



Quarterly Report

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

January 1, 2012 – March 31, 2012

Submitted by Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota.

Second Quarter Report

January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012

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).

This quarter, the average number of visits per day to the AgMRC website was 3,991 (↓), down from 4,171 per day last quarter, while the average number of pageviews per day was 18,258 (↑), up from 15,703 per day last quarter.

Within the United States, the most visits came from the states of California (19.9% ↑), Washington (9.1% ↑), New York (6.3% ↓), Texas (5.8%, ↑) and Michigan (5.2%, ↑). North Carolina visitors viewed more pages per visit (13.9 ↑) than visitors from any other state, followed by California visitors (11.5 ↑).

As usual, the largest number of visits this quarter originated from the United States (52.3% ↓), followed by (in order): China (13.2% ↑), India (3.3% ↑), Canada (3.0% ↓) and United Kingdom (UK) (2.9% ↑). On average, visitors from Guam (51.7 pages), Tunisia (20.6 pages) and the UK (13.2 pages) viewed more pages per visit than visitors from any other country, even viewing more pages than American visitors (5.2 ↑).

Blog

During this quarter, 21,445 visitors (↓) viewed the AgMRC Blog, opening 104,120 pages (↓) and spending an average time of 2 minutes and 16 seconds (↑).

Major Content Sections

The major content sections of the AgMRC website account for the following percentages of total visits to the website:

1. Commodities and Products (31.9% ↓)
2. Business Development (17.4% ↑)
3. Renewable Energy (11.7% ↑)
4. Markets and Industries (4.4% ↑)
5. AgMRC Blog (3.9% ↑)
6. Directories and State Resources (1.9% ↑)

The Commodities and Products (C&P) section and the Business Development (Bus Dev) section continue to rank as the top two most frequently visited sections this quarter. C&P accounted for 267,734 visits (↑) and 323,033 pageviews (↑); Bus Dev accounted for 146,191 visits (↑) and 191,798 pageviews (↑). Renewable Energy, the newest section on the website, still ranks third in visits, capturing 98,518 visits (↑) and 149,000 pageviews (↑).

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

1. Fruits (44,590 visits ↑)
2. Livestock (43,553 visits ↑)
3. Vegetables (38,042 ↓)

Within the Bus Dev section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Operating a Business (48,726 visits ↑)
2. Getting Prepared (30,356 visits ↑)
3. Starting a Business (27,422 visits ↑)

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

1. Ethanol (23,877 visits ↑)
2. AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter (16,586 visits ↓)
3. Biofuels and Biorefining (10,921 visits ↑)

Website usage is tracked and analyzed using Urchin version 6.6 from Google Analytics. Visits are the number of visits to the site from a particular country/region/city. Pageviews are the number of times the webpage was displayed. 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

Mike Boland, University of Minnesota, supervised commodity updates and conducted peer reviews of them before submission to Iowa State University staff.

Eight contributing writers helped update AgMRC C&P profiles this quarter. Those authors are:

- Gary Brester, Montana State University
- Lisa Case, Vermont
- Geri Isaacs, Kentucky
- Lisa Jore, University of Minnesota
- Greg Lutz, Louisiana State University
- Gene McAvoy, University of Florida
- Greg McKee, North Dakota State University
- Kim Morgan, Mississippi State University

During this time, the following new profiles were developed: Meat for Ethnic Markets and Rabbits.

Likewise, the following 52 profiles were updated: Agritourism Overview, Alligator, Almonds, Amaranth, American Eel, Online Apples, U-Pick Apples, Organic Apples, Aquaculture Overview, Dried Beef, Marketing Beef, Blueberries, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Christmas Trees, Cotton, Cranberries, Eggplants, Equine Agritourism, Flax, Garlic, Grapes, Lettuce, Onions, Peaches, Peanuts, Pennycress, Plums, Certified/Verified Pork, Direct Marketing Pork, Foodservice Pork, Marketing Pork Internationally, Natural Pork, Niche Pork, Potatoes, Prairie Grasses, Proso Millet, Prunes, Quinoa, Rapeseed, Raspberries, Rural Weddings, Tobacco, Triticale, English Walnuts, Colorado Wine, Illinois Wine, Kansas Wine, Missouri Wine, South Dakota Wine and Wine Tours.

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

Markets and Industries

The following 43 topics were reviewed: Antibiotic Use, Baking, Bioterrorism, Canning, Community Supported Ag, Co-packing, Direct Markets, Ethnic Foods, Food Safety, Food Safety Centers, Foodservice, Foodservice/Retail Trends, Food Supply, Freezing, Fresh Processing, Genetically Modified Foods, Grocery Industry, International Issues, Irradiation, Kitchen Incubators, Kosher Industry, Labeling, Market Trends, Meat Processing, Meat Science Labs, Natural Foods, Packaging, Private Labeling, Processing, Quality Management Systems, Restaurants, Retailing, Specialty Food, Supply Chains, Trade Shows, Wholesaling, Federal Programs, Industry Structure, Market Trends, Regulation, Fiber Industry Structure, International Markets and Understanding Markets.

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

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).

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).

Mike Boland, University of Minnesota, continued to research ways for mutuals and fraternal to invest equity in value-added ventures and collaborative efforts among food manufacturers and producer groups.

The AgMRC website provides 53 case studies profiling recipients of USDA Value-Added Producer Grants online at:

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).

Outreach Activities

Mike Boland, University of Minnesota, worked with Value Added Producer Grant recipients and business development members in California and Minnesota.

Greg McKee, a contributing writer from North Dakota State University, distributed AgMRC brochures to students studying value-added agriculture at the university.

Trade Show Promotions

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

Date	Event	Location	AgMRC Participant
January 24	Local Food, Culinary Tourism and Agritourism	Bellevue, Iowa	Presenting: Marsha
January 26	Risk Mgmt for Farm Women, Annie's Project	Ralston, Iowa	Presenting: Madeline – included overview of AgMRC website
March 21-23	ANR Conference, Iowa State University Extension	Ames, Iowa	Attending: Barry, Dan, Linda, Madeline, Margaret, Marsha, Ray
March 6	GEAPS Exchange/NC-213 meeting	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Presenting: Connie Hardy
March 28-29	National Women in Ag Educators Conference	Memphis, Tennessee	Presenting: Madeline – distributed AgMRC brochures at booth

Client Requests

In-house AgMRC staff researched and responded to 137 e-mailed questions pertaining to the Commodities and Products section, the Markets and Industries section, the Renewable Energy section and the Directories and State Resources section of the website this quarter.

As of March 31, AgMRC staff reported receiving 70 toll-free phone inquiries from 29 different states, that is, Alabama; Alaska; Arizona; Arkansas; California; Colorado; Florida; Georgia; Illinois; Iowa; Kentucky; Maryland; Massachusetts; Michigan; Missouri; Montana; Nebraska; New Jersey; New Mexico; New York; Ohio; Oregon; South Carolina; Tennessee; Texas; Virginia; Washington, D.C.; West Virginia; and Wisconsin.

One call was also received from Canada (Ontario). The caller was directed to website resources for information.

Subscriptions to the Renewable Energy Newsletter list now total more than 2,500 addresses. Subscribers access and self-subscribe to the newsletter online at:
HUhttp://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, Cellulosic Ethanol, Energy Audits, Local/Regional Foods, Organic Foods, Renewable Energy and Value Added Producer Grants, in the center column. Pertinent AgMRC profiles and articles are highlighted in this column as well as resources from land-grant university Cooperative Extension, ATTRA, SARE, MOSES and USDA. The left column features announcements such as the National Value Added Ag (VAA) Conference and the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. 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 such topics as Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, Farm to School Programs, Organic Agriculture and Raising Meat Rabbits.

The AgMRC homepage also provides a link to a section about the annual National Value Added Agriculture Conference. The 2012 conference, hosted by Michigan State University Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources, will be held in Traverse City, Michigan, on June 24 - 26. Information is also available about past conferences.

Additional Public Relations

AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter

The January, February and March 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

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 affiliated with Iowa State University contributed a total of seven articles.

- More on Feeding Nine Billion People by 2050, January, Don Hofstrand, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?more_on_feeding_nine_billion_people_by_2050&show=article&articleID=645&issueID=122
- Biofuels Prospects for 2012: Emerging Developments, January, Robert Wisner, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?biofuels_prospects_for_2012_emerging_developments&show=article&articleID=646&issueID=122
- Glossary of Global Warming and Climate Change Terms, January, [http://www.agmrc.org/media/cms/Glossary of Global Warming and Clim 4314FBAC16B15.pdf](http://www.agmrc.org/media/cms/Glossary_of_Global_Warming_and_Clim_4314FBAC16B15.pdf)
- Seasonality of Corn Ethanol Profitability, February, Don Hofstrand, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?seasonality_of_corn_ethanol_profitability&show=article&articleID=685&issueID=129
- Ethanol Exports: A Way to Scale the Blend Wall, February, Robert Wisner, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?ethanol_exports_a_way_to_scale_the_blend_wall&show=article&articleID=688&issueID=129
- Drop-in Fuels: Are They the Next Phase of Biofuels Development?, March, Robert Wisner, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?dropin_fuels_are_they_the_next_phase_of_biofuels_development&show=article&articleID=697&issueID=132
- Understanding the Time Value of Money, March, Don Hofstrand, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?understanding_the_time_value_of_money&show=article&articleID=703&issueID=132

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

AgMRC Blog

The following entries were posted during the quarter:

1. New Iowa Food Hub, January 12, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?new_iowa_food_hub&show=entry&blogID=533
2. Hawaii Launches Food Innovation Center, January 18, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?hawaii_launches_food_innovation_center&show=entry&blogID=537
3. New Biofuel Production Facility in Oregon, January 26, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?new_biofuel_production_facility_in_oregon&show=entry&blogID=543
4. Value Added Producer Grants Announced, February 7, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?value_added_producer_grants_announced&show=entry&blogID=559

5. USDA Launches START2FARM.GOV to Support America's Future Farming Generations, February 21,
http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?usda_launches_start2farmgov_to_support_americas_future_farming_generations&show=entry&blogID=560
6. Know Your Farmer Compass, February 29,
http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?know_your_farmer_compass&show=entry&blogID=563
7. Local Foods Distribution Patterns, March 22,
http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?local_foods_distribution_patterns&show=entry&blogID=582

AgMRC on Facebook

16BAgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had seven posts. We have 169 total likes of the AgMRC page, 291 impressions during this time and 17 engaged users.

Press Release

No press releases were distributed this quarter.

Radio Spots

AgMRC signed an agreement with the National Farm Broadcaster's Association to use their news service to market AgMRC topics on national farm radio. Two radio spots were created and distributed nationally. Nineteen national stations picked those up, many having multiple markets and stations.

Prepared by Diane Huntrods, AgMRC, Iowa State University, April 2012.