

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – July – September 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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Quarterly Report – July – September 2018

Iowa State University

AgMRC Website Statistics

This quarter, the total number of page views 234,633 with an average of 2,555 per day.

The Commodities and Products section attracts the most visits, at 142,147 this quarter total. Within Commodities and Products, Fruits is the top section at 44,625 visits. Vegetables follows at 28,923 visits. Livestock has the next highest visits at 18,678.

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

1. Strawberries – 5,044 pageviews
2. Watermelon – 3,910 pageviews
3. Industrial Hemp – 3,824 pageviews

AgMRC



The mission of AgMRC is to continue to provide independent producers and 6,848 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	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		
November		
December		

Major Content Sections

The major content sections of the AgMRC website visits:

1. Commodities and Products – 142,147 pageviews
2. Business Development – 38,811 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 29,483 pageviews
4. Markets and Industries – 5,555 pageviews
5. Directories and State Resources – 2,222 pageviews

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

1. Fruits – 44,625 pageviews
2. Vegetables – 28,923 pageviews
3. Livestock – 18,678 pageviews

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

1. Getting Prepared – 12,481 pageviews
2. Starting a Business – 11,235 pageviews
3. Operating a Business – 10,958 pageviews

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

1. Ethanol – 6,971 pageviews
2. Renewable Energy and Climate Change Report – 6,499 pageviews
3. Renewable Energy – 5,928 pageviews



AgMRC Website Updates:

Profiles updated this quarter (23):

Camelina	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/camelina/
Canola	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/canola-profile/
Dates	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/dates/
Dry Beans	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/dry-edible-bean-profile/
Flax	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/flax-profile/
Prairie Grasses	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/specialty-crops/prairie-grasses-and-wildflowers-profile/
Proso Millet	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/proso-millet/
Pumpkins	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/pumpkins/
Quinoa	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/quinoa/
Rabbits	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/livestock/rabbits/
Raisins	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/fruits/raisins/
Rapeseed	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/rapeseed/
Rice	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/rice-profile/
Russian Dandelion	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/specialty-crops/russian-dandelion/
Rye	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/rye-profile/
Safflower	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/safflower/
Sesame	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/sesame-profile/
Sorghum	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/egyptian-wheat-sorghum/
Spelt	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/spelt/



Sugarbeets	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/sugarbeet-profile/
Sugarcane	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/grains-oilseeds/sugarcane-profile/
Sweet Potatoes	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/vegetables/sweet-potatoes/
Switchgrass	https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/biomass/switchgrass/

Commodities and products profiles are updated based on client inquiries to AgMRC Match participants and AgMRC office staff.

Business development files updated this quarter (2):

Entrepreneur Resources: Intellectual Property, Angel Investing, Litigation and Financing was created for the business development section. Tax Questions to Consider was also created.

These files were created because of client interactions from our AgMRC Match participants.

Email

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 33 e-mailed questions pertaining on industrial hemp, food industry trends, sawdust woodwaste to name a few.

Phone Calls

As of September 30, 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 36 posts, which were seen by more than 4,045 people.

Radio Spots

One radio spot was created during this quarter entitled, “Renewable Fuels Profitability Models Offer Valuable Info to Farmers.” This radio spot was utilized by 36 stations with multiple affiliates in multiple states.

Blog

During this quarter, three blog articles were posted to the website. Blog entries entitled “USDA Value Added Program Helps Taylor Fish Farm Enter Larger Markets,” “USDA Rural Development Innovation Center Launches Interactive Webpage to Share Best Practices for Rural Economic Development,” and “USDA Adds New Tools, Resources to Farmers.gov to Aid Producers.”



AgMRC Subcontracts

Global Food and Agriculture Network

The MarketMaker IT staff worked closely with Iowa State's data scientists to create the first in a series of templated reports that feature commodity specific market information gathered from the AgMRC web site. This information is coupled with maps that pull from the MarketMaker data base. The map and its associated data can be customized to the users targeted market region. The file format is a pdf. Which can be downloaded and inserted easily into a proposal or business plan.



MarketMarker.pdf

The team is also in the early stages of developing exportable customizable maps where farms and businesses can be plotted over heat maps and inserted as jpg files into the body of documents of displayed on web sites.

AgMRC educational content is now a regular feature in the bimonthly MarketMaker newsletter sent to registered MarketMaker subscribers. In the 3rd quarter 2 newsletters were sent out to a subscriber list of over 7,000 farms businesses and stake holders.



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.

Early stage development has focused on tracking specific activities related to searches for products and farmers and food related businesses. The ability to monitor these activities will ultimately help



AgMRC and MarketMaker identify economic impact that can be tracked directly to the user community. Below is an example of the list that summarizes farms and businesses that were discovered through searches on AgMRC’s Food Searcher and on the MarketMaker web site.

In the 3rd Quarter there were 12,652 farms and businesses whose profiles were visited for a total of 46,107 profile views (some profiles were visited multiple times)

Most Viewed Businesses (7/01/18 - 9/30/18)			
Name	ID	Email	Views
Himmel's Farm		View	joleneh-75@himmels.comcastbiz.net 505
Sturm Fish Hatchery & Bait Farm		View	justinsturm2@gmail.com 287
Dragon Farm, LLC		View	fdragonfarm@yahoo.com 220
Mazanek Orchard		View	lisamazanek@yahoo.com 208
Wayne County Produce Auction, LLC		View	schrder@parallax.ws 193
Cave City Watermelons - Day Farms		View	carson.day1488@gmail.com 185
Crum Strawberry Farm		View	Email Not Provided 173
Mt. Vernon Growers Market at Times Square		View	mvfarmer1@gmail.com 172
Rising Sun Ranch Creations		View	risingsunranchcreations@yahoo.com 167
Old Timer Brands, Inc.		View	tempteebrands@gmail.com 162

Showing 1 to 10 of 46,107 entries

Previous 2 3 4 5 ... 4611 Next

Below is an example of the list that summarizes the unique product searches that took place on AgMRCs Food Searcher Tool in combination with the What’s in Season App. In the next quarter the IT staff will separate AgMRC’s product searches from the What’s in Season app searches.

In the 3rd Quarter there were 73,420 searches that were conducted by way of AgMRC’s Food Searcher tool and the What’s in Season App.



Show 10 entries Search:

**** Recent Searches (7/01/18 - 9/30/18)**

Date	Source	Product Searched
Sep 30, 2018 11:56PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Tomatoes
Sep 30, 2018 11:55PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Tomatoes
Sep 30, 2018 11:48PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Strawberries
Sep 30, 2018 11:23PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Watermelon
Sep 30, 2018 11:06PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Strawberries
Sep 30, 2018 11:01PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Tomatoes
Sep 30, 2018 10:57PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Strawberries
Sep 30, 2018 10:53PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Watermelon
Sep 30, 2018 10:52PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Strawberries
Sep 30, 2018 10:22PM	https://foodsearcher.com	Strawberries

Showing 1 to 10 of 73,420 entries Previous 1 2 3 4 5 ... 7342 Next

One way that of economic impact that can potentially result from the AgMRC MarketMaker collaboration is when farms and businesses who are being featured in our respected platforms form business relationships that are facilitated through our shared technology. In many, if not most cases , contact between farms , businesses and customers will be made by using the contact information made available through the websites identified in their respective profiles but through the new activity tools we are able to track those connections that are made through MarketMaker’s blind e-mail system (“contact me” hyperlinks that direct inquiries to farms and businesses without giving the inquirer a personal e-mail address) . Below is an example of the list of business to business and consumer to business connections.

In the 3rd quarter there were 231 entities received 276 online connections facilitated through the AgMRC and MarketMaker collaboration.



Show 10 entries search:

Most Contacted Businesses (7/01/18 - 9/30/18)

Name	ID	Email	Contacts
Himmel's Farm	View	joleneh-75@himmels.comcastbiz.net	11
The Mayhaw Patch	View	jeaves010@yahoo.com	4
Joe's Business Updated renamed	View	joe@2wav.com	4
Bavarian Bakery Enterprises, LLC	View	bakeryoffice@gmail.com	3
Rocky Mountain Poultry Processing	View	RMPPNC@GMAIL.COM	3
Sturm Fish Hatchery & Bait Farm	View	justinsturm2@gmail.com	2
Williams Family Markets	View	Williamsfamilymarkets@gmail.com	2
Organilicious LLC	View	lindsey@organiliciousfoods.com	2
Broadway Foods	View	mike@redwheelfundraising.com	2
Jordan Creek Aronia Berries	View	vicweldon@outlook.com	2

Showing 1 to 10 of 231 entries Previous 2 3 4 5 ... 24 Next

In addition to the above development activities for Goal 4 the MarketMaker has successfully completed the task of archiving activity retired farms and businesses so that their activities are not purged when the profiles are no longer active. This will enable a more accurate portrayal of aggregated historical activity.

Outreach and Engagement

MarketMaker was a sponsor, presenter, exhibitor and member of the conference committee for the National Direct Agricultural Marketing Summit which was a shared event with the National Value Added Ag Conference held in Arlington, Virginia Sept 16th- 18th 2018.

- Over 400 attendees were in attendance
- One breakout session featured a recipient of the VAPG who shared about the ways funding from VAPG helped grow their enterprise.
- One breakout session shared the benefits of the data integration tools used in the AgMRC MarketMaker collaboration.
- One break-out session focused on ways to engage with value added processors.
- The MarketMaker team disseminated AgMRC materials and introduced people to the AgMRC site to people visiting their booth.



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 3 2018 saw great progress in the development of the guide for agritourism and best practices. Five case studies from VAPG recipients were created, and the design and layout of these case studies will be finalized in Q4. The case studies represented a variety of farm enterprises from a vineyard and orchard in Maine to a community garden in Rhode Island, to a caramel and cheese operation in Vermont. The development of the guides was further enhanced through interviews with five veteran agritourism operators in Vermont, who answered questions about what they wish they had known at the outset of their business, their greatest successes as an agritourism business operator, and the marketing strategies that have proven successful for them. An inventory of current agritourism resources was completed with support from a farmer. Two farmers provided in-depth comments on existing Best Practices in Agritourism Resources, highlighting several opportunities to update and augment the information to optimize the utility of the guides. In addition, we have developed a template for the case study that is being used by UVM and OSU.
2. *Workshops on agritourism and value-added enterprises.* See list of workshops below. We organized one workshop in Vermont and three in Oregon this quarter. Also, a series of five farm tours was conducted in New York City 9/16 - 9/18. Tours were coordinated, hosted, and marketed by project partner, the Farm-Based Education Network. The tours were attended by 9 individuals, who came from the greater New York Area. They focused on the ways the host sites have safely structured farm visits for a variety of audiences, and explored farm visits as a form of value-added agriculture. We anticipated another 10 individuals to attend, but due to weather and other obligations, we had more cancellations than anticipated. The Best Practices in Agritourism project status was shared with all who signed up for the workshop, whether they attended or not.
3. *Presentations at national conferences to share the best practices guide and VAPG program with producers and with agricultural service providers.* We are preparing a presentation on agritourism trails and a poster on a conceptual framework for agritourism for the First World Congress on Agritourism, which will take place November 7-9 in Italy. This will be an opportunity to share tools and resources for agritourism and value-added enterprises with an international audience, and also to learn from 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 7 farms in the Northeast.



Workshops:

- 1) Food Safety for Farms Open to Visitors. Cedar Circle Farm, Thetford, Vermont, August 9, 2018. 21 participants.
- 2) Farm-Based Education Network Fall Learning Journey - New York City; September 16 - 18, 2018. 9 participants.
- 3) Training in August in Salem, Oregon, with subject: Getting your farm ready for visitors. Only one farmer attended.
- 4) Agritourism networking and demonstration training event on an agritourism operation in Gervais, Oregon, and had 10 farmers attend.
- 5) Collaborated with Oregon Agritourism Partnership to plan an agritourism educational tour for community leaders.

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 3 was 21%.

July Articles:

Corn Use for Ethanol in 2018/2019 Updated Down, More Sorghum for Ethanol Expected

EPA Proposes 2019 RVOs; Fails to Address Volumes Lost by Small Refiner Exemptions

Feature of the Month

Prices and Profitability Models

August Articles:

U.S. Ethanol Export Record Volume through June 2018 Helping Increased Ethanol Production

Ethanol Profitability Potential: Positive Operating Margins during January – August 2018

Feature of the Month

Prices and Profitability Models



September Articles:

Impacts of EPA's Small Refinery Exemption Program on the U.S. Ethanol Market

Ethanol and Biodiesel Top Contributors to Oregon's Clean Fuels Program

Feature of the Month

Prices and Profitability Models

University of Minnesota Food Industry Center

We did not have any commodity updates to do. We will meet with University of Minnesota Crookston on the subcontract from Iowa State to coordinate their digital content with ours in winter 2019.

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. Moving forward, Elizabeth Wilts, is going to continue to work on the database using some social media to reach out to VAPG recipients to learn more about the job creation aspects. We are 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. We have planned and created November 2018 meetings in Minnesota and the Pacific Northwest (Idaho, Oregon, Washington State) and January 2019 meetings in California, Minnesota, and South Dakota.

Community Food Systems, Iowa State University

The Community Food Systems program currently has 70 individuals in the online Local Food Leader curriculum.

Three modules for the Community Food Systems online modules have been completed, and due to change in the curriculum the platform will now launch in January. This is ideal because all 10 pilots will have gone through the in-person workshop in January, and thus, will receive access to the online modules at the same time.



Local Food Leader has been offered in 4 states: Iowa (February 7) with 30 participants, North Carolina (March 21) with 11 participants and Texas (May 21) with 40 participants, and Alaska (August X) with 24 participants. A total of 70 participants have enrolled in the online modules to complete certification. All states will have access to Local Food Leader by January. Each state cohort receives 4 months for completion. Edits to the curriculum will occur in June of 2018.

In addition, new connections to other regional trainings have been discussed. Also, discussions with state hosts has led to the potential to create more place-based programming for specific cohorts.

Community Food Systems has been offered in 6 states: 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, and Nebraska (September 28-29) with 21 participants. As mentioned, online modules for this program will launch January 2019. The certifications now include: Full, facilitator, assessor, feasibility technical assistance, and economic impact technical assistance. Due to changes in the certification, we now have 6 modules available:

- Community Food Systems Framework
- Collective Thinking
- Community Food Systems Assessment
- Project Implementation
- Feasibility Studies
- Economic Impact Analysis

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:

- Rowe Ridge Vineyard & Winery
- Garry's Berries
- White Tail Run Winery
- Green Dirt Farm
- Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative
- Three Brothers Farm
- Sassy Cow Creamery

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- Robinette Farms
- Gretta's Goats
- The Cider Farm
- Wisconsin Hop Exchange
- Heartland Nuts N'More

All videos can be viewed at:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDsV3k7fXdKj1faJQPHvxcg/videos?view_as=subscriber.