

Cornhusker Economics

2021 Women in Agriculture Conference

More than 200 attendees joined the virtual 2021 Nebraska Women in Agriculture Conference from the comfort of their own homes, February 19-20. While this conference looked different compared to years past, it still captured the goals of building relationships while gaining valuable knowledge.

The two-day event offered both a live stream and an *on-demand* learning opportunity for the attendees. Two keynote speakers, four live workshops, and more than 10 *on-demand* workshops gave attendees a variety of topics and knowledge to take back to their operations.

Elaine Froese, a professional farm family coach, discussed farm transition and communication during her talk “Finding Fairness in Farm Transition.” She noted the challenges that farmers and ranchers face when talking about transition and gave solutions on how to overcome those hard discussions. Elaine provided resources and tools for families working through succession or other communication issues.

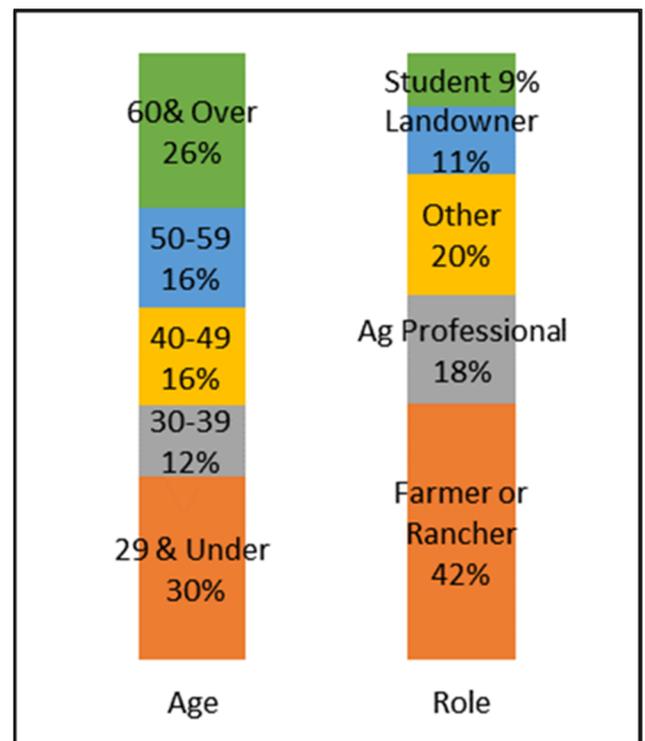
Brandi Buzzard Frobose, a rancher, communications professional and passionate agriculture advocate, discussed being authentic in the world of advocacy during her talk, “Agriculture & Advocacy: Hard Work Worth Doing.” She highlighted tips to properly advocate and tell your story.

Conference attendees also heard from three speakers during the live workshops. Katie Samples Dean talked about business entities and the differences between them. Erin Schoenberg and Halle Ramsey discussed the basics of business plans, how they function, how to implement one and how to build a plan. J’Nan

Ensz talked about taxes, business entities and the new tax laws for 2021.

People attending the conference represented a wide variety of agricultural backgrounds and demographics. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents identified as female, white, and non-Hispanic. Because the event was held virtually, 15% of attendants resided outside of Nebraska, a higher percentage than 2020’s in-person Conference.

On average, participants had attended the conference 5.4 times. Figure 1 shows the roles and ages of those who attended.



The average age of participants was 43.9, which was 2.5 years younger than the average age of participants at last year's event. Furthermore, a lower percentage of participants identified as farmers or ranchers, compared to last year, while a greater percentage identified as "other." Of the farmers and ranchers in attendance, 42% identified as beginning producers with less than 10 years' worth of experience.

The main goal of the conference is to increase attendees' skills and knowledge about a wide variety of topics. Workshop evaluations were sent out to attendees and 45 were submitted after the conference. Survey respondents were asked to complete these sentences:

As a result of this conference, I increased my knowledge in the following areas... and

As a result of this conference, I increased my skills in the following areas ...

The response options and percentage of survey respondents are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Impact of workshop session statement results.

	Knowledge	Skills
Agricultural leases	3%	2%
Analyzing financial documents	4%	3%
Calculating cost of production	3%	3%
Creating a business plan	16%	19%
Family and business relationships	28%	31%
Financial record-keeping	8%	7%
Health, stress and well-being	16%	16%
Lending and loans	4%	3%
Production record-keeping	6%	6%

The future success of the conference depends on continued funding from supporters. This year's conference was funded by the Nebraska Dry Bean Commission, Farm Credit Services of America, Nebraska Corn, Reinke Manufacturing, Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska, Valley Irrigation, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Beef Council, Ward Laboratories and Nebraska Farm Bureau.

This conference was also supported by grants from the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center (USDA-NIFA Award Number 2018-70027-28586) and the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development grant (USDA NIFA Award Number 2020-70017-32735).

For more information on this conference and the Women in Agriculture program visit, wia.unl.edu or follow us on Twitter, @newomeninag and like us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/NebraskaWIA.

The 2022 Nebraska Women in Agriculture Conference is scheduled for Feb. 24-25, 2022 at the Kearney Holiday Inn Convention Center.

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