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At Work for Nebraska

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At Work for Nebraska
Radio taping Feb. 13 for Feb. 19 station use
4 min. 30 sec. maximum; 571 words

1. John, a study focusing on the work and value of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources for Nebraska was released recently and has some great things to say for Nebraska, its leading industry -- agriculture -- and the Institute. The study is called "At Work for Nebraska." What is the study and why was it done?

Jim, we at the Institute commissioned Battelle of Columbus, Ohio, to provide us impartial information ^{and accountability proven.} we can use in our strategic planning. Along the way, they've given us excellent information on the tremendous benefit of our work for Nebraska.

Battelle is a nonprofit research and development organization specializing in global science and technology. The organization operates five national laboratories, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory ^{Brookhaven Nat. Lab} and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. [Optional: No tax dollars were used to pay for this study.] It was important to us that an independent, outside reviewer with an unbiased perspective conduct this study, and that it be a highly credible organization with significant expertise in science and technology, plus knowledge of extension and experiment station programs at land-grant universities.

2. John, how can the At Work for Nebraska study help Nebraska citizens, as well as the Institute?

The Institute, like everyone, has finite resources. We need to ensure our efforts in agriculture, natural resources, families, youth and communities provide the greatest benefits possible for Nebraskans. The At Work for Nebraska report provides insights into growth areas for Nebraska, such as agbiosciences, while affirming our work is effective and does have positive results on Nebraska society and the economy.

Agriculture is Nebraska's No. 1 industry; one in three Nebraska jobs derives from agriculture. The Institute is Nebraska's primary provider of agriculture and natural resources programs in support of Nebraska agriculture, and helps keep the industry strong and growing.

According to the "At Work" report, a 1 percent increase in agricultural production creates 1,544 Nebraska jobs annually.

3. John, the At Work for Nebraska report says the Institute is providing the state an excellent return on its tax dollar investment with us.

That's right. All interested can read the entire report on the Web: atworkfornebraska.unl.edu. The At Work for Nebraska report states in 2005, Nebraska's return on state funding invested in the Institute was conservatively greater than 10 to 1 in direct economic output and savings benefits for Nebraskans. In 2005 the Institute received an appropriation of \$71.6 million from the state. The report said the estimated impacts of our programs for that year far exceeded \$750 million. Plus, when impact of IANR's direct and indirect expenditures is added in, the number rises to more than 15 to one!

4. John, name a project or two that illustrate Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources successes, and what lies ahead.

Glad to. We know increased yields from IANR-developed wheat varieties are worth about \$30-35 million annually to Nebraska producers, and that's every year since the 1960s. [Optional if time: Our animal scientists have proven the feasibility, benefits and economic advantages -- now approaching half a billion dollars -- of feeding ethanol byproducts wet instead of dry.] In the future, agbiosciences are expected to offer great growth potential for Nebraska's economy - food, fuel and fiber from renewable resources. The Institute will be providing research and education to help that growth, transferring its scientific, technical and research knowledge to Nebraskans for their use.

Jim concludes: **Again, the Web site for the report we've been discussing is AtWorkForNebraska.unl.edu.**