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## LEAD luncheon

John Owens

*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, jowens2@unl.edu

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LEAD luncheon  
September 19, 2005  
John Owens  
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

I'm so delighted to be here today to provide an update on the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. It's a treat to share some Institute highlights to let you know not only what your land-grant university is doing to benefit you and your neighbors, but also what you have to be proud of here.

I think all Nebraskans can share the pride I feel when I report to you that over the last decade, our IANR scientists are among the **world's** most-cited scientists in agricultural research. We rank high amidst some mighty-fine competition.

On the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus these days we talk about the Power of Red. That phrase in no way refers solely to Nebraska's football team. When we use it in the Institute, we're talking about the benefits our faculty, staff, and students provide Nebraska. Our faculty's work exemplifies - and multiplies - the power of red for this entire state. It's the power

of red that helps keep Nebraska green and growing!

The ISI Essential Science Indicators Report, 1994-2004, indexes nearly 9,000 journals, tracking how often <sup>“scientific”</sup> articles are cited by other authors. The report reviewed agricultural sciences articles published by 298 institutions worldwide – both government agencies and large universities – and found we rank 16<sup>th</sup> in the world.

Sixteenth. In the world. Now, “Sweet 16” has a whole new meaning for us at UNL!

The United States Department of Agriculture tops the list. The number one university cited is Wageningen University in the Netherlands. The top American university cited is the University of California-Davis.

We rank 10<sup>th</sup> among universities **worldwide**. We’re **eighth** among **American universities**. We’re in pretty high-energy company here, and we certainly belong there!

On behalf of the State of Nebraska, I like to note that all the highest-rated universities other than ours are located in

states with huge populations, compared to Nebraska's 1.7 million citizens. Yet over the years, Nebraskans consistently have rated education a high priority. Our scientists return the state's investment in our programs through especially good use of Nebraska tax dollars invested in the Institute.

Another good news item I'm delighted to share with you today is that this fall, after eight years of decline, enrollments in our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources rose by 42 students. <sup>1264</sup> Our college showed the largest enrollment increase among <sup>all</sup> UNL colleges this year. And, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis, increased by 48 students or 22.4%. This is great news for NCTA, which now has a total of 262 students and is looking hard for ways to build two new residence halls for both female and male students.

I'm also pleased to tell you the College of Education and Human Sciences is up 25 students. The College of Education and Human Sciences combines what once was the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences and Teachers College. Research

3.4%

and extension education from the former College of Human Resources and Family Sciences are part of the Institute.

This rise in enrollments is something we must see continue. We welcome your insights, your ideas, and your help here. In 1997 we had 1,545 students studying in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Over the intervening eight years we dropped over 300 students. This year we're up 42 students, and those numbers must continue to rise. For several reasons.


First, Nebraska is a powerhouse agricultural state. Our student enrollments need to reflect agriculture's importance in our state economy, where it's the number one industry. Many people today no longer have direct connections to the farm, and do not fully understand how much they rely on agriculture. We need your assistance in telling people our college encompasses not only production agriculture, but also a wide variety of exciting careers for people who won't farm or ranch – agribusiness careers, food science careers, biochemistry, natural resources,

horticulture, animal science, entomology, water science, soil science, fisheries and wildlife – the list goes on. We're a natural for students interested in science, technology, food, business, and people. We have talented, caring faculty who provide an education that "springboards" our students to so many rewarding careers.

"Changing demographics" mean growth in our college requires innovation and new programs that build on our traditional agricultural strengths to attract those who have not been our traditional students. In turn, tuition dollars from new programs help support and keep our traditional agricultural programs "strong."

UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman has made it clear that at UNL, academic departments that do a good job getting and keeping students will be financially rewarded. "Recruiting success" is one determining factor for departments to, in future, "regain" funding they'll lose this year.

And speaking of funding – budget continues to be almost a

permanent part of any update I provide on the Institute, so I must tell you today that while the Legislature appropriated an excellent budget to the university this year, and we thank *our* legislators very much for that, we are, indeed, looking at further budget cuts because of tuition shortfalls due to falling enrollments across all of UNL. UNL's overall numbers were down last year, and they are down 117 students again this year. 

The tuition shortfall "cuts" come on top of extremely difficult rounds of budget cuts we endured in the past several years because of the state's recent economic crisis. The first is a "temporary" 2 percent cut this year, with a permanent 1.66 percent cut next year. In the Institute, this year's temporary 2 percent cut is tentatively estimated at \$1.5 million.

Further complicating our Institute budget is the fact that while we have ended our agreement with Kansas State University for veterinary medicine education, we are honoring our commitment to Nebraska students enrolled in that program when the agreement ended. That means for three years we will cash

flow funding for these Nebraska students still studying at KSU.

This fall we've also started doing the same for our first veterinary medicine class starting under our new veterinary medicine education-agreement with Iowa State University. We had hoped, in 2006, to have the Nebraska portion of that program up and going, but that was too optimistic, however, and we now find ourselves implementing the new program in veterinary medicine for the fall 2007 class because our colleagues at Iowa State University could not make the Fall 2006 goal work for them. We will know our time-line for certain when we receive the full report from the American Veterinary Medical Association's review team that visited our campus and the Ames campus recently.

So, to meet our budgeting challenges, we will make cuts, and we will hold positions open much-longer than usual to cash flow as much as possible. That's extremely frustrating; we all want to see these positions filled. It is, however, the responsible thing to do in tight budget times. Some positions we must fill



soon, such as those that fulfill our obligations to the new veterinary medicine program. Others we must keep <sup>OPEN</sup> until we can afford to release them.

We think our <sup>NEW</sup> agreement with Iowa State University ultimately makes the best use of resources available to us on behalf of Nebraska, strengthens ties with food animal veterinarians so important to Nebraska's livestock industry, and will enhance internal and external research-funding opportunities. Short-term, it's going to be really tough on us financially. Long-term, it's especially good for Nebraska.

I'm going to end today with several examples of how the Institute is carrying out our land-grant university mission for Nebraska.

I hope you're aware two of our faculty are part of a research team awarded the 2004 International Meat Secretariat Prize for Meat Science and Technology. It's the first U.S. team to ever win this international award. Their work is responsible for development of the flat iron steak and other beef cuts that have

"increased demand" and added at least \$50 in value per animal over the past five years. This is a "great example" of commodity board investments in research "paying off!"

Our scientists' research on soybean oil is helping shape food allergen labeling laws here and abroad." An international study by our food scientists "confirmed" that highly refined soybean oil does not cause reactions in people allergic to soybeans. Nebraska findings "played a role" in European Union food allergen labeling decisions, as well as the U.S. Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004, which Congress passed to "protect" allergic consumers.

Our researchers found "today's ethanol yields more energy than is used to produce it - their research demonstrated <sup>ethanol to be</sup> about "30 percent ahead" energy-wise. These findings on modern ethanol production are especially important because most studies used to assess ethanol's potential have been based on 10- to 20-year-old data that do not reflect farming and production "efficiency gains" made during the past two decades. This more

accurate data should help policy-makers make better-informed national energy policy choices.

One of our nutrition scientists has combined stearic acid from beef tallow with plant-sterols from soybeans to create a potent cholesterol-lowering compound that could be used as a dietary supplement or a food additive. It outperformed commercially-available plant-based food additives in animal studies. Preliminary research suggests it works as well as widely prescribed cholesterol-lowering statin drugs.

Our student chapter of the National Agri-Marketing Association received the Outstanding Student Chapter award this spring during the organization's annual conference and trade show in Phoenix. The chapter also brought home the Communications Chapter Improvement Award and the Membership Recruitment Chapter Improvement Award. We are so proud of them.

In June we celebrated completion of a research-facility at the Barta Brothers Ranch near Long Pine. The last day of August

*IN BROWN + ROCK COUNTIES*

Cherry, Grant, & Hooper Counties

we dedicated the new Wagonhammer Education Center at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory near Whitman. Both greatly enhance the research, teaching, and extension education programs we conduct for Nebraska.

It would do my heart good to go on providing numerous examples of how the Institute is at work for Nebraska, but time does not permit. Instead I will end by wishing you all the best as LEAD fellows. Nebraska desperately needs leaders, and we look to you to put to good use the skills you are developing and expanding through your participation in this great leadership program. We await with great eagerness all the good you can and will do for Nebraska and beyond.

Thank you.