

2008 Top Farmer Crop Workshop—Adding Value to Every Acre You Farm

Bruce Erickson

These are unprecedented times for U.S. agriculture, and the opportunities associated with this year's crop are better than in many years. But it is also important to keep a perspective on the critical, bigger-view issues that will be so important to your future. The decisions that you make now will be with you for many years to come, and we hope you will be on the right side of those decisions.

The Top Farmer Workshop can help you do just that, and always features three key staple components—a top lineup of speakers, the ability to test your own farm situations with linear programming, and time to network with other farmers who share common concerns, but whom you don't necessarily compete with locally. We continue to feel that your growth should be made with an eye to efficiency, and our program contains many of those elements—in enhancing the value from each acre that you farm, using the most appropriate technology to reduce costs, and in looking for ways to spread some of the risks that you face each day. These and others are part of the more than 50 presenters at this year's workshop, July 20-23 on the Purdue campus.

What Skills Are Important for Success? First-time attendees and those who are participating in linear programming are encouraged to come on Sunday afternoon to get a jump start on their data entry and computer runs. The program begins in earnest Sunday evening with this year's linear programming base case, a look at machinery sharing options for various-sized and configured farming operations. Then we want to look closely at what skills and abilities you will need in the coming years—and, to let you and other attendees do a proficiency self-analysis as you get to know each other in Sunday evening's mixer.



Kastens

A Farmer's Perspective Presentations by the farmer attendees have always been part of the Top Farmer experience, and Monday morning's program begins with the unique perspectives of Terry

Kastens, a Kansas farmer and K State agricultural economist. Terry will examine some of the realities of today's growing farm businesses, and in how to best manage how that growth occurs.



Beck Center at Agronomy Farm—Venue for Monday Afternoon and Eve

Interact While most of our activities will be in the Deans Auditorium in Pfendler Hall



right on campus, Monday afternoon and evening activities will be at the new Beck Agricultural Center at the Agronomy Farm. In the past we have sometimes sweated our way through Monday evening's barbeque and associated activities in the old Extension building. But this year, we welcome you to come into the air conditioning! Our Monday afternoon/evening activities will feature the field demonstrations that you have come to expect—from diagnostics, to automation, to learning more about one of your most precious resources, your soil.

Efficient Resource Management Farmers are masters of efficient utilization of resources, but many admit frustration when dealing with the human element. Sarah Sanders Smith has worked with labor issues for much of her career, and she can help you know how to attract and keep good employees during her Tuesday presentation. Efficient resource management is a recurring topic at the workshop, in helping you to look for ways to grow your business without necessarily growing your acres.



Smith

Taking Time to Enjoy While the program mostly sticks to business, learning should be enjoyable, too! Illinois farmer and U.S. Farm Report host John Phipps' Tuesday after-lunch spot will help you adjust to the new realities of today's farm economy. Producers often spend time lamenting past decisions--John will help you make peace with yourself and ready you to tackle tomorrow's new challenges.



Phipps

What is in Store for the Future? There has been considerable discussion about biotechnology-driven improvements in seed genetics causing corn trend yields to increase at an increasing rate in recent years. The answer is important not only to producers, but also to current policy debates about the amount of additional acreage that will be needed for corn production in the future. With

their own perspectives on this issue we have invited Mike Edgerton, Monsanto, and Scott Irwin, with the University of Illinois, to lead these discussions during Friday morning's wrap-up sessions.

See the Full Line-Up We look forward to seeing you in a few weeks! For a list of all speakers planned, registration information, and other details, see:

<http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/topfarmer/conference.asp>.

