Eastern Iowa Agriculture & Natural Resources News

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Agriculture specialists, in partnership with Iowa State University and counties in the Southeast Iowa area, build partnerships and provide research-based learning opportunities to improve the quality of life in Iowa.

HERBICIDE-RESISTANT WEED MANAGEMENT

Herbicide resistance costs farmers over $60 per acre per year, according to the USDA Economic Research Service Economic Research Report 184, page 21, published in April 2015. Unfortunately, several fields in eastern and southern Iowa have developed herbicide-resistant weed populations. In tight economic times, farmers cannot afford this loss, so managing weeds to prevent or delay herbicide resistance development is imperative.

To address this issue, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach conducted a series of workshops across Iowa in early August 2015. Twenty-nine farmers, dealers, crop consultants, and Department of Transportation employees attended the meeting at the Southeast Research and Demonstration farm near Crawfordsville. The farmers, dealers, and crop consultants represented just under a half million row crop acres. While it is too soon to have data about actual changes in weed management practices for 2016 since the crop has not yet been planted, participants recorded an improved ability to properly identify weeds, select herbicides effective on those weeds, use effective herbicide rates, and manage the weeds in a manner minimizing the potential for the development of herbicide resistance on their after-meeting evaluation.

If this meeting prevents herbicide resistance development on each of the approximately 500,000 acres represented at the meeting, the impact will be over $27,000,000 in improved farm profits annually. Similar events are scheduled for the week of July 18-22, 2016.

Learn more about the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Crops Team: crops.extension.iastate.edu.

DEVELOPING NEW FARMERS

Young and beginning farmers face many hurdles in entering the agricultural industry and growing their farm operations. Financial constraints, time limitations and communications skills often complicate the growth and asset transition plans of young farmers and farm families. Beginning farmers are also unique in their collective organization, family structures and goals. Yet they need education, skills and experiences to help them sustainably and profitably grow their operations. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, 28 percent Iowa’s farmers are over age 65 and there are four times more farmers over 65 than under 35 years of age.
DEVELOPING NEW FARMERS (continued)

Through a new USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program grant, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is responding to the needs of young and beginning farmers by developing an educational program titled “Roads to Successful Farm Succession.” The program will help retiring farmers find opportunities for successful farm business succession and new farm business startups within their families or with unrelated parties. The outreach effort will support beginning and retiring farmers as well as military veterans interested in farming. Iowa State's award is $698,393 for the three-year program. Several Iowa commodity and community partners including the Farmer Veteran Coalition are also involved in the project.

CORNBELT COW-CALF CONFERENCE

The Cornbelt Cow-Calf Conference has provided timely, accurate and important information to the state’s beef cattle industry for more than 45 years. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach beef program specialist Patrick Wall spearheads the educational forum held the final Saturday in January in Ottumwa.

The 2016 program targeted a variety of topics designed to help producers of all ages and production goals; nearly 800 attended the event. Senator Joni Ernst kicked off the morning with an informal ag policy discussion with a Q&A. Michael Dolch, Special Assistant for Agriculture to Ernst, dove deeper into key areas of the WOTUS rule and its potential impact on beef producers. Mike Pearson from Iowa Public Television's Market to Market gave his take on the current and future outlook of the beef market. Dr. Jesse Randall, Iowa State University Forester, helped attendees understand the value of timber in a pasture and how to effectively manage and market it to area buyers.

Other highlights included a panel discussion from two order buyers of feeder cattle in southeast Iowa. Mike Keuning, Monroe, Iowa, and Mark Herboldt, Albia, Iowa, outlined what they desire to buy from Iowa’s cow-calf sector. Karl Dallefeld, Prairie Creek Seed, laid out several practical options for cover crops that can be used in a haying or grazing system. On the flip side, John McGrath, Amana Farms, talked about the cover crops and alternative feeds they have already implemented into their beef enterprise. Zoetis graciously sponsored Dr. Mike Wells to offer insight to the upcoming Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) rules set to take place next year. John Whitaker from the Farm Service Agency described the features and potential opportunities of the new CRP Grasslands program. Finally, Jeff Lutz, Missouri cow-calf producer shared his challenges battling EHD in his cow herd as well as fescue management for fall calving herds.

For more information about the Iowa Beef Center, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org.