDA primarily seeks to benefit Kentucky’s farmers by identifying and developing new markets and improving the production channels that move Kentucky farm products from field to shelf to table.

The regulation and inspection function of KDA has grown steadily over the past eight years, as evidenced by the greater number of gasoline pumps and grocery price scanners today. But the more agriculture-related duties of KDA have grown even faster, so fast that today we estimate KDA now strikes a 50-50 balance between its regulation-inspection and agricultural duties.



The emphasis on agricultural market promotion will be one of the major legacies of Commissioner Smith’s two terms at the KDA helm. And history will show that Commissioner Smith shifted KDA’s primary emphasis into finding new markets just at the time new markets and new products came to be needed.

Illustrating this year’s volume are winning entries in a statewide photography contest sponsored by KDA during early 2003.