



Quarterly Report

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

October 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012

Submitted by Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota.

First Quarter Report

October 1, 2012 to December 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 4,133 (↑), up from 3,309 per day last quarter, while the average number of pageviews per day was 17,407 (↑), up from 16,199 per day last quarter.

Within the United States, the most visits came from the states of California (21.5% ↑), Washington (13.0% ↓), Texas (5.8% ↑), Michigan (5.3%, ↓) and New York (3.8% ↓). North Carolina visitors continued to view more pages per visit (16.5 ↓) than visitors from any other state, followed by Washington visitors (8.3 ↑).

As usual, the largest number of visits this quarter originated from the United States (51.7% ↓), followed by (in order): China (8.4% ↓), the United Kingdom (UK) (3.6% ↑), Canada (3.3% ↑) and India (2.7% ↓). On average, visitors from Costa Rica (7.8), from Uganda (7.8 pages), from Canada (6.5 pages), from Austria (6.0 pages) and from Hong Kong (5.0 pages) viewed more pages per visit than did American visitors (4.8 pages ↓).

Blog

During this quarter, 32,589 visitors (↑) viewed the AgMRC Blog, opening 110,899 pages (↑) and spending an average time of 2 minutes and 4 seconds (↓). The two most frequently viewed blog posts were: Reflections on 2010 Value Added Producer Grants (4.4% ↓) and Market Maker Honored (4.2%).

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 (33.5% ↓)
2. Business Development (18.8% ↑)
3. Renewable Energy (14.5% ↑)
4. Markets and Industries (4.6% ↑)
5. AgMRC Blog (3.4% ↓)

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 319,866 visits (↑) and 355,613 pageviews (↑); Bus Dev accounted for 179,707 visits (↑) and

194,998 pageviews (↑). Renewable Energy still ranks third in visits, capturing 138,140 visits (↑) and 174,536 pageviews (↑).

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

1. Fruits (55,944 visits ↑)
2. Livestock (53,480 visits ↑)
3. Vegetables (46,716 ↑)

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

1. Operating a Business (59,030 visits ↑)
2. Getting Prepared (38,613 visits ↑)
3. Starting a Business (33,933 visits ↑)

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

1. Ethanol (40,440 visits ↑)
2. Biofuels and Biorefining (19,080 visits ↑)
3. AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter (13,990 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, completed work on specialty grain flours (quinoa, etc.), Russian Dandelions and seed potatoes.

The following profiles were updated: Avocados, Bell and Chile Peppers, Commodity Dairy, International Dairy, Mustard, Organic Dairy, Organic Poultry, Safflower, Soybeans and Tobacco.

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

Markets and Industries

The following 44 topics were reviewed: Animal Rights and Welfare, Antibiotic Use, Bioterrorism, Baking, Branded Food Products, Community Supported Agriculture, Co-packing, Diet/Health/Obesity, Direct Markets, E-Commerce, Exports, Fiber Industry, Food Allergens, Food Packaging, Food Safety, Foodservice, Foodservice/Retail Trends, Freezing, Fresh Processing, Functional Foods, Food Profitability, Genetically Modified Foods, Grocery Industry, International Issues, International Markets, Irradiation, Kitchen Incubators, Labeling Issues, Manufacturing, Meat Processing, Meat Science/Processing Labs, Natural Food Trends, Private Labeling, Processing, Quality Management Systems, Restaurants, Retailing, Specialty Food, Supply, Trans Fat, Understanding Markets, University Food Development/Processing Centers, University Food Safety Centers, Wholesaling

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).

Nothing was completed in this category.

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, began a project to update analysis of the VAPG program (jobs created, products, etc.). He will update the 2001 to 2005 study to include the 2001 to 2011 time period. A database of recipients was created and analysis has started.

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 VAPG recipients and business development members in California, Minnesota, Montana and Washington. Presentations were given in California to RBEG recipients.

Trade Show Promotions

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 by AgMRC as match dollars through staff time and travel dollars.

Date	Event	Location	AgMRC Participant
Oct 1-4	National eXtension Conference	Oklahoma City	Attending: Diane, Madeline
Oct 17-18	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program	Statesville, NC	Attending: Madeline
Oct 23-24	ISU Extension and Outreach Conference	Ames, Iowa	Attending: Ray, Barry and Christa; Presenting: Ray
Oct 23-27	National FFA Convention	Indianapolis	Attending and Hosting a Booth: Diane, Madeline, Linda, Barry
Oct 29-Dec 3	Value-Added Ag Annie's Project 18-hour business course	Boone, Iowa and Fairfield, Iowa	Presenting: Madeline and Marsha
Dec 5-6	Project Director's Meeting	Rochester, Minnesota	Attending: Madeline

Client Requests

In-house AgMRC staff researched and responded to 91 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 December 31, AgMRC staff reported receiving 68 toll-free phone inquiries from 24 different states, that is, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Vermont and Washington.

Staff also received three calls from Canada [Ontario (2), Quebec (1)].

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 continues to feature a “hot” topic, such as Agritourism, High Tunnels, Energy Audits, Local/Regional Foods, Organic Agriculture, 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 2012 Value-Added Producers' Grants, Blueberries, Meat Rabbits, The 2012 Drought and Winter Farmers' Markets.

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 October, November and December 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 eight articles.

December 2012

- Distillers Grains and Solubles: Its Role in the Livestock Industries, Dr. Robert Wisner, Iowa State University, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?distillers_grains_and_solubles_its_role_in_the_livestock_industries&show=article&articleID=954&issueID=238
- Creating a Return/Risk Profile for an Equity Investment, Don Hofstrand, Iowa State University, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?creating_a_returnrisk_profile_for_an_equity_investment&show=article&articleID=957&issueID=238

November 2012

- Updated Perspectives on Adjustments to Tight Corn Supplies, Dr. Robert Wisner, Iowa State University, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?updated_perspectives_on_adjustments_to_tight_corn_supplies&show=article&articleID=923&issueID=225
- Financing Stages for Business Start-ups, Don Hofstrand, Iowa State University, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?financing_stages_for_business_startups&show=article&articleID=925&issueID=225

- Types and Sources of Funding, Don Hofstrand, Iowa State University, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?types_and_sources_of_funding&show=article&articleID=926&issueID=225

October 2012

- Brazil Ethanol Developments & Implications for the U.S. Ethanol Industry, Dr. Robert Wisner, Iowa State University, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?brazil_ethanol_developments_implications_for_the_us_ethanol_industry&how=article&articleID=893&issueID=214
- Constructing a Capital Budget, Don Hofstrand, Iowa State University, October 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?constructing_a_capital_budget&show=article&articleID=894&issueID=214
- Cash Flow and Profitability are Not the Same, Don Hofstrand, Iowa State University, October 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?cash_flow_and_profitability_are_not_the_same&show=article&articleID=895&issueID=214

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

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

1. Iowa Farmland Values up 24 Percent, December 12, 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?iowa_farmland_values_up_24_percent&show=entry&blogID=767
2. For the Record: 2012 Census of Agriculture, December 4, 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?for_the_record_2012_census_of_agriculture&show=entry&blogID=765
3. Tech Company Invests Big in Green, November 16, 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?tech_company_invests_big_in_green&show=entry&blogID=754
4. Multi-Enterprising Farm Households: The Importance of Their Alternative Business Ventures, November 6, 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?multienterprising_farm_households_the_importance_of_their_alternative_business_ventures_in_the_rur&show=entry&blogID=744
5. Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program, October 31, 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?community_food_projects_competitive_grants_program&show=entry&blogID=740
6. New Worksheets Assist Organic Farmers in Assessing their Operations, October 11, 2012, http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?new_worksheets_assist_organic_farmers_in_assessing_their_operations&show=entry&blogID=732

AgMRC on Facebook. AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had nine posts, ranging from local foods to renewable energy to new farming enterprises. Activity during December included 142

views and 45 people talking about posts. Activity during November included 227 views, and activity during October included 417 views. AgMRC had 365 general likes.

Press Release. A press release titled “[New Curriculum Educates Youth on Value-added Agriculture Opportunities for Rural Development](#)” was distributed on October 18, 2012. This release discussed a free, new curriculum that AgMRC developed to educate youth on the opportunities for rural development through value-added agriculture. The press release was picked up by at least 20 different papers.

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 was created and distributed nationally this quarter: [Educating Youth on Value-added Agriculture the Goal of New Curriculum](#) in October 2012. About 25 national stations picked up the spots, including many syndicated farm shows with multiple stations.

Prepared by Diane Huntrods, AgMRC, Iowa State University, January 2013.