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April 2006

## The Leading Object: April 2006

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## Perspectives

*"In 1990, 25 percent of the state's total employment was directly or indirectly the result of agribusiness activity. In 2002, agribusiness supported nearly 366,000 full and part-time jobs, representing 31 percent of the state's total employment. No doubt, agriculture and agribusiness remains firmly entrenched as Nebraska's number one industry."*



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

That quote is from "The Importance of Agriculture and Agribusiness to Nebraska's Economy, 2002," a Nebraska Policy Institute report released during National Agriculture Week in March.

The Nebraska Policy Institute is a nonprofit research and educational foundation that studies public policy issues. Charles Lamphear, retired Director of the UNL Bureau of Business Research, authored the report available at [www.Nebraskapolicy.org](http://www.Nebraskapolicy.org), under "completed research." It's well worth reading.

Here are several other pertinent report quotes:

*"Agribusiness is considered an industrial complex, made up of a group of industries engaged in product-related production, exchange and marketing. **The farm industry is the foundation** of the agribusiness industrial complex, with backward linkages to farm suppliers and forward linkages to agricultural processors. In 2002, agribusiness in Nebraska produced nearly \$25.3 billion in goods and services..."*

The boldface emphasis in that paragraph is mine.

Lamphear made clear that while the direct economic contribution of agribusiness to Nebraska's economy is great, the total economic effect is even greater. For 2002, the agribusiness complex's total economic impact in our state was an estimated \$45.9 billion in gross output.

The report states: *"In 2002, agribusiness directly and indirectly contributed 37 percent to the state's total gross output, 28 percent to value added, 31 percent to total employment, and 33 percent to earned income. That level of economic contribution continued on page 2*

## The Leading

*The Morrill Act of 1862  
established a Land Grant University  
in each state where  
**The Leading Object**  
would be instruction  
in agriculture and related fields.*

# Object

**N**  
IANR

April 2006

## Sleight, Adams Appointments Strengthen Ties Between NCTA, WCREC

**A** restructuring created through two new appointments aims to create a stronger tie between the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) and the nearby West Central Research and Extension Center (WCREC).

Weldon Sleight of Utah State University (USU) has been named Dean of NCTA in Curtis while Don Adams, Interim Director at WCREC in North Platte since 2004, has been appointed director.

Each will have new secondary appointments to help the two institutions work more closely together. Sleight also will be Associate Director of WCREC while Adams will be Associate Dean of NCTA.

"Because WCREC and NCTA are within 42 miles of one another, it's critical that they work together to foster greater collaboration between faculty, staff, students, and programs for the benefit of the citizens of our state," said John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR.

"The formalization of that relationship with these co-appointments will help the university do an even better job of accomplishing our land-grant university mission in Nebraska."

The appointments will enhance the Institute's teaching, research, and extension efforts in the region, Owens added.

Sleight has been Associate Vice President for University Extension and Associate Dean for Continuing Education at USU since 1998. The Professor of Agricultural Systems Technology and Education has been at USU since 1974. He has bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural education from USU and a doctorate in the same

field from Iowa State University.

Sleight already is familiar with UNL, having worked with several faculty members on the development of ADEC, the American Distance Education Consortium, based at UNL.

"I got a first-hand look at a truly magnificent land-grant university," Sleight said.

Sleight's goal with NCTA is to extend its educational outreach throughout rural Nebraska using telecommunications in an effort to advance agriculture and small business. Merging NCTA's educational opportunities with WCREC's outreach and research will benefit the state, he said.

"I'm excited about the link between West Central and NCTA," Sleight said. "This could be a model as it matures and could be extended throughout the state."

Adams received his bachelor's and master's degrees also from USU in animal science and his doctorate in the same field from New Mexico State University. Before coming to UNL, he was a research range nutritionist and Interim Director at the

continued on page 2



**Sleight**



**Adams**

Perspectives continued from page 1

to the state's overall economy far exceeded that of any other industry complex doing business in Nebraska in 2002."

The report ends:

"Since Production Agriculture and its dependent agribusinesses directly and indirectly generate a very large share of Nebraska's overall economic activity, it is not an exaggeration to conclude that Production Agriculture is the dominant primary source for economic livelihood in Nebraska."

Yes!

Those who've heard me speak about production agriculture classes here in the Institute know I consistently say the people who built this program built it right.

We have a tremendous faculty and staff, whose work in the field and in our laboratories, whose teaching in our classrooms, and whose extension education all across Nebraska contribute greatly to making this a powerhouse agricultural state. We've entered into a veterinary medicine agreement with Iowa State University because we think it will further support Nebraska's large animal industry.

I'm extremely proud of – and committed to – IANR's contributions to Nebraska's production agriculture and agribusiness industries. What we do matters in our state.

Those who've heard me speak also know I consistently say we must build on our traditional strengths to attract students with interests in careers more diverse than those once expected from agricultural college grads. The way we've built on IANR's turf grass strength to offer the well-received professional golf management program that has brought us some highly

welcome students is one example.

The more students we educate, the more graduates go out into the world with a better understanding of what agriculture and natural resources mean to the state, national, and global economies.

The more students we educate, the more resources we have to support both our new and traditional programs.

We must do both to best serve Nebraska.

Sometimes I encounter people who misread my interest in new programming as an abandonment of our traditional strong production agriculture heritage.

It is not. It never will be.

Experience teaches me we need each to support and grow the other.

Our IANR community contributes daily to the good of Nebraska. I hope you share my pride in the excellent work done here. And my delight in this report's tremendous affirmation of Nebraska agriculture's importance.



## Debra Pederson receives April OEA

Debra Pederson, a staff secretary with the Department of Plant Pathology, has received the Outstanding Employee Award for Office/Service Staff for April.

Supporters say Pederson "operates with grace under pressure and provides a very positive image for the University of Nebraska." Another says she "is dedicated to her job and readily accepts new assignments and responsibilities to move Extension Plant Pathology and the department forward."

Pederson will receive a cash award of \$250, a certificate, and a lapel pin.



Pederson

## Middle, High School Students Take Part in Olympiad

More than 500 middle and high school students from across Nebraska converged on East Campus this month for the Nebraska Science Olympiad 2006, hosted by the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

The April 1 event was the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Olympiad but the first held on East Campus, said Jim Woodland, Director of Science for the Nebraska Department of Education.

The Olympiad brought 552 students from 28 middle schools and 29 high schools to the campus to compete in various contests relating to science, Woodland said. Each school had a team that competed for points.

Competitions in 18 events included chemistry, physics, remote sensing, tower building, food science, and bottle rocket projects. The winning teams were Mission Middle School in Bellevue and Bellevue West High School.

CASNR provided \$1,000 to each winning team for travel expenses to the national competition in Bloomington, Indiana, on May 20, Woodland said. In addition, CASNR gave \$500 scholarships to all gold medal participants.

Laura Frey, College Relations Director, said many of the students probably had never been on East Campus.

"It exposed the middle schools and high schools to our college, as well as East Campus and UNL," she said.

## Sleight, Adams Appointments Strengthen Ties Between NCTA, WCREC (continued from page 1)

USDA Agricultural Research Service at the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory in Miles City, Montana.

Adams said he appreciates the opportunity he has had to serve UNL and WCREC for the past 16 years and looks forward to his new positions.

"I look forward to serving as District Director for the West Central District and as the Associate Dean of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture," he said. "I hope to help continue the tradition of quality research and education at IANR."

### Need to meet with the

**Vice President/Vice Chancellor?**  
Drop-ins each Friday from 3-5 p.m.\*

### John C. Owens

NU Vice President for  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR

202 Ag Hall • (402) 472-2871

\*Occasionally Dr. Owens will be called away on University business.

Editor - Lori McGinnis • Layout - Anne Moore

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The Leading Object is published monthly for all IANR staff members by Communications & Information Technology. Questions or story ideas may be directed to the editor at 106 ACB, 0918; via e-mail (lmcginnis2@unl.edu) or via fax (402-472-0025).



## Heuermann the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement Honoree

University of Nebraska–Lincoln alumnus B. Keith Heuermann has had a long successful career in corn breeding. His retirement brought even more success.

Heuermann is the developer of BKH Popcorn, which is marketed worldwide and is a hot product on the QVC Home Shopping Network. Heuermann travels to West Chester, Pennsylvania, about once every three weeks to sell the popcorn.

He sells on average 2,000 to 3,000 cases of his popcorn each appearance. Earlier this month, however, he sold more than 5,000 cases.

Also this month, Heuermann was selected as the 2006 Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement honoree. Formed in 1916, the Hall is dedicated to preserving and improving Nebraska agriculture.

"It's quite an honor," he said. "I hope I'm worthy."

Heuermann was raised on his family's farm near Phillips, enrolling in UNL's College of Agriculture in 1942. He worked on an Agronomy Department corn breeding project, which got him interested in hybrid corn production. While a student, he convinced his father to send him \$12 for foundation seed to plant two acres of hybrid seed corn.

He attended UNL one year and then had to leave because he was needed on the family farm. He knew, however, that someday he would return. That day came nine years later when he returned to his studies in agronomy while operating a seed production business. He focused on classes he thought would help his busi-

ness. He graduated in 1956 with a general agriculture degree.

"I would hate to think what I would be doing if I hadn't gone to the university," he said. His education, he said, "allowed us to specialize and add value to agriculture."

Heuermann was one of the first hybrid corn breeders to breed and sell a single corn cross hybrid, creating Prairie Valley Hybrids. The company was sold in 1979 to the Stauffer Chemical Company, which now is owned by Syngenta.

Though he had a no-compete clause while working with Stauffer, popcorn was not considered competition to seed corn. Stauffer gave Heuermann permission in 1982 to experiment producing popcorn part time.

"I did it because I was wondering what I was going to do when I turned 65," he said.

Heuermann retired in 1990 and started working in the popcorn business full time. In 1997 QVC purchased 1,800 cases of his popcorn and invited him to appear on the shopping network. Promoting the popcorn as one with fewer hulls, the cases sold out in less than four minutes. Later that year QVC named the popcorn its best new product from Nebraska.

BKH has expanded steadily, and its products are now marketed worldwide in stores, the Internet, and QVC.



Heuermann

## Nine Elected to Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement

The Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement has elected nine new members. They are:

Don Adams, newly-appointed Director of the West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte and Associate Dean of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis.

Linda Boeckner, Nutrition Specialist and Family and Consumer Science Program Coordinator at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff.

Victor Bohuslavsky, Executive Director of the Nebraska Soybean Board.

Roy Dinsdale of Palmer, Chairman of Pinnacle Bankcorp Inc.

Daniel Duncan, Director of the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead.

Mary Pat Finn-Hoag, Farm Editor of the Norfolk Daily News.

Derrel Martin, Biological Systems Engineering Professor of Water and Irrigation Management.

Milton Rogers, a Deuel County wheat and small grain agriculturalist who owns Milton Rogers Dryland Farms.

Roy Smith of Plattsmouth, the grain market commentator for UNL Extension "Market Journal."

The Hall of Agricultural Achievement has nearly 200 members dedicated to preserving and improving Nebraska agriculture.

## Gary Brewer named Head of Department of Entomology

Gary J. Brewer has been named Head of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Department of Entomology.

Brewer currently chairs North Dakota State University's Entomology Department and previously was Coordinator of NDSU's Plant Protection Program. He received his bachelor's degree in zoology in 1974 and his master's degree in entomology in 1978, both from UNL. His 1984 doctorate in entomology was from Kansas State University.

At NDSU, Brewer has researched sunflower insect pest management with major emphasis on the interaction of pollinators and pests and plant resistance to insects.

"Dr. Brewer brings a unique and valuable set of strengths and experiences to our department," said Fred Baxendale, Interim Head of Entomology.

John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR, said Brewer will provide leadership for one of UNL's most successful and entrepreneurial academic departments.



Brewer

## BizFind Leads Entrepreneurs to Business Opportunities

Entrepreneurs now have a one-stop-shop to find new business opportunities.

The Nebraska Rural Initiative has joined with the Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC) at the University of Nebraska at Kearney to launch BizFind. BizFind is a powerful Internet tool for the attraction, development, retention, and transition of small business, said Odee Ingersoll of the NBDC.

Ingersoll, who designed the software to start the Web site, said it will assist people looking to buy, expand, or start a business as well as list franchise opportunities. The site is at [www.bizfind.org](http://www.bizfind.org).

Every community in Nebraska is represented on the site with basic demographic data. Communities can go further by

paying a fee to become partners with BizFind, Ingersoll said. That allows communities to add details, including searchable incentives and lists of desired businesses in an effort to bring more businesses to those areas.

BizFind also will partner with lenders and real estate brokers to attract entrepreneurs toward business opportunities, he said.

"BizFind links people to people," Ingersoll said. "It links communities and entrepreneurs together."

Letters and brochures about the new service have been sent to Realtors, brokers, lenders, and communities across Nebraska. Ingersoll hopes revenue generated through membership fees will pay for advertising to promote the site.

## PorkBridge Leads to Education Award for Brumm, Levis

Mike Brumm, Swine Specialist at the Haskell Ag Lab, and Don Levis, Extension Educator based at the Agricultural Research and Development Center, have received a National Pork Board Swine Education Award.

Brumm and Levis were co-recipients of the innovation award for helping develop an educational program for pork producers called PorkBridge. The program delivers educational opportunities directly to the farm on a regular basis.

The award was presented during the annual meeting of the Midwestern Section of the American Society of Animal Science in March in Des Moines, Iowa.

## 'Backyard Farmer' Returns to NET with New Host

"Backyard Farmer" returned to television this month with a new host.

Kim Todd, UNL Extension Landscape Horticultural Specialist, hosts the lawn and garden show, which airs Thursday evenings on NET1. It is the 53<sup>rd</sup> season of the show, featuring a panel of experts who provide lawn and garden advice and answer questions.

The show also can be seen on NET2 Friday nights and NET 3 on Wednesday nights. A companion program, "Backyard Farmer Extra," which covers emailed questions, airs on Saturday morning on NET1, Wednesday afternoons on NET2 and Monday nights on NET3.

The series is videostreamed live and also is available as a podcast on the "Backyard Farmer" Web site, [byf.unl.edu](http://byf.unl.edu).

## Graduate Students Place First, Second at Conference

Two UNL animal science graduate students placed first and second in a competition at the Plains Nutrition Conference this month in San Antonio, Texas.

Crystal Buckner, a master's student from Rolla, Missouri, won first prize and \$1,000 in a poster presentation competition. Matt Greenquist, a Ph.D. student from Holdrege, won second prize and \$750.

Thirty-seven posters depicting research projects in feedlot nutrition were entered in the competition, said Galen Erickson, Assistant Professor in Animal Science. Five other UNL animal science graduate students presented their work as well.

Erickson gave two presentations at the conference, which is one of the pre-eminent annual meetings on feedlot nutrition.

## Spring Forum Addresses Future of Institute in 2030

The Institute in 2030 was the topic of IANR's Spring Forum held in the East Campus Union.

Five panelists discussed the future of IANR and encouraged attendees to think about how the Institute, its clientele, and its students will look in 2030. Technological advances, including an increase in distance learning opportunities, were among the issues discussed at the April 3 event.

The panelists included Jerry Deichert, Director of the UNO Center for Public Affairs Research; Will Wittler of Otoe County Bank and Trust; Ronald Case, Professor Emeritus of the School of Natural Resources; Helen Raikes, Family and Consumer Sciences Professor; and Aubrey Vifquain, a Food Science and Technology student.

## LB605 Passage Will Bring East Campus Renovations

East Campus will undergo some renovations at Keim Hall and the Animal Science Complex.

The Nebraska Legislature this session passed LB605, a bill providing funds to renovate those buildings and nine others throughout the University of Nebraska system. Governor Dave Heineman signed the bill into law.

The new law provides \$20 million for the renovation of Animal Science and \$14 million for Keim. Renovations will include heating, ventilation, air conditioning, electrical, and plumbing work.

## Cyril Bish Dies at Age 84

Cyril Bish, a retired county extension agent who specialized as a nut grower, died in March at age 84.

Bish was an extension agent for 35 years in Lancaster, Hamilton, and Adams counties. He retired in the late 1970s. He also was retired as Professor Emeritus of Agronomy at UNL, where a professorship in horticulture was established in his honor.

He had served as President of the Nebraska Nutgrowers Association and the national Northern Nutgrowers Association. He helped create hybrid nut trees and black walnuts with large kernels. The East Campus nut-tree orchard was named after him.