



UW Cooperative Extension Service  Profitable & Sustainable Agricultural Systems  Risk Management Agency

Ag in Uncertain Times: This resource helps producers, others meet today's challenges

By James Sedman and
John Hewlett

We live and operate in uncertain times. Unstable markets, high input costs, the falling dollar, low credit availability, bank failures, and a thousand other risks add to the uncertainty of production agriculture.

Current overall economic conditions are not good, and, while overall hard times may have not fallen on agriculture as a whole yet, there is historical precedent, such as experienced in the 1980s, for producers and business owners to be cautious and prepared. There are seemingly thousands of information sources producers can access to help prepare for and survive hard economic times; however, finding information pertinent to you and your operation can be daunting. Having the right knowledge and information can be crucial not only to the profitability of your business but to its survival.

Free On-line Source Available

There is now an online source for producers looking for help with risk and uncertainty: *Ag in Uncertain Times* – helping producers and others meet the challenge. This comprehensive Web site and webinar series is under development by the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service and others to assist producers and other ag-related professionals address changing economic conditions. John Hewlett, extension farm and ranch management specialist, is a member of the team organizing and hosting the webinars, along with colleagues in six other states.

“Anyone interested in accessing the material can simply go to www.farmmanagement.org/aginuncertaintimes and follow the links from there,” said Hewlett.

Previous webinars and online discussions are archived by month along with all presentation material from the numerous speakers and presenters. Previous presentations can be



seen and can also be downloaded in MP3 format for playback on a device without an Internet connection, such as an iPod.

Five-Part Webinar Series

Ag in Uncertain Times was developed as a five-part series to address some of the most important topics in the areas of credit, markets, and overall risk.

The first section deals with uncertain credit, with lenders and educators discussing the overall credit climate and strategies to deal with problems arising with ag and business credit. Financial management spreadsheets and programs are exhibited showing the benefits of comprehensive financial planning and recordkeeping.

The second section deals with uncertain markets with presenters discussing marketing strategy, depending on an individual producer's situation and risk preferences. Producers are encouraged to build on the financial planning and stick to a marketing plan for optimal cost and operational control. Alternative and niche marketing is also discussed as a way of addressing uncertainty.

The third section deals with families facing uncertainty. The main areas of emphasis are helping producers cope with stress and depression, especially in not letting them affect the business.

The fourth section deals with operating in risky environments and began Nov. 4, along with the final

section that pulls it all together in December. Simply logon to view and participate in these interactive webinars.

Hewlett added, “The primary goals of the series are to help producers make informed decisions when dealing with risk and uncertainty and to help professionals improve their abilities to work with their clientele.”

Webinar participation is free, and all presented information is available, including handouts. For more information on this and other risk management topics on the Web, visit the Western Risk Management Library online at agecon.uwyo.edu/riskmgt.

James Sedman is a consultant to the UW College of Agriculture's Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, and John Hewlett is a farm and ranch management specialist in the department. Hewlett can be reached at (307) 766-2166 or hewlett@uwyo.edu.

UW extension presentations include ranching, crops, climate – even cheese making

The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service is presenting a variety of workshops this winter.

Nov. 16 – The High Plains Ranch Practicum – One-Day Course, Powell. Attendees learn about key components of sustainable ranching – profit, production, enjoyment, and family. The one-day seminar is based on the longer High Plains Ranch Practicum (<http://hpranchpracticum.com/>) and will include discussions on ranch financials, livestock nutrition, grazing systems, and strategic planning. The session is 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the multipurpose room at the Park County Fairgrounds in Powell. Cost is \$10. For more information, contact educator Barton Stam at (307) 864-3421 or brstam@uwyo.edu.

Dec. 1-3 – Range Beef Cow Symposium, Casper. For more information, contact extension beef specialist Steve Paisley at (307) 837-2000 or see the Web site at www.rangebeefcow.com/2007/2009_announce.html.

Dec. 9- 10 – Wyoming Climate, Cody and Powell. Educator Sandra Frost will present at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, in the EOC room in the basement of the Park County Courthouse in Cody and again 7 p.m. Dec. 10 in the extension meeting room at the Park County Fairgrounds in Powell.

Dec. 17 – The High Plains Ranch Practicum – One Day Course, Laramie. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Albany County Fairgrounds. Cost is \$10. Contact educator Kellie Chichester at (307) 721-2571 or kelliec@uwyo.edu.

Jan. 25-29 – Ag Mini-College, Powell. Noon to 3 p.m. daily at the Powell Research and Extension Center. Lunch served.

Feb. 2 – Master Gardener Training, Cody and Powell. Tuesdays and Thursdays from Feb. 2 through graduation Monday, April 5. To register, call (307) 754-8836.

Feb. 2-3 – WESTI Ag Days, Worland. The program will include a variety of presentations including pesticide applicator training, beef cattle nutrition, new herbicide chemistry for crop production, and much more. For more information, contact educator Jim Gill at (307) 347-3431 or jrgill@uwyo.edu.

Feb. 4-5 – Wyoming Crop Improvement Association meeting, Powell. Open to the public. For more information, call (307) 754-9815. Information will also be posted at www.wyseedcert.com.

Feb. 11-12 – Farm and Ranch Days, Riverton. For information, contact educator Ron Cunningham at (307) 332-2362 or at ronc@uwyo.edu.

Feb. 18 – Private Pesticide License training, Powell. Park County Fairgrounds, 8 a.m. to noon. Call (307) 754-8836 for more information.

Feb. 20 – Common Sense Conservation, Powell. Rural living workshop at the Park County Fairgrounds in Powell. For information, call (307) 754-8836.



The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service sponsors resource management workshops.

Feb. 23-25 – Cheese Making Workshop, Powell. Park County Fairgrounds. \$150 registration required. For more information, call (307) 754-8836.

March 18 – Private Pesticide License Training, Cody. Park County Courthouse basement, 8 a.m. to noon. For more information, call (307) 527-8560.



Patti Griffith, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service nutrition and food safety educator, conducts a session during Fremont County Farm and Ranch Days in Riverton.



University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service educator Dallen Smith (center) of Big Horn County assists producers during Wyoming Extension's Strategically and Technologically Informative (WESTI) Ag Days in Worland.