



Report to the Citizens of Northwest Iowa Agriculture

Agricultural Field Specialists in Extension, in partnership with Iowa State University, provide education and information to help the people of Northwest Iowa become the best.

Please let us know how we can better serve you.

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Our Mission

Iowa State University Extension builds partnerships and provides research-based learning opportunities to improve quality of life in Iowa. We believe in quality, access, diversity, and accountability. We are dedicated to engagement, entrepreneurship, and local presence.

Extension Field Specialists are involved in issues that matter

Cow-Calf Producer Education

By Beth Doran, ISU Extension Beef Field Specialist

Cow-calf producers entered January, 2004 with a number of issues facing them. Lack of rain in 2003 and overgrazing had depleted the root reserves of pasture forages. Hay production was less than normal. Forced to feed stored feeds, producers were inquiring about alternative feeds such as ethanol co-products.

ISU Extension offered two cow-calf meetings at Mapleton and at Marcus. Joel DeJong and Todd Vagts, ISU Extension Crops Field Specialists, presented pasture management information. Beth Doran, ISU Extension Beef Field Specialist, used the BRANDS program to demonstrate how producers might use wet distillers grain and condensed distillers solubles in cow rations. Two local veterinarians, Dr. Steve Sulsberger - Mapleton Veterinary Clinic, and Dr. Bruce Tabke - Marcus Veterinary Clinic, visited about herd health, emphasizing BSE.

When asked about the overall impact of the meetings, the responses were as follows: 31% improved the carrying capacity of their pastures; 69% reduced their cowherd feed cost; 46% improve the health of the cowherd; 31% shared information from the program with others. Producers were asked how many dollars the meeting had added to the operational value of their cowherd. Responses ranged from less than \$100 to priceless.

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www.extension.iastate.edu

**ISU Extension to Agriculture and
Natural Resources**
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/>

Extension Field Specialists
[http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/
fs.html](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/fs.html)

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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.
12/01

Web Page Spreads Information About Aphid Outbreak
Todd Vagts, ISU Extension Crops Field Specialist

The soybean aphid (*Aphis glycines*) is a new pest to soybeans in Iowa and the United States. Following two years of isolated infestations across the upper Midwest, the aphid spread rapidly, in August of 2003, and heavily colonized soybean fields in the upper two-thirds of Iowa counties, causing widespread confusion over management strategies and ultimately resulting in yield and economic losses.

In order to develop a consistent message on management strategies, Todd Vagts developed a Web page to act as a clearing-house for information on the latest recommendations to manage the aphid outbreak. On this Web page, Vagts included management recommendations as well as photos of leaves with aphids (counted) to help crop scouts and producers estimate the number of aphids per leaf.

The soybean aphid web page was heavily utilized statewide and possibly into other areas of the upper mid-west region. The soybean aphid home web page was viewed 2,323 times from August to December of 2003 for a total viewing time of 9,575 minutes (160 hours). Other associated web pages with aphid pictures, aphid leaf counts and estimated yield set were viewed 3,320 times during the same time period for a total viewing time of 14,903 minutes (248 hours). A survey indicated that 80 percent of farmers that directly received notice and a Web link (via e-mail) to the soybean aphid Web page felt adequately informed about the soybean aphid, vs. only forty-five of farmers that did not directly receive the information.

Increasing Profits from Sheep and Goat Production
Dennis L. DeWitt, livestock field specialist

Many sheep and goat producers have off-farm employment, but still want to add value to their operation so they can have a profitable enterprise. Portable fencing, new energizers, proper grounding, improved grazing management, using non-traditional lambing system, and reduced lambing death loss will increase profits from the sheep and goat operation. Boer goat production is increasing due to increased demand for lean meat and changing consumer preferences in the U.S. and the world. The addition of the Boer goat herd to the traditional operation is adding value to agriculture.

Educational grant applications totaling \$1750 was secured from the Iowa Lamb and Wool Promotion Board and \$150 from the Northwest Iowa Sheep Producers to hold three lambing time management workshops, four Iowa Communications Network (ICN) programs at four locations and one sheep & goat for profit field day. The Internet has proven successful for providing education also.

One hundred ninety one men and women from Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa attended at least one of these educational opportunities. The producers indicated 12 and 16 new or different ideas that will be put into immediate practice. The actual cost of these workshops per producer was \$48 and according to the producers, if they apply the knowledge gained they would expect to increase income by \$165 or as a group \$2625.