



# Quarterly Report

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**to USDA Rural Development  
Agricultural Marketing Resource Center  
(AgMRC)**

*April 1, 2010 – June 30, 2010*

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Submitted by Iowa State University and Kansas State University.

# Iowa State University Extension

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## *Third Quarter Report*

*April 1, 2010 to June 30, 2010*

### **Goal #1**

*Create and promote an electronic, Web-based library with powerful search capabilities to make value-added information and other resources available to producers (includes Website development and functions). Provide electronically available information and resources on value-added markets and industries including a wide variety of commodities and products (this includes the Commodities and Products and Markets and Industries sections of the Website).*

In terms of visits to the site, the total number was 295,125 (↑) during the quarter, while the average number of visits per day was 3,243 (↑).

Within the United States, the most visits came from the states of Washington (22.2% ↓), California (20.8% ↑), New York (12.1% ↑), Illinois (3.9 ↑) and Florida (3.3% new). California visitors view more pages per visit (3.8) than visitors from any other state, followed by Washington visitors (2.8).

By country, the largest number of visits this quarter originated from the United States (69.0% ↓), followed by (in order): China (3.2% unchanged), Canada (3.0% unchanged), India (2.8% unchanged) and United Kingdom (2.2% unchanged). On average, Indian visitors view slightly more pages per visit (3.1) than do American visitors (3.0).

### *Blog*

During this quarter, 14,618 visitors (↓) viewed the AgMRC Blog, opening 22,700 pages (↓) and spending an average of 2 minutes and 12 seconds (↓).

### *Major Content Sections*

When the content sections of the Website are considered, Commodities and Products (C&P) and Business Development (Bus Dev) continue to rank as the top two most frequently visited sections this quarter. C&P accounted for 24.1 percent of Website visits (↓), and Bus Dev accounted for 16.4 percent of visits (↓). Renewable Energy, the newest section on the Website, now ranks third in visits, capturing 10.7 percent of the visits (↓).

Within the C&P section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Fruits (16.8% ↑)
2. Livestock (16.6% ↑)
3. Grains and Oilseeds (14.6% ↓)

The top three topics visited in the Bus Dev section were:

1. Operating a Business (31.4% ↑)
2. Getting Prepared (21.0% ↓)
3. Starting a Business (17.9% ↑)

The top three topics visited in the Renewable Energy section were:

1. AgMRC Renewable Energy Newsletter (27.5% ↑)
2. Ethanol (23.3% ↑)
3. Biofuels/Biorefining (general) (8.5% ↓)

Website usage is tracked and analyzed using Urchin version 6.6 from Google. Visits are the number of visits to the site from the country/region/city. Pages/Visit is pageviews divided by number of visits. ↑ indicates percentage increased from the last quarter, and ↓ indicates percentage decreased from the last quarter.

## **Updated Topics**

### *Commodities and Products*

During this time, the following 60 profiles were updated: Apricots, Bison, Camelina, Chestnuts, Hazelnuts, Herbs, Pine Nuts, Prairie Grasses, Organic Soy, Teff, Black Walnuts, Watermelons, Wind Energy, Commodity Beef, Organic Beef, Blackberries, Blueberries, Carrots, Celery, Grapes, Mushrooms, Pears, Pecans, Popcorn, Organic Pork, Pork Processing, Sweet Potatoes, Rice, Squash, U-Pick Strawberries, Alpaca, American Eel, Hybrid Striped Bass, Largemouth Bass, Certified Beef, Natural Beef, Bluegills, Canola, Bass, Cauliflower, Chickpeas, Dairy Products, Dates, Egyptian Wheat, Elk, Ethanol, Garlic, Golden Shiner, Kenaf, Koi, Melons, Ostrich, Dairy Sheep, Solar Power, Spinach, Sturgeon, Tilipia, Walleye, Worms and Yellow Perch.

All profile links to external sites are checked when the profile is being updated.

### *Markets & Industries*

The following seven topics were reviewed: Allergens, Convenience Stores, Drying, Eco Labels, Farmers' Markets, Organic Food Trends and Tourism.

All profile links to external sites are checked when the profile is being updated.

### *Renewable Energy*

The following two new subsections were added: (1) Climate Change and Agriculture and (2) Farm Alternative Energy. One existing subsection, Farm Alternative Energy, was revised. Four new information files were added. More than 90 new external links were added.

## **Goal #2**

*Provide value-added business and economic analysis tools, including information on business principles, legal, financial and logistical issues (information contained in the Business Development section of the Website).*

More than 25 broken external links were revised.

**Goal #3**

*Conduct research and analysis on economic issues facing producers involved in value-added business ventures (this includes research activities on all topics included at the Website).*

As of this quarter, 53 case studies profiling recipients of USDA Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) are available online at:

[http://www.agmrc.org/business\\_development/strategy\\_and\\_analysis/analysis/case\\_studies\\_of\\_value\\_added\\_producer\\_grant\\_recipients.cfm](http://www.agmrc.org/business_development/strategy_and_analysis/analysis/case_studies_of_value_added_producer_grant_recipients.cfm)

**Goal #4**

*Conduct outreach activities to disseminate the research and information assembled and developed under the previous three goals. These activities are designed for producers, producer groups, businesses and others involved in value-added agriculture (this includes all outreach activities of the Center including workshops, seminars, newsletters and other delivery methods including individual client requests for specific information).*

**Trade Show Promotions/Outreach**

Staff attended and manned a booth at numerous trade shows to continue development of a user base. The following table represents programs, events and outreach either funded by AgMRC or represented AgMRC as match dollars through staff time and travel dollars.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>AgMRC Participant</b>
	Biobased Industry Center Industrial Advisory board and ISU BIC Management Team Project award		Presenting: Bob W.
April 8	National Academy of Science	Minneapolis, MN	Presenting: Bob W.
April 29	High Tunnel workshop	Decorah, IA	Presenting: Linda and Ray
May 3-4	CooperationWorks meeting	Washington, DC	Madeline
May 4-6	International Biomass Conference	Minneapolis, MN	Don
May 13-27	Armenian Vet. Cochran Program	ISU, Ames, IA	Madeline, Dan
June 6-8	eXtension Communities of Practice	Austin, TX	Madeline
June 13-17	National Farm Business Management Conference	Fargo, ND	Presenting: Don

June 19-22	IAMA Conference – Navigating the Food System in a New Era	Boston, MA	Reg, Mary
June 27-29	National Value Added Ag Conference	Biloxi, MI	Ray and Barry
June 27-30	U.S. Biochar Initiative Conference	Ames, IA	Presenting: Don
June 29	High Tunnel Build Workshop, Farm Progress Show	Boone, IA	Presenting: Linda and Ray

### **Client Requests**

In-house AgMRC staff researched and responded to more than 110 e-mailed questions pertaining to the Commodities and Products section, the Markets and Industries section or the Directories and State Resources section of the Website this quarter.

As of June 30, AgMRC staff reported receiving 88 toll-free phone inquiries from 20 different states, that is, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Washington, D.C and Wisconsin. One call was also received from Canada (Ontario). Each caller was directed to Website resources for information or forwarded to specialists for additional assistance.

Another 39 e-mails and phone calls were received with comments or questions about the Renewable Energy section from such organizations as the American Petroleum Institute; China Economic Review; Economic Research Service, USDA; FarmEcon LLC; Farmgate; FC; High Plains Community Redevelopment Group; MTED; Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit Association; Televent; and U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Subscriptions to the Renewable Energy Newsletter list now total 1,435 addresses. Subscribers access and self-subscribe to the newsletter online at:  
[http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc\\_renewable\\_energy\\_newsletter.cfm?show=subscribe&newsletterID=4](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc_renewable_energy_newsletter.cfm?show=subscribe&newsletterID=4)

### **Homepage**

The AgMRC homepage is now featuring a “hot” topic, such as Agritourism, Food Safety, Local/Regional Foods, Organics, Renewable Energy and Value Added Producer Grants, in a center column titled Featured Topics. Pertinent AgMRC profiles and articles are highlighted in this column as well as resources from land-grant university Cooperative Extension, SARE, ATTRA and USDA. The left column features announcements such as the upcoming National Value Added Ag (VAA) Conference and the AgMRC Renewable Energy Newsletter. The right column features quick links to helpful resources and links to funding resources, emphasizing the Value Added Producer Grant Program.

During this quarter, the homepage provided information about Community Supported Agriculture, Renewable Energy, Ag Cooperatives, Local/Regional Foods, Value Added Producer Grants and Energy Audits.

### **Additional Public Relations**

#### *AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter*

The April, May and June issues of the AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter were distributed via e-mail and made available online at:

[http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc\\_renewable\\_energy\\_newsletter.cfm](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc_renewable_energy_newsletter.cfm). The newsletter is sent monthly to a list comprised of producers in value-added agriculture, service providers, media and others. Each newsletter consists of several articles from partnering organizations in AgMRC, new research and a Web page providing the latest price, profitability and supply/demand figures for corn/ethanol and soybean/biodiesel. This quarter, experts at Iowa State University (five articles), Kansas State University (two articles), Montana State University (one article) and North Dakota State University (five articles) contributed articles.

Newsletter articles included:

- Iowa Corn Ethanol Supply Chain Profitability
- Evaluating the Effect of State Ethanol Production Subsidies in the Upper Great Plains
- Value-added Business Success Factors: the Role of Financial Structure and Performance
- New Energy Economics: Removing Ethanol Subsidy Increases Risk
- Cellulosic Biofuels Web Seminar Series 2010
- Ethanol Industry Approaches the Blending Wall - Cellulosic Ethanol Investments Severely Threatened
- Displacing Corn and Soybean Meal in Livestock Feed Rations
- Biofuel Feedstock Production in a 'Full World'
- Value-Added Business Success Factors - Strategic Planning and Implementation
- The Ethanol Blenders' Tax Credit, Part I: Who Gets the Benefits?
- Analysis of the CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Land Use Changes Caused by U.S. Corn Ethanol Production
- Measuring Supply-Use of Distillers Grains in the United States
- Value-Added Business Success Factors - Organizational Issues

All articles are now provided in one print-ready format.

#### *AgMRC Blog*

As of this quarter, 55 entries had been posted under ten categories. The following ten entries were posted during the quarter:

1. USDA, Navy Launch Effort to Encourage Use of Renewable Energy, April 7
2. U.S. Ethanol Industry to Launch First-Ever National TV Ad Campaign, April 13
3. Reflections on 2010 Value-Added Producer Grant, April 20
4. Deadline to be Listed in the 2010 Directory of Farmers Markets Approaching, April 30
5. Small Dairy Resource Available, May 12
6. America's Organic Farmers Face Issues and Opportunities, May 21
7. USDA Identifies Gaps, Releases Maps Which Detail Local Meat Processing Facilities, May 27
8. USDA Value Added Producer Grants Announced, June 4

9. USDA Rural Development and Small Business Administration Work Together to Foster Business Growth, June 10
10. Get Outdoors! June 24

#### *AgMRC on Facebook*

AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. As of June 28, the AgMRC Facebook page had a total of 27 fans, and 130 visits were made to the page that week.

#### *AgMRC Forum*

The first AgMRC forum, on Local/Regional Foods, was introduced last quarter. Four posts about farmers' markets are now available.

#### *Press Releases*

The following press releases were distributed this quarter: Discuss Value-added Agriculture in Social Media, April 7.

In addition, AgMRC received positive press this past quarter. Articles appeared on the Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (direct marketing and food safety), Better Health Research, Center for Sustainability at Cal Poly, Food Consumption Trends cited on Intute research website, Pond Leasing and Fee Fishing on Indonesian website lowongankerjajunis, and Washington Agriculture and the Economy.

# **Kansas State University**

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Responded to nine requests for information on various commodities.

### **Goal #2**

*Provide value-added business and economic analysis tools, including information on business principles, legal, financial and logistical issues (information contained in the Business Development section of the Website).*

Developed and wrote monthly ethanol newsletter articles for the AgMRC newsletter. Completing article on CO2 impact in a value-added business.

### **Goal #3**

*Conduct research and analysis on economic issues facing producers involved in value-added business ventures (this includes research activities on all topics included at the Website).*

Completed work on the alfalfa seed, retail and rural electric development industries and started new project on biomass with rural utilities. Began work on looking at fresh and canned fruit comparisons for value added to better understand USDA's new local foods approach. Met with Iowa State University staff to discuss planning activities for 2011.

### **Goal #4**

*Conduct outreach activities to disseminate the research and information assembled and developed under the previous three goals. These activities are designed for producers, producer groups, businesses and others involved in value-added agriculture (this includes all outreach activities of the Center including workshops, seminars, newsletters and other delivery methods including individual client requests for specific information).*

Worked with Value Added Producer Grant recipients and business development members in California, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri and South Dakota.