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Field to Market Improves Farm Efficiency

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Gage County will be a host site for a Field to Market workshop to estimate efficiency of input use and environmental sustainability for your farming practices. The workshop is sponsored by University of Nebraska Extension, Nebraska Corn Board and Nebraska Soybean Board. Participating farmers will use a new web based tool called the Fieldprint® Calculator.

Workshop time is Monday, December 7, 5:30 PM – 9:00 PM. Farmers will select a representative corn or soybean field for 2015 and complete a data input sheet in advance of the Fieldprint® Calculator workshops. The meal provided and workshop materials are sponsored. Computer laptops are provided or bring your own.

Extension Educator Paul Hay says this is a great time for this program as we are facing several years when expense control and efficiency are going to be critical. Randy Pryor and I first became familiar with the Fieldprint program when we helped Bunge in Crete develop a carbon footprint for the corn coming into Crete mills. Today carbon footprints are being done in house for Crete mills and the Cargill mill in Blair.

The exciting thing about these carbon footprints for me was not the carbon dioxide equivalents on the box of corn flakes or bottle of corn syrup. Reviewing the data it was interesting that the top five yielding fields ranked on carbon use (energy) (money) were random.

One was the lowest carbon user, a couple in the middle and a couple on top. The highest carbon energy inputs are nitrogen fertilizer and irrigation water. Mid-range carbon energy inputs are crop drying, transportation and tillage. All other inputs are low in energy use per bushel.

What is exciting to me is the use of this tool by farmers to evaluate their farm crop efficient use of energy resources. The output sheets gives them a holistic view of energy inputs and some good ideas about which inputs might be examined to reduce operation costs. It also gives them a view of carbon footprint inputs which may well be required in the future in some of the markets they deliver to.

For more information and to pre-register by the December 3, 2015 deadline, contact the Gage County Extension office at phone 402-223-1384 or e-mail phay1@unl.edu. We will mail and e-mail you the input sheets for the Fieldprint program.

I attended the Cornhusker Economic Outlook meeting this week and can sum up the presentations in just a few words. Income levels are down. Expenses are a challenge. Prepare and look for marketing opportunities and execute them promptly. Work closely with your accountant and lender in open communication to track cash flow positions and debt structure.

For more information e-mail Paul C Hay at phay1@unl.edu, call 402-223-1384, or visit the News Column University of Nebraska Extension local Website: gage.unl.edu, Twitter: @Cloverhay



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