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Issues in agriculture - summer programs for 2007

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balance question is largely bogus. Whether you are concerned about weaning the U.S. from foreign oil, stopping global warming, or both, ethanol is better than gasoline and getting better every day.

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Issues in agriculture - summer programs for 2007

by Ann M. Holste, Extension Program Specialist, 515-294-4197, aholste@iastate.edu

The recent changes in agriculture indicate we are in another "Golden Age." There is no clear answer to how long high prices will last, or how much corn will ultimately be needed to meet ethanol demands. To help with decisions related to these issues, there are meetings to be held across Iowa this summer that will answer questions related to farmland leasing and what to do with all that extra grain.

Farmland Leasing Workshops

A hot issue that began last fall with the rise in grain prices and will continue to be an issue for a few years is rental rates. Currently, over 70 meetings are planned in Iowa with the majority of them occurring in July and August. The deadline for terminating a lease is September 1, so leasing decisions are being made right now for 2008.

Meetings are approximately 3 hours in length and are facilitated by ISU Extension farm management specialists. These workshops are designed to assist landowners, tenants and other agri-busi-

ness professionals with issues related to farmland ownership, management, and leasing agreements. Each workshop attendee will receive a set of useful materials about farm leasing arrangements.

Topics covered include:

- Cash Rental Rate Survey and Land Values Survey
• Comparison of different types of leases
• Lease termination
• Impacts of yields and prices
• Calculating a fair cash rent
• Use of spreadsheets to compare leases
• Available Internet Resources

All available dates, times, and registration information will be listed in the Iowa State University Extension Calendar (http://www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/) as they become available. Search under the Category "Financial Management & Strategic Planning" to find meeting information, or contact your county office to find the meeting being held closest to you.

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Grain Management and Storage Strategies

Increased corn acreage poses unique storage opportunities and challenges for rural Iowa. Ethanol plants have an impact on both the demand for corn and the quality of the corn demanded. Iowa State University Extension and the Iowa Grain Quality Initiative are sponsoring meetings across Iowa to address issues related to grain management and storage during the month of August. The day long programs will address four main areas: quality management and storage practices, harvesting and storage logistics, the economics of storage, system analysis and future planning. The agenda concludes by looking at the whole picture using a storage planning web module.

The discussion will include looking at the "harvest surge" of Fall 2007 and operational decisions that will need to be made this fall. There are economical and physical decisions that producers will be looking at including, how to manage what you have, accurate forecasting of bushels right now,

consignment of specific grain to specific storage, and market and contract decisions that are linked with storage options. Spreadsheets available through the Ag Decision Maker web site will aid in analyzing economic decisions.

The end of the program will allow for discussion and questions for the presenters. Presenters include field engineers and economists as well as campus faculty and staff. Meetings are currently planned in Lewis (Aug. 7), Sheldon (Aug. 8), Dows (Aug. 9), Newton (Aug. 14), Independence (Aug. 15), and Washington (Aug. 16). Advanced registration is \$25 per person or \$40 at the door. For more information contact your area field engineer or economist, or the Value-added Agriculture Program at: (515) 294-9483. The Iowa Grain Quality Initiative, www.iowagrains.org, and Ag Decision Maker, www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm, will provide information on issues in grain storage as they arise.

Beginning Farmer Opportunities and Renewable Energy are Top Farm Bill Priorities for Iowa Farmers

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Iowa farmers ranked "enhancing opportunities for small and beginning farmers" and "renewable energy" as top goals for the next farm bill. These goals were closely followed by increased competitiveness, protecting natural resources, and enhancing rural economies according to a survey of 736 Iowa farm operators coordinated by the Community Vitality Center at Iowa State University as part of a National Agricultural Food and Public Policy Preference Survey project.

The national effort was conducted in 27 states by Farm Foundation and the National Public Policy Education Committee. The Iowa results were released Friday as part of a 2007 Farm Bill Lunch and Learn Web Forum series organized by Iowa State University Extension.

Bioenergy production incentives, followed closely by food safety programs, head the list of programs producers would target for new or reallocated funding. "This is one area where Iowa farmer preferences mirror those at the national level," said Mark Edelman, director of the Community Vitality Center at ISU which coordinated the survey of Iowa Farmers.

When asked to rank existing programs that should continue to receive funding, Iowa farmers put disaster assistance at the top of the list, followed closely by other safety net programs such as commodity loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs), working lands programs, land retirement programs, counter-cyclical payments and insurance programs.