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CLIPPINGS

A Weekly Column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

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For Immediate Release

Crop Advantage Meetings set for January

Joel DeJong, Field Agronomist

Recently I read an article stating that national net farm income will be 46 percent less than that really good year we had in 2013. As we know, this is creating challenges for many of our producers. I believe that one of the best things we can do to manage better in tough times is to learn more – so we can make better decisions. Many of the ag producers in Iowa continue to learn and make changes to improve their operations.

Annually, over 2,000 Iowans attend one of the 14 sessions offered across Iowa called the “ISU Extension and Outreach Crop Advantage Series.” Each location has a variety of topics -- cropping practices, pests, soil fertility and farm management -- which are selected by the local Field Agronomist for the crop producers in their own region.

Locations and dates of Northwest Iowa sessions include Jan. 4 in Sheldon, Jan. 5 at Okoboji, Jan. 10 in Storm Lake, Jan. 24 at Le Mars and Jan. 26 in Denison.

Some examples of the morning keynote session, depending on the location, include:

- Extension Climatologist Elwynn Taylor
- A Market Outlook from Extension Economist Chad Hart
- A Palmer Amaranth Discussion with Weed Specialist Bob Hartzler
- Jerry Hatfield, Director of the National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment, talking about soil health in a changing climate

In addition, each location features a full agenda of workshops that attendees can choose from in the afternoon. Each year, I hear from attendees that they wish there were more breakout sessions during the day. They are interested in many of the topics and cannot be at every workshop. I believe this is a great problem to have as it means that the topics are in demand and of great value.

Each of the meetings is approved for Certified Crop Adviser continuing education credits. Every location also offers the opportunity for private pesticide applicators to receive continuing education credits, a kind of “value added” pesticide training day.

Launched in 2002, the Crop Advantage Series has impressive attendance numbers. We have seen tremendous growth in attendance, and response from producers has been very positive. In addition to receiving the latest research information from Iowa State University, the meetings have been a valuable way for producers to provide input back to ISU researchers and specialists on what their

needs are. I also find it to be a great opportunity to talk with crop producers and agronomists about how the season affected them, and what issues of concern they have for the next year.

Early registration for each location is \$50 and includes workshop materials, lunch, and refreshments. This year the registration cost includes the price of the Private Pesticide Continuing Education and Certified Crop Advisor credits. Registration less than one week prior or at the meeting increases to \$60. Additional program details, registration forms and online registration is available at <http://www.cropadvantage.org> or from local ISU Extension and Outreach offices. Make sure you check out the agenda for each site – they do vary!

- 30 -

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