Ag Decision Maker

How do you conduct needs assessment to plan the activity?
New files and publications are developed based on requests field and campus staff receive. These requests come from meetings or e-mails received from individuals. Ag Decision Maker is also used an outlet for information developed through grant and in response to farm and ag business issues that arise.

How is the educational material developed? Who develops it? How is it presented, archived, etc?
When a need arises for new materials, Economics and Farm Management Field Staff work together to develop materials. Materials may consist of Information Files (fact sheets), Decision Tools (spreadsheets), Teaching Aids, and Voiced Media (voiced presentations, videos, etc.). Material is reviewed by the group and if needed, other program leaders. This may include individuals with USDA FSA, NASS, Iowa Farm Bureau, etc. Newsletter topics are based on current issues or forthcoming issues in farm and agribusiness management.

With the help of Extension Communications, materials are reviewed and posted on the web on a monthly basis. Newsletter articles are archived on the web site. Information Files are posted on the web site and updated as needed. Most receive an annual update. When the Information File is updated all associated materials (Decision Tools, Teaching Aids) are updated or reviewed at this time as well.

How is promotion and recruitment handled?
Ag Decision Maker is promoted through Farm Management meetings and various conferences around the state. It is often cited in media publications such as Successful Farming and Farm Futures. A sign-up sheet for the e-mail list is provided at meetings or participants are directed to the web site for further information.

Are there partners? Who?
None officially, but we work closely with FSA, Farm Bureau, and other organizations when needed.

Are there additional resources needed? Grants, sponsors, registration, etc?
Sponsorship is available; sponsors receive monthly notification personalized for them to share with employees and clients. AgDM is often included in grants as an outreach component.

How many people are reached?
The AgDM web site receives an average of 2,500 visitors per day. Printed subscriptions are still available and sent to over 100 individuals. E-mail notification is sent to 5,800 individual e-mail addresses.

How is the activity evaluated?
Occasionally surveys through the web site. A link is posted on the web site for anyone to fill out as well as sent to our e-mail notification list. Take in requests from individuals at meetings, through e-mail, and through county offices.
What are the outcomes? Short-term? Longer-term?
Ag Decision Maker adds to the Farm Management resources available from ISU. Individuals find Ag Decision Maker when trying to find an unbiased source of information. Web site users who contact us have done some background research making the questions we receive more direct and not as much on general knowledge. It also is used to direct individuals to more information when they do make requests. Short term it saves staff time and helps address the needs of our clientele.

Learning - It gave me information when I needed it as I needed it; the updates on crop insurance help to understand the decisions our customers make; I use it to enrich my personal knowledge to be able to do my Extension job better.
Action - It helped us put together a management plan and cash flow that allowed client to refinance and avoid foreclosure; I'm using it today to try to figure out whether I should sign up for ACRE program.
Conditions - an invaluable tool; helped ag customers make decisions that affect the profitability of their operations; they are my cornerstone on unbiased ag info.