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23rd Women in Agricultural Conference

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Over 300 women from across the state participated in the 23rd Women In Agriculture Conference held February 21-22, 2008. For some, it was their first time attending the conference, and for others it was their 23rd. Participants spent time listening to keynote speakers, participating in topic specific workshops and socializing. The women also had the opportunity to learn about new things happening in the agricultural industry by visiting with booth attendants and talking with the sponsors of the conference. “I enjoyed the positive attitude that rubbed from one person to another – such fun!” said a participant from Gosper County.

The conference had over 35 workshops in five sessions, covering topics such as: GPS usage, farm bill, beginning farmer programs, accounting, estate planning, Excel features, business plans, cow-calf records, stress management and many more! These workshops were designed for women to hear about specific information they could use on their farms, ranches or businesses throughout the year. When asked what changes participants plan to make within the current year as a result of the conference, one participant from Nuckolls County said she will “put up a new machine shed because of the tax change she was informed about.”

Three optional FunShops were also a part of the program on Thursday evening. Nebraska State Patrol Sergeant Jim Stover talked about personal safety. He showed the women techniques on how to get out of an unwanted harassment situation, and then gave them time to practice what they had learned. Another one of the FunShops, Step into Gardening, gave them a chance to get their hands dirty by making a stepping stone they could take home with them on Friday. The final FunShop helped workshop attendees learn basic techniques on buying and selling items on eBay.

The conference is designed to provide timely and useful information that the participants can take back to their family operations or their personal lives. We also encourage them to take what they learn and make changes to their operation...
based on their new knowledge. As a result of the conference, a Cuming County participant said that within the next ten years she will “cut back on what I physically do outside in the operation, but plan to continue computer and bookkeeping. I plan to take better care of me!!”

There were several speakers scattered throughout the conference that all of the participants had the opportunity to hear. The conference was kicked off by motivational speaker Shannon Zetterlund, who spoke to the women about being positive, that if you are looking for happiness you will find it. The evening entertainment was provided by Joseph E. Hall, who wooed the ladies with his magnificent voice. He earns his living by singing and performing Elvis music for groups. “Elvis is alive and well!” according to one conference participant!

This was the first conference for the new Women in Ag project coordinator, Megan Voss. She has attended the conference in the past and worked to incorporate some new ideas into the conference, while still maintaining many of the traditions of this longstanding conference.

“Oh, Women in Ag is not really a series of workshops. It’s more than that. It’s an event to be shared with interesting women,” summed up a participant from Clay County.

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