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Cattlemen's Conference

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CATTLEMEN'S CONFERENCE
2:10 P.M. WEDNESDAY, NOV. 28, 2007, KEARNEY HOLIDAY INN
JOHN C. OWENS, NU VICE PRESIDENT AND HARLAN VICE CHANCELLOR, IANR

Many good things are happening in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. I thank each of you here today for the support and interest you show in the Institute's work. We greatly appreciate the value you put upon IANR, and the many times you step forward for the Institute and the work we do that is so important to our powerhouse agricultural state. IANR truly is at work for Nebraska. And thank you, also, for helping others understand that fact – for example, Homer Buell's testimony this spring before the legislature's appropriations committee was powerful and convincing evidence of the importance of IANR to Nebraska's future.

I want to begin by talking briefly about my vision for IANR. The Institute will stay true to the land-grant university mission by serving the interests and needs of the citizens of Nebraska through excellence in teaching, research, and extension education. We emphasize leadership in food, agricultural, environmental, and social sciences. I see an Institute that must balance its programs to meet the needs of Nebraskans through advances in biological, physical, and social sciences, such that stakeholders enhance the knowledge and skills necessary to remain competitive in a rapidly-changing global economy.

Because of your support and efforts, I am pleased this afternoon to talk about the **[slide 2]** following key accomplishments I think the Nebraska Cattlemen will find interesting:

- Enrollment numbers are up in our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR)
- Great things are springing forth from the UNL Extension Division and the Agricultural Research Division
- We're enhancing our cattle facilities throughout the state
- New animal and livestock faculty have been hired within the last two years, and
- Our search is on for the new head of our Department of Animal Science.

Let's get started.

I'm delighted our student enrollment numbers are up, thanks in no small part to the Cattlemen's work with Nebraskans for Nebraska, encouraging students to study and learn with us in order to enter agricultural and other careers.

This fall CASNR led the entire University of Nebraska-Lincoln in new student enrollment. That's great for Nebraska -- historically about 70 percent of CASNR graduates take their first jobs out of college in Nebraska -- that means this newly-developed talent remains in our state.

[slide 3] CASNR new student enrollments increased this fall by 11.7 percent, and a good number of those were in the Department of Animal Science. This fall is the first time since 1997 enrollment has exceeded 200 students. This fall the department's enrollment is 231 students. While this growth is a significant accomplishment, we all recognize animal science has capacity for even more growth.

Animal science departments in other states have student enrollments such as 265 at South Dakota State, about 650 at Kansas State, nearly 700 at Oklahoma State, over 700 at both Colorado State and Iowa State. ~~Yes, we know there is potential for growth here in Nebraska.~~

[Slide 4] The $150,000 you've pledged over three years for the Nebraska Cattlemen's Excellence Fund is a key component in this effort. Judging teams, internships, new students, grazing studies, and students transferring from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture – all will benefit. Thank you for this significant gift.

We also appreciate your **[Slide 5]** partnership with Dean Weldon Sleight and the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture's new ***100 Beef Cow Ownership Advantage*** program created to provide a forum where students, parents, employers, and agencies can come together to create successful business-plans and develop farm and ranch transfer programs.

You will hear more about this new program and other exciting developments at NCTA when Dean Sleight makes his presentation at this conference.

Teaching undergraduates is by State of Nebraska statute and Board of Regents policy the first priority of the university and teaching is a significant emphasis in the Institute. **[Slide 6]** Research and extension education also are absolutely vital to keeping your industry and Nebraska agriculture strong and competitive. All three of these mission areas are of equal priority and are closely intertwined in the Institute; what raises one raises all, and what lowers one affects all. Likewise, a strong animal science department needs to be broad and deep to meet the needs of the most significant economic component of Nebraska agriculture.

[slide 7] IANR is at work for Nebraska. A recent independent study showed we return 15 to one on every Nebraska tax dollar invested in the Institute, and the study placed special emphasis on the importance of our partnerships. As longtime partners with Nebraska Cattlemen we highly value you and your organization as we work together for the future of Nebraska.

Beef is so significant to Nebraska's economy that one in five steaks in the United States – one in five -- comes from Nebraska. Beef's importance is reflected in the work we do for you and beef clearly has huge significance in our state.

[Slide 8 blank] The Institute endured some formidable funding challenges the past six years. As you know, with significantly less money, none of us can do everything that was done before. That has been frustrating. Really frustrating. However, even during these budget cuts, we were committed to advancing Nebraska's future, and have been able to create a number of key positions in IANR in support of the beef industry.

[slide 9] In fact, over the past three years, a higher percentage of positions were filled in the animal science department than for the Institute as a whole. Since July 1, 2005, approximately 20% of IANR's new faculty hires have been in the department of Animal Science.

We are excited about our new animal-related hires in the last two years. While not all are directly related to beef, they certainly are complementary. In alphabetical order they are:

- **[slide 10]** Dr. Thomas Burkey, non-ruminant nutritionist who started in July 2006. Tom teaches veterinary physiology and advanced nutrition.

- **[slide 11]** Matt Ellicott, extension educator appointed in the animal science department, is providing leadership for our livestock judging program for both 4-H and FFA students and, also, at the collegiate level. He started Aug. 1. You can be certain that the IANR Administration has heard your message and highly values the importance and impact of judging at UNL.

- **[slide 12]** Dr. Lisa Karr-Lilienthal, companion animal lecturer who joined us in February 2006. Lisa's expertise is in teaching animal behavior and nutrition.

-**[slide 13]** Dr. Jim Keen, veterinary epidemiologist, recently joined the VBMS faculty on November 1, 2007. Dr. Keen is located at the Great Plains Veterinary Educational Center and has a particular interest in vector-borne diseases and the role that stable flies play in E. coli 0157 transmission.

- **[slide 14]** Dr. Don Levis, swine specialist at the Northeast Research and Extension Center at Concord, who started in this capacity October 2006. Don conducts Extension and Research programs on swine management, health, and physiology issues.

- **[slide 15]** Libby Lugar, lecturer in equine science and management. Libby's appointments are in teaching and extension, and her appointment was made permanent in 2006.

- **[slide 16]** Dr. Richard Randle, extension beef cattle veterinarian, will join us Dec. 3 in a newly-created position emphasizing ranch production systems, to ultimately contribute to the viability and sustainability of Nebraska's beef cattle industry.

- **[slide 17]** Dr. Matt Spangler, beef specialist and animal geneticist will join us Jan.1 and he will provide leadership for our beef scholars program, extension beef genetics, and beef marketing that culminates with the annual UNL Bulls Worth Waiting For Spring Sale.

- **[slide 18]** Dr. Aaron Stalker, animal nutritionist in beef and range production systems at the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte. His research and extension programming in beef nutrition began in January.

- **[slide 19]** Dr. Judson Vasconcelos will be our Panhandle Research and Extension Center feedlot nutrition and management specialist beginning in March. He will conduct applied beef feedlot nutrition research at our newest research feedlot facility. He also will conduct statewide beef feedlot extension education programs.

- **[slide 20]** Dr. Jennifer Wood, a reproductive biologist with a specialty in physiological genomics started January 2006. Jennifer coordinates the physiology section for first year students in our new cooperative program in veterinary medicine and has her research focus in the area of basic reproductive physiology.

As the budget improves, the Institute should have more flexibility during the next two years to fund some additional new positions. After that the budget picture becomes less clear.

[Slide 21] It's important to also note many other units within the Institute complement Animal Science and the beef industry.

UNL Extension programs **[Slide 22]** encourage Nebraska 4-H youth all across our State to exhibit all animal types and 4-H encourages high school students to interact with faculty and beef industry leaders on the East Campus in Lincoln. **[Slide 23]** Our college judging team members develop keen eyes and sharp minds, developing the ability to think quickly on their feet and to be convincing -- important skills not only for herd management but also in developing confidence and leadership, which are key skills that will be helpful to them for the rest of their lives.

Adult extension beef **[Slide 24]** programming includes the Nebraska Ranch Practicum, UNL Extension's Beef Cow Basics, and the website:beef.unl.edu, to name just three of IANR's highly visible and profit-enhancing educational activities.

IANR's Agricultural Research Division, also, is strong and paying off for Nebraska cattle producers. **[Slide 25]** Dr. Rick Funston demonstrated that replacement heifers can be developed to a lighter-than-traditional weight without hurting reproductive performance. **[Slide 26]** Dr. Dave Smith is working on a method to detect the incurable Johne's disease that wastes away adult cattle, and he is collaborating to understand the ecology of E. coli 0157 and to reduce occurrences in live cattle.

Our research scientists produce work of great value: the work **[Slide 27]** Dr. Chris Calkins did with his University of Florida colleagues led to new beef products such as the flat iron steak that added **$50-$70 in value per head**, culminating in $1.5 billion in benefits to Nebraska producers over the last decade or so. And, that per head additional value is not a one-time event – it goes on every single year.

"STEEN"

As you are "keenly aware", **[Slide 28]** Dr. Terry Klopfenstein led the work "proving" the feasibility, benefits, and economic advantages of feeding ethanol-byproducts "wet" instead of dry and shipping them to dried feed markets. **[Slide 29]** Dr. Galen Erickson is moving forward with this work, which has "added" nearly half a billion dollars cumulative from 1992-2006.

Add these large figures together, and it magnifies **two billion** times the importance of the Institute as an "economic engine" at work for Nebraska.

Nebraska, second nationally with 6.65 million cattle, has four UNL "research" feedlots. Our Panhandle facility **[slide 30]** now is vastly expanded and transformed with state-of-the-art equipment, in large part due to the "efforts" of our long-time beef specialist Dr. Ivan Rush and the private support of regional cattlemen and agribusiness operations in "partnership" with IANR and the University of Nebraska Foundation. It includes:

- 61 new pens that can allow for consistent comparisons; **[slide 31]** "water" is individually "metered" at each pen, **[slide 32]** "allowing" for precise measurement of animal intake; **[slide 33]** an electronic identification system "automates" the process of gathering and storing data on each animal; **[slide 34]** and a silencer chute is much quieter and less stressful on animals during handling.

Our three other feedlots are at the **[slide 35]** West Central Research and Extension Center at North Platte, **[slide 36]** the Northeast Research and Extension Center's Haskell Ag Laboratory at Concord, and at the **[slide 37]** Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead.

[slide 38] The Wagonhammer Education Center, too, is a tremendous, modern asset at our Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory. This classroom and laboratory space was made possible with an initial gift by Elaine Wolf and her late husband Jim Wolf.

Speaking of facilities, a $21.34 million renovation of the **[slide 39]** East Campus based Animal Science complex begins in 2008. This renovation will better meet the standards required by the National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare. **[Slide 40]** This project upgrades heating, air conditioning, ventilation, and addresses fire and other safety deficiencies. It is to be completed in 2011.

I would like to thank Don Beermann, for his past service as animal science department head, and look forward to his leadership for UNL's animal care programming and for pioneering the One Health, One Medicine program in conjunction with the University of Nebraska Medical Center's new College of Public Health. The goal of this new effort is to strengthen the relationship between animal and human medicine for the mutual benefit of all.

I see an exciting future for our Department of Animal Science, which means an exciting future for animal agriculture in Nebraska. We are pleased that Nebraska Cattlemen's President Jay Wolf is a member of the search committee for the new department head.

A new endowment associated with this department head position should help us attract top candidates. **[Slide 41]** The Marvel L. Baker Head of Animal Science is an endowment generously created by Ardis and Robert James to commemorate the life of Marvel Baker and his contributions to the university and to animal science. My deep thanks also to Chancellor Harvey Perlman for helping make this possible by providing the matching funds for the endowment.

We are looking nationally for the absolutely best person for this position, someone who has the ability and vision to lead an animal science department in Nebraska **[Slide 42]**, a state with a tremendous livestock industry, to even greater heights than we have so far reached. Someone who can work with faculty, staff, administration, and our constituents statewide to significantly **[Slide 43]** increase student enrollments and develop and lead robust, competitive, and strategic Research and Extension Education programs so very critical to our state's future, and certainly to the future of your industry.

We in the Institute look forward to working even closer **[Slide 44]** with Nebraska Cattlemen in the years ahead. The IANR Deans and I look forward to enhanced communications with you and additional opportunities to work together for the benefit of this great state in which we all are privileged to live and work.

Good news in enrollments, good news in new faculty and leadership, and good news in research and extension education – yes, much is occurring in your Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

[Slide 45] As part of our ongoing strategic planning process, we invite you to participate in one of our upcoming IANR listening sessions, Dec. 6 in North Platte and Dec. 7 in Valentine.

Now for questions. Please know you always are welcome to contact me, Dean Steve Waller, or Dr. Sheila Scheideler. We welcome all opportunities for open and FRANK discussion.

Again, thank you for all you have done and do for the Institute. We highly value your partnership. As your land-grant university, we are at work for Nebraska.

Thank you.