

# Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – January – March 2019

As a condition of its USDA Rural Development grant, the cooperating universities comprising AgMRC were tasked to prepare four reports a year and submit them to USDA. These reports summarize the activities completed during each quarter, including website development and functions, value-added business and economic analysis tools and outreach activities (workshops, seminars, newsletters and WebMail inquiries).

# Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – January – March 2019

Iowa State University

## *AgMRC Website Statistics*

This quarter, the total number of page views 299,201 with an average of 3,331 per day.

The Commodities and Products section attracts the most visits, at 192,164 this quarter total. Within Commodities and Products, Fruits is the top section at 52,085 visits. Vegetables follows at 36,515 visits. Livestock has the next highest visits at 25,247.

Within the website, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Industrial Hemp – 14,096 pageviews
2. Strawberries – 6,443 pageviews
3. Potato Profile – 5,504 pageviews

## AgMRC

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The mission of AgMRC is to continue to provide independent producers and processors with critical information needed to build successful value-added agricultural enterprises through the [www.agmrc.org](http://www.agmrc.org) electronic resource information website.

AgMRC continues to serve a national value-added agriculture audience, with more than 3,000 unique visits per day.

| 2019      | Pageviews | Page Views Per Day |
|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| January   | 96,029    | 3,098              |
| February  | 98,746    | 3,527              |
| March     | 104,426   | 3,369              |
| April     |           |                    |
| May       |           |                    |
| June      |           |                    |
| July      |           |                    |
| August    |           |                    |
| September |           |                    |
| October   |           |                    |
| November  |           |                    |
| December  |           |                    |

## Major Content Sections

The major content sections of the AgMRC website visits:

1. Commodities and Products – 192,164 pageviews
2. Business Development – 46,140 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 28,931 pageviews
4. Markets and Industries – 6,587 pageviews
5. Directories and State Resources – 2,588 pageviews

Within the Commodities and Products section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Fruits – 52,085 pageviews
2. Vegetables – 36,515 pageviews
3. Livestock – 25,247 pageviews

Within the Business Development Section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Getting Prepared – 17,809 pageviews
2. Starting a Business – 11,235 pageviews
3. Operating a Business – 10,439 pageviews

Within the Renewable Energy Section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Ethanol – 7,355 pageviews
2. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Report – 5,745 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 5,475 pageviews



*AgMRC Website Updates:*

**Profiles updated this quarter (17):**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Blackberries             | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/blackberries">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/blackberries</a>   |
| Blueberries              | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/blueberries">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/blueberries</a>   |
| Carrots                  | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/carrots">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/carrots</a>   |
| Fee & Lease Pond Fishing | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism/fee-and-lease-pond-fishing-profile">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism/fee-and-lease-pond-fishing-profile</a> |
| Hunting Leases           | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism/hunting-leases">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism/hunting-leases</a>   |
| Industrial Hemp          | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fiber/industrial-hemp">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fiber/industrial-hemp</a>   |
| Kiwi                     | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/kiwi2">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/kiwi2</a>   |
| Mustard                  | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/mustard">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/mustard</a>   |
| Peaches                  | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/peaches">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/peaches</a>   |
| Peppers                  | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/bell-and-chili-peppers">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/bell-and-chili-peppers</a>                           |
| Pomegranates             | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/pomegranates">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/pomegranates</a>   |
| Pumpkins                 | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/pumpkins">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/pumpkins</a>   |
| Spinach                  | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/spinach">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/spinach</a>   |
| Squash                   | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/squash">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/squash</a>   |
| Sugarbeet                | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/sugarbeet-profile">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/sugarbeet-profile</a>                           |
| Sunflowers               | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/sunflower-profile">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/sunflower-profile</a>                           |
| Sweet Corn Profile       | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/corn-grain/sweet-corn-profile">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/corn-grain/sweet-corn-profile</a>   |



Commodities and products profiles are updated based on client inquiries to AgMRC Match participants and AgMRC office staff. This quarter we streamlined commodity pages on our website and eliminated commodity pages that were not being utilized according to our analytics.

**Business development files updated this quarter (1):**

**Business Expansion**

<https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/business-expansion>

**Industry Analysis**

<https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/analysis/industry-analysis>

**Email**

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 105 e-mailed questions pertaining to cauliflower, sweet potatoes, bees, and small business development to name a few.

**Phone Calls**

As of March 31, AgMRC staff reported having 48 toll-free phone inquiries from 25 different states.

**Facebook**

AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had 40 posts, which were seen by more than 6,518 people.

**VAPG Videos Added:**

**Cannon River Winery and Vineyard**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBR\\_ntEXGaM&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y\\_8vLtzOg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBR_ntEXGaM&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y_8vLtzOg)

**Chapel Hill Creamery**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsZhSlt-vDk&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y\\_8vLtzOg&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsZhSlt-vDk&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y_8vLtzOg&index=2)

**Dan & Debbie's Creamery**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GSX0See4Ww&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y\\_8vLtzOg&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GSX0See4Ww&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y_8vLtzOg&index=3)

**Darby Springs Farm**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4h3RaBNF4M&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y\\_8vLtzOg&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4h3RaBNF4M&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQiBiK3Y_8vLtzOg&index=4)



Holy Field Winery

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pyx-kvvxgc0&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQIBiK3Y\\_8vLtzOg&index=5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pyx-kvvxgc0&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQIBiK3Y_8vLtzOg&index=5)

Fireside Winery

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syjoRJrkKT0&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQIBiK3Y\\_8vLtzOg&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syjoRJrkKT0&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQIBiK3Y_8vLtzOg&index=6)

Redhead Creamery

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zrZXCiRo1Y&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQIBiK3Y\\_8vLtzOg&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zrZXCiRo1Y&list=PLhTIISerD2WBz6rDBmQIBiK3Y_8vLtzOg&index=7)

### Radio Spot:

Value Added Grants Help Dairy Family Realize a Dream (recorded in March)

<https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/value-added-grants-help-dairy-family-realize-a-dream>

## AgMRC Subcontracts

### Progress Report on AgMRC MarketMaker Collaboration

#### Goal 1

**Build Exportable Maps and Reports-** *Develop a series of maps and customizable marketing studies that provide Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) applicants with market intelligence that can easily be incorporated into feasibility studies and business plans that support the VAPG application process.*

The MM team is currently uploading and refreshing all of its current secondary data sources that will be available as part of the exportable maps and reports tools.

The MM team acquired a more expanded version of Consumer Preference Data which will double the number of categories for food related purchasing behavior. These categories are being refreshed in the current mapping tool and the related increase search options are being added to the search feature.

#### Goal 2

**Integrate Educational Content from AgMRC site into MarketMaker Platform-** *Develop additional MarketMaker search tools targeting the AgMRC site educational content, building on the progress made in the first round of funding,*



Over 6945 thousand newsletters were sent out to MM users featuring AgMRC educational content on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Conducted early stage planning and development to enable “smarter” MarketMaker search tools to sweep AgMRC content into its current searches.

### **Goal 3**

**Enhance MarketMaker Advanced Mapping Tools-** *Expand the secondary data sources from USDA that can be incorporated into the MarketMaker interactive mapping platform. Develop a more intuitive interface that will make the resource more user friendly to the non-technical user. Develop new functionality that will allow VAPG grant applicants to identify market trends.*

Made minor modifications to mapping tool in response to user feedback collected at tradeshow and conferences .

### **Goal 4**

**Build Metrics and Impacts-** *Develop tracking tools that will allow AgMRC and MarketMaker staff to collect data that can be used for evaluation purposes and ultimately the long term economic impact of the resources being developed.*

**Food Searcher-** The current 22 products averaged 2,230 product searches per week during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2019.

**Most searched Food Searcher products include:**

Strawberries: 392 searches per week

Lettuce: 321 searches per week

Watermelon: 244 searches per week

Cherries: 188 searches per week

Grapes: 182 searches per week

**Profile Views-** There were 13,107 farms and businesses whose profiles were visited for a total of 39,778 profile views (some profiles were visited multiple times)

**Connecting Farmers to Markets -**449 entities received 519 online connections facilitated through the AgMRC and MarketMaker collaboration.

## **Outreach and Engagement**



**Conferences and Trade shows-** The MarketMaker team promoted the AgMRC/ MarketMaker collaboration at the following events in the first quarter of 2019

- Illinois Specialty growers
- Southern Sustainable Ag Working Group SAWG
- USDA Ag Outlook Forum
- Iowa State Community Foods System Event
- Illinois Farmers Market Annual Meeting

**MarketMaker Year in Review-** This year's issue of the MarketMaker Year In Review features the AgMRC / MarketMaker collaboration including the Food Searcher Mapping Tool and the Report Generator Tool. The YIR is now available online in addition to copies sent directly to stakeholders, legislators and governmental agencies. <https://ia.foodmarketmaker.com/content/1979-2018-year-in-review>

**Farm Bureau's Farm Week Newspaper-** Farm Week did a feature story on the AgMRC/ MarketMaker collaboration <https://farmweeknow.com/story-marketmaker-links-growers-national-value-added-source-0-184989>

## Other

**Food Searcher-** The MarketMaker tech team added an additional 6 products to the AgMRC Food Searcher Tool.

## University of Vermont

The primary objective is to provide tools and resources to support agritourism and value-added agriculture enterprises. Funding is being used to develop materials and deliver trainings and technical assistance for producers and for agricultural service providers. Specific deliverables include:

1. A guide on best practices for agritourism and value-added enterprises.

We completed five videos that highlight unique and successful agritourism operations. Farms selected represented the breadth of Vermont's agricultural industry, including flowers and vegetables, dairy, livestock, berries, and maple. The types of agritourism activities also varied





widely, from pick-your-own, to bed and breakfasts, to educational tours and workshops, to field tours and more. The videos will be used to celebrate and pique the interest of peer farmers who may be considering agritourism, as well as provide them with skills in the industry.

We completed an Extension publication, “Questions Planners may anticipate regarding the Agritourism Industry’s Farm Direct Sales and other Farm-Based Activities.” Online at: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/documents/9271/agtourfactsheetplannersquestionsagtouractivities2019v4.pdf>

The Extension publication and videos will be integrated into existing resource hubs, including the Vermont Agritourism webpage [www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism](http://www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism), a valuable tool used by service providers and farmers alike.

## 2. Workshops on agritourism and value-added enterprises.

On February 8, Melissa Fery, Oregon State University Extension small farms faculty, gave an agritourism training on behalf of Mary Stewart at the County Planners Network meeting in Corvallis, Oregon. Some 38 county planners attended this day-long training and networking event, plus 15 additional people. The organizer requested a session about agritourism, because the topic is of growing interest to planners.

On March 14, the Agri-Eco Tourism Conference was held in Salem, Oregon. The annual daylong training and networking session brought local as well as national speakers from California and Washington D.C. to share their knowledge of the trends, techniques and resources in this growing industry. A total of 48 producers and tourism industry representatives attended plus an additional 14 speakers and organizers.

On March 20, Mary Stewart was interviewed about “The Dos and Don’ts of Agritourism” for nearly 30 minutes on the OregonBroadfork Radio Program. This local radio station in Salem, Oregon, has a listenership of 4000 – 4500 regular listeners, include many farmers, plus they have podcasts and a website. OSU Extension Small Farms Extension faculty Victoria Binning hosts the monthly program, which is 30 minutes in length.

On April 19, the Agritourism 101 Training took place at MPFS Youth Farm, Chemeketa Community College, Salem, Oregon. The program was presented to 11 farmers by the Oregon State University Extension Service, Small Farms Program, Mid-Willamette Valley/Marion County.



3. Presentations at national conferences to share the best practices guide and VAPG program with producers and with agricultural service providers.

We submitted proposals to present on agritourism and value-added enterprises at the Agricultural, Food, and Human Values Society Conference in Alaska in June; the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association meeting in Atlanta in July; and the National Extension Tourism Conference in October in Oregon.

4. Technical assistance to support farmers with agritourism and value-added enterprises including farms applying for Value-Added Producer Grants.

We provided direct technical assistance through farm visits and one-on-one consultations to eight farms in the Northeast.

## **University of Minnesota Food Industry Center**

### **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 web site 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/Products and Markets/Industries sections of the Web site).*

We did not have any commodity updates to do. We worked with University of Minnesota Crookston on the subcontract from Iowa State on their digital content, which was submitted in late December. A follow-up call was done with University of Minnesota Crookston to plan the rest of the material.

### **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 Web site).*



We are developing a spreadsheet tool to use for the developing of linking farm enterprise budget with investment in a value-added business. This is an update of an earlier AgMRC product done about ten years ago but will include information from the recent tax bill changes. A draft is completed and being circulated for peer review among economists at Oklahoma State and Iowa State.

### **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 Web site).*

We created a digital file for the website of the work done by Edward Blevins in his update of the VAPG program and a written summary was created. We are still finalizing a database with contacts of VAPG recipients on social media such as Facebook and Twitter and will be contacting them to learn more about what they are doing. It is going a little slower but we expect to have it completed this summer.

### **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 VAPG recipients and business development members in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Workshops were done in California, Kansas, Minnesota, and South Dakota. Planning for next winter's workshops have begun with initial planning calls for the Minnesota November meeting and January South Dakota meeting.

### **Community Food Systems, Iowa State University**

January-March

The last Local Food Leader and Community Food Systems certification was hosted January 7-9 in St. Croix Virgin Islands.

Local Food Leader has been offered in 6 states with nearly 200 participants in the workshops : Iowa (February 7) with 30 participants, North Carolina (March 21) with 11 participants and Texas (May 21) with 40 participants, and Alaska (September 5) with 24 participants, Colorado (Oct. 16) with 21



participants, Pennsylvania (December 16) with 46 participants, and Virgin Islands (January 7) with 11 people.

In March we hosted the Local Food Leader Train-the-Trainer and had 27 participants. Each state that participated in the pilot, as well as 2 additional participants that went through the fast pass option. Based on the LFL Train the Trainer, we will create a contract with individuals that wish to teach the program in their respective regions. Individuals that are certified will choose to participate as a trainer, host, or contributor and will all participate in a collective evaluation plan that will share information on participants, impact of the program, and use of the training. The trainers will be able to offer their first course in August 2019, following an update to the online modules.

The Community Food Systems online modules will launch May 22nd. Due to delays in curriculum development and Moodle technology, we pushed back the deadline. The course now includes 7 different online modules and 6 levels of certification: Full, Facilitator, Assessor, TA- Economic Impact, TA- Design Thinking, and TA- Feasibility studies.

Community Food Systems has been offered in 10 states with over 150 participants in the in-person workshop: North Carolina (March 22-23) with 11 participants, Kentucky (May 15-16) with 22 participants, Texas (May 22-23) with 20 participants, and Georgia (May 29-June 1) with 8 participants; Alaska (August X) with 18 participants, Nebraska (September 28-29) with 21 participants, Colorado (October 17-18) with 11 participants, Iowa (December 12-13) with 15 participants, Pennsylvania (December 17-18) with 24 participants, and Virgin Islands - St. Croix (January 8-9) with 8 participants. Participants will receive 8 months to complete their online modules which include (depending on their level of certification):



Certification Table:

|                                 | <b>Module 1:<br/>Community Food<br/>Systems<br/>Framework</b> | <b>Module 2:<br/>Collective<br/>Thinking<br/>and<br/>Facilitation</b> | <b>Module 3:<br/>Community Food<br/>Systems<br/>Assessment</b> | <b>Module 4:<br/>Project<br/>Coordination and<br/>Development</b> | <b>Design<br/>Thinking</b> | <b>Economic Impact<br/>Analysis</b> | <b>Feasibility</b> | <b>Mapping 101</b> |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Full</b>                     | x   | x   | x  | x   | x                          | x                                   | x                  | x                  |
| <b>Facilitator</b>              | x   | x   | x  |   |                            |                                     |                    |                    |
| <b>Assessor</b>                 | x   |   | x  |   |                            |                                     |                    | x                  |
| <b>Design Thinking</b>          |   |   |  |   | x                          |                                     |                    |                    |
| <b>Economic Impact Analysis</b> |   |   |  |   |                            | x                                   |                    |                    |
| <b>Feasibility</b>              |   |   |  |   |                            |                                     | x                  |                    |
| <b>Mapping 101</b>              |   |   | x(partial)   |   |                            |                                     |                    | x                  |

#### Next Steps:

Starting in June, we will review evaluations from the Local Food Leader online modules and update the curriculum. Following the update, we will host "hub" certifications that will be piloted in the Northeast, central, and northwest regions.

Online modules for CFS certification will launch May 22. This will include grading and observation hours by staff to support the cohort. There will also be regular cohort zoom calls to answer questions and discuss any questions.

#### University of Arkansas

For the quarter, UA efforts have focused in the following areas to enhance understanding of value added opportunities and the VAPG program:

- 1) Developed and presented a poster titled, Price of Convenience, at the 2019 National Risk Management Education Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Poster abstract listed in Conference



booklet: <http://erme.events/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/AGENDA-2019-ERME-National-Conference.pdf>

- 2) Managed the National Value Added Conference Facebook page. Over the last month, we have reached 1,623 individuals and had 107 engagements. The page has 368 Likes with 105 new followers.
- 3) Developing individual success stories on VAPG grantees for each state in the Southern region. Once finalized will post on-line, host a webinar to highlight the entrepreneurial successes and conduct a social media campaign to promote the success stories as well as AgMRC tools and resources.
- 4) Working on a news article with UA communications department that highlights two successful grantees from Arkansas. The news story will serve as the press release for the online activity.
- 5) Participated in the Community Food Systems Annual Event hosted by Iowa State University, March 28-29, 2019 where I highlighted opportunities in local food systems as part of a panel.