



Newsletter for Western Agricultural Educators

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Center Transitions to a New Director

On July 1, Shannon Neibergs, Washington State University Associate Professor and Extension Economist, was appointed the new director of the WSU Extension Western Center for Risk Management Education. Shannon succeeds Jon Newkirk who is retiring after 10 years as the Center's Director and 21 years as an Extension Economist. "Shannon brings a good background in Ag Economics and an understanding of risk management to the position," says Newkirk. "He brings a strong commitment to working with producers from small to large farms and ranches."

Dr. Neibergs received his Master's degree from WSU and his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, with most of his work directed to applied livestock economics. He has conducted research and published widely on dairy farming, cattle management and marketing, agribusiness profitability, Thoroughbred auction markets, and other topics relevant to ag producers in the western region of the United States. Shannon worked as a WSU Extension

associate in ag economics in the mid-to late 1980's and returned to WSU Extension's School of Economic Science in 2006 in his current position. "Shannon has the perfect background to take the Center to the next level," says Dan Bernardo, Dean of WSU's College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resource Sciences. "He's been working on the ground with producers for years and, as well, is a great teacher who knows how to effectively communicate and help people deal with complex economic issues."

Shannon comments on his future with the Center, "I am very excited for the opportunity to work with farmers, ranchers and the people awarded grants through the Western Center that address risk management in agriculture." Shannon continues, "There is increasing risk in every aspect of agricultural production due to increasing variability in input costs, market prices and management of natural resources. Effectively managing these risks is critical to agricultural success. I look

forward to being involved in projects that aid in the implementation of risk management strategies that facilitate agricultural success."

Jo Ann Warner was appointed Assistant Director effective June 1, and will assume additional responsibilities for the Risk Management Education program of the Center. Jo Ann's appointment to this role will insure continuity, and take advantage of her experience and capacity to strengthen the Center's outcomes with producers across the West. Shares Newkirk, "Jo Ann is well respected and networked across the west and with the National Extension Risk Management Education group."

The Center is well positioned with a strong team. Please take the time to visit our website (<http://westrme.wsu.edu/contact/>) and become acquainted with the Center staff who are integral in supporting the Center's work and mission.

Ag In Uncertain Times... Your Resource for Presentations

Leveraging information to create stimulating and informative presentations is an effective way to reach farm and ranch audiences. Most of us charged with providing training and information to constituents, do not consider ourselves experts in the multitude of topics to which our audiences need to be familiarized. At the same time, we do have competency in many subjects and with the available resources stored on the internet we can incorporate comments from experts into our presentations that can enrich the quality of the information we provide. This article is about how we can bring video comments of prominent speakers into our own presentations to support positions



and provide additional discussion on a subject. There are economic tools and presentations stored at numerous web locations and the price for using them is simply, "acknowledging the source."

Ag In Uncertain Times (AIUT) originally delivered a series of expert seminars

at a critical juncture that dealt with multiple facets of a volatile agriculture. These presentations were triggered by early signals in 2009 of a crisis building around access to credit, volatility in fuel and related inputs, and the need for capturing the highs of the market. More than fifty presentations are archived

Presentations, continued from pg. 1

on the AIUT website by economists, bankers, psychologists, educators, input credit managers and market specialists on commodity and value added farms and ranches. Not only are these video recordings available to utilize in your presentations, there are many financial, estate planning and enterprise management tools available to share with farm and ranch audiences as well.

For example, one of our AIUT presenters, Gary Brester, Montana State University, Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, provides a wealth of timeless information that lends itself to commodity marketing presentations. A series of slides in his presentation captured over 150 years of wheat markets, adjusting income per acre for inflation, efficiency, yield improvements, etc. His conclusion was that wheat is yielding the same dollars per acre today that it was 150 years ago. "When the price goes above the cost of production, producers get into growing wheat and when the price dips below cost of production producers exit production of wheat," stated Brester in his [November 4, 2009 presentation](#). Showing this excerpt stresses two things: 1) It is important to be a least cost producer of commodities; and 2) Times of high profit margins are quickly overcome by increased production. Bringing in Brester's data should get the attention of an audience of wheat growers and lend credibility to the presenter trying to make the points about commodity marketing.

Similarly, Raleigh Curtis, past General Manager of Mid Columbia Producers, Inc. (MCP), had four noteworthy suggestions in his [September 23, 2009 presentation](#)

on financial management of a farm: 1) Know what your goals are. 2) Get the emotion out of marketing: know where you are going; know your cost of production and market above that cost. 3) Capture your depreciation and return it to your operating capital instead of living off of it. 4) Control increasing your cost of living, pay yourself a wage and if warranted, give a bonus in good years. This will keep from unconsciously increasing the cost of family living during good times because it is very difficult to reverse. Again, using Raleigh's materials to touch on one or all of these points will provide some context for a presentation on marketing.

In conclusion, the AIUT website is a strong source of knowledge, experience, and education pertaining to agriculture and the challenges presented to producers and their families as well as, the educators seeking to help them meet the challenges. All of the available presentations may be viewed at the following link <http://www.farmmanagement.org/aginuncertaintimes/>, or by clicking on the embedded links within the article.

For specific instructions on how to use information from the website and how to edit slides to fit them into other presentations, visit the [AIUT content training site embedded in this link](#). Powerpoint presentations, audio files, and SWF files are three of the different formats in which the information may be downloaded and integrated for use in other presentations. Brief videos may be viewed which explain specific techniques for editing and embedding the files to suit individual needs.

Kelly Olsen from the Idaho Barley Commission shares: *"The value of the Ag in Uncertain Times series was twofold: it introduced me to the webinar education format and gave me confidence that this tool could be incorporated into our training with Idaho grain producers and it exposed me to speakers who I could use as resources for our Idaho training. From this initial introduction, we have successfully launched our own webinar series which have provided us with a powerful, low cost tool to reach a broad audience."* Olsen goes on to say, *"The Ag in Uncertain Times topic of greatest interest to me was grain marketing because that it is what I specialize in however; I found several other topics useful as they gave me a broader perspective on farming and ranching risks and introduced me to specific topics and speakers beyond my own area of expertise."*

John Hewlett, Ranch/Farm Management Specialist, University Wyoming Extension says: *"As part of the Ag In Uncertain Times project I not only developed online presentations covering how to use the recorded video and audio files for onsite presentation to agricultural managers, but also provided in-person instruction to colleagues on how to do this. Many expressed their appreciation and reported successful offerings to live producer audiences."*

The Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education is one of five USDA NIFA competitively awarded Extension Risk Management Education Centers that conduct a regional results and outcome based competitive risk management education grant program serving agricultural producers. State university Extension educators and other partners in the public and private sector in the west have provided tools and training for producers to support them in establishing long-term risk management strategies, strengthening economic viability of their farm and ranch enterprises.



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