

CORNHUSKER ECONOMICS

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University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension

Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Department of Agricultural Economics
<http://agecon.unl.edu/cornhuskereconomics>

Women in Agriculture Conference 2011

Taking Charge of Our Future was the theme of the 26th Women in Agriculture (WIA) Conference, February 17-18, 2011. Nearly 400 women participated in the event, hosted by the Department of Agricultural Economics, University Extension and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR).

Attendees were from all corners of Nebraska, with others making the trip from Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota and Indiana. The average attendee has attended the conference six times over the 26 years. For 53 women this was their first experience attending a WIA Conference, and two have attended the conference all 26 years. The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources sponsored 15 students attending the conference this year. Other interesting statistics show that the average participant has been involved in agriculture for 25.4 years, 49 percent are employed off the farm and 20.3 percent have a spouse working off the farm. Those attending are responsible for 168,500 acres of crop/grassland and 64,146 head of livestock – with everything from cattle, hogs and feeder cattle to donkeys, llamas and show cattle.

The main goal of the conference has always been to heighten attendees' skills and help them gain knowledge to take back and use in their agricultural operation. This is done through the keynote speakers, concurrent workshop sessions and networking with booth sponsors and other participants. At the start of the 2011 Conference, the IANR Vice-Chancellor Ronnie Green and Jane Green took a few minutes to welcome the group. Jane was very instrumental 26 years ago in bringing the Women in Agriculture Program to Nebraska, and she continues to be a huge supporter of the program over the years. This year the Reinke Manufacturing keynote speaker was Gloria

Market Report	Yr Ago	4 Wks Ago	3/18/11
<u>Livestock and Products,</u>			
<u>Weekly Average</u>			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.....	\$ *	\$109.41	\$114.21
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	127.58	139.00	155.87
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	105.72	131.00	130.89
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	153.69	167.75	186.88
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.	67.92	80.36	79.22
Feeder Pigs, National Direct 50 lbs, FOB.	*	*	*
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass, 51-52% Lean.	73.66	89.87	91.91
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., Heavy, Wooled, South Dakota, Direct.	*	162.62	188.00
National Carcass Lamb Cutout, FOB.	273.07	355.28	381.86
<u>Crops,</u>			
<u>Daily Spot Prices</u>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	3.77	7.80	6.89
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Omaha, bu.	3.58	6.86	6.52
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Omaha, bu.	9.46	13.41	13.37
Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	5.63	11.50	10.88
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, MN, bu.	2.24	4.15	3.49
<u>Feed</u>			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	135.00	140.00	140.00
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	87.50	72.50	72.50
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Premium Nebraska, ton.	*	*	*
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture, Nebraska Average.	95.00	*	191.00
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture, Nebraska Average.	34.00	*	71.00
*No Market			



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Schaefer, a motivational speaker from Kennebec, South Dakota. She got everyone started with laughter and a positive outlook, and encouraged everyone to look at the positive in their lives and find 15 minutes each day to laugh! During the noon hour, Dr. Larry Van Tassel, Head in the UNL Department of Agricultural Economics welcomed the group on behalf of the department.

Over 30 concurrent workshops were held during the conference, giving participants their choice of sessions. Some of these sessions were marketing, cattle health, computer records, farm pet health, landscaping, business feasibility, irrigation use, crop insurance, wildlife damage, animal welfare, financial planning, family communications, parenting, government programs, estate planning and crop budgeting. One of the more popular workshops was geared to the new farm wife – those who find themselves involved in farming or ranching that didn't grow up in agriculture. They learned how to talk the talk, and in addition how to walk the walk of life on the farm. Bonnie Schulz and Hilary Maricle, both instructors at Northeast Community College, discussed things found on the farm and terminology used everyday so that participants might feel more comfortable talking to the equipment parts store manager, the banker, seed salesman, coop manager or even their husband!

Jim Crandall, Elaine Cranford and Marilyn Schlake from the UNL Center for Applied Rural Innovation discussed business feasibility. Many participants have ideas for a value-added business on the farm, but don't know where to turn to see if it really is a viable one. The trio discussed how to conduct a critical self-analysis of the idea before moving on to industry research. We look to see a new business or two appear as a result of this workshop!



Women at WIA Conference listen to landscaping ideas from Jill Brown, Director of External Relations IANR and Jane Kruger, Landscaper.

Bethany Johnston, UNL Extension Educators discussed forage growth and stocking rates, grazing techniques for animal nutrition and rotating their pastures for plant health. They also looked at figuring AUMs (animal unit months), to see how much grass their cow/calf pairs may need. Matt Spangler, UNL Beef Extension Specialist talked about cattle genetics and the new tools available to improve herd genetics for feed efficiency, animal health and the overall nutritional value of beef for consumers. Rick Rasby, also a UNL Beef Extension Specialist shared management techniques designed to add value to a cow/calf enterprise, discussed nutrition, body condition, scoring beef cows, calving distribution, identifying calves and keeping good, accurate records.

Friday morning began with Furnas County Extension Assistant Lynette Brown speaking to participants about how a "Little Ag Won't Hurt You." Her humorous, no-nonsense approach to life on the farm vs. life in the city was very entertaining for every-

Nebraska producers always need to be thinking about business succession and estate planning. Joe Hawbaker, an attorney, presented two sessions on basic issues in farm and ranch estate planning, including relevant current estate and gift tax laws, basis adjustment rules, capital gains, inheritance tax asset preservation and probate. He discussed many of the tools used such as wills, trusts, contracts, leases and power of attorney. Surprisingly, less than 50 percent said they felt comfortable with the plans they currently had in place, but would take this information home and look at updating their plans.

Ranchers took advantage of several sessions on cattle.

Cindy Tusler and

one there, and she spoke of what many perceive as a “disconnect” between urban folks and those that produce the food for the entire world. Cowgirl singer and poet Georgeann Wearin of Hyannis, NE, the capstone speaker sponsored by Farm Credit Services of America, entertained the group. Her uplifting humor and song embraced the woman’s role on the ranch and sent everyone home on a highnote.

Attendees commented that as a result of the conference they intend to implement many changes on the farm, including:

- Take action and advocate for agriculture.
- Use EPD’s (Expected Progeny Differences) as genetic markers in the cattle herd.
- Update farm production records and utilize a spreadsheet to track grain inventory.
- Pay closer attention to what is happening globally in relation to our markets.
- Use technology (GPS, SMART phones, etc) more efficiently in their operation.
- Work closer with husband to make insurance and marketing decisions.
- Develop an estate plan.

Almost everyone said they hoped to be back next year! In upcoming months, focus groups will be held in each extension district with current and past participants and Extension Educators, to establish priorities and topics for upcoming conferences. We will continue to work with Nebraska’s agricultural women and help them plan and **take charge of their future!**



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