

An Unseen Audience: Communicating Corn Production Information Via the Web

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Iowa State University Extension Corn Production

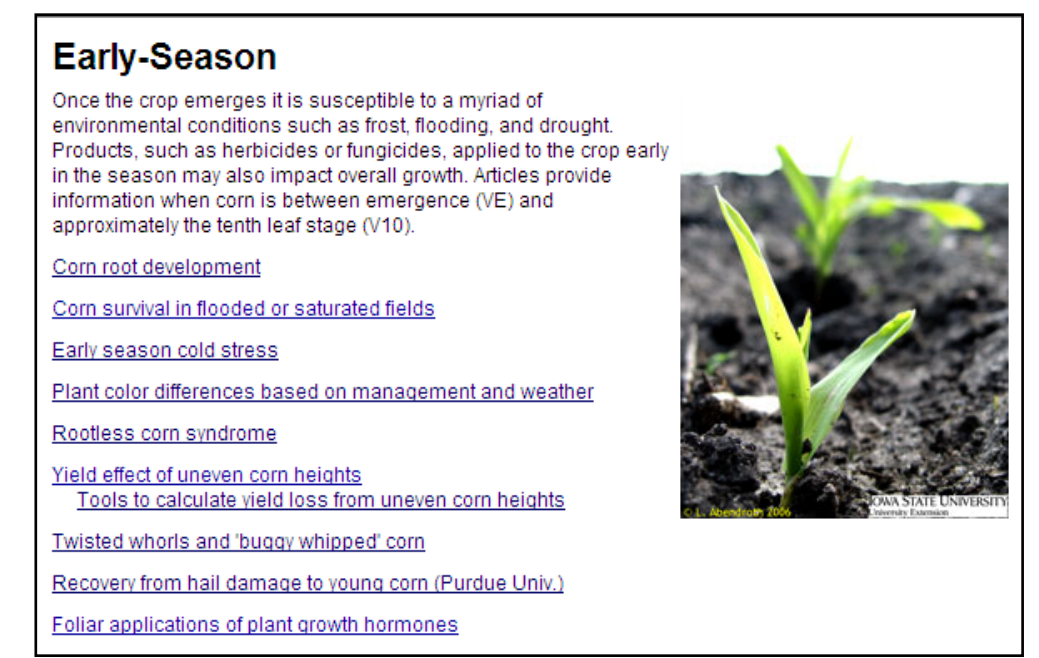
www.agronext.iastate.edu/corn

Purpose

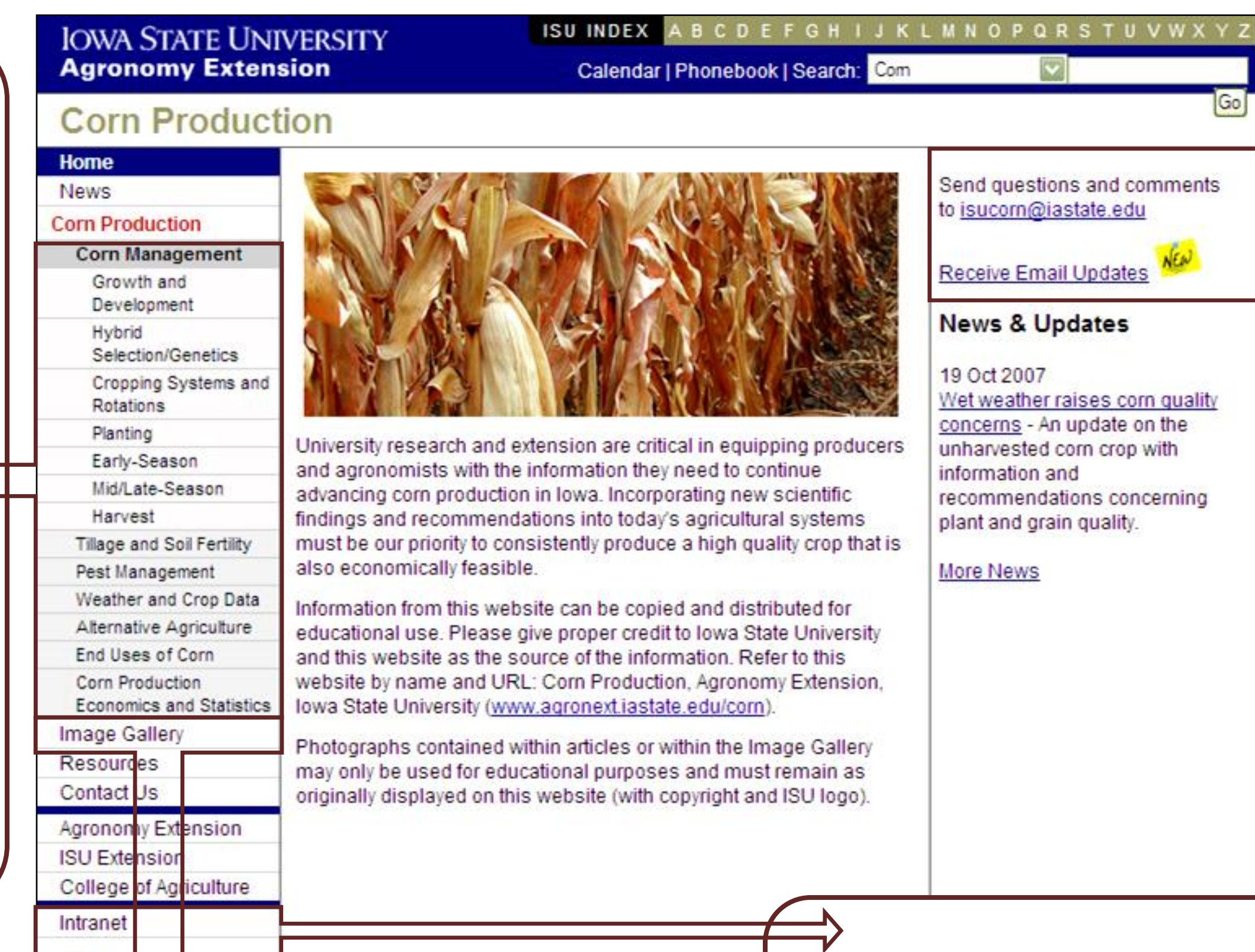
Educate Iowa agronomic and agribusiness clientele with science-based information and recommendations regarding corn production practices.

We communicate more information to the public faster and more thoroughly than thru any other media.

Information is organized by subject matter allowing users to easily navigate and find items of interest. All sources of information (newsletter articles, extension publications, journal articles, and related links) are found within their respective subject area.

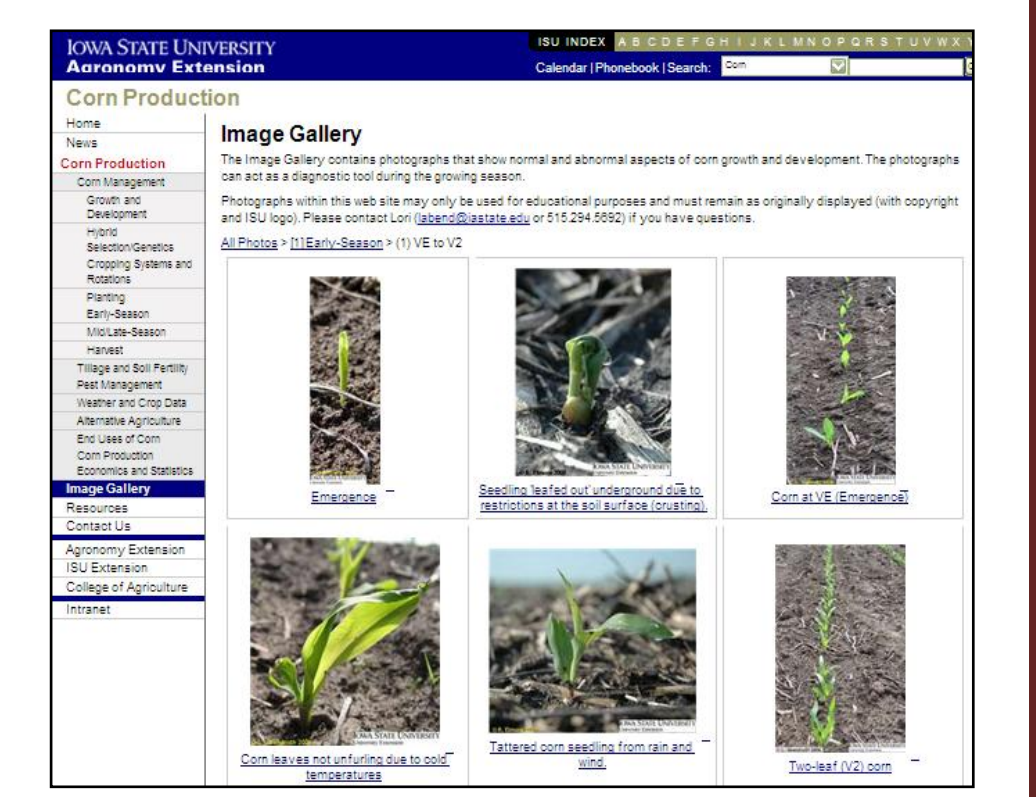


Highlights



Communication is easy between campus and web clientele:
To ISU: Visitors can send questions and comments to isucorn@iastate.edu. E-mails are instantly routed to Abendroth & Elmore for quick turn-around.
From ISU: Users can receive e-mail notification each time the site has been updated with a news item, article, or gallery image. As of 31 Oct 07, 134 people have signed up for e-mail alerts.

The Image Gallery is one of the most popular areas on the site and contains photographs of normal and abnormal crop growth. Photographs are categorized by topic and developmental stage. The Gallery serves to visually teach production principles and to help in diagnostic assessment. Some photographs have been viewed up to 1100 times.

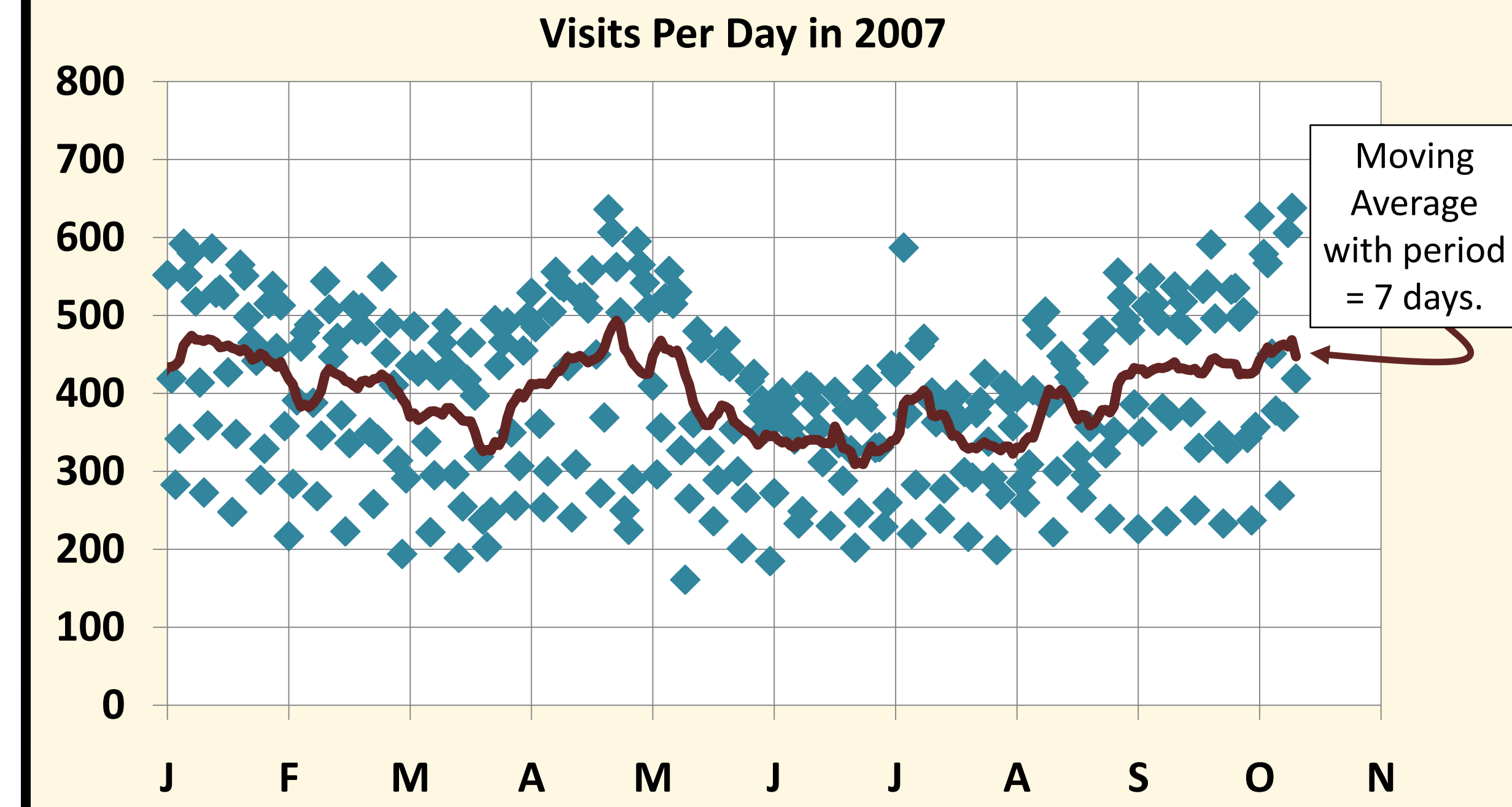


A password protected intranet is available to Iowa State University colleagues. This serves as a vehicle to transmit and post internal or sensitive materials easily. The goal for this area of the site is that it will act as a "clearinghouse" for communicating corn related information within ISU. On-going research is posted as well to serve as a tool for departmental collaboration and knowledge of corn research conducted across disciplines.

Web Analytics

Documenting the usefulness of a web site to deliver information can be achieved thru key performance indicators. Traffic to this site has been analyzed with AWStats 6.5¹.

- Since 1 January 2007:
- Total visits = 117,850
 - Mon. thru Fri. visits = ~500 per day
 - Peak hours = 900 to 1400
 - Pages viewed/visit = 2.78
 - Length of visit = 3.53 minutes
 - 30% of visitors come directly to site from a bookmark
 - 47% of visitors are directed from an internet search engine
 - #2 recommended site on Google when "corn" is keyword



¹AWStats 6.5 is available at <http://awstats.net> and allows for evaluation of log files. Programs such as Google Analytics though are more user friendly and provide better graphics (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>).