December 2007

The Leading Object: December 2007

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December. Already.

As 2008 knocks on the door, I’d encourage each of you to take a moment and recall IANR triumphs important to you this year, whether individual or collective, large or small, personal or professional.

IANR has a number of 2007 highlights. Among them:

We saw students graduate and launch careers. There were research discoveries, grants and contracts secured, awards presented to students, faculty and staff, workshops, seminars and field days statewide that took the resources of this great university to Nebraska residents, fulfilling our land-grant mission.

Release of the independent At Work for Nebraska study certainly was a 2007 IANR highlight. The study found IANR provides a conservative $15 return for every state tax dollar invested with us.

Commissioned to provide knowledge for setting future priorities in our strategic planning, the study captured benefits IANR’s research, teaching and extension education return to Nebraska.

In 1990 one in four Nebraska jobs depended in some way upon agriculture. Last year a report by the Nebraska Policy Institute told us that number now is one in three.

Agriculture’s importance in Nebraska is increasing. IANR is Nebraska’s primary provider of agricultural and natural resources programs, and an economic engine for our state.

I see the West Central Research and Extension Center’s acquisition of 1,280 acres of western Nebraska farmland for research and extension education to help Nebraska’s farmers and ranchers with limited water and irrigation practices, water saving irrigation and cropping demonstrations as another highlight.

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Last spring we dedicated the transformational expansion of the Panhandle Research Feedlot at Scottsbluff that provides 61 new pens with a uniform research environment.

In August approximately 500 people attended the wonderful celebration of our Haskell Agricultural Laboratory’s 50th anniversary.

CASNR led all UNL colleges in increasing undergraduate student enrollment this fall with an 11.7 percent increase, up 152 students. We began new undergraduate degree programs in forensic science and food technology for companion animals.

Our Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication received the university system’s Department Teaching Award, which recognizes a department that has made a unique, significant contribution to teaching.

We experienced a first in the history of our state as 25 Nebraska students started their Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree studies on our campus. They’ll study for two years here, then take their last two years at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine. This innovative, new professional program was granted full accreditation status by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association this year.

We saw the launch of ReTree Nebraska, with its goal of adding 1 million trees to the state in the next decade. Led by the Nebraska Forest Service and other IANR units, this new program will be critical to the future of our state’s community forests.

The Dairy Store celebrated its 90th anniversary and opened a branch in the City Union.

Throughout Nebraska, extension education provided knowledge that contributes to bottom lines and better lives. County fairs, State Fair and Ak-Sar-Ben were among the many events highlighting knowledge and skills youth gain through 4-H.

Our Tractor Test Laboratory got a new track this summer, 22 feet wide and 9

inches thick. No taxpayer dollars were used in funding the project.

Our scientists unveiled the Biofuel Energy Systems Simulator, a tool to assess greenhouse gas mitigation and energy efficiency of corn-based ethanol plants, important to Nebraska.

I know these examples are only the tiniest tip of the IANR highlights iceberg, only a few of the many, many accomplishments people can name throughout the Institute.

That’s a highlight in itself!

I thank each of you for the many ways you have been at work for Nebraska in 2007. I look forward with great anticipation to an exciting, successful 2008.

Best wishes for the holidays, and a healthy, happy new year.


Extension Guardianship Program Nationally Recognized

A guardianship program developed by University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension is proving its success, winning both national and state awards this fall.

The program, which provides guardianship and conservatorship training in 11 out of 12 Nebraska judicial districts, received a national award for complete curriculum from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences in September.

It was recognized in October by UNL Extension with an Excellence in Team Programming Award.

The program was developed five years ago at the request of a York County judge, said Eileen Krumbach, Extension Educator based in York and state program coordinator. People who were appointed by county court to be a guardian or conservator for a ward had lacked necessary training, she said.

“What was available was a videotape,” Krumbach said. “The Nebraska county court system had trouble getting people to fill out the forms in a timely fashion and knowing what forms to fill out.”

Nebraska has about 2,000 court-appointed guardians and conservators each year, Krumbach said. Extension’s guardianship program has trained about 1,500 people since the program was taken statewide two years ago.

The program is offered four times per year in 24 Nebraska counties and all judicial districts except in Douglas County, which has a separate training. The program consists of a three-hour class that addresses the guardian or conservator’s responsibility to the court and the ward and other important issues. Most classes are co-taught by a volunteer attorney through the Nebraska State Bar Association, who answers general legal questions.

This program has been approved for use by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

Know how. Know now. Seeks to Educate about Value of Extension (continued from page 1)

The DVD shows Nebraskans in a variety of settings explaining how extension education has helped them. For example, a teenage boy states “I know how to be responsible for raising an animal.” A young woman says “I know how to save money for college.” Young parents say “We know how to be better parents in every sense of the word.” A farmer says “I know how to grow 200-bushel corn and use less water.”

“Know how, Know now” will be more than a one-time DVD and brochure, Dickey said. Extension efforts will be ongoing to deliver its message about the breadth, depth, and impact of extension education.

– Lori McGinnis

Need to meet with the Vice President/Vice Chancellor? Drop-ins each Friday from 3-5 p.m.*

John C. Owens

NU Vice President for Agriculture and Natural Resources and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR

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*Occasionally Dr. Owens will be called away on University business.
Dairy Store Busy Preparing Cheese and Gift Boxes

The end of the year brings a shifting of gears at University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Dairy Store.

The store is making more cheese than ice cream and is readying its gift boxes for holiday giving, said Courtney Wilson, retail manager. The store has mailed out a slick new gift box brochure and is taking orders for the packages that contain cheese, meat, and honey.

Last year the store sold 6,166 gift boxes, and the goal this year is to sell 20 percent more, Wilson said. The order forms were sent to faculty and staff as well as to past customers. The boxes are shipped nationwide.

“People like to support the university and this is one way to do it,” Wilson said.

To enhance its offerings, the Dairy Store expanded this fall by opening a second store at the Nebraska Union on City Campus. Single servings of the Dairy Store ice cream also were sold in the stands during Nebraska football games for the first time.

“People really like the Dairy Store, but not everyone can make it out here,” Wilson said, referring to the store’s historic location on East Campus.

Sales at the City Campus store are going well, though the large number of other food outlets has posed a challenge, she said. Ice cream, however, remains a major attraction.

Ice cream is the store’s biggest seller throughout the year — except at the end of the year, Wilson said. That’s when more focus is placed on cheese. Last year, the store sold 11,766 pounds of cheese. The most popular is Husker Cheese, a white cheese similar in flavor to Monterey Jack.

The Dairy Store offers 11 gift boxes, ranging from the $9.95 Pioneer Box to the $44.95 Sky Box. The new Build Your Own Box option allows buyers to choose any combination of items for a customized gift.
Natural Resources, Plant Industries Halls Renamed

Two buildings on UNL’s East Campus have new names.

Natural Resources Hall now is Forestry Hall and Plant Industries now is Entomology Hall. The name changes were approved in November by University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken.

John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor, requested the name changes to eliminate confusion on campus and better reflect the current uses of the building.

The Nebraska Forest Service now is the sole occupant of the former Natural Resources Hall. The School of Natural Resources now is housed at Hardin Hall.

The new name “will eliminate confusion with the programs in Hardin Hall, the new home of the School of Natural Resources, while making it much easier for visitors to find the Forest Service,” Owens said.

The Department of Entomology now is the only academic occupant of the former Plant Industries Building, which often has been confused with Plant Science Hall.

“At the beginning of each semester, new students are reported to be confused by the names Plant Industries and Plant Science Hall,” Owens said. “Campus visitors also are confused by the current building names. The new name will eliminate that confusion while more accurately reflecting the current usage of the building.”

Dinsdale Award To Go to Three Assistant Professors

Three assistant professors in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources have been named to receive 2007 IANR Dinsdale Family Faculty Awards.

The three are Kathy Hanford in the Departments of Animal Science and Statistics, Amalia Yiannaka in the Department of Agricultural Economics, and Deana Namuth in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture.

The award is given for outstanding teaching, research, and outreach in IANR, specifically focusing on untenured faculty who have demonstrated commitment to academic excellence.

Nominators state Hanford has worked closely with the National Beef Cattle Consortium, which contributed to a large national study to find genomic markers for beef quality traits such as marbling, tenderness and fat depth.

“The findings of this study will have a national and international impact on improving quality characteristics of meat products,” nominators said. Hanford also works with many faculty and graduate students in CASNR, contributing as a statistician.

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Yiannaka’s nominators state that she has developed a diverse research portfolio addressing current economic problems of national and international scope and of importance to Nebraska’s agricultural and agri-food sectors.

“She has made significant contributions to the study of the market and welfare effects of genetically modified food products, mandatory country of origin labeling, the livestock mandatory reporting act, genetic use restriction technologies, and the effect of Wal-Mart on the economic growth of Nebraska counties, to name a few,” a nominator wrote.

Namuth’s nominators state she has been instrumental in introducing distance education in the department and making it a seamless part of instruction.

“Her contribution to Nebraska’s outreach capacity in biotechnology and plant breeding is key as the state sees unprecedented growth in this important agriculture industry,” a nominator wrote.

The Dinsdale awards will be presented during a luncheon on April 21.

Hart, Baxendale Receive Awards

Jeff Hart, Extension Educator for Special Projects, and Fred Baxendale, Professor and Extension Entomologist, each received awards at the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) annual meeting in New York this month.

Hart received the 2007 National Award for Diversity, which is presented for outstanding efforts and accomplishments in achieving and sustaining diversity and pluralism in Cooperative Extension.

Baxendale received the 2007 North Central Regional Excellence in Extension Award, which recognizes extension professionals who excel at extension programming, make a positive impact on constituents, and provide visionary leadership for the system.