

January 13, 2023

E-RME Conference Proposals

ACCEPTED The Power of Networking: Annie's Project in SW Iowa (poster)

By Tim Christensen and Madeline Schultz

Women are an important audience for the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach farm management team. The 2017 Iowa Farm and Rural Life poll showed women participated in record keeping or financial management at higher rates than men. Annie's Project is an 18-hour agricultural business education program that empowers women in agriculture to be successful through education, networks, and resources. The course focuses on strategies to manage financial, human resources, legal, marketing, and production risk. Tim Christensen facilitated three Annie's Project courses from 2020 to 2023 with 49 participants – 46% were young producers. Before the course, 20.8% of survey respondents 'knew quite a bit' or were 'completely familiar' with the knowledge of where to find research-based estimates for costs of production. After the course this increased to 79.5%. Before the course, 25.0% of survey respondents have 'completed/currently do this' or were 'in progress' on the action of compare my/our farm/ranch financial ratios to benchmarks. After the course this increased to 64.6%. For A.M., Annie's Project allowed her to connect with others and think deeper. "It is a great way to interact with other women in agriculture," she said. English is A.W.'s second language. Christensen provided her with vocabulary ahead of class and the other participants were very helpful to her as well. "I loved it! I can't wait to attend more!" she said. When Extension extends knowledge and empowers women, all Iowans benefit through expanded agricultural businesses, conservation of natural resources, and support for the community of women in agriculture.

ACCEPTED A Helpful Spark: Managing Your Cyber Ecosystem (poster)

By Alexis Stevens and Madeline Schultz

Recent cyberattacks on Iowa's agribusinesses and farmers sparked urgency in securing cyber ecosystems. This spark led the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach farm management team to develop a project to increase awareness of cybersecurity and help farm managers identify risks and implement steps to minimize risks. The team increased their own understanding of cybersecurity, introduced the topic to farmers during farmland leasing meetings, included the topic in statewide conferences and regional meetings, created videos, wrote publications, and hosted webinars. A cybersecurity conference is being planned for September 2023. Another opportunity the team created is a "Managing Your Cyber Ecosystem" lesson for Annie's Project courses. With increased reliance on sharing personal data through a variety of online platforms, the cybersecurity lesson focuses on how financial data is being protected by other businesses and how women can secure their own data. Participants increase cybersecurity literacy, gain best practices to proactively manage their cyber ecosystems, and learn practical steps to prepare for cybersecurity threats. Extension has an important role in supporting farmers and giving them the

spark and encouragement they need to learn new cybersecurity skills. With increased awareness, economic losses due to lost or mismanaged decision-making data, identity theft, malware attacks, production delays, and physical system failures, can be minimized. All Iowans can benefit from a more secure food supply and stronger economy.

Priority Programming: Leasing Education (poster)

By Kelvin Leibold

And Charles Brown, Tim Christensen, Ryan Drollette, Patrick Hatting, Ann Johanns, Melissa O'Rourke, Alexis Stevens, and Gary Wright

Over half of Iowa farmland is owned by someone who does not currently farm, of which 34% is owned by those with no farming experience, and the remaining 24% is owned by retired farmers (Zhang, 2017.) Both landowners and tenants look to the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm Management Team to annually provide un-biased leasing information impacting 16.8 million acres in Iowa. In July-August 2022, Farmland Leasing Meetings were offered across Iowa to address questions from landowners, tenants, and others. A 100-page leasing guidebook was prepared for attendees and meeting sites were organized with county extension professionals. Programs were offered both in-person and virtually. Topics included land values, cash rent trends, rental rate determination, legal updates including income tax exclusion, carbon credits, cost of production, land improvements, water quality, landowner-tenant communication, cyber security, mental health, and annual reports. The team planned 85 in-person meetings and 1 virtual meeting. Participants were invited to complete an online survey after the meetings. Three key leasing objectives were assessed using a Likert scale. In addition, top participant goals for applying what they learned were assessed including: 'increase rent,' 'increase the information shared between leasing parties (annual reports),' 'improve communication with other parties involved in leasing arrangements' 'send termination notice to end the 2022 lease terms,' and 'discuss and/or implement conservation strategies.' The Farmland Leasing meetings resonated with Iowa and out-of-state landowners. Meetings were effective in extending knowledge and supporting good decision-making based on un-biased information.

ACCEPTED Hang Your Hat on It: 20 Years of Annie's Project in Iowa (poster)

By Kelvin Leibold and Madeline Schultz

When it comes to having an Extension program you can hang your hat on, Annie's Project is one of the good ones. The Iowa farm management team depends on Annie's Project to improve lives. The 2017 Census of Agriculture showed 74 percent of women producers were involved in recordkeeping and financial management. Annie's Project courses support women as they make key financial decisions by addressing risk in the areas of finance, human resources, legal, marketing and production. Annie's Project is an 18-hour agricultural business education program that empowers women in agriculture to be successful through education, networks, and resources. The team facilitated 124 Annie's Project courses reaching 2,138 women from 2004 to 2022. Stories of women improving their lives are rewarding. J.R. is a busy farmer with a full-time off-farm job. "I can't always attend the Extension programs I'm interested in, but I've

learned so much from Annie's Project," she said. Connecting to other women was her favorite. "I ran into one of the young ladies from the class and it was so nice to have that conversation about farming," she added. After taking Annie's Project, she converted field headlands to grassland to conserve soil and she's working on her grain marketing skills. Participants in Annie's Project courses, like J.R., took important actions to reduce risk and manage profitability. When Iowa State University extends knowledge and empowers women, all Iowans benefit through expanded agricultural businesses, greater conservation of natural resources, and increased support for the community of women in agriculture.