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The Leading Object: May 2010

John C. Owens

NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

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Perspectives

This is a hopeful time of year.

We see it across Nebraska in greening fields and small calves who find their legs and frisk their ways across the pastures, never too far from Mom's side. We see it in lilacs and forsythia, in longer days and leafing trees.

After the long, cold, gray and white days of this past winter, greening fields and warmer days bring hope to many souls.

Couple that with the graduations occurring from one end of our state to the other in May, and I think a person would have to be essentially joy-resistant to not feel at least a glimmer of promise from the dreams and possibilities surrounding us.

This May it has been my very great pleasure to be part of our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Salute to Graduates, as well as commencements here at UNL, and at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis.

CASNR saw 208 undergraduate students graduate. NCTA said good-bye to 105 students who are moving on to fulfill their dreams.

And not only did NCTA celebrate commencement with its graduates May 6, it also broke ground on the college's new Education Center as well as a major addition to the Veterinary Hospital that is part of that project.

The Education Center will be home to NCTA's horticulture and agronomy programs. Expected to open in August 2011, it will provide new classroom space, an auditorium, and plant science laboratories. The spacious lobby will display pictures and other media of Nebraska's commodity groups, making clear that NCTA is an institution focused on Nebraska agriculture.

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

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.*

May 2010

NU delegation visits Vietnam

Agricultural and water sciences expertise from the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources will be key to developing relationships between American and Vietnam universities, government agencies, and businesses.

Deb Hamernik, associate dean of IANR's Agricultural Research Division, was among six University of Nebraska representatives to travel to Vietnam March 27-April 4.

The Nebraska group was led by Executive Vice President and Provost Linda Ray Pratt, and included other colleagues from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Nebraska at Omaha, and University of Nebraska at Kearney.

They met university and government officials, as well as private business and non-government organization representatives, in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho, and Hue.

Vietnamese officials are interested in improving production agriculture, the environment, and information technology, Hamernik said.

Encroaching sea waters in southern Vietnam's Mekong Delta and new dams at the headwaters of the Mekong River, coupled with what meteorologists call a 100-year drought, have left soils very salty and difficult for rice and aquaculture. About half of the country's rice production lies within the delta, also called the "shrimp basket of the world," Hamernik said.

"Vietnam is very interested in modern agricultural practices," she said. "The whole country is trying to pursue various



Linda Pratt

Deb Hamernik, associate dean for IANR's Agricultural Research Division, greets an administrator from Nong Lam University in Ho Chi Minh City. Hamernik was part of a University of Nebraska delegation visiting Vietnam March 27-April 4.

avenues of economic development."

Tom Farrell, NU associate vice president for international affairs and former deputy assistant secretary for academic programs in the U.S. Department of State, said Vietnam is the fastest growing market for students intent on studying in the U.S. Nearly 13,000 Vietnamese students studied in the U.S. in 2008-09, he said, making it one of the top 10 countries of origin of international students.

"U.S. officials are very pleased that the University of Nebraska is making agriculture a serious plank in its platform of engagement with Vietnam," Farrell said.

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Perspectives (continued from page 1)

Being part of these joyous events affirms my thoughts that the future of our state is a bright one, and that we in IANR are playing a vital role in gaining a successful, sustainable future for Nebraska.

Each year at Salute to Graduates I am so impressed to hear highlights of the accomplishments of our students, as well as their plans for the future. I also congratulate their families and friends for their support of these students. And, I think with pride of all the IANR faculty and staff have done to prepare these students for their careers and lives.

CASNR is a college oriented to community service, citizenship, and leadership, and certainly to academic excellence, and it all shows in our graduates.

Thank you to each of you who model these attributes so well for our students.

Looking at the graduates at commencement in Curtis May 6 and here in Lincoln May 8, the hopefulness I feel for the future is based in large part upon these bright, enthusiastic, responsible young people who are tomorrow's leaders. How wonderful it will be in the coming years to see the promise carried within each student bloom and grow.

I think, also, in this hopeful time of year, of how IANR is well-positioned for future accomplishments under a new vice chancellor. IANR will continue to lead in providing the knowledge and education Nebraska needs to grow its strengths in agriculture, and to sustain and enhance its natural resources. IANR will continue to be an economic engine for Nebraska.

I do not minimize in any way the state budget concerns that loom on our immediate horizon. The fiscal picture is somber, with the potential to be quite painful. But watching hope graduate this May, and knowing in August new hope will enter our campuses and bring new dreams and new energy, reminds me that we must work very hard, very intelligently, and very cohesively in the short-term to bridge the way to Nebraska's longer-term future.

Because while we depend on these graduates to lead the future, they and our entire state are depending on us today.



Green to assume vice chancellorship July 19

Pending approval by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents, Ronnie D. Green of Sutton will become the next NU vice president and Harlan vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources July 19.



Ronnie Green

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Chancellor Harvey Perlman made the announcement May 26.

"I see this as a phenomenal opportunity to serve the state of Nebraska and beyond," Green said, adding the Global Water for Food Institute and Nebraska Innovation Campus are noteworthy projects that will make lasting contributions.

"The opportunity to be a part of those initiatives as well as to continue to evolve the important research and outreach of the university is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to help transform our world," Green said.

Most recently Green served as senior director, animal genetics global technical services for Pfizer Animal Health. From 2003-08 he was national program leader in Food Animal Production at USDA's Agricultural Research Service after serving as vice president of cattle operations and assistant vice president and director of genetic operations for Future Beef Operations.

Green has been an animal science professor at Colorado State University and an animal science assistant professor at Texas Tech University. He is the incoming 2010-11 president of the American Society of Animal Science.

Green earned his bachelor's degree in animal science at Virginia Polytechnic

Institute and State University, his master's in animal science at Colorado State University, and his doctorate in animal science at UNL. He was a graduate assistant from 1985-88 at UNL.

Other finalists interviewed on campus were Cheng-i Wei, University of Maryland; Cameron Hackney, West Virginia University; and Ken Grafton, North Dakota State University.

"The Institute's faculty and staff who teach our students, conduct cutting-edge research, and extend that research throughout Nebraska through extension education, are second to none in this nation," said Vice Chancellor John Owens. "I extend my very best wishes to Dr. Green as he leads IANR, and am excited and optimistic about IANR's future accomplishments during Ronnie's administration."

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

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Pioneer Hi-Bred researcher credits success to 'solid education'

Joe Keaschall "got lucky" working with crop genetics, and in being surrounded by talented people, with the right germplasm, and the right environments for selecting winning inbreds and hybrids.

The Ravenna native grew up loving farming and agriculture and was first in his family to earn a four-year college degree. Keaschall said inspiration from College of Agriculture (now the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources) faculty helped drive his love of learning, which propelled him to become research director for crop genetics research and development for Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.

Keaschall said professors, including the late genetics instructor D.P. McGill, and his adviser and soybean breeder Jim Specht, influenced his love of learning and excitement in using genetics to better farmers and the world's food supply.

"My education at Nebraska was very solid in all the basics," Keaschall said, adding he enjoyed college and getting to know his instructors and classmates. He was a member of the Alpha Gamma Sigma fraternity and the Agronomy Club.

Keaschall earned his bachelor's degree in agronomy and crop production from UNL in 1978. He said working for corn breeder Charlie Gardner during his junior and senior years convinced him to obtain an assistantship and go to graduate school. After earning his masters in plant breeding and genetics from UNL in 1980, Keaschall earned his doctorate in plant breeding and genetics from Purdue University in 1983.

Keaschall became research manager for Pioneer's corn breeding and research facility at Windfall, Ind., and was a corn breeder for 11 years. From 1994-2007 he

was Pioneer's corn research director for the central corn belt and southern European countries of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey. He traveled to Europe twice a year for his work, and said it was during that time that genetic crop engineering came of age.

"I was lucky enough to hit on some big inbreds and hybrids, and I loved the interaction with farmers and researchers, which helped create new opportunities for career advancement," Keaschall said.

In 2007 he moved to Lincoln and into his current position as corn and sorghum research director for the western region of Pioneer, a DuPont company, in Nebraska, Kansas, Texas, and Colorado, overseeing nearly 100 people.

He said he and wife Deb, who are parents of three grown sons, "love being back" in Nebraska.

Keaschall is giving back to his alma mater as a member of the Crops of the Future committee supporting IANR crops research, which is part of the NU Foundation's \$1.2 billion Campaign for Nebraska: Unlimited Possibilities.

Keaschall said anyone growing up with a farm background today has a distinct advantage in the seed industry because the numbers of people with that background are shrinking, as are the number of farmers.

"There is a deficit of graduates with experienced farm backgrounds — there are jobs waiting for them," Keaschall said, adding, "A college education from UNL is a great investment, and I am living proof."



Joe Keaschall

Presidential nominee has IANR ties

The presidential nominee for USDA Under Secretary for Agriculture for Research, Education and Economics has ties to the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Catherine E. Woteki in August-November 2001 had a part-time appointment in the Department of Food Science and Technology teaching a distance learning course in food safety and human nutrition policy. At the time Woteki was a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

President Obama on April 22 nominated Woteki to the key administrative post. She currently serves as global director of scientific affairs for Mars, Inc. From 2002-2005 she was dean of agriculture and professor of human nutrition at Iowa State University. She earlier served as the first Under Secretary for Food Safety at USDA 1997-2001, overseeing U.S. government food safety policy development and continuity of USDA operations planning.

Presidential nominees must be approved by a confirmation process of the Senate, the time of which had not been determined at this writing.

VIETNAM *(continued from page 1)*

While Vietnamese schools today teach English, Hamernik said the Nebraska group traveled with an interpreter. She noted motorcycles, scooters, and mopeds — some carrying two adults and two children — were prevalent.

Hamernik said group members plan to share what they learned with IANR faculty and that tentative plans call for Nebraska representatives to return to Vietnam in the future.

In addition, she said, two Vietnamese water scientists from Can Tho University and Vietnam National University attended the Future of Water for Food conference at UNL May 2-5.



Several dignitaries helped break ground for a new Education Center at the University of Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis May 6. By fall 2011 the new center, supported by the Nebraska Legislature and NCTA, will be home to NCTA's horticulture and agronomy programs. From left are NCTA Dean Weldon Sleight, NU President J.B. Milliken, and NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor John Owens.

Tiffany Taylor

Awards ... Dinsdale and OEA

Two individuals recently received Dinsdale Family Faculty Awards, given for outstanding teaching, research, and outreach. They are Tamra Jackson, assistant professor of plant pathology, and Jens Walter, assistant professor of food science and technology.

The IANR awards focus on untenured faculty who have demonstrated commitment to academic excellence.

Jackson, who has statewide research and extension responsibilities for corn and sorghum pathology, has built a national reputation in corn nematology and Goss' Wilt. In 2009 her lab received over 350 nematode analysis samples from seven states and one Canadian province. Her annual foliar corn fungicide evaluation helps Nebraska producers decide on treatment type and timing.

As chair of the student recruitment committee for her department, Jackson regularly coordinates activities leading to increased interests in plant pathology



Tamra Jackson

graduate work and the new Doctor of Plant Health program. She also developed a week-long Field Plant Pathology Tour for undergraduates.

Walter's research involves the ecology and evolution of the microbial intestinal symbiont *Lactobacillus reuteri*, the impact of diet on digestive health, and the use of metagenomics to exploit enzymes of gut bacteria for agricultural and pharmaceutical applications.

Besides teaching a graduate level course in gastrointestinal microbiology, Walter supports his research with grants and his superb ability to work with the private sector. Walter also was selected to participate in the 15th annual German-American Kavli Frontiers of Science Symposium for distinguished young scientists, and elected to the group's organizing committee for the 2010 meeting in Potsdam, Germany.

The award for each recipient includes \$1,750. The 2009 awards were presented April 19.



Jens Walter

Julie Lanxon, office supervisor in the Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies, has received an Outstanding Employee Award for office/service staff for May.

A letter in support of her nomination read, "She is creative in attacking problems and often comes up with unique solutions." Another said, "Julie does not back away from hard work and goes beyond the call of duty."

Lanxon received \$350 and a lapel pin.



Julie Lanxon

Water research to 'jump start' new center

A multi-campus center for research, education, and policy analysis relating to use of water for agriculture will build in part on 60 years of water research in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The global Water for Food Institute, funded by a \$50 million gift from the Robert B. Daugherty Charitable Foundation, will allow the University of Nebraska to become a global resource, said NU President J.B. Milliken.

Daugherty is the founder of Valmont Industries.

We have the experience and opportunity to leverage "the knowledge and resources of the University of Nebraska and other leading institutions to help alleviate human suffering and food insecurity," Milliken said. "This is an area of fundamental importance for Nebraska and the world."

In an April 20 announcement Milliken said the university already is recognized as a national leader in water research, and future plans can leverage IANR's good work to jump start the new Water for Food Institute.

"Best management practices for water resources, and accurate information for policy decisions, are critical to our state, nation, and world," said John Owens, NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor. "This is an exciting opportunity, as well as a great responsibility, for our university. This gift will foster good and important work of great value for our farmers and ranchers, and the world they help feed."

Entrepreneurship, ag are tour highlights

Showcasing agriculture, natural resources, and entrepreneurship in south-central Nebraska was the focus of the second IANR Roads Scholars Tour.

The May 13-14 tour was a joint project of the IANR vice chancellor's office and IANR Liaison Committee.

Jeanette Friesen, committee member and UNL Extension educator based in Aurora, said the purpose of the tour is for junior faculty and others to gain a better understanding of the importance of agriculture to Nebraska and the university, which can be useful for teaching, research, and extension education.

"Participants were impressed with learning about industries of which they were unfamiliar, about agribusiness, and how the university is involved with many things occurring in Nebraska," she said.

Stops included the Iams Co. plant at Aurora; the Grain Place near Marquette; Miletta Vista Winery, St. Paul; Pumpkin Patch/Vegetable Farm, St. Libory; College Park in Grand Island; Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center, Alda; the Meat Animal Research Center at Clay Center; and more.

The 27 participants also had opportunities to talk with state senators about university contributions to Nebraskans, and to learn about the role and challenges of immigrants, issues surrounding natural resources, entrepreneurship, and tourism.

Death

Willard A. Waldo, longtime supporter of agriculture, the state, and the university, died May 2 in Wilber. He was 98.

Waldo Farms near DeWitt had the reputation of the world's largest recorder of registered Duroc hogs. The operation at times included Landrace and Yorkshire hogs, Shorthorn cattle, and Hampshire sheep.

A 1934 animal science graduate of the University of Nebraska, Waldo was an extension agent in Cass County 1940-1946 and served as Nebraska state senator at various times from 1957 to 1973.

Throughout his life Waldo received many awards, among them Alpha Gamma Rho Outstanding Alumnus, 1962; Nebraska Agriculture Builders, 1970; Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement honoree, 1973; National Pork Industry Hall of Fame, 1998; and many more.