

# Agricultural Marketing Resource Center

Quarterly Report – January – March 2014

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 visits per day to the AgMRC website was 5,851, up from 5,807 per day last quarter, while the average number of pageviews per day was 21,851, up from 22,031 per day last quarter.

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

1. Fruits
2. Livestock
3. Grains and Oilseeds

During this quarter, the AgMRC Blog had 59,435 visitors, who opened a collective 158,205 pages and spent an average time of 2 minutes and 51 seconds.

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

The Renewable Energy and Climate Change 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. Inquiries on these dynamic tools, updated monthly, were received from the following this quarter:

1. Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine, Mississippi State University
2. Business and Energy, Notre Dame
3. Results thru Strategy

## *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.



#### 4. USDA, ERS

These tools are distributed bi-monthly through the AgMRC Renewable Energy & Climate Change newsletter, with approximately 3,000 subscribers. Issues went out for January/February and March/April. In addition to the profitability tools and pricing models, articles included, “Biodiesel Developments and Concerns,” “Can We Meet the World’s Growing Demand for Food?” “Ethanol, Gasoline, Crude Oil and Corn Prices: Are the Relationships Changing?” and “Corn Revenue, Costs and Returns, Trends and Implications for Ethanol Profitability.”

A new graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies at Iowa State University was hired for the semester to continue developing new curriculum files for the AgMRC Curriculum section. Twenty-six additional lessons/worksheets were added during the quarter. Outreach focused on the curriculum section has been planned, including individual contacts at the National FFA Organization, a booth at the national conference for vocational agriculture instructors and new linkages on websites specific to FFA curriculum for instructors.

Mike Boland, University of Minnesota, began a project to update analysis of the Value Added Producer Grant Program (jobs created, products, etc.). He is updating the 2001 to 2005 study to include the 2001 to 2011 time period. A database of recipients was created and analysis has started. Boland received data from USDA through 2011 and worked with the agency to refine the analysis and add new questions to it. Information related to the industry is available for almost 90 percent of each recipient. Interviews are being conducted to determine the stage in business development. The final report was reviewed and submitted on November 1.

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

AgMRC staff researched and responded to 54 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 aquaculture, industrial hemp, organic eggs and chickens and aronia hybrids.

As of March 31, AgMRC staff reported receiving 72 toll-free phone inquiries from 6 different states.



AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had the following 10 posts, which were seen by more than 740 people.

Staff members at the University of Minnesota worked with VAPG recipients and business development members in Minnesota, North Dakota, Kansas, California, and Wisconsin (twice).

Staff members in Iowa attended the following trade shows and/or spoke at the following events on AgMRC:

Advanced Business Planning for Beef Production Class	January 15	Ray Hansen
Iowa Organic Association	January 17	Margaret Smith
Practical Farmers of Iowa Conference	January 23-25	Margaret Smith
Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference	January 23-24	Linda Naeve, Marsha Laux
USDA Outlook Forum	February 20-21	Ray Hansen
Midwest Aronia Association Conference	February 27-28	Craig Tordsen
Iowa State University Extension Annual Conference	March 11-12	Ray Hansen, Madeline Schultz, Dan Burden, Connie Hardy, Craig Tordsen
Risk Management Education Meeting	March 30-31	Marsha Laux