

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – January – March 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 260,716 with an average of 2,897 per day.

The Commodities and Products section attracts the most visits, at 157,109 this quarter total. Within Commodities and Products, Fruits is the top section at 47,506 visits. Vegetables follows at 35,039 visits. Livestock has the next highest visits at 21,261.

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

1. Strawberries – 5,404 pageviews
2. Potatoes – 4,454 pageviews
3. Industrial Hemp – 3,873 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 2,000 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		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

2017 Analysis
260,716 total pageviews
2,897 average page views per day

Major Content Sections

The major content sections of the AgMRC website visits:

1. Commodities and Products – 157,109 pageviews
2. Business Development – 42,890 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 31,594 pageviews
4. Markets and Industries – 6,490 pageviews
5. Directories and State Resources – 2,289 pageviews

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

1. Fruits – 47,506 pageviews
2. Vegetables – 35,039 pageviews
3. Livestock – 21,261 pageviews

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

1. Getting Prepared – 14,348 pageviews
2. Starting a Business -11,782 pageviews
3. Operating a Business – 11,645 pageviews

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

1. Ethanol – 9,171 pageviews
2. Renewable Energy – 6,169 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Report – 4,947 pageviews



AgMRC Website Updates:

Profiles updated this quarter (16):

Cranberries, Spinach, Watermelon, Almonds, Black Walnuts, Chestnuts, Commodity Apples, English Walnut, Figs, Hazelnuts, Pine Nuts, Pistachios, Avocado, Celery, Peanuts and Fee and Lease Pond Fishing.

Business development files updated this quarter (2):

Product Life Cycle and Economies of Scale and Scope.

AgMRC Accessibility

AgMRC is getting closer to completing the Accessibility Project to make AgMRC compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. These updates to the content and framework of our website will ensure that users who use devices to interpret web-content, such as screen readers, will be able to get value added agriculture information they are seeking. AgMRC has a little less than 100 pages that need slight updates to make them accessible.

Commodity Pricing Chart

The commodity pricing fruits and vegetables market report went live in October 2017. Information from the USDA National Retail Reports was used for a newly designed commodity pricing chart that is visually appealing and user friendly. Users will be able to filter the fruit and vegetable data date range, region, commodity, variety, organic status and unit.

Email

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 41 e-mailed questions pertaining on flax, worm casting and maple syrup to name a few.

Phone Calls

As of March, AgMRC staff reported having 19 toll-free phone inquiries from 9 different states.

Facebook

AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had 10 posts, which were seen by more than 1,494 people.

Radio Spots

Two radio spots were created during this quarter entitled, "Direct Marketing Provides Added Value Opportunities for Farmers" and "New Uses/Added Value Event Offers New Market Ideas for Farmers." These radio spot were utilized by 34 stations with multiple affiliates in multiple states.

Blog

During this quarter, four blog articles were posted to the website. Blog entries entitled "2018 Field to Fork Webinar Schedule Set," "USDA Now Accepting Vendor Applications for 2018 Farmers Market



Season,” “USDA Launches MARS, Delivering Market Data to Agricultural Producers Around the Globe Faster and Easier” and “New Uses Forum: Adding Value at the Speed of Innovation.”

AgMRC Subcontracts

Global Food and Agriculture Network

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.

Meeting with Chris Seeger and AgMRC staff for preliminary planning related to exportable pdf’s.

MarketMaker IT staff created capacity to aggregate census information based on users selected regions of interest and print the results in pdf. form



Census Data

powered by MARKETMAKER™

State: Georgia

AGE	YR 2000	YR 2010
Population 18 years and under	2,284,932	2,521,038
Population 19 to 24 years	715,556	998,273
Population 25 to 34 years	1,289,695	1,460,609
Population 35 to 54 years	2,450,792	2,892,076
Population 55 to 69 years	895,500	1,440,298
Population 70 years and over	549,978	701,751
HOUSEHOLD TYPE	YR 2000	YR 2010
Total One Person Households	710,098	135,581
Total Family Households	2,126,360	2,521,570
Total married couple families	1,579,407	251,869
Total married couple fam. w/ chldrn. < 18 yrs.	759,345	115,452
Total nonfamily households	171,220	359,187
RACE	YR 2000	YR 2010
White	5,327,175	6,083,590
Black	2,342,110	3,024,631
American Indian Alaska Native Population	23,688	33,326
Asian	171,463	285,493

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,

Launched the new homepage for the 21 legacy MarketMaker states, including an AgMRC promotional space, hot link which will eventually become the spot for featured AgMRC educational content.

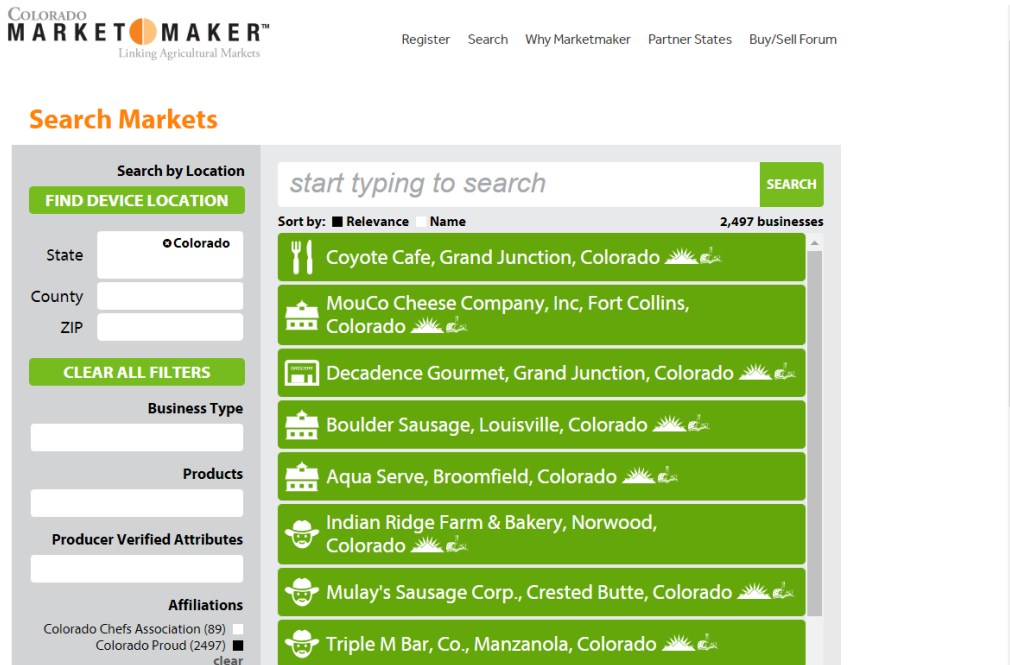
Enhance MarketMaker Advanced Mapping Tools- Expand the secondary data sources from USDA that can be incorporated into the MarketMaker interactive mapping platform. Develop a more intuitive interface that will make the resource more user friendly to the non-technical user. Develop new functionality that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

New Advanced Mapping interface was launched and is ready for user group testing by Iowa State team.



New features allow you to map your “market area” and print the census data including food preference data for the selected geographic area. We also re-instated affiliations into search results, allowing the user to search exclusively for businesses in a given organization.

Screen shot showing affiliations, in this case by selecting Colorado Proud we have a sort of the 2,497 Colorado Proud Members.



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.

Developed detailed scope of work to redevelop the data admin site to expand the tracking of all measurable activities. These activities are foundational in the development of an administrative site that tracks user behaviors that can ultimately be used for evaluative purposes.



Outreach and Engagement

Trade Shows and Conferences- The MarketMaker team attended 3 trade shows and one educational event where they promoted AgMRC as a potential resource and distributed related marketing materials.

- Illinois Specialty Growers Conference January 10 – 12, 2018 in Springfield, Illinois ,
- Southern SAWG (Sustainable Ag Working Group,) in Chattanooga, Tennessee January 18 – 20, 2018
- USDA Ag Outlook Forum in Alexandria, VA February 22 – 23, 2018
- Local Food Resource Mapping team meeting, Atlanta, GA Feb. 28 – March 1, 2018

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.* The guide is in development, with coordination planned between University of Vermont, Oregon State University, and Shelburne Farms.
2. *Workshops on agritourism and value-added enterprises.* We have organized five workshops to date. See below for a list of workshops. Planning is underway for additional workshops, including ones in May in Southampton, MA and August in Thetford, VT.
3. *Presentations at national conferences to share the best practices guide and VAPG program with producers and with agricultural service providers.* We presented at three conferences to share our work on agritourism and value-added enterprises. See below for a list of presentations.
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 14 farms in the Northeast. Some, but not all, resulted in applications to the VAPG program cycle due January 2018.

Workshops:

- 1) Engaging Visitors: Tours, Camps & On-Farm Events. Golden Well Farm & Apiaries, New Haven, Vermont, February 28, 2018. Organized with Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN). 17 participants.

Presentations at conferences:



1. Chase, L.C., S. Cook, and P. Cooper-Ellis. Welcoming the Public to your Sugarhouse. Vermont Maple Conference, Brattleboro, Vermont, January 20, 2018.
2. Chase, L.C. Marketing Beyond Vermont. Vermont Fresh Network Annual Meeting, Norwich, Vermont, January 22, 2018.
3. Simon-Nobes, V. and S. Marchand. Operation Education: Your Farm as a Classroom. North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association Conference. Los Angeles, California, February 6, 2018.

Activities

Agritourism Conference 2018 – A training for agritourism operators and professionals

January 24, 2018 8:30 am – 3 pm

The Oregon Garden,

Silverton, Oregon (mid-Willamette Valley)



Purpose: To teach agritourism best practices and provide tools to agritourism farmers, value-added producers and tourism professionals.

Attendees: Nearly 80 attended from across Oregon and Washington, and with most attendees from the mid-Willamette Valley in Oregon.

Evaluation: There was a 48 percent response rate from attendees. Participants were asked to rate several things, with 5 being excellent and 1 being poor.

As a result of attending the conference, participant's understanding of agritourism grew from 3.59 to 4.19 – a gain of .60.

As a result of the quality of formal and informal education presented at the conference, 86 percent of the attendees say they will make changes in their business practices as a result of what learned by attending the conference, or they may make changes.



Detail from the respondents follows:

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Please rate your understanding of agritourism best practices <u>before</u> today’s conference: | 3.59 |
| 2. In general, how would you rate the quality of the event? | 4.33 |
| 3. How would you rate the quality of the instruction? | 4.33 |
| 4. How important were the topics and content for your agritourism business? | 4.27 |
| 5. How likely are you to change your business practices, as a result of what you learned at today’s conference? | |
| Not likely | 0 |
| Not sure | 2 |
| May make changes | 14 |
| Will make changes | 11 |
| 6. Please rate your understanding of agritourism best practices <u>after</u> today’s conference: | 4.19 |

Attendance at “Farmers Inspired” - North American Farm Direct Marketing Association Conference and Agritourism Destination Observation, Feb 4-7, 2018

Purposes: Mary Stewart attended this conference to

1. Learn from educational sessions that will add technical content to her upcoming educational publications and trainings, and
2. Hold discussions with colleagues who will help her set up training opportunities on the west coast, and
3. Make a connection with key trainers and influencers in the farm direct marketing industry.

Outcomes:

1. Attended keynote and educational seminars
 - a. Mom and Pop on Top: How to Be Small, but Play Large (Jon Schallert)
 - b. Whole Farm Risk Assessment (Doolarie Sigh-Knights)
 - c. You’re Not Alone: Community Supported Agritourism (Penny Leff)
 - d. Animal Exhibits Liability Issues (Rusty Rumley)
 - e. AgTourism Statutes to Limit Liability (Rusty Rumley)
 - f. Transform Your Business into a Consumer Destination (Jon Schallert)
2. Held brief meetings with: Jon Schallert, Rusty Rumley, Doolarie Sigh-Knights and Penny Leff.
3. Started process to schedule trainings in Northern California.
4. Visited, photographed and analyzed “The Original Farmers Market”, 3rd & Fairfax, L.A.



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 1,877 subscribers, an increase from an average of 1,854 subscribers from the previous quarter. The average open rate in quarter 2 was 18.02%.

January Articles:

U.S. Ethanol Exports Expected to Set a New Record in 2017 – 119 pageviews

U.S. Ethanol Price Decline in 2017: Historical Look at Possible Explanations – 98 pageviews

Feature of the Month – Proposed Changes to the Fuel Ethanol Policy – 45 pageviews

Prices and Profitability Models – 30 pageviews

February Articles:

U.S. Corn Usage for Ethanol, Dry Mill Ethanol Co-Products Production and Ethanol Yields Update – 70 pageviews

Quantifying the Volume of U.S. Corn for Ethanol Use in Declining Gasoline Consumption – 37 pageviews

Feature of the Month – U.S. Ethanol Exports – 14 pageviews

Prices and Profitability Models – 42 pageviews

March Articles:

Iowa Ethanol Gross Production Margins: Update February 2018 – 58 pageviews

Production and Revenue Trends in Corn Ethanol, DDGs and Corn Distillers Oil – 50 pageviews

Feature of the Month – Potential Impacts of a Cap on Prices of Ethanol RINs – 31 pageviews

Prices and Profitability Models – 44 pageviews



University of Minnesota Food Industry Center

Dr. Michael Boland and his team at the Food Industry Center have continued to study Value Added Producer Grant recipients. Over the life of the USDA VAPG Program, two graduate students have studied the program in two different time periods, 2001-2005 and 2001-2012. We have completed an update of the VAPG recipient database. We are now adding other variables such as commodities grown in that county and zip code and have the steps in the level of business development where they are at. An M.S. student is currently working with the data on a report as we have done in the past. Worked with VAPG recipients and business development members in Minnesota, California, Indiana, Iowa and South Dakota.

Community Food Systems, Iowa State University

Community Food Systems workshop curriculum has been completed and includes a two day workshop that covers the process for food systems development, team building, tools and resources, and mapping and assessments. Online Modules for Local Food Leader will be completed in April and online modules for Community Food Systems will be launched in July.

Local Food Leader in Iowa was hosted February 7, 2018 with 30 participants- Iowa plans to offer another Local Food Leader and the first Community Food Systems certification in the summer 2018.

North Carolina hosted both Local Food Leader (11 participants) and Community Food Systems certification (9 participants) March 21-23.

Additional outreach has been done for the spring pilot. Confirmed partners include Nebraska, Alaska and the Virgin Islands. Additional interest has been from Ohio, South Carolina, and Arkansas.

We will be analyzing the initial 5 pilot post- and pre- evaluations throughout the summer and will provide an updated report at that time on the findings and initial impact of the 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:

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center



- Lakehouse Farms
- Does and Diva's Dairy
- Penoch Winery

All videos can be viewed at:

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