The University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Agriculture: The First Century -- Cover & Flaps

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During most of its first century, the College of Agriculture/IANR of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has played a major role in improving the state's agriculture and home environment. The College/IANR is now widely respected by Nebraskans. But it struggled long and hard to gain acceptance by prospective students, by the citizens generally, by academia in the rest of the University, and by its chief beneficiaries — agricultural and home economics interests.

Basically, the College has drawn its strengths from outside organizations. These interests have increasingly expressed their support to county Extension boards, to University administrators, to the Board of Regents, to the Governors of the state, and to the members of the State Legislature and the U.S. Congress.

Much credit accrues to the federal government for the growth and success of the College. Under the Morrill Act of 1862, the state had three years after attaining statehood to establish a land grant university in order to take advantage of the largesse provided by the Act. Nebraska beat the deadline by one year. And under the Act, the University had to include an agricultural college — thus the College of Agriculture opened its doors in 1872, although not a single student registered in the first two years.

Similarly, the Agricultural Experiment Station was established to take advantage of the funds provided by the federal Hatch Act of 1877, and the Cooperative Extension Service to accept funds under the federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914.

Today the College of Agriculture/IANR has a highly respected teaching program which attracts students from many other states and foreign countries as well as from Nebraska. The findings of the Agricultural Research Division are sought by many. The Cooperative Extension Service provides an effective delivery system for scientific findings.

Every one of Nebraska's 93 counties is organized and provides local tax support to have the services of county extension agents. There is a strong program of foreign assistance, with funding provided largely by USAID.

This is the story of the struggles and accomplishments of the College/IANR during its first 100 years and of the people who made it possible.

A Message from the Vice Chancellor

I am pleased that authors Elvin F. Frolik and Ralston J. Graham have produced this history of the College of Agriculture covering the first century. The Institute joins with the College of Agriculture Alumni Association in sponsoring the writing and publishing of the book.

It is important that the origin, development, and accomplishments of the College (now the IANR) be recorded in this carefully prepared documentary. The College, along with the other colleges of agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has been a major factor in the magnificent progress made in agriculture and home economics during this 100 year period.

The book will be an excellent source of information for those seeking historical facts. The authors have carefully documented the contents and have been candid and objective in their writing. Along with providing sound and dependable information, the authors have included material of human interest, not uncommonly of a humorous nature, to make the book more readable.

Anyone interested in the development of agriculture in Nebraska will find a desk copy of this book invaluable.

Roy C. Arnold, Vice Chancellor
IANR, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

About the authors

Elvin F. Frolik is a native Nebraskan, having graduated from DeWitt High School. He earned the BS and MS degrees from the University of Nebraska, and the PhD in agronomy and plant genetics from the University of Minnesota. He has served the University of Nebraska as county extension agent in Nemaha county; as professor of agronomy in extension, teaching and research, and as departmental chairman; associate director of the Agricultural Experiment Station; and dean of the College (when it consisted of all major divisions as the IANR does presently).

Ralston J. Graham is also a native Nebraskan. He graduated from Lincoln High School and from the University of Nebraska with a major in journalism. He worked for the Lincoln Journal and the Scottsbluff Star-Herald, served in the U.S. Army from 1940 to 1945, and later was editor of the Mineral Wells (Texas) Index. In 1947 he was appointed station editor of the College of Agriculture. He worked in all Divisions of the College/IANR, and retired as professor and head, Department of Agricultural communications.

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