

News Column

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## COMPETING WITH THE INTERNET

When I started my Extension career a few years back (over 25 years ago), I learned pretty quickly to schedule educational meetings in the winter months, during January, February and March. At that time of year – and in that era – the choices for farmers might have been to: work all day outside in the cold, sit inside and watch soap operas, or go to town to an Extension meeting.

Given those limited choices, and after a couple of days of soap operas, it was pretty easy to be the activity of choice.

A lot has changed in the last 25 to 30 years. Farmers have more choices than ever before, with just about everyone having a heated tractor cab. Many have heated shops. Almost all have satellite TV and internet service. The competition is getting tougher.

I admit to being addicted to Google and I'm a strong enough introvert that I find myself learning by self-study for hours at a time. Then,....I'll find myself at an educational meeting, or just in a conversation with a farmer, and I'll realize how much more I can learn when there are real people involved.

With that thought in mind, I offer you three learning opportunities over the next couple of weeks.

- January 22, 9:30 a.m. – Ag Profitability Conference at the United Methodist Church in Wamego. Topics discussed will included pasture and crop leases, livestock market

outlook, the farm financial situation, and useful decision making tools available on the AgManager website. Speakers are Mykel Taylor, Glynn Tonser, Gregg Ibendahl, and Rich Llewellyn, all Ag Economists with K-State Research and Extension. The meeting runs from 9:30 to 3:30 and lunch is included in the \$10 registration fee.

- January 25, 8:30 a.m. – RAM II Workshop (Advanced Risk Assessed Marketing) at the Kaw Valley State Bank in Wamego. This workshop will focus on marketing strategies, including futures, options, crop insurance and forward contracts. The highlight of the day will be a hands-on case farm activity where you test your marketing skills against the skills of the other class participants. It's a competition – and guaranteed to be fun! Lunch is included with this workshop too, but the registration fee is \$15. I guess it'll be a better lunch.
- January 25, 6:30 p.m. – RCLA Annual Meeting at Pottorf Hall in Manhattan. I'll miss the RAM II Workshop in Wamego since these meetings are the same day and it takes most of the day to set up and cook for a crowd of 100-plus. The Riley County Livestock Association Annual Meeting probably appears to be more of a social event than an educational meeting, but you can't help but learn something when you get this many people together. The registration fee is \$15 and includes a ribeye steak dinner. This one is a bargain and should be the best meal of the three.

You can register for the RCLA Annual Meeting online at [www.riley.ksu.edu](http://www.riley.ksu.edu), or by phone at the number listed below. Reservations for the other two meetings will run through the Wabaunsee County Extension Office. Their number is 785/765-3821.

If you have questions, you can reach me at the Riley County Extension Office at 785/537-6350. Or, you can send e-mail to [gmcclure@ksu.edu](mailto:gmcclure@ksu.edu).

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