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## 2003 IANR Team Award and Exemplary Service Award Presentations

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2003 IANR Team Award and  
Exemplary Service Award Presentations  
April 21, 2003  
East Campus Union  
John C. Owens  
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor

What a treat it is to be here today to celebrate the outstanding work of members of our IANR community.

It seems so much of our administrative time these days is spent dealing with difficult and joyless issues surrounding slashed budgets, lost programs, and the very real pain those engender. Perhaps it is that pain that doubles our joy when we have opportunities such as today to celebrate excellence. This afternoon we celebrate accomplishment in two ways – with the IANR Team Award, and with the Exemplary Service Award.

We'll begin today with the IANR Team Award, which recognizes the importance of interdisciplinary team efforts in achieving the Institute's goals. Criteria include: 1) problem identification, team strategy, grant success; 2) productivity and impact and the output of the team in relation to inputs; 3) the team effort, and 4) the quality of the nomination.

Before we recognize the team receiving the award this year, I would like to note that DeLynn Hay, chair of the 2003 IANR Team Award Selection Committee,

tells me all the nominations this year were excellent, creating a challenge for the committee as they worked to select a team to recommend for the award. We encourage the teams not receiving the award this year to resubmit their applications next year.

That said, today we are very pleased to honor the Cow-Calf and Forage Systems in the Nebraska Sandhills Team with the 2003 IANR Team Award. Cow-calf and forage production systems that improve economic efficiency and sustain "the natural resources" of the area are the focal points of the team's research and education efforts. We are so pleased to applaud the work of this team that, with its research, extension education, and teaching efforts, "truly-represents" the broad mission of a land-grant university. The team effort includes a strong research program that is "the basis" for a strong extension education program. The work also has supported a number of graduate students, contributing to graduate education.

While based at the West Central Research and Extension Center, this interdisciplinary team also includes participants from the Panhandle and campus. Lead team committee members are: Don Adams, Professor of Animal Science; (Völ-es'-kēē)  
Dick Clark, Professor of Agricultural Economics; Jerry Volesky, Associate Professor of Agronomy and Horticulture; Terry Klopfenstein, Professor of Animal (Shot) Science; Walter Schacht, Associate Professor of Agronomy and Horticulture, and

Pat Reece, Professor of Agronomy and Horticulture. Would you come forward, please?

Let me read you just a few of the excerpts from the wonderful letters of support for the Cow-Calf and Forage Systems in the Nebraska Sandhills Team receiving this award. Said one: "Over the years, IANR has encouraged a shift from traditional component-research to systems research. This is an excellent example of a team of researchers and educators from diverse backgrounds and disciplines coming together and integrating component-research to a systems approach ... This research has brought about a paradigm-shift in the way ranching operations are viewed in terms of which variables could be manipulated to improve profitability. The mark of truly significant research is one which takes a completely new look at resources, makes major changes, and results in producers managing their operation with improved productivity and profitability."

Said another, "The production systems work ... in my opinion, is the most economically significant for beef cattle production of any in America right now."

"In my career, there have been landmark projects that have had major impact on the way producers do things," said a third. "I would say that the recently completed projects hinged around calving-season timing and forage production systems to coincide is one of those. Producing marketable calves and

fed cattle that fit other market windows has been "an area" Midwest cattle producers have been pondering, but did not have systems research results to evaluate. The "systems research-work" that this team has done the last 6 to 8 years fits perfectly in paving the way for better understanding and assisting producers in their decision-making process to make major operational changes to enhance success and add profit."

A fourth added, "The systems approach that these men have taken, to give answers to the questions that other ranchers and I ask, is right on target. In 1999 I was a participant in "the first" Nebraska Ranch Practicum. This was "the best" extension-sponsored educational program that I have been involved in. Much of "what" we focused on was the work being done by this team. Having a group working in the Sandhills of Nebraska, taking a systems approach, and doing practical useful research is very important."

Please join me in "congratulating" the Cow-Calf and Forage Systems in the Nebraska Sandhills Team, this year receiving the 2003 IANR Team Award.

The other award I'm delighted to present today is the 2003 Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Exemplary Service Award. This is only the "second year" we have presented this award, the result of an IANR KUDO Committee proposal that the Institute implement "an award" that recognizes

sustained exemplary service. Only those who have received both an Outstanding Employee Award and a KUDO award can be candidates for IANR's Exemplary Service Awards. Eligibility for the Exemplary Service Award begins five years after the recipient receives a KUDO, and those who receive this award are people who consistently demonstrate high-quality performance, and more. The standard for this award is very high, and <sup>(Shāf)</sup> Dan Schaaf, Ag Research Technician III at the West Central Research and Extension Center, more than meets the standard. Dan, would you come forward, please?

Let me share with you just a few of the remarks in the "glowing letters" supporting Dan's nomination for the 2003 IANR Exemplary Service Award.

One nominator said Dan, "has been an excellent employee as well as an informal ambassador for the University of Nebraska since he was first employed in 1972. ... He can be depended upon to perform high-quality work with little supervision. When one project is completed, even with only a few minutes left in the workday, he cleans in the greenhouse or pulls a few more weeds outside. ...

"Dan takes great pride in maintaining the horticulture plots at the West Central Research and Extension Center," the supporter continued. "We have had many positive, public comments about the weed-free plots and their neatness. This also makes it much easier to conduct field plot research. He is very friendly

to visitors, "as well, and takes the time to visit and answer their questions. He does an "outstanding job" of talking to students of all ages when they visit the West Central Center. ... He has been innovative in designing and making equipment to assist in field plantings, such as making row-markers to mount behind a tractor to help in field transplanting and seeding. He has also made various sets of seed cleaners using screening of various sizes to make seed-cleaning much easier and faster. He is conservative with funds, always trying to recycle anything possible. ... He sets an example for others for "work-ethics."

Said another, "Dan helps morale at the center because he always has a smile for everyone and a kind word. His humor and joking manner help lighten "attitudes" especially during the tough times the University has experienced the past few years with budget cuts."

"Dan is meticulous concerning his plots, and he hates weeds!" said another supporter. "He will spend "more-time" with a hoe in his hand than walking behind his rototiller. His "dig 'em, bag 'em, and trash 'em" philosophy has produced weed-free plots for many years. It's not unusual to see Dan walking down row after row of penstemon plants looking for a renegade cheatgrass plant.

"Dan is always willing "to help" with other projects around the Center," the supporter continued. "... He has planted several "memorial-trees" for past employees

who have passed away. Dan takes an "active role" when working with children who tour the Center. He also is very good with the garden clubs and the Master Gardeners. ... Dan is not one to sit on his thumbs. He has no problem with "questioning" University officials when something is on his mind. He will ask the "hard questions" when he has a concern. "

Dan "...is always willing to pitch in and help on "anything" that is for the good of the Center," said one supporter. "He is always a "major-player" for our clean-up days or in helping with youth education tours. When surplus flowers are available, he fixes bouquets for the secretaries or provides flowers for centerpieces if some special program is scheduled at the Center. He does these things before or after his working schedule. ... He is an employee who comes to work early and leaves late and will work on weekends in order to keep irrigation, planting or cultivation done in a timely manner, and this is done on his "own" time. Dan has made these kinds of contributions for the good of the unit as long as he has worked here. If any of the employees of the Center have illness, injuries, or family tragedies, Dan will be one of the first to ask "what he can do to help and then will proceed to do something."

(S h ā f)

Please join me in congratulating Dan Schaaf upon receiving the 2003 Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Exemplary Service Award.