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Farm Use of Computers and Internet

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Cornhusker Economics

Cooperative Extension

Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources
Department of Agricultural Economics
University of Nebraska – Lincoln

Farm Use of Computers and Internet

Market Report	Yr Ago	4 Wks Ago	6/30/00
<u>Livestock and Products,</u>			
<u>Average Prices for Week Ending</u>			
Slaughter Steers, Ch. 204, 1100-1300 lb Omaha, cwt.	\$63.72	\$69.21	\$67.46
Feeder Steers, Med. Frame, 600-650 lb Dodge City, KS, cwt.	85.00	*	*
Feeder Steers, Med. Frame 600-650 lb, Nebraska Auction Wght. Avg.	94.25	*	105.75
Carcass Price, Ch. 1-3, 550-700 lb Cent. US, Equiv. Index Value, cwt.	101.84	112.16	109.52
Hogs, US 1-2, 220-230 lb Sioux Falls, SD, cwt.	*	45.50	*
Feeder Pigs, US 1-2, 40-45 lb Sioux Falls, SD, hd.	*	45.93	42.59
Vacuum Packed Pork Loins, Wholesale, 13-19 lb, 1/4" Trim, Cent. US, cwt.	96.75	117.75	136.50
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., 115-125 lb Sioux Falls, SD, cwt.	76.63	92.00	85.40
Carcass Lambs, Ch. & Pr., 1-4, 55-65 lb FOB Midwest, cwt.	172.00	210.00	190.00
<u>Crops,</u>			
<u>Cash Truck Prices for Date Shown</u>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Omaha, bu.	2.81	2.92	3.00
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Omaha, bu.	1.74	2.03	1.66
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Omaha, bu.	4.07	5.07	4.70
Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Kansas City, cwt.	3.01	3.55	2.81
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Sioux City, IA, bu.	1.18	1.23	1.18
<u>Hay,</u>			
<u>First Day of Week Pile Prices</u>			
Alfalfa, Sm. Square, RFV 150 or better Platte Valley, ton.	85.00	102.50	105.00
Alfalfa, Lg. Round, Good Northeast Nebraska, ton.	*	70.00	52.50
Prairie, Sm. Square, Good Northeast Nebraska, ton.	*	70.00	*
* No market.			

The availability of personal computers and the Internet has changed the business climate on farms and ranches across the United States. Record keeping, business analysis, communications and marketing are a few notable examples of potential computing applications. But how many in the farm sector have taken advantage of this potential tool?

A survey conducted by the National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA, in 1997, and again in 1999 demonstrates that while personal computer and Internet use is lagging behind rates in the general population, adoption continues to increase.

Table 1 shows percentage of farms using computers for various purposes in 1999, with 1997 values in parentheses. Across the United States, the percentage of farms with computer access grew to 47, from 38 percent in 1997, while those owning or leasing computers grew from 31 to 47 percent. Those using computers for their farm business increased from 20 to 24 percent, while farms with Internet access more than doubled to 29 percent.

Figures for Nebraska are comparable. Nebraska farms exceed United States averages in all categories except Internet access. This may be of particular cause for concern, considering that Nebraska farmers actually led their United States counterparts in 1997.

In neighboring states similar increases have also occurred. Furthermore, the same concern about Internet availability is present. While Nebraska ranked second in 1997 in Internet availability on farms, its



ranking dropped to sixth (among its neighbors) in 1999, leading only Missouri.

Farm size, as measured by gross receipts, seems to be related to computer use on farms. As Table 2 shows, the larger the farm class, the higher the percentage of use. Figures for states in the North Central Region of the United States (not shown) show a similar pattern. Computer use by farm type, however,

does not seem to vary. Table 2 shows similar rates of use on both crop and livestock farms.

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Source:
<http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/reports/nassr/other/computer/fmpc0799.txt>

Table 1. Computer and Internet Use by State - 1999 (1997)

State	Percentage of Farms			
	With Computer Access	That Own or Lease Computers	Using Computers for Farm Business	With Internet Access
Nebraska	49 (45)	44 (38)	31 (29)	26 (14)
Adjacent States				
Colorado	64 (47)	59 (43)	42 (31)	37 (16)
Iowa	51 (46)	45 (37)	32 (25)	30 (12)
Kansas	52 (36)	46 (31)	26 (21)	27 (11)
Missouri	39 (33)	34 (27)	19 (16)	19 (10)
South Dakota	50 (43)	39 (30)	31 (24)	29 (13)
Wyoming	65 (56)	48 (45)	38 (35)	30 (11)
United States	47 (38)	40 (31)	24 (20)	29 (13)

Table 2. Computer and Internet Use by Size and Type, United States 1999 (1997)

	Percentage of Farms			
	With Computer Access	That Own or Lease Computers	Using Computers for Farm Business	With Internet Access
By Sales				
\$1,000 - \$9,999	42 (32)	34 (25)	14 (11)	25 (12)
\$10,000 - \$99,999	46 (36)	38 (29)	26 (20)	27 (12)
\$100,000 +	68 (60)	62 (54)	53 (47)	43 (20)
By Farm Type				
Crop	47 (41)	40 (34)	25 (24)	29 (14)
Livestock	47 (36)	39 (28)	23 (17)	28 (12)