

DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING A NEW SUGARBEET RESEARCH AND EDUCATION BOARD WEBSITE

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The objective of this project is to create a modern, mobile-device friendly website for users to better access Sugarbeet Research and Education Board information and report archives. The purpose of this report is to update sugarbeet growers, agriculturalists, university researchers, and members of allied industry on the status of this important project.

BACKGROUND

Website is a resource provided by the Sugarbeet Research and Education Board, a grower driven organization that administers research and education programs to benefit sugarbeet growers. The affairs of the Board are managed by the Board of Directors comprised of sugarbeet growers and representatives from American Crystal Sugar Company, Minn-Dak Farmers' Cooperative, Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, North Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station, and University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service and Agricultural Experiment Station. The Board is funded by an assessment of each sugarbeet acre planted. The board funds research projects by public and private researchers. In general, these projects focus on sugarbeet production, although the board may occasionally fund other projects of general interest to the sugarbeet industry.

North Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service is overseeing renovation of the Sugarbeet Research and Education Board website. The primary purpose for the website is an electronic archive of research reports summarizing funded projects. The website has many other useful functions including links, repository for extension publications, presentations, and a calendar of upcoming events and activities. Website also enables the Board to present its mission and purpose more clearly including 1) to further develop the sugarbeet industry of North Dakota and Minnesota through coordinated research and educational programs; 2) provide a structure whereby sugarbeet interests can participate in and contribute to cooperative research and educational efforts; 3) identify needs for strengthening the sugarbeet industry and make recommendations for research and educational programs 4) evaluate research and educational proposals funded by the Board 5) serve as a forum for the sugarbeet industry in Minnesota and North Dakota.

NEW FEATURES

Extension is developing the new website by using software called WordPress. With this technology, we are able to transform the current site into a more mobile-friendly, up-to-date, and reorganized website that includes improved functionality. The new website will be equipped with a modern search engine to improve its functionality. The new website will provide easier navigation with constant accessibility to main headers, contact information, and a summary of the Board's purpose and mission.

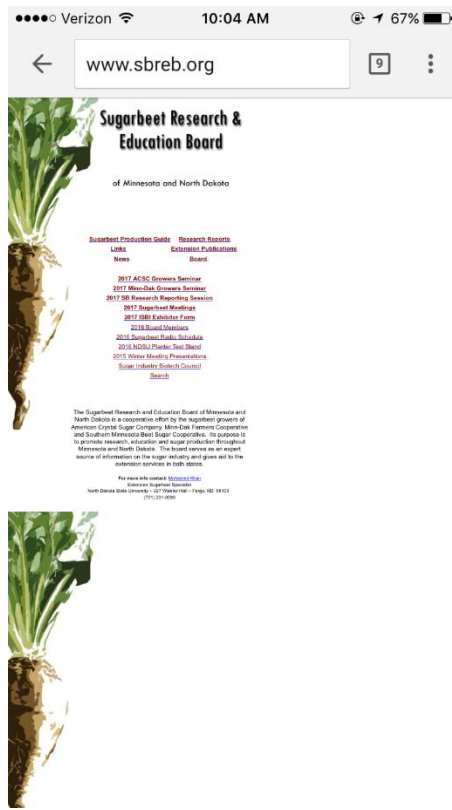
The current procedure for creating updates involves multiple individuals, steps and time. The new website allows for real-time updates that can be performed by a single individual. The simplicity of this process will allow for news article and current event publications to be linked to the website along with more frequent updates for meetings and events.

Figure one illustrates the homepage mobile view of the new website as compared with the homepage mobile view of the original website (figure two).

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



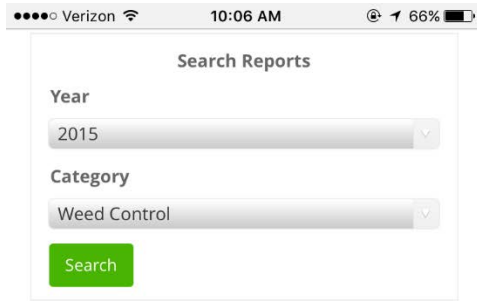
DEVELOPMENT AND PROCESSES

There have been many challenges involved with making final format decisions for the new website. The format of research articles on the original site include a mixture of PDF, HTML, DOCX, and images. Making the website mobile friendly was a high priority; thus, HTML format was uniformly chosen for publishing and uploading research reports. Uploading reports onto the new site from the original site is time-consuming. The process takes approximately 40 minutes to upload one report if all goes well. One time consuming challenge faced was the formatting of tables and graphs. There were multiple ways to accomplish this task with each format having benefits. Ultimately, the project elected to insert tables and graphs within the articles as images.

Tables must be ‘snipped’ and saved as images from the different formats on the original site to transfer content from the original website to the new website. Next, the report must be downloaded and saved onto a jump drive to be re-opened as a Microsoft Word document. Next, the word document is inserted into WordPress and edited, for example, deleting any extra spaces, tables, or figures and adding the previously ‘snipped’ images. Lastly, the report is uploaded, reviewed, and inserted into both the category and ‘Post’ it belongs.

The research reports page is very simple and to-the-point on both the current and new websites. However, the updated search engine on the new website will be much more efficient for conducting content based searches and retrieval of reports (Figure 3 & 4).

Figure 3.

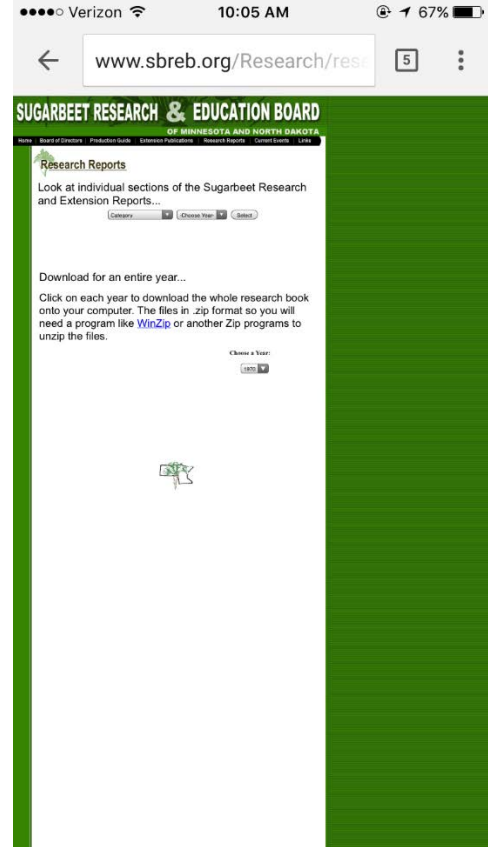


Download For an Entire Year

Click on each year to download the whole research book. The files are in zip format so you will need a program like WinZip or another Zip programs to unzip the files.

1970	1980	1990	2000
1971	1981	1991	2001
1972	1982	1992	2002
1973	1983	1993	2003
1974	1984	1994	2004
1975	1985	1995	2005
1976	1986	1996	2006
1977	1987	1997	2007
1978	1988	1998	2008
1979	1989	1999	2009

Figure 4.



TIMELINE

The goal is to transfer the original site’s URL to the new site by March 1, 2017. However, a complete clone of the archive of research reports will not be accomplished on the new site by the March 1 deadline. Thus, the original site will be linked to the new site until all archives can be transposed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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