

2005

ABN Summer Meeting

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**ABN Summer Meeting
Tuesday, August 2, 2005
ARDC
John Owens
NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor**

We in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources are so pleased you're here with us today at our Agricultural Research and Development Center. We hope you "enjoy-the-day" as much as "we enjoy" having you here. Thank you for coming. Thanks, also, to "everyone" who has been involved in putting this day together. Your work is "very much" appreciated.

I'm extremely pleased to have "this-opportunity" to speak with you, because we in the Institute need your help and your insights in several areas. "One" of these areas is keeping the lines of communication open and free-flowing between the Institute and you, as well as ^{the} other many constituents across Nebraska. We want to know "what's" on your mind. We want to honestly and forthrightly "discuss" ideas and concerns, and come to a clear-
understanding of "where" we are and "what" we all face on behalf of

agriculture and natural resources in Nebraska. It takes all of us, working together, to keep our industry strong.

I have four topics I particularly want to visit about with you today. I also want us to have time for discussion following my remarks, so I'm going to jump directly into my topics.

My first topic, what the Institute is doing for Nebraska, always is a treat to talk about. Recently someone asked me what we're doing for Nebraska's beef industry – a very fair question. Your land-grant university belongs to you, and you always should feel free to ask us what we're doing for Nebraska. We appreciate the opportunity to reply.

I decided what we do benefitting the beef industry provides such a good-illustration of our work for Nebraska that I'm going to focus today on beef, although we could just as readily provide examples of Institute work in many other areas. I brought along a handout showing some-examples of beef-related items in the Institute's 2005 impacts report, and I'll mention a few of them – and other items – here. For instance:

Institute research shows developing replacement heifers to lighter-than-traditional weights significantly reduces feed costs without hurting reproductive performance.

Our biological systems engineers are developing a research-based computer tool that should help communities, planners, and producers make better-informed decisions about where to locate livestock operations in order to reduce odor-related conflicts and improve environmental quality. We hope it will be available for use by individuals next year.

Our veterinary scientists designed and successfully tested a calving system that greatly reduces scours outbreaks by managing cow-calf pairs and pregnant cows to minimize calf contact with diarrhea-causing organisms.

We're proud two of our faculty are part of a research team awarded the 2004 International Meat Secretariat Prize for Meat Science and Technology. It's the first U.S. team ever to win this international award. Their work is responsible for development of the flat iron steak and other beef cuts that have increased

demand and, I'm told, added at least \$50 in value per animal

over the past five years. *AND THIS IS A GREAT EXAMPLE OF COMMODITY BOARD INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH "PAYING OFF"!* *NATIONAL BEEF COUNCIL NEBRASKA B.C.*

Last week we hosted a national review team. They were on campus looking at the proposed cooperative agreement between the Institute and Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine to provide veterinary medicine education for Nebraska students. "One of the key reasons we're so excited about this proposed cooperative agreement is that we think it will produce "more" food-animal veterinarians, a "critical-need" for our livestock industry. This is a "very-real-example" of our commitment to the industry "now," and in the future.

I could provide so many, many "more-examples" demonstrating "practical-benefit" the Institute provides Nebraska ... such as our *E. coli* work, and the work accomplished "here" on feeding wet byproducts. That's a "great-example" of how the

Institute benefits Nebraska and for those of you who ~~don't know~~ *heard Terry* the story - it's a "terrific-example" of how our work with Nebraska's commodity groups "pays-off" for the state, because the *as you know,*

Speak

this morning
~~the story~~

Nebraska Corn Board “helped fund” IANR’s ethanol byproducts research.

During the 1990s, because of pioneering work done in the Institute, wet byproducts went from an unfamiliar material to a “major” Nebraska feed source. Today, it’s estimated roughly two-thirds of Nebraska “feeder-cattle” are fed rations that include wet byproducts.

In 2000, one of our ag economists analyzed the economic-benefit of this research, and found feeding byproducts wet instead of drying them “provided” a \$212 million net cumulative benefit to Nebraska from 1992-through 1999. Recently he estimated the cumulative benefit “doubled” to about \$400 million by 2004.

That’s just one more example of “how” Institute work is contributing to the Nebraska economy and ^{to} Nebraskans. Time doesn’t permit more, so I’ll move on to my “second-topic” today, ^{student} which is recruitment. We need your insights, your ideas, and [^] your help on this one.

In my opinion, the University of Nebraska has one of the strongest traditional agricultural programs in the country. Yet undergraduate enrollments in our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources have dropped for the past eight years. In 1997 we had 1,545 students studying in our college. Last fall it was 1,222. ~~_____~~
We're down over 300 students in eight years.

Last fall CASNR's undergraduate enrollment was about 7 percent of the total UNL undergraduate enrollment. For comparison, I'll note that in 2004 Kansas State's ag college had 9.7 percent of their university's enrollment. This spring Iowa State's ag college had 12 percent of their university's total enrollment. We're not exactly comparing apples and apples here, because each of these schools doesn't offer exactly the same programs, but this gives you an idea of where other schools are.

In our business, 10-11 percent of the total university *undergraduate* enrollment is considered very, very good. We want to see CASNR get there. I think that can happen. I also think, as much

as this pains traditionalists, that "changing-demographics" mean growth ~~that~~ ^{REQUIRES} innovation and new programs built on our traditional strengths to attract those who have not previously been our traditional-students. The university is moving to a tuition incentive program. Attracting non-traditional students will help grow our student numbers and allow us to continue to fully meet the needs of our traditional students. There is no "either-or" between traditional and non-traditional students and traditional and non-traditional majors – they are totally complementary one to the other. We build on our traditional programs to attract new students. In turn, tuition dollars from new programs help support and keep our traditional programs strong, and folks – that's important to all of us involved in agriculture in Nebraska.

Three to four percent growth for CASNR, over time, is both a necessity and, very likely, an optimum, when we look at the percentage of students enrolled in agricultural colleges at other universities in the nation. To have 300 more students, as we did eight years ago, would be tremendous. To grow even beyond

that is, a goal to shoot for. We're going to need ^{'all'} the help and innovation we can muster to gain those numbers.

Chancellor Perlman has made it clear that at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln individual academic departments that do a good job getting and keeping students will be financially rewarded. And that recruiting success will be one determining factor for departments to, in-the-future, ^{'regain'} funding they'll lose this year. More on that funding loss when I talk about budget.

The key point here is: Chancellor Perlman is ^{'linking'} enrollments and funding. The corollary is: In the Institute, research, teaching, and extension-education are closely entwined. What raises one, raises all. What diminishes one, diminishes all.

Three departments in which we see ^{'both'} the past and ^{the} future of agriculture – animal science, agronomy and horticulture, and agricultural economics – seem especially ^{'key'} to me in the college's growth. In the past eight years 'animal-science' dropped

from 226 to 166 enrolled. Agronomy enrollments dropped from 131 to 55. Horticulture – you know it's now the department of agronomy-and-horticulture – actually has seen "a rise" in enrollments from 1997 to 2004. Agribusiness went from 229 to 167. Agricultural economics went from 56 to 45. How do we raise these numbers? How do we make clear "all the career opportunities our traditional majors can "springboard-CASNR" graduates such that they might have fulfilling and rewarding

lives?

*DON BEERMANN, MARK LAGARINI, & ALAN BAQUET.
NO PRESSURE - BUT THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY DEPENDS ON YOU + YOUR FAMILY*

We need your help, as agricultural representatives and Agricultural

leaders, to talk "positively" about the importance and value of agriculture and natural resources, and the variety of careers "both" provide, not just in production agriculture, but also in related careers as well. I cannot tell you how "dismayed" I am whenever I hear a farmer or rancher say they "told" their children to take up "another-profession" because they couldn't see a "future-for-them" in farming or ranching. That child, then, went away from agriculture "altogether."

What about food science? What about agribusiness? What about horticulture and entomology and animal science and water science and soil science and fisheries and wildlife and the myriad of other possibilities that exist for students to be part of the industry they love, even if they aren't living and working directly on the land?

If kids want to do something else, they certainly should do something else - but we need them to at least know and to think about all they can learn and do ⁱⁿ CASNR. We're a natural for students interested in science, technology, food, business, and people.

In the Institute, we know - and we say - agriculture encompasses everything from the farm gate to the restaurant plate. It's obvious to us way too many people don't know that. With no personal-link to farms and ranches, they have little or no understanding of the importance-and-issues of what we do. We have a tremendous story to tell. We need your help telling it.

Changing demographics also will influence future

enrollments. A report from the Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education says the number of Hispanics in Nebraska high schools is about to increase dramatically. Traditionally, a significantly lower percentage of Hispanic students, compared with Anglo students, pursue higher education. We need to convince these students our university-education has benefits they won't find elsewhere, both inside and outside the classroom.

My third topic today is budget – and I surely wish we didn't have to talk about this again.

It is extremely disappointing, after several years of budget cutting due to our state's financial crisis, to find this year, when the state economy has rebounded, that we still are looking at further cuts. The Legislature appropriated an excellent budget to the university this year, and we thank them so much for that. Unfortunately, we face further cuts because of tuition shortfalls due to falling enrollments across all of UNL.

The first cut is a temporary 2 percent this year, with a

permanent 1.66 percent ^{cut} next year. In the Institute, this year's temporary 2 percent ^{cut} is tentatively estimated at \$1.5 million. Plus, UNE ^{just a few days ago} completed a budget cut from its tuition shortfall last year (FALL 04) costing IANR \$864,000.

Institute budget issues are further complicated by the fact that while we have ["]ended["] our agreement with Kansas State University for veterinary medicine education, we are ["]honoring["] our commitment to the Nebraska students who were enrolled in that program when the agreement ended. That means for three years we will ["]cash-flow["] funding for all Nebraska students still at KSU. We'll also, ["]starting this fall["], do the same for our first veterinary medicine class starting under our ^{new} agreement with Iowa State University. We hope in 2006 to have the Nebraska portion of that program up and going, which would mean Nebraska will share in veterinary medicine ["]tuition-dollars["] from the fall 2006 class. However, a 2006 start-up may be too optimistic, and we may be implementing the new program in veterinary medicine for the Fall 2007 class. We will know more when we receive the

full report from the American Veterinary Medical Association's review team which was in both Lincoln and Ames last week for site reviews.

To meet our budgeting challenges, we will (1) make cuts, and (2) hold positions "open" much longer than usual to cash-flow as much as possible. I know holding positions open longer is extremely-frustrating for department heads, directors, faculty, and constituents who want to see the positions filled. It is extremely-frustrating for those of us in administration, ~~also~~ ^{ALSO.} It is, however, the responsible "thing-to-do", to get us through these tight times. Some positions we must fill soon, such as those that fulfill our obligations to the new veterinary medicine program. Others we will "hold" until we can afford to release them.

Candidly, the easiest thing we could have done on this veterinary medicine program would have been to continue a traditional contract with Kansas State, or to enter into a new, traditional contract with Iowa State University. Yet to make the best-uses of the resources available to us on behalf of Nebraska

and to [“]both[”] strengthen ties with food animal veterinarians so important to Nebraska’s livestock industry and to enhance internal and external research ~~and~~ funding opportunities, we have taken the long view in entering into this new cooperative agreement with Iowa State University. [“]Short-term[”], it is very tough for us financially; long-term[”], it is the right thing to do to benefit Nebraska.

The last topic I want to talk about today has buzzed through our agricultural community – and our state – in the past few months, and that is the discussion surrounding the name[”] of our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

I said earlier that this college’s enrollment has declined for the past eight years. We hear stories – too many stories to simply ignore – about people who apparently have such skewed ideas of what[“] the college name portrays that their minds are closed[”]. Closed to the excellent opportunities available to students who study with us *in CASNR*.

We need to know[^] what those people think so we can

develop strategies to combat people's misconceptions. To find out, we need to ask questions. I sometimes think that when college Dean Steve Waller began this name discussion with the *people of our* state, his openness to considering "all possibilities" – the mark of a true scientist, by the way – "translated" in some people's minds into "the belief" that we were "heading-straight" to dropping the word agriculture from our college's name.

That never was the point. It never will be "the-point" while I am Vice President and Vice Chancellor for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The point is that robust discussion and candid exploration – even, and sometimes *especially*, when people "vigorously-disagree" – often leads to answers yet unknown, to solutions not yet discovered. Asking questions and seeking answers is part of education. It's ^{*certainly*} a hallmark of "both" a land-grant university campus and a free society. I always will vigorously defend anyone's right to raise and explore a question. "Always". I will defend Dean Waller's "right" to ask the question – and your right to ask him

what he was *thinking* in asking the question! I just ask that when you have such a question, you direct it straight to us, so we can respond directly to you. We want to know your thinking. We want you to know our challenges and our opportunities.

I thank you for your time. Having spoken of the importance of discussion in the last few minutes, I'd now like to invite your thoughts and questions. Thank you again for being with us today.

Thank you.