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2007

## Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory Open House

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Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory Open House  
9:40 a.m., Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2007  
Whitman, Nebraska  
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice  
Chancellor, IANR

Please let me also extend a welcome to everyone attending today's Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory open-house. It is wonderful to see you here, and it is great to be back. I know this is going to be a good, informative day, and I thank each and every member of our Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources community who has worked to make this open house a success. I have a special thank you for today's co-sponsors and exhibitors who are providing such useful information. And a sincere thank you to each of you attending today's open house. You're the reason why we're here.

We say in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources that we are partners with Nebraska, and we take our partnerships seriously. To us, partnership is a two-way street of give and take, where each partner brings our best

“skills and talents” to the partnership. We know communication is “vital”, with each partner providing candid communication that identifies, discusses, and resolves issues, and “builds” for tomorrow’s successes. We ask your “help” in fostering such communication.

As your land-grant university, we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources are at work for Nebraska “all” across our state, through our 83 county extension offices serving all 93 Nebraska counties, through our offices, “classrooms,” and laboratories in Lincoln, and through our research and extension sites strategically located across Nebraska.

Certainly, the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory is here for a reason, and I’m going to talk about “that” just a bit today. I’m also going to talk about “how,” as your land-grant university, our faculty, staff, and students “daily” are at work for Nebraska. I also will talk about the vision and ~~THE~~ expectations I have for Nebraska’s future, and the Institute’s “role” in that future.

First, let me talk about the “why” of Gudmundsen and  
other University of Nebraska research and extension sites.

These sites allow us to put university resources as close to Nebraskans as possible. It is a “deliberate” choice. We do so throughout Nebraska, so the research-and-extension-education “needs” of diverse parts of our state best can be met, within the limits of the resources available to us.

There is no question resources “affect” what we do, just as “personal resources” affect “what” we all do in our personal lives. We deal with this reality “every day” as we strive to carry out our land-grant university mission to bring the resources of the university to the citizens of our state. We do that in many ways, including the work done here, and at other sites. Last year we celebrated 25 years of work for Nebraska here at Gudmundsen. Earlier this month we celebrated 50 years of work for Nebraska at the Haskell Agricultural Laboratory near Concord. In 2005 we celebrated 35 years of work for Nebraska at the High Plains Ag Lab near Sidney.

The West Central Research and Extension Center at North Platte, the oldest of our regional research and extension centers, was established in 1903. We've been at work for Nebraska at that center for 104 years. The Panhandle Research and Extension Center at Scottsbluff was established in 1909. In two years, we'll mark that 100-year anniversary. We have a long and proud legacy of being at work for Nebraska throughout this state. We intend to go right on lengthening that legacy, and we intend to keep it strong.

As Nebraska's primary-provider of agricultural and natural resources programs, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources is critical to the vision for Nebraska I'm going to talk about today. And let me be clear -- when we say agriculture in the Institute, we mean everything from the farm gate to the restaurant plate. Production, food safety, new product development, agribusiness, competitive science, resource management, water, rural development,

families, youth and communities, nutrition, and so much more is covered by that term in the Institute.

"Agriculture"

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You know, as I do, that the important work that occurs here at Gudmundsen contributes both to Nebraska's economy and Nebraska's way of life. We have the opportunity to hear more about that work today, with a variety of interesting topics that include grazing, economics of calving systems, heifer development systems, and more. Much more.

If you've heard me speak before, you know I am a tremendous believer in land-grant universities, and often describe them as three-legged stools. It's not my original illustration -- it has been around a long time. Research, teaching, and extension education are the stool's three legs. All three closely intertwine in the Institute. We conduct research to add value to Nebraska commodities, develop new products and grow emerging markets, and sustain and protect the environment, all are key to Nebraska's position as a powerhouse agricultural state. We <sup>ALSO</sup> do research for

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Nebraska's human resources – its youth, families, and  
communities.

Extension education carries "new knowledge" discovered through research all across Nebraska, so Nebraskans can put it to "immediate use" in their lives. That new knowledge also is "taught" in our classrooms and laboratories in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. CASNR helps build the "well-prepared workforce" necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the leadership skills so very essential to help Nebraska communities "survive and thrive."

As state dollars "in support" of land-grant universities "decline", there are "concerns" university-budget issues will mean more and more research "follows" research dollars, rather than state's needs. This issue, voiced throughout the United States, concerns us all.

We are especially conscious of "that concern" in the Institute, and I tell you straight out -- your Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources will remain *firmly focused* on Nebraskans' needs in both applied and appropriate basic

research. That's our job. We are "your" land-grant university.  
Meeting Nebraska's needs is "why" we're here.

Let me also tell you I expect our extension division to remain "a leader" in connecting Nebraskans with the resources your land-grant university offers. I am a "firm believer" that extension education is the best educational method yet devised "outside" the traditional classroom to deliver new knowledge. It is absolutely vital to Nebraska.

Research, teaching, and extension education are "what" we do. Every day. That's "how" we're at work for Nebraska.

~~Ivan Rush / Jim Coore / David Smith~~  
I've mentioned several of my expectations for

Nebraska's future and the Institute's role in that future, and in the next few minutes I'd like to talk "more" about that. I welcome hearing your thoughts and expectations throughout the day.

So. When I look to Nebraska's future, and the Institute's place in helping build that future, I expect this: I expect agriculture will remain Nebraska's leading industry, and its importance will grow. It already has. In 1990, one



in four Nebraskans depended upon agriculture in some way for their livelihood. A study released last year by the Nebraska Policy Institute tells us that number now is one in three.

Smart people build on their strengths. Agriculture is a Nebraska strength. Nebraskans are smart people. Value-added products from Nebraska's tremendous agricultural commodities, as well as the biosciences – renewable resources for fiber, fuel, and food -- are "naturals" for growing our state's economy. I expect they will. I also expect the Institute "will lead" in providing the knowledge and education "Nebraska needs" to grow its agricultural strength.

I expect – no, I *know* -- we will go on providing a tremendous education for students, an education that "leads" to lucrative, fulfilling careers. All students interested in science, in agriculture, in people, in helping lead our state and world, can find tremendous educational opportunities in our College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis also offers students excellent educational opportunities leading to rewarding careers.

A strategic plan guides our work in the Institute. It has three themes that basically boil down to this:

- One, we're going to work with Nebraskans to see Nebraska's natural resources – our wildlife, our grasslands, our very soil and water – are preserved ~~and~~ sustained so they "in turn" can sustain future generations.
- Two, we're going to build on Nebraska's "strong heritage" of agricultural expertise to help grow our state's economy and keep our food supply safe and abundant. We're going to "help grow" Nebraska's future in biosciences, providing naturally renewable food, fuel, and fiber for the future.
- Three, we're going to continue to work for and with Nebraska's families, youth, and

communities to preserve and strengthen the  
very fabric of our society. When we talk about  
the good life of Nebraska, we're intent on  
making it even better, from our most rural  
communities to our most urban.

"Now, I want to be very-clear that when I say "we," I  
don't mean just those who work in the Institute of  
Agriculture and Natural Resources. I mean "everyone" here  
today, and all others throughout our state with whom  
we partner. It takes all of us, working-together, to build a  
strong future."

I see your very important role in all this, and the role of  
all our partners, as supporting the development and  
distribution of the knowledge "Nebraska needs," so you and  
others can take that knowledge and, with Nebraska  
ingenuity, skill, and determination, build Nebraska's future  
for all generations. We have a highly successful, century-  
plus legacy that shows just how well this works for our  
state. We're going to go right on doing it."

A recent independent study found the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources provides a conservative 15-to-1 return on your state tax dollars invested with us. That's money in Nebraskans' pockets, and that's good for us all.

These are some of the many ways we in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources are at work for Nebraska. We'll learn about other ways today, also, as we hear about the exciting work being done for Nebraska here at Gudmundsen. Thank you again to everyone who is part of this day, from all <sup>the</sup> planners and presenters, to all participants. We really are glad you're here. Thank you.

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