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## Agriculture Builders of Nebraska

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**AGRICULTURE BUILDERS OF NEBRASKA**

(Morning Session)

John C. Owens

NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln

January 16, 2002

Good morning.

It is my ~~very great pleasure~~ to be here with you today, and to have this opportunity to visit with you about the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. I'm going to talk for just a few minutes about issues and highlights for the Institute, and then I've asked Dan Cotton, director of IANR's Communications and Information Technology unit, to illustrate some of the fine and innovative work being done in the Institute to benefit Nebraska. *DEAN DON WOODBURN - Nebraska College of Technical Agric Curtis - 4-min.*

If there is one unit in IANR that touches all parts of what we do, that supports our faculty and staff in our work, and provides us with communications and technology expertise useful in our teaching, research, and extension education programs, *It's CIT.*

Not only do they

“provide our faculty with technological tools and expertise to harness the new technologies in teaching, research, and extension education, and to communicate IANR knowledge and benefits to the citizens of our state, they also provide us with “the leadership” necessary to get those tasks accomplished. I’ve asked Dan to speak for about 20 minutes, and that will leave us plenty of time for questions and answers, for dialogue, and for those of us from the Institute to hear what is on the minds of the membership of the Agriculture Builders of Nebraska.

There are “so many” exciting things going on in the Institute today, and a number of those “are covered” in the deans’ reports you all have. I’m going to highlight “some” of those items, both now and at today’s luncheon, and I hope you’ll take the opportunity to read through all the material here to learn more of the innovative, diverse “work” our faculty and staff are doing. At the noon luncheon today there will be “eight <sup>fact</sup> cards” on each table that provide “other” exciting examples of how the Institute “benefits” Nebraska. We hope they’ll be “helpful” conversation starters as “you visit” with your legislators about agriculture, natural resources, human resources, families, and IANR.

Before I “touch” on a number of Institute highlights, however, I want

to thank each of you for your support of our work, and for your dedication to issues and concerns that affect food, agriculture and agribusiness systems, natural resources, and human resources - communities, families, individuals - in this great state. We value your expertise and insights, your vision, and your willingness to stand up and be counted for those things in which you believe and value.

I also want to talk with you briefly about a couple of concerns we face this year, the first of which is the budget reduction now in process at the University.

As partners with Nebraska, IANR certainly expects to bear our fair share in the economic downturn in which Nebraska finds itself. We appreciate your strong interest in seeing that we bear a fair, but not a disproportionate share. Thank you for that.

The University recently accomplished Phase One, the fiscal year 2002 budget reduction, which was 2 percent, through the use of one-time, temporary funds. That amount came to \$8,268,436 systemwide. President Smith reduced the impact of that cut to NU campuses through the use of approximately \$4.8 million of one-time funds. I think he made an extremely good decision when he did this to soften the blow of a budget

reduction "so late" in the fiscal year.

With nearly \$5 million of that "one-time" temporary reduction resolved, the remaining balance "assigned" UNL was approximately \$1.8 million, with IANR's share at \$507,000. This means that in the Institute we reported that we will delay filling eight positions and delay replacing "equipment" to meet our \$507,000 cut.

Now we are cutting budgets "to meet" Phase 2, and it's a "real-chore" to accomplish. At present, Chancellor Perlman is "asking" the Institute to send forward a revised budget showing just over a \$1.7 <sup>million</sup> permanent ~~cut~~ cut that will be "in force" on July 1, 2002, when our "new-fiscal-year" begins.

If you had told me when I arrived in Nebraska "just-one-short-year-ago" that I'd be "relieved" to put forward a \$1.7 million budget cut, I would have wondered if you'd stayed outside too long. Compared to the originally projected \$3.5 million cut to the Institute budget, "of course," \$1.7 million is much, much better.

However. Having said that, I "also-must-say" that this cut will hurt. It will hurt people, it will hurt programs, and it will hurt clientele. These are not cuts in fat; "these-are-cuts" in muscle and bone. We will feel them. You will feel them. Through it all, however, we "will" remain-focused on

our land-grant university mission to provide teaching, research, and extension-education programs for the citizens of Nebraska. We will take "the resources" of the University to our state, and we will "work" with our constituents to provide programs "most-vital" to their needs.

The other concern I would like "to visit" with you about today is "the-concern" we feel over "decreasing" undergraduate enrollments in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. We have seen "some-declines" in our undergraduate numbers, and we need to turn that around "for-several-reasons". One, our faculty have tremendous expertise to share, and there are wonderful, exciting careers "available" to those who study with us. Two, we are "well-aware" that there are people who look at a decline in a college's enrollment and "equate" that decline with a lessening of "the-importance" of the ~~mission~~ <sup>mission</sup> of that college. We cannot have that. We simply cannot. "Everyone" in this room "knows" how important agriculture and natural resources are to this state, and our enrollments "need" to reflect that. We must seek new audiences, <sup>and</sup> new academic programs that build on our strengths and "broaden" our offerings. I'll talk "a little-more" about that later, but I invite you, if you have ideas on new academic programs <sup>student</sup> and recruitment, "to visit" with Interim Dean

Steve Waller or me. We very-much would like to hear your ideas. We are extremely serious about increasing our enrollments, and Steve and his folks are working-hard to make it happen. *Radio Student Recruitment Ads!*

As you know, we in the Institute take our land-grant university role very-seriously, and our faculty and staff work-hard to provide research and knowledge that brings the resources of the university to bear on the concerns of Nebraska. Along the way we get to do some fascinating and valuable work. For instance:

\*In fiscal year 2001, our Agricultural Research Division's 270 faculty with research appointments obtained \$25.2 million in grant funds, which is 40 percent of all UNL research grant-dollars earned by UNL's 1,072 tenured and tenure-track faculty. Stated another way, ARD's scientists represent 25 percent of UNL faculty and obtained 40 percent of all UNL outside research grant-dollars. This includes \$16.6 million in federal funds. We released 18 new cultivars and germplasms, and obtained two patents.

\*A UNL research-team has developed technologies for producing fresh water prawns in facilities previously used for confined swine-production. In high demand by restaurants, these high-value crustaceans

usually are imported. A Nebraska company is seeking to license that technology.

~~\*Our researchers found that bad habits among America's adults tend to cluster, and cigarette smoking, excessive alcohol use, and poor eating habits all tend to reinforce each other.~~

\*One of our scientists coordinated a multistate project that developed recommendations for minimizing heat stress in feedlot cattle through altering feeding routines and the feedlot's microclimate during hot spells.

\*Researchers who studied three Nebraska towns where meat packing is a major employer to understand how meat packing is changing rural communities and how it affects newcomers and longtime residents found both groups share similar concerns about rapid demographic changes altering their communities.

\*ARD soybean geneticists and biotechnologists are collaborating to produce and evaluate genetically-modified, high-oleic acid soybean lines. High oleic acid oil is desirable for use in healthier cooking oils and biodiesel fuel. These modified plants have 80 to 90 percent oleic content, compared with the 15 to 20 percent in conventional soybeans.



\*Research initiatives at the IANR Center for Advanced Land Management Information Technologies in the Conservation and Survey division focus on many aspects of agriculture. Remote sensing is being applied to assist with monitoring carbon-sequestration, determining the extent of hail-damage, identifying soil-crusting, improving the yield estimates in corn, and more.

\*A state-of-the-art field research facility is being established by the IANR Conservation and Survey Division at the UNL Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead to quantify the amounts of carbon sequestered in dryland and irrigated agriculture. One goal of this interdisciplinary research program is to improve our understanding of the relevant controlling factors and to apply this knowledge toward developing improved methods to predict annual carbon-sequestration.

\*Our researchers are exploring development of textile materials for environmental compatibility and human health and safety; economic well-being of Nebraska households; and so much, much more.

\*IANR serves as the lead on a unique four-state, USDA-funded project designed to increase small and mid-size farm profitability.

\*IANR Cooperative Extension Division's Building Nebraska Families -

program provides education to help families transition from welfare to work. Funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, a contract signed in November 2001 provides over \$2 million for the program for the next three years and increases the number of extension educators to 11 who will work in 40 rural counties to teach welfare-to-work clients.

\*IANR Cooperative Extension Division also leads Technologies Across Nebraska, an initiative to create awareness and provide communities with education and support as they make decisions affecting their information-technology-futures.

\*IANR's Cooperative Extension Division is teaming with the Nebraska Department of Labor to provide workforce preparation programming. Extension's ~~Character-Counts!~~ in the Workplace program continues to be in high-demand by employers; Runza International contracted with Cooperative Extension to train 250 of its managers in the program.

\*I mentioned earlier that we are putting a lot of energy into student recruitment for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and now I'd like to share with you some glimpses into life in the College. The expertise of our faculty is well-established, and the

interest they show in students prompted a CASNR graduate and Fulbright scholar to say, in an interview about his study abroad experience, that - and I quote - "The student/faculty rapport on East Campus is something that other universities, even other colleges at UNL, should try to model."

\*While we've heard that employers attending <sup>CAMPUS</sup> career fairs around the United States ~~is~~ is down, the fall CASNR career fair drew the "second-highest" number of employers ever - 70, with six new companies or organizations represented. There were 518 students attending, up from the past two years' student attendance of 480 and 485. CASNR's was the only fall 2001 career fair university-wide that showed growth from last year in students and employers.

Said the representative of one potential employer, and I quote, "There's no doubt... about the quality of students from CASNR." That person cited our students' willingness to help out and to learn.

\*CASNR cooperates with University Housing and the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences to offer incoming freshmen a "learning-community" called ACE - Achievement, Commitment, and Excellence. It enhances students' learning environment transition from high school to college, and for the last two years ACE freshman-to-

sophomore retention rates averaged 94 percent.

\*The College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources offers undergraduates research opportunities - in fact, a few majors require it. One student reports he takes his undergrad thesis with him to job interviews; his thesis research is the kind of work he expects to do in his career. Another was the only undergrad to present a thesis at a leadership education conference in Toronto.

\*Like CASNR, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture also continues significant recruiting efforts. We've seen the landscaping completed at NCTA's Livestock Teaching Center, and conversion of cattle-working facilities for the vet-tech equine facility is completed. There's the possibility development of a new privatized student-residence hall could be initiated this year.

\*We're pleased that the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences has seen their enrollment grow by 11 percent over the previous year.

\*Our international programs office sponsored a statewide seminar on the impacts of globalization on agricultural commodities, as well as a multi-state forum on immigration issues. It also initiated new

study abroad opportunities for UNL students and faculty<sup>^</sup> in Siberia<sup>^</sup> and at Moscow State Agroengineering University.

That's just<sup>^</sup> some<sup>^</sup> of our highlights; I always am<sup>^</sup> so happy<sup>^</sup> to have the opportunity<sup>^</sup> to talk<sup>^</sup> about the challenging, innovative, and exciting work our faculty and staff do. Thank you again for your support of and interest in our work. Now I'm going to ask Dan<sup>^</sup> to show<sup>^</sup> you more of the exciting work done within IANR.