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

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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.

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“It is interesting to note that the preferences do vary some by farm size,” said Edelman. “Iowa’s large and medium farm operators place higher preferences on commodity loans, LDPs, counter-cyclical payments and insurance programs, while Iowa’s small farms place higher preferences on disaster assistance, land retirement and working lands programs,” he said.

Including labor, environment and food safety issues in trade negotiations received the greatest level of agreement among six agricultural trade policy strategies from both Iowa farm operators and those in the national survey.

Regarding conservation and environmental policy, the survey asked farmers to indicate their preferences on a number of conservation and environmental policy goals. In order of priority, Iowa farmers and farmers nationally indicated highest support for technical and financial assistance to achieve goals related to (1) soil erosion, (2) water quality, (3) air quality, (4) wildlife habitat and (5) animal waste management. Iowa’s small farmers indicated a higher level of plurality support for air quality and wildlife habitat assistance than did larger farmers.

On risk management program strategies, Iowa farmers and those nationally indicated the highest level of preference for tax-deferred savings accounts. However, Iowa’s large and medium size farm operators indicated a higher preference for increased coverage levels and subsidies for crop production and revenue insurance than did Iowa small farmers.

Regarding rural development strategies, Iowa farmers and those in the national survey indicated the highest level of agreement for business education and training assistance, grants for business development and job creation, and access to capital, respectively.

The survey results show that while farm program payment limits are supported by the weighted sample of farm operators nationally, Iowa farm operators see lower program payment limits as being more important than farmers nationally.

More information on the survey is available from Edelman at (515) 294-6144, medelman@iastate.edu, or on the Community Vitality Center Web site, www.cvcia.org, where the full Iowa Farm Bill Survey Report and access to the National Farm Bill Survey Report are available.

Updates, continued from page 1

Internet Updates

The following updates have been added to www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm.

Strategic Management Concepts – C6-39

Elasticity of Demand – C5-207

Experience Curve – C5-208

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