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Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, Inc.

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Agriculture Builders of Nebraska, Inc.
Summer Meeting
August 1, 2007
John C. Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

Good morning! There's a lot of information I want to share with you in a short amount of time, so I'm going to get right to it.

First, there are some handouts on the back table I hope you have or will pick up. They're about the independent "At Work for Nebraska" study that found the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources provides a conservative 15-to-1 return on state tax dollars invested with us, and the many ways the Institute is at work for our state.

I hope you've visited our At Work for Nebraska Web site - address: atworkfornebraska - as one word - .unl.edu; that's atworkfornebraska.unl.edu. I hope you'll visit the site frequently throughout the year; we continue to develop it to make it even more useful. Currently, we're adding some video clips under the heading: IANR Conversations. In the video clips, our faculty and staff talk about diverse, innovative, exciting ways the Institute is is

at work for our state.

This is a “no-frills” set of videos, yet as our folks talk, the video clips capture the passion and commitment each of them bring to their work. I brought along “two” of the video clips that are part of this project for you to see – one is on the Web now, and the other is a “sneak preview” that has not yet been placed on the web. In the next months, we’ll add new video clips roughly every week. Please check it out and forward it on to everyone you know who might find it of interest. In that way, you help us “tell the IANR story.” Producers, science and ag teachers, potential students and their parents, the governor’s office, legislators, concerned citizens, other stakeholders – please share “what” you think will be of interest for them and then please “encourage them” to share the videos with others. Let’s take a look at “two” of the video pieces, one of Entomology Associate Professor Tiffany Heng-Moss here on campus, and the other of Hydrologist Jim Goeke at North Platte: *THE WEST CENTRAL RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER.*

VIDEO OF TIFFANY HENG-MOSS AND THEN JIM GOEKE

As I said, we'll add new video clips to the site weekly. Our handouts, also, are available on the Web, as is the full report prepared for us by the Battelle Institute of Columbus, Ohio.

We commissioned the At Work study to determine our accountability to the taxpayer, and to provide us some strategic planning information. We wanted an impartial-observer to take a close, critical look at what we do, and what we have accomplished, to help us determine any adjustments needed as IANR continues its strategic planning process. We selected Battelle because we wanted a highly-credible organization with significant expertise in science and technology, plus an existing knowledge of extension and experiment station programs at land-grant universities. Earlier, Battelle conducted a study similar to the University of Nebraska study for the Agricultural Program at Ohio State University. Battelle, a nonprofit research and development organization specializing in global science and technology, currently operates five national laboratories, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Brookhaven National Laboratory, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

They found 'we return' \$15 for every one tax dollar Nebraskans invest with us. Conservatively, 15 to 1. The direct quote is:

*"... it is evident that IANR's research, teaching, and extension activities are having 'powerful impacts' on Nebraska's economic growth and on economic and social sustainability in the State of Nebraska. In FY2005, IANR received an annual appropriation of \$71.6 million from the State of Nebraska. ... the estimated annual impacts of IANR programs 'far exceed' \$750 million in direct economic output and 'savings-benefits' for Nebraska, 'a leverage ratio' conservatively-estimated to be greater than ten to one. This number does not include the impact of IANR's direct and indirect expenditures (salaries, benefits, capital improvements, etc.) ... which represents an 'additional leverage' ratio of approximately five to one. **Taken together, the impact of IANR's programs and expenditures represents a 'leverage of state funding that exceeds fifteen to one.'**"*

We are an 'excellent investment' and an economic engine for Nebraska.

They noted, and again I quote: "In the 21st century, challenges such as globalization, competitive market pressures, technological advances, and the preeminent importance of innovation and talent are restructuring the economy. Against such a backdrop of rapid and dramatic change, can a system such as agricultural research and extension, established in the late 1800s, be relevant? The surprising answer – that agricultural research and extension institutions may well be more necessary and relevant than ever before – is a testimony to the foresight of those who ensured the creation of IANR ..."

"Thank you", each of you, and those who went before you, who had the foresight to ensure the Institute's creation, and whose vision and support helps keep us moving forward today. Your strong voices and your vision are invaluable in assuring we can and will be at work for Nebraska. We thank you for that.

THE LEGISLATURE

Let me quote the independent At Work study one more time: "Much of what is required for 21st century success (innovation, technology transfer, human capital enhancement, productivity improvement, networking and quality of environment

and place) is directly addressed through the mission and
operations of IANR."

Our handouts demonstrate how we are at work for our state in diverse ways. Please do take all of interest to you. Feel free to take ^{EXTRA} copies to share, too.

As part of my update today, I am delighted to report Don Wilhite, who founded the National Drought Mitigation Center based at UNL, is the new Director of the School of Natural Resources. He assumes the post today, replacing Mark Kuzila, who we thank for four productive years of leadership in developing the School of Natural Resources.

LEAD DIRECTOR
Dr. ALLEN BLEZER
August 6th

We're extremely pleased the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine has been granted full accreditation by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association, as has the new Professional Program in Veterinary Medicine which is a partnership of Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska. Our newly-accredited program will be teaching veterinary medicine for the first time in the history of

the University of Nebraska this month when classes begin. You'll hear more about this exciting, innovative program this afternoon.

A search now is under way for a new Director at the Northeast Research and Extension Center, following John Witkowski's retirement. We have an able Interim Director in Dennis Bauer, a long-time extension-educator in the district. Don Beermann, who has headed our animal science department, has accepted a joint appointment as Director of the Institutional Animal Care Program at UNL and Coordinator of the One Health Initiative in our Agricultural Research Division. Dr. Sheila Scheideler is serving as Interim Head of Animal Science beginning today. We will launch a ^{National} search for a new Head of Animal Science as quickly as possible.

We are beginning a national search for a new Head of our Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication Department. Dan Wheeler's appointment in that position will end in about a year, and Dan has said he will be retiring.

We are awaiting word from a candidate offered the

Biochemistry Department chair; we hope to fill that position soon. We're also seeking a permanent Director for our Communications and Information Technology unit as Dan Cotton continues his important work directing the national extension program from his office right here on the East Campus.

Before I end today, it's my pleasure to tell you about some of our new majors in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. These innovative programs tap our faculty's entrepreneurial skills to offer new opportunities and expand the diversity of our student audience.

Our new Plant Biology major, approved last year, allows students to explore plant biology at any developmental level, from the molecular to the ecological. It's offered through either CASNR or the College of Arts and Sciences. This new program only can strengthen Nebraskans' knowledge in biosciences, which the independent At Work study identified as a growth area for our state.

This fall our new Food Technology for Companion Animals undergraduate major will start. A joint program between our

Food Science and Technology and Animal Science Departments, it will prepare students for successful careers in the rapidly-growing companion animal food manufacturing industry.

Also starting this fall is our new undergraduate Forensic Science major, with two options. Forensic biology is for students interested in a laboratory-based career, and crime scene investigation is for those students interested in a field-based career.

These exciting new majors join other creative, innovative majors added the last few years to meet the demands of changing times, and attract a broader base of student interests and backgrounds.

By attracting more students, these new majors will help us protect funding for core traditional programs in agriculture and natural resources as IANR maintains and builds on its strengths.

Thank you for this opportunity to update you on how the Institute is at work for Nebraska. I look forward to visiting with you throughout the day. Thank you.