

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Agriculture technology boot camp launching food producers into the future

AT A GLANCE

The technology boot camp offered a look into what technology tools are available and how they can be incorporated into production practices.

The Situation

Food producers and stakeholders from all facets of agriculture expressed an interest in learning what new technologies could be put into practice on their farms and ranches to enhance their production practices. Advancements in agriculture are changing rapidly and technology industries are adding remote sensing to nearly all moving mechanisms on the farm or ranch. A showcase of these technologies and their uses is of great importance to food producers. University of Idaho Extension has provided education on new technologies that will continue to keep Idaho producers at peak performance.

Our Response

University of Idaho Extension partnered with the Idaho Barley Commission, the Western Extension Risk Management Education Center and Idaho State University Work Force Training to bring the agriculture technology boot camp to growers in southern Idaho. Education on new and evolving technology was presented with an emphasis on incorporating these ideas into production management. The conference was held on the Idaho State University campus in Pocatello, Idaho. Producers from all segments of agriculture were in attendance. The two-day conference focused on



The Mavic Drone, students were able to get their hands on the controls and fly this drone during class. Photo by Jon Hogge.

seeing the big picture of technology. Day one topics included: precision planting, variable rate fertilizer and chemical application, using drone infrared technology, low elevation sprinkler application, high frequency ear tags in livestock production and cyber security. Day two had a hands-on focus with drone operations and drone flight as the guiding discussion. Those in attendance were able to fly different types of drones and learn about the capacity and benefits of each aircraft. At the end of the two-day conference attendees had a new appreciation for technology and its application to agriculture.

Program Outcomes

The evaluation administered after the conference showed that attendees from twelve counties in

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southern Idaho were in attendance. The total acreage represented by attendees who filled out the evaluation was just under 120,000 acres. Those in attendance were asked to thoughtfully consider the financial opportunities that could be represented by implementing ideas or practices learned during the conference. The responses were very positive. Through implementation of the education, producers could cut costs as well as increase profits. Attendees were asked what practices they planned to change based on the skills learned from this program. Responses included:

- Pursue and upgrade my yield monitoring equipment.
- Make better use of the data I currently collect.
- Use the tools to become a better water scheduler and save money on pumping costs.
- Start soil mapping my fields so I can use variable rate applications.
- Protect my data from hackers.

When attendees were asked for their overall opinion of the technology boot camp their responses included:

- It was a very insightful class; I really enjoy seeing the technology coming available today.
- I thought the information that was presented will give me tools to make better management decisions.
- Positive information, continually educating food producers on new technology, makes us more efficient, economically viable and better stewards of the land.
- It gave me information that I will probably implement but not all at once.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jon Hogge, Area Extension Educator, University of Idaho Extension, Madison County, 208-716-5602, jhogge@uidaho.edu

Les Nunn, Agriculture Extension Educator, University of Idaho Extension, Bear Lake County, 208-847-0344, lnunn@uidaho.edu

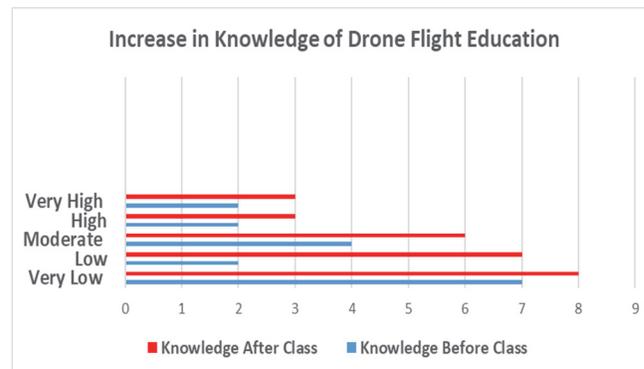
Ben Eborn, Extension Agricultural Economist, University of Idaho Extension, 208-847-0344, beborn@uidaho.edu

Joseph Sagars, Extension Educator, University of Idaho, Jefferson and Clark counties, 208-745-6685, jsagars@uidaho.edu

Nav Ghimire, Associate Director of University of Idaho Extension, 208-364-4056, nghimire@uidaho.edu

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The table below shows a representation of the increase in the level of understanding after producers participated in day two of the conference on drone operations and flight.



The Future

A needs assessment will be given to stakeholders during the annual advisory committee meetings in each county. As producers request new information on technology, another conference will be held to address those needs. University of Idaho Extension is looking for new and innovative ways to keep education current and relevant to all our stakeholders.