



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Evaluation of the Master Marketer Newsletter

Faculty Paper Series 01-9

June 2001

Dean A. McCorkle
Extension Specialist – Risk Management
d-mccorkle@tamu.edu

Mark L. Waller
Professor and Extension Economist

Stephen H. Amosson
Professor and Extension Economist

Stan J. Bevers
Associate Professor and Extension Economist

Robert Borchardt and
Extension Specialist – Risk Management

Jackie G. Smith
Professor and Extension Economist

Department of Agricultural Economics
2124 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-2124
979-845-9589

Department of Agricultural Economics
Texas Agricultural Extension Service and Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
Texas A&M University System

Evaluation of the Master Marketer Newsletter

Dean A. McCorkle, Mark L. Waller, Stephen H. Amosson, Stan J. Bevers,
Robert Borchardt, and Jackie G. Smith*

Extension Specialist-Risk Management, Professor and Extension Economist, Professor and Extension Economist, Associate Professor and Extension Economist, Extension Specialist-Risk Management, and Professor and Extension Economist, Texas Agricultural Extension Service

Abstract

Several support programs have been developed to help support, reinforce, enhance, and improve the effectiveness of the educational experience of Master Marketer graduates and other marketing club participants. One of those products, the Master Marketer Newsletter, is currently mailed to over 700 Master Marketer graduates and Extension faculty on a quarterly basis. In the June 2000 newsletter, a questionnaire was sent to newsletter recipients asking them to evaluate the various sections of the newsletter, and provide any suggestions for improvement. The following report provides a summary of the findings from the survey. Additionally, some modifications to the newsletter were implemented with the June 2001 newsletter.

Master Marketer Program Overview

Master Marketer is an educational program designed to train agricultural producers in advanced risk management and marketing techniques. The Master Marketer program combines three successful educational concepts - master programs, master volunteers, and marketing clubs, with the intent of enhancing producers' knowledge in risk management and marketing. The program begins with 64 hours of intensive classroom training taught by Texas A&M University System faculty and nationally recognized instructors from across the U.S. At the conclusion of the four, two-day sessions, the graduates are expected to start and lead a marketing club in their home area, allowing this new knowledge to be transferred to marketing club participants.

The Master Marketer program was originally piloted in Amarillo during 1996. The success of the Amarillo effort led to the expansion of the program statewide. From 1997 to 2001 additional programs were conducted in Lubbock, Wharton, Vernon, Waco, Victoria, Uvalde, Abilene and again in Amarillo, Lubbock and Vernon. A total of 520 producers, agribusiness owners/managers, and agricultural lenders have successfully completed the training. These graduates have started or revitalized over 100 marketing clubs across the state.

Master Marketer Support Programs and Materials

Since the first Master Marketer program in 1996, there has been a need to provide continuing education, resource materials, market information, and maintain a strong relationship between the Master Marketer program and its graduates. In light of this need, several support programs and materials have been developed including:

- **Risk Management Education Curriculum Guide:** A comprehensive set of educational materials made up of a four page or less publication, curriculum guide, and overhead visuals for close to 100 risk management topics. Approximately 70 sets of materials have been completed and distributed thus far.
- **Marketing Club Cookbook:** This guide was developed to help provide a step-by-step approach to the development and operation of a marketing club.
- **Marketing Club Teleconference Network:** The teleconference network is a way for marketing clubs in Texas and other states to have access to nationally known guest speakers from across the country. Approximately 30 marketing clubs in Texas participate in this monthly educational activity.
- **Master Marketer Web Site:** The Internet site, located at <http://masterinarketer.tamu.edu>, provides access to most of the support programs, information for future programs, contact information for Master Marketer instructors, and links to other marketing related Internet sites.
- **Master Marketer Newsletter:** This quarterly newsletter is designed to keep graduates abreast of current Master Marketer program activities, provide educational information, updates on the Texas Risk Management Education Program and other Texas Agricultural Extension Service programs. The newsletter is mailed to 520 Master Marketer graduates and 308 County Extension Agents, District Extension Directors, Extension Project Group Leaders, and Extension Agricultural Economics Faculty.

Master Marketer Newsletter Survey

The June 2000 edition, the seventh Master Marketer newsletter, contained a 6-question survey to evaluate the newsletter and determine if it is meeting the needs and expectations of the newsletter recipients. Newsletter recipients were asked to rate on a scale of one to five the overall newsletter, the Master Marketer highlights section, the guest column, the Inside the Texas Agricultural Extension Service section, the Texas Risk Management Education Program Update section, and the Choice Web Site section. Additionally, recipients were asked what they would like to see in the newsletter that would make it more valuable to them. The survey, as it appeared in the newsletter, is contained in Appendix A. Responses from Master Marketer graduates and extension faculty were kept separate.

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the surveys received from Master Marketer graduates and extension faculty respectively. Thirty-four survey responses were received from Master Marketer graduates which represents 8% of all graduates that receive the newsletter. Fifteen survey responses were received from extension personnel which represents 5% of extension faculty who receive the newsletter.

Master Marketer graduates, on average, rated the newsletter higher than did the Extension faculty. The average rating of the overall newsletter by Master Marketer graduates was 4.77 compared to an average rating of 3.93 by Extension faculty (Tables 1 and 2). For Master Marketer graduates, 56% and 32% of the respondents rated the newsletter a 4 and 5 respectively.

For Extension faculty, the majority of the respondents (80%) rated the newsletter a 4 while 7% rated it a 5. Throughout the entire survey, Master Marketer graduates, on average, consistently provided higher ratings than the extension faculty.

Each newsletter section is described below along with a brief summary of the evaluation information:

- **Master Marketer Highlights:** This section of the newsletter provides information about upcoming Master Marketer related programs, summaries of recent programs and activities, and any newsworthy items. A few topics contained in this section of the newsletter include a summary of the 2000 Master Marketer Industry Review Committee meeting, an announcement regarding the revision of the Marketing Club Cookbook, and announcements regarding speakers and dates for the Marketing Club Network Tele-conference.

Master Marketer respondents gave their highest ratings to the *Master Marketer Highlights* and the *Guest Column* sections. Both sections received an average rating of 4.80. While the *Master Marketer Highlights* section, received an average rating of 4.80 by Master Marketer respondents, it received a lower average rating by extension faculty at 4.00. While the 4.00 rating may look substantially lower, it was the second highest rating given by the extension faculty.

- **Guest Column:** This section is authored by a guest columnist on a wide-array of relevant topics. Of the eight issues distributed thus far, two of the guest columns were authored by extension specialists from other states, one by a marketing consultant in Texas, and five by Texas Extension service specialists. A few of the topics that have been addressed in the guest column include cotton and soybean marketing strategies, 2002 farm bill outlook, crop insurance issues, and income tax management strategies.

While the *Guest Column* section tied for the highest rating received from Master Marketer respondents (4.80), the average rating of 3.80 by Extension faculty respondents was the next to lowest rating they gave any section. One-half of the Master Marketer respondents rated this section a 5, while only 2 of 15 Extension respondents rated it a 5.

- **Inside the Texas Agricultural Extension Service:** This section of the newsletter contains information about upcoming programs and services offered by the Extension Service. Topics discussed in this section include the benefits of using BudPro (a software program for enterprise budgeting), Standardized Performance Analysis (SPA) program updates, and a profile of the Dickens County marketing club.

The *Inside the Texas Agricultural Extension Service* section received an average rating of 4.40 from Master Marketer graduates and 3.73 by extension faculty. Only 7% of extension respondents rated this section a 5 whereas nearly one-fourth of Master Marketer respondents rated it a 5. This section was rated lowest by both groups.

- **Texas Risk Management Education Program (TRMEP) Update:** This section provides an update on activities in the risk management education program. While the risk management program encompasses most of the programs offered by the Agricultural Economics Extension

project group, this column has focused primarily on the FARM Assistance program which involves working one-on-one with producers in analyzing long-range strategic plans under risk. Topics addressed in this column include a summary of risk management activities in the original pilot area, announcements of risk management specialists hired in each district, and a summary of common strategies suggested for analysis by FARM Assistance subscribers.

The *TRMEP* section received average ratings of 4.47 and 3.93 from Master Marketer and Extension faculty respectively.

- **Choice Web Site:** This section highlights web sites that could be useful to farm and ranch operators. Web sites highlighted thus far offer information and services pertaining to all aspects of farm and ranch operations including marketing, machinery ownership, chemicals, and agricultural news.

With an average rating of 4.27, the *Choice Web Sites* section was rated higher by extension faculty than any other section. Master Marketer graduates gave the *Choice Web Site* section an average rating of 4.61. This section had the highest level of variability in ratings with a standard deviation of 1.07.

Comments by Respondents

Comments provided by respondents are listed in Appendix B. Eight of the thirty-four Master Marketer respondents provided comments with their survey response. These comments included: complete satisfaction, interest in analysis of specific marketing alternatives under current market conditions, more crop insurance content, marketing consultant reviews, and better timeliness of some of the news in the newsletter. Five of the fifteen extension faculty respondents provided comments. These comments included: fine as it is, desire for more testimonials from producers, suggestions of activities that marketing clubs find useful, more topics related to cattle, technical information, and agricultural legislative issues.

Modifications to Newsletter

The June 2001 newsletter contained some revisions based on the findings of the evaluation. The *Inside the Texas Agricultural Extension Service* section was replaced with a new section entitled *Marketing Club Corner*. This section focuses on one marketing club in each issue, and address the club's creative activities that enhance the marketing education experience of club members. Also, to make room for more effort being placed on existing content and some of the views expressed by subscribers, the *Choice Web Site* column will only be included if newsletter space is available.

Table 1. Survey of Master Marketer Graduates

	Overall Question 1	Highlights Question 2	Guest Question 3	Inside TAEX Question 4	TRMEP Question 5	Website Question 6
Rating of 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rating of 2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Rating of 3	4	4	9	12	8	4
Rating of 4	19	18	8	14	17	17
Rating of 5	11	12	17	8	8	9
No response	0	0	0	0	0	2
Average:	4.77	4.80	4.80	4.40	4.47	4.61
Minimum:	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00
Maximum:	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Std. Dev.:	0.64	0.65	0.85	0.77	0.78	1.07

Percentage of responses in each rating category

Rating of 1						
Rating of 2					0.03	0.06
Rating of 3	0.12	0.12	0.26	0.35	0.24	0.12
Rating of 4	0.56	0.53	0.24	0.41	0.50	0.50
Rating of 5	0.32	0.35	0.50	0.24	0.24	0.26
No Response						0.06
Total:	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Table 2. Survey of Extension Faculty

	Overall Question 1	Highlights Question 2	Guest Question 3	Inside TAEX Question 4	TRMEP Question 5	Website Question 6
Rating of 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rating of 2	0	0	1	0	0	0
Rating of 3	2	2	3	5	3	1
Rating of 4	12	11	9	9	10	9
Rating of 5	1	2	2	1	2	5
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average:	3.93	4.00	3.80	3.73	3.93	4.27
Minimum:	3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Maximum:	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Std. Dev.:	0.46	0.53	0.77	0.59	0.59	0.59
Percentage of responses in each rating category						
Rating of 1						
Rating of 2			0.07		0.00	0.00
Rating of 3	0.13	0.13	0.20	0.33	0.20	0.07
Rating of 4	0.80	0.73	0.60	0.60	0.67	0.60
Rating of 5	0.07	0.13	0.13	0.07	0.13	0.33
No Response						0.00
Total:	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Appendix A

Marketing Club Newsletter Survey

The publication of the quarterly Master Marketer Newsletter began in the fall of 1998 as a result of feedback from Master Marketer graduates and our statewide sponsors. Now that the newsletter has been in publication for approximately a year and a half, we would like some feedback about whether it is meeting your needs and expectations.

Please take a few minutes and complete this postage paid anonymous survey. When you are finished filling out the survey, please fold it over, tape it shut, and drop it in the mail.

There are currently six sections in the Master Marketer Newsletter: Master Marketer Highlights, Guest Column, Inside the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Risk Management Education Program Update, and Choice WEB Sites. On the first six questions we are asking you to rate the value of the overall newsletter, and each section within the newsletter on a scale of 1 through 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The seventh question requests your advice on other topics that you would like to see included in the newsletter to increase its value to you.

- 1) How would you rate the value of the newsletter overall?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

- 2) How would you rate the value of the **Master Marketer Highlights** section of the newsletter?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

- 3) How would you rate the value of the **Guest Column** section of the newsletter?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

- 4) How would you rate the value of the **Inside the Texas Agricultural Extension Service** section of the newsletter?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

- 5) How would you rate the value of the **Texas Risk Management Education Program Update** section of the newsletter?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

- 6) How would you rate the value of the **Choice Web Sites** section of the newsletter?

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

- 7) What else would you like to see in the newsletter that would make it more interesting and valuable to you?

Appendix B

Master Marketer Survey Comments 2000

Comments by Master Marketers graduates:

Scenarios based on developing trends to give the producer ideas on when certain situations are developing, should you consider options, futures, doing nothing.

Crop insurance as it relates to effective risk management. CRC coverage and various innovative add-on policies by select companies greatly impact risk evasion strategies that a producer can take.

Some things that marketing clubs are doing.

More short courses in risk management (advanced).

By the time I get the letter some of the events it tells you about have already happened.

I would like to see reviews of Marketing Co. and marketing consultants who are after my acres!

Excellent program - I look forward to the newsletter.

Feature articles by Carl Anderson and Wayne Purcell - the experts who speak at the Master Marketer Program.

Contributors comments concerning the market.

Extension faculty comments:

Maybe some personal testimonials from producers who had success with any of our Risk Management Programs. Also personal photos. But always always keep it short and simple!

Good content - Keep it timely and updated. Suggestions on activities for marketing club programs. What marketing clubs find to be successful would be good.

More on cattle - enough on commodities such as cotton.

Technical information. More educational with information.

Fine as is!

Legislative status and updates on Ag. Critical issues.