



Agriculture and Natural Resources Southeast Iowa

January 2009

Extension Agriculture Specialists, representing Iowa State University and serving the 23 counties in Southeast Iowa, build partnerships and provide research-based learning opportunities to improve the quality of life in Iowa.



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Bioeconomy Community Conversation II: Food, Feed, Fuel

During November 2008, the 23 counties in Southeast Iowa took part in a statewide initiative spearheaded by Iowa State University Extension to help Iowans understand the facts regarding the state's role in meeting national demands for food, feed and fuel. Participants in each county viewed one or more research-based webcasts exploring the following topics: Food and Fuel: Enough Grain but Not Enough Processing; Iowa's Position in Global Agriculture and Bioenergy; Factors that Determine the Cost of Food; Rising Energy and Food Prices: Effects on Families; Renewable Energy's Place in the High Energy Cost Picture; and From Vulnerability to Resiliency: Iowa Agriculture in the Age of Biorenewables.

What resulted were passionate and relevant discussions among the community leaders, livestock and grain producers, elected officials and citizens gathered. Each conversation assumed its own identity, largely dependent on the topics that were discussed. One county identified the need for a solid long range plan that outlines where we are going in renewable fuels. Another appreciated that low income individuals were included in the discussion about rising energy and food prices and their impact on families. In a discussion about Iowa agriculture, it was mentioned that more terraces and tiling are going into land to both increase productivity and provide conservation, but increased revenue means increased investment by farmers. Others were glad ISU Extension could dispel some myths relating to the connection between the cost of corn and food prices. Notes from each conversation have since been reported for qualitative analysis and a final report will be shared with stakeholder participants and the media.

Livestock Animal Welfare Enlightenment

Iowa State University Extension Livestock Specialists are engaged in providing welfare information to producers through various livestock Extension programs. Meat packers require pork producers to have Pork Quality Assured (PQA Plus™) certification in order to market their animals. During the ISU Extension sponsored PQA Plus training, animal welfare is discussed extensively along with the requirements to meet the welfare standards of a farm assessment. Youth must also obtain a Food Safety and Quality Assurance (FSQA) certification to exhibit their animals at most county fairs and ensure their understanding of proper care for animals. During the past year, ISU Extension Livestock Specialists and Swine Specialists have certified over 250 adult producers as PQA Plus™ in Southeast Iowa. Additionally, over 1,500 youth have received FSQA certification.



SE Iowa Ag Extension Specialists Deliver

A New Perspective on Food Safety: West Liberty Foods Shares Their Food Safety Program

Forty-eight participants, representing 26 companies in the food industry recently attended a two-day conference at Iowa State University to learn about cutting edge practices in food safety as guests of West Liberty Foods, LLC. During the program West Liberty Foods shared the details of their award winning food safety program which was developed in partnership with Iowa State University Extension. The company's president and CEO, Ed Garrett, stated, "At West Liberty Foods, we do not consider food safety information proprietary and we are happy to share with others food safety techniques and programs that have been successful for us." Among the 48 attendees were industry representatives from USDA/FSIS, ISU Extension, Iowa Meat and Poultry Inspection and the media.

The training program has been a collaborative effort of Iowa State University, ISU Extension and West Liberty Foods for the past 6 years. Over this time frame, West Liberty Foods' employees have participated in this highly successful food safety training program—bridging the gap between the classroom, research and industry studies, and perspectives of food safety in the workplace. Conference participants had the opportunity to experience selected training modules and activities—including an allergens training module, using new technology (Turning Point clickers), hand washing demonstrations, cross contamination and sanitation presentations, as well as real-life industry case studies.

ISU Extension Ag and Natural Resources: Disaster Relief Response

- As the potential for flooding escalated, Extension Ag professionals were actively involved in animal relocation—communicating with commodity organizations and producers to find available, acceptable housing with appropriate animal care.
- Extension Livestock Specialists assessed quantity and quality of forage feedstuffs available to supplement ruminants (beef cows, dairy, goats and sheep) by contacting potential growers and suppliers throughout Southeast Iowa and Western Illinois.
- An ISU Extension disaster web page (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/disasterrecovery/>) was developed by Extension field and campus staff to provide pertinent information regarding broad-scoped disaster relief topics including livestock and forage fact sheets.
- Area ANR Specialists participated in six area flood meetings, reaching over 180 attendees. These programs were designed to inform producers of resources currently available to address disaster impacts. Additionally, due to the specialization of many modern farming operations, Extension Ag professionals provided one-on-one consultation assistance as disaster decisions were explored and finalized.
- ISU Ag Extension purchased 30 moisture meters in early July that were distributed for checkout to Extension Offices in 9 Eastern Iowa counties hardest hit by the flooding. Information sheets were also provided on use of the meters as well as the safe moisture content of building materials before reconstruction should start. Over 550 locations were checked for moisture levels for adequate drying before rebuilding.

Selected 2009 Southeast Iowa Educational Opportunities

Crop Advantage Series 2009

January 21 – Ottumwa

Fed Cattle Marketing Strategies

January 27 - Keystone

Weather, Grain, Livestock Outlook

January 28 - Hills

2009 Overall Women Conference

January 29-30 – Bettendorf

Fed Cattle Marketing Strategies

February 3 - Welton

Cornbelt Cow-Calf Conference

February 28 – Ottumwa

For information about these and other agriculture and natural resources programs, visit

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/>

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Helping Iowans become their best.

January 2009

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Our Mission - ISU Extension builds partnerships and provides research-based learning opportunities to improve quality of life in Iowa.