

8-16-2001

## Nebraska Agri-Business Association (formerly Nebraska Fertilizer and Ag-Chemical Institute)

John C. Owens

*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, [jowens2@unl.edu](mailto:jowens2@unl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#)

---

Owens, John C., "Nebraska Agri-Business Association (formerly Nebraska Fertilizer and Ag-Chemical Institute)" (2001). *John Owens: Speeches & Appearances*. 1.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/owenspeech/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Agriculture and Natural Resources, Institute of (IANR) at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in John Owens: Speeches & Appearances by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Nebraska Agri-Business Association  
(formerly Nebraska Fertilizer and Ag-Chemical Institute)  
Aug. 16, 2001  
Dr. John C. Owens  
NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

Thank you for inviting me to be with you here this morning. It's a real pleasure to be here, and I look forward to the opportunity to visit with you today, and in the future. It was my privilege to serve on the board of the New Mexico Ag-Chemical and Plant Food Association when I was in New Mexico, so please know I have some appreciation for the work you do.

I thank you for your interest in and your support of the work we do in the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Such interest and support is critical to us as we go about the business of fulfilling our land-grant University mission to be of service to Nebraska.

As I begin today I want to applaud the Certified Crop Advisors receiving their certificates at this convention. I know this is not an easy thing you've done, and I congratulate you on your accomplishment. I have read your code of ethics, and I agree with you that, "The privilege of professional practice imposes obligations of responsibility as well as professional knowledge."

By your participation it's clear you realize one of those responsibilities is

"continuing education." I think education is especially critical in agriculture today, as it is in many other areas. In fact, I think education in agriculture seems more critical every year as we seek best management practices that help assure profitability and at the same time help protect the environment. It seems to me that all of us in agriculture these days are wise to consider education both from our own aspect of seeking it to keep up with rapid changes and to increase our own knowledge for our own professional success, and from the aspect of being educators about the importance of agriculture in a country where fewer and fewer people are involved in farming and ranching, and so may not understand agriculture's importance in their lives.

I'm pleased that those of us in IANR are part of providing education you can use, both through our classes in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and through our University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension programs. Cooperative Extension's in-depth crop and natural resource courses such as our crop management diagnostic-clinics and our corn/soybean expos provide continuing-education-credits approved by the Nebraska Certified Crop Advisor Board. It's certainly our pleasure to work with you in meeting Nebraska's needs. I also am pleased that our faculty are both participants and presenters at Nebraska Agri-Business Association programs.

I was asked to talk with you a bit today about my goals for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and I am delighted to do so. I have spent a great deal of time in my first seven months in Nebraska traveling the state, talking with and listening to as many of the Institute's constituents as possible, and I think that what I hear must be incorporated into my goals for those goals to be both productive and effective. I expect to be on the road a good deal more in the months and years to come, listening to what you and others have to say.

I think it crucial that those of us in the Institute talk with Nebraska's residents to hear what you think are Nebraska's key issues, opportunities, and needs. I very much want to know what you think are the greatest challenges facing Nebraska's agriculture, natural resources, and people in the coming years. I want to know what your dreams are for this state. I want to know how you think the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources can assist Nebraska in meeting its needs and realizing its dreams. I look forward to visiting with as many of you as possible before I must leave today to learn those very things, and I encourage you to contact me with your ideas and issues as they relate to work done in IANR. I value your input.

I think it is vital that we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources include our constituents in the process of setting the direction of our

research and extension education programs, and I hope you will join us in that process. That inclusion always will be a goal toward which I continually work. I also think it vital that we in IANR remember people are looking to us to be of service to Nebraska. I think it is both an honor and a responsibility to serve Nebraska and its people.

One thing "bedrock certain" for my goals for IANR is this: each *is* and *will be* firmly rooted in the land-grant University mission, the leading object of which, from the time our land-grant institutions were established through today, is to work with the people the university serves, and to take the resources of the university to the citizens of the state. It's my goal for IANR to be as effective as possible in carrying out that mission.

We in IANR are partners with Nebraska in our priority areas of food, agriculture, agribusiness, natural resources, people, and communities. We feel so strongly about that that you'll find a "Partners with Nebraska" statement on many of our publications that says, "Land-grant universities work with the people they serve. NU's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources does so in priority areas of food, agriculture, agribusiness, natural resources, people, and communities. We teach, discover new knowledge through research, and extend that new, unbiased information across the state and beyond through extension."

of our traditional programs. We cannot afford to let those strengths erode or languish because of misunderstandings as to their importance, so we must do all we can to preserve and build on our strong suits. We must do all we can to see that people do not view agriculture as of diminishing importance in today's society, because that simply is not true. Unless people plan to give up eating any time soon, agriculture remains vitally important and life-giving.

We will make those changes in IANR that we need to make, but we will not change just to change. Any changes we make will be slow and progressive, and our constituents will have their say in them. I can only learn more about what is right for Nebraska by talking and listening with Nebraska's residents. I hope you will share with me your own ideas and experiences. I want to hear from you.

Thank you.

\*\*\*

robustness of a college's enrollment. If enrollments are down, people may assess the focus of the college as less important than it once was. When those people are decision makers, that is likely to affect a college's future.

Everyone in this room knows agriculture is important, and we want that importance reflected in enrollments in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. To do that, we must recognize the changes constantly occurring in our society and look for new areas of study within our focus areas that build on our traditional strengths. As an example, we're working on a new professional golf management program that emanates from our turfgrass program, which I think has to be one of the top 10 turfgrass programs in the nation. We're building on a traditional agricultural strength to attract new students to our college.

I'm asking the Department of Animal Science to consider an equine science program, as well as a program in companion animals. The College of Human Resources and Family Sciences now is talking of resurrecting hotel, restaurant, and tourism management courses, which literally would engage east campus in agriculture from the farm gate to the restaurant plate. I'd like your thoughts on other areas in which you think we could broaden our student base.

I think that expanding our offerings – and with those expansions, people's views of what agriculture encompasses – will build on and <sup>will</sup> preserve the strengths

That is why we are here, and perhaps my overarching goal, if there is one that takes precedence over the others, is to see that we in IANR always are honest, productive, dependable, supportive, and responsive partners with Nebraska.

Another of my goals after seven months in Nebraska is to increase the enrollment in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. I'd like to see enrollment increase in the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences, as well – both colleges are on east campus.

We have the capacity for more students both at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and within the Institute on east campus, and we have a lot to offer. I personally think we would have a difficult time finding a land-grant university with any stronger production agriculture program than ours. As I've looked at our programs within IANR and talked with people about them, I believe production agriculture work – the Institute's research, teaching, and extension – was built correctly in Nebraska, and I applaud the people who built it, as well as those who continue to build on this strong work today. My goal is to maintain and enhance the strength of these programs and to develop new programs to draw others onto our campus to maintain our strength. Let me tell you why I know that is important.

Some people's assessments of a college's importance are based on the