

## Energy Beet Risk Management Training

### The Situation

The development of next generation biofuels presents a potential opportunity for North Dakota farmers to grow new dedicated energy crops. Energy beets, varieties of beet bred for industrial purposes, show unique promise for North Dakota whose climate is ideal for sugar production and allows beets to be piled and stored over winter.

Farmers need considerable agronomic and economic information to evaluate production of a new crop. Identifying and measuring a variety of risks associated with new crop production makes the situation even more challenging.

### Extension Response

NDSU Extension, with financial support from the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center, designed and delivered an Extension program to educate farmers about the opportunity associated with beets as an industrial crop, beet agronomics and production, economics and risk.

David Ripplinger, Bioenergy/Bioproducts Economics Specialist, and Ron Haugen, Farm Management Specialist, led the effort. The full program was delivered during half-day meetings in four target communities: Valley City, Jamestown, Carrington, and Langdon. A shorter program was given to bankers in Grand Forks, Minot, Bismarck, and Fargo.

### Impacts

489 farmers and bankers participated in the Energy Beet Risk Project. Participants in the four targeted communities completed evaluations at the end of each program.

Respondents reported:

- A significant improvement in knowledge of energy beets (3.8/5.0)
- A significant improvement in knowledge of the costs of growing energy beets (3.9/5.0)

Participants in the four targeted communities were surveyed electronically six months after the face-to-face program.

- 100 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding of energy beets improved as a result of the program.
- 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their ability to evaluate the risks and financial implications of energy beets improved as a result of the program.
- 100 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their ability to effectively use risk management strategies improved as a result of the program.
- 88 percent stated that they would consider growing energy beets when energy prices rebound

### Public Value Statement

Crop production decisions, including growing new crops, are critical to farm profitability, agility, and continuity.

### Contact

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