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Nebraska Pork Summit Remarks

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Nebraska Pork Summit Remarks
November 8, 2005
Downtown Holiday Inn
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

I'd like to begin my "brief remarks" today with some thank you's. First, "thank you", Governor Heineman, for sharing your views with us just now, and for your efforts on behalf of Nebraska agriculture as you work with others to grow Nebraska markets. We also "thank you" for your strong support of the University of Nebraska. THANK YOU! STATE SENATORS.

ROD & YOUR ASSOCIATES —

Thank you, also, to the organizers of this day. It is good to "come together" for thoughtful discussion and planning. I look forward to seeing the road map that "grows" from today's discussion. We in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln "applaud" the Nebraska Pork Producers Association's "concern" for Nebraska's rural communities. Sustainability and growth of these communities is of very real concern to those of us in the Institute, as well, and I can tell you it is a concern "felt" across

ANN BAUMITZ:
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Nebraska.

When the Institute held over 30 listening sessions across our state in 2003, two issues consistently arose. One is water, both quantity and quality. The other is community revitalization. That was true in our 2004 listening sessions, as well. Issues that affect Nebraska's rural communities are very real to us.

Because we're talking about pork production today, I'd like to touch on some of the work being done in the Institute I think of interest here.

First, I'm very pleased to tell you our Extension Dean, Elbert Dickey, now is leading the extension effort of the U.S. Pork Center of Excellence. This center is a public/private partnership involving USDA, pork industry organizations, and most of the land-grant universities in the Hog Belt states. The goal of this new organization is to facilitate cooperation in research, teaching, and extension for the benefit of pork producers nationwide.

Second, for over a year now, technology has allowed the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Iowa State University to share

swine experts in a joint swine extension-education program. Mike Brumm, at our Haskell Agricultural Laboratory near Concord, lends his expertise in finished pigs. Iowa State swine veterinarian Locke Karriker contributes his medical knowledge. We've been able to leverage what each is doing to share resources and reach more people than either would alone. In December we'll have a four-state Pork Bridge program for producers in Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and Minnesota, delivering information via CD-ROM and toll-free telephone sessions.

A FOCUSED-Education

Third, new Extension Educator Richard Ness is heading a new extension swine program called "Alternative and Sustainable Swine Production and Management Systems." We are seeing consumer demand for "designer" pork products differentiated by such factors as no antibiotic use, family-farm produced, pasture raised, and/or other factors, including organically-certified pork. At present, demand outstrips supplies of available hogs for most of the categories. Also, some pork producers are raising and

marketing their product differently than the industry as a whole. Richard is working to develop educational programs of value to those interested in meeting this growing niche market demand.

Fourth, with livestock odor an increasingly contentious and emotional issue in our state, our biological systems engineers are developing a research-based computer tool to predict how often annoying odors will exist in areas surrounding a livestock operation. Called the Nebraska Odor Footprint Tool, the modeling software illustrates how far a livestock operation needs to be from neighbors in different directions to avoid odor-related conflicts. The tool incorporates specific information about Nebraska weather conditions and livestock operations. It should help communities, planners, and producers make better-informed decisions about where to locate livestock operations to reduce conflicts and improve environmental quality. The Nebraska Pork Producers Association and the National Pork Board help fund this research.

I've used up my time, so will end saying I look forward to other opportunities to talk with you in future. Thank you.