

Master Marketer Newsletter

<http://mastermarketer.tamu.edu>

Volume 15•Issue 1•March 2015

In this Issue:

Master Marketer Highlights	1
Celebrating 20 Years	2
FARM Assistance Update	3

Master Marketer Highlights

Master Marketer, Making a Mark for 20 Years

Steve Amosson hosted the 20th Anniversary of the Master Marketer Program earlier this year in Amarillo. The program began January 20 and 56 participants graduated on March 3. Graduates primarily held interests in wheat, sorghum, corn, and cotton crops and also in stocker cattle and cow/calf pairs. The total number of Master Marketer graduates reaches 1177 and, reported from participant surveys, have a yearly impact averaging \$35,000 using the knowledge and tools gained from the Master Marketer Program.

Special thanks is extended to Steve Amosson and Mark Welch for all their hospitality, coordination efforts, and making this 20th Anniversary Program a milestone celebration. Thank you Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Cotton State Support Committee, Texas Corn Producers Board, Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board, and Texas Wheat Producers for your support to this program. We appreciate the many great participants, presenters, and supporters who have allowed this program to continue for the last 20 years with great success. Again, congratulations to the 2015 Amarillo Master Marketer Graduates.

Generation Next: Our Turn to Ranch

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service would like to invite you to register for a "Generation Next: Our Turn to Ranch" School April 9-10 in Corpus Christi. This 2-day school will have expert presenters on topics concerning how to start an agricultural business, understanding business taxes, marketing your product and yourself, using technology to your benefit, how to set up grazing and wildlife lease agreements, multigenerational ranching, understanding market fluctuations, land management techniques, coping with invasive species, and alternative operations to add to the business. The Generation Next Schools are specifically targeting children or grandchildren of landowners, although the schools are open to all who are interested in attending. Staying connected to the land and finding your place in the family ranch can be difficult, but these schools are specifically designed to provide ideas and direction to make multigenerational ranching successful.

The registration fee is \$100 (or \$75 if a currently enrolled college student) until 2 weeks prior to the course. This fee includes 2 full days of classes from expert instructors, a resource notebook and jump drive, 5 meals, and a Generation Next: Our Turn to Ranch School Completion Certificate at the end of the course. Registration will be limited to the first 50 participants, so sign up early!

To Register, visit <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ESSM> OR call 979-845-2604. For more information, please contact Dr. Morgan Russell at morgan.russell@ag.tamu.edu or 325-657-7317 or your local County Extension Office.

Annie's Project

Designed to help educate on the fundamentals of maintaining a farm, Annie's Project, a women's workshop series, is being offered in six sessions, from 6-9 p.m. each Tuesday beginning April 9 through May 14, at the Fort Worth Botanic Garden – Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd. Dr. Jason Johnson, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Economist, of Stephenville is leading the project. The series provides a place where farm women can learn both from the perspectives of local agricultural professionals as well as the experiences of other class members.

Participants will receive training in critical decision-making and information areas addressing risk management in the areas of production, marketing, financial, legal and human resources, as well as estate planning. Annie's Project is intended to empower farm women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information. Annie's Project is an educational program dedicated to strengthening women's roles in the modern farm enterprise.

Cost is \$50 per person, and class size is limited to 30. Registration slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. The conference is sponsored by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, with program support provided by Farm Credit Bank of Texas. Interested participants with questions about the program can request a brochure and registration form by contacting Johnson at 254-968-4144 or the AgriLife Extension office for Tarrant County in Fort Worth at 817-884-1941. The registration form is also available at <http://bit.ly/1JmMUG9>

National Value-Added Agriculture Conference

The 17th National Value-Added Agriculture Conference is scheduled for May 18-20 at the Austin Marriott South, 4415 South Interstate 35 in Austin. The conference is hosted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Department of Agricultural Economics at Texas A&M University. The theme of the conference is "The Future of the U.S. Food System: Providing Nutritious, Sustainable, and Healthy Food for All Americans."

(Continued on Page 3)



Master Marketer Program Celebrates 20 Years

Congratulations to the 2015 Master Marketer Class!

Kay Ledbetter,
Communications Specialist,
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service,
Texas A&M University

When a Master Marketer class is offered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, seats fill up fast. That's because the program, celebrating its 20th anniversary, is making a difference in farm operators' bottom line, according to attendees and coordinators.

Dr. Steve Amosson, AgriLife Extension economist in Amarillo, initiated the first training in 1996 and hosted the 27th training in Amarillo this year. Graduation of the 62 class members was March 3.

During the past 20 years, the program has offered agricultural producers a way to develop better risk management skills to deal with price volatility year in and year out, Amosson said. It has been conducted around the state in a format of a 64-hour curriculum covered in four two-day sessions held two weeks apart.

The format was suggested by a producer focus group and has worked quite well over the years, he said. While the content remains the same, the commodity emphasis of each program changes to fit the area of the state where it is being held.

AgriLife faculty provide a majority of course instruction, however, their efforts are complemented by a number of outside experts brought in from around the country to give their perspectives and guidance, Amosson said.

"We wanted to provide participants with the opportunity to hear from professionals they may have only read about, in an effort to provide them the best educational experience possible," he said.

Producers and industry have embraced the program because it is making a difference, confirmed by the repeated attendance by individuals and the requests for the award-winning training, Amosson said. More than a dozen of the current participants are past graduates. Also, other states are now conducting similar programs patterned after the Master Marketer program.

Janet Tregellas, a producer from Booker who attended the first training and has repeated it three times, said, "We acquired the tools to prosper in the transitional environment that unfortunately has eliminated the uninformed."

"Dr. Amosson and the team continue to address the issues that will define success in Texas agriculture for the upcoming leaner years. Producers must stay up to date to remain profitable as margins narrow."

In addition to Amosson, the original AgriLife Extension training team consisted of economists Dr. Mark Waller of College Station; Stan Bevers of Vernon; and Dr. Jackie Smith of Lubbock. Currently, Dr. Mark Welch, AgriLife Extension Economist in Grain Marketing and Policy in College Station, serves as the statewide director of the program.

Annual program sponsors and underwriters include the Texas Corn Producers Board, Texas Wheat Producers Board, Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board, the Cotton State Support Committee, Texas Farm Bureau, the Risk Management Agency and AgriLife Extension. In addition, several agribusinesses serve as local sponsors to help defray costs of the program.

The program team received the Superior Service Award from AgriLife Extension in 1997, the Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence from Texas A&M University in 1998, and the Group Honor Award for Excellence from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2000 for "creating innovative programming to raise agricultural producers' management skills."

Locations of trainings over the years have included six in Amarillo, five in Vernon, four in Lubbock, two in Waco, and one each in El Campo, Plainview, San Angelo, Gainesville, Victoria, Wharton, Weslaco, Kingsville, Uvalde and Abilene.

The results have been overwhelming with capacity audiences in most locations of 40 to 60 producers, the economists said. Master Marketer has graduated more than 1,150 attendees from the 27 trainings. (Continued on Page 3)

FARM Assistance Update

Steven Klose,

Associate Professor and Extension Economist,
Department of Agricultural Economics,
Texas A&M University

For over 10 years, the FARM Assistance program has been a certified provider of financial and production training for USDA-Farm Service Agency loan programs. FSA has and continues to offer low interest loans for a variety of terms and purposes. They provide short term operating loans, long term loans for real estate, machinery & equipment, as well as micro loans for smaller scale projects. Many of their programs offer special consideration for new and beginning farmers, as they have now branded the term "lender of first opportunity" and work with a wide variety of borrowers (no longer just a last resort lender). In all cases, part of their lending and producer development program includes training requirements. FARM Assistance is one of several independent vendors certified to provide the training. Over our 10 year partnership, we have had an overwhelming response from FSA borrowers who have completed our analysis service as their training. They come to us uncertain of what to expect, and for a relatively inexpensive investment of time and money, they walk away with a detailed understanding of their operation's financial viability and what it takes to annually measure, track, and adjust strategic plans for financial success.

A key point of our training and service is that strategic financial planning is an ongoing exercise. Many of our clients update their analysis each year, constantly evaluating and planning for the future. If it has been a while since you conducted an analysis with us, there is no doubt much has changed in and around your operation. Now is always a good time to evaluate the financial outlook for your operation and prepare for the possibilities. Contact FARM Assistance toll free at 1-877-TAMRISK or online at: farmassistance.tamu.edu

Master Marketer Highlights, Continued from Page 1

Speakers at this year's conference will include Neilson C. Conklin, president of the Farm Foundation, who will present their The Dialogue for Food and Agriculture in the 21st Century project; Carlos Rubinstein, Chairman of Texas Water Management Board; Francisco Valentin, State Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development, Judith Canales, U.S. Department of Agriculture-Farm Service Agency Texas State Executive Director, and many other economists, researchers, farmers, producers and policy makers. Conference participants will also have the opportunities to visit U.S Foods' Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified facility in Buda and Whole Foods flagship store in Austin, and tour two urban farms in Austin: Agua Dulce Farm and Springdale Farm.

Deadline for registration is 5 p.m. April 27. Registration fee is \$200, which will cover meetings, two breakfasts, two lunches, three coffee breaks, a reception, and a banquet. American Farm Bureau Federation, National Food MarketMaker, Southern Rural Development Center, Southern Extension Risk Management Education, AgriLife Extension and the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center are confirmed sponsors for the conference. For more information about the conference and conference registration, visit <http://www.agmrc.org/national-value-added-agriculture-conference/>

*Contributions from Blair Fannin



Master Marketer Program Celebrates 20 Years, Continued from Page 2

In post-graduation surveys conducted two and half years after the training, graduates indicated they have increased their returns by an average of \$30,000 to \$35,000 annually, said Welch.

"What is important to realize is that the techniques learned in this program can be applied year after year in developing a producer's risk management plan," Welch said.

"The program not only has the potential to dramatically impact the bottom line of Master Marketers, but their communities as a whole," said Waller, Texas A&M Associate Department Head for Agricultural Economics.

"Increased producer income translates into more money for goods and services, multiplying throughout the local economy, over and over again," Waller said.

For more detailed information about the Master Marketer Program, including evaluation results from previous classes and registration brochure, go to <http://mastermarketer.tamu.edu>



2124 TAMU, College Station TX 77843

Prepared by:

**Emmy L. Williams, Extension Program Specialist and
Dr. J. Mark Welch, Associate Professor and Extension Economist-Grain Marketing**

**Department of Agricultural Economics,
Texas AgriLife Extension Service,
Texas A&M System
College Station, Texas 77843-2124**

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email,
or have any other questions about the Master Marketer system,
please write Emmy Williams at emmywilliams@tamu.edu

An archive of newsletters can be found online by visiting
<http://agecoext.tamu.edu/programs/marketing/master-marketer-program/newsletter-archives.html>

Educational Programs of Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all citizens
without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics,
Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the
United States Department of Agriculture and Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M System.

Partial funding support for the Master Marketer program has been provided by
the Cotton Inc.-Texas State Support Committee, Texas Farm Bureau,
Texas Corn Producers, Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board, and Texas Wheat Producers Board.