

2009

The Leading Object: June 2009

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NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

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Perspectives

It catches my attention each time someone unfamiliar with land-grant universities asks politely if things slow down here during the summer.



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

“Not really,” is always my answer.

I explain that the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources has a statewide campus, and summertime for us definitely is not the slowdown time people often associate with other universities. I talk about how, every day, we in IANR are at work for Nebraska.

While we see fewer students on East Campus during the summer, visiting groups bring new faces and interests to campus. From new or potential students and their parents to younger youths through adults, we're always glad to welcome our visitors.

Some come to learn and to enjoy events offered here, staying several days. Others make much shorter visits, with ice cream in mind for hot days and humid nights. Little ones not yet knee-high, their parents, grandparents, even great-grandparents — ice cream has universal appeal.

In the evenings we often see visitors sitting on the benches outside the Dairy Store, strolling through the Jeanne Vierk Yeutter Garden or the Maxwell Arboretum, or even further afield. East Campus is a favorite place for many walkers, including many with dogs.

While our students may not be here, we know they're learning through the summer in such venues as travel and study abroad, internships, and other summer jobs.

Our faculty, also, may be traveling, conducting research, or delivering extension programs.

One of the many interesting facts contained in the molecular life sciences report IANR prepared for a review team visit earlier this year is that 58 percent of IANR's tenured and tenure-track research

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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.*



June 2009

France study trip shows students a different way of agriculture

For College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources students, studying agriculture in another country can provide great benefits.

Twelve CASNR students were on a two-week study abroad trip to France in May, said Rosalee Swartz, program and recruitment director for the Department of Agricultural Economics who led the trip for the fifth consecutive year.

“The goal is to learn about how other parts of the world practice and view agriculture,” Swartz said.

The differences in agriculture between France and the United States are very noticeable, she said. For example, agricultural businesses are small by design, and unlike in the U.S., 50 percent to 60 percent of the produce is sold on site, she said. Much of this relates to the importance the French place on food — not just in its preparation but how and where it is grown, she said. They prefer to buy local, as evidenced by vibrant farmer's markets in the regions they visited, she said.

For Cassidy Robinson, an agricultural economics senior from Elm Creek, it was her first trip outside the United States and an eye-opener.

“It was just awesome. It was so different from here,” Robinson said.

The trip was coordinated by Pascal Durand, associate professor of agricultural economics at ENESAD (French National School for Higher Education in Agriculture) at the University of Burgundy campus in Dijon. The tour also



Rosalee Swartz

CASNR students Brenda Walla, left, and Cassidy Robinson join Pascal Durand, ENESAD professor, at the top of Dent de Vaulion in the Swiss Jura Mountains, with the Swiss and French Alps and Lake Geneva on the horizon.

included faculty and students from the University of Kentucky.

The students visited cheese and mustard factories and wineries, and toured farms producing cereal grains, dairy, poultry, beef, fruit, olive oil, and truffles.

Although the tours were focused in the Burgundy, Rhône-Alpes, Jura, and Provence regions, students also enjoyed two days of sightseeing in Paris, Swartz said.

Robinson said her favorite part of the trip was when the students talked to French agricultural producers about

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Perspectives *(continued from page 1)*

faculty hold joint research and teaching appointments. The growing season finds many of our scientists working in fields and laboratories across our state, seeking new knowledge that will help Nebraska grow and prosper.

County fairs, 4-H camps, the start of State Fair — all bespeak summer for us.

I don't know how anyone can walk through displays of 4-H'ers projects and not find delight in the knowledge and skills participants are making their own. While the fairs showcase youths' talents and enthusiasm for what they've learned, we all know 4-H is about the learning.

From science, engineering, and technology to entrepreneurship, from photography to healthy foods to animal projects and so much more, throughout the entire year 4-H'ers experience content based on land-grant university research as they explore their interests.

They also gain life skills such as critical thinking, responsibility, and teamwork. They gain confidence, and, because many families spend time around 4-H projects, family ties are strengthened.

We don't provide knowledge only to youth, of course. Well-attended field days

and meetings all across Nebraska, from the High Plains Agricultural Laboratory to Gudmundsen, the Haskell Agricultural Laboratory, the Agricultural Research and Development Center, and other sites, as well, transfer research-based knowledge to our constituents, providing information they can put to immediate use in their lives.

Meanwhile, other research and education programs continue on a variety of topics year-round to help Nebraskans make solid, fact-based decisions, best manage their resources, and enhance their lives.

Summer always goes in a blink, and before we know it, we're welcoming both new and returning students to campus, glad to see familiar faces and delighted to make the acquaintance of new.

Summer, winter, spring, fall — in all seasons I applaud IANR faculty and staff for setting a brisk pace to benefit our state in myriad ways. After all, all year long, we are at work for Nebraska.



France study trip shows students a different way of agriculture *(continued from page 1)*

agricultural differences between the United States and France. For example, French producers are more heavily subsidized by the government than are U.S. producers.

Also, life is much slower paced there, she said.

"It's a completely different way of life in France," she said. "It's a lot slower."

Justin Nolte, an agribusiness junior from Nehawka, noted both differences and similarities. He was surprised to learn that the leading brands of tractors in the Burgundy area were John Deere, New Holland, and Renault. When it came to ordering lunch at McDonald's, he found that the food tasted much the same but the servings were smaller and more expensive.

Students participated in five, two-hour preparation sessions before the tour and did reports and presentations on various topics as part of the preparation, Swartz said. They also completed journals while on the tour and turned them in as part of their course requirements when they returned.

— 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

202 Ag Hall • (402) 472-2871
*Occasionally Dr. Owens will be
called away on University business.

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PGA program director retiring

Five years ago Terrance Riordan assumed leadership of a new and untested program within the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Now, Riordan is retiring as head of one of the most successful programs in the college. Riordan, program director of the PGA Professional Golf Management program at UNL, is moving on to new things. Alan Baquet, currently head of the Department of Agricultural Economics, will take over the program on July 15.

Riordan leaves a program that started with 31 students and this fall will have 170. Eighteen have graduated from the program, which is in the top six in the nation in terms of size, Riordan said.

Seventy percent of the students who started the program still are in it and are on target for graduating, and 70 percent have a playing ability that has met the requirements of the Professional Golfer's Association, Riordan said.

CASNR Dean Steve Waller praised the job Riordan has done.

"We were very fortunate to have someone of Terry's caliber accept the program," he said. "Through his leadership the PGA Professional Golf Management program has prospered, and he has provided a wonderful foundation to build on."

Baquet said he looks forward to building on Riordan's foundation.

"It is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to serve as the second director of the Professional Golf Management program," he said. "Dr. Terry Riordan has done an excellent job as the initial director of the program."

Riordan said he has enjoyed his 31 years at the university and working with undergraduate and graduate students in agronomy and horticulture and later PGM. Obtaining a membership in PGA at age 64 was an unexpected highlight for him, he said. PGA's magazine is featuring him in a player profile in an upcoming issue.

Riordan's future includes traveling with his wife, Judy, and playing more golf.

"I plan to work on the game that has been so much a part of my career, with the goal of shooting my age before 70 or 80."



Terrance Riordan

Bulletin board posting leads Bidrowski to his career

Bob Bidrowski's decision to work in the food technology for companion animals industry came by chance after he saw an ad posted on a bulletin board.

Bidrowski, a 1989 College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources food science and technology graduate, had thought he would work in a field pertaining to human food. But a few months before he graduated he saw an ad seeking a quality assurance technician at Alpo in Crete.

"It was an answer to the question 'what am I going to do now?'" the Omaha native said.

Alpo hired Bidrowski in October 1989, two months before graduation. He still is with the company, now called Nestle Purina Petcare, working in quality assurance.

Bidrowski took a non-traditional route for his college career. After graduating from high school, Bidrowski worked full time for an Omaha agricultural laboratory, where he prepared soil and plant tissue samples.

During that time he got married and his wife, Nancy, a CASNR agronomy graduate, had to move to York for a position with a chemical company. They bought an acreage in York and Bidrowski worked for a local fertilizer company and did "other odd jobs."

He concluded that he needed something more steady.

"I decided a college degree would be something valuable," he said.

So at age 29 he enrolled at UNL and commuted daily from York. He had long been interested in becoming a veterinarian

so he decided to study animal science and take courses he would need for vet school. As he and his wife started a family, Bidrowski thought it best to get a job after graduation rather than go on to vet school. He then switched his major to food science and technology.

This degree program still enabled him to take the science courses needed if he someday attended vet school, but the advertisement on the bulletin board settled that issue.

After Alpo was purchased in 1995 by Nestle — the world's largest food company — Bidrowski started working on special projects that took him to places around the world for three to six months at a time. He was transferred to St. Joseph, Mo., where he worked at two factories between 2001-2003.

With his wife and two sons living in Lincoln during this time, Bidrowski returned to Lincoln on weekends as often as he could. Eventually he settled into working full time in Crete.

As quality assurance manager Bidrowski ensures all the dog and cat food leaving the plant meets quality standards. He said he enjoys his work and got hands-on training at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that prepared him well for the industry.

"My time at the university was very important," he said. "The technical background I received was very solid."

— Lori McGinnis



Bob Bidrowski

NCTA raises necessary funds for new education center

If young Nebraskans are going to invest in Nebraska, then Nebraska has to invest in young Nebraskans.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis is doing just that while celebrating the planned building of a \$9.7 million education center. The new center will house classrooms and laboratories for its veterinary technician, agronomy, and horticulture programs, as well as a 144-seat auditorium that can be divided into four classrooms.

To obtain \$8.7 million in state funding, the Nebraska Legislature stipulated more than a year ago NCTA had to raise \$1 million for the project.

It did, and in six months.

Dean Weldon Sleight called the \$1 million fund-raiser a miracle, and thanked Nebraska's commodity groups, businesses, alumni, and friends for their support.

"They could see what we're trying to do," Sleight said. "The real story is to thank the people throughout Nebraska."

Sleight's goal is to prevent rural communities from further shrinking populations through such programs as 100-Acre, 100-Cow, and Business Builder ownership programs that link NCTA graduates with the means to build their own operations close to home.

"It's important to show young people there are opportunities in rural communities, and to start at a young age," Sleight said. He added NCTA's instructors have taken the NebraskaEDGE entrepreneurship program so they can teach the principles of entrepreneurship important for business ownership.

The Curtis community, former resident and entrepreneur George Garlick, and NCTA are working toward community

improvements, economic development, and increased NCTA enrollment. In 2008 the two-year college had 285 full- and part-time students enrolled in its eight associate degree programs.

The new education center is to be built on a former campus baseball field. With the architectural work and site preparation to begin this summer, it is expected to be complete in 2011 or 2012. It complements other upgraded and converted facilities: a former retirement home that now is an NCTA residence hall; the former NCTA gymnasium that now is the college's student union; and a new Curtis Community Center that hosts NCTA's athletic events.

Plugfest relationships could be a model for Innovation Campus

Strong working relationships seen in the 10th annual ISOBUS Plugfest, held last month on UNL's East Campus, provide a positive model for the kind of relationships that will turn State Fair Park into Innovation Campus, said Susan Fritz, IANR associate vice chancellor.

ISOBUS is the common term for an international standard of communication interfaces on tractors and other agricultural equipment. At the May 19-20 event, agricultural equipment engineers, representing 19 separate business entities, cross-tested their company devices to ensure all work together properly before products reach consumers.

Plugfest was held for the second time on UNL's East Campus, home of the internationally known Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory, a part of the Department of Biological Systems Engineering. The lab is the officially designated tractor testing station for the United States, with some manufacturers having worked with the lab for nearly 90 years.

The ability to grow and maintain strong long-term relations and develop new ones, as the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory has done, will be key to the proposed redevelopment of State Fair Park into a private/public research community, Fritz said.

"The Nebraska Tractor Test Lab, a key reason why UNL hosted the ISOBUS Plugfest, likely represents one of the University's longest public/private partnerships," Fritz said. "These partnerships obviously have grown beyond the state and nation and include international partners."

"Public/private partnerships of similar scope exist in numerous places throughout IANR. These partnerships will be key in generating projects that will populate Innovation Campus," Fritz added.

UNL is to acquire the 251-acre State Fair Park Jan. 1, 2010, to begin its conversion into a high-tech research and development campus. Innovation Campus is to create opportunities for economic development, while core facilities and instrumentation are shared in mutual research projects.

Three IANR faculty receive NACTA teaching award

Three IANR faculty members have received the 2009 Teacher Fellow Award from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture.

The three are Bryan Reiling, associate professor of animal science, Darrell Mark, associate professor of agricultural economics, and Cheryl Bailey, assistant professor of biochemistry.

The award was presented during NACTA's joint conference with the Science and Education Resource Development unit of the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service June 17-20 at Oklahoma State University.

The award is based on the instructor's teaching philosophy; evaluations submitted by students, alumni, administration,



Bryan Reiling



Darrell Mark



Cheryl Bailey

and peers; a self-evaluation; and factors such as the availability to students, teaching innovations, and departmental and institutional activity.

Taylor receives award for food allergen research

Steve Taylor, food toxicologist in the Department of Food Science and Technology, has received the 2009 Babcock-Hart Award from the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT).



Steve Taylor

The award is given annually to an IFT member whose contributions to food technology resulted in improved public health through nutrition or more nutritious food. The award

was presented at IFT's annual meeting and food expo in Anaheim, Calif., June 6. It includes a \$3,000 honorarium from the International Life Sciences Institute North America and an IFT plaque.

According to IFT, a nonprofit international society with 20,000 members, Taylor has acted as a liaison between the food industry and consumers with food allergies to help minimize the risk of allergic reactions.

"I am very pleased to receive this honor from IFT as recognition for my research and outreach activities related to food

allergies," Taylor said. "The Food Allergy Research and Resource Program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and all of my talented, hard-working graduate students and staff members have indeed made a real difference in the lives of consumers with food allergies. I am proud that we have made the marketplace safer for these consumers."

In addition, the Food Allergy Research and Resource Program, which Taylor directs, received the Association for Dressings & Sauces 2009 Technical Achievement Award in April.