

New and updated Iowa State University farm bill tools, continued from page 2

embedded in their structures to eliminate the need for external data. As a starting point for price expectations, the user can choose from three sets of price projections: USDA, Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) and futures prices. However, all prices and yield projections can be overwritten to reflect the user's expectations. The impact of base acreage reallocation on program payments can also be evaluated with both worksheets.

With the Yield Update and Base Acre Reallocation decisions, and the Election decision looming upon us (February 28 and March 31, respectively), the *Calculator* and the simplified *Analyzer* are expected to provide producers and land owners with additional insights for the decision process.



Retirement resources for every age

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No matter how close or far Iowans are from retirement, the new "Retirement: Secure Your Future" Web page from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach will help them prepare, said Barb Wollan, a human sciences specialist in family finance.

The Web page includes resources for three general audiences: those who are just starting to prepare for retirement, those in mid-career and those who are nearing retirement. It includes publications on a wide range of topics, all available for free online review or download. Video learning modules, usually 10 to 20 minutes in length, also are available on specific topics.

"Currently three modules are available. We expect to add several more in the next month or two, and build the collection over time," Wollan said.

"Our goal is to provide information that can help people understand their retirement planning decisions," Wollan said. "For example, young adults often will tell us, 'I've got plenty of time before I retire; right now I have other things to worry about.' Many young adults don't realize



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the tremendous retirement benefit they will gain by starting early, even if they only set aside a small amount each month. One of the publications and an upcoming module help to explain this concept."

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Investors of all ages have questions about investing and asset allocation, and may be confused by the various types of tax-advantaged accounts they can choose from, Wollan said. Two publications address those questions in clear, straightforward language.

For those approaching retirement within the next five to 10 years, a set of four "Retirement Transitions" publications explains key topics that affect retirement well-being, including Social Security options, required minimum distributions, income annuities and strategies for establishing a steady income flow in retirement.

In addition to materials consumers can use on their own, the "Retirement: Secure Your Future" Web page also highlights three core retirement workshops from ISU Extension and Outreach. These workshops are available to groups and

sometimes are offered to the public, with a modest fee to cover expenses, Wollan said.

"ISU Extension and Outreach materials always are non-commercial, with no vested interest in promoting any particular products or services," Wollan said. "That makes them fairly unique in the retirement planning world, which is dominated by commercial firms and organizations that have commercial interests through advertising. I don't discourage people from reading and learning from commercial material, but it's important to critically evaluate the motives of those sources. ISU Extension and Outreach materials are based on research."

Visit the "Retirement: Secure Your Future" Web page at www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/retirement.



Dividing up assets after death*

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Dividing assets among the heirs after death rarely poses a tax problem although there may be hurt feelings for years among those who get less than a proportionate share of the estate. The problems, if they develop in dividing up the assets after death, usually arise when the parents left undivided interests in assets, particularly if the assets are of unequal value and an equal division is difficult or impossible to achieve. That could occur with one-of-a-kind personal property items or of farmland with widely varying productivity and value. Unfortunately, none of the alternatives will assure that all parties will be completely satisfied. However, some of the options score higher than others. With careful pre-death planning the level of satisfaction can be elevated significantly.

Undivided interests passing to the heirs

The first issue is whether the heirs are willing to continue for the foreseeable future as happy, cheerful and contented holders of undivided interests in the assets including the farm or ranch land involved. If so, the major concern is in deciding who will bear responsibility for management, how the ownership will be handled long term (as undivided interests or as co-owners of an entity formed prior to or after death such as a limited liability company, limited liability partnership or some other organizational structure) and how those eventually wanting to exit from the arrangement can do so on a fair basis. All of those concerns should be carefully worked out and agreed to in writing in a manner that will be enforceable even on the part of a minority owner.