PROGRESS REPORT: Iowa Beginning and Young Livestock Producer Success Network

Objective
Develop a network of beginning and young livestock producer peer groups across the state to both educate and mentor. The peer group curricula will focus on both business management and production skills, but also will provide peer mentoring and social networking.

Funding Awarded $156,054 ($80,507 FY13 and $75,547 FY14)

Funds Expended to Date $10,306.18

Outcomes/Impact to Date
Many of the activities of this project have been delayed approximately six months due to demands by Extension staff for drought programming throughout the summer. The clientele also were impacted by drought issues and early harvest. Beginning mostly this fall several peer groups are in various stages of formation. Here is a brief overview of each group and ISU staff involved.

- **Northwest Iowa**—David Stender, Beth Doran, Kaye Strohbehn, Janelle Johnson, Cindy Gannon. The group had a kick-off event on November 29, which included a tour of Sioux-Preme Packing Co., a question and answer discussion, networking, and food. More than 20 young farmers attended. Iowa Farm Bureau has been a major partner and supporter. Beginning as an open, multi-specie group, discussion and surveys have led to a next event scheduled for February 11 to be held at Sioux Center Co-op with a feed mill tour and marketing discussion led Chad Hart.

- **Southwest Iowa**—Tim Eggers, Chris Clark, Kathy Rohrig, Shane Ellis. This group is a cow-calf focus. They are working with two young farmer Farm Bureau leaders in the region, the Iowa Cattlemen’s, and retired colleague Darrell Busby. As a steering team they are identifying topics of interest, potential tours, and educational opportunities as well as “not-so-well-known, but successful mentors.” An event at the Anita Veterinary Clinic is planned and will focus on heifer evaluation and development.

- **East Central Iowa**—Denise Schwab, Amber Matthiesen, Mark Schroeder, Ashley Sherrets, Greg Walston. Potentially two (East and West) multi-species groups will be developed. The west group consists of Tama, Benton, Black Hawk, and Buchanan counties. The county Farm Bureaus and Cattlemen’s Associations have been involved and the effort will core from a prior young cattlemen’s peer group. The east group involves counties from Linn to Clinton and is seeking additional leadership.

- **Northeast Iowa**—Kristen Schulte and Jennifer Bentley. A previously existing dairy peer group may expand beyond records and performance analysis to the group concept of education, social networking, and peer mentoring. There is also desire to start a different livestock group as well.

- **Southeast and South Central Iowa**—Potentially multi-county, cattle focused groups. Farm Bureau has suggested a Henry County core group of multi-specie.
• **North Central Iowa**—Margaret Smith, Russ Euken. Making contacts and some interest in startup of a niche production oriented peer group.

**Next Steps**
Specialists will continue to work with partners to develop groups, group activities, and local leadership. As groups develop, website and other communications activities will be updated.