



Research Farm Celebrates 75th Anniversary

Chris Beedle—farm superintendent

The 75th anniversary of the Western Iowa Experimental Association field day was held September 14 and 15 at the Western Research and Demonstration farm near Castana Iowa, with 150 people in attendance. Guest speakers highlighted the history of the farm. They spoke about the current and historic agricultural research, with an emphasis on the impact of the relationships between research, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and farmers.

The two-day event emphasized agricultural education. Joel DeJong and Mike Witt, field agronomists with ISU Extension and Outreach, gave an overview of the corn and soybean genetic demonstration plots. Industry professionals demonstrated technology and careers in agriculture, (including drones and GIS tools). ISU Extension and Outreach swine specialist Dave Stender focused on livestock production, while Monona County Director, Melissa Beermann provided hands-on education with live swine and poultry. Lee Burras, Morrill professor of agronomy at Iowa State, focused on weather and climate data understanding and how to study soil information including a soil demonstration pit. Participants enjoyed a look at equipment, photos, and annual reports through the decades.

High school youth with an interest in agriculture from Monona, Harrison, Crawford and Woodbury counties attended the first annual youth agriculture education on September 14 while the general public attended the education day on September 15. The youth education day will be the first of many large-scale agricultural events to come.

The Western Research and Demonstration Farm got its start in the spring of 1944. Representatives of three northwest Iowa counties: Harrison, Monona, and Woodbury met to discuss the need for an experimental farm in their area. Fundraising began, with Crawford County soon joining the effort. Two years later, the \$18,500 needed to purchase the 240-acre farm from Mr. Riddle in Monona County had been raised. The Western Iowa Experimental Association took possession March 1, 1946.

Current research and demonstration projects at the farm include on-farm cooperator trials, feeding pigs in deep-bedded hoop structures, pasture grazing, a demonstration and donation garden, and a fully automated weather station. The most rewarding project currently happening are the Monona County swine and poultry projects (the 4-H Breakfast Club). The club immerses youth from Crawford and Monona counties in hands-on animal science education

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the Western Research and Demonstration Farm board of directors, financial sponsors, volunteers and ISU Extension and Outreach field specialists to make the event possible.



Figure 1. Commemorating plaque for the support and partnership between Iowa State University, Western Research and Demonstration Farm, and Western Iowa Experimental Farm Association.