

## **Garrard County Hosts 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Tobacco Cutting Contest** **Submitted by Kimberly Bartley**

Nearly 400 people were gathered on a humid day at Shell Farms in Garrard County on September 4 to see if the record could be broken at the 33rd Annual Tobacco Cutting Contest. This annual event draws people from Garrard and the surrounding counties. It is a competition of skill and a celebration of farming, community and the crop that has been harvested by families in the county for over 100 years.

The conservation district feels that it is very important to participate in events like these each year for not only promotion but to support community events that are agriculture related. The district does that by handing out nearly 500 bottles of free water to attendants of the contest.



Also present were State Representative Jonathon Shell whose family hosted the event and Agriculture Commissioner James Comer who enjoyed the event, which also included a health fair and a meal sponsored by Cooperative Extension.

It was a great day to watch fourteen participants compete for the title “Top Cutter” and the \$500 prize. The cutter is allowed to have one sponsor who is allowed to sharpen blades and spears and a time keeper who also watches for errors. For the ninth straight year the winner was Alvin Stamper, who managed to cut an outstanding 265 sticks in 59 minutes with no errors.



Garrard County is ranked 15th in the state for tobacco production. Some feel that tobacco cutters are a dying breed, but in Garrard County local tobacco cutters are still very much a part of the harvest season.