



# Quarterly Report

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

*January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013*

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Submitted by Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota.

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*January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013*

### **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 4,517 (↑), up from 4,133 per day last quarter, while the average number of pageviews per day was 20,066 (↑), up from 17,407 per day last quarter.

Within the United States, the most visits came from the states of California (20.5% ↓), Washington (11.3% ↓), Michigan (6.1%, ↑), Texas (4.7% ↓) and New York (4.0% ↑). West Virginia visitors viewed more pages per visit (19.4 new to list) than visitors from any other state, followed by North Carolina visitors (17.1 pages ↓) and Washington (10.3 pages ↓).

As usual and as expected, the largest number of visits this quarter originated from the United States (49.6% ↓), followed by (in order): China (7.0% ↓), Canada (3.9% ↑), the United Kingdom (UK) (3.7% ↑) and India (2.9% ↑). On average, visitors from Ghana (33.0 pages), Kazakhstan (22.4 pages), Zambia (9.5 pages), Kenya (8.9 pages) and Taiwan (6.0 pages) viewed more pages per visit than did American visitors (5.4 pages).

### *Blog*

During this quarter, 26,605 visitors (↓) viewed the AgMRC Blog, opening 103,232 pages (↓) and spending an average time of 2 minutes and 22 seconds (↑). The two most frequently viewed blog posts were: Reflections on 2010 Value Added Producer Grants (4.8% ↑) and Market Maker Honored (3.9% ↓).

### *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 (32.7% ↓)
2. Business Development (18.4% ↓)
3. Renewable Energy (15.1% ↑)
4. Markets and Industries (4.8% ↑)
5. AgMRC Blog (3.5% ↑)

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 347,399 visits (↑) and 387,814 pageviews (↑); Bus Dev accounted for 195,367 visits (↑) and 228,533 pageviews (↑). Renewable Energy still ranks third in visits, capturing 160,287 visits (↑) and 217,598 pageviews (↑).

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

1. Fruits (63,150 visits ↑)
2. Livestock (60,412 visits ↑)
3. Grains and Oilseeds (53,374 new to list)

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

1. Operating a Business (63,633 visits ↑)
2. Getting Prepared (40,477 visits ↑)
3. Starting a Business (37,056 visits ↑)

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

1. Ethanol (38,782 visits ↓)
2. Biofuels and Biorefining (21,897 visits ↑)
3. AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter (21,267 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, started updates on value added products.

The following 15 profiles were updated: Avocados, Blueberries, Buckwheat, Citrus, Dairy Products, Hazelnuts, Maple Syrup, Meat Goats, Organic Dairy, Organic Poultry, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Raisins, Sweet Corn and Sweet Potatoes

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

### *Markets and Industries*

The following topic was reviewed: Organic Market Trends

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 on the website).*

Mike Boland, University of Minnesota, began a project to update analysis of the Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program (jobs created, products, etc.). He will update the 2001 to 2005 study to include the 2001 to 2011 time period. He created a database of recipients and started the analysis process. After receiving data from USDA through 2011, he worked with his USDA contacts to refine the analysis and add new questions to it.

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 VAPG recipients and business development members in California, Minnesota, 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 following table 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>
Jan 23-26	Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program	Little Rock, Arkansas	Presenting: Madeline, on beginning farmer programs and issues, Distributed AgMRC brochures
Jan 24	Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers		Presenting: Linda, Marsha, Craig and Ray, on high tunnels, local foods and MarketMaker

Feb 14	Fairfield GAPS	Fairfield, Iowa	Presenting: Ray, Marsha and Linda, on food safety
Feb 15-16	North Central Regional Aquaculture Center Board of Directors and Program Planning Meeting	Ames, Iowa	Presenting: Dan, Distributed AgMRC brochures
Feb 15-17	NFU College Conference on Cooperatives		Distribute AgMRC brochures and Cooperatives on eXtension promo items
Feb 20	USDA Outlook Forum		Attending via phone: Ray and Christa, on AgMRC
Feb 25-26	FDA Meeting		Presenting: Connie Hardy, on grain storage traceability
Mar 14-15	MarketMaker		Presenting: Ray and Craig, on labor positions within MarketMaker
Mar 19-20	Local Food and Farm Initiative		Presenting: Ray, Marsha and Linda, on local foods

#### *Client Requests*

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 116 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 82 toll-free phone inquiries from 25 different states, that is, Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Staff also received 2 calls from British Columbia, Canada.

Subscriptions to the Renewable Energy Newsletter list now total more than 2,500 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

### *Homepage*

The AgMRC homepage continues to feature a “hot” topic, such as Agritourism, Energy Audits, Local/Regional 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 2012 Census of Agriculture, High Tunnels, Food Hubs, Organic Agriculture and Winter Farmers’ Markets.

The AgMRC homepage also provides a link to a section about the annual National Value Added Agriculture Conference. The [2013 conference](#), hosted by the University of Arkansas, will be held in Rogers, Arkansas, from Sunday, May 19 – Tuesday, May 21, 2013. Information is also available about other past conferences.

### *AgMRC Renewable Energy Newsletter*

The 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](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 five articles.

### March 2013

- EPA's Proposed Biofuels Mandates for 2013 - Challenges for the Biofuels Industry, Dr. Robert Wisner, retired Iowa State University (ISU) Professor, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?epas\\_proposed\\_biofuels\\_mandates\\_for\\_2013\\_\\_challenges\\_for\\_the\\_biofuels\\_industry&show=article&articleID=1072&issueID=276](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?epas_proposed_biofuels_mandates_for_2013__challenges_for_the_biofuels_industry&show=article&articleID=1072&issueID=276)
- Rough Times for Corn Ethanol, Don Hofstrand, retired ISU Extension ag economist, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?rough\\_times\\_for\\_corn\\_ethanol&show=article&articleID=1073&issueID=276](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?rough_times_for_corn_ethanol&show=article&articleID=1073&issueID=276)

### February 2013

- Biofuels Mandates Outside the U.S., Dr. Robert Wisner, retired Iowa State University Professor, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-)

newsletter/?biofuels\_mandates\_outside\_the\_us&show=article&articleID=1018&issueID=253

- Combination of Drought and Insurance Increases Farm Profits, Don Hofstrand, retired ISU Extension ag economist, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?combination\\_of\\_drought\\_and\\_insurance\\_increases\\_farm\\_profits&show=article&articleID=1019&issueID=253](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?combination_of_drought_and_insurance_increases_farm_profits&show=article&articleID=1019&issueID=253)
- Tightening Corn Availability and Potential Increased Stress on Corn Users, Dr. Robert Wisner, retired Iowa State University Professor, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?tightening\\_corn\\_availability\\_and\\_potential\\_increased\\_stress\\_on\\_corn\\_users&show=article&articleID=1029&issueID=253](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?tightening_corn_availability_and_potential_increased_stress_on_corn_users&show=article&articleID=1029&issueID=253)

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

### *AgMRC Blog*

The following entries were posted during the quarter:

1. Corn Ethanol Profitability, March 20, 2013, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?corn\\_ethanol\\_profitability&show=entry&blogID=955](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?corn_ethanol_profitability&show=entry&blogID=955)
2. USDA Releases Report on the Growing Importance of Food Hubs in Rural America, March 8, 2013, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?usda\\_releases\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_growing\\_importance\\_of\\_food\\_hubs\\_in\\_rural\\_america&show=entry&blogID=949](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?usda_releases_report_on_the_growing_importance_of_food_hubs_in_rural_america&show=entry&blogID=949)
3. USDA Invests to Prevent Food Insecurity, February 28, 2013, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?usda\\_invests\\_to\\_prevent\\_food\\_insecurity&show=entry&blogID=937](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?usda_invests_to_prevent_food_insecurity&show=entry&blogID=937)
4. Ohio Farmers, Educators do More with Cover Crops and No-till, February 13, 2013, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?ohio\\_farmers\\_educators\\_do\\_more\\_with\\_cover\\_crops\\_and\\_notill&show=entry&blogID=929](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?ohio_farmers_educators_do_more_with_cover_crops_and_notill&show=entry&blogID=929)
5. Online tool provides interactive farm budgeting resource, January 22, 2013, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?online\\_tool\\_provides\\_interactive\\_farm\\_budgeting\\_resource&show=entry&blogID=787](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?online_tool_provides_interactive_farm_budgeting_resource&show=entry&blogID=787)
6. Drought Persistence and Assistance, January 18, 2013, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?drought\\_persistence\\_and\\_assistance&show=entry&blogID=785](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?drought_persistence_and_assistance&show=entry&blogID=785)
7. Small Farms Webinar Series Begins January 10, January 9, 2013, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?small\\_farms\\_webinar\\_series\\_begins\\_january\\_10&show=entry&blogID=781](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?small_farms_webinar_series_begins_january_10&show=entry&blogID=781)

### *AgMRC on Facebook*

AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had six posts, which were seen by 619 people.

### *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. A radio spot titled "Employment Opportunities Now Available on MarketMaker" and featuring Craig Tordsen was created and distributed this quarter. The spot was picked up by 13 reporters, many with syndicated shows on multiple stations.

### *Interviews*

Inquiries about renewable energy, from the people and organizations below, were received and responded to:

- Hospitality Services, Inc., Aberdeen, SD
- Department of Energy, Washington, D.C.
- C12 Energy
- Utah State University
- Lumina Decision Systems
- Tim LaSalle
- Advanced Biofuels Corp.
- Cargill Risk Management
- Texas A & M
- Oklahoma State University
- American Feed Industry Association
- Center for Food and Agricultural Research
- Milling and Baking news
- Inteligencia de Mercado, Graos, Brazil

### *Articles*

AgMRC was mentioned in the following articles:

- KFYI, Arizona News
- eFeedLink Pte., Ltd.
- Ventura County Star
- Harrisburg Patriot-News

### *AgMRC Curriculum*

Two graduate students at Iowa State University developed [28 lessons](#) to educate high school students about value-added agriculture and the information shared on the AgMRC website. The majority of the lessons introduced students to the major topics covered in the Commodities and Products section of the website, including Agritourism, Aquaculture, Energy and Livestock. Another two lessons introduced students to the Business Development section of the site and one lesson provided a [website orientation](#). [Teacher guides](#) were prepared for each of the lessons. Additional lessons will be added as they are developed.



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