

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – January - March 2015

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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Goal 1. Maintain an electronic, web-based library.

This quarter, the average number of sessions per day to the AgMRC website was 3,864, up from 3,476 per day last quarter, while the average number of pageviews per day was 6,102, an increase from 5,450 per day last quarter.

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

1. Citrus
2. Organic Food Trends
3. Grains and Oilseeds

Goal 2. Provide value-added business and economic analysis tools.

The Renewable Energy Monthly Report newsletter is written by Don Hofstrand and Robert Wisner, retired professors at Iowa State University.

The newsletter contains pricing, profitability and supply/demand tools used for analysis of ethanol, biodiesel and distillers grains.

During this quarter, three issues of the Renewable Energy Monthly Report were created and distributed. Articles included Big Changes in Ethanol Revenue, Costs and Profitability; Intermediate Term Issues for U.S. Biofuels, Part I; Impact of Crude Oil Price Collapse on Corn Starch Ethanol; Impact of Declining Oil Prices on the Future of Solar Energy; Impact of Low Ethanol Prices on the Corn Market and Has Solar's Day in the Sun Finally Come?

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 4,000 unique visits per day.



In addition to these articles, balance sheets and profitability spreadsheets were updated monthly. The monthly report is distributed to 3,000 individuals.

During this quarter, AgMRC hired a graduate student in Agricultural Education to look at the curriculum section of AgMRC and revise lesson plans for additional student interactivity vs. lecture/worksheet lesson plans. The graduate student, John Rasty, will stay on through the spring semester and summer on a part-time basis to promote the revised curriculum to ag teachers.

Goal 3. Link producers with electronically available information and resources.

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 61 e-mailed questions pertaining to the Value Added Producer Grants, 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. The questions requested information about such topics as white popcorn, applying for a VAPG grant, eel farming, kenaf and agritourism farms.

As of June, AgMRC staff reported receiving 72 toll-free phone inquiries from 9 different states.

AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had the following 9 posts, which were seen by more than 2,302 people.

A Google + page was created in May 2014. AgMRC has 254 followers and 216,103 views.

One radio spot was created during this quarter - Resources Available for Farmers to Learn More about Local Foods Movement in February 2015. The spot was utilized by 19 stations, each with multiple syndicates.

In January, AgMRC sponsored a booth at the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual conference in San Diego, California. AgMRC staff gave away screen cleaners and visited with more than the 600 attendees at the three-day convention.

On February 26th AgMRC held an Open Shop Night for those students currently student teaching in agricultural education from Iowa State University and those that will soon be student teaching. There were eight of these students in attendance that spent a few hours working on any agricultural mechanics skills they felt needed the most improvement. Many of them spent time



with different welding processes while others worked with woodworking. Two Iowa State University professors and a PhD candidate were also in attendance. Following open work time, there was a dinner catered by Hickory Park. During the meal, a presentation about the AgMRC curriculum was given to the attendees. The students commented that they were impressed with the amount of good information and lesson plans available through AgMRC. After the presentation and meal, the shop was re-opened for students to continue working if they desired.