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Omtvedt Innovation Award Winners

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Omtvedt Innovation Award Winners

Monday, Jan. 28, 2008

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

It is a wonderful pleasure to have this opportunity today to present two Omtvedt Innovation Awards to Institute colleagues whose outstanding work is a source of tremendous pride and inspiration for us all.

These awards are a reminder of how all parts of our land-grant university mission -- teaching, research, and extension education -- contribute to the well-being of Nebraska and Nebraskans. These three parts are so closely intertwined within the Institute that each rises and falls with the others; each relies on the others; each needs the others to totally fulfill our mission. It is a treat today to recognize and applaud that.

We are able to provide the Omtvedt Innovation Awards because of the generosity of Leone and the late Neal Harlan, great friends of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Harlans' vision and foresight in realizing how important it is to recognize and support outstanding strengths and innovative work in the Institute is a very real benefit for us. The Harlans honored Irv Omtvedt on his retirement with funding to support these Omtvedt Innovation Awards. The awards recognize areas of strength and promise within the Institute, as well as innovative research and programming by our faculty, our staff, and our students. We are so appreciative of the Harlans' support for the Institute, and their belief in the work we do here, and its importance. It is a wonderful way to honor Irv and the work of all those recognized with these awards.

Today's two Omtvedt Innovation Award recipients are very well known in the cattle industry. Beef is very big business in Nebraska, and Nebraska's cattle industry ranks second in the nation, with 6.65 million cattle. One in five steaks in the United States comes from Nebraska. Our two honorees have significantly helped build and strengthen Nebraska beef.

Dr. Don Adams, would you come forward, please?

Dr. Adams is district director for the West Central Research and Extension Center at North Platte and associate dean of the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis. The West Central Research-and-Extension Center serves a 20-county region, much of which is used for cattle production -- very fitting for this scientist whose expertise lies in range beef systems and nutrition of the range beef cow.

Before assuming his duties as district director of West Central Research and Extension Center, Dr. Adams served as faculty supervisor for the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory near Whitman. Under his leadership, Gudmundsen grew and evolved into a center of research activity that is nationally known. There he coordinated the construction of the wonderful Wagonhammer Education Center with its Ray Bohy Conference Room, dedicated in 2005. And, just last year, under his direction, more than 1,200 acres of farmland in western Nebraska were purchased to help enhance research and education efforts to help Nebraska farmers and ranchers adjust to limited water supplies.

As a team leader, Dr. Adams researched how best to modify the calving season to extend grazing resources and lower costs. The highly-successful Nebraska Ranch Practicum was his concept, and with a dedicated and knowledgeable team of colleagues, he has taught more than 300 producers, veterinarians, consultants, agency personnel, and others how best to manage land and cattle.

Producers who have taken the practicum manage 2.5 million acres of rangeland and 200,000 head of cattle -- for them the estimated value of the practicum impact is a collective \$3 million.

The practicum has been described by one prominent Nebraska cattleman as "by far the most valuable of any extension educational program" with which he had been involved.

Dr. Adams will tell you he thoroughly enjoys studying the 'big picture' of raising cattle and what they eat. Interacting with graduate students working on his research projects also has been especially rewarding for Don.

Dr. Adams is a member of the Nebraska Hall of Ag Achievement, and has received the IANR Team Award for his work in cow-calf and forage systems in the Nebraska Sandhills. Other awards include the Wendell Burgher Beef Industry Award, the UNL Distinguished Educational Service Award, UNL Extension's Distinguished Specialist Award, and a senior Holling Family Award for Teaching Excellence.

He was the Kling Anderson Lecturer at Kansas State University in 1995 and earned the Young Scientist Award from the Western Section of the American Society of Animal Science in 1990.

Dr. Adams completed his degrees in Utah and New Mexico and was a USDA beef/range systems nutritionist in Montana before joining IANR in 1990 as a beef specialist. One of the things he feels best about in his career, he says, is having had the opportunity to work closely for many years with our next Omtvedt Innovation Award recipient.

Congratulations, Dr. Adams.

Dr. Terry Klopfenstein, would you come forward, please?

Widely recognized for nearly 40 years of teaching and research in the Institute, Dr. Klopfenstein is known nationally for his efforts to make beef production sustainable and efficient for cattle producers.

Pioneering research led by Dr. Klopfenstein demonstrated the feasibility and benefits of feeding cattle ethanol byproducts wet, instead of drying them. This work laid the foundation for a new, economical cattle feed source that also helped reduce ethanol production costs. It's estimated that from 1992 through 2006 the cumulative benefit to Nebraska from feeding byproducts wet instead of dry approached half a billion dollars.

Terry has researched sustainable beef-production systems that emphasize the use of forages and other byproducts. By identifying ways to modify beef cattle diets to reduce the amount of phosphorus, ammonia, and nitrogen in cattle waste, an integrated team of which he is part studied how best to manage and compost livestock manure for use as a cropland fertilizer.

As the Kermit Wagner professor of animal science at UNL, Dr. Klopfenstein in 2004 earned a USDA Secretary's Honor Award, the agency's most prestigious recognition for outstanding contributions to agriculture and to consumers. He was cited for "integrating" scientific and practical approaches to increase beef production "efficiency" using available resources as well as for research on controlling E. coli O157:H7 in feedlot cattle and livestock waste-management.

Among his lengthy list of honors and accomplishments, one that means "the most" to him is the 2005 Distinguished Teaching Award presented by the American Society of Animal Science. That award was presented by his peers in the state of Ohio, where Dr. Klopfenstein did his undergraduate and graduate work in animal science and ruminant nutrition. To date, he estimates he has worked with approximately 135 students earning their master's or doctorate degrees.

What Dr. Klopfenstein says he values most in his career is giving students the opportunity to succeed. "To me, that's why we're here," he says.

The Terry Klopfenstein Student Excellence Fund, a
"permanent endowment" ⁱⁿ the University of Nebraska Foundation,
demonstrates his commitment to students. It provides
undergraduate scholarships for students in the feedlot
management program, or graduate stipends to majors in
ruminant nutrition.

Other awards and honors presented to Terry include the
UNL Alumni Association Excellence in Graduate Education Award,
American Society of Animal Science Fellow Award for Teaching,
Holling Family Teaching Award, UNL Teaching Award for the
College of Agriculture, ^{and Natal Research} and Gamma Sigma Delta Teaching Award.
He also has received multiple awards for his work with cow-calf
and production systems, ~~and~~. He is a member of the
Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement and past president of
the Federated Animal Science Societies, American Society of
Animal Science, and Midwest Section of the American Society of
Animal Science.

"Congratulations," Terry.

As I said at the beginning of this presentation, it is a real pleasure today to honor two such outstanding members of our Institute community and the beef industry for the betterment of the Institute, our state, and our world. Thank you, each of you, for all you do every day with excellence and grace. Let's give them one more round of applause to show our appreciation.

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