



Quarterly Report

to USDA Rural Development
Agricultural Marketing Resource Center
(AgMRC)

April 1, 2008 – June 30, 2008

Submitted by Iowa State University, Kansas State University
and the University of California.

Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD) Iowa State University

Third Quarter Report

April 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008

Goal #1

Create and promote an electronic, Web-based library with powerful search capabilities to make value-added information and other resources available to producers (includes web site development and functions). Provide electronically available information and resources on value-added markets and industries including a wide variety of commodities and products (this includes the Commodities/Products and Markets/Industries sections of the Web site).

No activity for this quarter.

Goal #2

Provide value-added business and economic analysis tools, including information on business principles, legal, financial and logistical issues (information contained in the Business Development section of the Web site).

No activity for this quarter.

Goal #3

Conduct research and analysis on economic issues facing producers involved in value-added business ventures (this includes research activities on all topics included at the Web site).

Research Papers

Du, Xiaodong, and Dermot J. Hayes. "The Impact of Ethanol Production on U.S. and Regional Gasoline Prices and on the Profitability of the U.S. Oil Refinery Industry." CARD Working Paper 08-WP 467, Iowa State University, Ames. April 2008.

McPhail, Lihong Lu, and Bruce A. Babcock "Short-Run Price and Welfare Impacts of Federal Ethanol Policies." CARD Working Paper 08-WP 468, Iowa State University, Ames, June 2008.

Feng, Hongli, and Bruce A. Babcock. "Impacts of Ethanol on Planted Acreage in Market Equilibrium." CARD Working Paper 08-WP 472, Iowa State University, Ames, June 2008.

Goal #4

Conduct outreach activities to disseminate the research and information assembled and developed under the previous three goals. These activities are designed for producers, producer groups, businesses and others involved in value-added agriculture (this includes all outreach activities of the Center including workshops, seminars, newsletters and other delivery methods including individual client requests for specific information).

Newsletter and Other Articles

Babcock, Bruce A., and Lihong Lu McPhail. "The Outlook for Corn Prices in the 2008 Marketing Year." *Iowa Ag Review* 14(2): 4-5.

Hart, Chad E. "Agricultural Trade with a Weak Dollar." *Iowa Ag Review* 14(2): 8-9.

Presentations

Babcock, Bruce A. "Global Warming, Biofuels and Future Food Supplies: Which Path for the United States?" Presented at the 6th World Instant Noodle Summit in Osaka, Japan, April 9, 2008.

_____. Presentation about CARD Biofuels models, to Kraft Fuels, Chicago, IL, April 15, 2008.

_____. Environmental and Resource Economics seminar, presented at the Department of Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, April 21, 2008.

_____. "Socio-Economic Impacts of U.S. Ethanol." Presented to agricultural leadership group, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, April 28, 2008.

_____. Statement before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, presented at the Hearing on Fuel Subsidies and Impact on Food Prices, Washington, DC, May 7, 2008.

_____. "Land Use Changes from Biofuels in Market Equilibrium." Presented at the Sustainable Biofuels and Human Security workshop, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 12-13, 2008.

_____. "Does the Ethanol Industry Need Continued State Incentives?" Presented at the Iowa Department of Economic Development, Des Moines, IA, May 14, 2008.

_____. "Short Term Impacts of Federal Ethanol Policy." Presented at congressional briefing on "America's Bioeconomy: Balancing the Nation's Needs for Food and Fuel," Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC, June 26, 2008.

Carriquiry, Miguel. "Impacts of Rising Feed Prices and Expansion of Bio-Energy on Beef Production World-Wide." Presented at the Agri Benchmark Beef Conference 2008, Brasilia, Brazil, June 23-26, 2008.

Clemens, Roxanne. "Branding Agricultural Products." U.S. Embassy Speaker Program on Food Branding, presented at Nicksić, Bijelo Polje, and Podgorica, Montenegro, June 23-27, 2008.

Elobeid, Amani. "The Global Impact of Biofuel Expansion: Accounting for Green House Gas Emissions from Land Use Changes." Presented at the Sustainable Biofuels and Human Security workshop, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 12-13, 2008.

Fabiosa, Jacinto F. Featured presentation at regional workshop, "Expansion in Biofuel and Soaring Food Prices: Implications for Agricultural and Food Policies in the Near East and North Africa," sponsored by the Near East and North Africa Regional Network for Agricultural Policies of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), June 2-4, 2008.

Hart, Chad. Discussion of biofuels and their impact on the availability of livestock feeds, with Robert Pettit of Dairy Australia, Ames, IA, April 11, 2008.

_____. "Bio-renewable Energy's Impacts on Agriculture and the Economy." Presented at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AK, April 24, 2008.

_____. Presentation at "Biofuels and the Rural Economy" roundtable workshop, Perry, IA, May 14, 2008.

_____. "Looking at the Economics of the Next Generation of Biofuels." Presented at Breeding Lignocellulosic Crops for the Bioeconomy conference, Iowa State University, Ames, May 27-28, 2008.

Hayes, Dermot. Presentation about the food versus fuel debate, to members of the Biotechnology Affairs Department of Pioneer Hi-Bred, Ames, IA, May 7, 2008.

_____. "The Economic Impact of DDGs and Their Impact on U.S. Grain, Oilseeds and Livestock Markets." Presented at the National Cottonseed Products Association's 112th Annual Convention, Destin, FL, May 3-6, 2008.

_____. "Food versus Fuel." Presented at National Pork Producers Council meeting, Johnston, IA, June 3, 2008.

_____. "Food versus Fuel." Presented at interfaith church group meeting, Des Moines, IA, June 4, 2008.

Secchi, Silvia. Presentation on the environmental sustainability of ethanol and biofuels, at "Biofuels and the Rural Economy" roundtable workshop, Perry, IA, May 14, 2008.

Iowa State University Extension

Iowa State University

Third Quarter Report

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During this quarter, visits to the AgMRC Web site continued to rise, reaching more than 5,000 per day in April before declining to 4,600 in June. Of the five major sections of the site, the Commodities and Products (C&P) and the Business Development (Bus Dev) sections continue to be the most frequently visited. While Bus Dev posted more visits each day in April, C&P posted more visits in May and June. In addition, viewers continue to spend the longest amount of time at the Bus Dev section. This trend first appeared in November 2007.

Overall, the site received more than 443 thousand visits from April through June and averaged 147 thousand visits per month.

Updated Commodities & Products

During this time, the following 67 webpages were updated: Commodity apples, Azuki beans, Commodity beef, Direct market beef, Natural beef, Organic beef, Bison, Blackberries, Blueberries, Celery, Chestnuts, Chickpeas, Crambe, Cranberries, Crawfish, Dairy products, Organic dairy, Dates, Deer ranching, Edible dry beans, Eggs, Egyptian wheat, Ethanol, Finfish agriculture, Forestry, Herbs, Kenaf, Direct marketing lambs, Meadowfoam, Nursery trees, Onions, Ostrich, Oysters, Pears, Pecans, Pine nuts, Certified/verified pork, Direct marketing pork, Organic pork, Processing pork, Potatoes, Commodity poultry, Prairie grasses, Rye, Salmon, Solar power, Organic soy, Soyfood, Squash, Commodity strawberries, You pick strawberries, Sugarcane, Sunflowers, Sweet potatoes, Tilipa, Turkeys, Black walnuts, Watermelons, Wind energy, Arkansas wine, Colorado wine, Michigan wine, Minnesota wine, New York wine, North Carolina wine, Wisconsin wine and Worms.

New profiles on Sugarcane and on Jatropha were also developed.

AgMRC Web site Changes Planned

Staff continued work on proposed changes to the AgMRC Web site. A contract was established with Global Reach to review the AgMRC code and suggest improvements, as well as continue modifications to the existing site. The code review has been completed. The recommendation was to update the content management system to a newer management application to avoid potential gaps in server support and upgrades. The new content management system application to manage the website will be available in September 2008. Content will be ported to the new

system at that time and all URLs will remain the same. The new CMS system will allow for additional newsletters and news lists to be managed much more efficiently.

In the meantime, minor tweaks will be made to the organizational structure. The left navigation will be modified through Global Reach. This new structure will feature a “Hot Topics” section to highlight topics currently in the news and an “AgMRC Toolbox” to highlight specific feasibility and outlook tools developed for the site.

Goal #2

Provide value-added business and economic analysis tools, including information on business principles, legal, financial and logistical issues (information contained in the Business Development section of the Web site).

Plans were made for making a special section for Renewable Energy on the AgMRC site. Specific materials that were prepared during this period for future inclusion on the site are:

- Development of an economic model of a typical ethanol plant to track monthly profitability.
- Tracking ethanol futures prices and basis by state.
- Tracking ethanol future prices versus gasoline prices
- Tracking the quantity of corn needed to meet the existing, under construction and planned ethanol expansion.
- Tracking price paid by ethanol plants for corn by state.
- Tracking price received for wet distiller’s grains and dry distillers grains by state.

Other improvements in Business Development section of the site include:

- Revision of the entire Business Development homepage and subsections
- Revision of the Success/Failure Analysis section
- Revision of Intellectual Property section
- Revision of Agritourism section
- Revision of the Travel Expense decision tool
- Revisions to the Ethanol Webcast section
- Edited numerous external links to correct broken web links

Goal #3

Conduct research and analysis on economic issues facing producers involved in value-added business ventures (this includes research activities on all topics included at the Web site).

During May, Mary Holz-Clause interviewed the owners of the following businesses:

- Wilcox Family Farms, Roy, Washington
- Orchard View Farms, The Dalles, Oregon
- Oregon Woodland Cooperative, Portland, Oregon
- Brian O’Driscoll, North Plains, Oregon
- Wild Plum Farmers (Winter’s Hill Vineyard), Lafayette, Oregon

The following month, the owners of seven additional businesses were interviewed.

- Plains Oilseed Products (POP) Cooperative, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Oklahoma Sustainable Energy LLC, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Redland Juice Company, LLC, Lexington, Oklahoma
- Oklahoma Goat Producers, Langston, Oklahoma
- Upper Red Fork Innovations, Hunter, Oklahoma
- Value Added Products, Inc., Alva, Oklahoma
- Walters' Pumpkin Patch, Burns, Kansas

Two other entities were also interviewed: Practical Farmers of Iowa, Ames, and Picket Fence Creamery, Woodward, Iowa.

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Trade Show Promotions/Outreach

Staff attended and manned a booth at numerous trade shows to continue development of a user base. The following table represents programs, events and outreach either funded by AgMRC or represented AgMRC as match dollars through staff time and travel dollars.

Date	Event	Location	AgMRC Participant
4/1	Extension Professional Development Day	Ames, Iowa	Connie
4/1-4/2	National Extension Women in Ag Education Conference	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Madeline
4/3	Making Value Chains Work: Best Practices for Success	Ames, Iowa	Margaret, Connie, Reg
4/15-4/17	International Biomass '08	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Bob W.
4/27-4/29	Cooperation Works Meeting, NCBA Annual Conference	Washington, D.C.	Madeline
5/28-5/30	NxLevel State Administrators National Conference	Utah	Marsha
5/29-5/30	Corn Dry Milling Conference	Peoria, Illinois	Connie
6/1-6/3	National Value-Added Ag Conference	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	Ray, Marsha, Connie booth
6/4-6/6	PDI Spring Conference	Okoboji, Iowa	Bob M.

Client Requests

Staff researched and responded to 51 e-mailed questions this quarter, including 26 requests for newsletter subscriptions.

During this quarter, AgMRC received a total of 81 toll-free phone inquiries from 27 states: including Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin. Each caller was directed to Web site resources for information or forwarded to specialists for additional assistance.

Additional Public Relations

The summer issue of the AgMRC Action newsletter was distributed via e-mail and made available online. The newsletter is sent bi-monthly to a list of 2,000 names comprised of producers in value-added agriculture, service providers, media and others. Each newsletter consists of an article from one of the partnering organizations in AgMRC, a state profile to give a snapshot of value-added agriculture in certain areas, new research and other updates added to the Web site in the past month, a value-added agriculture business profile and a calendar of upcoming value-added agriculture events.

Features in the newsletter included an article on the growing Hispanic market, predominately Mexican-Americans; an article about the factors contributing to higher food prices; an article highlighting the value of raising heritage animals and heirloom crops; regular value-added agriculture news; and web updates to www.agmrc.org.

Additionally, AgMRC received positive press this past quarter. Articles appeared in the *Iowa Department of Tourism e-traveler*, *Iowa Farmer Today*, *Wallace's Farmer* and broadcasts on Iowa farm radio.

Kansas State University

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Responded to 18 requests for information on various commodities

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We completed work (with Don Hofstrand) on an ethanol publication looking at commercialization of various technologies. Staff completed drafts of research looking at alternative cooperative restructuring efforts (in review at the present time).

Staff completed three cases during this time period: the case looking at regionalization of local farm supply cooperatives within CHS (with Montana State University), the case of Tree Top cooperative and educational programs in Oregon, Washington and Idaho (with Washington State University, Idaho State University and Oregon State University) and the case of Sunkist's new strategy campaign for California cooperatives (with University of California).

Staff also finished the Cass Clay Creamery and AMPI restructuring (with North Dakota State University).

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Staff began looking at branding by denomination of origin to see exactly how producer cooperatives are able to control supply.

After finishing a survey on the genetically modified pasta market and consumer attitudes, we completed a draft report.

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Director development programs were held in California, Illinois and Minnesota.

Plans are underway for programs in Indiana, the Pacific Northwest and California.

Agricultural Issues Center University of California

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Writing of summaries of our research findings (see Goal 3) and their postings on the website has been ongoing. In addition, UC AIC continued work on new dairy and wine profiles for the website.

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Commodity Profiles (Hayley Boriss, Daniel Sumner and Marcia Kreith, University of California)

This quarter, a second iteration of a new Dairy profile was completed. Now in final stages of formatting and editorial refinement, it will be available shortly. Revision of the Wine profile continued.

The Measure of Agriculture and the Contribution of Agriculture to the Economy (Daniel Sumner, Hayley Boriss, Henrich Brunke, Marcia Kreith, Kurt Richter, Omid Rowhani and Laurie Treacher, University of California)

We focused on editing and reformatting of the chapter on marketing, trade, policy and risk management. We anticipate completion and online availability shortly.

Agricultural Exports (Omid Rowhani, Daniel Sumner, Laurie Treacher, Marcia Kreith University of California)

Commenced gathering data on California-produced international agricultural exports in 2007. To date, the majority of time spent on this project has involved the gathering of pertinent data and entering it into appropriate spreadsheets. As with previous export years, we plan to write an issues brief summarizing the study and detailed data will be published on the web and by CDFA.

Trade-Weighted Exchange Rate Indices (Daniel A. Sumner and Thomas Rosen-Molina, University of California)

Rosen-Molina constructed trade-weighted exchange rate indices for almond, wine and grape juice imports and exports. He then collated the indices into PowerPoint slides used by Sumner when he addressed the California Farm Bureau Conference.

Government Programs, Market Power and International Trade (Sanggon Jeon and Daniel Sumner, University of California)

With focus on fluid milk and processed cheese products, work continued on effects of market power on agricultural trade. The researchers use market power in a model of trade under the Free Trade Agreement to assess the impact of domestic market power on implications for trade policy.

Effects of Agricultural Policies on Obesity (Julian Alston and Stephen Vosti, University of California, Davis and Daniel Sumner, University of California)

Julian Alston, Daniel Sumner and Stephen Vosti revised and resubmitted their paper on "Farm Subsidies and Obesity in the United States: National Evidence and International Comparisons" to the journal *Food Policy* and it was accepted for publication.

Effects of Agricultural Policies on Obesity: Increasing Access to Fruit and

Vegetables (Virginia Chaidez, Lucia Kaiser, Micki Stewart, Steve Vosti, and Julian Alston, University of California, Davis and Daniel Sumner, University of California).

The second round of anthropometric and food expenditure data are being collected now. Preliminary analyses of the first round of data suggest that many of the toddlers in our sample are indeed overweight and that some will likely fall into the 'obese' category; the same seems also to be true for the toddlers' caregivers. Analysis of data gathered using a special survey instrument designed to identify and measure indulgent feeding practices is suggesting that such practices are not uncommon among the Latina caregivers in our sample; the links between feeding practices and toddler nutritional status will be assessed in the next round of analysis. The socioeconomic survey data collected alongside the nutrition/anthropometric data have identified a broad array of household food expenditure patterns, some of which include large proportional outlays for fresh fruits and vegetables. These data also highlight the very important role of agriculture (broadly defined to include working in food processing plants, etc.) in the incomes of sampled households. The interrelationships among toddler nutritional status, on the one hand, and the characteristics of their caregivers and of the households and neighborhoods in which they live, on the other, will be undertaken once all the data are available.

Vosti made a presentation on this and the broader obesity study to the NRI Human Nutrition and Obesity Project Directors' Workshop, June 23-35 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Economics of Traceability and Food Safety (Sébastien Pouliot and Daniel Sumner, University of California)

Pouliot and Sumner worked on estimating the effects of mandatory cattle traceability in Québec. Pouliot has submitted an early draft of the paper for presentation at the American Agricultural Economics Association meeting in July. After gathering more data, he began estimating the premium (if any) for traceable Québec cattle.

Pouliot completed drafts of two papers on the value of traceability for cattle. In the first paper, he discusses the estimation of a premium for identified and traceable cattle in Canada given that BSE was discovered soon after the implementation of the systems. In the second paper, he attempts to find evidence that a premium is paid for Québec traceable cattle, considering the effects of the discovery in Canada

Grapevines of Innovation: Diffusion of Innovations in the Wine Industry

(Calanit Bar-Am and Jonathan Barker, University of California and Rolf A.E. Mueller, Universität Kiel)

Statistical analysis continued on this project.

Sustainable Winegrowing Practices (Daniel A. Sumner and Calanit Bar-Am, University of California)

Data has been gathered and analyzed on the costs and benefits of selected sustainable winegrape growing practices identified in the California Sustainable Winegrowing Program—grassed filter/buffer strips, perennial hedgerows, sprinkler, drip and micro-irrigation technologies, and grassed alleys and roads. A draft report on the direct costs and benefits to producers has been shared with the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance.

Economic Effects of Climate Change on the Wine Industry (Calanit Bar-Am and Daniel A. Sumner)

Climate conditions affect various grape varieties differently and therefore their prices differently. To understand the potential impacts of climate change on the winegrape industry, our study will estimate the relationships between climate, sugar levels and prices of 50 varieties of wine grapes grown in 17 crush districts in California by using hedonic models and historic daily weather data. During this report period, the researchers have downloaded daily weather data since the beginning of the 20th century from 150 stations across California (only 90 are in regions where grapes are grown) and began digitalizing price and sugar data by variety and crush district from crush reports dating back to 1976. Also, Bar-Am began to draft an overview on the effect of natural environment and management practices on quality of grapes.

Hedonic Wine Pricing Study Using experimental Methods (Christopher Gustafson and Daniel Sumner, University of California)

Work has continued moving toward the field experiments on consumer valuation of wine attributes. A panel was trained and performed the sensory analysis of the attributes of the set of wines that will be used for the experiment. The resulting data has been analyzed. A computer-based framework has been developed for the field experiment and is nearly ready, with a few modifications to be completed before the start of the experiments. Apart from pretesting, which will occur after the wines have been finalized, the experiment is essentially ready to begin. In addition to moving these experiments forward, the researchers have been reviewing the extensive literature on wine choice, perception, expertise, etc. that have been reported in the journals of other disciplines.

Regional Agricultural Models (Kurt Richter and Dan Sumner, University of California)

Based on the success of the Solano Agricultural Futures Project, and at the request of Yolo County and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, AIC has commenced to develop several regional agricultural models that relate to land use issues. The models will focus on the connecting regional economies of scale in agricultural processing and parcel-level agricultural production. They will also examine the potential of developing short supply chains between local production and urban food consumption.

Definition and Extent of Mediterranean Agriculture (Daniel Sumner and Hayley Boriss, University of California and Cloe Perrin, University of California, Davis)

Work continued to progress on this project.

Export Markets and California Agriculture: Understanding the Implications of Trade Barriers Applied to Citrus Products (Bradley J. Rickard, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and Daniel Sumner University of California)

Examining phytosanitary barriers in the citrus industry, Rickard is developing a model of trading regions, trade flows and various trade barriers for a matrix of citrus products. So far the model includes five regions and four citrus products. In addition to AIC/AgMRC, the project is partially supported by Cal State University Agricultural Research Initiative (ARI).

Global Trends of Production and Trade (Bradley J. Rickard, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and Christine St. Pierre, IPC)

Bradley Rickard has examined global trends of production and trade for 16 key agricultural commodities from different regions of the world, developed a framework for projecting production and trade patterns over a 10-year period, and collected data characterizing variables expected to have had an impact. His paper provided background to discussions at the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy Center conference in May. Since USDA and FAPRI models have done similar work for grains, oilseeds, cotton and animal products, the focus of his discussion paper was on horticultural products, including coffee as the representative tropical product. On the trade side, he and co-author Christine St. Pierre find an inverse relationship between import prices and import demand for chicken, corn and tomatoes. Furthermore, the import demand models show a positive and statistically significant relationship between per capita import

demand and per capita income, trade openness and diet. The results support claims that (i) water and land availability are the major factors that determine production decisions and (ii) income, diet patterns and trade openness have driven import demand patterns between 1990 and 2005.

The Economic Effects of the Proposed California Ballot Initiative Establishing Space Requirements for Egg Layers. (Thomas Rosen-Molina and Daniel A. Sumner, University of California)

This project examines the potential economic impact of the November 2008 California ballot initiative that would call for the replacement or modification of existing cages with alternative systems, with the intended purpose of improving the welfare of egg-laying hens. Our objective is to estimate the overall economic impact on the California egg industry and the statewide economic effects that may result from producers' reactions in the event of the initiative's passage. The AIC has collected and analyzed primary data relative to costs of production in the egg industry, including transportation of fresh eggs and feed from other parts of the United States to California. A report presenting the results from AIC's economic model is nearly completed. Preliminary findings indicate California farmers would be unable to compete with out-of-state producers. Costs of production for California egg farmers would increase by as much as 25 percent over the next five years.

Food Safety and Value-Added Produce. (Roberta Cook, University of California, Davis)

In April, Roberta Cook conducted interviews in the Salinas area on food safety with fresh cut processors and leafy green producers.

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Materials Made Available for Print and/or Online Posting during this Quarter (partial listing)

“California Wine and the EU Wine Policy Reform.” Henrich Brunke, Rolf A.E. Mueller, Daniel A. Sumner. *AIC Issues Brief* No. 34, May 2008.

“California's International Agricultural Exports in 2006.” Omid Rowhani and Daniel A. Sumner. *AIC Issues Brief* No. 32, December 2007.

“Market Power in the Corn Sector: How Does it Affect the Impacts of the Ethanol Subsidy?” Tina L. Saitone, Richard J. Sexton and Steven E. Sexton.

“Minimum Quality Standards, Industry Self Regulation, and Economic Welfare.” Tina L. Saitone and Richard J. Sexton.

"Current Economic Trends in the California Wine Industry." Rachael E. Goodhue, Richard D. Green, Dale M. Heien and Philip L. Martin.

“Recent Trends in the California Wine Grape Industry.” Richard Volpe, Richard Green, Dale Heien and Richard Howitt.

"Appellation, Variety, and the Price of California Wines." Oh Sang Kwon, Hyunok Lee, and Daniel A. Sumner.

“California Wine Industry Evolving to Compete in 21st Century.” Rachael Goodhue, Richard Green, Dale Heien and Philip Martin.

Outreach Talks

Roberta Cook’s presentation at the United Fresh annual convention in Las Vegas was on “Business Trends Creating New Produce Sales Channels.” About 200 people (growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers) attended the May 5, 2008 talk.

Fresh Produce Marketing Trends: Implications for Blueberry Growers and Shippers was the subject of Roberta Cook’s talk when she spoke at the KAC Annual Blueberry Field Day and Lectures on May 21, 2008. About 200 attendees, mainly growers and secondarily shippers, attended.

Robert Cook addressed the topic “A Greater Vision: What does Ag Sustainability Mean on the Central Coast?” at a conference of educators and sustainability professionals. The conference with the same name was moderated by the Salinas mayor and sponsored by the Central Coast Ag Task Force, the Grower-Shipper Foundation and Agri-Culture on May 30, 2008 at Cabrillo College, Aptos, CA.

“The Dynamic US Fresh Produce Industry: An Industry in Transition” and “The U.S. Fresh Produce Industry: Consumer Issues in Quality and Safety” were the titles of presentations by Roberta Cook to the UC Davis Postharvest Technology Short Course, June 16 on the Davis campus. About 100 people attended.

About 90 people heard Roberta Cook’s talk, “What are consumers telling us? – Trends in the Fresh Produce Marketplace,” when she spoke to attendees at the UC Davis 30th Anniversary Postharvest Short Course Symposium, “*Charting New Directions in Postharvest Biology & Technology*” on June 21 at the UC Davis campus.

Julian Alston participated as a discussant in the CAL-MED conference in Cetraro, Italy, June 16-17, 2008. His emphasis was on food policies, consumption patterns, health concerns and the Mediterranean diet.

Roberta Cook gave a presentation on the “Growing Fresh Produce Use in Foodservice: Challenges, Opportunities and Strategies” to an audience of about 120 vice presidents of culinary development from top restaurant chains (fast food to high end) who attended the International Corporate Chefs Association 6th Annual ICCA Summit, in Portland, Oregon, June 23, 2008.

Rachael Goodhue presented a paper with results from the AgMRC project on pre-commitments (informal contracts) in the fresh strawberry market at the University of Cassino in June.

Also at the CAL-MED conference, Daniel Sumner led a session on geographical indications, consumer preferences and firm strategies.

The findings of UC’s multidisciplinary studies on the effects of agricultural policies on obesity and on increasing access to fruit and vegetables among Latina mothers and toddlers were presented by Steve Vosti when he addressed the NRI Human Nutrition and Obesity Project Directors' Workshop on June 23-25 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Ask a Specialist Resource

Marcia Kreith and Hayley Boriss responded to questions received by AgMRC on the following topics:

- Selling of home baked goods and regulatory requirements, health and safety, weights and measures, business aspects. (Riverbank, CA)
- Sources for an overview and data on goat milk products industry. (Elk Grove, CA)
- Updated citrus data for use by an event historian. (Litchfield Park, AZ)
- Co-packers of milk containing beverages. (Riverside and Los Angeles, CA area)
- AIC’s recent data on California agricultural exports (Webster, TX)
- Recent data on apricot production, prices, yield, trade and world market information, as well as other possible sources of information.
- Names and addresses of grain coops in California. (Phoenix, AZ)
- Central Valley (CA) contacts where Lebanese grower could visit experimental farms growing fruit that could be grown in Lebanon. (Nabatya region, Lebanon)

Roberta Cook responded to questions about:

- Source of data related to specialty table olives
- Cost of high-technology, drip-irrigated, field-grown tomato production (pre- and postharvest) in Sinaloa, Mexico; costs of high-tech plastic greenhouse construction; and typical costs of medium- to high-tech greenhouse production of tomatoes in Mexico.
- Florida and California’s relative volume of production of fresh market tomatoes and of processing tomatoes (Chicago, IL)