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Women in Agriculture Conference 2001

Deb Rood

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Women in Agriculture Conference 2001

Each year, the conference Women in Agriculture: The Critical Difference brings together women who are involved in production agriculture and agribusiness. The conference is designed to provide women information about the management of their agricultural business. This year the conference was held on September 13 - 14 at the Kearney Holiday Inn.

The conference had over 400 ag women in attendance from Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Iowa and Australia. A delegation of fourteen Australian ag women and men came to learn about Nebraska agriculture. The members arrived in Omaha on September 9th and spent three days touring around Schuyler and attending Husker Harvest Days. After attending the Women in Ag conference, the Aussies visited ag families across the state before leaving for home on September 22.

There were seventeen different workshops which the women could choose from to attend. Topics included marketing, Brazil competition, new developments in ag lending, income tax changes, record keeping, time management, family relations and raising ag kids.

Ruth Paterson from Tasmania kicked the conference off by talking about the similarities and differences that Australian and Nebraska ag women have. Jolene Brown from Iowa helped the women deal with changes and Lynette Brown, Oxford, Nebraska ended the conference with ways to figure out “are we there yet.”

The conference was held against the back drop of the September 11, 2001 tragedy in New York and Washington D.C. Never far from the minds of the attendees was the devastation that was wrought by the
hands of terrorists. The patriotism that was demonstrated at the conference was overwhelming to the Australians that were there. While learning about the business of agriculture, the future of the country was not far from the women’s thoughts.

In that spirit, I am reprinting a poem that R. P. Smith, a cowboy poet from Broken Bow wrote and recited on Thursday evening. In this very eloquent and touching poem, R. P. put into words how the women felt about the crisis.

Deb Rood, (402) 472-1771
Programs Coordinator

One Nation
By R.P. Smith, September 11, 2001

Would I have ever noticed, If I had not known,
The absence of the trails where big jet planes had flown?
As I looked toward the heavens for a cloud that might bring rain,
Would I have seen what wasn’t there and asked you to explain?

I suppose it doesn’t matter, for I know the reason why,
My mind is in a haze beneath the blue September sky.
As I labor at my duties of working on the land,
Thankful for my solitude, as I try to understand.

Dust drifts across our nation from broken hearts and burning dreams,
I do not smell the smoke, I do not hear the deafening screams,
I felt only numbness as I watched the tragic scene
Unfold before my eyes on the television screen.

To hate is my first impulse, to blow someone away,
To make them feel a nation’s wrath — Then I bow my head to pray.
As the walls come tumbling down, crushing all that is within,
I know hate is not the right place for the healing to begin.

My Country has been struck, but it is not a fatal blow,
Hope will rise up from the rubble, the cowards will soon know,
Our spirit has not been crushed, for that would let them win,
We are in America and we will build again.

Satan has torn the goal posts down, He has not won the game,
The cowboy’s ride is not completed as the devil’s advocate will claim.
For what they hate most about us is what has made us great,
Now we will come together to bear the burden of the weight.

It will not be fists raised in anger, claiming God is on our side,
But humbly seeking Him in prayer to guide us on our ride.
We will ask it from our knees, then we will say it standing tall,
We are one nation, under God, with Liberty and Justice for all.