

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

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ANR NEWS

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This electronic newsletter from Extension to Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) is sent monthly to ANR faculty, field specialists, program staff, and all CEEDs. It is intended to provide current information regarding ANR administration and programs. Please let us know of topics you would like addressed.

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JERRY'S COMMENTS

During the many years that I have been associated with ISU Extension and ANR Extension I have had the opportunity to observe how rapidly Extension colleagues can respond to emergency situations when Iowans are experiencing difficulties resulting from floods, tornadoes, droughts, blizzards, and other natural occurring events. The multiple responses by ISU Extension faculty and staff to the 2008 floods were no exception. My congratulations to each of you for your willingness to adjust your on-going priorities and respond to the needs of fellow Iowans.

Unfortunately, the effort required by ISUE is not complete. Many Iowans are still very much involved in the recovery phase. And ANR Extension faculty and staff are involved in this effort.

In addition to the ISUE Disaster Recovery web site <

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/disasterrecovery/>> there are several ANR Extension web sites

that have flood recovery information. These include Ag Decision Maker <

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/homepage.html>> and Integrated Crop Management News < <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/CropNews>>. Also, ISU Extension is linked under "Resources" to the Governor's web site posted at < <http://flood2008.iowa.gov/index.php?topic=resources>>.

The ANR Extension plans-of-work for 2009-2013 are now posted at < <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/staff/homepage.html>> Each POW was updated during the past quarter by the respective executive committee and chair/co-chair of the committee. In addition, the 2007 ISU Extension annual report is now posted on the same web page. This report was submitted to USDA CSREES. A lot of time and effort is invested in these annual updates and reports. Thank you for those who allocated the time and work to ensure that ANR Extension's plans and reports are of high quality and complete.

LIVING WITH HIGHER FEED PRICES

The most recent issue of the Iowa Farm Outlook addresses the issue of increasing pork production costs, specifically those related to feed inputs. The headline article includes acknowledgements and suggestions from ISU Extension livestock economist John Lawrence on how producers can adapt their business management strategies for survival even in these times of high feed costs. Recognizing risks and focusing on the margin between revenue and costs rather than simply prices are options. Because grain prices are volatile and weather-sensitive, Lawrence suggests that it might be wise to be more cautious. Some possibilities: futures, options, forward contracts and livestock insurance products. You can read the entire newsletter here <http://snipr.com/2yfew>

DIRECT OBSERVATION USEFUL AFTER FLOODING by Sorrel Brown

Here's a reminder of another approach to evaluation that can provide valuable information as we deal with the aftermath of flooding. When asking questions isn't appropriate, direct observation is especially helpful in documenting activities, behavior and physical aspects. In these times of hardship from flooding, you can't depend on people's willingness or ability to respond to questions, and you don't have the time to ask them. But observation is useful to understand ongoing behavior, processes, events, reactions, physical settings, or an unfolding situation. Observing whether people and businesses are applying procedures related to flood conditions as recommended by Extension can result in benchmark data and/or outcomes, both of which can be valuable in assessing the usefulness of these procedures. The information you capture using direct observation (field notes, photos, recordings) can be objective (how much time before a business resumes operations) as well as subjective (anxiety or frustration levels). Remember, as your observations are unobtrusive, keep in mind that neither the observation nor any resulting accounts negatively reflect on the people observed.

HART NAMED NEW GRAIN MARKETING ECONOMIST AT IOWA STATE

When it comes to information about the grain markets, there's a new kid on the block. Beginning Aug. 1, Chad Hart will pick up many of the responsibilities of Robert Wisner, who provided

grain marketing information and advice to Iowa producers for more than 40 years before his retirement in December 2007. Hart has been an agricultural economist with Iowa State's Center for Agricultural and Rural Development. More:

http://www.ag.iastate.edu/aginfo/news_detail.php?var1=658

FARMLAND LEASING WORKSHOPS TO BE HELD IN JULY AND AUGUST

ISU Extension farm management specialists are offering 47 farmland leasing workshops in July and August. The workshops are designed to assist landowners, tenants, and other agri-business professionals with issues related to farmland ownership, management, and leasing agreements. Each workshop attendee will receive a set of useful materials about farm leasing arrangements. Topics covered include:

- Cash Rental Rate Survey and Land Values Survey
- Comparison of different types of leases
- Lease termination
- Impacts of yields and prices
- Calculating a fair cash rent
- Use of spreadsheets to compare leases
- Available Internet resources

A listing of scheduled dates, times, and locations is available at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/info/meetings.html>

ICM NEWS GAINING MOMENTUM

The new Integrated Crop Management (ICM) News is proving to be a boon to Iowa farmers and agribusiness service providers as they look for advice on how to deal with this year's unusual crop growing conditions. Nearly 12,000 readers visited the web site in June, with nearly 54,000 pages viewed. Those numbers compare with about 3,500 print and web-based subscribers last year. Since mid-March, faculty and staff have published over 125 articles on crop production and protection issues.

ICM News is available at no charge to anyone with computer access to the World Wide Web, and it is widely used by farm operators, agribusiness service providers, and others who follow production agriculture. Readers are invited to request an electronic subscription to ICM News, which allows them to receive an e-mail notification once a day or once a week that summarizes new information that has become available, with links to complete articles. The articles also are available without a subscription to anyone who visits ICM News on the web site at:

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

IOWA SCHOOLS FAIL TO MEET AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY'S NEEDS

Iowa schools are not doing enough to help students learn about and become involved in careers in agricultural and life sciences, according to a review of educational programs by the Governor's Council on Agricultural Education.

"Most middle school and high school students have no knowledge of the food, fiber and natural resource industry in this state, let alone the huge number of careers available," said Robert Martin, chair of the council who is a professor and chair of the Department of Agricultural Education and Studies at Iowa State. More:

http://www.ag.iastate.edu/aginfo/news_detail.php?var1=655

WHAT IS A SMALL FARM?

What makes a farm a small farm? Acreage? Capitalization? Ecological footprint? The answer can be quite subjective, but the USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) has settled upon dollar volume of annual agricultural sales as their main criterion. In the past, the ERS used \$50,000 in agricultural sales as the dividing line between a small farm and a large farm. Today, the ERS has an eight-part typology with five types of "small family farms," all having less than \$250,000 in agricultural sales:

Small Family Farms

1. "Limited-resource farms" have sales under \$100,000 and operator household income below both the poverty level and half the county median.
2. "Retirement farms" have operators that report being retired.
3. "Residential/lifestyle farms" have operators who report a major occupation other than farming.
4. "Farming occupation – low sales" have operators that report farming as their primary occupation, but still have sales under \$100,000 annually.
5. "Farming occupation – high sales" have operators that report farming as their primary occupation and report \$100,000 to \$249,999 in annual agricultural sales.

Other Family Farms

6. "Large family farms" report \$250,000 to \$499,999 in annual agricultural sales.
7. "Very large family farms" report sales of \$500,000 or more.

Nonfamily Farms

8. "Nonfamily farms" are organized as nonfamily corporations or cooperatives, or are operated by hired managers.

NEW RESEARCH VIDEO ON THE WEB

"Harvesting Wood as a Biofuel" is the latest research video to appear on the College's web site. Rick Hall, forestry professor and new interim chair of the natural resource ecology and

management department, researches the selection of genetically improved cottonwoods, aspens and other tree species for use in the biofuels and new products. More:
<http://www.ag.iastate.edu/research/videos/?id=3>

ISU EXTENSION PROGRAM IN SMALL FARM SUSTAINABILITY

The ISU Extension Program in Small Farm Sustainability will concentrate on providing educational opportunities and information grounded in research-based science to entrepreneurs who really want to make a business venture of living and working on a small farm. Within the ERS typology above, it seems likely that most of the clientele will fall into the “residential/lifestyle farms” and “farming occupation” categories. However, the terminology may be a bit misleading. Instead of simply making a home in the country, residential/lifestyle farmers may want to grow a legitimate business. They might be raising free-range poultry for retail meat sales or vegetables for farmers markets rather than just for home consumption. The occupational group of farmers may establish new enterprises, beyond conventional crops and livestock, to bring a son or daughter into the business.

The program in Small Farm Sustainability will serve those with what most would consider smaller holdings and diversified operations. They may be growing horticultural crops or grass-finishing cattle for direct-market sales, or other food and agricultural ventures that will extend Iowa’s agricultural leadership into the local foods arena.

Objectives of the program will be to:

- Facilitate development and improve viability of small, diversified farm businesses
- Coordinate educational tools to improve small farm planning and decision-making
- Advance interdisciplinary food and farming systems research, outreach, and leadership
- Enhance ecological and operational sustainability on the Iowa small farm landscape

If you would like to know more about the ISU Extension program in Small Farm Sustainability, please contact Andy Larson at 515-294-6038 or allarso1@iastate.edu.

CARD TO HELP FARMERS WITH NEW FARM BILL PROGRAM

Analysis by researchers at the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) at Iowa State suggests most U.S. farmers will find Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) much more attractive than current commodity programs. ACRE is a new commodity program included in the 2008 farm bill. More: http://www.ag.iastate.edu/aginfo/news_detail.php?var1=656

LEOPOLD CENTER SEEKS PROJECT IDEAS FOR 2009

Ideas for projects that will lead to sustainability in agriculture are being sought by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Each of the Center's three initiative areas -- ecology, marketing and food systems, and policy -- is looking for innovative new projects to enhance the long-running competitive grants program at the Leopold Center. More:

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/newsreleases/2008/061908_rfp.html

The competitive grants program is outlined in a webcast featuring Rich Pirog, Associate Director of the Leopold Center. The webcast is archived at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/staff/lunchandlearn.html>

SWINE NUTRITIONIST JOINS IOWA STATE FACULTY

An expert in swine nutrition will join the Iowa State Department of Animal Science Sept. 1. John Patience will focus on current nutritional issues for the swine and feed industry. The Iowa Pork Producers Association is providing \$100,000 in funds to support the position. Details:

http://www.ag.iastate.edu/aginfo/news_detail.php?var1=645

NEW WEB SITE HIGHLIGHTS SCIENCE OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture has developed a Web site that summarizes findings from more than 70 peer-reviewed, scientific articles about organic agriculture. The site organizes the research findings by topic, from animal health and welfare issues to information about poultry, meat, grains and fruit and vegetables. More:

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/newsreleases/2008/071008_organic.html

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Iowa Watershed Improvement Projects

Funds of up to \$500,000 per project are available to local watershed improvement committees, soil and water conservation districts, public water supply utilities, county conservation boards and cities.

Extension specialists and staff may want to assist local groups develop project ideas and applications.

The link to the Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board information is:

<http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/IWIRB/iwirbRFA.asp>

DEADLINE: August 1, 2008

Biodiesel Fuel Education Program, CSREES, USDA

PURPOSE: to balance the positive environmental, social and human health impacts of biodiesel utilization with the increased per gallon cost to the user.

Applications are invited for Biodiesel Education projects that will develop practical indicators or milestones to measure progress towards achieving several objectives. Guidelines are available at: <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/biodieselfueleducationprogram.cfm>

DEADLINE: August 8, 2008

EPA Dedicated Water Quality Program, EPA Region 7

PURPOSE: to improve the capacity of Region 7 states to effectively and efficiently assess Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) capacities for impaired water bodies through the region.

Activities should relate to gathering or transferring information, or advancing the state of knowledge, and accelerating program development for improving water quality in Region 7. About 10 awards are expected in the range of \$10,000 to \$90,000. There is no matching requirement. Guidelines are available at:

http://www.epa.gov/region07/economics/r7_grant_opportunities.htm

DEADLINE: August 29, 2008

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Conservation Education Program, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

PURPOSE: to teach people of all ages about their environment and how to make intelligent, informed decisions to protect the environment.

Projects are generally one year in length. Funded projects provide curricula, program materials, educator stipends, and other methods to increase environmental awareness and understanding of stewardship, and to enhance natural resources. Grants range from \$2,500 to \$50,000, with most awards under \$25,000. Matching funds are not required but are encouraged. In 2007, REAP funds provided about one-fourth of total project costs for the awards given. Guidelines are available at:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/reap/cep.html>

DEADLINE: Grant applications are reviewed two times annually. Applications must be emailed by November 1 to be eligible for funding.

SELECTED CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July-September: 2008 Research and Demonstration Farm Field Days.

<http://www.ag.iastate.edu/farms/fielddays.php>

July 21-22: Crop Diagnostic School, Field Extension Education Laboratory (FEEL), Ames.

<http://www.aep.iastate.edu/feel/cdc.html>

July 30-31: 2nd Annual Iowa Women in Ag Conference, Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, Riverside. <http://www.iowawomeninag.org/>

August 5: Soybean Cyst Nematode Clinic, Field Extension Education Laboratory (Feel), Ames. <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/feel/scn.html>

August 11-21: Seed Science Workshops, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Seed Science Center, ISU Campus. <http://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/seedscience/home.html>

August 7-17: Iowa State Fair, Des Moines. <http://www.iowastatefair.com/>

August 26-28: Farm Progress Show, Boone. <http://www.farmprogressshow.com>

September 5-6: Aronia Berry Festival, Sawmill Hollow Organic Farm, Missouri Valley. For more information, contact Dr. Eldon Everhart, everhart@iastate.edu, 712-249-3868.

September 7-9: Growing the Bioeconomy – 2008 Biobased Industry Outlook Conference, Iowa State Center, Ames. www.bioeconomyconference.org

ISUE Calendar of Events website: <http://dbs.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/>

ANR FIELD & STATE STAFF DIRECTORY UPDATE

The ANR Field & State Staff directory has been revised and is available at:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/contacts.html>

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Publisher: Gerald Miller
Managing Editor: Paul Brown
Editor: Julie Honeick