

Ag outlook is focus of econ conferences

Written by Gothenburg Times
Friday, 24 February 2012 15:16 -

The seventh annual Cornhusker Economics Conference will focus on the ag outlook and management decisions for farmers and ranchers at five locations across the state in late February and early March.

The conference is offered by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and the Department of Agricultural Economics and is sponsored in part by funding from the Nebraska Soybean Board.

The conferences will start on Feb. 28 in Columbus during the day and in Lincoln in the evening. Other conferences will follow on Feb. 29 in Clay Center during the day and North Platte in the evening and will wrap up on March 1 during the day in Alliance.

The day sessions in Columbus, Clay Center, and Alliance are scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and the evening sessions in Lincoln and North Platte will be from 4:30-9 p.m. (all local times).

The conferences will cover a number of key topics affecting farm management and production decisions for 2012.

This year's conferences will feature specialists from UNL Extension and the Department of Agricultural Economics together with experts from Kansas State University, Iowa State University and the Livestock Marketing Information Center in Denver, Colo.

The opening session at each meeting will focus on the agricultural outlook, covering livestock, crops, and land and leasing issues.

Dan O'Brien of Kansas State University will return this year to share his insight on grain and oilseed outlook and risk management decisions in today's uncertain markets. While market volatility shows the need for sound hedging strategies, concerns about futures market performance and the recent MF Global bankruptcy affecting hedge margin accounts raise questions about the best path ahead for managing market risk. O'Brien will bring his experience

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and analysis of futures market performance to bear on the issues and discuss implications for producer decisions.

Shane Ellis, livestock marketing specialist at Iowa State University, and Jim Robb, director of the Livestock Marketing Information Center, will discuss the outlook for livestock markets and producer profitability. With outlook for meat demand and continued reductions in cattle supplies, the market fundamentals look strong, but must weigh against grain supplies and feed prices. Ellis and Robb will both bring their expertise to the situation and provide guidance for producer marketing and production decisions in 2012.

The land market has also been moving in the past year and UNL Extension Educators Allan Vyhnalek, Robert Tigner and Tom Holman will use their local knowledge and analysis to discuss land markets and leasing arrangements with implications for producer decisions.

The closing session will feature a focus on agricultural policy and the direction for new farm programs. Brad Lubben, policy specialist, will discuss the policy outlook in Washington and the major policy developments that could affect agriculture in 2011. Then, Lubben will team with UNL Extension educators to discuss specific directions for the new farm bill and implications for farm programs, conservation programs, and risk management decisions.

More information and details on the meetings are available on the web at the Department of Agricultural Economics homepage (<http://agecon.unl.edu>).

Advance registration of \$25 is necessary to confirm meeting meals and materials and is available by contacting the local Extension office listed for each location. You can also contact Lubben at 402-472-2235 or any one of the educators listed with the meeting locations for additional information.

Locations, dates, and information:

Columbus—Tuesday, Feb. 28, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Duster's Restaurant, 2804 13th Street.
Contact: Allan Vyhnalek, Platte County Extension, 402-563-4901, avyhnalek2@unl.edu

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Lincoln—Tuesday, Feb. 28, 4:30 to 9 p.m., Lancaster County Extension Office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A. Contact: Tom Dorn, Lancaster County Extension, 402-441-7180, tdorn1@unl.edu

Clay Center—Wednesday, Feb. 29, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Clay County Activities Building, Clay County Fairgrounds, West Johnson Street. Contact: Jennifer Rees, Clay County Extension, 402-762-3644, jrees2@unl.edu

North Platte—Wednesday, Feb. 29, 4:30 to 9 p.m., West Central Research and Extension Center, 402 West State Farm Road. Contact: Randy Saner, Lincoln-McPherson County Extension, 308-532-2683, rsaner2@unl.edu

Alliance—Thursday, March 1, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Alliance Country Club, 2472 County Road 62. Contact: Tom Holman, Scotts Bluff County Extension, 308-632-1480, tholman1@unl.edu