



Cornhusker Economics

Part II: The North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center – Activities and Success Stories

Last week's article provided an overview of the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center, including its operations, priorities, service areas, and how our grant program functions. This week, we'll detail our center's activities and highlight some of the numerous projects we've supported over 23 years since our awarding process started.

Center Activities

In addition to overseeing the grant program for the North Central region, the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center is dedicated to collaborating with its stakeholders and partner organizations in advancing its mission. Therefore, a key aspect of its mission involves needs assessment, training opportunities, and identifying valuable initiatives to enhance the visibility of the grant program and broaden its accessibility to a larger audience. Throughout the grant year, this is accomplished through various methods.

The Center prioritizes engaging with stakeholder listening groups and Council members to gather their insights. Through these sessions, members pinpoint and evaluate educational needs and emerging issues. Drawing from these discussions and recommendations, the Center then utilizes the results of the needs assessments to develop and administer the competitive grants

program for the subsequent year.

Additionally, we hold capacity-building and training sessions to assist stakeholders with our processes. An applicant webinar is typically held on a yearly basis to provide information to prospective applicants when our Request for Applications (RFA) is released. The last applicant webinar was held on September 27, 2023, to help interested parties learn more about the RFA and application process. Our Advisory Council members attend an annual summer meeting to review the needs assessment report and further identify emerging trends and current issues to help develop the regional priority language in the RFA. The meeting also helps introduce new and existing members to established procedures and the grant awarding process. The last advisory council meeting took place in Green Bay, WI and the next one is planned for Traverse City, MI in August.

On April 9, 2024, a training workshop was conducted for newly funded project directors emphasizing project administration duties and effective implementation through marketing, evaluation, and reporting practices for successful projects.

The Center sustains support for outreach initiatives to engage educators and potential applicants, fostering capacity building for future risk management education endeavors through networking opportunities.

The 2024 National Extension Risk Management Education Conference (ERME) that was recently held in Salt Lake City, UT over a 3-day period from April 9-11 with more than 206 conference participants presented an opportunity to network, share, and disseminate ongoing and emerging successful risk management initiatives that are being done nationally in all regions. This annual conference featured 3 keynote speakers, 48 concurrent session presentations on educational projects and topics, and a networking reception which included a poster session featuring 35 additional projects. This conference regularly brings together private and public sector educators, agency and organization leaders, and other agricultural professionals providing an opportunity to share ongoing and emerging successful risk management education efforts which target agricultural producers and their families. The four regional centers will host the 2025 National ERME Conference next spring on April 1-3, 2025, in Nashville, TN.

The Center participated in the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) Meeting & Conference that was held from August 13-17, 2023. Participation at the trade show was aimed at increasing visibility of the ERME Centers amongst county agricultural agents and visitors to the trade show.

The Center also co-sponsored the AAEA Extension meeting in Washington, D.C. and sponsored the Extension Outlook Conference in Kansas City, which were held in July and August respectively, reaching Extension and other Ag professionals.

In the last quarter of 2023, the Center took part in the National Ag Marketing Summit held in partnership with the Food Distribution Research Society and Farmer Veteran Coalition on November 12-14 in Washington, D.C. ERME sponsored a track session on “Successful Approaches to Managing Market Risk” which consisted of 7 different marketing-focused presentations. The Center managed the ERME exhibit booth throughout the event as well as to promote the ERME National Program. Participants from diverse backgrounds had the opportunity to learn more about ERME and our funding opportunities.

Success Stories

Projects supported by the Center assist farmers and ranchers in comprehending, developing, and applying risk management principles and practices to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their operations. While the extensive range of projects funded over time has a significant track record of success and positive outcomes for producers, the ERME program's Outstanding Project Award, initiated in 2019, acknowledges annually the effective endeavors of one project from each region that contributes to these desired outcomes for producers.

Now in its sixth year, the North Central Center recently recognized Elliot Dennis and his co-project directors, Jay Parsons and Jim Jansen from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for their recent project “Risk Management Education for Nebraska Livestock and Forage Producers Underserved by Crop Insurance” as its 2024 Outstanding Project Award Winner. The goal of this project was to educate cattle producers about federally funded crop insurance products. Beginning producers – those with less than 10 years of experience – were targeted through numerous workshops, conferences, webinars, and in-depth meetings focused on marketing and risk management. Aspiring producers were reached through youth risk management events as well as post-university semester-long classes to focus on livestock risk management and marketing for operations they planned to start or join. Participants gained a better understanding of available risk management tools and valuable hands-on experience.



Participants Attending Workshop Sessions

The Center also has numerous other projects that have their own success stories throughout the North Central region. One such project is from North Dakota State University led by Project Director Audrey Khalil on pulse crops. Pulse crops present a range of advantages for agriculture in North Dakota. Given the state's heavy reliance on agriculture for economic stability, incorporating pulse crops into farming practices can yield numerous benefits. These include enhanced resilience to climate fluctuations, better soil quality, and access to burgeoning markets for plant-based proteins. Responding to this demand, North Dakota State University arranged a comprehensive outreach program, featuring podcasts, workshops, field demonstrations, cafe talks, and an extension publication. These initiatives aimed to educate growers keen on exploring this promising agricultural avenue.

Finally, the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center is committed to educating American farmers and ranchers on effectively managing the distinct risks associated with producing food for global consumption. So far, we've funded 523 projects totaling over \$18.7 million, benefiting more than 168,000 participants. In the forthcoming segment, Part III of our article series, we'll delve deeper into funded projects, participants, outcomes, economic implications, and program impacts.

For further information about NCERMEC and its initiatives, please visit ncerme.org.



Photo shows field demonstrations that were held in North Dakota

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