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Panhandle Research and Extension Center Feedlot Dedication Ceremony

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Panhandle Research and Extension Center
Feedlot Dedication Ceremony
Monday, May 7, 2007
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

It is my very great privilege and pleasure to have this opportunity to welcome you to today's dedication. We look forward with great anticipation to the exciting, important research to enhance cattle feeding profitability this feedlot will provide. Approximately 34 percent of Panhandle agriculture's economic impact – about $350 million yearly -- comes from cattle finishing.

When fully complete, this feedlot's capabilities will place us in the top five research feedlots in the United States. We thank each of the donors who helped make this possible, and the steering committee, which did so much, ranging from helping ensure the construction and research capabilities consistent with current and evolving industry-standards, to facilitating generation of funds for construction. We are pleased

members of the steering committee will become an advisory committee for the future.

I want to note that 89.4 percent of revenue for the feedlot expansion was generated from non-tax sources. This is a significant commitment by the feedlot industry and deeply appreciated. I thank Chuck Hibberd and all members of his Panhandle Research and Extension Center team who have worked so hard to make this project – and this day – a success. Of course, qualified people are a key resource for our expanded Panhandle Research Feedlot. Stephanie Quinn is our research manager; Nabor Guzman and Doug Pieper continue to provide capable support for feeding cattle and for animal health. We currently seek a feedlot-nutrition and management ~~specialist~~ faculty member through a national search.

Profitability will be a key research and extension education area for us here, as will natural resource and waste management. Increasing grain-prices resulting from our nation's need for renewable bio-based fuels will have significant impacts on the prices of traditional feeds. New

research on cost-effective rations will be essential for maintaining a profitable cattle industry. This facility is ideal for such research. We expect work done here will help provide our graduates knowledge needed to take productive roles and become leaders in the cattle feeding industry.

Today we celebrate the addition of 61 new pens for feedlot research, each of which holds 12-15 head in a uniform research environment. A dual lagoon system manages feedlot waste consistent with industry standards. Sixty-one individual water lines can monitor water intake and administer innovative compounds through the water supply. This is a unique way to deliver nutrients, microminerals, or other health promotants through the water rather than feed. ~~Since~~ Because incoming cattle typically drink before they start eating, this allows us to see what administering health promotants in this way can do. This is the only research feedlot we know to have this capability on this scale, and we are eager to put it to work. Other capabilities the feedlot provides also are exciting, and I think

you'll enjoy learning about them on the tours following this ceremony.

An independent study conducted for the Institute recently found IANR provides a conservative 15 to 1 return on tax dollars Nebraska invests with us. We're proud of that return and proud, too, that in talking about how the Institute serves as a significant economic engine for the state, the report noted, and I quote, "IANR is positively impacting the State of Nebraska in significant ways through both its diverse array of activities, as well as its close partnerships with producers and community stakeholders. Without these partnerships, much of IANR's accomplishments could not be achieved."

Thank you to our partners here today and those throughout Nebraska who continually work with us to grow and prosper our state. It is a joy to celebrate this tremendous new state-of-the art facility, and the successful partnership that forged this feedlot project. Thank you.