“Make a Difference & Go Do It”

Capnote speaker Marshall Stewart, North Carolina State University Extension, said it best when he shared with the Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference attendees that you can “make a difference and go do it.” This was a very inspiring way to wrap up the 10th annual Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference at the end of February. It truly describes the power of networking and knowledge women attained during the conference so that they are now better equipped to make a difference in agriculture.

More than 160 women, speakers, committee members and the press joined together for the two-day event in Jeffersonville. We probably enjoyed the warmest weather ever for the conference. A new addition to the conference this year was the opportunity to get together on the day before the start of the conference. A small group enjoyed a tour of historic Churchill Downs in Louisville. It was a great opportunity to gain insight into the world of horse racing. Then, about 25 met for dinner.

During the next two days attendees had the opportunity to participate in 20 breakout sessions on a wide variety of timely topics. For those who were able or unable to attend, you will be able to soon find the conference proceedings on the Women in Ag website (www.agriculture.purdue.edu/WIA). If a speaker shared their information, it will be on the proceedings page. If you do not have access to the internet and would like information from a session, please contact your local Extension Office to see if they would be willing to assist you.

Another highlight was the roundtable discussion on estate planning. Ladies openly shared their needs and situations for more estate planning information. Continued on page 2.

This winter 52 women at six locations across the state went through this year’s Annie’s Project Class. Annie’s Project is a six-week Educational program for farm women, based on a real farm woman’s experience of living and working in a complex business. The program is designed to deliver education and technology training to farm women enhancing their business and decision-making skills. Four of the six weeks we had statewide speakers that were broadcast via Adobe Connect to the various locations.

The first week the ladies learned about their personality profiles with the Real Colors®. Week two Farm Family Finance was the statewide topic with CPA Lynn Lambert, as the featured speaker. Farm Financial Analysis was the featured topic week three with Dr. Freddie Barnard. Week four was the week of the blizzard and our featured speaker Dr. Corrine Alexander featured speaker was trapped in Wisconsin, but with several challenges we did get connected with her via Adobe Connect to hear her Continued on page 3.
They liked the idea of having access to a group of Extension trained mediators to assist with the process. Stories from the kitchen table are helpful to learn from as well. This information will be very helpful in planning upcoming training sessions. The goal is to incorporate more of these small group discussions into conference.

A conference wrap-up would not be complete without a Top Ten list why the conference was so great this year:

1. Discovering that women can indeed grow soybeans even without soil. Thank you Joni Wallman for many moments of much needed laughter.
2. Meeting “Clark” & the Clark County Farm Bureau Ladies for the help with preparations and registration.
3. 56 first-time attendees at a new location – you and the other 100-plus women are so inspiring to the mission of the conference.
4. Having one of our panel members inspire another farm wife to become involved in her farm operation and educational opportunities after the conference.
5. Sharing stories of the funniest events on the way to conference! Thanks to the ladies from LaPorte County.
6. Learning that “No.” really is a complete sentence.
7. Highlighting our Women in Ag Achievement and Leadership Award Winners
8. Outstanding sponsors who help make this all possible
9. The conference planning committee for their dedication
10. And last but not least the people at home who allow you to attend the conference

As reported by Kelly Heckaman, Purdue Extension Educator in Kosciusko County.
WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – Purdue Extension is accepting nominations for the 2011 Women in Agriculture Awards.

The annual awards recognize women who have provided leadership and made positive contributions to Indiana agriculture through their involvement in an Indiana agricultural enterprise, agribusiness, farm, or commodity organization, said Christa Holloway, Extension educator in Fulton County and awards coordinator.

"Women have always been an important part of agriculture but were less likely to be sought out or recognized for their involvement and success in the field," Holloway said. "The Women in Agriculture Awards validate that women are an important part of Indiana agriculture. In addition, it is important to highlight the agricultural field in general because younger generations need to know that agriculture is still a career option."

Two awards will be presented: The Achievement Award honors a woman who has been active in Indiana agriculture primarily through a home farm operation or agribusiness. The Leadership Award is given to a woman who serves in an agribusiness or policymaking position.

An award nomination form is available online at http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/wia/index.htm. The Purdue Women in Agriculture Team will present the awards during Purdue Day at the Indiana State Fair on Aug. 12.

The 2010 award winners were Louise Beaman of Johnson County and Carolyn Hegel of Wabash County. Beaman received the Achievement Award for work on her family’s farrow-to-finish hog operation and grain farm and for her efforts on legislative issues affecting Indiana agriculture. Hegel received the Leadership Award for her 20 years of involvement in various roles in the agricultural industry.

Writer: Jeanne Gibson, Ag Communications
Do you know your credit score?

Louisville, KY (March 24, 2011) – A quick glance at your credit score gives lenders most of the information they need to make judgments about your repayment capacity. It's a grading system that adds or subtracts points based on certain criteria. Late payments and several open credit cards with high balances, for example, decrease your score. On the other hand, a solid payment history increases your score.

According to Hollie Dearwester, regional vice president for Farm Credit Services of Mid-America in southern Indiana, a good score is generally over 720. “But in up and down economy today, that level keeps increasing. Keep in mind that a good score today may only be an acceptable score in the future. That's why it's important to know and maintain your credit score,” she said.

Dearwester said there are several ways you can get your score. For example, if you are denied a loan due to your credit score, the lender will provide specific reasons why you were denied credit and how to obtain a copy of your complete credit report at no charge if you request the report within 60 days of receiving the notice of denial.

“A better way, though, is to manage your credit score upfront,” she added. While there are a number of websites that provide a credit report for a fee, www.annualcreditreport.com allows you to pull your report for free once a year (to get your score, there is a cost). This site - www.creditkarma.com - is another great site that not only allows you to pull your score as frequently as you like, it also gives you useful tips to manage your score.

“Like it or not, most banks - including Farm Credit - rely on your credit score as a part of the lending decision. In fact, over 62% of our loans are scored loans - the other 38% are reviewed using more detailed credit underwriting guidelines,” Dearwester said.

“Generally, most scored loans at Farm Credit are smaller loans or those under $250,000 - scored loans only represent a little over one-third of our total loan volume.”

Additionally, Farm Credit does not rely on credit score alone in many cases. “Our underwriters usually supplement the credit score with other customer financial information and documentation,” she said. Here are some websites with detailed information about credit scoring you might find useful.

Bankrate.com, Wikipedia.com

About Farm Credit Services of Mid-America
Farm Credit Services of Mid-America is a $17 billion financial services cooperative serving over 92,000 farmers, agribusinesses and rural residents in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Tennessee. The association provides loans for all farm and rural living purposes including real estate, operating equipment and housing and related services such as crop insurance, and vehicle, equipment and building leases. For more information about Farm Credit, call 1-800-444-FARM or visit them on the web at www.e-farmcredit.com.

Contact: Randy Barbee
502-420-3756 or 502-494-5713 (mobile)
rbarbee@e-farmcredit.com

Purdue Day at the Indiana State Fair

Be sure to wear your black and gold when you attend Purdue Day at the Indiana State Fair, August 12, 2011. Explore Purdue exhibits in the Our Land Pavilion, mingle with fellow Boilermakers on State Fair Boulevard, and enjoy concerts and shows on the Purdue Live Stage! in front of the Home and Family Arts Building. A special presentation of the Women in Agriculture awards will take place at 9:30 a.m. on the Red Gold Stage in the Our Land Pavilion. Don't miss the Boilermaker Special in its appearance in the daily parade. For more information and a schedule of events for Purdue Day at the State Fair, visit http://www.purdue.edu/giving/events/Indiana_State_Fair/.
Workshop provides basics of starting specialty food business

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Entrepreneurs can learn what it takes to break into the food products business by attending a workshop sponsored in part by Purdue University.

An Introduction to Starting a Specialty Food Business in Indiana takes place 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. April 21 at Indiana Farm Bureau Inc., 225 S. East St., Indianapolis.

The workshop is geared toward those interested in developing a food or food ingredient business, whether they are small farmers, homemakers or those who have always wanted to work for themselves in a food-related business, said Maria Marshall, Purdue agricultural economist and workshop coordinator.

"We'll be providing information on business planning, marketing, food safety, food regulations, product development, process development and packaging," Marshall said. "We'll also talk about organic products."

Specialty food businesses run the gamut from those who sell products at farmers' markets to running restaurants and catering operations, and making pet food. Despite the sluggish economy, between 30,000 and 50,000 new or improved food products are introduced each year, Marshall said.

"Because of the economic downturn it's even more important that people make good business decisions based on sound knowledge," she said. "This workshop will help people understand what they need to do to start a business and make it successful so that they're not just starting on a wing and a prayer."

In addition to Marshall, workshop speakers include Kevin Keener and Steve Smith of Purdue's Department of Food Sciences; Sharon Farrell of the Indiana State Department of Health; and Annie Schmelzer of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture.

Workshop attendees also will hear Tashia St. Clair, founder and owner of Sweet Poppins, a Kokomo-based maker of gourmet-flavored popcorn. St. Clair will talk about her experience starting a specialty food business.

Registration is $100 per person and due by April 8. Enrollment is limited to about 35 people in order to provide as much one-on-one interaction between attendees and speakers as possible. The registration fee includes workshop materials, lunch and refreshments.

For more information and a registration form, download the workshop brochure at http://www.ag.purdue.edu/foodsci/Documents(workshops/feep_brochure.pdf

The workshop is sponsored by Purdue's departments of agricultural economics and food science, and the Indiana State Department of Health

Writer: Steve Leer, Ag Communication

I just wanted to thank the Women in Ag Conference planning committee for their gifts and recognition at the recent conference. It has been an amazing 10 years working with the conference. I have truly enjoyed getting to know and work with so many different women through this conference. It has been very rewarding to know that we have helped to make a difference for so many farm women – almost 1,000 in the last 10 years. You and the planning committee members I have worked with over the years are the reason why the conference and associated educational opportunities have been successful. Thank you so very much.

Sincerely,
Kelly Heckaman

THANK YOU
Volunteer corn reduces yield in corn and soybean crops

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Volunteer corn has proven to be more than just a nuisance, with major yield reductions to both corn and soybean crops, said Purdue Extension weed scientist Bill Johnson. Problems with the weed arise when corn kernels that dropped during harvest persist in the soil, overwinter and grow in the spring. With 70 percent of Indiana’s annual corn crop resistant to glyphosate, or Roundup Ready, volunteer corn has become increasingly difficult to control.

“We’re rotating Roundup Ready corn with our soybean crop, which is typically 95 percent Roundup Ready,” Johnson said. “With glyphosate being the primary herbicide used on soybeans, we simply are spraying it on a weed that it was not designed to kill.” With heavy, untreated infestations, the weed can cause up to a 40 percent yield reduction in soybeans or up to 30 percent in corn.

“Volunteer corn is more frequently a problem in fields where farmers use fall tillage, because it buries the corn seed and allows it to overwinter,” Johnson said. “It is less of an issue in a strict no-till system because of rodents and weathering.”

The weed also becomes more of a problem in fields where a lot of corn hit the ground during the previous harvest. If that’s the case, Johnson said farmers need to scout before planting so they know what controls to employ and where.

Volunteer corn is fairly simple to control in soybeans because farmers can use post-grass herbicides. “We simply need to encourage growers to spray these a little bit earlier in the summer than we typically would,” Johnson said.

The weed is much more difficult to control in cornfields - especially those planted in continuous corn. The best methods are spring tillage and using non-glyphosate, pre-plant herbicides.

“Producers need to control volunteer corn before they plant their corn crops,” Johnson said. “Spring tillage is more reliable, but if it’s a no-till operation farmers need to spray.”

Volunteer corn also can lead to significant corn rootworm problems.

“In the past, farmers rotated corn and soybeans. Soybean fields have zero rootworms because when the insects hatch, they have nothing to eat,” said Purdue Extension entomologist Christian Krupke. “With volunteer corn, those rootworms have something to feed on, so farmers need to kill this weed as early as possible.”

Writer: Jennifer Stewart, Ag Communications

Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals, and happiness.  

Letter from Thomas Jefferson to George Washington (1787)
10 Years of Sponsorship

The Purdue Women in Agriculture State Team would like to thank the sponsors that have supported our efforts to educate and recognize women in agriculture since the start 10 years ago.

Beck’s Hybrid Inc. and Milk Promotion Service of Indiana

Milk Production Services of Indiana Inc. have graciously supported Purdue Women in Agriculture and the Midwest Women in Agriculture Conference. Thank you for partnering with us for the past 10 years, and we look forward to continuing these partnerships for many more.

Would you like to do Annie’s Project from home?

This past winter we have been working with ladies to view the Risk Management Education for Farm Women workshops via the internet at home if there was not a location near them offering the class.

Now we are interested in piloting an Annie’s Project session all via Adobe Connect using the internet. We would want this group to be very small just so we could learn about the pitfalls and how to make it a great experience for an expanded group. Please keep in mind that one of the advantages of meeting face to face for Annie’s Project is creating a great network with the other women in attendance. Right now we are just looking for those interested in trying something like this and then we will work with this group to finalize more details.

If you are interested in this option or would like more details, contact Kelly Heckaman at kheckaman@purdue.edu, 574-372-2340 or Bryan Overstreet at boverstreet@purdue.edu, 219-866-5741

Upcoming Events

April 9-10  Purdue Spring Fest at Purdue University
www.purdue.edu/springfest

April 15  Snyder Lecture Series “Sowing the Seeds: Monetary Policy and the Ag Economy” by Dr. Thomas Hoenig, President, Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. Begins at 1:30 p.m. Fowler Hall, Stewart Center, Purdue University.

June 8-10  4-H Science Workshops at Purdue University
http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/workshop/index.cfm

June 14-17  State 4-H Junior Leader Conference at the University of Indianapolis
http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/sjlc/

June 20-22  4-H Round Up at Purdue University (for those who have completed grades 7, 8, and 9) Contact your local Purdue Extension office to register.

June 13-15  State FFA Convention at Purdue University
http://www.indianaffa.org/association/stateconvention.htm

August 5 – 21  Indiana State Fairgrounds – Indianapolis
www.indianastatefair.com

August 12  Purdue Day at the Indiana State Fair
http://www.purdue.edu/giving/events/Indiana_State_Fair/

August 12  Purdue Women in Agriculture Awards Ceremony. 9:30 a.m. on the Red Gold Stage in the Our Land Pavilion at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. 
http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/wia/index.htm
Important Reminder in this Issue
Award Nominations Due April 29, 2011