The Power of Networking: Annie’s Project in SW Iowa

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RELEVANCE

Women have significant employment, management, and ownership on family farms in Fremont and Mills Counties. The 2017 Census of Agriculture reported 1,047 farms in with a combined $249.5 M in total sales of agricultural products in the counties. There were 660 women farm operators in the counties who represented 36% of all farm operators.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

Annie’s Project:

- Empowers women in agriculture to be successful through education, networks, and resources.
- Creates a comfortable and supportive environment that allows for guest speaker appearances and group discussion.
- Covers financial, human resources, legal, marketing, and production risk management strategies.

SURVEY RESULTS

Of the 21 women enrolled in the course, 18 completed the pre-course survey and 16 completed the post-course survey.

- 16,168 acres were owned and/or operated
- 42.8% of class members were beginning farmers
- 93.8% agreed the woman-centered environment was important

MOST VALUABLE TOPICS

1. Marketing
2. Estate planning
3. Farmland leasing
4. Insurance for farm families
5. USDA Farm Service Agency

WOMEN’S STORIES

A.W. and her husband raise corn and soybeans on 1,200 acres of farmland. When A.W. moved from Quebec to Iowa to join her husband and his family on the farm five years ago, she had zero background in the agriculture industry. Networking with class members deepened her learning.

She plans to take over the bookkeeping for the farm from her mother-in-law.

“Tim and Mandy were very helpful to explain things I did not understand. It was a great time out of the house, informative, and there was something for everybody. I loved it! I can’t wait to attend more!”

- A.W.

A.M. is an ISU graduate who grew up on her family farm with 4-H and a small cow/calf operation. Today, A.M. works as a loan officer and portfolio manager. This was Moore’s second Annie’s Project class. With her career being in finance, a key takeaway centered around the insurance coverage.

“My family and career revolve around agriculture with living in a small town. It [Annie’s Project] opened my mind to things I wasn’t thinking about. It is a great way to network with other women in agriculture.”

- A.M.

IMPACT

The Annie’s Project course was effective in extending knowledge and empowering women. Participants took important actions during the course to reduce risk and maintain profitability. When Extension and Outreach 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.

Knowledge Gained

- Where to find research-based estimates for cost of production
- Basic estate planning terminology
- Crop, livestock, or whole farm insurance products available to me

Actions Taken

- Compare my/our farm financial ratios to benchmarks
- Obtain market pricing information from a reliable source
- Visit USDA NRCS office to learn more

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