



Acreage Answers

Exploring Direct Marketing

By Steven Johnson, ISU Extension Farm & Agribusiness Management Field Specialist

Have you ever thought about ways to make a little extra money from your farm or acreage? One way is to consider direct marketing of your produce. Direct marketing takes on various forms. Farmstand or roadside markets are perhaps the oldest forms of direct marketing and can range from a simple booth selling a few items to a more sophisticated roadside market that resembles retail food stores.

Today the most common way consumers encounter direct farm marketing is at the local farmers' market. These markets are usually held weekly from late spring until early fall at various public locations around central Iowa. Farmers set up booths or use the backs of their trucks to sell the produce they just picked on their farms. Many farmers' markets also have ready-to-eat food stands and some offer entertainment to increase the social atmosphere.

Another common form of direct marketing is the "U pick" or "pick your own (PYO)" farming operation. These markets are most commonly associated with popular crops such as strawberries, apples, pumpkins and Christmas trees. Most PYO farms also offer products that have already been picked for those who are unable or choose not to do the picking themselves.

The newest form of direct farm marketing is known as community - supported agriculture or CSA. Under this form of marketing a group of farms offer to consumers a share or subscription in the produce from there farms. The consumers pay an annual fee. Each week throughout the growing season, each subscriber gets a mixed box of produce. CSAs invite their members to visit the farm and some even require consumers to work a certain number of hours during the growing season.

Other forms of direct marketing include the delivery of farm produce to restaurants, other retail outlets, and home delivery routes. New ways to attract attention to farming areas and add to direct marketing opportunities are agricultural tourism and various forms of on-farm recreation such as a corn maze.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a web site dedicated to direct marketing of farm produce: www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing/

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A Written Fence Agreement Will Save Future Grief

by Norm Riggs, ISU Extension Community Development Specialist

Please share *Acreage Answers* with your acreage neighbors. Call your local ISU Extension office to be placed on the mailing list for *Acreage Answers* and to give us suggestions for future articles.

**Central Iowa
Extension offices
515 area codes**

Boone Co.	432-3882
Clarke Co	342-3316
Dallas Co.	993-4281
Green Co.	386-2138
Guthrie Co.	747-2276
Jasper Co.	641-792-6433
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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

As more and more city dwellers seek the rural good life, fence disputes are on the rise. Country homes adjoining farms need to make sure that written fence agreements are in place. As Robert Frost once said, "Fences make good neighbors," and fence agreements will help ensure that neighbors stay on good terms.

New property owners without livestock often object to sharing in the responsibility for erecting or maintaining a fence and need to be reminded that this is mandated by the Code of Iowa. The Code even spells out the requirements for lawful "tight" fences for different types of livestock.

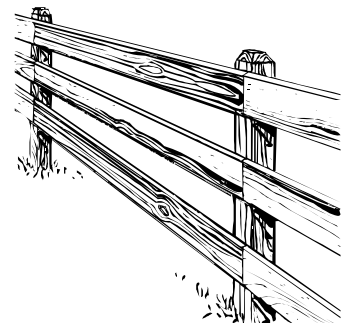
Historically, fence agreements between rural neighbors were often based on "The Right Hand Rule." Adjoining farm neighbors would face one another on the property line and each would agree to maintain the right hand portion. Usually, this would be at the mid-point, but if one portion was more difficult to maintain because of a water gap or other irregularity, the two parties could agree to maintain unequal portions.

However, in today's world neighbors need to forge a written agreement because property owners are not bound by oral agreements between previous

landowners. This has become a particular problem in rapidly growing rural areas experiencing an influx of new homes. To illustrate, if a farmer sells land to a developer, who in turn subdivides the land, previous oral fence agreements are no longer legally binding on the new residents. The adjoining farmer must now make separate fence agreements with all of the new landowners -- a cumbersome and burdensome task.

If landowners are uncertain as to whether a formal written fence agreement exists, they should check at their county recorder's office. If such an agreement is in place, it is binding on all parties. In the absence of an agreement, involved landowners should immediately draft a written agreement, which will then apply to all present and successive property owners.

If a fence disagreement should occur, the township trustees should be contacted to resolve the issue as fence viewers.



All Terrain Vehicle Safety

All-terrain vehicles are becoming more popular with both young and old for work and recreation. There are many safety considerations that go along with owning an ATV. Since youth are frequently victims of accidents involving the popular multi-wheeled vehicles, it's important that all family members know and follow necessary precautions every time ATVs are used - for work or for play.

KNOW THE LAW

All ATVs must be registered in the county of residence in Iowa. Iowa law also prohibits their use on public roads, and certain restrictions apply to their use on public land and land purchased with snowmobile registration fees. Anyone under age 18 must have a valid safety certificate to operate an ATV, and youth between ages 12 and 15 must have a certificate and be under direct parental or adult supervision.

WEAR THE RIGHT GEAR

Head protection. A helmet is the most important piece of safety gear for an ATV operator. Look for helmets with a label from the American National Standards Institute, Department of Transportation, or the Snell Memorial Foundation to verify

that the helmet has been safety tested.

Eye protection. A face shield may be part of the helmet. If not, wear an ANSI-approved pair of goggles or glasses with hard-coated polycarbonate lenses.

Body protection. Gloves, boots, a long-sleeved shirt or jacket and long pants are recommended for protection from trail debris and branches. Proper clothing also protects the operator from problems caused by weather conditions, including sunburn and frostbite.

KNOW HOW TO OPERATE

ATVs handle differently from other vehicles, such as motorcycles and cars. Therefore, it's important to know how to turn, go up and down hills, and

select safe routes. Operators also need good judgement in maintaining a safe distance behind other ATVs, following laws, and knowing when to turn around due to weather, fuel needs, or darkness.

All-terrain vehicles can be both practical and fun for families but they also pose risks. Reduce the dangers, and the number and severity of injuries, by following good safety practices whenever an ATV is used.

For more information visit your local extension office and ask for publication PM 1563c *ATV*

Safety for Farm Work or Recreation. A summary of Iowa snowmobile and ATV regulations is available from the IA Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Bldg., 900 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50319-0039. For training, contact the ATV Safety Institute, 1-800-887-2887.

Safety First Saves Lives!

Filter Strips

People who own land along rivers and other water sources may be eligible for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This program allows eligible landowners to enroll cropland of up to 120 feet along rivers, streams, and creeks, etc. New incentives payments are now being offered for interested persons. An annual rental payment is paid on the eligible land and cost share assistance is available to seed the area to grasses. The Farm Service Agency can help you determine if your land qualifies for these 10 to 15 year contracts.

Winter Provision Reminder for Outside Pets

by Dr. Ken Henrichsen, DVM

Weather changes going into the winter can occur gradually or come about in an abrupt harsh manner. Either way your pet(s) may need your help to cope with these elements in a comfortable manner.

This year water accessibility will be of utmost importance. In order to avoid even marginal dehydration be certain fresh unfrozen water is available at all times.

Keeping the water from freezing may need to be accomplished by using an electrically heated water bowl. Remember, just because there was open water in a creek or at a nearby spring last year doesn't mean it will be there this winter.

Wind chill factors reported by the weather bureau are very important to your pet's level of comfort. It is of utmost importance to provide a shelter that is not only dry but draft free as well. Supplemental

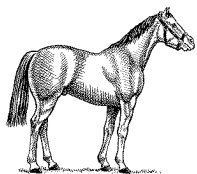


heat may be necessary depending upon the pet's age, level of activity, density of hair coat, fat cover and extreme weather swings. Bedding, whether it will be blankets or simply straw, will allow your pet to cover up to a comfort zone just as we do.

Pets too may need more energy in the winter to compensate for their loss of body heat. A high-quality dry pet food available at all times should maintain acceptable body condition. Special circumstance may warrant a high fat diet. As a rule, the higher the fat content the higher the heat value generated.

In conclusion, your pet's winter well-being is dependent upon:

- 1.) Fresh water available at all times.
- 2.) Draft free dry nesting area provided.
- 3.) Ample high-quality pet food present in a comfortable feeding zone.
- 4.) Your ongoing reassurance that spring is just around the corner.



Feeding Horses in the Winter

by Carl Neifert, ISU Extension Livestock Specialist

Although horses are ridden less often during the winter months, you still need to give attention to the horse's nutritional needs. Most adult horses can maintain condition during the winter on a complete forage diet (hay with 25 percent alfalfa or greater) with access to a free choice trace mineralized salt. Adult horses will eat 1.5 to 2 percent of their body weight in hay. A 1000-pound horse will eat 15-20 pounds of hay per day. Supplementation with grain is only needed if horses are having difficulty maintaining condition.

Horses have a "Lower Critical Temperature"(LCT) for them to maintain moderate body condition. Winds and wet conditions can greatly affect LCT for horses. For horses with a heavy winter coat, the LCT is approximately 30-32 degrees F. For each 10

degrees below the LCT you need to increase digestible energy (grain) by 2 lbs. per head per day. Temperatures below LCT longer than 2 days would justify addition of some grain to the ration. Always make all ration changes gradually.

Horses will tend to reduce their water intake during colder weather. Water should be maintained between 45 and 65 degrees F, if possible, to encourage water consumption and reduce the potential of impaction and colic. Normally, a horse will consume 10-12 gallons per day.

"Rations for Horses" Extension bulletin AS387 available at Extension offices, can help you in developing rations for other kinds of horses— weanling, yearling, pregnant mares, etc.

Tips for Safe and Happy Holidays

by Mary Beth Kaufman, ISU Extension Field Specialist/Family Resource Management



This holiday season, don't let the spirit of giving lull you into giving burglars, muggers, and pickpockets a better chance to do their dirty work. Thieves love the holidays as much as everyone else, but chiefly because it's an opportune time for crime.

Here are some tips on how to celebrate safely this holiday season.

When you're traveling away from home overnight or for several days:

- ◆ Get an automatic timer for your lights.
- ◆ Ask a neighbor to watch your home, shovel snow, and park in the driveway from time to time.
- ◆ Don't forget to have mail and newspaper delivery stopped. If it piles up, it's a sure sign you're gone.

When you're out for the evening:

- ◆ Turn on lights and a radio or TV so it looks like someone's home.
- ◆ Be extra cautious at this time of year about locking doors and windows when you leave, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- ◆ Don't display gifts where they can be seen from outside.

When you're shopping:

- ◆ Stay alert and be aware of what's going on around you.
- ◆ Park in a well-lighted space, and be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- ◆ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash; pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- ◆ Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages. Be extra careful with purses and wallets. Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket.
- ◆ Shopping with kids? Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.



If a stranger comes to the door, beware.

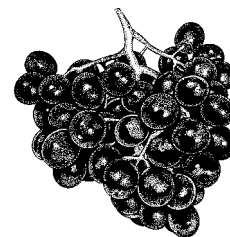
Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts. And it's not uncommon for people to try to take advantage of others' generosity during the holidays by going door-to-door for charitable donations when there's no charity involved. Ask for identification and find out how the funds will be used.

Let these basic safety precautions reduce your holiday stress so you can make the most of the holiday spirit. Do your part to make the holidays a safe and happy time for everybody -- except the criminals.



Future Programs

If you are interested in beginning a vineyard, a series of meetings will be offered February 13, 20, 27 and March 6, 10. The first three meetings will be 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. held at the Polk County Extension Office, in Des Moines. The March 6th meeting will be at the Sommerset Winery, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. The March 10th meeting will be a tour starting at the Warren County Extension Office in Indianola. Call the Warren County Extension Office to get more information when it is available.



Prairie plantings are very popular with acreage owners. An educational meeting is being planned for sometime in February or March. The topics discussed will be establishing a prairie, what to plant, where to get the seeds and what is a good prairie. Watch for more information later.

Garden Calendars are available at the Extension Office. They are \$6.00 and cannot be mailed. Not only do they have beautiful garden photographs but also contains are tips on gardening and a list of the horticulture publications.