

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

Success Story

Title

Annie's Project - Northeast Iowa

Author: Kristen Schulte

Author's Location

Program Specialist
132 1ST AVE W
CRESCO IA
52136-1514

Relevance

Women have been key players in farming operations for many generations; however, education targeted towards women in northeast Iowa has been a gap in extension programming for the past six years. Women thrive in learning environments that cultivate discussion and networking. Many farm and business management meetings and sessions are geared toward the male population. Whether directly involved in the day-to-day operation or working off-farm, farm managers typically excel at the hands on production activities and commonly 'get by' with business and risk management tasks. Women in the operation typically fulfill some of the business management roles such as recordkeeping; however, as a key player in the business it is important for them to be educated in all aspects of business management. Typically, they know crop insurance is bought or land is rented, but often do not know the details behind these decisions.

Annie's Project is a six-week program that can provide education for farm women across the five areas of risk management. Additionally the program is offered exclusively for women and the sessions are taught by local agribusiness leaders in the designated topic area. The program not only offers the educational component, but also networking opportunities with local agribusiness leaders and other farm women. Women can take the education gained back to the farm operation to be more involved in business decisions or to better understand management decisions involved with the farm business.

Response

Annie's Project was identified by two counties as programs that would fit clientele needs for educational outreach and programming. Annie's Project is a six week program including eighteen hours of class time. This class worked with eight local businesses as sponsors and multiple speakers from local agribusinesses. Speakers covered fifteen different topics at each program.

Thirty-two women attended the class between the New Hampton and Waukon locations. These women were able to connect with over a dozen local agri-business professionals. Additionally, women were able to meet and network with other farm women taking the class.

Results(s)

- Learning Changes
- Behavior Changes

Other Results

Each night was closed out with the women writing down a few things they learned and one or two items they planned to ask questions on, information to research further, or things they were going to change. The following week, participants reviewed these items and shared what they had taken action on in the past week.

The following are comments the women made referring follow-up from the week prior:

- I explained my personality type to my husband so he could better understand why I am the way I am and do what I do.
- I asked how many acres we rent and what we are paying for rent.
- I met with my banker to review the ratios we talked about and he walked me through their rating and approval process. I now have a better understanding of the financial ratio measures and how my operation is viewed financially for the loan approval process.
- I dug out my crop insurance policy to better understand it and know what policy we have.
- My husband and I went into the NRCS office to learn more about conservation methods and to build a plan for our operation. We then sat down with our tenant and shared each party's wishes on conservation practices. Additionally the tenant shared information, provided further education for myself, landlord, on marketing practices used.
- I looked at my will and estate plan and scheduled an appointment with my attorney.
- The tax planning information was very timely; I used some of the information on business structures and tax planning during my appointment.
- The COLORS presentation helped me to better understand strong temperments in my spouses and peers. COLORS also helped me to better understand how kids learn.
- I have since used the livestock budgeting tools to better evaluate our operation and understand the breakeven for raising different types of finishing beef.
- I will use the tools and information on Ag Decision Maker, what a great resource.

Additional outcomes will be measured post assessment survey results completed at the end of the course. These results are released two weeks after class completion.

Location / Participant(s) Came From

- County
 - Allamakee
 - Chickasaw
 - Clayton
 - Floyd
 - Winneshiek

Partner(s)

- Business and Industry
- County Extension Staff

Danielle Day, Chickasaw County; Julie Christensen, Allamakee County