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### ABN Noon Remarks for Legislators Luncheon

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By 2050 - Just 41 YEARS FROM NOW -  
THE WORLD POPULATION WILL GROW BY 2 CAUSAS

ABN Noon Remarks ( ) for Legislators Luncheon  
Cornhusker Hotel

Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2009

John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor,  
IANR

Bing Crosby song

"THOSE FAR AWAY PLACES  
WITH STRANGE SWEDEN NAMES ..."

Abraham Lincoln is a hero of mine. And, probably of yours  
as well. We celebrate his 200<sup>th</sup> birthday this February, and I'd  
like to start today with a Lincoln story I think appropriate for our  
times -- and certainly for <sup>all</sup> luncheon speakers.

It seems one day President Lincoln received a committee  
report on a newly-invented gun. Like many committee reports,  
this one was long. Very long. When the President saw it he said,  
"I should want a new lease on life to read this through!" Then he  
added, "Why can't a committee of this kind 'occasionally' exhibit a  
grain of common sense? If I send a man to buy a horse for me, I  
expect him to tell me his points - not how many hairs there are  
in his tail."

Point well taken. I'll stick to <sup>4</sup> ~~2~~ key points, not horse hairs!

**Key point #1:** Nebraska has a bio-based economy and is a true "powerhouse" agricultural state. In 2007, the last year for which these figures are available, cash receipts from farm marketings contributed over \$14.5 billion to Nebraska's economy. No doubt the success of Nebraska's agriculture has made a significant contribution to Nebraska's strong economy <sup>when</sup> compared <sup>today</sup> to virtually every other state. No doubt that economic success, along with good stewardship by you, our state's elected leaders, has contributed to the unprecedented cash-reserve so critical to helping Nebraska "manage" through the tight economic times for which our state is preparing.

**Key point #2:** You can feel good about the taxpayers' investment in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. An independent study conducted by Battelle of Columbus, Ohio, found the Institute has powerful impacts on Nebraska's economic growth and on economic and social sustainability. The study found that for every state tax dollar invested in the Institute, there is a return of \$15. **Conservatively.**

One example of the Institute's contribution and impact is muscle profiling research conducted by Institute animal scientists and colleagues at the University of Florida. This led to new beef products, such as the flat iron steak, that added at least \$50-\$70 per head. With beef such big business in Nebraska, in the past decade that has meant a *minimum* cumulative \$1.5 billion benefit for Nebraska's economy. ~~ANOTHER~~ My Flat Iron STEAK TODAY, TASTED A LOT LIKE CHICKEN.

**Key point # 3:** Numbers, especially those pertaining to return on investment, are important. Yet everyone in the room knows numbers can't capture what it means to be part of making an Omaha Superfund site safer for children at risk of lead-poisoning from contaminated soil and peeling paint, or the life skills gained by those Nebraska youth involved in our 4-H programming – although there are approximately 132,000 Nebraska 4-H students, one-in-three of all age-eligible youth in Nebraska, a number we're pretty proud of, as well.

Numbers don't capture the quality, <sup>THE</sup> courage, and <sup>THE</sup> quiet determination of Nebraska's citizens, yet we know with great certainty that these people – and our state – are worth every investment we can make in and for them. Research and education are "keys" to Nebraska's future. When you consider strategic investments in our state's future, please consider the many ways we -- and our colleagues throughout Nebraska's ~~land~~ <sup>THE UNIVERSITY OF</sup> ~~land~~ -- are at work for Nebraska. Your Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is providing a conservative 15-to-1 return on state tax dollars, serving as an economic engine, and helping Nebraskans build their lives, their businesses, and their dreams.

**Key point # 4:** We thank you for the ways you, also, are at work for Nebraska. We look forward to working with you throughout 2009 to forge a strong and sustainable future for our state. Thank you.

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