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Perspectives

First off, happy new year.

I hope this is a healthy, productive, satisfying year for each individual member of the IANR community, as well as for IANR as a whole.

Our culture traditionally views the beginning of each new year as a time for reflection on the year past, and hope for the future. Here at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where a new year coincides with the beginning of a new semester, we are happily attuned to the promise each January brings.

When I reflect on 2005, I see much for which IANR can be proud. I hope you have the same sense of satisfaction in reviewing your individual contributions to the year. Here in the Institute we fulfilled our land-grant mission of taking the resources of the university to Nebraska. Our research, teaching, and extension education programs contributed both to our state's economy, and the quality of life of the citizens of Nebraska.

We in IANR have the proud privilege – and the solemn responsibility – of being Nebraska's food, water, and sustainable environment researchers and educators. Communities, youth, and families are part of our research and educational focus. We deal with the very basics of life – the basics not one Nebraskan can live without.

What could be more important, more exciting, more fulfilling than that?

I had the opportunity to share some of IANR's important, exciting, fulfilling work at the Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, Inc. winter meeting this month. This is an opportunity I look forward to each year.

This year ABN members specifically asked for time to discuss student recruitment for our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Like us, they realize the importance of well-



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

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*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

January 2006

Farmers See USDA Grant as a Way to Improve Organic Farming in Nebraska

Jim Bender of Weeping Water began an organic farming project 30 years ago, and he applauds new University of Nebraska-Lincoln research on the subject.

"Organic farming is unfolding agronomically in a very strong way," Bender said, adding, "whatever we do as organic farmers it can be done better."

IANR researchers hope that a new grant from USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service will do just that in Nebraska.

The four-year, \$750,000 grant will establish 20- to 40-acre certified organic research plots at university farms near Concord, Mead, Clay Center, and Sidney, said Charles Shapiro, soil scientist at the Northeast Research and Extension Center.

Organic farming prohibits the use of manufactured pesticides on crops. Meat animals can be raised organically as well by giving them only feed raised from organic crops.

Interest in organic farming has increased through the years and "it's accelerated in the last few years," Shapiro said.

Organic farming has increased in part due to lower commodity prices for conventional crops and the trend toward larger farms. Organic farmers don't need as much land because they substitute labor and management for chemicals, which is compensated for by increases in the value of their crops, Shapiro said.

The UNL researchers expect the information they gain from working on the



Lori McGinnis

Organic sections in grocery stores are growing in popularity.

plots will help existing and future organic farmers.

One goal of the work is to help organic farmers with weed control, which is a major problem, he said. They also want to help the farmers become more efficient.

"We'll have extension education focused on providing educational programs for farmers and people who want to get into it," Shapiro said.

Organic farmer Mark Ramaeker, who owns 315 acres about 18 miles west of Columbus, said more organic farmers are needed because the demand is so high.

"There's no way we can grow the amount of corn that we are requested to grow," he said.

A greater collaboration between farmers and university researchers will advance organic farming in Nebraska, said Stephanie Newman, Executive Director of Organic Crop Improvement Association Research and Education Inc., headquartered in Lincoln.

- Lori McGinnis

educated members of Nebraska's largest industry. Their support for our work, and their interest in helping us tell agriculture's story, inform potential CASNR students of the many varied opportunities available to them here, and generate a broader understanding of all we have to offer, is very important to us and to our future.

Every one of us in the Institute knows our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources is a wonderful place for students. The quality of the education we offer springboards our graduates to a wide variety of careers. The caring and commitment our faculty and staff show CASNR students is nothing short of remarkable.

During 2005, 257 students graduated from CASNR. We think of that as a full and lasting measure of our impact on the future.

Our high quality faculty provide a high quality educational experience. Their dedication to sharing knowledge in the classroom and laboratory, to fostering learning, to mentoring, and to sending into the world educated, well-reasoning people committed to lifelong learning and who understand the importance of contributing to their communities, whether those communities are local or worldwide, matters.

We see our graduates off with a huge sense of satisfaction, reveling in their intelligence, their enthusiasm, and their commitment to doing their part to contribute to society. We see them off knowing they have experienced the best Nebraska has to offer in the land-grant university tradition.

As we look back on the past year we celebrate that in 2005, CASNR saw a 3.5 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment. That's 42 more students than last year. This comes after eight years of declining enrollment, and, if we work hard at it, we fully expect to see an increase again next fall. We welcome ABN's interest in how they might best help us make that happen. Increasing the number of students on our campus, both in CASNR and the College of Education and Human Sciences, and, indeed, in all of UNL remains a real priority for us all.

We look to this new year with high hopes. Thank you for the work each of you will do to translate our hopes into reality.



Two receive Dinsdale Faculty Award

Greg Bashford and Galen Erickson have received 2005 IANR Dinsdale Family Faculty Awards.

The award is given for outstanding teaching, research, and outreach in IANR, specifically focused on untenured faculty who have demonstrated a commitment to academic excellence. Bashford is Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering and Erickson is Assistant Professor in the Department of Animal Science.

They will each receive cash awards of \$2,000, a certificate, and recognition at an awards luncheon on April 17.



Bashford



Erickson

Three IANR Employees Receive OEA Awards

Three IANR employees have received recent Outstanding Employee Awards.

Wayne Peshek, Agricultural Research Technician at the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center in Clay Center, received the OEA for office/service staff for December. One of his supporters said,

"His knowledge of his work is excellent, whether working with a researcher or taking care of his animals." Another said, "He is always willing to go the extra mile and to put forth extra effort to ensure a research project is completed thoroughly and accurately in its needed detail."

Marnita Cihal, Clerical Assistant at the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead, received the OEA for office/service staff for January. One supporter calls her "the champion

of multitasking" who is always willing to take on a new project. Another says she "always keeps what is best for the university, our programs, and our clientele in mind."

Lisa Silberman, Research Technologist with the Department of Entomology, received the OEA for managerial/professional staff for January/February. One supporter said "she is an excellent

citizen of the department and the university, participating in a variety of outreach activities." Another said her eagerness to maintain her technical competency has improved departmental efficiency.



Peshek



Cihal



Silberman

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.

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UNL Experience Helps Nielsen Impact Her Students

One of the more important things Suzanne Nielsen learned while at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is that faculty can have a tremendous impact on the lives of their students.

Now that she is a faculty member herself at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, she hopes she has the same impact on her students as her professors had on her.

Nielsen, a Department Head and Professor of Food Science at Purdue, did not plan to enter the field of food science until her second semester at UNL.

The Shelton native entered UNL as a home economics major in the 1970s. Then-Food Science Professor Roy Arnold convinced her otherwise when she took his course in food science.

"I would go back and tell my friends and my roommate all the interesting things I was learning in food science," she said. "They said 'you should major in that,' so I did."

She decided in her second semester she wanted to teach food science. She credits that decision to Arnold.

"Dr. Arnold was a very good teacher. I was going to be another Roy Arnold," she said.

Nielsen graduated in 1976 with a bachelor's degree in food science and technology. After graduation she participated in an international 4-H youth exchange program and lived for six months in Poland, where she worked on private and state farms.

"We learned lots about agriculture in a communist country," she said.

Upon returning, she worked at UNL in the food science lab of her undergraduate adviser, Lowell Satterlee. After marrying her husband, Bob Nielsen, in 1977, they moved to Minnesota and she obtained master's and doctoral degrees in food science from the University of Minnesota.

They then moved to West Lafayette where he took an agronomy position and she participated in post-doctoral research

in biochemistry. In 1983 she took a faculty position in food science and last year she became Department Head.

"Teaching and interacting with students is my favorite part," she said.

In 1994, Nielsen edited a textbook, "Food Analysis," that is used by most food science departments in the United States, including UNL.

She credits her UNL classes and teachers for helping her reach her goals.

"I think that many times faculty don't realize what an influence they have on the future careers and success of students by their offering of opportunities, suggestions for direction, and words of encouragement."



Nielsen

Omtvedt Innovation Award Given to Three IANR Faculty Members

An IANR nutrition specialist, plant geneticist and drought expert were honored in December as recipients of the Omtvedt Innovation Award.

NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor John Owens recognized Linda Boeckner, Don Lee, and Don Wilhite.

Boeckner was cited for leading health and wellness education for University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension for 18 years.

"Dr. Boeckner's work is dedicated to educating people to live healthier lives through diet, weight management, and nutrition and fitness," Owens said.

Among Boeckner's more recent programs cited by Owens was ABC's for Good Health. The statewide program developed in 2000 focuses on increasing physical activity and weight management; eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; and moderation in sugar, salt, and fat intake.

Boeckner began studying aging issues in Nebraska in 2002-2003. She works with other agencies and extension teams to coordinate the nutritional needs of Nebraskans 55 and older. She is part of an NU Medical Center team studying how rural Nebraska women ages 50-69 can

improve their eating and physical activity.

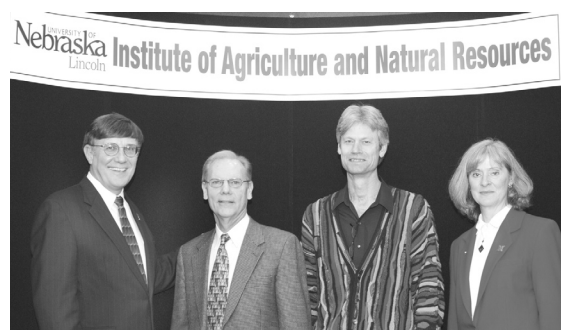
Lee was honored for his innovation in teaching genetics at UNL for 17 years and advising for 15 years.

"Dr. Lee believes stories involving genetics are everywhere," Owens said. "He aims to help those stories come to life for his students of introductory genetics, crop and weed genetics, and crop genetic engineering."

A program he helped develop called Advising Plus allows new students to gather in the first few weeks of the fall semester and learn more about research and extension education opportunities available to them in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture.

Lee's efforts helped develop the Library of Crop Technology Web site, which is used worldwide to help people learn more about biotechnology.

Wilhite was cited for his work as Director of the National Drought Mitigation Center and the International Drought Information Center, both at UNL. Through his work he has gained expertise in drought planning,



John Owens, far left, with Omtvedt Innovation Award winners, from left, Don Wilhite, Don Lee and Linda Boeckner.

mitigation and policy, and use of climate information in decision making.

"He has helped governments in the United States and around the world better understand drought as the world's costliest natural disaster, and the importance of improved monitoring and preparedness to help reduce the damage it causes," Owens said.

Wilhite's center recently partnered with the Department of Computer Science and Engineering and the USDA's Risk Management Agency on a \$6.4 million effort to enhance drought mitigation tools.

Flores Named Head of Food Science

Rolando Flores will become Head of the Department of Food Science and Technology and Director of the Food Processing Center effective March 1.

Since 2003, Flores has worked for the Crop Conversion Science & Engineering Research Unit at the Eastern Regional Research Center of the USDA-ARS in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania.

Flores said he is looking forward to his new opportunity at UNL.

"The Food Science and Technology Department is known for its excellence in teaching, research, and extension and its team of dedicated educators and scientists," Flores said. "The Food Processing Center is a vital outreach component for the University and an engine for economic development for the state of Nebraska."

Flores has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the

Universidad de Costa Rica, a master's degree in agricultural engineering from Iowa State University and a doctorate in grain science and industry from Kansas State University.

"Dr. Flores will bring to UNL some impressive leadership qualities, a great breadth of experience, and a strong interest in undergraduate education, economic development, research, and graduate studies, and Extension education programs," said John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor.



Flores

National Societies Honor IANR Faculty

Several IANR faculty members have been honored by various national societies. They include:

From the American Society of Agronomy, Darrell Nelson, recently retired Dean and Director of the Agricultural Research Division, received the Agronomic Service Award. Roch Gaussoin, Drew Lyon, and Charles Shapiro, all Agronomy and Horticulture Professors, were named fellow. Cropping System Specialist Bob Klein was named to the Board of Directors Extension Education Division. Gaussoin was named chair-elect of the Crop Science Society of America's Turfgrass Science Division.

Richard Ferguson, Professor of Agronomy and Horticulture, was named chair-elect of the Soil Science of America's Nutrient Management and Soil and Plant Analysis Division.

Receiving Educational Aids Competition Blue Ribbons from the American Society of Agricultural Engineers were: Associate Professors of Biological Systems Engineering Bill Kranz, Dean Yonts, Tom Franti, and Richard Koelsch; BSE Professor Emeritus Darrell Watts; Extension Educator Jill Heemstra; and BSE doctoral student Amanda Fox.

Ken Cassman and Charles Francis, both Agronomy and Horticulture Professors, have been named fellows in the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Williams Appointed Director of Southeast Research and Extension District

Susan N. Williams has been appointed Director of the Southeast Research and Extension District. The Southeast District includes the 28 counties in southeast Nebraska from Omaha to Grand Island and is headquartered in Lincoln on UNL's East Campus.

"Director Williams brings to the university and the citizens of Southeast Nebraska a valuable set of professional skills including resource management, leadership, and the successful delivery of educational programs to a diverse set of Extension clientele," said John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor of IANR, in announcing her appointment.

Williams has 15 years of experience as an administrator both in public schools

and as Interim Director of the Southeast District. She also worked for 18 years as an Extension Educator and received the University of Nebraska Distinguished Educational Service Award in 2000.

"The faculty and staff are committed to bringing the resources of the University and its research-based information to the communities to improve the lives of Nebraskans," Williams said.



Williams

Master Conservationist Program Announced

Youth and adults in urban and rural areas who have excelled in soil and water conservation can be recognized through the 2006 Master Conservationist program sponsored by IANR and the Omaha World-Herald.

The program includes categories for youth groups and individuals, as well as production agriculture, residences, communities, and businesses, according to Dick Fleming, Coordinator for IANR.

Details on nominations are in the Master Conservationist brochure, which is available from IANR departments, centers, and local extension offices or by via e-mail at rfleming1@unl.edu or phone (402) 472-8742. The brochure also can be viewed at <http://ianrpubs.unl.edu/masterconserv.pdf>. Anyone may submit a nomination by the April 1 deadline.

Hutkins Awarded New Professorship

A newly established professorship named after a professor acclaimed for research in healthy food bacteria has been awarded to Robert Hutkins, Professor of Food Science and Technology.

The Khem M. Shahani Professorship in Food Science and Technology was established with lead gifts of \$200,000 from Shahani's wife, Leona Shahani of Walnut Creek, California, and \$25,000 from the American Dairy Association of Nebraska to the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Shahani served as UNL Professor of Food Science and Technology until his death in 2001.