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### **Master Marketer Program Returns to Vernon in January**

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VERNON – Texas Cooperative Extension is looking for a few farmers and ranchers who want to boost their net returns, hone their marketing skills to a finer edge, and who can help their neighbors do the same.

The award-winning national Master Marketers program will return in January, 2004, to Texas A&M's Agricultural Research and Extension Center here, noted Stan Bevers, Extension economist at Vernon.

Master Marketers is an in-depth, intensive risk management education program that teaches participants how to develop marketing plans and evaluate marketing alternatives. They also learn all the skills necessary to execute a marketing plan, and how to manage risk to improve their profitability.

"Master Marketer training provides groups of farmers and ranchers with marketing education that pays direct dividends to their bottom line," Bevers said. "A 2½-year post program survey of the previous Vernon Master Marketer class suggests participants were able to increase their annual gross revenues from \$28,000 to as much as \$33,000 simply by applying their new-found marketing skills and knowledge.

"This 64-hour curriculum is offered as four two day sessions, held every two weeks. The instructors are top professionals from industry and universities around the country. It's been three years since we've hosted Master Marketers in Vernon. If you ever thought about enrolling, or even if you want a refresher course in marketing, you should consider signing up for the next program here."

Registration costs \$250 per person, which includes noon meals and materials. Graduates pass their newly acquired marketing skills and expertise on to others, with the help of county agents and marketing clubs. This is an effective way for Extension and other program sponsors to spread the training across a large group of participants, Bevers said.

The first 2004 session at Vernon is Jan. 20-21, with subsequent sessions slated on Feb. 3-4, Feb. 17-18 and March 3-4.

Registration fees pay for only a small portion of the program's cost. Grants from Extension partners such as the Texas Corn Producers Board, Texas Wheat Producers Association, Texas Farm Bureau, Cotton Incorporated, and others also help fund the program.

Texans can get registration forms or more information on the 2004 Master Marketers Program at Vernon by calling Bevers at 940-552-9941, or from their local county Extension office.