Greetings from 132 Curtiss Hall. Summer is winding down. The cool weather in late August was a welcome relief, but also a reminder for the fall weather ahead. We won’t get the official count on student numbers for a few days, but the unofficial word is “about 36,000” at ISU, another new record. They, along with the rest of Cyclone Nation, are optimistic about the football team and curious about basketball season.

I think that attitude also describes Iowa farmers preparing for harvest. In most of the state they are optimistic about yields and curious about how and when the Farm Bill will kick in. I say most of the state as I know that farmers in southern Iowa had a very wet year that delayed or prevented plantings. Some of the crops that were planted look pretty rough.

In addition to weaker corn and soybean prices, hog and milk prices are significantly lower than a year ago. Feeder cattle prices are slightly lower than this time last year and will likely continue weaker through the fall. The reason feeder prices may be lower in spite of lower corn prices is that feedlots are posting losses in excess of $100 per head on cattle sold this summer. By some estimates cattle sold in August 2014 were making over $200 per head profit; a $300 swing. The market giveth and the market taketh away.

This flashback to my economist days is to highlight a recent USDA report that forecast net farm income will be 36% lower than it was in 2014. That income was already lower than income in 2013. This lower income will put stress on farm families and rural communities. We have been talking about this for well over a year. Rents and land values have weakened some and will decline further. Machinery sales have declined and prices have been weaker.

I am sure I wrote about this same topic and timeline last year, but we will repeat the cycle again, and it will likely impact more farmers. More stress will show up after harvest; yields will be known and estimates of the crop insurance and farm bill payments will become more apparent. Farmers will meet with their lenders from Thanksgiving through February to plan for 2016. Lenders that last year said they had one or two farmers of concern are now reporting “a few more.” It is not a crisis. Banks are still strong, but farmers and rural communities will feel the change in farm income.

At the risk of leaving out some of the great programming delivered this summer, I want to give a shout out to the Crops Team for a successful Weeds Week. I don’t think they had the numbers that Shark Week does, but they did have a powerful educational program targeted to both professional agronomists and farmers. They partnered with the ISU Research and Demonstration Farms and provided a hands-on learning experience at five locations across the state. The Iowa Beef Center has also been conducting grazing workshops for beginners through serious grazers this summer and fall. The Farm Management team held 82 farm leasing meetings across the state and the Horticulture team held an irrigation workshop and research farm field day. Considering the myth about extension work slowing down in the summer time, it has been a busy few months.
**Futuring ‘15 Update**
The Futuring ‘15 committee continues to meet monthly to gather and discuss information relevant to their challenge:

- Who will our clients be in 5-10 years and beyond?
- What will they expect from us?
- How will they receive information?
- What does that imply for us?

The committee wants more information about you and feedback on your career with ISU Extension and Outreach. You should have received a Qualtrics survey by email that was sent to ANR specialists and county-based staff with ANR responsibilities. If you fit those categories but didn’t receive the email please contact pgunn@iastate.edu. We are asking questions about where you are in your career and your plans for the future; your work responsibilities and how far you commute; and how you interact with clients and colleagues.

We also ask about your job satisfaction and why you feel the way you do. I hope that you will complete the survey and provide us your honest feedback. This information will help us plan for the future. As the committee proceeds and works on developing a report, we may be back to you for more input.

In addition to the survey of individuals, we have asked the POW Team Leaders to gather the teams’ perspectives to the questions above. You have already addressed these questions for your current clients and issues. What about 5-10 years from now? Watch the David Peters ANR at Noon webinar about farmer demographics and think about communication technology as you develop your response.

**Announcements**

NCR-SARE has several grant opportunities with Call for Preproposals now available:

- **Research and Education Grant Program.** Proposals are due October 22, 2015. [Word](#) | [PDF](#)
- **Partnership Grant Program.** Proposals are due October 29, 2015. [Word](#) | [PDF](#)
- **Youth Educator Grant Program.** Proposals are due November 12, 2015. [Word](#) | [PDF](#)
- **Farmer Rancher Grant Program.** Proposals are due December 3, 2015. [Word](#) | [PDF](#)

The Natural Resources and Environmental Stewardship POW team is hosting fall in-service training September 15-17 at Elings Hall (Ag and Biosystems Engineering) on campus. Topics of discussion will include Avian Influenza mortality management, crop quality, Food Safety Modernization Act rules, grain drying and management, bioreactor design, saturated buffers, setback distances, prairie STRIPS, Manure Applicator Certification, and drone cameras and software. The full agenda is available at [http://tinyurl.com/NRES-Sep-15](http://tinyurl.com/NRES-Sep-15).

Additional POW teams fall in-services scheduled:

- **Swine Team,** September 9-10 in Audubon
- **Crops Team,** September 15-17 at FEEL
- **Farm Management Team,** September 30 - October 2 at ISU Memorial Union
- **Beef Team,** October 28-29 on campus

**ANR Update**

**ANR at Noon:**

- September 25 - Water Quality Update presented by Jamie Benning
- Previous ANR at Noon presentations are archived and available at: [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/staff/anratnoon.html](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/staff/anratnoon.html)
Staff update:
- NWIA Farm Management, re-advertise for Program Specialist or Field Specialist.
- Extension Economist and Farm Management Specialist, Dr. Wendong Zhang

Extension Admin Update
- BBQ for the United Way, September 25 from 11:00 - 1:00 on the south patio of the 4-H building. Watch for details and bring a friend.
- Professional development opportunities [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/forstaff/profdev](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/forstaff/profdev)