

Cornhusker Economics

Women in Agriculture: Today's Critical Difference

Market Report	Year Ago	4 Wks Ago	4-1-16
Livestock and Products,			
Weekly Average			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight.	165.72	132.00	135.42
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb.	280.75	198.24	200.89
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb.	220.64	165.76	163.76
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass.	248.92	226.24	222.46
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated.	55.83	51.55	63.31
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass 51-52% Lean.	66.49	69.65	76.44
Slaughter Lambs, woolled and shorn, 135-165 lb. National.	144.21	143.71	136.31
National Carcass Lamb Cutout FOB.	370.66	359.79	344.85
Crops,			
Daily Spot Prices			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu.	5.03	3.93	3.90
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	3.75	3.33	3.29
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Nebraska City, bu.	9.22	8.21	8.56
Grain Sorghum, No.2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt.	7.79	5.48	5.26
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, Mn, bu.	3.07	2.66	2.42
Feed			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton.	175.00	250.00	200.00
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton.	77.50	82.50	80.00
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton.	105.00	85.00	87.50
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture Nebraska Average.	174.25	134.50	130.00
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture Nebraska Average.	57.00	51.50	49.50
* No Market			

Women in Agriculture: Today's Critical Difference was the theme of the 31st Nebraska Women in Agriculture (WIA) Conference, February 25-26, 2016 in Kearney. This annual conference is hosted by the Department of Agricultural Economics, Nebraska Extension and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR). The Nebraska WIA program is committed to providing opportunities for all Nebraskans to develop management skills in every facet of agriculture by providing leadership, learning support, and networking avenues.



Over the years each conference has had its own unique characteristics and in 2016 this was no different. There was a wide variety of topics presented and discussed and some unusual ones as well! Topics ranged from basic grain marketing to flying unmanned vehicles, crop insurance updates to risk aversion, and tax planning in uncertain times to pesticide training, and everything in-between. It was a special treat to have Jolene Brown, from West Branch, Iowa and Trent Loos from Litchfield in attendance as the keynote and capstone speakers. Jolene is a farmer, author, and family business consultant with valuable life experiences to share. Trent is a Nebraska rancher who is passionate about sharing his agriculture story and motivating others to do the same.



Jolene Brown leads the group in a musical activity!



Participants enjoy Jolene Brown's group activity with exercise bands!

In 2016, 260 women and a few men attended the conference and represented a wide variety of agricultural backgrounds and demographics. The main reason attendees state for attending the conference is the opportunity to network and spend time with friends and colleagues, all the while discussing issues important to them as Nebraska agricultural producers. Participants were from all corners and most counties of Nebraska but others made the trip from Kansas, Colorado, South Dakota, Iowa, and Missouri. Of those that responded, 17% are under age 30, 15.9% age 30-39, 13.4% age 40-49, 23.2% age 50-59 and 24% are 60 and over. The average age of those attending was 48.2 years of age. It is important to note the increase in young women under the age of 30 attending this year's conference. This is partly due to the fact that the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) played a large role in encouraging students to attend, but also because younger women are playing a vital role in the agriculture industry. The majority of attendees have attended at least three conferences and one person has attended every conference since 1985. CASNR sponsored seven students and the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) sponsored 18 students to attend the entire conference this year.

Other interesting statistics show that of those attending the 2016 conference, over half or 53% are employed off the farm. Traditionally, spouses that work off the farm do so not only for the additional income but for the health insurance benefits it offers the family. Those attending report that they are responsible for 46,788 acres of row crops, 14,300 acres of small grains, 720 acres of fruits and vegetables and 14,693 head of livestock. Small grains include popcorn, millet, cane, wheat, sugar beets, sunflowers, and rye.

The main goal of the conference is to heighten participants' skills and knowledge and provide them with information they will take back to their agricultural operation. Many women report that they take the information gained from networking; concurrent workshop sessions and the keynote speakers back to their farm or ranch and review it with their partners. Together they evaluate and decide if they will implement any changes in their operation.

Using a scale of 1 (little change) to 5 (substantial change), participants reported a 4.54 change in their knowledge on specific topics, a 4.36 change in enhancing their skills and abilities, and an attitude change of 4.25. Attendees also reported their interest in various agricultural topics at 4.51 and they want to know much more. Their confidence level using this information and knowledge was reported at 4.31. A six month follow-up evaluation will be done on-line with this year's conference participants.

Teaching and encouraging leadership skills is something highly valued in women's programming and especially at these WIA conferences. Participants are given the tools and skills to go back to their communities and become active leaders by telling their own agriculture stories to those not involved in agriculture, taking ownership in various community activities and becoming part of the growing agriculture industry. In response to the survey question "Are you currently involved in a community/county organization?" over 60% said yes, and some had even run for an elective local office.

The future success of the conference depends on continued funding from our sponsors. We were honored to have Farm Credit Services of America as the premier sponsor for Jolene Brown. Silver sponsors included Reinke Irrigation, Inc.; Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation, and BASE. There were various agricultural business and government agencies sponsoring at other levels.

The Women in Agriculture program has had a profound impact on the lives of many women and agricultural operations in Nebraska over its 31 years. The involvement of women in agriculture nationwide and in Nebraska has increased in recent years. According to the 2012 Ag Census, there are approximately 47,000 operators in Nebraska--20,000 are women who partner with their spouses or other business partners. In addition, 4,091 women are the primary operators of their agricultural operation. Many women comment that business and estate planning is an issue that is the most difficult to tackle with their partners and family members, but is the most important.

A few comments from this year's attendees are below:

- "I now think I will be able to communicate better with my ENTIRE family and we will be pursuing business and estate planning again. We need to finish our transition plan and talk more to our kids about their dreams and goals."
- "The Women in Agriculture Conference broadened my education and helped me network with other ag women."
- "We are going to make and write out a business plan and stick with it! I also need to be sure our essential documents are in place."

For more information on this conference and the Women in Agriculture program see our webpage, <http://wia.unl.edu> or follow us on Twitter, @newomeninag and like us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/NebraskaWIA. Plans are already underway for the 2017 conference which will be held again in Kearney on February 23-24.

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