As a condition of its USDA Rural Development grant, the cooperating universities comprising AgMRC were tasked to prepare four reports a year and submit them to USDA. These reports summarize the activities completed during each quarter, including website development and functions, value-added business and economic analysis tools and outreach activities (workshops, seminars, newsletters and WebMail inquiries).
Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Report – October 2019 – June 2020

Iowa State University

AgMRC Website Statistics
This period, the total number of page views was 685,426 with an average of 2,502 per day.

The Commodities and Products section attracts the most visits, at 516,426 this period total. Within Commodities and Products, Fruits is the top section at 124,405 visits. Vegetables has the next highest visits at 107,250. Fiber follows at 62,155 visits.

Within the website, the top three topics visited during this period were:

1. Industrial Hemp – 59,767 pageviews
2. Potatoes – 16,332 pageviews
3. Strawberries – 14,064 pageviews

The mission of AgMRC is to continue to provide independent producers and processors with critical information needed to build successful value-added agricultural enterprises through the www.agmrc.org electronic resource information website.

AgMRC continues to serve a national value-added agriculture audience, with nearly 3,000 unique visits per day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pageviews</th>
<th>Page Views Per Day</th>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>98,413</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<td>December</td>
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<tr>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>April</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>53,153</td>
<td>1,772</td>
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**Major Content Sections**

The major content sections of the AgMRC website visits:

1. Commodities and Products – 516,426 pageviews
2. Business Development – 68,589 pageviews
4. Markets and Industries – 13,268 pageviews
5. Directories and State Resources – 5,388 pageviews

Within the Commodities and Products section, the top three topics visited during this period were:

1. Fruits – 124,405 pageviews
2. Vegetables – 107,250 pageviews
3. Fiber – 62,155 pageviews

Within the Business Development Section, the top three topics visited during this period were:

1. Getting Prepared – 20,069 pageviews
2. Starting a Business – 16,922 pageviews
3. Operating a Business – 15,082 pageviews

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

1. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Report – 13,627 pageviews
2. Renewable Energy – 4,918 pageviews
3. Ethanol – 2,946 pageviews

**AgMRC Website Updates:**

**Profiles and Pages updated this period (56):**

<p>| About Us          | <a href="https://www.agmrc.org/about-us">https://www.agmrc.org/about-us</a> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Aquaculture</td>
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<td>Aquaculture Non-fish species</td>
<td><a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/aquaculture/aquaculture-non-fish-species">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/aquaculture/aquaculture-non-fish-species</a></td>
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<td>Asparagus</td>
<td><a href="https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/asparagus">https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/asparagus</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bees</td>
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### Financial Performance & Analysis Tools

### Food Packaging
https://www.agmrc.org/food/food-packaging

### Food Safety
https://www.agmrc.org/food/food-safety

### Fruits
https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits

### Investment Analysis Tools

### Kitchen Incubators
https://www.agmrc.org/food/kitchen-incubators

### Labeling Issues
https://www.agmrc.org/food/labeling-issues

### Local/Regional Foods
https://www.agmrc.org/food/local-regional-foods

### Net worth Tools

### Organic Beef
https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/beef/organic-beef

### Organic Corn

### Organic Food Trends
https://www.agmrc.org/food/organic-food-trends

### Renewable Energy
https://www.agmrc.org/renewable-energy/renewable-energy

### Renewable Energy Industry Analysis
https://www.agmrc.org/renewable-energy/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-industry-analysis

### Renewable Energy Related Websites

### Specialty Food
https://www.agmrc.org/food/specialty-food

### Trade Shows
https://www.agmrc.org/food/trade-shows

### Winery and Vineyard Feasibility Workbooks

Commodities and products profiles are updated based on client inquiries to AgMRC Match participants and AgMRC office staff. This period we continued our streamlining of commodity pages on our website and eliminated commodity pages that were not being utilized according to our analytics. This process is ongoing.
We have also been editing and consolidating our Business Development section to be more usable and relevant, the full revamp of which is due to launch in Fall of 2020.

The homepage of the website received a facelift during this period. The website now more prominently features the VAPG recipient videos, and the tabs more clearly reflect AgMRC resources and materials. The homepage also now includes a COVID-19 Resources module with useful materials to assist in navigating the challenges due to COVID-19.

**Email**
AgMRC staff researched and responded to 339 e-mailed questions pertaining to hemp, wine, livestock, potatoes, and agritourism to name a few.

**Phone Calls**
As of June 30, AgMRC staff reported having 107 toll-free phone inquiries from 38 different states.

**Facebook**
AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this period, the AgMRC Facebook page had 113 posts, which were seen by 9,987 people.

**YouTube**
The AgMRC YouTube channel added 30 new videos this period which amassed a total of 908 views. The channel has 63 subscribers. New VAPG videos were created and include:

- Sno Pac Food (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-sno-pac-foods/)
- Midwest Hop Producers (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-midwest-hop-producers/)
- Honestly Cranberry (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-honestly-cranberry/)
- White Oak Pastures (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-white-oak-pastures/)
- Love Food Farm (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-love-food-farm/)
- Collective Harvest (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-collective-harvest/)
- Oliver Oil Co LLC (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-oliver-oil-co-llc/)
- Farmer’s Daughter Vineyards (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-farmers-daughter-vineyards/)
- Together Farms (https://www.agmrc.org/media-room/videos/value-added-producer-grant-together-farms/)

One longer-length compilation video was also created to talk about the program highlights overall. This video showcases snippets from some of the previous individual farms to highlight the overall growth and promotion of the Value Added Producer Grant program. (https://www.agmrc.org) This video is featured on the homepage and promoted in social media and youtube channels.

**Enterprise Budgets**

Enterprise budgets were added specifically to track the revenue distribution of various marketing channels. Staff worked directly with growers involved in the various crops to track all costs and develop enterprise budgets based off marketing streams.

- Asparagus (https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/asparagus)
- Butterhead Lettuce (https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/lettuce)
- Carrots (https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/carrots)
- High Tunnel Tomatoes (https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/tomatoes)
- Scallions (https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/onions)
Community Food Systems, Iowa State University

The Community Food Systems Program (CFSP) received funds from the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center to develop and pilot two national certification programs: Local Food Leader certification, and Community Food Systems certification. Additionally, they have created a Mapping 101 certification as well. [Pilot program evaluation report](#).

- **Mapping 101**: a curriculum that includes unique input models to garner feedback, comprehensive reports utilizing qualitative and quantitative information, and resources to find necessary data for decision making on multiple scales from business development, organizational work and community food systems assessments. This certification is appropriate for individuals interested in understanding how to create maps for decision making and building new skills in QGIS for data and map development. [Mapping 101 Certification Syllabus](#)

- **Local Food Leader**: a foundational practice certification that builds capacity for individual engagement within the food system. The certification develops individual skills including: building trust, facilitation, knowledge of the food system, evaluation techniques, leadership, plan of work development and professional development plans. [Here is a two-page overview](#) of the goals and curriculum of the Local Food Leader certification. [Local Food Leader Online Module Syllabus](#)

- **Community Food Systems**: a process based certification that increases capacity for food system practitioners to work in and develop food systems. It teaches a needed framework for food systems development that walks through a three year process that started in Iowa in 2014. This certification is unique because it both focuses on collective decision making and strategic planning methods, as well as unique opportunities to tie in technical assistance such as economic impact analysis, feasibility studies, and design thinking. This is relevant because food systems are dynamic and unique. This certification will equip participants in various different skill sets and facilitation methods, as well as team building; participants will develop different strategies for decision-making, and will have the ability to bring projects from thinking to project implementation for reaching systems based goals. [Here is a four-page overview](#) of goals and curriculum of the Community Food Systems certification. [Community Food Systems Assessor Certification Syllabus](#), [Community Food Systems Design Thinking Certification Syllabus](#), [Community Food Systems Economic Impact Certification Syllabus](#), [Community Food Systems Facilitator Certification Syllabus](#), [Community Food Systems Feasibility Certification Syllabus](#), [Community Food Systems Full Certification Syllabus](#)
Farm to School Procurement

Staff developed a Farm to School Summer Meal Site Campaign Toolkit in response to schools requesting information on how to procure local food from farmers. This toolkit covers best practices and recommendations for a successful campaign. An expanded toolkit is planned following the 2020 summer meal campaign, which featured an added challenge of COVID-19.

https://www.agmrc.org/media/cms/Farm_to_Summer_Meal_Site_Campaign_T_DF3157E06B6C2.pdf

Scaling Up Processing

This Scaling Specialty Crop Processing brought together a team of ISU Extension and Outreach professionals from the units of Farm, Food, and Enterprise Development (FFED), Food Safety and Consumer Production, and Community and Economic Development (CED). This team utilized a process that included surveys, interviews and pilot projects to understand food business needs. The primary categories that arose from this project include areas of visioning and pre-feasibility, food safety, business development, and layout and logistics of processing space.

Overview:

An online assessment survey was created in February of 2019 and sent to potential partners to gather detailed information about the food based businesses throughout the summer of 2019. The survey was open until July of 2019, and resulted in 10 survey responses and 14 site visits and interviews. These interviews and site visits were conducted with a variety of food based businesses including: shared-use kitchens, farms, food hubs, farmstands, processors, grocers, restaurants, community and event centers, and entrepreneurs looking to start-up their own processing food business. The interview and site visits included on-site observation and evaluation with food producers and businesses. Site visit questions were designed to learn more about the businesses daily schedules as well as their future goals. Additionally, there were discussions on barriers to scaling processing and needs in reaching their goals for the future of food processing. Site visit inventories and interviews led to understanding of:

- Existing conditions and site categories
- Understanding of common needs amongst food producers and businesses
- Identification of basic processing equipment and interior needs as well as layout and logistics
- Desire for business skills and scaling-up opportunities from financial perspectives
- Identification of food safety considerations, regulations and licensing

Following the interview and surveys, a pilot selection matrix was utilized to determine 3 pilot projects suited for scaling project needs. Selection criteria included readiness, identification by the interviewee their desire to scale-up or add value-added produce processing to their business, and different categories of business operations. In early August 2019, scopes of work were developed for three pilot partners, with business categories of community center, retail, and aggregator. Throughout early August and end of
September, the Scaling Specialty Crop team met and consulted with each partner regarding food safety, layout and logistics, and business development. The pilot projects informed the Scaling-Up Processing Toolkit.

**Agritourism**

Agritourism best practices checklists were developed by staff at Iowa State University.

- Agritourism Bio-security Checklist
- Agritourism Emergency Preparedness Checklist
- Agritourism Food Safety Checklist
- Agritourism Negligence Mitigation Suggestions
- Agritourism Pesticide Safety Checklist
- Agritourism Play Area Checklist

**Commodity Reports**

These reports can be used as preliminary research in determining current production, market analysis, demographics and price points. Reports can be accessed from any of the commodity pages listed below and are also aggregated on a server: [https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/projects/CommodityReport/](https://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/projects/CommodityReport/). Reports are now finalized for the following commodities:

- Apples
- Cheese
- Grapes
- Pork
- Potatoes
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes

**Audio Files**

New audio files were added to the website to help reach new audiences through podcast channels. This will continue to be expanded to include general business topics, as well as horticulture and livestock files.

- Raised Bed Gardening - May 2020
- Standard Operating Procedures Podcast - April 2020
- Spring Vegetable Production Podcast - April 2020