

# Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Special Funding Report – July 2016

As a condition of its USDA Rural Development grant, the cooperating universities comprising AgMRC were tasked to prepare a report a year and submit them to USDA. This report summarizes the activities completed.



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## *Goal 1. Website Support/Enhancements.*

Because the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center is essentially, an online resource for producers and service providers, it is critically important that the site maintain a high-level, high-quality virtual presence to continue serving clients in the most efficient and user-friendly experience possible.

To that end, AgMRC has completed its goal of migrating to a mobile response platform for the website. A responsive website automatically changes to fit the device it is being read on.

Typically there have been four general screen sizes that responsive design has been aimed at: the widescreen desktop monitor, the smaller desktop (or laptop), the tablet and the mobile phone.

AgMRC is undergoing programming work now to highlight USDA market data for various crops directly on AgMRC. This will allow clients to look at base prices when determining their own.

## *Goal 2. Subcontract with Riverside Research.*

The subcontract with Riverside Research was established to expand the research of both MarketMaker and AgMRC respectively. MarketMaker is transitioning to a new contractor. The goals under the new contract will be to revamp the entire beef portal to include the entire supply chain – from transportation, to seedstock, to service suppliers, to packers, etc.

## 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](http://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.



### *Goal 3. AgMRC Renewable Energy Report.*

The Renewable Fuels Monthly Report is now being produced as a partnership between the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center operated by the Value Added Agriculture Program at Iowa State Extension and Outreach (ISUEO), the [Iowa Grain Quality Initiative](#) (IGQI), an ISUEO program directed specifically at grain processing and handling, and is authored by [Decision Innovation Solutions](#), LLC, an economic research and analysis firm located in Urbandale, Iowa.

The previous primary authors of the newsletter were Don Hofstrand and Bob Wisner, two very knowledgeable, well-known individuals from Iowa State University.

So who is DIS? Decision Innovation Solutions was founded in 2007 by Sterling Liddell and Spencer Parkinson, and is an economic research and analysis firm based in Urbandale, Iowa. All members of the DIS team have educational and practical experience in agriculture, as well as practical experience in the renewable energy industry. By our nature, DIS has extensive experience in communicating technical information to our clients and their stakeholders. Please visit the following links for more evergreen background on the company:

- Website: [www.decision-innovation.com](http://www.decision-innovation.com)
- Blog: <http://decision-innovation.typepad.com/solutions/>
- Bios: <http://www.decision-innovation.com/about-us/bios.aspx>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Decision-Innovation-Solutions/134714986542002?ref=hl>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/decision-innovation-solutions>

### *Goal 4. Subcontract with Minnesota.*

AgMRC has a subcontract with the University of Minnesota, under the direction of Dr. Mike Boland. Dr. Boland is identifying and interviewing former VAPG recipients to assess how effective the program has been in building their business.

### *Goal 5. Focus on Feasibility Project.*

AgMRC will be piloting a Focus on the Feasibility project for 2016-2017. In an effort to improve value added producer grant applications, AgMRC staff will be conducting in-depth workshops to train service providers on how to conduct feasibility studies of projects in their regions. AgMRC staff will go through methodology, how to perform a desk audit, how to draw information from clients, important questions to ask and how to perform an in-depth analysis.

## Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

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To date, three regions have been identified. The southeast regional workshop will be held in Arkansas, under the direction of Ron Rainey, extension economist and co-director of the Southern Risk Management Education Center. An upper Midwest workshop will be held in the Wisconsin/Michigan area and a third workshop will be held in southern California.