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WIA - The Conference that Makes a Difference

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CORNHUSKER ECONOMICS

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension

WIA - The Conference that Makes a Difference

| Market Report | Yr Ago | 4 Wks Ago | 1/4/13 |
|---|-----------|--------------|----------|
| <u>Livestock and Products,</u> | | | |
| <u>Weekly Average</u> | | | |
| Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight..... | \$121.23 | \$123.26 | \$128.50 |
| Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb. | 180.07 | 169.63 | 171.79 |
| Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb. | 151.11 | 152.33 | 152.37 |
| Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass. | 192.34 | 194.49 | 194.32 |
| Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated. | 82.29 | 70.40 | 81.20 |
| Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass, 51-52% Lean..... | 84.77 | 84.96 | 82.80 |
| Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., Heavy, Woolled, South Dakota, Direct. | 152.50 | 97.13 | * |
| National Carcass Lamb Cutout, FOB. | 396.54 | 297.59 | 299.69 |
| <u>Crops,</u> | | | |
| <u>Daily Spot Prices</u> | | | |
| Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu. | 6.07 | 8.06 | 7.39 |
| Corn, No. 2, Yellow Nebraska City, bu. | * | 7.31 | 6.95 |
| Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Nebraska City, bu. | * | 14.62 | 13.94 |
| Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt. | 10.88 | 12.29 | 11.54 |
| Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, MN, bu. | 3.10 | 4.03 | 3.46 |
| <u>Feed</u> | | | |
| Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton. | 155.00 | * | * |
| Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton. | 140.00 | 215.00 | 230.00 |
| Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Good Nebraska, ton. | 97.50 | 215.00 | 212.50 |
| Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture, Nebraska Average. | 214.50 | 282.50 | 266.25 |
| Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture, Nebraska Average. | 73.50 | 104.25 | 97.88 |
| *No Market | | | |

Year after year, hundreds of farmers, ranchers and business owners attend the Women in Agriculture (WIA) conference with a purpose – to learn and to network. That’s more than 400 like-minded individuals who could potentially use their knowledge and skills to positively impact their personal and economic goals. Is this happening? Are the hundreds of loyal WIA attendees using their newly acquired knowledge to teach others, add value to their agricultural operations or serve as advocates for agriculture? In other words, is the WIA conference good for women agriculturalists and Nebraska’s agricultural industry?

In Spring 2012, 565 individuals who attended the 2011, 2010 or 2009 conferences were asked to participate in an evaluative survey of the WIA Conference. A total of 274 responded with information about themselves, their operations and their views about the effectiveness of the conference. Based on their responses, key findings emerged.

When asked to self-identify their roles within their agricultural operation and within the industry, the study found that women often identified with multiple roles.

1. Within the farm or ranch operation, nearly two-thirds (60%) of the respondents stated they were main partners and 13 percent stated they were single owners. Another 15 percent considered themselves to be business managers, ten percent employees and six percent agricultural consultants. Nine percent were not directly involved in the farm or ranch operation.
2. Within the industry, 73 percent stated they were farmers, 32 percent ranchers and 20 percent service-providers. Only six percent of the respondents identified themselves as a value-added business owner. In addition, ten percent identified themselves as agricultural landlords. Of the farmers and ranchers, 21

percent identified themselves as having both types of operations.

When questioned why the WIA attendees participated in the conference, 49 percent said they wanted to gain knowledge and skills around farm and ranch operations, including how to improve their financial management practices. Women 60 years or older were more likely than women age 40 or younger to rate this reason as most important (61% compared to 45%). Was the WIA conference meeting those needs? Were individuals gaining the information and skills they needed to improve their financial management practices? The responses indicated that yes, individuals were or are currently changing their agriculture or business operations as a result of the WIA conference.

3. Since attending the conference, 36 percent of the Farmers and 38 percent of F/R Combined (individuals who indicated they have both a farming and a ranching operation), have or are currently modifying their operations by using new marketing grain tools. Thirty-seven percent of Farmers and 54 percent of F/R Combined have or are currently modifying operations by using new crop budgeting and record keeping tools.
4. Ranchers and F/R Combined have or are currently modifying their ranch management practices by implementing animal ID/tracking processes (39 and 28 percent, respectively); new grazing practices (39 and 34 percent, respectively); and adding new tools for marketing livestock (36 and 27 percent, respectively).
5. Forty-six of all respondents have or are currently modifying their tax planning strategies with F/R Combined leading with 51 percent and Farmers following close with 50 percent.
6. Use of new computer-based tools in decision-making was adopted by 51 percent of the F/R Combined and 50 percent of the Ranchers.
7. Thirty-nine percent of all survey respondents have or are currently modifying their estate plans, with another 24 percent planning to implement an estate plan within the next one to two years.

Individuals were asked to rank the level of impacts that these change of practices had on their operations. Responses indicate that changes are creating positive economic impacts for the conference attendees.

1. Farmers and F/R Combined (41 and 45 percent, respectively) reported that changes made to their operation led to moderate and high impacts in the area of increased farm or ranch profits, and increased business effectiveness (51 and 57 percent, respectively).

2. Ranchers reported the highest percentage of moderate to high impacts in the areas of increased use of agricultural networks and resources (33 percent) and effectiveness in business (34 percent).
3. Service Providers/Consultants reported the highest percentage of impacts in the areas of increased use of agricultural networks and resources (46 percent), effectiveness in business (37 percent) and improved family health (37 percent).

The WIA conference attendees represent a number of livestock and farm and ranch acres. Fifty-three percent indicated they have livestock and 75 percent reported producing farm crops. However, with only 48 percent providing their numbers of primary livestock and crops, the estimated value of \$286 million may be relatively low. Compared to Nebraska's overall livestock and crop production, the WIA conference attendees represent only a small fraction of the state's total agriculture volume. The figures do, however, represent an opportunity to provide education to a sector that is willing and able to implement agricultural education and practices that can have significant impact in their farm or ranch.

Finally, according to the women respondents, the WIA Conference is more than just skills learned and technology applied. When asked specifically to describe what they felt to be the greatest impact of the WIA conference, 13 percent cited emotional support, 31 percent networking with other women and 12 percent felt it was the personal growth. One participant shared the impact of the WIA conference as providing *"continued faith in the benefit of women gathering together to learn, laugh, cry and share life as farm women. WIA is an important, worthwhile program that enriches lives."* Together, through the sharing and mentoring of lasting friendships, the WIA participants provide a nurturing and educational culture that equates to improved agricultural operations, enhanced personal well-being and a stronger agricultural community.

The entire Women in Agriculture evaluative report is available at <http://wia.unl.edu>

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For additional information about the Women in Agriculture Conference, contact Cheryl Griffith, Conference Director, at (402) 472-0079, cgriffith2@unl.edu.

The next WIA Conference will be held February 21-22, 2013 in Kearney, NE. Visit the WIA website for conference details: <http://wia.unl.edu>.

