Beginning and Young Livestock Producer Network
By Patrick Wall

The BYLPN is a Strategic Initiative of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. The objective is to develop a network of beginning and young livestock producer peer groups across the state to both educate and mentor. The peer group curricula focuses on both business management and production skills, but also provides mentoring and social networking.

Iowa livestock producers under age 35 are coming together across the state through the Beginning and Young Livestock Producer Network. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has organized these groups of young Iowans so they can ask questions of each other, listen to educational presentations, talk to more experienced producers, and connect with each other to be successful in agriculture. Visit http://www.extension.iastate.edu/iowabylp/ for more information.

They’re trying to transition back home after college, trying to expand the operation, maybe a new endeavor. … How do we get them back to the family operation? How do we ensure that they’ll be successful when they get started? What resources are available?

Young farmers have a lot of apprehension getting into the business. In recent times we’re dealing with large sums of money, so a lot of risk. We don’t take those decisions very lightly. We like to think that Extension is their number one go-to resource to help them make sure they don’t make mistakes. And once they do get started, when they have hurdles or stumbling blocks, we have some information available to help them get through it.

We all know that agriculture is big in this state, and there’s probably nothing bigger than making sure this business continues and it continues to be profitable. Agriculture and the rural lifestyle is a really good way to raise a family, it always has been. We hope it will continue that way. It’s good for rural economies, it brings small businesses to the local community, and some of the rural counties really count on agriculture to keep Main Street open.

BYLPN peer groups are organized by regions but are limited to participants in that region. Some groups are multi-species while others are species or topic specific. All types of farmers, students and agribusiness individuals are welcome to attend and farm families are encouraged to participate as couples. Meet dates, locations and topics are self-directed by participants in the groups. If a peer group is not listed for your area or you would like to assist in the startup of a group, please contact Colin Johnson at colinj@iastate.edu, 515-291-9287 or Patrick Wall, patwall@iastate.edu, 641-842-2014.
PROPERLY PRUNING TREES DURING WINTER MONTHS

AMES, Iowa—At this stage of winter, trees on Iowa’s landscape are still months from blooming and providing shade, which makes this the prime time of the year to give trees a tune-up with pruning. Using proper pruning techniques avoids harming trees. Here are some tips from horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach on the proper way to prune trees in winter. To have additional questions answered, contact the ISU Hortline at 515-294-3108 or hortline@iastate.edu.

When is the best time to prune shade and ornamental trees?
February through March is generally regarded as the best time to prune most deciduous trees. The absence of foliage at this time of year gives the individual a clear view of the tree and allows the selection and removal of appropriate branches. Also, the walling-off or compartmentalization of wounds occurs most rapidly just prior to the onset of growth in spring. Oaks are an exception. The winter months – December, January and February – are the best time to prune oak trees.

Deciduous trees can be pruned at other times of the year with little or no negative consequences. However, if possible, avoid pruning deciduous trees in spring when trees are leafing out and in fall when trees are dropping their leaves.

To reduce the risk of an oak wilt infection, do not prune oaks from March through October. Oak wilt is a fungal disease that is lethal to many oaks. It can spread from infected trees to healthy trees by sap-feeding beetles (“picnic bugs”). If an oak tree must be pruned in spring or summer (such as after a storm), apply latex house paint to the pruning cuts to avoid attracting sap-feeding beetles to the wounds.

Which pruning tool should be used when removing a tree branch?
There are various types of pruning tools. The size of the branch determines the best tool for the job.

Hand shears or pruning shears are generally used for pruning branches up to three-fourths inch in diameter. Branches from three-fourths to 1.5 inches can be removed with a lopping shears. Use a pruning saw on branches larger than 1.5 inches in diameter.

What is the proper way to remove a large tree branch?
When pruning trees, make the final cut just beyond the branch collar and branch bark ridge. The branch collar is the swollen area at the base of the branch. The branch bark ridge is the dark, rough bark ridge that separates the branch from the main branch or trunk. Pruning just beyond the branch collar and branch bark ridge retains the tree’s natural defense mechanisms and promotes compartmentalization and callus formation.

To prevent extensive bark damage, use a three-cut procedure when pruning branches that are greater than 1.5 inches in diameter. Make the first cut six to 12 inches from the main branch or trunk. Cut upward and go about one-third of the way through the branch. Make the second cut one to two inches beyond the first. Saw downward from the top of the branch. As the second cut is made, the weight of the branch will cause it to break at the pivot point between the two cuts. (The initial, bottom cut prevents the branch from ripping off a large piece of bark as it breaks.) Make the final cut just beyond the branch collar and branch bark ridge.

Sap is flowing from a pruning cut on my maple tree. Is this harmful to the tree?
Some tree species, such as maple, birch and elm, “bleed” heavily when pruned in late winter or early spring. However, the loss of sap does not harm the trees. The trees will not “bleed” to death. Eventually the flow of sap will slow and stop.
Local Food Producers Use Iowa MarketReady Training to Reach Local Wholesale Markets

Training helps farmers meet requirements for selling goods locally and beyond.

AMES, Iowa – While significant opportunity exists to build on the demand for local products in farmers markets, many food producers are hesitant or unprepared to meet additional requirements of institutional, wholesale and restaurant buyers to manage food safety, insurance, product quality and traceability risks.

Iowa MarketReady, a new program from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Value Added Agriculture Program, offers farmers the support and education to succeed in both local retail and wholesale markets.

“We want farm vendors to continue to be profitable while using a different or new marketing stream to sell their dairy, fruits, meats and vegetables,” said Linda Naeve, value added agriculture specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

The training is based around best business practices identified by food buyers in these markets that are actively seeking local suppliers. "Our goal," Naeve said, "is to help them design a better business strategy to succeed."

The Iowa MarketReady day-long training will be held March 3 from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in Room 115 of the Northeast Iowa Community College Dairy Center in Calmar, Iowa. It is located just south of Calmar at 1527 Highway 150 South. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.

Program topics include communications and relationship building, packaging, labels, supply and delivery, post-harvest handling for produce, grading, insurance, regulatory and marketing.

The registration fee is $55 per person or $90 per couple or two employees attending from the same farm. The fee includes training materials, a light lunch and refreshments.

Pre-registration required
For more information or to register, contact Linda Naeve at 515-294-8946 or lnaeve@iastate.edu. Please give names of registrants, address, phone number, email address and indicate whether the registrant is a produce or livestock/poultry/egg producer.

Sponsors of the program include Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Value Added Agriculture Program and Northeast Iowa Food and Farm Coalition.

Growing Farm to School in Iowa Through Partnerships

Ann Y. Robinson, National Center for Appropriate Technology

You are invited to attend a workshop on Growing Farm to School in Iowa Through Partnerships-- taking place in three locations across the state this spring including:

Oelwein, Thursday, March 5
Council Bluffs, Monday, April 6
Des Moines, Friday, May 1

Each meeting will highlight practical examples of farm to school in action and provide resources tailored to help Iowans connect more students to healthy, fresh food.

The workshops are coordinated by the National Center for Appropriate Technology and FoodCorps Iowa, and offered in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Public Health's Iowa Nutrition Network. Other partners include the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the Iowa Department of Education, Oelwein Community Schools, Council Bluffs Community Schools, and Des Moines Public Schools.

For more information and to register, visit the NCAT website.
Iowa State University Graduate Named Coordinator at FEEL

The Field Extension Education Laboratory (FEEL) at Iowa State University has named Warren Pierson as the new coordinator. Starting Nov. 1, Pierson will be responsible for organizing educational events at FEEL which holds demonstration plots used by Iowa State faculty and Iowa State Extension and Outreach staff.

Pierson, an ISU graduate, emphasized his M.S. research on investigating corn growth and development as he worked as a graduate research assistant managing research trials after receiving a B.S. in agronomy. The Iowa native has experience with the teaching agronomy lab at ISU as well as involvement in Extension conferences.

I am excited to accept this position because it allows me to work with many different people in agriculture, including high school students, college students, farmers, and agronomists,” Pierson said. “I’m excited to tie the needs of farmers and agri-businesses with our educational events and to make the farm more accessible to students and those involved in agriculture.”

Pierson says his years of experience working as a farm assistant and crop scout will make him successful in his position as coordinator. Assisting crop specialists and working directly in the fields, partnered with his academic achievements, led him to develop a passion for a career in agriculture.

He brings a background in agriculture, educational experience, work experience, and knowledge of current topics in agriculture. “While a graduate student at ISU, I had the opportunity to teach at FEEL and already know many faculty and staff that teach there,” Pierson said.

The Field Extension Education Laboratory is a 23-acre teaching facility located west of Ames that provides hands-on training for crop production. The facility hosts a variety of programs that demonstrates management problems, solutions, and diagnostic challenges. For more information about FEEL programs, contact Warren Pierson at wpierson@iastate.edu or (641)-750-3124.

2014 Farm Bill - ARC/PLC decisions: a three-step process

Here’s a summary of the three-step process:

1. **UPDATE**: The first step is whether you want to update base acres and yields. The landowner makes that final decision and signs the appropriate FSA form. The landowner has between Sept. 29, 2014 to **Feb. 27, 2015** to update base acres and/or yields by FSA farm number. The second and third steps involve the current producer(s) on the farm. The second step is the determination of whether or not to elect ARC or PLC. ARC is a revenue-based program. PLC is a price-loss program.

2. **ELECTION**: Current producer can make a 5-year election by FSA farm number for ARC-CO, ARC-IC, or the PLC program. This decision has to be made Nov. 17, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

3. **ENROLLMENT**: The third step is enrollment. Producers enroll the farm for the program elected. They can do this from **mid-April through summer 2015**. They will then enroll for 2014 and 2015 crop years concurrently.
Required Morel Mushroom Certification

Register before March 30 for workshop on selling mushrooms in Iowa

AMES, Iowa – Interested in hunting and selling morel mushrooms in Iowa? If so, plan to take this three-hour class in April from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and be certified to sell morel mushrooms legally within the state of Iowa.

“The purpose of the workshops is to help assure that mushrooms sold as morels in the state are actually morels,” said Mark Gleason of ISU Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology, who is conducting the workshops. “People can be poisoned by eating mushrooms that are misidentified as morels.”

To legally sell morel mushrooms in Iowa, sellers must complete a certification workshop on identifying morels and false morels. The certification lasts for three years. Iowans who have not certified for three or more years must re-certify this year. Registration is open to both in-state and out-of-state individuals.

Workshop Agenda
- Pre-training identification test
- Slide presentation on recognizing morels and false morels as well as other species of wild mushrooms
- Examine preserved morels and false morels
- Post-training identification test (and re-testing as needed)
- Receive wall-size and wallet-size training certificates

Location and Times
All three 2015 morel certification workshops will be held on the Iowa State University campus in Ames, at Room 106, in the Seed Science Building, located at the northwest corner of Wallace Road and Osborn Drive, on the following dates:

Saturday, April 4, 1-4 p.m.
Saturday, April 11, 1-4 p.m.
Saturday, April 18, 1-4 p.m.

Free parking is available near the Seed Science Building, in Lot #41 on the east side of Wallace Road. See an online campus map. To register for the workshop by Monday, March 30, contact Mark Gleason at 515-294-0579 or email mgleason@iastate.edu. Participants should indicate which workshop they plan to attend. Cost is $50 per person, payable at the training. Cash or checks are accepted; no credit cards.

Better Farm Accounting

The Better Farm Accounting book by Dr. William Edwards, professor of economics at Iowa State University is available at you county Extension Office. This book is a place for you to keep manual records and will help:

1. Provide summaries of income and expenses that can be transferred to your income tax schedules.
2. Help you prepare Net Worth and Net Income Statements that show your financial progress during the year.
3. Help you analyze your business and identify the weak and strong points in your farm operations.

Stay informed at:
http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/homepage.html
Lambing Time Workshop for Sheep Producers Offered
March 7
Discover lambing tips for sheep production profits

AMESTOCK PHOTO

AMES, Iowa – Iowa State University Extension and Outreach invites sheep producers to attend a Lambing Time Workshop at the Hansen Agriculture Student Learning Center, 2516 Mortensen Road in Ames, March 7 from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Discussion leaders include Dan Morrical, sheep specialist, Joe Sellers, livestock specialist and Ben Stokes, ISU sheep teaching farm manager.

The half-day program will focus on Improving Lamb Survival with Morrical, sheep specialist for ISU Extension and Outreach. “Lamb losses from birth to weaning range from 10 to 25 percent. In this session we will identify the main causes of death loss and provide management ideas to correct those causes,” says Morrical. Lamb loss can be due to starvation, hypothermia, dystocia, stillbirths, digestive disorders, scours, pneumonia and lastly trauma.

“Baby lamb survival is key to sheep production profits. A goal of flock operations is to get lambs off to a good start,” said Sellers, livestock specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach.

Registration is at 9:30 a.m. with the program starting at 10 a.m. After 11 a.m., attendees will travel to ISU Sheep Teaching Farm, on South State Ave. in Ames, for a tour of the Iowa State lambing barn and for sessions on: condition scoring ewes, assessing lamb health, temping and tubing and lamb processing. Participants should come dressed for the weather.

Class size is limited to 40 participants. To pre-register by March 4, contact Dan Morrical at 515-294-2904, morrical@iastate.edu or Joe Sellers at 641-203-1270, sellers@iastate.edu.

Sponsors for the Lambing Time Workshop are ISU Extension and Outreach, Iowa Sheep and Wool Promotion Board, and Premier 1 Supplies, Ltd.

2015 Production Guides Now Available

The 2015 Spray Guides are printed and are available at the Extension Publication Store. There have been major updates to the Vegetable Production Guide the last couple of years with the integration of Ohio State into the group. If it has been awhile since you purchased one of these books, it is time to do so. The Small Fruit and Grape and the Tree Fruit Spray Guides have undergone smaller changes but include updated information on Spotted Winged Drosophila and Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Control.

Each of the guides can be downloaded for free or purchased for $10 (Vegetable), $5 (Tree Fruit), or $6 (Small Fruit).
New Tool Evaluates Options for Reducing Odors in Livestock Operations

By Colin Johnson

The Air Management Practices Assessment Tool, AMPAT for short, is an online tool to help livestock and poultry producers compare odor mitigation techniques that could be useful on their farms. This resource is available at no charge at www.agronext.iastate.edu/ampat

AMPAT helps producers see which technologies have the highest impact with a listing of technologies to address pollutants. The tool can help producers identify best practices and help them be good neighbors as we know they want to be.

To evaluate practices on AMPAT, the producer can select from one of three core odor and emission source areas—animal housing, manure storage and handling, and land application. Each category provides access to resources that are specific to a particular pollutant. Once a pollutant is selected, a variety of resources are listed. The list includes a research-based publication on the recommended practice, pros and cons of using the recommended practice and a short video. Additional information and related links also are provided. Just as important is discussion on the effectiveness and relative cost of practices.

Development of the tool was completed by an Iowa State University Extension and Outreach project team of Jay Harmon, Steven Hoff, Dan Anderson and Angie Rieck-Hinz with major funding from the National Pork Board.

Iowa State Helps Develop App for Recording Pesticide Applications

ARTICLE | FRI, 02/20/2015 - 09:41 | BY KRISTINE SCHAEFER, ED ADCOCK

AMES, Iowa — Meeting state and federal pesticide record-keeping requirements can be as easy as pulling out a smartphone or tablet for producers and agribusinesses, thanks to an app Iowa State University helped develop.

The Pesticide Safety Education Program at Iowa State worked on the Pesticide and Field Records app for iOS and Android systems with funding from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Environmental Protection Agency. It is available at no charge from the iTunes store (Pesticide and Field Records Plus) and Google Play (Pesticide and Field Records).

The ISU Extension and Outreach program, formerly known as the Pest Management and the Environment Program, is working with the developers to improve the app’s usefulness and features, said Kristine Schaefer, program manager and extension program specialist.

The app is designed to help producers and agricultural businesses record and maintain pesticide application information. It allows users to document pesticide application information and link the information to specific field locations using satellite mapping.

The app also features a product search option that lists EPA product registration numbers and identifies restricted use products. The iPad version, and an updated release of the Android version scheduled for late February, includes printing and emailing capabilities.

Iowa Beef Center Releases ‘Cattle Bidder’ App

AMES, Iowa – Cattle feeders, order buyers and bankers now have a tool from the Iowa Beef Center to help them make cattle buying decisions. Garland Dahlke said the newly released “Cattle Bidder” app can help users determine maximum bids on feeder cattle purchases. “The user enters the purchase and sale weights, the expected cost of gain and the desired margin, and the app calculates the maximum purchase price,” he said.

“It’s a simple app, but is handy for buyers who know their cost of gain and expected market price by cattle type.” The program also can account for potential death losses. Cattle Bidder is for Android 2.2 phones and tablets, and is available as a free download from the IBC website at www.iowabeefcenter.org/Software/CattleBidder.apk and on Google Play at https://play.google.com/store/search?q=cattlebidder&c=apps&hl=en.
### Weigh-in Dates for 4-H

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#### SHEEP/MEAT GOAT

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