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ABN Summer Meeting

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ABN Summer Meeting
Thursday, July 20, 2006
1:30 p.m.
East Campus Union
John C. Owens
NU Vice President
and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

It is such a pleasure to have you on campus with us today. While we couldn't do anything to turn the heat down outside, at least we've had some hot topics to go right along with it! I sincerely hope you've enjoyed the wide variety of information we've shared with you today. It is our pleasure to have this opportunity to host you here on campus, and I thank everyone who has been part of presenting and putting this day's program together. I also thank each of you, and every member of ABN, for all you do in support of Nebraska agriculture, the Institute, and the university.

You know, agriculture is part of my family's tradition – and has been since 1865 in Texas where my Mom still farms with a renter. I remember once, when I was in the third grade, my

teacher asked me, "John, if there are 20 calves in a field, and one gets out through a hole in the fence, how many calves are left in the field?"

Well, I was a bright lad, and of course I knew the answer. In fact, I was eager to tell her. "None, teacher."

"John," she said, frowning fiercely at me, "You're wrong. There are 19 calves left in the field. One got out through the hole. Nineteen are left. You're going to stay in this recess and work through your math book. Obviously you don't know arithmetic."

I didn't think that was fair, and I told her. "Well, that's not right, teacher," I protested. "I do too know arithmetic. But you must not know calves – because when one goes, they all go!"

At least, that's how it always seemed to me!

And I did – and do! – know arithmetic! Its importance has continued in my professional life, because numbers always are important to college administrators.

When we talk about research in the Institute, we often use

numbers to help people better grasp the benefit of what we do, and the impact our work has, on behalf of Nebraska.

One excellent example of that is our wheat breeding program. Hard red winter wheat varieties developed here have helped boost Nebraska's annual yields by **9.5 million bushels** since the 1960s. Those varieties are planted on about 62 percent of the state's wheat acres. These improved varieties are worth roughly $30 to $35 million annually to Nebraska producers, based on increased yield alone. Yield improvement in these varieties means Nebraska wheat growers can feed nearly **3.8 million** more people than they did on the same acreage in the 1960s.

We have wheat breeders now collaborating with scientists in 17 states on research to implement new molecular technologies, called Marker Assisted Selection, that will improve U.S. wheat quality and disease resistance.

Another fine example is that of our IANR meat scientists in the Department of Animal Science who teamed with University of

Florida colleagues on extensive studies identifying promising higher value uses for under-used muscles in the chuck and round.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the industry developed several new beef products based on this research; Sallie Atkins tells me these new products have increased demand for beef and added $50 to $70 in value per head over the past seven years. With more than 26 million cattle fed and marketed in our country every year, that represents $1.3 *billion* to $1.8 *billion* added value annually.

It's especially fun to say *billion* when it's a plus, not a debt!

Today I'm especially happy to be able to talk about some other numbers, as well, recognizing that this is the most current information I have from UNL's research office, and that these numbers still are being adjusted.

We are delighted this year at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to note that, for the first time ever, grants and contracts awarded for research at UNL topped $100 million, coming in at

over $104.7 million as of July 19, 2006.

Our researchers here in the Institute did us all proud, as they always do, earning over $38.2 million of that research grants and contracts total.

A few examples: Our School of Natural Resources accounted for nearly $11.9 million of that figure. Our Department of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences researchers earned over $2.4 million in grants and contracts, as did our Department of Agronomy and Horticulture $2.3 million. Our Department of Food Science and Technology was near $1.9 million, Biochemistry earned just over $7.2 million, and Animal Science $600,000. This money funds research of real value for Nebraska and our world; it is a vital part of what we do.

As we look at the grants and contracts earnings across all our departments within the Institute, we see some have a very real room for growth. I have every expectation that potential will be fulfilled because the results which come from IANR research projects will be good for agriculture and related areas in our

state.

Other numbers I'm highly aware of as we meet this year are the numbers of

new unit heads in place, and the number yet to be hired. The latter number is two – the Director of the School of Natural Resources and the Head of the Department of Plant Pathology. The number of positions now filled is a real plus for us. I'm pleased you have this opportunity to meet some of our new department and center heads, as well as the new Dean of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. I'm going to ask each to say a few words as I introduce them.

I cannot tell you how tremendously pleased I am personally, and we all are collectively here in the Institute, to have attracted these intelligent, talented individuals to work with us all in providing leadership and vision for the Institute's, UNL's, and Nebraska's future.

In the last few years, retirements and turnover have led to a number of new faces throughout the Institute. We are so thankful to have had the skills and vision of those individuals our new department heads follow into these positions, and we welcome the new insights, inputs, and ideas new people always bring.

I am extremely pleased to be working with these dynamic individuals. I think we'll start our introductions of new heads with Don Adams – who actually is not a new face for us, for which we're very grateful, because Don has done tremendous work at the West Central Research and Extension Center for years, and, indeed, Nebraska and the Institute are both better for that.

Don, who served as Interim Director of West Central before recently being named the permanent District Director there, also serves as the Associate Dean of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. Don?

Then: Rolando Flores

David Hardin

Weldon Sleight

I've said today that numbers are part of every administrator's life, and budget, of course, is number, numbers, numbers. I'm going to ask Alan Moeller, Assistant Vice Chancellor, to talk about where we are with the budget, our challenges and opportunities, and how important this next year in the Legislature will be to us, with the next biennium budget to be established in the next session.

Alan

That ends my update for the day. Thank you so much for being with us here on campus, for your ongoing support of our work, and for your encouragement and advice as we all work together for the future of Nebraska agriculture.

Kathy, we'll turn the program back to you. Thank you.