Small and Mid-size Iowa Farmer Training Program: Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Business Planning Skills / Phase 1: Market Research

Strategic Marketing Services

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Small and Mid-size Iowa Farmer Training Program: Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Business Planning Skills / Phase 1: Market Research

Abstract
This was a survey of 400 northeast Iowa producers about their marketing, entrepreneurship and business planning skills and needs. See related grant project 2005-M06.

Keywords
Market research and feasibility studies, Strategic Marketing Services

Disciplines
Agricultural Education | Agriculture | Entrepreneurial and Small Business Operations | Marketing

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SMALL AND MID-SIZE IOWA FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM:
MARKETING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP & BUSINESS PLANNING SKILLS

Phase I: Market Research

Funded By:
The Leopold Center For Sustainable Agriculture

Submitted To:
Management & Professional Development Center

Submitted On:
April 1, 2005

Submitted By:

STRATEGIC MARKETING SERVICES
The University of Northern Iowa, College of Business Administration, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0120
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Introduction

Background

Today many Iowans, including farmers, students and entrepreneurs, have a strong desire to sustain an economic connection to rural Iowa. However, many of those who choose to remain on the farm or live in rural communities struggle to maintain or increase their income, often becoming involved in unsuccessful business enterprises that drain their savings, cut income and reduce net worth. The Small and Mid-size Iowa Farmer Training Program is being created to address the need for training in the key areas of marketing, entrepreneurship and business planning skills.

This training program will be specifically designed to provide realistic approaches upon which to build and/or diversify ag-related businesses. The understanding of risks and rewards of ag-related enterprises in today’s market can greatly increase the chance of success. This program will offer basic business principles essential to identifying, starting and operating ag-related businesses. Some examples of potential classes include:

* Basic business start-up (including early stage financing)
* Business planning skills
* Establishing a competitive advantage
* Finance
* Goal setting (including identifying net income goals)
* Legal and tax issues
* Marketing (including product, pricing, promotion and distribution)
* Market research/Industry research
* Money management/Accounting

Even the most valuable training programs can be rendered useless by obstacles such as time/season, cost, method of delivery, program content, length of training and location. Furthermore, they may not be directly applicable to the intended audience and their needs. To maximize the impact of this training program, research was conducted to identify the needs of the target audience and to act as a basis for a highly specialized and effective training program.

Objectives

In order to address project objectives, three distinct tasks were created. This summary report covers Phase I: Market Research, in which SMS was tasked to complete the initial research component. The research was designed to provide insight into the following topics:

* Evaluate the level of interest and commitment among Iowans in pursuing ag-related enterprises
* Identify specific training topics targeted in the areas of marketing, entrepreneurship and business planning
* Measure the level of interest and commitment to training
* Determine training obstacles/barriers
* Identify preferred training methods
Methodology

Phase I: Market Research called for a self-completion mail survey to be distributed among Northeast Iowa\(^1\) farmers to determine the necessity of further development of a training program targeted to meet ag-related business needs. In order to increase initial response rates, SMS designed a two-phase recruitment approach which included a press release in targeted counties followed shortly by individual survey parcels.

In early February, the press release was made public and successfully acted as a vehicle to increase the awareness of this study. Less than two weeks later, 4,000 surveys and cover letters were sent to a random sample of farmers whose names and addresses were obtained through Select Publishing, a publishing company which was determined to have one of the most comprehensive and cost effective lists available. Survey invitations were also sent out to approximately 80 MyEntreNet participants via email to help ensure a proper response rate.

Of the 4,080 total survey parcels mailed, 89 were returned upon delivery. SMS was able to forward 16 of those to new addresses which calculate to a surveyed population of 4,007. SMS received a total of 435 surveys for a response rate of 10.86%. However, only 356 were returned by the February 25th deadline and used in the analysis of this report. The remaining 79 were comprised of 23 completed surveys received after the deadline, 20 incomplete/incorrect surveys and 36 retired/deceased participants. With such a high response rate, it was unnecessary for SMS to conduct follow-up phone calls as a statistically valid sample was collected with a 95+ 4.96 percent confidence level. This means for any ranking or rating where the group size (N) matches or comes close to matching the total group size of 356, we can be 95 percent certain that the data are within plus or minus 4.96 percent of being accurate\(^2\).

In addition to running frequencies and means, statistical testing was completed using Chi-Square and One-way ANOVA techniques. Statistical tests were conducted to compare differences between farms of various sizes. The following guidelines were used to place respondents into like groupings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crops:</th>
<th>Hogs:</th>
<th>Cattle:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small - Less than 500 acres</td>
<td>Small - Less than 250 hogs</td>
<td>Small - Less than 100 cows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium - 500-1499 acres</td>
<td>Medium - 250-749 hogs</td>
<td>Medium - 100-499 cows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large - 1500 acres or more</td>
<td>Large - 750 hogs or more</td>
<td>Large - 500 cows or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Chi-Square and ANOVA tests were conducted to find any statistically significant differences between farm operation sizes. A few significant differences were identified through this process, and they are noted in the Results section of the text.

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\(^1\) Counties surveyed include Allamakee, Benton, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hardin, Howard, Jackson, Jones, Linn, Marshall, Mitchell, Story, Tama, Winneshiek and Worth.

\(^2\) If we were to conduct this same survey 100 times, 95 out of the 100 administrations should yield results within ± 4.96 percent of the current collected data.
Executive Summary

Demographics
Responses revealed that the two most frequent situations for farmers in this participant group included owning the land they farm and leasing/renting the land they farm. These options were selected by approximately 90 percent and 65 percent of the respondent group, respectively. It is also appropriate to recognize that the 65 percent of respondents who indicated leasing/renting include both those who lease/rent the land from an owner and the owners who lease/rent their land out to be farmed. With nearly 90 percent each, corn and beans were the most frequently reported types of operations and corn was most often selected as the primary operation. Approximately two-thirds of the group reported farming less than 800 acres (63 percent) or owning a herd size less than 300 (68 percent), which indicates a group composition of primarily small to medium sized farms.

Almost all of the participants were men and just over four-fifths fell between the ages of 40 and 69. The vast majority, roughly 90 percent, have been farming for at least 20 years. About two-fifths have graduated high school or received their GED, almost one-fourth have completed at least some college level courses and an additional one-third have their college degree. Just over 80 percent of the group has Internet access, a vast majority of those indicated access was at their home.

Sources of Income
A large portion of respondents reported multiple means of income, as only one-fifth of participants stated that their entire annual income is derived from their farming operation. Of the remainder, 16.7 percent have ag-related supplemental income, 55.9 percent have non ag-related supplemental income and 27.4 percent have both ag and non ag-related supplemental income.

Almost two-thirds of those with supplemental income were satisfied or very satisfied with the current level of income that was being generated. Almost 85 percent of these respondents planned to continue supplementing their farm income in the long term. Very few were interested in replacing their entire income. For those participants who do not currently have an additional source of income, approximately 35 percent thought they would likely need to find an additional source of income in the next five years. The top choice of supplemental income for the 26 respondents in this situation would be to find a job.
**Level of Interest/Training Topics**

On the whole, participants were interested in developing additional sources of income and business skills. Two-thirds of the group reported being very interested/interested in developing an additional source of income and in learning new business skills that would help them supplement their current income. When working to identify areas of interest, respondents were asked to provide their level of interest regarding a series of training topics related to small business development. Their level of interest was recorded using a scale of 1 to 5, with one being not at all interested and five being very interested. Overall, the level of interest in all topic areas listed was quite similar with all mean scores falling between 2.99 and 3.75, indicating only moderate interest. The greatest level of interest was in marketing with a mean of 3.75 followed by production (3.61). The least amount of interest was expressed in basic business start-up including early stage financing (2.99).

**Training Delivery**

When asked how to best deliver training, half-day on-site class sessions was the most preferred method of delivery followed by Internet/online. Over half of the participants who provided a distance threshold would be willing to travel between 20 and 30 miles for a half-day class, with an additional one-fourth who would be willing to travel 40 to 59 miles. When all participants were asked how likely they would be to attend an on-site class if that were the only way the session was available, almost 60 percent said they would be very likely/likely to attend.

Participants were most concerned about the time required for training when asked to identify the largest obstacle they would need to overcome in order to attend future small business training. Travel requirements and training costs fell to a distant second and third, respectively. Although time required is a major issue, participants identified January, February and March as the best months in which to hold training sessions. The traditional planting and harvesting months of April, May, September and October were the least popular choices. In terms of training costs, almost two-thirds of participants would be willing to pay between $25 and $99. One-fifth would not be willing to pay more than $25, while just under six percent would not be willing to pay anything for the training.

**Statistical Testing**

Chi-square and one-way ANOVA testing revealed the following differences between farms categorized as small, medium and large:

- Respondents categorized as a large operation appear to be significantly less likely to supplement current income when compared to small and medium size operations.
- Respondents categorized as a large operation appear to be significantly less interested in developing an additional source of income when compared to small and medium size operations.
- Respondents categorized as a large operation appear to be significantly less interested in learning new business skills to help supplement income when compared to small and medium size operations.
- Respondents categorized as a small operation appear to be significantly less likely to indicate January as the best time to participate in training when compared to large size operations.

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3 Small, medium and large farms were categorized as defined in this report’s Methodology section.
• Respondents categorized as a *small* operation appear to be significantly less likely to select *February* as the best time to participate in training when compared to *large* size operations.

• Respondents categorized as a *small* operation appear to be significantly more likely to pay under $25, if willing to pay anything, compared to *medium* and *large* size operations.

• Respondents categorized as a *large* size operation appear to be significantly more likely to pay $50 or more when compared to *medium* and *small* size operations.

• Respondents categorized as a *small* operation appear to be significantly less likely to have *Home Internet access* when compared to *medium* and *large* size operations.

• Respondents categorized as a *small* operation appear to be significantly more likely to not have Internet access when compared to *medium* and *large* size operations.

• Respondents categorized as a *small* operation appear to be significantly more likely to be over the age of 50 when compared to *medium* and *large* size operations.

• Respondents aged (30-49) appear to be significantly more likely to run *medium* and *large* size operations.

• Respondents who were categorized as a *small* sized organization were significantly more likely to have only completed high school.

• Respondents who were categorized as a *large* size organization were significantly more likely to have some college courses or a college degree.
Results

1. Of the following, which ones describe your current situation? Do you...

When asked to describe their current farming situation, respondents most frequently reported that they Own the land with 306 responses, while Lease/rent the land was selected second most frequently with 233 responses. From there, responses drop significantly with Manage a farm for another owner receiving only 22 responses. Work for someone on their farm and Do not work on a farm were selected the least.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own the land</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease/rent the land</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage a farm for land owner</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work for someone on their farm</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not work on a farm</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers provided by participants in response to “Other” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Work off farm in addition to farming operation – 4
- Retired/Semi-Retired – 2
- Crop share – 2
- Seed dealer/Dealership – 2
- Custom baling
2. Of the following, which type of farming operation do you currently own/manage?

The majority of participants selected Corn (320) and Bean (309) in regards to the type of farming operation they currently own/manage. Beef was selected by 124 respondents, while 77 respondents selected Hog. Dairy had the lowest representation with only 23 respondents. Participants were allowed to select more than one of farm type which accounts for the combined frequencies totaling more than 100 percent.

Answers provided by participants in response to “Other” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Hay – 32
- Alfalfa – 18
- Oats – 9
- Sheep – 9
- Grains – 5
- Produce – 5
  - Vegetables – 4
  - Fruit
- CRP – 3
- Prairie – 2
- Eggs
- Elk
- Chickens
- Goats
- Greenhouse
- Wood sales
- Pasture
- Kennel
- Straw
- Tree farm
Participants were also asked to indicate their primary type of farming operation. Of the 106 who indicated a primary operation, *Corn* was selected the most frequently by 38.7 percent of respondents, followed by *Beef* with 19.8 percent. *Hog* and *Dairy* farms were indicated as primary operations by 15.1 and 12.3 percent of the respondent group, respectively. *Bean* was selected least often as a primary operation, receiving only 6.6 percent of responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hog</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bean</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers provided by participants in response to “Other” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Corn and Bean – 2
- CRP – 2
- Carrots
- Eggs
- Prairie
- Sheep
3. Approximately how many acres do you farm annually?

When participants were asked approximately how many acres they farm annually, answers ranged from 7 to 4,300 with a mean of 775. Over half (56.6 percent) of the responses fell between 200 and 799 acres. This group was comprised of 24.4 percent in the 200-399 range, 18.2 percent in the 400-599 range with an additional 14.0 percent in the 600-799 range. Just under 15 percent of respondents reported that they farmed more than 1,400 acres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 200</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-399</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-599</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-799</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800-999</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000-1199</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200-1399</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400-1599</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600-1799</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-1999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 or Above</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3A. What is the approximate size of your herd?

When participants were asked to approximate the size of their herd, answers ranged from 8 to 300,500 with a mean of 2,366. However, by removing this outlier⁴, the answers ranged from 8 to 9,600 with mean herd size of 632. Approximately two-thirds (67.6 percent) reported a herd size of Less than 300. Approximately 8 percent indicated their herd size was 300-599, followed by 600-899 and 900-1199, both at 4.6 percent. Only 9.2 percent of respondents reported their herd size as 2100 or Above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Herd</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 300</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-599</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-899</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-1199</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200-1499</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-1799</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800-2099</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100 or Above</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴Outlier reported owning 300,000 chickens and 500 sows for a combined total of 300,500.
4. How many years have you been farming?

An overwhelming majority (87 percent) of the respondent group has been farming for 20 years or more. An additional 11 percent have been farming for 10 to 19 years. Very few, less than 2 percent, have been farming under 10 years.
5. What percentage of your total annual family income is derived from the following sources?

A. Your farming operation (identified in question 2)?

Of the 346 participants who provided a percentage of their total annual income derived from their farming operation, responses ranged from 4 to 100 percent with a mean of 65.81. Almost half of this group reported that their primary farming operation contributes 75 to 100 percent of their total annual income. Almost 22 of this group reported living entirely off their farming operation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farming operation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-24%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Other ag-related income-producing activities?

Of the 124 participants who provided the percentage of their total annual income derived from other ag-related activities, responses ranged from 1 to 100 percent with a mean of 23.83. Almost two-thirds of this group reported that their other ag-related income producing activities contribute 1 to 24 percent of their total annual income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ag-related supplement income</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-24%</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Other non ag-related income-producing activities?

Of the 234 participants who provided the percentage of their total annual income derived from other non ag-related activities, responses ranged from 1 to 100 percent with a mean of 41.87. One-third of this group reported that their non ag-related income producing activities contributed 1 to 24 percent to their total annual income, while another one-third reported contributions of 50 to 74 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non ag-related supplement income</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-24%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. If applicable, please describe your ag-related income producing activities.

Responses provided to the question, “If applicable, please describe your ag-related income producing activities,” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Custom work – 27
- Part time ag-related employment – 22
- Seed sales – 16
- Assist other farmers – 12
- Other products – 10
- Trucking – 9
- Lease farmland – 7
- Consulting – 5
- Board of Directors – 4
- Cattle operations – 4
- Government subsidies – 4
- Ag investments – 3
- Crop Insurance Agent – 2
- Miscellaneous – 3
  - Farmland Real Estate Broker
  - Value added meat marketing
  - Value added co-op and LLC’s

7. If applicable, please describe your non Ag-related income producing activities.

Responses provided to the question, “If applicable, please describe your non ag-related income producing activities,” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Work off-farm (unspecified) – 32
- Retirement funds – 30
- Educational services – 29
- Investments – 29
- Health services – 25
- Financial institutions – 16
- Construction – 14
- Trucking – 10
- Factory – 8
- Retail – 7
- Insurance – 5
- Postal service – 5
- Cemetery work – 3
- Secretary – 3
- Charter pilot – 2
- Custom finishing – 2
- Maintenance – 2
- Operator – 2
- Miscellaneous – 19
  - Building inspector
  - Consulting
  - Cooperative extension worker
  - Day care
  - Engineer
  - Fire Fighter
  - Frame straightening
  - Garbage burning for energy
  - Iowa National Guard
  - Lawn mowing
  - Real estate
  - Self-storage facility
  - Snow removal
  - Librarian
  - Campground
  - Computer programmer
  - Auctioneer
  - Seed company
  - Elevator worker
8. How satisfied are you with the current amount of supplemental income your family generates?

Roughly 65 percent of the participants reported they were Very Satisfied or Satisfied with respect to the current amount of supplemental income their family is generating. While 14.8 percent indicated being Dissatisfied, only 3.4 percent of participants were Very Dissatisfied with the amount of supplemental income being generated by their family.
9. In terms of these supplemental income activities, is your primary long-term goal to...

When participants were asked their primary long-term goal in regard to current supplemental income activities, a majority (84.8 percent), indicated they plan to *Continue supplementing current income*. Nearly ten percent of participants indicated the desire to *Eventually replace entire income* with their supplemental income.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Continue supplementing current income | 90.1%
| Eventually replace entire income | 9.9%
| Other | 5.3%

Answers provided by participants in response to “Other” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Retire/quit – 7
- Sell/rent out the land– 2
- Find other sources of income – 2
- Continue part time dealership
- Investments
10. How likely is it that your family will need to find additional sources of income to supplement your current income in the next five years? **Note:** Question 10 applies to those who do not have any type of supplemental income.

Less than 10 percent of the respondents who do not currently have any type of supplemental income believe their family will be Very Likely to need to find an additional source of income in the next five years. An additional 27 percent predict they will Likely have to find an additional source. However, half of the total group predicts the necessity of finding an additional source of income will be Unlikely or Very Unlikely in the next five years. Almost 15 percent of respondents did not know what the short-term had in store for their family.

One-way ANOVA statistical testing revealed that respondents categorized as a large operation appear to be significantly less likely to supplement current income when compared to small and medium size operations.
10A. If likely or very likely was selected, which of the following would you/other family members most likely consider to supplement/increase your income?

When participants were asked what they would consider doing to generate additional income, the majority, nearly 60 percent, indicated they would *Find a Job*. Roughly 15 percent would consider *Starting an agricultural related business* while only 4.5 percent would consider *Starting a non-agricultural related business*.

Respondents provided the following responses when asked to explain what type of agricultural related businesses they were considering:

- Expand hog buildings
- Haul agricultural related product

Respondents provided the following responses when asked to explain what type of non-agricultural related businesses they were considering:

- Utilizing the truck we own and rebuilding cars and trucks
11. How interested are you in developing an additional source of income?

A majority of participants were *Very Interested* or *Interested* (66.6 percent) in developing an additional source of income, while just over 20 percent of respondents were *Uninterested* or *Very Uninterested*. Thirteen percent of the total respondent group was indifferent.

One-way ANOVA statistical testing revealed that respondents categorized as a *large* operation appear to be significantly less interested in developing an additional source of income when compared to *small* and *medium* size operations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=353</th>
<th>Very Interested</th>
<th>Interested</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Uninterested</th>
<th>Very Uninterested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. How interested are you in learning new business skills that would help you learn to supplement your income?

Over 65 percent of respondents indicated being Very Interested or Interested in learning new business skills that would help supplement their incomes. Participants who were Uninterested or Very Uninterested about learning new business skills accounted for 23.4 percent of the respondents, while just over 11 percent were Neither Interested nor Uninterested.

One-way ANOVA statistical testing revealed that respondents categorized as a large operation appear to be significantly less interested in learning new business skills to help supplement income when compared to small and medium size operations.
13. Please rate your level of interest in learning more about each of the following topics.

Using a five-point scale ranging from Not At All Interested to Very Interested, respondents were asked to rate their interest in ten training topics centered around small business operation. Marketing was selected most often, with a mean of 3.75, followed by Production (3.61) and Establishing a Competitive Advantage (3.54). Although Basic Business Start-up Including Early Stage Financing was the lowest rated topic, with a mean of 2.99, it was still well above the midpoint of two and a half on a one to five scale.

Answers provided by participants in response to “Other” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Use of the internet and computer – 2
- Spanish
- Stocks and Bonds
- Organic Marketing
- Organic Production
- Commodity Trading
- Create decent market prices for livestock and commodities
14. Please rank the following in order of your most preferred method of delivery, assuming the courses were offered on the topics in which you showed interest.

The following table identifies which factors respondents ranked as their most preferred methods of delivery, assuming the courses were offered on the topics in which they showed interest. The factors were ordered by looking at a combination of variables including the number of respondents who chose a specific factor as a preferred method of delivery, the mean score (with one being the greatest and four being the lowest) and the number of times an individual factor was ranked the number one method of delivery.

_Half-day on-site class sessions_ was indicated as the most favorable method across all three variables. The second and third most preferred methods of delivery were _Through the internet/online_ and _Mail Correspondence_, respectively. The least favorable method of delivery indicated by participants was the _Iowa Communications Network_.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Of Respondents</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>No. of times ranked First</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>175</td>
<td>Half-day on-site class sessions</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159</td>
<td>Through the internet/online</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>165</td>
<td>Mail correspondence</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td>Full-day on-site class sessions</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Iowa Communications Network</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14A. I would be willing to travel X amount of miles one way for a half-day of on-site class sessions.

If respondents indicated *Half-day on-site class sessions* as one of their preferred delivery methods, they were then asked to specify how many miles they would be willing to travel for a half-day session. Nearly 53 percent of participants were willing to travel 20-39 miles one way, and just over 24 percent were willing to travel 40-59 miles one way. Less than six percent of respondents indicated a willingness to travel 80 miles or more, while slightly less than seven percent were not willing to travel more than 20 miles.
14B. I would be willing to travel X amount of miles one way for a full day of on-site class sessions.

If respondents indicated *Full-day on-site class sessions* as one of their preferred delivery methods, they were then asked to specify how many miles they would be willing to travel for a full day session. Roughly 36 percent of participants were willing to travel 20-39 miles one way and almost 35 percent were willing to travel 40-59 miles. Nearly 12 percent of respondents indicated a willingness to travel 80 miles or more, while less than four percent were not willing to travel any more than 20 miles.
15. If the training were only available through on-site classes, how likely would you be to attend?

Slightly over 49 percent of the participants indicated that they would be Likely to attend on-site classes if that was their only option for delivery. An additional 8.7 percent would be Very Likely. Almost 22 percent of respondents reported Neither and another 20 percent indicated being Unlikely or Very Unlikely to attend any on-site classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unlikely</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15A. If you answered Unlikely or Very Unlikely, Why?

Answers provided by participants in response to “Why” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Time – 15
  - Wouldn’t want to be away all day
- Distance – 6
- Interference with work – 5
- Family – 3
- Age – 2
- Retiring soon – 2
- Lack of flexibility
- Weather
- Money
- Health Issues
16. Please rank the following in order of the largest obstacles you will need to overcome in order to attend future small business training?

The following table identifies which factors respondents ranked as the largest obstacles they would need to overcome in order to attend future small business training. The factors were selected by looking at a combination of variables including the number of respondents who chose a specific factor as an obstacle, the mean score (with one being the greatest and four being the lowest) and the number of times an individual factor was ranked the number one, or largest, obstacle.

A majority of participants indicated *Time required for training* as the largest obstacle that they will need to overcome. *Travel required for training* and *Cost of Training* were the second and third most common obstacles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Of Respondents</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>No. of times ranked First</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>Time required for training</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186</td>
<td>Travel required for training</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>178</td>
<td>Cost of Training</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>No interest</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers provided by participants in response to “Other” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- Age – 3
- Work – 3
- Quality and content of training – 3
- Daytime class
- Time of year
- Opportunity that would inspire action
17. Please select three months that you consider to be the best time to deliver training for you/your family.

An overwhelming majority of participants indicated January and February as the best months to attend a training session. March was reported third, outnumbering December (fourth place) by 67 participants. Fewer than 10 responses were given for the months of April, May, June, September and October.

Chi-square statistical testing revealed that respondents categorized as a small operation appear to be significantly less likely to indicate January as the best time to participate in training when compared to large size operations. Additionally, chi-square testing revealed that respondents categorized as a small operation appear to be significantly less likely to select February as the best time to participate in training when compared to large size operations.
18. How much would you be willing to pay to attend a full-day workshop or to receive equivalent materials through the mail or online?

When asked how much they would be willing to pay, the majority (80.6 percent) would not be willing to pay more than $99. More specifically, 17.1 percent wouldn’t pay more than $25, 34.6 percent would pay $25-$49, and 28.9 percent would pay in the $50-$99 range. Just under six percent would not be willing to pay any amount for training. On the opposite end of the spectrum, 13.7 percent would pay $100 or more to attend a full-day workshop or to receive equivalent materials.

Chi-square statistical testing revealed that respondents categorized as a small operation appear to be significantly more likely to pay under $25, if willing to pay anything, compared to medium and large size operations. Additionally, chi-square testing revealed that respondents categorized as a large size operation appear to be significantly more likely to pay $50 or more when compared to medium and small size operations.
19. Where do you currently have access to the Internet?

Most of the respondent group reported having access to the Internet at Home (271) with an additional 47 who also have access at Work. These numbers include respondents who have access in both locations as they were allowed to select more than one option. Only 71 respondents reported having No Access to the Internet.

Chi-square statistical testing revealed that respondents categorized as a small operation appear to be significantly less likely to have Home Internet access when compared to medium and large size operations. Additionally, chi-square testing revealed that respondents categorized as a small operation appear to be significantly more likely to not have Internet access when compared to medium and large size operations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=356</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>No Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>271</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Aggregate'
20. Please indicate your gender.

A majority (94.4 percent) of the respondent group were males, while only 5.6 percent were females.
21. To which of the following age groups do you belong?

When respondents were asked to identify their age group, 81.5 percent reported being between 40-69, with an additional 12.4 percent who fall in the 70 or Above category. Very few respondents (5.3 percent) were 30-39 and less than one percent of the total respondent group was under the age of 30.

Chi-square statistical testing revealed that respondents categorized as a small operation appear to be significantly more likely to be over the age of 50 when compared to medium and large size operations. Additionally, chi-square testing revealed younger (30-49) respondents appear to be significantly more likely to run medium and large size operations.
22. Which of the following best describes the highest level of education that you’ve completed?

Nearly 39 percent of respondents indicated having a *High school diploma*, followed closely by those with a *College degree* at 30.6 percent. An additional 23.3 percent have taken at least some college courses. Just over two percent reported having a *Masters* degree while another two percent reported attending *Some high school*.

Chi-square statistical testing revealed that respondents who were categorized as a *small* sized organization were significantly more likely to have only completed high school. Respondents who were categorized as a *large* size organization were significantly more likely to have some college courses or a college degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma/GED</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers provided by participants in response to “Other” are listed below in descending order of the frequency with which they were mentioned.

- PhD – 4
- 8th Grade – 3
- DMACC 2 years
- Navy electronics
- Vocational Training