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## Nebraska Panhandle Connects with German Institute on Agri Benchmark Project

Paul Burgener

*University of Nebraska - Lincoln*, [pburgene@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:pburgene@unlnotes.unl.edu)

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# CORNHUSKER ECONOMICS

July 28, 2010

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension

Institute of Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Department of Agricultural Economics  
<http://www.agecon.unl.edu/Cornhuskereconomics.html>

## Nebraska Panhandle Connects with German Institute on Agri Benchmark Project

In the Spring of 2009, the University of Nebraska Panhandle Research and Extension Center was contacted by a representative from the Institute of Farm Economics at the Johann Heinrich von Thunen Institute (vTI) in Braunschweig, Germany. In the initial meeting, a partnership was arranged to provide Western Nebraska irrigated economic data for the Agri Benchmark project operated by vTI, with the University of Nebraska receiving access to the worldwide data set that exists within the project. This relationship has grown over the past 18 months to include a number of other opportunities.

The Agri Benchmark project was developed to evaluate economic implications of differing production systems, market structure and agriculture policy around the globe. The Nebraska location was selected primarily because of the center pivot irrigation use and the sugarbeet industry in the Panhandle. In addition to the partner in Nebraska, there are United States partners in Iowa and North Dakota. Since both of those farms are rainfed systems, there is an obvious need for the irrigated farm example in Nebraska.

Each partner is required to provide data on a “typical” farm for the region, with data collected on machinery, crop inputs, labor and cropping systems, to be used in comparisons around the world. The typical farm in Western Nebraska included corn, dry beans, winter wheat and sugarbeets under center pivot irrigation in Box Butte County. The initial data was derived from the Nebraska Crop Budgets and consultation with representatives of Western Sugar Company. The plan for the 2010 crop year is to develop a farmer panel for a focus group meeting to ground check the initial year of data, and make any adjustments necessary to more accurately reflect the area.

In addition to the annual survey of crop production costs and returns, vTI uses the information and the expertise of the partners to develop additional projects,

Market Report	Yr Ago	4 Wks Ago	7/23/10
<b><u>Livestock and Products,</u></b>			
<b><u>Weekly Average</u></b>			
Nebraska Slaughter Steers, 35-65% Choice, Live Weight . . . . .	\$83.48	\$91.23	\$94.86
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame, 550-600 lb. . . . .	*	135.88	137.25
Nebraska Feeder Steers, Med. & Large Frame 750-800 lb. . . . .	104.65	117.50	117.95
Choice Boxed Beef, 600-750 lb. Carcass. . . . .	141.45	154.50	154.94
Western Corn Belt Base Hog Price Carcass, Negotiated. . . . .	57.51	77.56	77.63
Feeder Pigs, National Direct 50 lbs, FOB. . . . .	29.03	*	*
Pork Carcass Cutout, 185 lb. Carcass, 51-52% Lean. . . . .	65.69	84.08	83.83
Slaughter Lambs, Ch. & Pr., Heavy, Woolled, South Dakota, Direct. . . . .	103.25	130.75	122.00
National Carcass Lamb Cutout, FOB. . . . .	256.79	312.37	310.37
<b><u>Crops,</u></b>			
<b><u>Daily Spot Prices</u></b>			
Wheat, No. 1, H.W. Imperial, bu. . . . .	4.49	3.39	4.45
Corn, No. 2, Yellow Omaha, bu. . . . .	2.96	3.26	3.37
Soybeans, No. 1, Yellow Omaha, bu. . . . .	10.13	9.59	9.94
Grain Sorghum, No. 2, Yellow Dorchester, cwt. . . . .	5.02	5.14	5.64
Oats, No. 2, Heavy Minneapolis, MN, bu. . . . .	2.07	2.65	2.54
<b><u>Feed</u></b>			
Alfalfa, Large Square Bales, Good to Premium, RFV 160-185 Northeast Nebraska, ton. . . . .	*	150.00	150.00
Alfalfa, Large Rounds, Good Platte Valley, ton. . . . .	*	82.50	*
Grass Hay, Large Rounds, Premium Nebraska, ton. . . . .	*	*	72.50
Dried Distillers Grains, 10% Moisture, Nebraska Average. . . . .	80.00	92.50	85.50
Wet Distillers Grains, 65-70% Moisture, Nebraska Average. . . . .	37.00	32.00	26.50
<b>*No Market</b>			



with an international focus. This includes evaluations of the competitiveness of specific crop production systems, potential agricultural impacts of higher energy prices and analysis of the global competitiveness of oilseed crops. These projects are published in graduate student theses, academic journals, extension type publications and annual reports. They are also presented at major international meetings and agricultural trade shows.

The partners meet annually for a cash crop conference in a different location each year. In 2009, the conference was held near Cambridge, England in the United Kingdom. This conference included discussion of the Agri Benchmark Project, presentations from the different countries (including one from the Nebraska project), tours of local agriculture and agribusinesses and presentations by UK agribusiness and production agriculture representatives. In addition to the annual conference, the Agri Benchmark team will have major presentations at international meetings. A series of posters developed in Nebraska highlighting limited irrigation and our production system were included in a large display titled "Innovative Arable Farming in Arid Sites," at the World Soil and Water Show in Hanover, Germany. This was part of Agri Technica, which is touted as the largest agricultural trade show in the world.

Another benefit of the Agri Benchmark collaboration has been the local site visit of a German graduate student, Raphael Albrecht. He was in the United States studying the impacts of high commodity prices on the sugar industry, and over the past six weeks was hosted by the Panhandle Research and Extension Center. The project that he is undertaking includes evaluation of competing crops on the number

of sugarbeet acres in Western Nebraska. The interest in this area is tied to the potential changes in the European Union sugar policy, and the corresponding price relationships that could occur. Policy analysis in the EU will need to determine at what price ratios will competing crops be planted to replace sugarbeets. Some valuable information was gleaned locally from the unusually high prices received by area farmers in the 2007 and 2008 crop years. This visit was arranged as a part of the partnership with the Agri Benchmark project.

The relationships with economists throughout the world is an invaluable resource for my work here in Western Nebraska with agricultural producers, and for our University system as a whole. Opportunities to send an email or make a phone call to ask a question about crop conditions or production systems are critical in this global age. This connection with vTI and the Agri Benchmark project will have an endless stream of both potential contributions and returns from those contributions, for the citizens in our state.

Paul Burgener, (308) 632-1241  
Ag Economics Research Analyst  
Panhandle Research and Extension Center  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
[pburgene@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:pburgene@unlnotes.unl.edu)