

2010

The Leading Object: March 2010

John C. Owens

NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

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Perspectives

At work for Nebraska.

These four words hold a wealth of meaning in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. We use them often to describe both what we are about, and why we are here.



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

We are at work for Nebraska, educating tomorrow's citizens and leaders, and serving as an economic engine for our state.

The work we do helps keep Nebraska farmers and ranchers competitive, efficient, and effective, and helps Nebraskans protect and sustain our state's valuable natural resources. With agriculture Nebraska's leading industry, both are absolutely vital.

We are at work for Nebraska providing knowledge people can put to immediate use. We contribute to Nebraskans' health and quality of life.

We strive, along with our many and diverse constituents, to identify the concerns and issues that face Nebraskans today, and will face us tomorrow. Scanning for the future is an important part of what we do, crucial to remaining leaders in providing solutions to Nebraskans' concerns and issues.

We are at work for Nebraska all across our state, through teaching, research, and extension education programs. These three legs of the land-grant university mission are closely entwined in IANR, where each builds on and fosters the others.

When I speak to groups I often explain that when I say IANR is at work for Nebraska all across our state, what I mean is work done in the Institute benefits *all* Nebraskans, and reaches across both rural and urban areas. We are proud of our agricultural heritage in IANR, and we know its importance to Nebraska.

Look at our spires of excellence, built over time by faculty expertise responding to Nebraskans' needs: beef systems; water, climate and environment; crops of the

(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 2010

INTSORMIL helps improve varieties of grains in developing countries

International efforts to aid food production in developing countries are based within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

The International Sorghum and Millet Collaborative Research Support Program (INTSORMIL CRSP) was established at UNL's East Campus in 1979. Its goal is to improve the development of sorghum, millet, and other grains in Central America and Africa, said John Yohe, director since 1988.

"We're making a tremendous contribution to humanity," said Yohe, who is responsible for coordinating the multi-disciplinary program.

Before the assistance of INTSORMIL scientists, grain production in developing countries was from landrace, or native, varieties and plagued with diseases and pests. INTSORMIL has helped improve grain varieties to resist pests such as striga, a parasitic weed, Yohe said.

INTSORMIL was created by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to solve food and nutrition problems in developing countries through land-grant university expertise. Eight U.S. universities, including UNL, were competitively identified and became participants in the new program. UNL became the management entity and headquarters.

Yohe, who had previous international agricultural experience in South Korea and Brazil, worked for USAID in Washington, D.C., from 1977 to 1984. He moved to INTSORMIL in 1984, becoming director a few years later.



Women near Mopti, Mali, take harvested pearl millet heads to the village for threshing.

Photo by E.A. Heinrichs

INTSORMIL has had several accomplishments since 1979, such as helping developing countries grow sorghum free of tannin — a chemical that interferes with digestibility. Other successes have included helping countries lower the cost of producing food and making their grains more resistant to aflatoxin molds.

In Tanzania, for example, INTSORMIL has helped women support their families by selling bread made with sorghum flour.

Currently working with UNL are scientists from Kansas State University, Texas A&M and West Texas A&M universities, The Ohio State University, Purdue University, and a pearl millet breeder from

(continued on page 4)



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Perspectives (continued from page 1)

future; food, nutrition and health; child and youth development.

These affect our entire state, country, and world. We're seeing them echoed at the national level as the new USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture sets its own priorities. It is a pleasure to think — and a boon to Nebraska — that IANR strengths help make us leaders in these fields. And when I speak of IANR strengths, I include all parts of the Institute, because excellence here is built, over time, on the intertwining contributions of many people and disciplines.

So much of Nebraska's population lives in the eastern part of our state that there sometimes seems to be people who think agriculture's effect in Nebraska occurs west of Lincoln. Not

so. With agriculture Nebraska's leading industry, its benefits are woven throughout the state's economy.

Nebraska is a state of approximately 1.7 million people. For our own enlightened self-interest we cannot be a state divided into thinking of ourselves as rural OR urban areas; we *are* and we *must be* a state of urban *and* rural areas united, working together for a common good.

Perhaps that's particularly apparent to us in IANR, where we work in diverse areas because Nebraskans have diverse needs. We look at food, water, and people in a variety of aspects vital to health and life.

Looking ahead to Innovation Campus and the benefits it will deliver Nebraskans, I see IANR as a key contributor. Smart people build on their strengths. Agriculture is definitely a Nebraska strength, just as the Institute's work is an internation-

ally recognized strength of the University system.

Personally, I've always thought of East Campus and our four research and extension centers at Scottsbluff, North Platte, Norfolk and Concord, and Mead, plus our 83 county offices serving all 93 Nebraska counties, and our Kimmel Education and Research Center at Nebraska City, as a statewide campus of innovation. We research and teach innovation that benefits Nebraska.

Contributing to a strong economy and Nebraskans' way of life as we work toward a successful future for our state. That's how we're at work for Nebraska.



Engler's donation to support agribusiness entrepreneurship

A passion for entrepreneurship and the future of rural communities will establish a \$20 million permanently endowed fund to support the Paul F. Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The gift, from the Paul F. and Virginia J. Engler Foundation to the University of Nebraska Foundation on behalf of IANR, was announced March 1.

Engler said it is necessary to identify students who have "fire in the belly" when they are young and expose them to a curriculum teaching how to evaluate and manage business risk.

"If you don't take risk as an entrepreneur, you're not going to make it," said Engler, 80, who also said he is concerned about the future of the nation's rural communities.

The gift — the largest ever to IANR — will provide new student scholarships

and an endowed chair in agribusiness entrepreneurship. In part, the endowment will support agricultural entrepreneurship such as program support for student courses, a lectureship series, 4-H entrepreneurship training camps, internship placement assistance, and international student travel, as well as create a venture capital fund to support student start-up businesses.

John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR, said, "Entrepreneurship is the driving force in the American rural economy, and Paul Engler has made a permanent investment in generations of the future."

Engler was about age 13 when, unbeknown to his father, he took it upon himself to buy 100 head of stocker steers at about \$150 per head. Engler had no money but the salebarn operator was willing to loan him the money. When Engler's father found out, he shook his

hand and said he was proud of his son for taking the initiative.

Engler graduated from the university's College of Agriculture in 1951 and went on to start a Texas-based feedyard. In 1975 he started Cactus Feeders, the largest privately owned cattle feeding operation in the world.

Engler married Valentine native Virginia "Jinx" Engler in 1981 in Amarillo. She died in 1996.

The gift occurred during the NU Foundation's Campaign for Nebraska: Unlimited Possibilities, announced in October and having a goal of \$1.2 billion, the largest in the university's history.



Paul F. Engler

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.

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

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Read *The Leading Object* at <http://ianrhome.unl.edu/leadingobject>.

Career with Monsanto proves fulfilling

Holly Butka has held quite a bit of responsibility in her career with Monsanto.

Butka began her career with Monsanto shortly after her 1990 graduation from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources in agricultural honors and agricultural journalism. She first talked to Monsanto during a career fair on campus.

"I pursued several opportunities but decided that Monsanto was a company that really fit my style and interests and offered me the opportunity to sell some really great products," she said.

For the first six months after graduation, Butka was part of a sales trainee program that allowed her to remain in Lincoln. Her first full-time role moved her to upstate New York, where she earned a master's of business administration degree from the State University of New York-Albany.

She worked for Monsanto in New York and New England for about five years in the agricultural chemistry sales area, then moved to Georgia to take a job with the Monsanto dairy business. It gave her the opportunity to work with cattle, which was a love of hers from her days showing and judging 4-H livestock.

In 1997 Butka moved to the Monsanto world headquarters in St. Louis, where she has held many roles. She has led Monsanto's operations teams for chemistry, seed, and trait products. Currently she leads the market introductions of biotechnology

corn trait products.

As part of the planned commercialization of new traits, Butka puts together a cross functional launch team. She then leads that team in thinking through all the strategic decisions required to successfully launch a product.

"It is fun, challenging, and very rewarding work," she said.

Butka, who grew up on a farm outside of Sutherland, said she was fairly sure when she entered UNL that she wanted a career in agriculture. She looked at other opportunities within the ag journalism area, including writing and advertising design. As graduation neared, she decided to go into a sales role to leverage her communication skills.

Butka said her time in college provided her with the educational base to help her succeed.

"While at UNL I also developed leadership, teamwork, and public speaking skills through my extracurricular activities that have definitely made a difference in my career," she said. "While in college I learned how to think critically, how to deal with lots of personality types and work styles, and obtained a very good base education in agriculture."

—Lori McGinnis



Holly Butka

CARET delegates support IANR

Since 1982, when it was created by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges' Division of Agriculture, a national grassroots organization called Council for Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching (CARET), has worked in support of the land-grant university mission of teaching, research, and extension education.

Nebraska has five CARET delegates who make sure IANR needs are represented as funding priorities are considered in Congress.

"We have the opportunity to strengthen priorities on the national level and gain public support on the state level," said Sallie Atkins of Halsey, whose appointment in 2002 makes her Nebraska's senior CARET delegate.

The annual 2010 spring CARET meeting was held the last week in February in Washington, D.C. Attending were delegates Atkins, Rod Gangwish of Shelton, Roger Wehrbein of Plattsmouth, and John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR.

Nebraska delegates, all of whom have strong agricultural connections, asked to continue to receive federal research funding for biofuels, drought-resistant plant research, and the widely acclaimed, Nebraska-based National Drought Mitigation Center.

Owens appoints the Nebraska delegates, who originally numbered three. When additional delegates could be appointed beginning in 2005, Owens added two more to better ensure Nebraska representation at the national level, he said.

Former state senator Wehrbein is the newest delegate.

"I really enjoyed my first CARET meeting," Wehrbein said. "Everything they are doing fits naturally with the future needs of agriculture, and I really appreciate the opportunity to be involved at this level."

"This really is an opportunity to have an impact on future trends in agriculture, research, extension, and teaching."

Nebraska's five delegates and years of appointment are: Atkins, 2002; Gangwish, 2003; Richard Hahn, Omaha, 2005; Mike Jacobson, North Platte, 2007; and Wehrbein, 2010. All also have

(continued on page 4)

State ranks high during National Ag Week

National Agriculture Week gives Nebraska good reason to celebrate.

The designated week, this year March 14-20, is annually recognized by the Agriculture Council of America.

Nebraska's standing as a powerhouse agricultural state means agriculture is its No. 1 industry, as evidenced in part by these top rankings provided by the 2010 Nebraska Agriculture Fact card.*

- 1st • Commercial red meat production, 7.172 billion lbs.
- Commercial cattle slaughter, 6.773 million head
- Great Northern beans, 779,000 cwt.
- Irrigated land, 8.558 million acres

- 2nd • All cattle and calves, 6.25 million head
- All cattle on feed, 2.5 million head
- Pinto bean production, 1.3 million cwt.
- Proso millet production, 2.34 million bu.
- 3rd • Corn for grain, 1.575 billion bu.
- Grain sorghum, 13 million bu.

*The card is a cooperative effort of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, USDA, National Ag Statistics Service Nebraska field office, Nebraska Bankers Association, and Nebraska AgRelations Council.

Lindgren retires from UNL after 34 years

Dale Lindgren, horticulturist at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte, has retired after nearly 34 years.

Lindgren’s research includes biotechnology and gene manipulation, with a career highlight involving Penstemon. His Husker Red Penstemon was named plant of the year in 1996 by the national Perennial Plant Association. Penstemon

cultivars developed at WCREC now are grown all over the world.

Lindgren also helped evaluate dry edible beans at WCREC. He was co-developer of about 20 breeding lines and cultivars of dry edible beans.

Lindgren helped initiate the North Platte Farmers Market, helped organize the Master Gardener program in west-central Nebraska, and was the first chairman of the North Platte Tree Board.

Masek given March KUDO award

Leonita Masek, personnel generalist with the Natural Resources Business Center, has received the March KUDO award from the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

An excerpt from a letter supporting her nomination states “Leo is a true professional who shows a real passion for the work she does.” Another reads, “Many will simply learn the task at hand. Leo asks the whys and hows in an effort to truly understand how one task relates to the whole.”

Masek received the award at the March regents meeting.



Leonita Masek

McAndrew receives service award

T.J. McAndrew, assistant facilities coordinator in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture at the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead, has received the 2010 IANR Exemplary Service Award.

An excerpt from a letter supporting McAndrew’s award read: “The research farms under his management have made considerable improvement in their professional appearance and income potential.” Another read: “T.J. has always gone the extra mile and he has also spent innumerable hours helping us repair or alter some of our plot equipment to help us get our job done.”

The award will be presented April 19, where McAndrew will receive \$500 and a plaque.



T.J. McAndrew

Vet sciences building gets new name

The veterinary sciences building on the UNL East Campus now is named Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Hall.

The building’s new name is consistent with the name of the School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, which it houses. The new name also will

make it easier for campus visitors to find the administrative offices of the school, said John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR, who proposed the name change in February.

A sign with the new name will soon replace the old sign, which read the Veterinary Basic Sciences Building.

Owens said. “We in IANR really appreciate the work of these insightful and dedicated individuals.”

CARET (continued from page 3)

served in various capacities for Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, Inc.

“We’re fortunate to have such informed, enthusiastic CARET delegates,”

Fritz accepted into leadership program

The Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) has announced Susan Fritz, interim dean of IANR’s Agricultural Research Division, has been accepted into its leadership development program for academia, industry, and government.

The two-year FSLI program enhances personal and professional development by emphasizing leadership competencies, skills for organizational change, and a broad, interdisciplinary perspective of food systems.

“The program offers the flexibility to tailor learning to fit my context of IANR, and links my learning to the national food system,” said Fritz, UNL’s first participant in the program.

Year one includes assessments for scholars to increase their self awareness about leadership style and implement a personal development plan. During year two participants develop and carry out an individual leadership project.

The program is affiliated with the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.



Susan Fritz

INTSORMIL (continued from page 1)

the USDA Agricultural Research Service.

As a result of INTSORMIL, about 1,500 students from developing countries have attended UNL and partnering institutions since 1979, taking back to their home countries valuable information on food production, Yohe said.

INTSORMIL had been grant-funded until 2006, when USAID started a new five-year, \$9.6 million funding program for the organization under a cooperative agreement funding arrangement. That figure has since been raised to \$12.6 million for the period of Oct. 1, 2006, to Sept. 30, 2011.

“I can honestly say in 25 years I’ve never had a day where I dreaded coming to work,” Yohe said. “I work with a wonderful core group of scientists and staff. It’s a joy.”

– Lori McGinnis