

Northwest Oklahoma Women in Agriculture Conference

The Northwest Oklahoma Women in Agriculture Conference was held October 25, 2011, at the Northwest Technology Center in Fairview. The general session featured risk management topic 'Estate Planning and Transition' – presented by OSU Ag Law Professor Shannon Ferrell. The topic proved to provide knowledge to the participants, as nearly 100% of participants said the topic they were more aware of human issues that must be addressed for successful transition and estate plans. In addition to the general session, the participants had a choice of five breakout sessions. Breakout sessions included risk management topics, such as 'Record Keeping: Chore or Decision Making Tool', presented by OSU Farm Management Specialist Dr. Damona Doye. Additional topics that were especially beneficial to drought-stricken producers in the state included taking advantage of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) funding. 'How do I get a Part of the Program Dollars', was presented by Michael Roberts. According to the evaluation, 67% of the participants agreed they were more aware of government programs available to them that can assist in farm/ranch risk management. Additional breakout topics included ways to get involved in agritourism, managing the family farm on your own, QuickBooks versus Quicken computer software use, navigating the Farm Service Agency, getting to know your banker, and getting started in agribusiness.

Jim Rhodes, Major County Extension agricultural educator quoted, "Participants can learn the latest information relative to a variety of topics that empower women to solve issues and concerns of importance to them, their families and their communities." Jim also explained there are many producers who are longtime wheat growers, but are interested in learning how canola and sesame might benefit their operation. Therefore, it was beneficial for the producers to have the option to attend and learn more information in the breakout session, 'Canola, Sesame and Other Crops to Grow in Northwest Oklahoma.

Sponsors for the conference included the Oklahoma Cooperative County Extension Service, Northwest Technology Center, Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Jim Rhodes, Major County Extension Educator, was the chair for the conference. Post distribution and computing the evaluations, high marks included 62% of participants agreed they learned more about agricultural leasing trends, and 71% of participants said they learned more about successful farm management practices, individual or as a team. Mr. Rhodes plans to host another Women in Agriculture Conference in 2012.