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Evaluations of KSU ACRE Education Program¹

A KSU team thank you to all who participated in the ACRE Webinar, held on August 4. A special thank you for those participants who completed an evaluation of the program. We very much appreciate your educational business.

We are sure participants made the right decision on ACRE based on the best available information at signup. Hindsight is always 20-20, so if there is a payment, many producers will kick themselves for not electing ACRE, but the opposite is also true if there is no payment in one's state. Therefore, one can never do better than make a decision on the best available information and move on to the next decision.

The ACRE Webinar, held on August 4, 2009, had a confirmed total participation of at least 1,137 persons. This included 816 who participated as part of a group and 321 individuals.

A total of 29 group meetings were held in 8 different states, with 17 of these occurring in Kansas; most were hosted by county extension agents, but also by banks, insurance agencies or agribusinesses. The largest of these groups was 144 persons at Hesston, KS hosted by Citizens State Bank. Rodney Jones, Oklahoma State University and the Sidwell Insurance Agency hosted a meeting in Enid, Oklahoma that attracted 70 participants. Numbers were confirmed with the individual organizing the group events.

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The final numbers for one group were not available. An additional 23 persons in the week following the webinar viewed a recording of the webinar and received the updated analysis following the release of the new NASS yield data on August 12.

People from at least 26 states were involved in the webinar. The largest numbers of these participants were from Kansas, with Nebraska, Oklahoma, Iowa and South Dakota following. The states represented were (in alphabetical order): Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The webinar was conducted three times, at 7:00 am, 12:00 pm, and 3:00 pm, CDT. The third session had not been planned but was necessary to accommodate all who wished to participate, due to a limit of 150 webinar lines.

Two types of evaluations were done: by web (for individuals and some group members) and manually, for the groups. A total of 136 individuals filled out the evaluation on the web, a high proportion of the 373 lines which were used in the three sessions. An additional 178 persons filled out an evaluation at a group meeting and those were collected and sent to K-State for tabulation. Fourteen groups collected and sent in evaluations.

Results for all those responding are shown in Table 1. Seventy percent of those responding participated in the webinar as part of a group, with the remainder being individuals. The average score was 3.87 when asked “On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the overall usefulness of this webinar?” with 1=Not useful and 5=Extremely useful. Only five respondents answered less than “3”. When asked whether fees prevented people from participating, only 4.3% said “Yes”; 46% said “No” and the balance said “Maybe”.

Fully 71% of respondents said “Yes”, they would recommend a webinar like this to others, with another 26% indicating “Maybe”. Only 2.9% said “No” they would not. If another webinar were conducted, 61% said they “Definitely” would participate and a further 34% replying “Maybe”, depending on the topic.

The length of the session (1 hour presentation and 1 hour for questions) was deemed “About right” by 92% of those responding, with 6% suggesting it was “Too long”. The times (7 am and 12 pm) were viewed as appropriate by 83% of respondents. The most common alternative times suggested were 8:00 am and 1:00 pm, and a few other suggested times.

Most of the respondents (61.5%) were producers, with 9% being insurance agents, 6% being lenders and 4% being extension personnel.

When asked if they planned to sign up for ACRE, 54% said “No” and another 41% said “Maybe”. Only 4.6% planned to sign up and only 1 person (0.4%) had already done so.

A majority (58%) answered “Yes” when asked if the webinar influenced their decision regarding ACRE and another 35% said “Maybe”. Only 7% said the webinar did not influence their decision.

Reasons for participating were primarily to learn more about ACRE in order to make a decision (producers); to learn about ACRE in order to advise clients (insurance agents, extension personnel, lenders); or to learn more about ACRE to be able to serve producers (FSA).

Comments regarding the webinar were either technical in nature or were of a general nature regarding what they thought about the program. The technical comments were primarily concerned with the audio quality, particularly for the 7:00 am webinar, as well as several comments that the print on some slides and graphs was too small. Most of the general comments were that this was an excellent source of information, that Art Barnaby and Troy Dumler had done a good job in helping them understand the ACRE program, or comments about how difficult the ACRE program was to understand.

When asked to suggest topics for future webinars, the most common suggestion was the SURE program. Respondents also wanted a follow-up on ACRE following some further history and experience with the program. Others requested more general information on grain marketing and crop insurance.

Some differences were found between the web and manual evaluation responses. Those responding via the web gave higher scores for the usefulness of the webinar (4.14 compared to 3.67), indicating that individuals who watched it at home had a better experience than those participating in groups. More of the individuals on the web (79%) would recommend the webinar format, compared with only 65% in the group, and 71% of those on the web evaluations said they would “Definitely” participate again, compared with 52% who completed a manual evaluation at a group site. More of those participating in the group situation were producers (82%) compared with only 35% being producers of those individuals completing the web evaluation. There were more insurance agents who responded to the web evaluation (17%) than in the group events (2%). ACRE sign-up intention rates were nearly the same for both groups, but a higher percentage indicated that the webinar influenced their decision for those who filled out the web evaluation (74% answered “Yes”, compared with 48% for the manual evaluation).

Table 1: ACRE Webinar Evaluation Results

August 28, 2009

Total Responding: 341

Individual or Group Participation

Individual		94	29.9%
Group		220	70.1%

On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the overall usefulness of this webinar?

1. Not useful		0	0.0%
2.		5	1.6%
3. Somewhat useful		90	28.8%
4.		158	50.5%
5. Extremely useful		60	19.2%

Average: 3.87

We must charge fees to cover costs. Did fees prevented people from participating?

No, it didn't		136	45.5%
Maybe		150	50.2%
Yes, definitely		13	4.3%

Would you recommend a webinar like this to others?

Yes		222	71.4%
Maybe		80	25.7%
No		9	2.9%

If we had another webinar like this, how likely is it that you would participate?

Definitely		189	60.6%
Maybe		107	34.3%
No		16	5.1%

The length of the session was:

Too long		19	6.3%
About right		281	92.4%
Too short		4	1.3%

Were the times (7:00 am & 12:00 noon) appropriate?

Yes		252	83.2%
No		51	16.8%

I am a(n):

Insurance agent		28	9.0%
Grower/Rancher		192	61.5%
Lender		18	5.8%
Extension agent		13	4.2%
Other		61	19.6%

Do you plan to sign up for ACRE in 2009?

No		153	54.1%
Perhaps		116	41.0%
Yes		13	4.6%
Already signed up		1	0.4%

Did this webinar influence your decision?

Yes		168	58.1%
Maybe		101	34.9%
No		20	6.9%