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Pork Central's Al Prosch Retires

Al Prosch retired from his position as Pork Central Coordinator in June 2007 after 11 years at the University of Nebraska.

Pork Central was a Nebraska Pork Producers Association (NPPA) and University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension sponsored information clearinghouse with a mission to assist Nebraskans in the profitable production of quality pork. Al was Pork Central's sole coordinator. He enthusiastically and competently responded to producers' expressed needs for more information and education relating to business management and marketing.

Through Al's leadership, Pork Central offered producers a variety of methods to obtain information and advice critical for their business. Al created and maintained UNL's only pork-specific Web site. Al created and answered UNL's first and only pork-specific 800 phone line. His direct communication with producers provided the UNL Swine Group valuable feedback on producers' educational needs, which led to the development of numerous programs. He led a team of 11 specialists and educators to develop and deliver the Pork Central Management Review. Under Al's leadership, Pork Central, after operating only two years, was proven to be a valuable asset to producers, according to a survey conducted of Pork Central users.

Al partnered with NPPA to conduct a survey of over 2,700 Nebraska pork producers to determine educational needs. Acting on the results of that survey, Al organized UNL colleagues and out-of-state speakers to deliver "Improving Your Ability to Compete in the Pork Industry," a series of five meetings delivered by satellite.

Al's direct teaching mostly involved marketing, business management, and helping producers to create new opportunities for themselves. In addition to the weekly market updates Al posted on Pork Central's Web site, he presented marketing information on Market Journal about 60 times. He had a major teaching role

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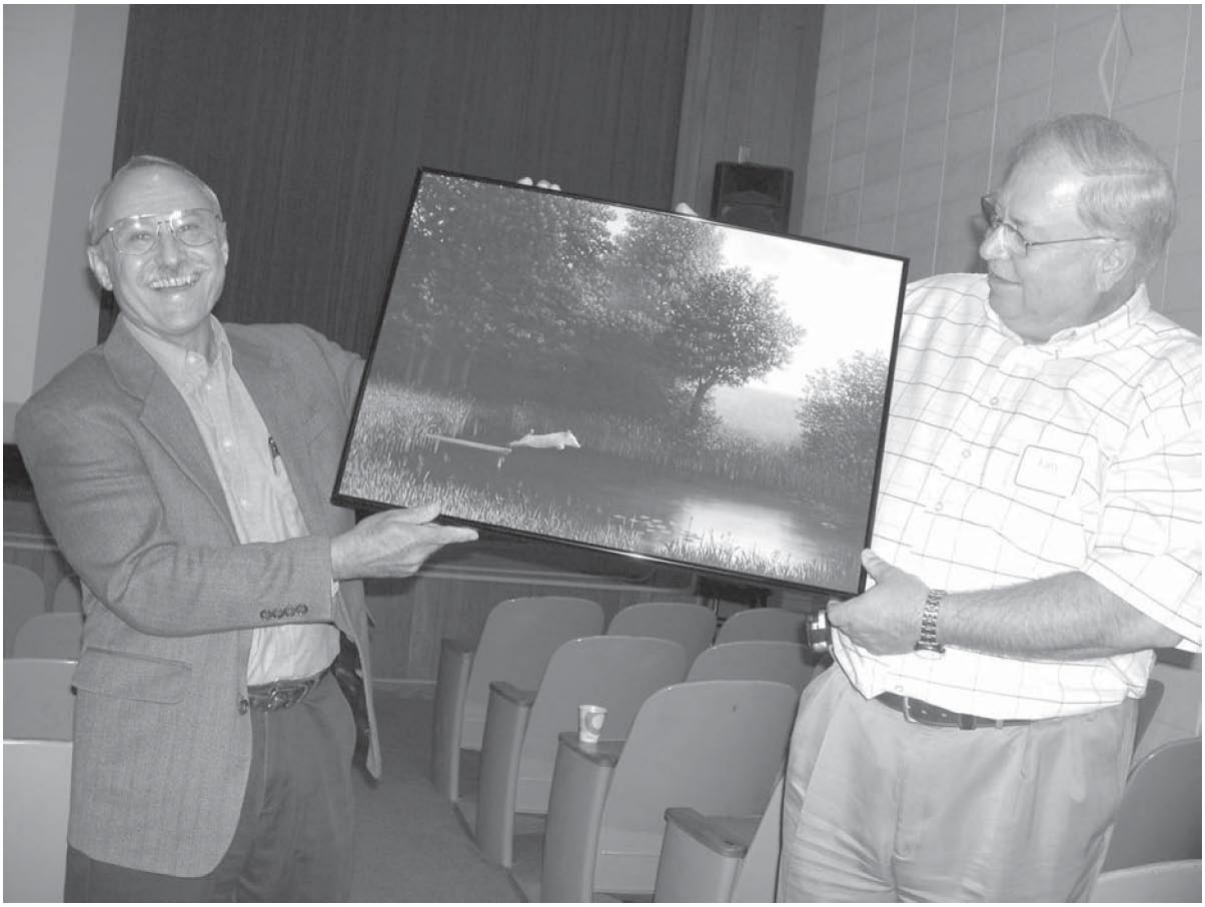

Figure 1. Larry Stizman (right), Nebraska Pork Producers Association executive director, presents Al Prosch a gilt to acknowledge his efforts as Pork Central coordinator at the University of Nebraska.

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in "Marketing in Turbulent Times," a program that attracted 102 participants and influenced over $9 million worth of annual pork production. Working with colleagues in the Department of Agricultural Economics, USDA, Nebraska Cattlemen, NPPA, and Farm Bureau, Al conducted 18 meetings, teaching producers and insurance agents about livestock risk protection (LRP). Al combined his knowledge of LRP and Web design to work with a development team to create an LRP Web site.

Establishing the "Business Planning Workshops for Pork Producers" in cooperation with NPPA was a major, four-year team programming effort that Al led. Seventy-five individuals representing 47 pork producing operations were impacted. Other programs that Al developed and assumed a significant teaching role in involved niche pork production and marketing.

Al provided considerable leadership for the development of the "Nebraska Model," a blueprint for reestablishing pork production throughout Nebraska. He developed the economic backbone of the model which received the endorsement of Nebraska pork producers and allied industry. His efforts have contributed to the recent increase in Nebraska's pig inventory.

Al's vision, insights, and strong background in business management made Pork Central a strong and very visible educational program in Nebraska. He was very successful in helping producers establish a model for the success of their businesses. He didn't stop there. He provided the educational programs and analytical tools to successfully carry out their plan.

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