



# Quarterly Report

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**to USDA Rural Development  
Agricultural Marketing Resource Center  
(AgMRC)**

*July 1, 2012 – September 30, 2012*

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Submitted by Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota.

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## *Fourth Quarter Report*

*July 1, 2012 to September 30, 2012*

### **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 website 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 and Products and Markets and Industries sections of the website).*

This quarter, the average number of visits per day to the AgMRC website was 3,309 (↓), down from 3,560 per day last quarter, while the average number of pageviews per day was 16,199 (↓), down from 16,463 per day last quarter.

Within the United States, the most visits came from the states of California (19.5% ↓), Washington (13.4% ↑), New York (6.4% ↑), Michigan (5.5%, ↑) and Texas (5.4% ↓). North Carolina visitors continued to view more pages per visit (28.6 ↑) than visitors from any other state, followed by California visitors (13.4 ↑).

As usual, the largest number of visits this quarter originated from the United States (52% ↑), followed by (in order): China (9.3% ↓), India (2.9% ↑), Canada (2.9% ↑) and the United Kingdom (UK) (2.9% ↑). On average, visitors from Costa Rica (13.5 pages), Romania (11.3 pages) and Zambia (10.1 pages) viewed more pages per visit than visitors from any other country, even viewing more pages than American visitors (5.8 ↑).

### *Blog*

During this quarter, 27,999 visitors (↑) viewed the AgMRC Blog, opening 102,879 pages (↑) and spending an average time of 2 minutes and 16 seconds (↓). The two most frequently viewed blog posts were: Reflections on 2010 Value Added Producer Grants (7.9%) and USDA Identifies Gaps, Releases Maps (7.1%).

### *Major Content Sections*

The major content sections of the AgMRC website account for the following percentages of total visits to the website:

1. Commodities and Products (33.6% ↑)
2. Business Development (18.6% ↓)
3. Renewable Energy (12.9% ↑)
4. Markets and Industries (4.2% ↓)
5. AgMRC Blog (3.6% ↓)

The Commodities and Products (C&P) section and the Business Development (Bus Dev) section continue to rank as the top two most frequently visited sections this quarter. C&P accounted for 264,280 visits (↑) and 285,786 pageviews (↑); Bus Dev accounted for 146,092 visits (↑) and

154,183 pageviews (↓). Renewable Energy, the newest section on the website, still ranks third in visits, capturing 101,950 visits (↑) and 127,207 pageviews (↑).

Within the C&P section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Fruits (46,479 visits ↑)
2. Livestock (45,000 visits ↑)
3. Grains and Oilseeds (39,341 ↑)

Within the Bus Dev section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Operating a Business (47,512 visits ↓)
2. Getting Prepared (30,728 visits ↑)
3. Starting a Business (26,824 visits ↑)

Within the Renewable Energy section, the top three topics visited during this quarter were:

1. Ethanol (27,022 visits ↑)
2. Biofuels and Biorefining (14,131 visits ↑)
3. AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter (12,185 visits ↓)

Website usage is tracked and analyzed using Urchin version 6.6 from Google Analytics. Visits are the number of visits to the site from a particular country/region/city. Pageviews are the number of times the webpage was displayed. Pages/Visit is pageviews divided by number of visits. ↑ indicates percentage increased from the last quarter, and ↓ indicates percentage decreased from the last quarter.

## **Updated Topics**

### *Commodities and Products*

Mike Boland, University of Minnesota, worked on developing a Seed Potato profile and reviewed several small grain updates.

The following contributing writers, from nine different states, helped update AgMRC C&P profiles this quarter. Those authors are:

- Marin Bozic, University of Minnesota
- Gary Brester, Montana State University
- Lisa Case, Vermont
- Geri Isaacs, Kentucky
- Lisa Jore, University of Minnesota
- Greg Lutz, Louisiana State University
- Gene McAvoy, University of Florida
- Greg McKee, North Dakota State University
- Kim Morgan, Mississippi State University
- Mykel Taylor, Kansas State University

The following 35 profiles were updated: Biomass, Celery, Certified/Verified Pork, Chickpeas, Commodity Apples, Commodity Pork, Commodity Strawberries, Crambe, Cuphea, Direct Market Pork, Foodservice Pork, Forestry, Industrial Hemp, International Pork Markets, Koi/Carp, Largemouth Bass, Meadowfoam, Miscanthus, Natural Pork, Niche/Ethnic Pork,

Nursery Trees, Olives, Organic Pork, Organic Soy, Pistachios, Pomegranates, Pork Processing, Pumpkins, Salmon, Soyfoods, Sugarbeets, Sunflowers, Switchgrass, Tilapia and Walleye.

All profile links to external sites are checked when the profile is being updated.

#### *Markets and Industries*

The following five topics were reviewed: Country of Origin, Food Consumption, Traceability, Trade Shows and Pharmaceutical Market Trends.

All profile links to external sites are checked when the profile is being updated.

#### **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 Website).*

#### **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 Website).*

The AgMRC website provides 53 case studies profiling recipients of USDA Value-Added Producer Grants online at:

[http://www.agmrc.org/business\\_development/strategy\\_and\\_analysis/analysis/case\\_studies\\_of\\_value\\_added\\_producer\\_grant\\_recipients.cfm](http://www.agmrc.org/business_development/strategy_and_analysis/analysis/case_studies_of_value_added_producer_grant_recipients.cfm)

#### **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).*

#### *Outreach Activities*

Mike Boland, University of Minnesota, worked with VAPG recipients and business development members in California, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin.

#### *Trade Show Promotions*

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 by AgMRC as match dollars through staff time and travel dollars.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>AgMRC Participant</b>
August 28-30	Farm Progress Show	Boone, Iowa	Attending: Ray, Linda, Madeline
August 29	Research Field Day	NE Iowa	Presenting: Connie on crop issues
September 18	High Tunnel Production and Irrigation Workshop	Troy and Keene, New Hampshire	Presenting: Linda on high tunnel strategies

### *Client Requests*

In-house AgMRC staff researched and responded to 73 e-mailed questions pertaining to the Commodities and Products section, the Markets and Industries section, the Renewable Energy section and the Directories and State Resources section of the website this quarter.

As of September 30, AgMRC staff reported receiving 42 toll-free phone inquiries from 19 different states, that is, California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Washington, D.C.

Staff also received one call from Canada (Montreal, Quebec).

Subscriptions to the Renewable Energy Newsletter list now total more than 2,500 addresses.

Subscribers access and self-subscribe to the newsletter online at:

http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\_energy/agmrc\_renewable\_energy\_newsletter.cfm?show=subscribe&newsletterID=4

### *Homepage*

The AgMRC homepage continues to feature a “hot” topic, such as Agritourism, High Tunnels, Energy Audits, Local/Regional Foods, Organic Foods, Renewable Energy and Value Added Producer Grants, in the center column. Pertinent AgMRC profiles and articles are highlighted in this column as well as resources from land-grant university Cooperative Extension, ATTRA, SARE, MOSES and USDA. The left column features announcements such as the National Value Added Ag (VAA) Conference and the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. The right column features quick links to helpful resources and links to funding resources, emphasizing the Value Added Producer Grant Program.

During this quarter, the homepage provided information about such topics as 2012 Value-Added Producers’ Grants, Blueberries, Meat Rabbits and The 2012 Drought.

The AgMRC homepage also provides a link to a section about the annual National Value Added Agriculture Conference. The 2012 conference, hosted by Michigan State University Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources, was held in Traverse City, Michigan, in late June. Information is also available about other past conferences.

### *Additional Public Relations*

AgMRC Renewable Energy Newsletter. The July, August and September issues of the AgMRC Renewable Energy newsletter were distributed via e-mail and made available online at: [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc\\_renewable\\_energy\\_newsletter.cfm](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc_renewable_energy_newsletter.cfm)

The newsletter is sent monthly to a list comprised of producers in value-added agriculture, service providers, media and others. Each newsletter consists of several articles from partnering organizations in AgMRC, new research and a Web page providing the latest price, profitability and supply/demand figures for corn/ethanol and soybean/biodiesel. This quarter, experts affiliated with Iowa State University contributed a total of six articles.

- Ethanol Industry Challenges Intensify with USDA August Crop Forecasts, Dr. Robert Wisner, September 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?september\\_2012\\_newsletter&show=issue&issueID=201](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?september_2012_newsletter&show=issue&issueID=201)
- Capital Budgeting and Decision Making, Don Hofstrand, September 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?capital\\_budgeting\\_and\\_decision\\_making&show=article&articleID=845&issueID=201](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?capital_budgeting_and_decision_making&show=article&articleID=845&issueID=201)
- Implications for Ethanol and Other Corn Users of the Shrinking Corn Crop, Dr. Robert Wisner, August 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?implications\\_for\\_ethanol\\_and\\_other\\_corn\\_users\\_of\\_the\\_shrinking\\_corn\\_crop&show=article&articleID=820&issueID=191](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?implications_for_ethanol_and_other_corn_users_of_the_shrinking_corn_crop&show=article&articleID=820&issueID=191)
- New Report on the Future of Grains, Biofuels and Livestock and Poultry Feeding Just Released, Don Hofstrand, August 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?new\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_grains\\_biofuels\\_and\\_livestock\\_and\\_poultry\\_feeding\\_was\\_just\\_released&show=article&articleID=821&issueID=191](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?new_report_on_the_future_of_grains_biofuels_and_livestock_and_poultry_feeding_was_just_released&show=article&articleID=821&issueID=191)
- Selected Developments Impacting the Ethanol Industry, Dr. Robert Wisner, July 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?selected\\_developments\\_impacting\\_the\\_ethanol\\_industry&show=article&articleID=805&issueID=185](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?selected_developments_impacting_the_ethanol_industry&show=article&articleID=805&issueID=185)
- Basics of Capital Budgeting, Don Hofstrand, July 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/renewable\\_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?basics\\_of\\_capital\\_budgeting&show=article&articleID=806&issueID=185](http://www.agmrc.org/renewable_energy/agmrc-renewable-energy-newsletter/?basics_of_capital_budgeting&show=article&articleID=806&issueID=185)

All articles are now provided in one print-ready format.

AgMRC Blog. The following entries were posted during the quarter:

1. Igniting America's Rural Entrepreneurship, September 20, 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?igniting\\_americas\\_rural\\_entrepreneurship&show=entry&blogID=726](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?igniting_americas_rural_entrepreneurship&show=entry&blogID=726)
2. Missouri Value-added Agriculture Projects Awarded \$370,000, September 12, 2012, [http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?missouri\\_valueadded\\_agriculture\\_projects\\_awarded\\_370000&show=entry&blogID=722](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?missouri_valueadded_agriculture_projects_awarded_370000&show=entry&blogID=722)

3. Vilsack Announces Grants to Support Beginning Farmers and Ranchers across 24 States, August 30, 2012,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?vilsack\\_announces\\_grants\\_to\\_support\\_beginning\\_farmers\\_and\\_ranchers\\_across\\_24\\_states&show=entry&blogID=713](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?vilsack_announces_grants_to_support_beginning_farmers_and_ranchers_across_24_states&show=entry&blogID=713)
4. Local and Regional Food: Farmers Markets and Beyond, August 22, 2012,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?local\\_and\\_regional\\_food\\_farmers\\_markets\\_and\\_beyond&show=entry&blogID=711](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?local_and_regional_food_farmers_markets_and_beyond&show=entry&blogID=711)
5. CSIF Conference to Help Farm Families Grow Successfully, August 9, 2012,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?csif\\_conference\\_to\\_help\\_farm\\_families\\_grow\\_successfully&show=entry&blogID=708](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?csif_conference_to_help_farm_families_grow_successfully&show=entry&blogID=708)
6. Resilience of American Agriculture— Innovation, Diversity and Growing Markets, July 26, 2012,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?resilience\\_of\\_american\\_agriculture\\_innovation\\_diversity\\_and\\_growing\\_markets&show=entry&blogID=689](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?resilience_of_american_agriculture_innovation_diversity_and_growing_markets&show=entry&blogID=689)
7. Specialty Crops and Weather Woes, July 17, 2012,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?specialty\\_crops\\_and\\_weather\\_woes&show=entry&blogID=684](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?specialty_crops_and_weather_woes&show=entry&blogID=684)
8. Community Supported Agriculture - A Mississippi Grower's Success Story, July 9, 2012,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?community\\_supported\\_agriculture\\_a\\_mississippi\\_growers\\_success\\_story&show=entry&blogID=680](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?community_supported_agriculture_a_mississippi_growers_success_story&show=entry&blogID=680)
9. Kentucky Passes New Agritourism Law, July 2, 2012,  
[http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc\\_blog/?kentucky\\_passes\\_new\\_agritourism\\_law&show=entry&blogID=679](http://www.agmrc.org/agmrc_blog/?kentucky_passes_new_agritourism_law&show=entry&blogID=679)

Two of the preceding blog articles were written by new AgMRC contributing writers on value-added agriculture issues in their region of the country.

AgMRC on Facebook. AgMRC has expanded its public outreach by creating a page on Facebook. During this quarter, the AgMRC Facebook page had twelve posts, ranging from local foods to renewable energy to new farming enterprises. These posts reached approximately 1,059 Facebook users. AgMRC had 25 active users in September and 43 people commenting on posts; 20 engaged users in August and 4 comments on posts; 28 engaged users in July and 13 comments on posts.

Press Release. A press release titled “[Agricultural Marketing Resource Center Assists Producers in Applying for USDA Value Added Grants](#)” was distributed on August 16. This release discussed AgMRC’s role in helping producer groups apply for the USDA Rural Business and Cooperative Service (RBCS) value-added producer grants.

Radio Spots. AgMRC signed an agreement with the National Farm Broadcaster’s Association to use their news service to market AgMRC topics on national farm radio. Two radio spots were created and distributed nationally this quarter: [Drought Consequences to Biofuels Unknown Right Now](#) in July and [USDA's VAPG Program Helps Turn Great ideas into Great Actions](#) in September. About 25 national stations picked up the spots, including many syndicated farm shows with multiple stations.

Prepared by Diane Huntrods, AgMRC, Iowa State University, November 2012.