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Barta Brothers Building Dedication
Thursday, June 23, 2005
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

What a treat it is to be here today to dedicate this new building at the Barta Brothers Ranch.

First off, it provides a wonderful opportunity to gather here in the "heart" of north central Nebraska's Sandhills.

Second - and most importantly - it gives us the opportunity "to remember" with real gratitude the tremendous gift Clifford and James Barta "provided" the University and the State of Nebraska. When they "chose" to work with the University of Nebraska Foundation to see that their "treasured" Barta Brothers Ranch would benefit "future generations" of Nebraskans through research and demonstration programs "carried-out" here by faculty ~~and~~ staff, and *students* of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, they benefitted us all.

We are grateful for their vision in providing this wonderful gift. It is a vision I know will lead to research findings and educational opportunities that someday will benefit people the Barta Brothers never knew, perhaps in ways we yet can "only" dream of.

There is an old adage that it is people of "vision" who plant saplings they will "never" see fully-grown so that someday, those who come after them will have shade. This saying seems particularly "fitting" for Clifford and Jimmy Barta, from all I've heard and read about them. While I never had the privilege or "experience" of meeting the Barta Brothers, I understand they were "excellent" ~~stewards-of-the-land~~, who planted thousands of trees, created ponds, and cared for wildlife, in addition to their ranching.

The Barta Brothers "left the ranch" in 1998 for a retirement-home in Verdigre. "Clifford Barta", the oldest of three Barta brothers, was born in 1908 and passed away in 1999. Jimmy, the youngest brother, was born in 1918 and passed away in

2001. Today, as we dedicate this building, we celebrate the legacy they left us. That legacy lives on, and will continue far down through the years, for succeeding generations.

I want to think Clifford and Jimmy Barta would enjoy our celebration today here at the Barta Brothers Ranch Headquarters. This new building, with its meeting room, kitchen, sleeping quarters for researchers and students working here, and a living room that functions as part of the museum, makes me smile *with*

Satisfaction whenever I look at it. I hope it would do the same for them.

Clifford and Jimmy Barta wanted future generations to know and understand what it was like to ranch and live right here when they did, to be able to gain insight into the equipment and methods they used in their ranching operation. To provide that insight they left their farm machinery and equipment and a building to house it as part of their gift to the Institute and to Nebraska. You can see some of their machinery on display here today.

We are so blessed, in the Institute and in our state, to have the Barta Brothers Ranch for research and education programs. It provides us a "unique opportunity" to demonstrate here the significant benefits of an integrated-resource-management program.

With its unique ["]blend["] of native grassland and tree plantings, the result of the Barta Brothers devotion to thoughtful stewardship, this ranch contains a "diverse habitat" capable of supporting livestock production and diverse wildlife populations.

The opportunities this offers our faculty, staff, and students for research and educational programs are as "exciting" as they are beneficial. The Barta Brothers Ranch has become a "demonstration-ranch" right here in north central Nebraska that "allows us" to demonstrate best-management-practices to support an environmentally sound, multifaceted livestock-production-system. This is of "great-importance" to the ranching industry.

It is a "tremendous-gift." Seems to me Clifford and Jimmy Barta must have been as "shrewd a-businessmen" as they were

dedicated stewards of their ranchland to foresee the benefits such research and educational programs could offer those who love ranching as they loved it, who make it their business and their life's work. They've provided us with this special place, where we can research and demonstrate ways to successfully integrate range management, prairie forestry, and wildlife management into a holistic resource management system.

They've provided us – and future generations – this ranch, where we can research grazing systems, and evaluate how different grazing systems and management practices affect animal performance, wildlife, and vegetation. Here we can look at such things as how windbreaks affect livestock performance, and explore the uses of various tree species in windbreaks.

Here we can study the influence of climate change on natural resources, and teach about environmental sciences. An interdisciplinary team of 15 scientists who received a \$1.8 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Biocomplexity in the Environment program in 2003 is working here, at the Barta

Brothers Ranch.

"Here we can look at seasonal-growth-rates and forage-quality-dynamics of cool-season and warm-season plant-communities on subirrigated-meadows to guide meadow-management decisions." We can study grazing-behavior of cattle, gaining critical information necessary to optimize harvest-efficiency, maintain relatively-high levels of plant-vigor, and meet livestock's nutritional-requirements.

There is so much we can do here; so much good research and educational programming that will come, because of the vision and decisions made by Clifford and Jimmy Barta.

As we celebrate our new Barta Brothers Ranch Headquarters building today, we do so with great-gratitude for all the possibilities that lie before us, all the discoveries that will be made, all the best management practices that will be taught, ALL because of their gift.

Thank you so much for being here with us today. And a special thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make this

day a success. Thank you to our Barta Brothers management team that includes Dan Duncan, Denny Bauer, Walt Schacht, and Jerry Volesky, [,] all part of IANR. Thank you, also, to the local members of our ~~rancher advisory~~ committee. Your work ^{and advice} is much ₁ appreciated.

I hope you'll join us for the tours and visit the displays while you're here. Again, thank you for coming.