

# Updating the Agronomic Crops Team Website to Benefit Ohio Row Crop Users.

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Ohio corn, soybean and what producers are moving rapidly to take advantage of web based resources for information on increasing yield and saving money to produce their crops. The Agronomic Crops Team website and C.O.R.N. newsletter have been very popular as sources of information. But we were limited by old web technology in our deliver of audio, visual, and other enhanced information methods. An update with the assistance of the Communication Technology Team of the college has created an updated, valuable resource for our growers.



In 2008 we were still on our 2002 format:

With the move to a web-based newsletter in 2002, the Agronomic Crops Team created a quickly delivered crops newsletter. Today this news letter is delivered directly to 1400 subscribers and forwarded to ten times more for an effective readership of 14,000. However when we created the rapidly delivered newsletter we removed pictures, graphs and often tables so that the newsletter would be short, and easily delivered over a dial-up modem downloaded email.

Prior to the current web-based newsletter format there was a document created then converted to text and emailed. Before 1995 a hard-copy newsletter was mailed that included pictures, tables, and graphs along with the recommendations. This format required one to two weeks to develop and to arrive in the users mail box. Today's format is quick but lacks the more visually effective format.

Additionally today's crop advisors and producers don't always want a newsletter format for their crop advice source. We have taken the tact that we will deliver the newsletter content and observations of the Agronomic Crops Team by multiple sources:

- Podcast
- Blog
- Radio
- Newspaper

As well as the CORN newsletter and website.

With no place for audio, video, blogs, etc.

And while we did have visitors, we didn't have as many as we hoped:



Remarks from our users:

- I'm 100% digital
- I go to the web for impartial information – I check OSU's website
- I can't always find the blog – that long address
- First thing I see in the morning, it's my homepage

Summer 2010 – the new *agcrops.osu.edu*

Beginning in November 2008 and through May 2010, a subcommittee of the Agronomic Crops Team met with the college Communications and Technology team to create a new home website for the Agronomic Crops Team. Due to pressing security issues, CommTech felt it was essential to move ahead with not just an update but a complete rebuild.

We used the open access Plone programming and built the new site.

Discussions were held as to what was essential: photos not just on the website but also in the C.O.R.N. (Crop Observation & Recommendation Network) newsletter, video access, ease of use of the website, multiple author access, the ability to more easily share the content, AND we needed to update the state agronomic crop specialists webpages – their home, too.

In the midst of the rebuilding of the Agronomic Crops Team website, we realized that the old site was just a carrier for the CORN newsletter with a few links to other sites. The new website took on it's own life and while it is now a carrier for the newsletter, our other content and potential for even more has grown beyond just a digital newsletter.

The table below is a listing of activity of our website compared to the 194 other website being hosted by CommTech and webstats are available for. Anyone can access this via the link <http://webstats.cfaes.ohio-state.edu/>. The ranking is based off the number of unique visitors for the day July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. As you can see if I would have chosen pageview or hit the ranking would have changed and the picture of our website use is good. Congratulations!

Rank of 194	website	visits	pageviews	hits	length	bytes
1	<a href="http://joe.org">http://joe.org</a>	4071	7553	56269	1:05	1.04 GB
2	<a href="http://ohioline.osu.edu/">http://ohioline.osu.edu/</a>	2212	4406	14281	0:36	253.6 MB
3	<a href="http://ohio4h.org">http://ohio4h.org</a>	1353	7486	20311	2:15	775.52 MB
4	<a href="http://corn.osu.edu">http://corn.osu.edu</a>	1119	13565	24820	1:23	342.1 MB
5	<a href="http://ati.ohio-state.edu">http://ati.ohio-state.edu</a>	613	1913	20311	2:15	148.31 MB
*	<a href="http://cfaes.osu.edu">http://cfaes.osu.edu</a>	217	1471	12041	1:51	230.7 MB
*	<a href="http://agcrops.osu.edu">http://agcrops.osu.edu</a>	159	643	4594	1:53	89.83 MB

"top content" information for corn.osu.edu website by recent issues (18, 19 & 20) for the period that newsletter issue would have been active.