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## *farmdoc daily* Turns Five Today!

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Please join us today in celebrating the five-year anniversary of *farmdoc daily*. When the *farmdoc* team committed to the goal of publishing one original article of research-based analysis and information each business day at the new *farmdoc daily* site, even we thought it sounded more than a little over-the-top. We are, of course, proud to have accomplished this goal, but we are even prouder that we met the goal while maintaining high standards for timeliness, relevance, and rigor. We know that the quality of articles, not the quantity, is the reason why *farmdoc daily* has earned a place on the "must read" list of literally hundreds of thousands of farmers, lenders, educators, journalists, traders, market analysts, and policy-makers around the world

### A Five-Year Review

In the five years since the launch of *farmdoc daily* we have published 1,235 articles. The range of topics has been truly remarkable—from spoofing in futures markets to costs of producing corn and soybeans and everything in between. Of course, none of this would be possible without the hard work and dedication of the remarkable team of contributors to *farmdoc daily*. Regular contributors during the last five years include Ryan Batts, Jonathan Coppess, Paul Ellinger, Bryan Endres, Darrel Good, Gary Hoff, Scott Irwin, Todd Kuethe, Marc Lovell, John Newton, Nick Paulson, Paul Peterson, Gary Schnitkey, Bruce Sherrick, and Don Uchtmann of the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics and Dwight Raab, State Coordinator of the Illinois Farm Business Farm Management Association and Extension Specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics. We are also very fortunate to count Chris Hurt and Mike Langemeier, Professors in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University, and Carl Zulauf, an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Agricultural, Environmental and Development Economics at The Ohio State University, as regular contributors. In addition, we have been privileged to publish on occasion the contributions of a long list of other talented authors. And none of what you see at *farmdoc daily* would be possible without the amazing talents and dedication of our project manager, Mark Althouse, and the assistant project manager, Hongxia Jiao. And, of course, a project of this magnitude cannot happen without funding, and we have been extremely fortunate to have a great group of supporters that include the Department of Agricultural and Consumer

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Of course, you know anything labeled “Five-Year Review” in a *farmdoc daily* article has to have some data and honest-to-goodness analysis (I will spare you supply and demand diagrams today). Figure 1 presents the history of monthly visits to the *farmdoc daily* site over March 2011 through February 2016. The level of monthly visits started out back in 2011 at around 25,000 per month and has grown steadily since then to about 150,000 per month. So, the number of visits to the site has grown by a factor of six over the last five years. We find it interesting how steady the growth has been. The trend regression explains 93 percent of the variation in monthly visits and the slope indicates trend growth of about 2,500 visits per month. A total of 5.4 million visits have taken place over the last five years. At the pace of recent months, *farmdoc daily* is set to surpass 2 million visits in 2016. To get some perspective on the magnitude of this number, it equates to about 5,500 visits per day or 230 visits per hour round-the-clock 24/7.

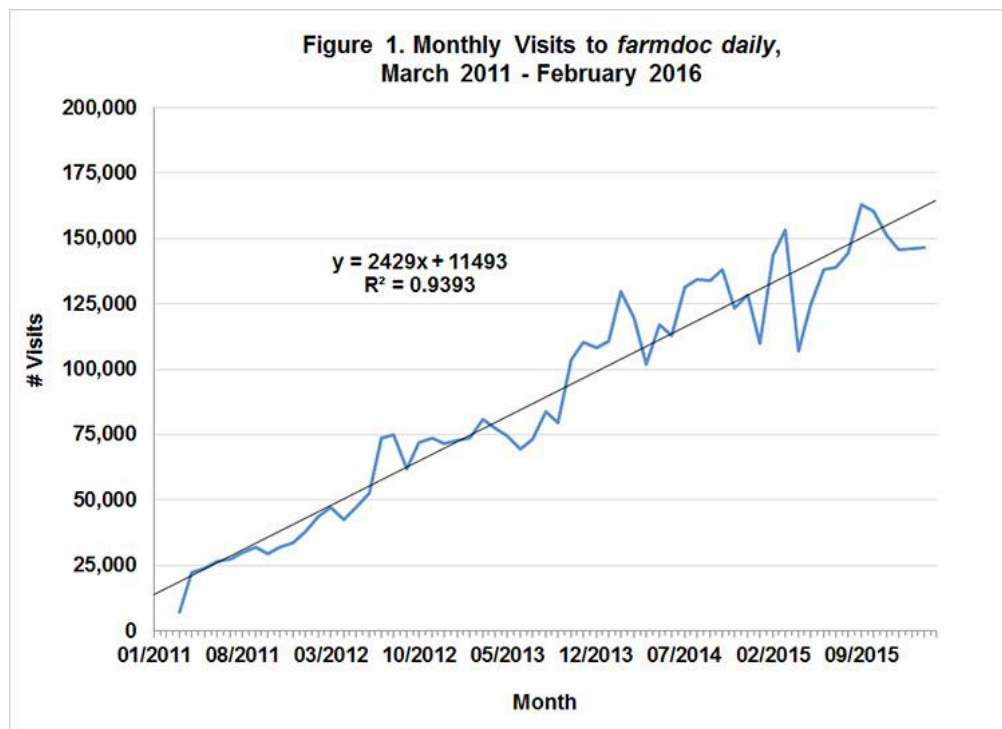
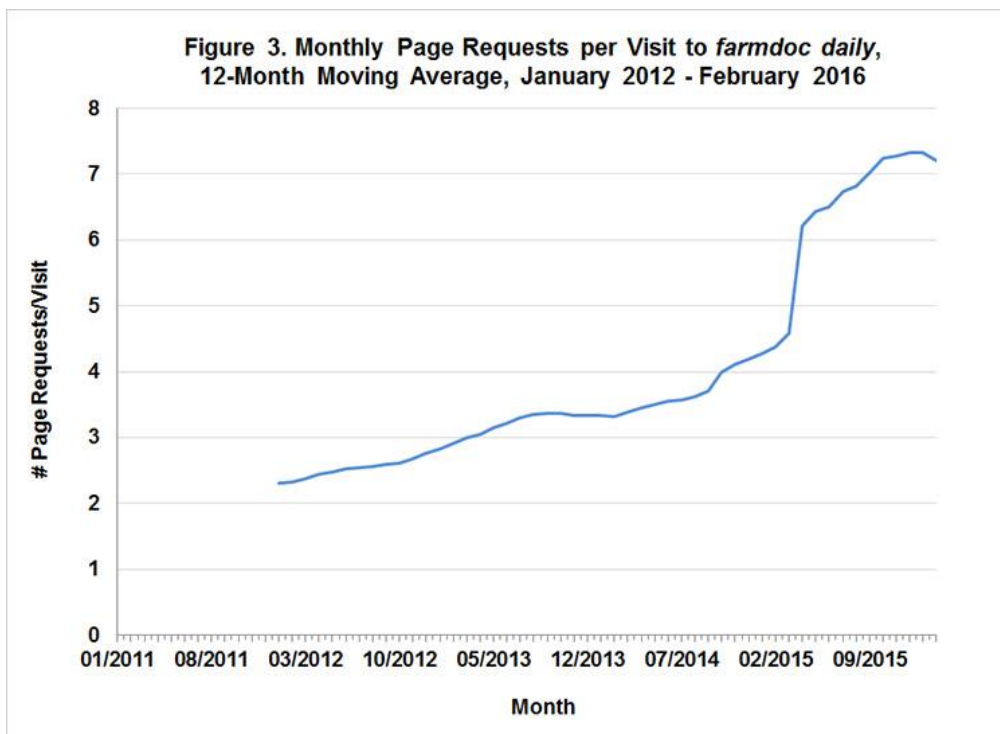
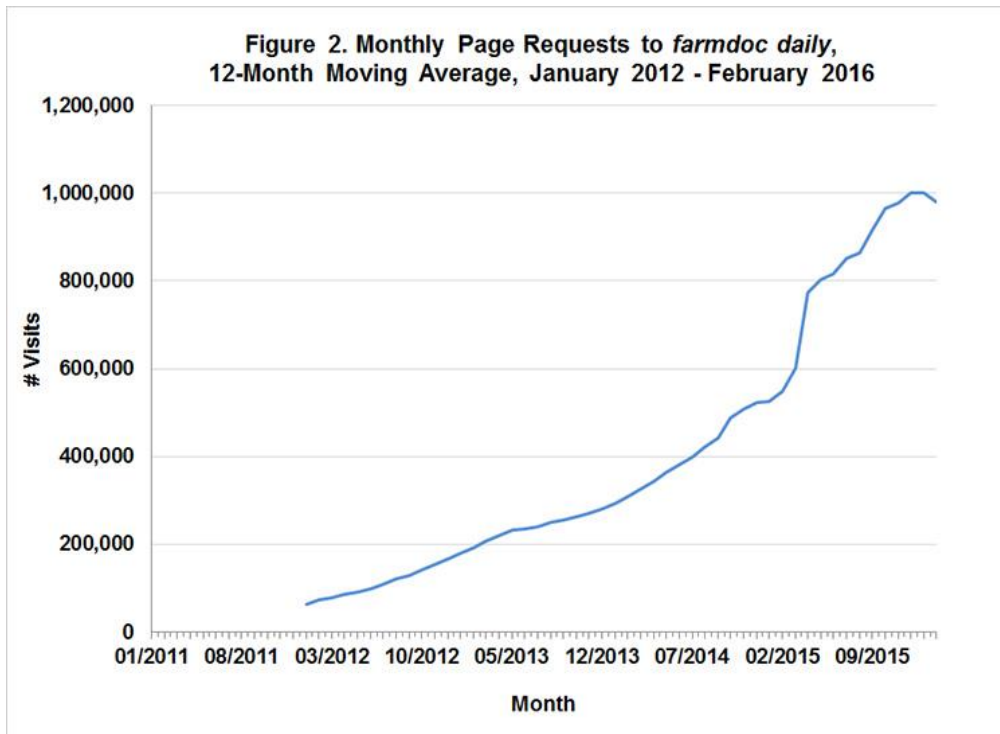


Figure 2 presents another measure of web traffic—page requests—that roughly equates to clicks at the *farmdoc daily* site. Due to some anomalous (and huge) totals for a few months, it is presented as a 12-month moving average for January 2012 through February 2016. In total, 25 million page requests have been made at the site in the last five years. It is not surprising that total page requests per month has grown as the number of visits has increased, but what is surprising is the big jump that has taken place in the last year. We are now serving up about 1 million pages per month. That is a lot of reading by anyone’s standard! Figure 3 shows that the driver of the jump in usage is a leap in the number of page requests per visit, which had been running about 3 to 4 pages per visit and now tops 7 pages per visit. We take this as a key indicator of the increasing value over time of the articles published at *farmdoc daily*.



Awards provide another indicator of quality and impact and *farmdoc daily* has been fortunate to win two prestigious awards during the last five years. In 2013, the program received the [Team Award](#) from the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES) here at the University of Illinois. In 2014, *farmdoc daily* received the [Distinguished Group Extension Program Award](#) from the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA). This is the leading organization of agricultural and applied

economics in the world so we are especially proud of receiving this honor. If you ever wondered what the *farmdoc daily* team actually looks like, here we are receiving the 2014 AAEA award:



## The Future

We are excited about the future of *farmdoc daily* and have several new initiatives that will be launching in the future. The first new initiative begins tomorrow when we will begin publishing a completely revamped daily email service. In the future we will be sending out only one email per day (7am CST) that features the most recent *farmdoc daily* article as well as headlines for all the most recent articles. The new email will use a newsletter format and will also include a spotlight area and announcements related to *farmdoc* meetings and webinars. It will truly be one-stop shopping for everything going on related to the *farmdoc* program. We will also be sending out a special “Weekender” edition of the email on Saturday morning that can be used to catch up with the last week’s articles if needed. If you are not currently an email subscriber it is easy to sign up [here](#).

We are also working on a completely redesigned *farmdoc daily* site that should be released in the next few weeks. The new site will be full of enhancements, including a responsive layout for easy use on mobile devices, a new “uber-menu” navigation structure that will make it substantially easier to find what you are looking for at the site, easy-to-use links to the most popular data and tools at the [farmdoc](#) site, and quick navigation to the latest outlook and farm economics articles. Another reason we are excited about the future is our new partnership with the [NCSA](#) here at the University of Illinois. The first fruits of that partnership are represented by the [2016 crop insurance tools](#), released last month. These new tools are path-breaking in several dimensions and show what can be accomplished when high-tech programming genius is applied to important agricultural decision-making problems.

As always, we appreciate our readers first and foremost. Thank you for joining us on this journey the last five years. We are looking forward to the next five years and hope you will continue to come along for the ride.

Regards,  
[Scott Irwin](#)  
*farmdoc* team leader