Meet the Staff

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Meet The Staff

What does a systems support specialist at FAPRI do? Or rather, what doesn't she do? Just ask Karen Kovarik who has been managing and occasionally juggling FAPRI's economic information resources since October, 1993. On any given day, Karen may be hard at work on projects ranging from producing the two FAPRI outlook books to preparing briefing papers for the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to fielding requests for production statistics from FAPRI's hard-working policy analysts. She's at home designing and developing tables, graphics, and images used in policy analysis reports and formal presentations given by FAPRI staffers. Much of the layout and design for the Iowa Ag Review is the result of Karen's comprehensive computer skills. Managing and updating the computer-based information contained in FAPRI's extensive agricultural database constitutes another large share of her responsibilities.

Karen assists in the design and implementation of data storage, retrieval, and presentation systems. Her familiarity with computer operating environments is impressive; she's worked with OS-2, DOS, Windows, IBM Token-Ring, Novell, IBM AS400 and Macintosh System 7.0 networks. She's proficient in software programs such as Lotus 1-2-3, Freelance Plus Graphics, Harvard Graphics, Word, Word Perfect, ProCom, Q&A database, and Checkbook Solutions Payroll. With this breadth of experience, FAPRI staff often call on her in filling their personal computer software needs and support requirements. In addition, she maintains contact (and an extensive library) with national and international data sources needed to provide working material for the FAPRI models.

Darnell Smith, managing director of FAPRI, says, "The degree of responsibility and importance to CARD of this position should not be understated. All FAPRI data and analytical results are dependent on Karen's performance as systems support specialist."

Before coming to CARD, Karen worked as a data support specialist for Women's Health Services and Samaritan Hospital in Clinton. She grew up on a farm in northeast Iowa near Calmar and recalls that doing chores was a good way to alleviate stress in those days. Her diploma as an information processing technician was earned at Northeast Iowa Technical Institute in Calmar.

Iowa Ag Review is published by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at Iowa State University, a program of the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD). FAPRI is organized cooperatively by CARD at Iowa State University and the Center for National Food and Agricultural Policy at the University of Missouri-Columbia. It provides economic analysis for policymakers and others interested in the agricultural economy. Analysis that has been conducted jointly with the University of Missouri is identified here as FAPRI analysis. This publication presents summarized results that emphasize the Iowa implications of ongoing agricultural policy analysis, analysis of the near-term agricultural situation, and discussion of new agricultural policies currently under consideration.

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Contact Betty Hempe for a free subscription, publication information, and address changes at Iowa Ag Review, CARD Publications, Iowa State University, 578 Heady Hall, Ames, IA 50011-1070; Phone 515-294-7519, Fax 515-294-6336, e-mail CARD@card.iastate.edu, WWW http://www.ag.iastate.edu/card

December 1995 CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT Page 11