

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – October – December 2018

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).



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Iowa State University

AgMRC Website Statistics

This quarter, the total number of page views 278,981 with an average of 3,035 per day.

The Commodities and Products section attracts the most visits, at 172,748 this quarter total. Within Commodities and Products, Fruits is the top section at 48,183 visits. Vegetables follows at 40,185 visits. Livestock has the next highest visits at 21,711.

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

1. Industrial Hemp – 7,999 pageviews
2. Potato Profile – 5,442 pageviews
3. Lettuce – 4,298 pageviews

AgMRC



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 more than 3,000 unique visits per day.



2018	Pageviews	Page Views Per Day
January	75,849	2,447
February	86,343	3,084
March	98,524	3,178
April	96,972	3,232
May	91,666	2,957
June	68,210	2,274
July	68,949	2,224
August	76,746	2,476
September	89,938	2,965
October	104,929	3,385
November	99,128	3,304
December	74,924	2,417

Major Content Sections

The major content sections of the AgMRC website visits:

1. Commodities and Products – 172,748 pageviews
2. Business Development – 43,174 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 35,414 pageviews
4. Markets and Industries – 6,453 pageviews
5. Directories and State Resources – 2,220 pageviews

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

1. Fruits – 48,183 pageviews
2. Vegetables – 40,185 pageviews
3. Livestock – 21,711 pageviews

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

1. Getting Prepared – 15,137 pageviews
2. Starting a Business – 12,427 pageviews
3. Operating a Business – 10,938 pageviews

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

1. Ethanol – 9,064 pageviews
2. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Report – 6,760 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 6,471 pageviews



AgMRC Website Updates:

Profiles updated this quarter (23):

Almonds	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/nuts/almonds
Amaranth	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/specialty-crops/amaranth
Aquaculture Fin-Fish Species	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/aquaculture/aquaculture-fin-fish-species
Aquaculture Non-Fish	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/aquaculture/aquaculture-non-fish-species
Aquaculture Profile	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/aquaculture/aquaculture-profile
Avocado	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/avocados
Barley	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/barley-profile
Bees	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/bees-profile
Buckwheat	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/specialty-crops/buckwheat-profile
Cauliflower	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/cauliflower
Celery	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/celery
Cheese	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/dairy/cheese-industry-profile
Chestnuts	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/nuts/chestnuts
Chickpeas	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/chickpeas
Commodity Apples	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/apples/commodity-apples
Cotton	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fiber/cotton
Cranberries	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/cranberries
Dairy Goats	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/goats/dairy-goats
Dairy Products	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/dairy/dairy-products-profile



Direct Marketing Beef	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/beef/direct-marketing-beef-profile
Direct Marketing Lamb	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/lamb/direct-marketing-lamb-profile
Direct Marketing Pork	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/pork/direct-market-pork-profile
Ducks & Geese	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/poultry/ducks-and-geese
Eggs	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/poultry/eggs-profile
English Walnuts	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/nuts/english-walnuts
Figs	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/figs
Goats for Fiber	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/goats/goats-for-fiber
Hay	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/biomass/hay
Industrial Hemp	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fiber/industrial-hemp
Maple Sugar	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/specialty-crops/maple-sugar-profile
Meat Goats	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/goats/meat-goats
Melons	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/melons
Non-traditional Forest Products	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agroforestry/non-traditional-forest-products
Onions	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/onions
Peanuts	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/nuts/peanut-profile
Peppers	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/bell-and-chili-peppers
Pine Nuts	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/nuts/pine-nuts
Pistachios	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/nuts/pistachios



Potatoes	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/potato-profile
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Commodities and products profiles are updated based on client inquiries to AgMRC Match participants and AgMRC office staff.

Business development files updated this quarter (1):

Business Expansion was updated for the business development section.

(<https://www.agmrc.org/business-development/strategy-and-analysis/expansion-and-strategy/business-expansion>)

Email

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 67 e-mailed questions pertaining on industrial hemp, sawdust, eggs, and goats to name a few.

Phone Calls

As of December 31, AgMRC staff reported having 42 toll-free phone inquiries from 16 different states.

Facebook

AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had 37 posts, which were seen by more than 4,444 people.

Blog

During this quarter, one blog article was posted to the website. This blog entry was entitled “Little Vine Vineyards and Winery”.

AgMRC Subcontracts

Progress Report on AgMRC MarketMaker Collaboration

Goal 1

Build Exportable Maps and Reports- Develop a series of maps and customizable marketing studies that provide Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG) applicants with market intelligence that can easily be incorporated into feasibility studies and business plans that support the VAPG application process.



Enabled full access to MarketMaker secondary data for use in the exportable reports. Initial data sets used on the prototype were for Iowa only.

Developed detailed requirements for the exportable maps which includes features and user interface issues. Early stage work on exportable maps has begun.

Goal 2

Integrate Educational Content from AgMRC site into MarketMaker Platform- Develop additional MarketMaker search tools targeting the AgMRC site educational content, building on the progress made in the first round of funding,

AgMRC educational content is now a regular feature in the bimonthly MarketMaker newsletter sent to registered MarketMaker subscribers. In the 4th quarter 2 newsletters were sent out to a subscriber list of over 7,000 farms businesses and stake holders.

Featured agritourism report from the AgMRC website in the Agritourism themed November Tidbits Newsletter.



Goal 3

Enhance MarketMaker Advanced Mapping Tools- Expand the secondary data sources from USDA that can be incorporated into the MarketMaker interactive mapping platform. Develop a more intuitive interface that will make the resource more user friendly to the non-technical user. Develop new functionality that will allow VAPG grant applicants to identify market trends.

Made minor modifications to mapping tool in response to user feedback collected at tradeshow and conferences .



Goal 4

Build Metrics and Impacts- *Develop tracking tools that will allow AgMRC and MarketMaker staff to collect data that can be used for evaluation purposes and ultimately the long term economic impact of the resources being developed.*

In the 4th quarter the MarketMaker tech team developed a tool in MarketMaker admin to track product searches specifically related to FoodSearcher any time after July 2018. The original 16 products averaged 320 product searches per day (2,242 product searches per week) during the last 6 months of 2018.

Most searched products include:

Lettuce: 350 searches per week

Strawberries: 343 searches per week

Watermelon: 315 searches per week

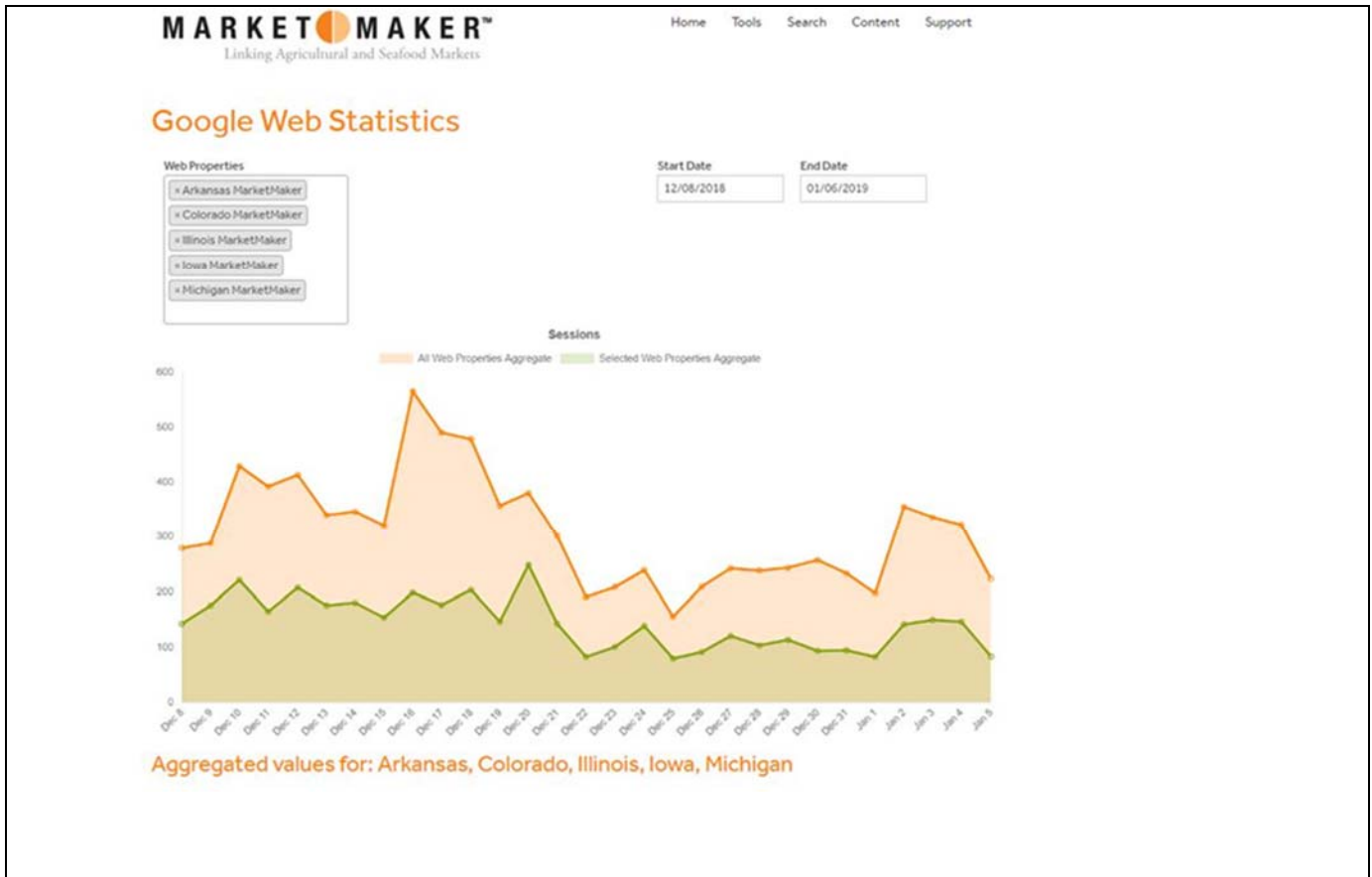
Grapes: 244 searches per week

Aronia berries: 214 searches per week

In the 4th Quarter there were 8,081 farms and businesses whose profiles were visited for a total of 30,312 profile views (some profiles were visited multiple times)

In the 4th quarter there were 133 entities received 155 online connections facilitated through the AgMRC and MarketMaker collaboration.

Google Analytics for MarketMaker related domains (including Food Searcher):



Outreach and Engagement

Live Local Conference November 5-6 Bloomington, IL.

Demonstrated MarketMaker and the AgMRC Food Searcher tool and distributed AgMRC materials during the 2 day conference which was attended by approximately 200 farmers, practitioners and local food advocates.

Gave a presentation to attendees on the suite of MarketMaker powered tools including AgMRC’s Food Searcher Tool.

Great Lakes Expo Dec 4-6 Grand Rapids, MI

Demonstrated MarketMaker and the AgMRC Food Searcher tool and distributed AgMRC materials during the 3 day trade show attended by over 4000 fruit and vegetable growers from 40 states.



University of Vermont

The primary objective is to provide tools and resources to support agritourism and value-added agriculture enterprises. Funding is being used to develop materials and deliver trainings and technical assistance for producers and for agricultural service providers. Specific deliverables include:

1. A guide on best practices for agritourism and value-added enterprises.

Quarter 4 of 2018 saw significant progress on the best practices guide for agritourism. We completed drafts of five case studies of VAPG recipients in the Northeast and developed an InDesign template to be used by colleagues for additional case studies in the Pacific Northwest. We are continuing to gather information from VAPG grant recipients in Oregon and Washington, and wrote up most of the findings. These case studies will be formatted using the InDesign template, to be consistent with the Northeast case studies. The inventory of agritourism resources will be integrated into existing, well-respected resource hubs, including the Vermont Agritourism webpage www.uvm.edu/vtagritourism, a valuable tool used by service providers and farmers alike.

In Vermont, we are working on short video clips to augment the guides, as farmers have indicated that the written guides are not always the best medium for communicating what Best Practices look like. We interviewed and shot video at five agritourism farms in quarter 4 of 2018, and we are in the process of editing the short video clips. Several farms volunteered to be featured in the videos, and the video team narrowed the farms down based on their geographic diversity, whether they represented a diverse range of agritourism and value-added products, and whether they were available to host the video crew when the crew was available. In addition to showing what agritourism looks like on different farms, the videos will highlight the farms' most successful marketing techniques.

2. Workshops on agritourism and value-added enterprises.

ABCs of Farm-Based Education

October 21-23 at Shelburne Farms, Vermont

22 participants

Shelburne Farms and the Farm-Based Education Network hosted a workshop, the ABCs of Farm-Based Education, which was attended by 22 individuals. Participants came from Delaware, New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Vermont, California and Galway, Ireland. While a few attendees were teachers looking to connect with farmers, most were working on farms and farm-based education sites that host the public on their land for education, sales, and entertainment. Several attendees represented farms that offer value-added products, including Stonewall Farm in Keene, New Hampshire and their maple syrup, raw bottled milk, cheese, and numerous educational programs; Coverdale Farm in Hockessin, Delaware and their hayrides, birthday parties, community-supported agriculture program; and Greener Partners, a Philadelphia-based organization that works with Delema G. Deaver Wellness Farm to provide more than 5,000 pounds of



organically grown produce per year for hospital patients free of charge to support healthy eating habits and provide fresh food for those who don't have access to it. The produce is also used in cooking classes at the hospital and pop up nutrition lessons in waiting rooms. The range of experiences and products grown at the various sites was an inspiration to all involved in the workshop. The ABCs workshop is a valuable time for farmers to network with one another, learn important safety information to be used when welcoming guests on the farm, and explore marketing, sales, and communications strategies for selling their products and experiences.

Farm Image and Public Relations

December 28 at Oregon State University Extension Service, Marion County, Oregon

11 participants

Through various needs assessments, it was determined that a training regarding farm image and public relations would be beneficial to a segment of farm operators in the area. The training was offered to all known farm direct sales and agritourism operators in Marion County and surrounding areas. Eleven individuals who owned and/or operated farm direct sales and agritourism operations attended the workshop. The main trainer was Christina Lenkowski, Sparrow Travel Media - Boise, Idaho, who is a national speaker on rural public relations. Mary Stewart, OSU Extension Service in Marion County, served as the local expert and added information when appropriate. All participants completed an evaluation and indicated they will make changes in business practices as a result of information learned in the training. Changes participants wish to make include:

- Responding to all comments on Social Media, strategic planning with our social media.
- Getting more education through sources provided by the trainer.
- Making sure all my platforms link up – maybe starting to do an e-newsletter but need to begin collecting emails! Make sure new website has capacity to do that? It launches next month.
- Add a Quarterly e-newsletter/ Improve e-newsletter
- Step it up!
- Not using social media effectively – need to get going on that!!

3. Presentations at national conferences to share the best practices guide and VAPG program with producers and with agricultural service providers.

Lisa Chase and Mary Stewart attended the First World Congress on Agritourism, which took place November 7-9 in Bolzano, Italy. We gave a presentation on agritourism trails and created a poster on a conceptual framework for agritourism in the U.S. This conference was an incredible opportunity to share tools and resources for agritourism and value-added enterprises with an international audience, and also to learn from other countries. We did not use AgMRC funding for travel since the conference took place outside the U.S., but we did share AgMRC resources with participants, as many of these resources are applicable for farmers and service providers in other countries.

4. Technical assistance to support farmers with agritourism and value-added enterprises including farms applying for Value-Added Producer Grants.



We provided direct technical assistance through farm visits and one-on-one consultations to four farms in the Northeast.

Renewable Energy Report

The Renewable Energy Monthly Report is produced as a partnership between the Agricultural Marketing Center, the Iowa Grain Quality Initiative, and is authored by Decision Innovation Solutions.

The newsletter contains pricing, profitability and supply/demand tools used for analysis of ethanol, biodiesel and distiller's grains and is sent out on a monthly basis. During this quarter, three issues of the Renewable Energy Monthly Report were published and distributed. The monthly report was distributed, on average, to 2,083 subscribers, an increase from an average of 1,877 subscribers from the previous quarter. The average open rate in quarter 4 was 16.61%.

October Articles

Latest 2918/19 Corn Projection and Yield, Still Record High

Review of U.S. Biodiesel Market: Production, Imports and Profitability

Feature of the Month

Prices and Profitability Models

November Articles:

A Review of Current U.S. Ethanol Production and Price

USDA's Baseline Projections to 2028: Corn Acreage Below 2007/08; Higher Production

Feature of the Month

Prices and Profitability Models

December Articles:

Final RFS Volumes for 2019 and Biomass-Based Diesel Volumes for 2020

U.S. Ethanol Exports Setting a New Record in 2018

Feature of the Month

Prices and Profitability Models



University of Minnesota Food Industry Center

We did not have any commodity updates to do. We worked with University of Minnesota Crookston on the subcontract from Iowa State on their digital content.

We are developing a spreadsheet tool to use for the developing of linking farm enterprise budget with investment in a value-added business. This is an update of an earlier AgMRC product done about ten years ago but will include information from the recent tax bill changes.

We created a digital file for the website of the work done by Edward Blevins in his update of the VAPG program and a written summary was created. We are still finalizing a database with contacts of VAPG recipients on Facebook and Twitter and will be contacting them to learn more about what they are doing.

Worked with VAPG recipients and business development members in Minnesota and Wisconsin. We planned November 2018 meetings in Minnesota and the Pacific Northwest (Idaho, Oregon, Washington State). Materials for January 2019 meetings in California, Minnesota, and South Dakota are in progress.

Community Food Systems, Iowa State University

The last Local Food Leader and Community Food Systems certification with state hosting is schedule for January 7-9 in St. Croix Virgin Islands.

Currently there are 111 people enrolled in the online curriculum of Local Food Leader, with 26 active participants. Based on the participation, outreach has been done to get more activity online.

Local Food Leader has been offered in 6 states with a total of 172 participants in the workshops : Iowa (February 7) with 30 participants, North Carolina (March 21) with 11 participants and Texas (May 21) with 40 participants, and Alaska (September 5) with 24 participants, Colorado (Oct. 16) with 21 participants, and Pennsylvania (December 16) with 46 participants. A total of 111 participants have enrolled in the online modules to complete certification. Each state cohort receives 4 months for completion.

On March 28, in Des Moines, Iowa, we will offer a Local Food Leader train-the-trainer for those who are certified. This will promote additional teachers throughout the nation.

The Community Food Systems online modules will launch on February 15th with 6 online modules and 5 levels of certification: Full, Facilitator, Assessor, TA- Economic Impact, and TA- Feasibility studies.



Community Food Systems has been offered in 9 states with 150 participants in the in-person workshop: North Carolina (March 22-23) with 11 participants, Kentucky (May 15-16) with 22 participants, Texas (May 22-23) with 20 participants, and Georgia (May 29-June 1) with 8 participants; Alaska (August X) with 18 participants, Nebraska (September 28-29) with 21 participants, Colorado (October 17-18) with 11 participants, Iowa (December 12-13) with 15 participants, and Pennsylvania (December 17-18) with 24 participants. Participants will receive 8 months to complete their online modules which include (depending on their level of certification):

	Framework	Collective Thinking	Community Food Systems Assessment	Project Implementation	Feasibility Study	Economic Impact
Full	X	X	X	X	X	X
Facilitator	X	X	Partial	X		
Assessor	X	X	X			
TA-Feasibility	X				X	
TA-Economic Impact	X					X

Mapping 101 is an additional certification that is required for assessors, and is also available for anyone that is going through the program. While funds from AgMRC have not provided full resources for the development of this training, partial components of Community Food Systems assessments feed into this development.

Next Steps:

Due to need and funds available, in the summer of 2019, 2 “hub” certifications will be piloted- Seattle, Chicago, and Boston to assess the success of hosting certifications in regional co-horts vs. state co-horts. We will also conduct an additional LFL and CFS Certification in Iowa based on need for a summer program.

Model Farm (Iowa State Daily)

AgMRC is utilizing student journalist from across the country to make 1-minute videos about VAPG projects from around the country. Iowa State Daily-Model Farm will manage the project using their peer-group colleagues from 33 universities around the country to gather footage from their local VAPG recipients. Iowa State Daily-Model Farm will manage the mini-contracts and editing here at ISU in



preparation for them to be added to the AgMRC site by the site managers. During this quarter, videos were added on the following:

- Sacred Blossom Farm
- Shared Ground Farmers' Cooperative
- Shepherd's Way Farms
- Red Tail Beef Ranch
- Midwest Elderberry
- Living Greens Farm
- Darby Springs
- Cannon River Winery & Vineyard
- Chapel Hill Creamery
- Dan & Debbie's Creamery
- Fireside Winery
- Redhead Creamery
- Holy Field Winery

All videos can be viewed at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDsV3k7fXdKj1faJOPHvxcg/videos?view_as=subscriber.

There are now a total of 32 video case study profiles of VAPG recipients on the AgMRC YouTube Channel. During this quarter, there were 136 views of the videos. The new redesign of the homepage of AgMRC, www.agmrc.org, allows for even greater promotion of the videos. All state rural development specialists with video case studies in their states were contacted to let them know about the video project and to increase awareness and promotion of the project.