



# Quarterly Report

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

*April 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009*

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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, 2009 to June 30, 2009*

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

During this quarter, more than 185,700 sessions were initiated by visitors to the AgMRC Web site. The average number of daily sessions was more than 2,000. Each visitor viewed an average of 5.5 pages per session and remained at the site for nearly 7 minutes.

The largest percentage of sessions came from the network (.net) domain (39%), followed by the commercial (.com) domain (18%). Roughly 5 percent of the sessions originated in the educational (.edu) domain. When the domain name indicated country of origin, the largest number of sessions this quarter originated from (in order): India, Canada, Australia and the United States.

In terms of hits, the total number between April 1 and June 30 was 4.0 million. The average number of daily hits was 44,290.

When the content sections of the website are considered, Commodities and Products and Business Development continue to capture an equal percentage of the content visits, 36 percent, and to rank as the top two most frequently visited sections. Renewable Energy, the newest section on the website, now ranks third in visits, capturing an average of 16 percent of the visits this quarter. Markets and Industries ranks fourth, with 6 percent of the visits, and Directories and Resources ranks fifth, with 5 percent.

Web site usage is tracked and analyzed using Urchin version 5 from Google. Sessions are defined as a series of clicks on the site by an individual visitor, and hits are defined as a successful request to the Web server from a visitor's browser for any type of file.

### **Updated Topics**

#### *Commodities and Products*

During this time, the following 66 profiles were updated: Alpacas, American Eels, Apricots, Largemouth Bass, Hybrid Striped Bass, Branded Beef, Natural Beef, Organic Beef, Biodiesel, Bison, Blackberries, Blueberries, Bluegills, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Chestnuts, Chickpeas, Dates, Elk, Garlic, Golden Shiner, Grapes, Herbs, Kenaf, Koi, Melons, Pears, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Organic Pork, Processed Pork, Sweet Potatoes, Prairie Grasses/Wildflowers, Rice, Sesame, Dairy Sheep, Organic Soy, Spinach, Squash, You-Pick Strawberries, Sturgeon, Sugarcane, Teff, Tilipia, Tobacco, Walleye, Black Walnuts, Watermelons, Wind Energy, Wine (15 states) and Worms.

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

### *Markets & Industries*

The following six topics were updated: Allergens, Convenience Stores, Eco Labels, Farmers' Markets, Energy and Tourism.

### *Renewable Energy*

Two files in this section were updated: one file on Brazil's ethanol industry and another on the impact of climate change on Midwestern agriculture. A new section titled "Other Energy" was added. This section included the following four topics: Ammonia, Butanol, Electricity and Hydrogen. A total of 131 external links were added.

### **AgMRC Web Site**

Global Reach has completed its update of the content management system (CMS) to a newer content management application. The AgMRC Value-Added Directories were ported to the new system. The new CMS allows for additional newsletters and news lists to be managed much more efficiently. Minor tweaks were made to the organizational structure. The left navigation was modified through Global Reach.

### **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).*

New information files on Electronic Budgeting Tools and on CSA Amount Contributed and Revenue per Unit were added to the Business Workbook. All links to external sites have now been inventoried and checked following the conversion.

### **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).*

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>
April	Ethanol 2009: Emerging Issues Forum	Nebraska	Presented: Bob W.
April	Grain and Feed Industry Outlook Conference	Denver, CO	Presented: Bob W.
April	Iowa Bankers Assoc	Iowa	Presented: Don
March 30-April 1	Extension Risk Mgmt Ed Conference	Reno, NV	Presented: Madeline Craig
April 22-23	IA Distillers Grain Conference		Connie
May 5-7	National Cooperative Business Assoc Conf & Annual Meeting	Washington, DC	Madeline
May 27-29	PDI Spring Conf	Sioux City, IA	Craig
June	First International Animal Feedstuffs Congress	Spain	Presented: Bob W.
June	World Pork Expo		Presented: Bob W.
June	Nat Pork Producers Council		Presented: Bob W.
June 2-4	Nat VAA Conf	Moline, IL	Presented: Mary, Reg, Marsha and Malinda (See their presentations on the National Value Added Ag Conference Web page.) Assisted or facilitated: Ray, Dan, Connie, Christa, Linda and Craig Diane, Barry, Bob and Margaret
June 9-10	Agricultural and Food Traceability Conf	Des Moines, IA	Connie, Reg

June 14-15	International Distillers Grain Conf	Denver, CO	Connie
June 14-17	Nat Extension Tourism Conf	Park City, UT	Marsha

### **Client Requests**

Staff researched and responded to 88 e-mailed questions pertaining to the Commodities and Products section, the Markets and Industries section or the Directories and State Resources section of the Web site this quarter. Another 54 e-mail messages were received with comments or questions about the Renewable Energy section from such organizations as the California Air Quality Board; Houston Biofuels Consultants, LLC; BBI International; Renewable Fuels Association; Kiplinger Agriculture Letter; and Harvest Biofuels, LLC.

During this quarter, 159 new subscriptions were added to the Renewable Energy Newsletter list, which now totals over 1,500 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)

During this quarter, AgMRC received a total of 95 toll-free phone inquiries from 26 different states, including Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wisconsin. Two calls were also received from Canada (Alberta, Ontario). Each caller was directed to Web site resources for information or forwarded to specialists for additional assistance.

### **Additional Public Relations**

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 bi-monthly to a list of over 1,500 names 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, Kansas State University, North Dakota State University and the University of Minnesota Extension Service contributed articles.

Newsletter articles included:

- Efficiency and Environmental Improvements of Corn Ethanol Production.
- Wild Cards for the Ethanol Industry.
- Socioeconomic Impacts of Developing Wind Energy.
- The Relationship of Ethanol, Gasoline and Oil Prices.
- Biofuels and Greenhouse Gas Emissions on a Collision Course.
- Tracking the Profitability of Biodiesel Production.

- Biodiesel Economics--Costs, Tax Credits and Co-product.
- Reinventing Agriculture for Environmental Enhancement.
- The Plight of Ethanol Plants.
- Economic Pressures on the Biodiesel Industry.
- Ammonia as a Transportation Fuel.
- The Impact of Grain Ethanol Plants on Local Grain Prices.
- Impact of Rising Feed Prices on Cattle Finishing Profitability.

The following 12 press releases were distributed this quarter:

- Changes Needed to Make Federal Biofuels Blending Rules Work
- How to Tap USDA's Value Added Producer Grants
- How California's Low Carbon Fuel Standard Impacts Ethanol
- AgMRC Assists Producers in Applying for USDA Value-added Grants
- Biodiesel Plants Experiencing Severe Economic Pressures
- Green Home-Grown Ammonia Could Become King of the Road
- National Value-added Agriculture Conference Set for June 2-4 in Moline
- Biodiesel Economics--Costs, Tax Credits & Co-products
- Biodiesel Profitability--Tracking Rapidly Moving Target
- Agritourism: A Recession Cure for Both Farmers and Vacationers
- Indirect Land Use Calculations Threaten Biofuels Development
- Super Ethanol Grows Even Greener, Using Less Petroleum

In addition, AgMRC received positive press this past quarter. Articles appeared in *AgriPulse*, *ATTRA*, *BioConversion blog*, *BioDiesel magazine*, *BioFuels Consultants*, *Cargill*, *Dairy Herd Management*, *Examiner.com ag blog*, *eXtension*, *Farm Bureau's Executive Newswatch to staff*, *Farm Futures*, *Farm Policy*, *FDIC Quarterly*, *FeedStuff*, *ICIS*, *Illinois Soybean Network*, *National Corn Growers Association*, *Ohio Soybean Review*, *Oil Mill Gazetteer*, *Oil Price Information Service*, *Poet Energy Magazine*, *Pork magazine*, *Progressive Dairy*, *Sacramento Bee*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Soybean Review*, *Today's Farmer* and *Wallace's Farmer*.

# **Kansas State University**

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*April 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009*

### **Goal #1**

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Responded to seven 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 Web site).*

Developed and wrote monthly ethanol newsletter articles for the AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter. Wrote an article for the AgMRC newsletter and one for the AgMRC blog.

### **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).*

Began working on a paper and collecting data outlining the idea of a margin concept as a means of risk management for value-added businesses.

### **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 in Missouri, Kansas and California.