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

Elvin F. Frolik  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Ralston J. Graham  
*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

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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.