

November 2007

## The Leading Object: November 2007

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## Perspectives

I always enjoy my travels throughout Nebraska, and each fall take keen interest in observing the harvest.

As fields yield their bounty, as loaded farm trucks rumble down country roads and highways, the rewards of many people's labor are apparent.

Frequent rains have complicated harvest for many Nebraska farmers this year, yet progress is made each time a field dries enough to let harvest continue. As we move through the weeks we see more fields picked clean, more cattle grazing cornstalks, more acres settling in for winter rest and the promise of spring.

When I drive harvest roads I think of the hard work, tenacity, and overall "smarts" of the Nebraskans who bring those crops in, and of IANR's role in Nebraska's harvest.

Our role in crop, soil, pest, water, and livestock research and education, in new product development, and best management practices.

Our role in building entrepreneurs, in leadership development, in strengthening youth, families, and communities.

Our role in disseminating what we learn through research as quickly as possible in our campus classrooms and laboratories, and throughout our state through extension education.

President Milliken often says his goal for the University of Nebraska is that we will be the best university in the country in terms of serving the interests of the citizens of our state.

Amen to that.

It's why land-grant universities were created. It's why we are needed. And we will go right on being needed as long as we fulfill our land-grant responsibility continued on page 2



**John C. Owens**  
NU Vice President and  
Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

# The Leading Object

*The Morrill Act of 1862  
established a Land Grant University  
in each state where  
The Leading Object  
would be instruction  
in agriculture and related fields.*



November 2007

## NCTA's 100 Cow Program Aims to Help Beginning Farmers, Ranchers

Getting started in farming and ranching can be tough — and expensive. It can cost up to \$1 million to buy land, livestock, and equipment.

Oftentimes, young farmers and ranchers start out as hired hands, but that doesn't give them the business experience they need to truly get their own operations going.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture's new "100 Beef Cow Ownership Advantage" program gives graduates low-interest loans to purchase cattle as well as an education in getting their businesses started, said Dean Weldon Sleight.

"We want them to leave with an asset large enough that will let them be partners rather than hired hands," Sleight said.

The program will give new graduates the guidance they need to become rural entrepreneurs, he said. While students have access to beginning farmer workshops, they too often take the information home and put it aside, never receiving the push they need to get started.

The 100 Cow program is designed to give them that push.

NCTA is partnering with USDA's Farm Service Agency, which is making loans available at 5 percent interest to participating students. Upon graduation, the participants use the money to buy



Brett Hampton

up to 100 cows. Then they are to strive to become partners in a farm or ranch operation, taking their own cattle with them, Sleight said. The program provides an income tax credit to resident producers who rent land to the participants.

The thinking is that these young farmers will be more involved in the farming operation knowing they own some of the cattle than if they were employed as a hired hand, he said.

The program also provides the educational background students need to get their own operations started, Sleight said. Students learn how to put a business plan together and seek financing. They also will learn about succession planning, so they will be knowledgeable should a business partner get out of farming or ranching.

Succession plans are important because oftentimes when a producer dies, his continued on page 2

Perspectives continued from page 1

of taking the resources of Nebraska's university to Nebraska's residents, of listening to their needs, and delivering highly-valued programs.

We hear concerns expressed locally and nationally that as state tax dollars supporting research decline, more research will follow research dollars, meeting the needs of granting agencies, rather than the needs of the citizens of the states.

Let me be very clear on this: IANR's commitment *is*, and *will remain*, firmly focused on Nebraskans' needs, through both applied and basic research.

As Nebraska's land-grant university, we are at work for Nebraska.

So when I think about harvest *in* Nebraska, I also think about harvest *for* Nebraska. Such as the conservative 15-to-1 return Nebraskans receive for each state tax dollar invested with IANR.

We contribute to both Nebraska's economy, and way of life. We are at work for Nebraska in a variety of ways.

Some of these ways we capture four times a year in the brief, eye-catching *At Work for Nebraska* newsletter first published in June. June and September issues are on the *atworkfornebraska.unl.edu* Web site, to be followed with issues in December and March. Brief, well-written nuggets about

a variety of IANR programs carry a Web address readers can use to learn more.

Also new to the At Work for Nebraska Web site are **IANR Conversations**, short videos in which members of our IANR community talk about how we in the Institute are at work for our state. New video is added weekly.

Please share these with others. Help tell the story of how IANR is at work for Nebraska.

The At Work for Nebraska Web site carries many tools for us to use, but the thing about tools is, no matter how good they are, they can't do the job if we don't use them. Please do.

IANR has a wonderful story to tell, of planting and bountiful harvest for Nebraska, of benefit and a proud tradition of providing strong return on investment.

Every day the work of our faculty and staff shows our commitment to being the best university in the country in terms of serving the interests of the people of our state.

It's why we're here. It's how we're at work for Nebraska.



## NCTA's 100 Cow Program Aims to Help Beginning Farmers, Ranchers (continued from page 1)

or her children don't want to take over ownership of the operation but do want the money from it. A sibling or even a non-relative who does want to take it over usually doesn't have the money to buy the others out, Sleight said.

The business plan and actual experience in running a business will better equip the students to get future business loans, and the cattle ownership will give them collateral, Sleight said.

Rich Barta, Farm Loan Chief with FSA, said the agency's goal is to help beginning farmers and ranchers. He worked with Sleight to develop the program.

"This particular program fits into our mission perfectly," Barta said.

Thirty-six NCTA students attended an October 10 seminar on the program. Sleight hopes NCTA students view the 100 Cow program as a means of eventually growing a small business into a larger operation.

—Lori McGinnis

Editor - Lori McGinnis • Layout - Anne Moore

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The Leading Object is published monthly for all IANR staff members by Communications & Information Technology. Questions or story ideas may be directed to the editor at 103 ACB, 0918; via e-mail ([lmcginnis2@unl.edu](mailto:lmcginnis2@unl.edu)) or via fax (402-472-0025).

## Longtime Agronomist Furrer Dies

John Furrer, a longtime University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension specialist and a former "Backyard Farmer" panelist, died October 3. He was 87.



John Furrer

Furrer, a retired agronomist, served with the University's Cooperative Extension Service for 41 years. He was a "Backyard Farmer" panelist for 33 years. He was past president of the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association and received its Distinguished Service Award.

Furrer also served on the board of directors of the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District and is in the Hall of Agricultural Achievement.

## Public Service to Ag Awards Given

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Dean Elbert Dickey has received one of three Public Service to Agriculture Awards from the Nebraska Agribusiness Club.

Steven Wright, a corn and soybean producer from Benedict, also was honored at the club's 41st annual awards banquet November 1st in Lincoln.

The late Neal E. Harlan of Valley was honored posthumously. Harlan, who died in 2003, and his wife, Leone, made numerous contributions to the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and other entities at UNL.

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

202 Ag Hall • (402) 472-2871

\*Occasionally Dr. Owens will be called away on University business.

## Maunder Receives First Henry Beachell Alumnus Award

**A.** Bruce Maunder has ties to the legendary University of Nebraska alumnus Henry Beachell in more ways than one.

Maunder's father was a classmate and fraternity brother of Beachell, a plant breeder whose research in rice helped feed hungry people in developing Asian countries.

Maunder attended the World Food Prize Conference in 1996 when Beachell was the recipient. Maunder was present for Beachell's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party a year ago.

Now, Maunder has received the Henry Beachell Distinguished Alumnus Award, given September 29 in Lincoln.

Maunder, a Lubbock, Texas, resident, studied plant breeding and genetics and earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture from the university in 1956, as well as master's and doctoral degrees from Purdue University in 1958 and 1960. He was given an honorary doctorate of science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1991.

The Beachell award is given for humanitarian contributions to the community, state, nation, and the world as well as for work that brings honor to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This is the first year the award was named for Beachell. Previously it was called the CASNR Distinguished Alumni Award.

"The award is a special honor to me because Henry Beachell's name is attached to it," Maunder said. "I admired him and to have his name on it gives it a special meaning."

Maunder is recognized for his work in sorghum breeding, although he considered another field while in college. The Holdrege native had an interest in wildlife management but changed his studies to agronomy after a graduate student, Milo Cox, said his future would be brighter in that field.

His adviser was Frank Keim, for whom the agronomy and horticulture building on East Campus is named. Keim's son, Wayne, invited Maunder to accept an assistantship at Purdue. Maunder accepted and while there researched the genetics of sterility in sorghum.

Dekalb Genetics Inc. offered him a position as sorghum breeder in Lubbock, which he accepted. It wasn't long before his supervisor was promoted to a different job, allowing Maunder to become Dekalb's worldwide director of sorghum research. He was named vice president of the company in 1976 and senior vice president in 1991.

Throughout his career with Dekalb, Maunder worked with UNL's International Sorghum and Millet Collaborative

Research Support Program, serving as an external evaluator for 22 years.

The crux of his work was developing new hybrids which resulted in better yields and more disease and

insect resistance. He had a role in releasing about 150 new grain and forage hybrids.

From 1997 to 2003, Maunder helped choose the recipients of the World Food Prize, the agricultural equivalent of the Nobel Prize. In 1996, that prize went to Beachell, a Nebraska agronomy graduate widely recognized for research in the development of the "miracle rice," which greatly alleviated famine in southeast Asia.

Maunder said the support he received and the contacts he made while at the university have helped him greatly in his career. He is especially honored to be remembered.

"For the university to still remember someone who graduated in the 1950s is very nice," he said.

— Lori McGinnis



**A. Bruce Maunder**

## Nebraska Master Conservationist Award Winners Announced

**N**ine Master Conservationist Awards were presented at the annual banquet of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) in Kearney September 24 by John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR.

The recognition program has been conducted for the past 25 years by the Omaha World-Herald and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources in cooperation with the NARD and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Master Conservationists are selected by IANR faculty and representatives of NARD, NRCS, and various Natural Resources Districts.

Master Conservationist recognition in production agriculture went to Mark and Bruce Watson, Alliance; Paul and Jeryl Kettelson, Albion; Pursley Family, Enders; Brandes and Sons, Inc., Central City; and L & L Farms (Lawrence and Larry Gronewold), Beatrice.

The community-public category recognition went to Keep Omaha Beautiful, Inc., for the "World O! Water Festival." Keep Omaha Beautiful and the Papillion Watershed Partnership conduct the annual event in September for children and adults to learn about water pollution, water quality, and water fun.

Two community youth groups were named Master Conservationists. The recipients were Spalding Academy of Spalding for "The Cedar River Stabilization Project" and the FFA Chapter at Superior High School for developing a tree nursery and carrying out an underground water testing program.

Adam Venteicher of Pierce, a member of the Pierce High School FFA chapter, was named Master Conservationist in the individual youth category. Venteicher started his own farming operation by renting land and farm equipment from his parents and purchasing six beef cows.

## Wilson Receives Employee Award

**R**oger Wilson, research analyst with the West Central Research and Extension Center, has received the Outstanding Employee Award for managerial/professional staff for November/December.



**Roger Wilson**

Supporters wrote that Wilson has made significant contributions to the center. He developed Access, a data management program for livestock records at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory, which has improved data access for faculty members and graduate students.

Wilson received \$250, a certificate, and a lapel pin.



## Three with UNL Ties Served as Equine Residents at Texas A&M

Each year the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences has three veterinarians in its equine surgery residency program. Amazingly, three students with University of Nebraska–Lincoln ties served in the program at once.

Residents A. Berkley Chesen of Lincoln, Will Jordan of Broken Bow, and Jason Mez of Falls City were residents in the program during the 2006–07 school year. Chesen and Jordan still are in the three-year residency program while Mez now practices equine surgery in Sturgis, South Dakota.

All three were undergraduates at UNL, although not at the same time and neither knew each other from UNL.

Chesen graduated from UNL in 1996 and received her veterinary medicine degree from Purdue University in 2000. She worked as a veterinarian associate at an equine hospital in Kentucky for four years, then went to Texas A&M for her residency, which she will finish next July.

Jordan, who got his veterinary medicine degree from Kansas State University, is in the second year of his residency.

Mez attended UNL from 1989 to

1992 and got his veterinary medicine degree from KSU in 1996. He worked in Mobridge and Belle Fourche, South Dakota, then started his residency in 2004.

Texas A&M receives about 60 applications a year for one residency position in equine surgery. Selecting three in a row from UNL was coincidental, said Cliff Honnas, Professor of Equine Orthopedic Surgery at Texas A&M.

“They were all outstanding,” Honnas said.

Jordan, who got his UNL degree in 2002 and his veterinary degree in 2005, will finish his residency in 2009. He met Chesen and Mez during his residency interview process.

“It was kind of neat to have a common connection between the residents,” Jordan said.



From left, Jason Mez, Berkley Chesen and Will Jordan

Chesen, who grew up around horses, said she thought it was unusual that three former UNL students had all three residencies in one place.

“All three of us were from Nebraska and none of us knew each other before. It’s funny what a small world it is,” she said.

Mez said he, Chesen, and Jordan plan to keep in touch no matter where their practices take them.

– Lori McGinnis

## Terry Assumes Post of CIT Director

Roger Terry has been appointed Director of IANR’s Communications and Information Technology Unit.

Terry, who has served as Interim Director since June 2006, has been a long-serving faculty member at Kansas State University. He most recently served as Professor and Coordinator of Information and Education Technology in the Department of Communications at KSU.

“Roger brings a partnership philosophy, a strong work ethic, a creative energy, and a commitment to excellence to CIT,” said John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor. “His vision for CIT is for the unit to be strategic partners with its customers.”

Terry succeeds Dan Cotton, who is now Director of eXtension.



Roger Terry

## Boeckner Named Interim Director of Panhandle Research and Extension

Extension Specialist Linda Boeckner has been named Interim District Director of the Panhandle Research and Extension Center.

Boeckner succeeds Charles Hibberd, who accepted the position of Director of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service and Associate Dean of Purdue Agriculture.

John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor, announced the appointment of Boeckner, saying she brings a wealth of successful programming and leadership experience to the interim position.

A search advisory committee has begun the process of seeking a permanent Director.



Linda Boeckner