



# Quarterly Report

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

*January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2009*

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Submitted by Iowa State University and Kansas State University.

# Iowa State University Extension

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## *Second Quarter Report*

*January 1, 2009 to March 31, 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, a total of 167,000 sessions was initiated by visitors to the AgMRC Web site. The average number of daily sessions was 1,858. Each visitor viewed an average of 8 pages per session and remained at the site for 8 minutes.

The largest percentage of sessions came from the network (.net) domain (33%), followed by the commercial (.com) domain (20%). Roughly 6 percent of the sessions originated in the educational (.edu) domain. When the domain name indicated country of origin, the largest number of sessions originated from (in order): the United States, Canada, India, the United Kingdom and Australia.

In terms of hits, the total number between January 1 and March 31 was 3.9 million. The average number of daily hits was 44,366.

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 61 profiles were updated: Agritourism; Almonds; Amaranth; Apples, Online Ordering; Organic Apples; You Pick Apples; Direct Market Beef; Bees and Honey; Bioreactors; Catfish; Cheese; Cherries; Christmas Trees; Cotton; Cranberries; Dairy Goats; Equine Agritourism; Fee and Lease Pond Fishing; Fiber Overview; Flax; Fluid Milk; Game Birds; Hay; Hazelnuts; Hunting Leases; Direct Market Lambs; International Market Lambs; Nature-Based Tourism; Olives; Organic Poultry; Peanuts; Pennycress; Pistachios; Plums; Certified, Verified Pork; Direct Market Pork; Foodservice Pork; International Market Pork; Natural Pork; Niche, Ethnic Pork; Prunes; Quinoa; Rural Weddings; Safflower; Sawdust; Soyfood; Triticale; Fresh Tomatoes; Processed Tomatoes; Trout; Turkey; English Walnuts; Colorado Wine; Illinois Wine; Iowa Wine; Kansas Wine; Missouri Wine; Nebraska Wine; South Dakota Wine; Wine Tours; and Wool.

Following the conversion to the new Web site, all profile links to external sites are checked when the profile is being updated.

### *Markets & Industries*

The following 42 topics were updated: Antibiotic Use, Baking, Bioterrorism, Canning, Community Supported Agriculture, Co-Packing, Direct Markets, Distributing, Ethnic Foods, Food Safety, Food Safety Centers, Foodservice, Food Supply, Freezing, Fresh Processing, Genetically Modified Foods, Grocery Industry, Industry Structure, International Issues, Kitchen Incubators, Kosher Industry, Labeling, Manufacturing, Market Trends, Meat Processing, Meat Science Labs, Natural Foods, Packaging, Private Labeling, Processing, Quality Management Systems, Restaurants, Retailing, Specialty Foods, Trade Shows, Wholesaling, Federal Programs, Industry Structure, Market Trends, Regulation, Fiber Industry Structure, Understanding Markets.

### *Renewable Energy*

The Small Wind section was consolidated into the main Wind section. An Energy Efficiency subsection was added that provides information on general conservation and efficiencies, and Industry Analysis and links to related websites were added to the Wind section. The information file titled “Brazil’s Ethanol Industry” was revised.

### **AgMRC Web site Changes Planned**

Staff continued work on proposed changes to the AgMRC Web site. Global Reach has completed its update of the content management system (CMS) to a newer content management application, thus avoiding potential gaps in server support and upgrades. 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. This new structure features a “Hot Topics” section to highlight topics currently in the news and an “AgMRC Toolbox” to highlight specific feasibility and outlook tools developed for the site.

### **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 Double Entry Accounting were added. The files detail the accrual method of accounting as well as provide a general introduction to vital financial statements.

New page sections have now been created on each subsection to organize links to external sites. This distinction was lost during the conversion to the new content site. In addition, all links to external sites have 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).*

Mary Holz-Clause interviewed and prepared profiles of the owners of the following businesses:

- Apple of His Eye Orchard
- Beef Ventures
- East Carolina Soy Processors
- Grassland Beef
- Greenglade Goat Milk Specialties
- Sugarloaf Mountain
- Sunergie
- Texas Citrus Mutual

As of this quarter, 53 case studies profiling recipients of USDA Value-Added Producer Grants 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>
January 3, 2009	Corn milling site visits	Nagoya, Japan	Bob W.
January 9-10, 2009	PFI Conference	Marshalltown, IA	Presented: Margaret, Madeline, display booth
January 22-23	Midwest Value-Added Ag Conference	Rochester, MN	Presented: Madeline, Dan
January 27	Iowa Renewable Fuels Summit	Des Moines, IA	Craig, Don and Ann
January 29-31	Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Marketers Conference	West Des Moines, IA	Presented: Linda and Christa, Margaret, display booth
February 1-4	National Biodiesel Conference	San Francisco, CA	Craig

February 6-7	INCA Local Foods Conference	Clear Lake, IA	Margaret
February 7	Beginning Farmer Conference	Ames, IA	Margaret
February 13	Iowa Corn Growers Workshop	Wall Lake, IA	Presented: Bob W.
February 18-20	NC213 USDA Regional Research Project	Kansas City, MO	Connie
February 20	Iowa Meat Processing Association	Ames, IA	Presented: Madeline and Reg
February 23-25	RFA National Ethanol Conference	San Antonio, TX	Craig
February 26-27	Ag Outlook Forum	Arlington, VA	Madeline and Craig, met with USDA officials, including LeAnn Oliver
February 26-28	MOSES Organic Farming Conference	LaCrosse, WI	Margaret
March 2-12	Corn Outlook Conference	Tokyo, Japan	Presented: Bob W.
March 7	Visit Iowa Farms Conference	Lake Rathbun, IA	Presented: Marsha, Christa, Malinda, Sue and Ray
March 8-13	PittCon 2009	Chicago, IL	Connie
March 16-17	Holistic Management Workshop	Ames, IA	Margaret
March 18	Fruit and Vegetable Working Group Meeting	Ames, IA	Presented: Linda, Madeline
March 20-21	Iowa Wine Growers Association Conference	Des Moines, IA	Craig
March 25	Extension ANR Professional Development	Ames, IA	All Staff
March 30	Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Initiative Workshop	Ames, IA	Presented: Linda and Ray, Margaret
	Extension Risk Management Education		

March 30-April 1	Conference	Reno, NV	Presented: Madeline, Craig
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### **Client Requests**

Staff researched and responded to 73 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 28 e-mail messages were received with comments or questions about the Renewable Energy section.

During this quarter, 63 new subscriptions were added to the Renewable Energy Newsletter list. Subscribers can now 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 78 toll-free phone inquiries from 21 different states, including Alabama, Arkansas, California, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Utah and Washington. Three calls were also received from Canada (British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan). Each caller was directed to Web site resources for information or forwarded to specialists for additional assistance.

### **Additional Public Relations**

Two issues of the AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter, the January and February issues, 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 1,382 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 and North Dakota State University contributed articles.

Five press releases were distributed this quarter. In January a release titled “MaxYield Cooperative profits from combining old with newest,” was distributed and in February a release titled “Olive Growers Council Develops New Products.” In March the following three press releases were distributed:

- “Is one answer to high farm input costs blowing in the wind?”
- “Ethanol industry bankruptcies present tough choices.”
- “Biofuels promise re-population and prosperity for rural America.”

Additionally, AgMRC received positive press this past quarter. Articles appeared in the *Des Moines Register*, *Farm Bureau Spokesman*, *Iowa Farmer Today*, *Maine Today*, *Renewable Fuels Association Ethanol Newsletter*, *Rural Cooperatives magazine*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Soybean Review* and broadcasts on Iowa farm radio.

# **Kansas State University**

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## *First Quarter Report*

*October 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008*

### **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).*

Reviewed two commodities (Hard Red Wheat and Hard White Wheat) on the AgMRC Web site. Responded to 19 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.

### **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).*

Worked on outline of developing 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).*

Conducted director development programs in California, Kansas, Minnesota and Missouri. Worked with VAPG recipients in California, Idaho, Kansas and Utah. Reviewed two proposals to acquire certain assets of VeraSun.