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The Leading Object: March 2009

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NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

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Perspectives

Hearty applause for everyone whose hard work allows us to say that for spring semester 2009, our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources leads the way in percentage of increased student enrollments.



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

In fall 2008 we were delighted to say CASNR undergraduate enrollment led all of UNL with a 12.9 percent increase.

This spring we are doubly delighted to say CASNR enrollments for spring semester 2009 are up 14.9 percent over spring semester 2008.

We have 1,591 undergraduates studying in CASNR this semester, and 518 graduate students.

CASNR's impact on total UNL enrollment based on sixth-day census [graduate students (518), professional students (48), and undergraduate enrollment by College of Program which includes Biochemistry students in the College of Arts and Sciences (174), and Biological Systems Engineering and Agricultural Engineering students in the College of Engineering (172)] is up 9.7 percent from 2,261 to 2,503. This means CASNR accounted for 49 percent of the total growth at UNL (undergraduate, graduate and professional students, 242/498).

Hearty applause, also, for everyone whose hard work allows us to say that the *second* highest percentage student enrollment increase at UNL for spring semester 2009 is held by the College of Education and Human Sciences, with an 8 percent increase in student numbers this semester when compared to spring semester 2008.

CEHS has 2,700 undergraduates this semester, and 1,100 graduate students.

In a *Leading Object* column before the holiday shutdown, I noted that we have many reasons to celebrate across our statewide campus. In these times of recession and difficult budget concerns, we must not lose sight of that fact.

When you think of the value what we do in IANR brings to our state, the importance cannot be overestimated.

continued on page 2

The Leading Object

*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.*



March 2009

Agreement expected to expand food industry in Nebraska, India

An agreement between the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology (IICPT), a major food institute in India, should lead to expanded opportunities in the food processing industry in Nebraska as well as India, according to Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources representatives.

The agreement was reached in February when UNL officials visited India. IANR faculty on the trip included Rolando A. Flores, head of the Department of Food Science and Technology and director of The Food Processing Center (FPC); Harshavardhan Thippareddi, associate professor of food science and technology; and Jeyamkondan Subbiah, assistant professor in food science and technology and biological systems engineering.

The memorandum of agreement was signed by UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman and representatives of IICPT, a pioneering research and development institute under the Indian Ministry of Food Processing Industries.

"It was created in the early 1990s to help reduce post-harvest crop losses," Subbiah said.

The IICPT wants to offer degree programs in science and technology and in food processing. The food science department and the FPC can serve as models for their development and engage in joint teaching programs, Flores said. IICPT scientists are to spend up to six months in Nebraska to learn more about food



Photo by Suresh Kumar

Alagu Sundaram, left, director of IICPT, and IANR's Rolando Flores evaluate the construction of a 200,000 square foot research and extension facility for IICPT to provide support for the food processing industry in India.

processing technology.

"The relevance is huge," Flores said of the agreement, which promises to lead to greater worldwide presence of the department and FPC. "We are presented with the unique opportunity to assist and participate in the development and modernization of the food processing industry in India."

Under the agreement, UNL will provide workshops and training to food industry representatives in India, which has a rapidly growing food processing industry, Flores said. It also will provide opportunities for faculty and students to go to India and in turn bring university faculty and students in India to Nebraska, he said.

In addition, the agreement is expected to increase marketing opportunities for Nebraska agricultural exports.

"We put a foot in the door at the right time in India," Flores said.

A senior scientist from IICPT, Kunjithapatham Singaravadevel, will be a

continued on page 2

Perspectives *(continued from page 1)*

We are about the very basics of life, those things people cannot live without. Food. Water. People. A livable, sustainable environment.

When you think that the world's population, now at about 6.7 billion, is expected to reach nearly 9 billion by the year 2042 if growth continues on its current projectory, the ability to feed this growing population comes into sharp focus.

When you think that about 1.5 billion hectares of land currently are in production, but decreases of 0.3 percent annually have been seen over the past decade, the focus grows sharper still.

We're told our world now has nearly 1 billion undernourished and malnourished people.

Oh yes. What we do matters.

Already our researchers, along with

researchers at other land-grant universities and colleagues around the world, work to address current and future needs. Our research helps move the body of knowledge forward. Here in Nebraska, our extension education program carries that new knowledge all across the state to those who can put it to immediate use.

And within IANR through CASNR, we help educate the professionals and thoughtful citizens who will grapple with these issues in the future.

Not all will be scientists. They will work across a wide variety of fields. Believing past is prologue, I know they will contribute considerably to their work and communities.

No matter what their careers, it is my firm belief that what our students learn in our student-centered learning

environment, where diverse basic and applied natural, life, earth, and social sciences are integrated into the context of a global society and environmental stewardship, will serve them well.

They will be citizens with knowledge and critical thinking abilities our world needs to make the best decisions possible for a sustainable and successful future.

Teaching, research and extension education — that's how we're at work for Nebraska.



Agreement expected to expand food industry in Nebraska, India *(continued from page 1)*

visiting scientist at UNL for six months, working on high hydrostatic pressure processing, a state-of-the-art novel food processing technology available in the department and FPC.

IICPT will sponsor a workshop called Enhancing India's Global Competitiveness in Food Trade — New Avenues in Food Processing and Safety Management, in New Delhi, India May 24-26. Flores, Thippareddi, and Subbiah will be the main speakers at the workshop, which also will feature speakers from government regulatory agencies and the food industry.

Another scientist from IICPT, Suresh Kumar, will come to UNL for three

months in September, Subbiah said.

During the India trip, Thippareddi worked with Tamil Nadu University of Veterinary and Animal Science (TANUVAS) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The vice chancellor from TANUVAS, Palanimuthu Thangaraju, visited UNL last year and signed an agreement to facilitate faculty and student exchanges and to share expertise in food safety. Some TANUVAS faculty will arrive in April to conduct research for six months.

The February visit allowed Thippareddi to meet with the faculty in TANUVAS to discuss expanding research opportunities, he said. One topic of conversation included receiving help from India to develop

new, ethnic dairy products in Nebraska, as India has a strong dairy industry.

Another visit was to Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University (SVVU) in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. SVVU has a strong dairy science program, and members of the SVVU board of directors were to be at UNL on March 25 to sign an agreement for joint research with UNL, Thippareddi said.

With its 1.1 billion population and growing numbers in the middle class, more people in India are looking for prepared foods, and UNL hopes it can help the country's food industry meet the growing demand, Thippareddi said.

— Lori McGinnis

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.

Holling Family Awards presented to faculty

Four senior faculty members, two junior faculty members and two teaching assistants received Holling Family Awards for teaching excellence in agriculture and natural resources.

Senior faculty teaching excellence awards were given to John Foster, Department of Entomology; Paul Hay and Connie Reimers-Hild, Southeast Research

and Extension Center; and Phillip Miller, Department of Animal Science. Each received a \$5,000 stipend.

Junior faculty teaching excellence awards were given to Cheryl Bailey, Department of Biochemistry; and Cory Reng, Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis. Each received a \$3,000 stipend.

Teaching assistant awards were given to Joana Story, Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications; and Jeremy Wagnitz, Department of Entomology. Each received a \$1,000 stipend.

The awards are given annually as a result of a gift from the Holling family to honor their pioneer parents. They were presented March 11 in the Nebraska East Union.

Editorial - Cheryl Alberts and Lori McGinnis • Layout - Anne Moore

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103 ACB, 0918; via e-mail (lmcginnis2@unl.edu) or via fax (402-472-0025).

Love of animals leads to career in veterinary medicine

Growing up on a Nebraska ranch outside Rushville, Kent Forney's love of animals persuaded him to become a veterinarian.

Forney, a 1979 general agriculture graduate, is the head veterinarian at the Nebraska Animal Medical Center in south-east Lincoln, which he said is one of Lincoln's largest and most progressive veterinary hospitals.

Forney decided to attend the University of Nebraska–Lincoln following two older brothers, one who studied medicine and another who studied law.

"I always enjoyed working with animals," Forney said. "I thought I would get my DVM (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) and return home to run the ranch."

After entering vet school at Iowa State University, Forney changed his mind about being a large animal veterinarian. His classes and faculty advisers persuaded him to go into small animal medicine.

Forney received his DVM in 1984 and spent 18 months in Las Vegas working for a large companion animal hospital. Wanting to return to Nebraska, he moved to Alliance and worked in a mixed animal practice.

Forney preferred companion animal medicine and wanted to open his own clinic. After much research, he and his wife chose Lincoln because "at the time there weren't as many vets in Lincoln" and there was opportunity for growth.

"Veterinary medicine is much the same whether you're working with small or large animals," he said.

The Forney Animal Center opened in 1987. Other than hiring one veterinary technician, Forney and his wife, Shelley, were the staff. He went to the clinic at 6 a.m. every day to walk the dogs and clean cages, then sat at the front desk making appointments until 9 a.m. when his wife arrived.

At 6 p.m., Forney would again walk the dogs before going

home. Two years later he hired another veterinarian, which allowed him to take a few weekends off. Through the years he has added veterinarians, each with a special area of interest in veterinary medicine. The clinic, which was renamed Nebraska Animal Medical Center, now has five veterinarians on staff.

One of his proudest achievements was working with other Lincoln veterinarians to help establish an emergency veterinary clinic, which is open nights and weekends and is well-used, he said.

The contacts Forney made at UNL were beneficial as he opened his practice, he said.

"When I opened in Lincoln I didn't know very many people here. The ones who supported me were my contacts from the university," he said. "My time at the university served me well."

Forney has given back to UNL and was one of the supporters in the concept of the Professional Program in Veterinary Medicine offered by Iowa State University and UNL.

Forney and his brothers continue to manage the family ranch and raise cattle, with conservation an important aspect of the Forney Ranch, he said.

Forney is in his second year of a five-year term on the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission board of directors. Rex Amack, commission director, said Forney brings important experience in agriculture and animal health to the board, particularly as the board formulates policies on wildlife diseases.

"He's really a strong supporter of Nebraska and its natural resource base," Amack said.

– Lori McGinnis



Kent Forney

CASNR Week planned April 17-25

"Future Defined in 2009" is the theme for the annual celebration of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources April 17-25.

Students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members are invited to participate in CASNR Week, said Kalli Estes, an agribusiness junior from Anselmo and the chair of publicity for the CASNR Week Program Council.

"CASNR Week is a fun week full of events, brought to you by the students, faculty, and staff for the students, faculty, and staff of CASNR to celebrate yet another great, successful year at the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources," Estes said.

CASNR Week begins April 17 with the UNL Rodeo at the Lancaster Event Center. A dance will follow with Jim Rice and the Final Round.

A banquet for all CASNR faculty, staff, and students is scheduled April 19. Several other events are scheduled during the week. With the exception of the rodeo, all are free.

"This is our week to celebrate the successes of students, faculty, and staff," said Susan Voss, student development and events director at CASNR.

Meat judging team places high in competitions

The Junior Meat Judging Team recently completed its season with some top finishes in three competitions.

The team, which consists of 10 College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources sophomores, finished sixth overall in the National Western Meat Judging Contest Jan. 18 in Greeley, Colo., and fourth overall in the Southwestern Meat Judging Contest Feb. 7 in Fort Worth, Texas.

Two teams were entered in the last contest of the season in March in Houston, where they placed seventh and tenth.

Each team member has to grade the quality and yield of 15 beef carcasses, and evaluate and place beef carcasses, beef cuts, pork carcasses, pork cuts, and lamb carcasses. They then have to write reasons in support of their decisions on five different classes, said Coach Ace VanDeWalle. Their participation teaches them decision-making, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills along with teamwork, he said.

Twelve to 15 universities typically are represented at the contests.

UNL selected to participate in USDA pilot biotech project

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln has been selected as the only university to participate in a USDA pilot project to develop quality management standards for field releases of regulated genetically-engineered crops.

UNL was selected in part because it does more field releases of genetically-engineered organisms than any other institution, said Dan Duncan, assistant dean of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources' Agricultural Research Division.

The purpose of the project is to identify ways to fine-tune regulations for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) regulations on the

field release and movement of regulated genetically-engineered crops.

IANR has researched field release trials of genetically-enhanced material for several years, Duncan said. These trials, he added, are important to the university's biotechnology pipeline that links research, insertion of traits, and the field testing of those traits.

"Ultimately, our goal is to develop new products that when commercialized will benefit Nebraska's agriculture industry," Duncan said.

Others in the project are Bayer CropScience, BASF Plant Science, J.R. Simplot Plant Science, and Pioneer Hi-Bred International.

The collaboration will: work to identify vulnerabilities in their processes for working with genetically-engineered organisms; develop or revise procedures addressing vulnerabilities; train personnel on standard operating procedures; and undergo a third-party audit to determine effectiveness of their quality management system.

Duncan is working on the project with Tom Clemente, a faculty member in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture and head of UNL's Plant Transformation Core Research Facility, and Pat Tenopir, research coordinator for field releases at UNL's Center for Biotechnology.

Dewey sees storm chasing as both educational and a service

When severe weather threatens, Ken Dewey finds some students and hits the road.

Dewey, professor of applied climatology in the School of Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, also is a storm chaser. As a storm chaser, he drives through the state and even in other areas of the country to track the paths of storms.

His reasons are twofold. First, storm chasing teaches students how to be better weather observers and forecasters. Second, the work is a service to emergency management personnel unable to be out chasing the storms on their own.

"We are the extra sets of eyes when we watch the weather," Dewey said.

Dewey is fascinated by the weather — good weather and bad. In fact, when he attends a Nebraska football game his focus isn't on the sport.

"I'm watching the sky when everyone else is watching the field," he said.

Dewey's computer is his lifeline to track storms so he knows where he needs to travel during the storm season. When a storm or tornado is forecast, Dewey invites several graduate students to follow the storm with him. They have gone as far north as North Dakota and as far south as Texas. He and the students have driven to Colorado to the west and Iowa and Missouri to the east.

"We're not thrill seekers. This is serious business for us," Dewey said.

In addition to being a learning tool for students, storm chasing also provides important safety information to the public, such as reporting information about storm paths to emergency management personnel. Since emergency responders can't be out watching the weather themselves, they rely on storm chasers to help alert the public.

After storm chasing is over, Dewey does what he can to help the public recover from storm damages. For example, after a tornado devastated the small Lancaster County community of Hallam on May 22, 2004, Dewey spent several days there helping residents clean up.

His photographs from Hallam recently were used on a tornado special that aired on The Weather Channel. Last year when tornadoes struck central Nebraska, ABC News called Dewey to provide

a report for "Good Morning America."

Each year Dewey plans a free public weather educational day that draws up to 3,000 people. This year's Central Plains Severe Weather Symposium is scheduled for April 4 at Hardin Hall on East Campus.

Dewey also travels the world to learn about the effects of global warming. Last summer Dewey and his wife drove 10,000 miles round trip to Canada and Alaska beyond the Arctic Circle. The purpose of the six-week trip was to search for global warming impacts in the far north communities.

In the small town of Inuvik in the Northwest Territories of northern Canada, Dewey learned that roads and buildings are collapsing due to thawing ground. Caribou, the main meat source, have left. Vegetation that thrives in cold weather is dying.

"I went to the Arctic to see evidence of climate change and found it everywhere," he said. "It's horrible."

Dewey will continue his weather travels when he goes to northeast Canada to study icebergs in the Atlantic Ocean.

To see and hear Dewey talk about weather, go to <http://atworkfornebraska.unl.edu/conversations.html> and look for Ken Dewey.

— Lori McGinnis



Ken Dewey

Chesnin, former agronomy professor, dies

Leon Chesnin, a distinguished professor emeritus and extension specialist in managing municipal, animal, and industrial wastes, died March 4 at age 89.

Chesnin, originally from the Bronx, N.Y., joined the University of Nebraska Department of Agronomy in 1947, and worked as an extension specialist. He partially retired July 1, 1984, and fully retired a year later. He remained in Lincoln until his death.

During his lengthy career, Chesnin taught educational programs on waste decomposition and composting and their effects on the environment. His honors include national awards, serving on national committees, and presentations at international symposiums.