



# Quarterly Report

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

*April 1, 2012 – June 30, 2012*

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Submitted by Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota.

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## *Third Quarter Report*

*April 1, 2012 to June 30, 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 3,560 (↓), down from 3,991 per day last quarter, while the average number of pageviews per day was 16,463 (↓), down from 18,258 per day last quarter.

Within the United States, the most visits came from the states of California (20.8% ↑), Washington (11.0% ↑), New York (6.2% ↓), Michigan (5.8%, ↑) and Texas (5.6% ↓). North Carolina visitors continued to view more pages per visit (19.4 ↑) than visitors from any other state, followed by California visitors (12.4 ↑).

As usual, the largest number of visits this quarter originated from the United States (50.5% ↓), followed by (in order): China (13.0% ↓), India (2.6% ↓), United Kingdom (UK) (2.6% ↓) and Canada (2.5% ↓). On average, visitors from Tanzania (9.6 pages), Portugal (7.7 pages) and Pakistan (6.7 pages) viewed more pages per visit than visitors from any other country, even viewing more pages than American visitors (5.7 ↑).

### *Blog*

During this quarter, 19,972 visitors (↓) viewed the AgMRC Blog, opening 70,622 pages (↓) and spending an average time of 3 minutes and 20 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 (33.0% ↑)
2. Business Development (19.2% ↑)
3. Renewable Energy (12.2% ↑)
4. Markets and Industries (4.2% ↓)
5. AgMRC Blog (3.7% ↓)
6. Directories and State Resources (1.9% unchanged)

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 247,931 visits (↓) and 272,359 pageviews (↓); Bus Dev accounted for 144,176 visits (↓) and 159,681 pageviews (↓). Renewable Energy, the newest section on the website, still ranks third in visits, capturing 91,707 visits (↓) and 120,737 pageviews (↓).

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

1. Fruits (45,125 visits ↑)
2. Livestock (40,267 visits ↓)
3. Grains and Oilseeds (36,405 ↑)

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

1. Operating a Business (48,554 visits ↓)
2. Getting Prepared (29,662 visits ↓)
3. Starting a Business (26,167 visits ↓)

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

1. Ethanol (21,899 visits ↓)
2. AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter (13,467 visits ↓)
3. Biofuels and Biorefining (11,396 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.

The following contributing writers, from nine different states, helped update more than 20 AgMRC C&P profiles this quarter. Those authors are:

- Marin Bozic, University of Minnesota
- 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
- Mykel Taylor, Kansas State University

The following 60 profiles were updated: Alligators, Alpaca, American Eel, Apricots, Aronia Berries, Hybrid Striped Bass, Commodity Beef, Direct Marketing Beef, Natural Beef, Organic Beef, Bison, Bluegill and Sunfish, Camelina, Canola, Cauliflower, Chestnuts, Sweet Corn, Cuphea, Dates, Eggplants, Elk, Fee and Lease Pond Fishing, Fiber Overview, Garlic, Dairy Goats, Golden Shiner, Hay, Hazelnuts, Herbs, Hunting Leases, Kenaf, Organic Lamb, Lettuce, Manure Digester Biogas, Melons, Mushrooms, Nature-Based Tourism, Pears, Pecans, Pine Nuts,

Popcorn, Organic Pork, Pork Processing, Sweet Potatoes, Commodity Poultry, Ducks and Geese, Game Birds, Organic Poultry, Pastured Poultry, Turkey, Sawdust, Dairy Sheep, Solar Power, Squash, Sturgeon, Sugarcane, Teff, Black Walnuts, Wind Energy and Worms.

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

#### *Markets and Industries*

The following eight topics were reviewed: Allergens, Convenience Stores, Distribution, Drying, Consolidation/Vertical Coordination, Eco-Labels, Farmers' Markets and Tourism.

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).*

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](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 Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

#### *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.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>AgMRC Participant</b>
April 5	Selling at Market: Success Through Marketing Techniques	Fairfield, Iowa	Presenting: Marsha Laux
April 9	DMACC Culinary Academy Presentation	Ankeny, Iowa	Presenting: Dan and Craig
April 14	Cultivating Opportunities for Southeast Iowa	Ames, Iowa	Attending: Marsha
April 18	Southern Iowa RC&D Local Food Group	Osceola, Iowa	Presenting: Marsha

### *Client Requests*

In-house AgMRC staff researched and responded to 93 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 June 30, AgMRC staff reported receiving 35 toll-free phone inquiries from 14 different states, that is, California; Florida; Georgia; Iowa; Massachusetts; Montana; Nevada; New Hampshire; New York; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Tennessee; Virginia; and West Virginia.

Subscriptions to the Renewable Energy Newsletter list now total more than 2,500 addresses. Subscribers access and self-subscribe to the newsletter online at:

HU[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 continues to feature a “hot” topic, such as Agritourism, High Tunnels, 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 Raising Meat Rabbits, EPA Allowing Use of E15 in Certain Vehicles and The 2012 Drought.

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, was held in Traverse City, Michigan, in late June. Information is also available about other past conferences.

### *Additional Public Relations*

AgMRC Renewable Energy Newsletter. The June issue 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 affiliated with Iowa State University contributed a total of four articles.

- Adequacy of Corn and Vegetable Oil Supplies for Biofuels in 2012-13, Robert Wisner, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?adequacy\\_of\\_corn\\_and\\_vegetable\\_oil\\_supplies\\_for\\_biofuels\\_in\\_201213&show=article&articleID=764&issueID=170](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?adequacy_of_corn_and_vegetable_oil_supplies_for_biofuels_in_201213&show=article&articleID=764&issueID=170)
- Understanding the Components of an Interest Rate, Don Hofstrand, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?understanding\\_the\\_components\\_of\\_an\\_interest\\_rate&show=article&articleID=765&issueID=170](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?understanding_the_components_of_an_interest_rate&show=article&articleID=765&issueID=170)
- Types of Term Loan Payment Schedules, Don Hofstrand, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?types\\_of\\_term\\_loan\\_payment\\_schedules&show=article&articleID=766&issueID=170](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?types_of_term_loan_payment_schedules&show=article&articleID=766&issueID=170)
- Understanding Progressive Tax Rates, Don Hofstrand, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?understanding\\_progressive\\_tax\\_rates&show=article&articleID=767&issueID=170](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?understanding_progressive_tax_rates&show=article&articleID=767&issueID=170)

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

A formal contract with the Livestock Marketing Association in Colorado has been signed, hiring Don Hofstrand and Dr. Robert Wisner to continue writing the newsletter, and renewable energy newsletters are going out monthly again.

AgMRC Blog. The following entries were posted during the quarter:

1. Fact Sheet Describes Rainwater Catchment from High Tunnels, April 16, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?fact\\_sheet\\_describes\\_rainwater\\_catchment\\_from\\_high\\_tunnels&show=entry&blogID=589](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?fact_sheet_describes_rainwater_catchment_from_high_tunnels&show=entry&blogID=589)
2. National Value-added Agriculture Conference Approaching, April 27, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?national\\_valueadded\\_agriculture\\_conference\\_approaching&show=entry&blogID=593](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?national_valueadded_agriculture_conference_approaching&show=entry&blogID=593)
3. Farmers' Markets - More than Local Food, May 4, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?farmers\\_markets\\_more\\_than\\_local\\_food&show=entry&blogID=596](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?farmers_markets_more_than_local_food&show=entry&blogID=596)

4. Nation's Largest 100 Agriculture Co-ops Post Near-Record Sales, May 9,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?nations\\_largest\\_100\\_agriculture\\_coops\\_post\\_nearrecord\\_sales&show=entry&blogID=597](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?nations_largest_100_agriculture_coops_post_nearrecord_sales&show=entry&blogID=597)
5. Minnesota Apple Producers Get Creative, May 15,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?minnesota\\_apple\\_producers\\_get\\_creative&show=entry&blogID=598](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?minnesota_apple_producers_get_creative&show=entry&blogID=598)
6. Still the Land of Opportunity: Farm Transition in the 21st Century, May 22,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?still\\_the\\_land\\_of\\_opportunity\\_farm\\_transition\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_century&show=entry&blogID=600](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?still_the_land_of_opportunity_farm_transition_in_the_21st_century&show=entry&blogID=600)
7. Changes in the Barley Market, May 31,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?changes\\_in\\_the\\_barley\\_market&show=entry&blogID=602](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?changes_in_the_barley_market&show=entry&blogID=602)
8. An Interesting Time for Farmer's Markets, June 7,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?an\\_interesting\\_time\\_for\\_farmers\\_markets&show=entry&blogID=671](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?an_interesting_time_for_farmers_markets&show=entry&blogID=671)

Four of the preceding blog articles were written by new AgMRC contributing writers on value-added agriculture issues in their region of the country.

AgMRC on Facebook. AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had twelve posts, ranging from local foods to renewable energy to new farming enterprises. These posts reached approximately 600 Facebook users. AgMRC had 24 engaged users this quarter commenting on posts and talking about the posts in cross-postings.

Press Release. A press release titled [Blueberry Sector Updates on AgMRC](#) was distributed on May 4. This release discussed the activities of the new contributing writers of AgMRC, highlighting U.S. blueberry production, the first AgMRC profile to be updated by a contributing writer.

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. One radio spot titled [Market Products Better with MarketMaker](#) was created and distributed nationally. About 25 national stations picked up the spot, including many syndicated farm shows with multiple stations.

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