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## The University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Agriculture: The First Century Part X. Reaching for Excellence - STAR and 2001 Nebraska Agriculture

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## Part X. Reaching for Excellence - STAR<sup>1</sup> and 2001 Nebraska Agriculture

Two major programs have been conducted by representatives of the private sector, College of Agriculture/IANR administration and staff, and representatives of other public agencies primarily to: 1) identify how to enhance the economic performance of Nebraska agriculture, and 2) determine through specific recommendations what programs and facilities were needed in the College of Agriculture/IANR to accomplish the goals. The findings and recommendations of the first of these were published in *STAR* in 1976, and those of the second in *2001 Nebraska Agriculture* in 1984. Important similarities and differences in the two programs, and in the publications emanating from each, are summarized in the table on the next page.

*STAR* had its origin in the early 70's, a concept that Dean Frolik promulgated after learning of a similar program underway at the University of Florida College of Agriculture. The program consisted of developing an inventory of the major segments of the state's agriculture, including both human and natural resources, of identifying trends, and of suggesting challenges for the future. Extension Director John L. Adams provided the primary leadership early in the program. However, as his health deteriorated, he was replaced in this role by Station Director Howard W. Ottoson.

At the time the *STAR* program was in its initial stages, the University Foundation was somewhat passive with respect to raising funds for the College. Although progress had been made by the private agricultural sector in supporting the College, such support had not crystallized to the extent that it has since. There was hesitancy on the part of College administrators to ask the private sector, especially farmers and ranchers, to devote very much of their time and personal expenses for travel to participate in conferences to develop programs aimed at strengthening financial support for the College. Hence, it is understandable that much of the effort in developing *STAR* was provided by IANR administrators and other College staff, and by representatives of other public agencies having an interest in agriculture.

During the period of the early work on *STAR*, University administrators and staff were rather guarded in their efforts to gain financial support for the Institution. To be too obvious and direct in using staff time and state appropriated funds to generate more funds, would have been considered inappropriate and possibly fraught with some danger of arousing the wrath of the State Legislature. Thus, the indirect approach was used. However, it must be pointed out that *STAR* represented a great deal of effort and was

a fine resource publication. It probably made its greatest contribution through many IANR staff members making in-depth analyses of how they could best serve the College clientele.

There is no evidence that *STAR* had any direct impact on increasing financial support for the IANR. Perhaps part of the reason is that there was no direct follow-up to get the recommendations activated, albeit there were other, highly successful efforts to increase state appropriations for the Institute.

*2001 Nebraska Agriculture* presented studies of how the IANR could strengthen the economic performance of Nebraska agriculture. Although established at the request of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, much of the input was provided by the private sector under the leadership of James F. Roberts. Unabashedly, the recommendations contained in the report included "... a target for the IANR to rank among the top agriculture and natural resource institutions in the nation." It was stated that most of the recommendations would require additional resources. In contrast to the *STAR* program, little attention was given to inventorying Nebraska agriculture — attention was focused primarily on trends and even more on specific recommendations for programs and facilities for the IANR. Priorities were established.

Sources for additional funding were not suggested in *2001 Nebraska Agriculture*, however, it was followed very shortly by another publication *Agriculture 2001 Is Now*. This latter publication, based on *2001 Nebraska Agriculture* was produced by the IANR and University of Nebraska Foundation officials. Specific programs and facilities were presented with dollar amounts (costs) shown for each to assist the Foundation in raising the goal of \$25 million from the private sector through gifts, grants and bequests.

The similarity of the two programs raises the question of whether or not any use was made in the second program of information developed in *STAR*. Nothing in the two publications covering the *Agriculture 2001* would indicate this, although there might have been, especially since there was some overlap of people involved. However, obsolescence of information generated almost a decade earlier might have made it of only limited use when *Agriculture 2001* was being developed.

The University of Nebraska Foundation is actively pursuing a program to raise \$25 million from private sources for additional support for the IANR. The two excellent *2001 Nebraska Agriculture* publications are providing the basic information which is essential in attempting to raise the funds.

<sup>1</sup>*STAR* is an acronym, the letters standing for "Strength Through Agricultural Resources".

# STAR and 2001 Nebraska Agriculture Compared

2001 NEBRASKA AGRICULTURE

STAR

Important Issues,  
Personnel, Projections,  
and Publications

Project officially initiated by:	College of Agriculture	The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska
Deans, Vice Chancellors involved	Prolik, Acker, Massengale	Arnold
Stated purpose	Determine how trends can be altered and how IANR opportunities and challenges can be met.	Make recommendations regarding IANR to strengthen the economic performance of Nebraska's agriculture.
Attempt to gain additional financial support for the IANR	Implied--inherent but veiled	Direct
Fields covered	Basically agriculture - "...focus on Nebraska's agricultural industry, its economy, and its human and natural resources...what is likely to happen in the future".	Basically agriculture - "trends impacting Nebraska's agriculture, human resources, and natural resources."
In charge:	Policy Committee	Executive Committee
Chairman of main committee:	Howard W. Ottoson	James F. Roberts
Other committees:	Coordinating Committee, and 12 section (subject matter) committees.	Six task forces (subject matter).
Total membership of committees	More than 200	177
No. of committee members from IANR	Not known, but higher ratio of IANR staff members than for 2001	27
No. of committee chairpersons from IANR	All	None
Projections to:	1980 and 1985	2001
Publications	Fifty-two page brochure 8 1/2" X 11" in color, well illustrated. June 1976. Written by Glen Vollmar and Wally Moline.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forty page brochure, 8" X 12" in color, highly illustrated. January 1984. Written by Ralston Graham and Glen Vollmar.</li> <li>2. Six individual task force reports, 1984</li> <li>3. Twenty page, 6" X 9" brochure, two-color, diagramatic drawings, no photographs. Not dated but about 1984.</li> </ol>
Printing costs	Defrayed by Beatrice Foods Co. Chicago, Illinois.	Paid from University of Nebraska Foundation funds.