

Caddo County Women in Ag Conference

The Caddo County Women in Ag Conference was held Thursday, November 10, 2011, at the Caddo Kiowa Technology Center in Fort Cobb, Oklahoma. The theme for the conference was 'Empowering Today's Woman'. The opening keynote speaker featured Oklahoma's 15th Lieutenant Governor Jeri Askins. Ms. Askins is an experienced legislator and businesswoman with extensive professional ties in Oklahoma. Askins encouraged participants to take opportunities that may be presented to them and serve in leadership roles. She spoke highly about the growing number of women holding high profile roles in agriculture.

The afternoon included a luncheon and keynote speaker Ronda Mikles. Mikles spoke with enthusiasm and high energy as she encouraged participants to live passionately. She spoke about the importance of the willingness to learn, living each day with a vision and to think big! The conference included risk management topics such as 'Ag Law/Estate Planning' and 'Farm Programs, Drought Resources'. The USDA Programs presentation was provided by Amanda Tye and Brandi Pietz-Jones. In addition, Dr. Rodney Jones, Cooperative Extension Service Agricultural Economics Specialist, and Dr. Eric Devuyst co-taught the 'Agriculture Game'. Specifically, the FAARM game teaches users what hedging, forward contracting, put and call options, and how to improve marketing decisions on your farm or ranch. The conference also included an assortment of alternative enterprise topics such as 'Stress Management Skills' and 'Couponing'. Rachel Geiger, Assistant Director of the Shawnee Economic Development Foundation presented 'Social Media – Make it Work for You'. The presentation included an overview of social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter and how they can work together to market your agricultural business better and create increased customer engagement.

In addition to the knowledgeable and informative speakers, participants enjoyed several opportunities to network with others at the trade show and luncheon. Upon the conclusion of the conference, an evaluation form was presented to the attendees. The evaluation results concluded that 83% of participants marked excellent for the information they received at the conference. Additional marks included, 29% of participants improving their understanding of social media, and 51% of participants plan to make changes as a result of the conference. The event was highly accomplished due to effective planning committee members, including chair Ranel Lasley, well informed speakers, and approximately 100 highly motivated conference attendees.