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June/July 2022 • Volume 78 • Issue 5

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On The Cover

Booker Bergquist intently follows the ins and outs of a branding with his mom, Janae, south of Atlanta. Photo courtesy of Jadyn Heckenlively.



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Developing a Skilled Ag Workforce

By Macey Mueller, Contributing Writer

Production agriculture is a vital component of Nebraska's economy – generating more than \$21 billion in cash receipts and employing approximately 23 percent of the state's workforce. In fact, one in four jobs across the state is related to agriculture, with many of those positions requiring specific education and training.

From welders and meat fabricators to veterinary technicians and truck drivers, the need for skilled agriculture employees has never been stronger. To meet the growing demand, many communities, schools and colleges around the state are investing in programs, facilities and educators to train and prepare young people to enter the agriculture work force.

Starting Young

Much of that preparation begins in high school and even as young as junior high when students are introduced to agricultural education classes in school. Dusten Bruss, vocational agriculture

educator at Wilber-Clatonia Public Schools, teaches animal, plant and meat science courses to nearly 150 students in the rural community 50 miles southwest of Lincoln. The district recently invested in improvements to the agriculture program, including a live animal lab, meats lab and greenhouse. Bruss uses a holistic, hands-on approach to provide experiential opportunities for his students.

"Some of my favorite and most beneficial courses in college were those that involved a lot of application and fieldwork," he says. "I try to replicate that in my classes as I teach industry standards and life skills in self-sufficient food production. The animals we raise on the farm are processed in our meats lab, and the students even learn how to prepare those meats to consume."

In addition, Bruss's courses focus on soft skills like problem solving, teamwork and communication.

"I like to tell my students that these classes are more than just 'cows, sows and plows,' and I really try to open their eyes to the role agriculture plays

in their lives, even if they're not directly involved on a farm or ranch," he says.

Bruss says agricultural education programs like his are vital to introducing students to the vast number of careers available in agriculture, and other school districts are starting to take note. The total number of Nebraska high schools with an agricultural instructor has grown from 133 in 2010 to more than 200 in 2022.

Recognizing the role agricultural education plays in the growing interest and pursuit of career opportunities in modern agriculture, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication (ALEC) department recently announced major steps to strengthen agricultural teacher training and support by hiring two ag educators — one in northeast Nebraska, the other in the Panhandle — to support ag teachers throughout their region. In addition, a new ALEC tenure-track faculty member will focus on enhanced teacher preparation and other supportive strategies.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Agronomy Professor Brad Ramsdale explains settings on the grain drill for a crops production class at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture. Photo by Craig Chandler/University Communication.



Agricultural education students at Wilber-Clatonia High School learn hands-on animal husbandry skills, including how to shear llamas.

Nebraska Cattlemen

Welcomes Libby Schroeder

Nebraska Cattlemen is pleased to announce the hire of Libby Schroeder as director of communications. Schroeder is a native of Texas and a graduate of Texas Tech University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree with honors in communication studies. Schroeder spent the last several years working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and she comes to Nebraska Cattlemen with an accomplished communications background.

"I am excited for the opportunity to use my communications expertise to convey the impact and achievements of our dedicated membership across the state," Schroeder says. "Nebraska Cattlemen members are the driving force shaping the success of the Beef State, and I am looking forward to working side by side with our members to accomplish the objectives of this outstanding association on a local, state and federal level."

"Nebraska Cattlemen is excited to add Libby to our team. Her communication

talents in all phases will translate well in promoting member involvement in the cattle and beef community," says Pete McClymont, Nebraska Cattlemen executive vice president. "Libby is eager to make a difference to the Nebraska Cattlemen family to strengthen our voice in all aspects of the organization's work."

Schroeder began her duties on April 4 and can be reached at (402) 475-2333 or lschroeder@necattlemen.org. ■ Ng ■

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“We’ve seen in Nebraska unprecedented growth of new ag education programs in the state, and lots of communities wanting to add teachers, add programs,” says Mark Balschweid, ALEC department head.

Getting a Career Jumpstart

In addition to traditional agricultural education classes, many Nebraska high school students have access to college-level courses and accreditations that prepare them to enter the workforce or continue their education after graduation.

Bruss is also an adjunct professor at Southeast Community College in Beatrice where he teaches live animal evaluation, carcass evaluation and meats classes for dual credit, allowing students to earn college credit at a discounted rate to traditional tuition before graduating high school.

These types of courses are designed to provide students a look into specific industries and even involve job shadow

requirements that can often lead to permanent employment.

“I can count on two hands the number of students who have gone on their job shadow and then ended up with a job offer afterwards,” Bruss says.

Across the state, there are other opportunities for high school students to take dual-credit and certification courses.

The Pathways to Tomorrow (P2T) program is a joint partnership between Northeast Community College, Educational Service Unit (ESU) #2 and Wayne State College that provides career and technical education to students from seven area high schools in Burt, Cumming, Thurston and Wayne counties through Northeast’s extended campus in West Point. P2T offers courses in health sciences, education, building construction, welding, computer science and a transportation class for students interested in earning their commercial driver’s license (CDL).

Gina Holtz, director of P2T and Northeast’s extended campus in West Point, says the program is designed

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Veterinary technician students in a large animal techniques class gain animal handling skills with swine, sheep, cattle and horses with Vet Tech Professor Elizabeth Fraser, DVM. Photo by George Hipple/NCTA.

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PRECAUTIONS:
Exceeding the highest recommended level of drug per pound of bodyweight per day, administering more than the recommended number of treatments, and/or exceeding 10 mL intramuscularly or subcutaneously per injection site in adult beef cattle and non-lactating dairy cattle and 5 mL intramuscularly per injection site in adult swine, may result in antibiotic residues beyond the withdrawal time.

Consult with your veterinarian prior to administering this product in order to determine the proper treatment required in the event of an adverse reaction. At the first sign of any adverse reaction, discontinue use of the product and seek the advice of your veterinarian. Some of the reactions may be attributable either to anaphylaxis (an allergic reaction) or to cardiovascular collapse of unknown cause.

Shortly after injection treated animals may have transient hemoglobinuria resulting in darkened urine.

As with all antibiotic preparations, use of this drug may result in overgrowth of non-susceptible organisms, including fungi. The absence of a favorable response following treatment, or the development of new signs or symptoms may suggest an overgrowth of non-susceptible organisms. If superinfections occur, the use of this product should be discontinued and appropriate specific therapy should be instituted.

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WARNINGS:

Warnings: Discontinue treatment at least 28 days prior to slaughter of cattle and swine. Not for use in lactating dairy animals. Rapid intravenous administration may result in animal collapse. Oxytetracycline should be administered intravenously slowly over a period of at least 5 minutes.

CAUTION:

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ADVERSE REACTIONS:

Reports of adverse reactions associated with oxytetracycline administration include injection site swelling, restlessness, ataxia, trembling, swelling of eyelids, ears, muzzle, anus and vulva (or scrotum and sheath in males), respiratory abnormalities (labored breathing), frothing at the mouth, collapse and possibly death. Some of these reactions may be attributed either to anaphylaxis (an allergic reaction) or to cardiovascular collapse of unknown cause. To report a suspected adverse reaction call 1-866-591-5777.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

to expose students to several career options and give them a leg up after graduation. Whether it's taking early college courses that will later transfer to other institutions or completing a training program in preparation for a career right after high school, P2T allows students to pursue educational and internship opportunities that meet their specific career goals.

"We have a lot of students who transfer their credits into Northeast, Wayne State College or another four-year institution, and then we have students who go through the CDL program and finish it at Northeast or those who take welding courses and go straight into the workforce," Holtz says. "Our goal is to find internship placements for our students so they can have that workforce experience, whether they want to start their career right away or transfer their credits to another higher learning institution."

Making the College Transition

From the University of Nebraska system and other four-year state universities to private institutions and two-year community colleges, students interested in seeking post-secondary education have a healthy variety of options across the state, and those specifically interested in agriculture and looking for a close-knit environment might consider the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) in Curtis.

NCTA is the sole, two-year campus of the University of Nebraska and is uniquely focused completely on agriculture, with associate degree offerings in a variety of agricultural production, management and education fields. NCTA is also home to one of the state's veterinary technology programs.

Many of the academic programs are designed to prepare students for direct transition to their desired career pathway and even include artificial insemination.

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Nebraska Beef Council News

Recent Beef Checkoff Programs

1319 Central Ave PO Box 2108 Kearney, NE 68848 • (308)236-7551 • nebeef.org

Nebraska Beef Passport Highlights Local Nebraska Restaurants

The Nebraska Beef Council launched the second annual Nebraska Beef Passport program on May 1st. The program, funded by Nebraska beef producers through their Beef Checkoff, urges people to visit the 44 participating restaurants where they can order their favorite beef menu items, earn stamps, and be entered to win prizes. The goal of the program is to showcase the Nebraska beef industry while encouraging beef meal purchases at local restaurants throughout the state.

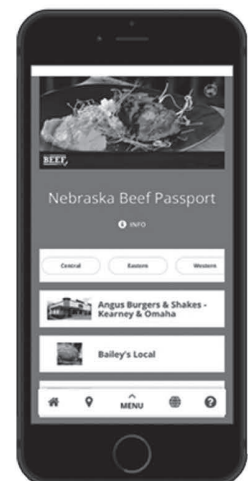
“We had a tremendous response during the first year and we’re looking forward to even more participation as we expand the program,” said Adam Wegner, director of marketing for the Nebraska Beef Council. “A few of the changes this year include new restaurant locations, more prize opportunities, and the addition of a mobile friendly passport giving people more opportunities to enjoy some of the best beef Nebraska has to offer.”

During the initial launch of the program in 2021, over 17,000 passports were distributed to people in more than 600 communities across the state.

Nebraska Beef Passports are free and can be obtained at www.GoodLifeGreatSteaks.org or from any of the 44 participating restaurants.



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nation short courses and certifications in areas like animal health care, welding, irrigation technology, equine training and agriculture production systems.

Although the campus is more than 100 years old, modern-day instructional facilities like a full-size equine and animal science arena, small meats laboratory, 550-plus-acre farm with three center pivots and a 2,100-acre work-

ing ranch provide students hands-on experiences in crop production, meats fabrication, and livestock handling and husbandry. Cutting-edge teaching resources like a robotic welding machine and life-size animal simulators also enhance workforce training.

Additionally, NCTA is a pipeline for students who want to go on to earn

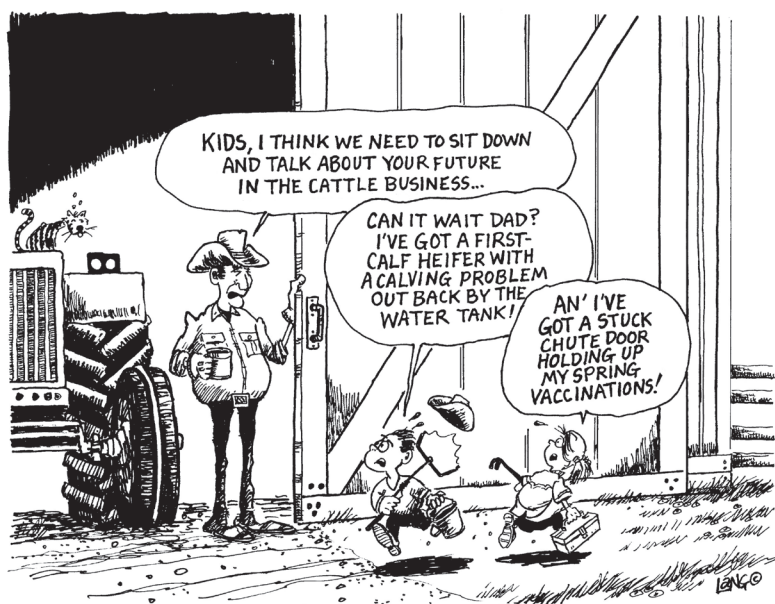
a four-year degree and become high school agriculture teachers or pursue careers in agricultural youth programs such as 4-H and Extension. Currently, 21 NCTA alumni are teaching in Nebraska high schools and leading FFA chapters.

NCTA Dean Larry Gossen says the practical teaching methods on his campus help train students for their careers, build confidence for real-world application and create marketable candidates for companies looking to hire.

"Whether students are graduating NCTA and starting their careers or continuing on to earn a four-year degree, we want them to have the skills necessary to be lifelong learners," he says. "Agriculture is an ever-changing and evolving industry, and new technology, government policy and consumer demand will require our farmers and ranchers – and the businesses that support them – to adapt.

"One of our most important jobs is to help prepare our students to return to rural Nebraska and help build and support that economy, either as business owners, valued employees or even well-informed citizens." ■ NG ■

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Summer 2022 Edition Vol. 1

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Doc Ryan heifer calf at
Schrock Angus, Nebraska.

**"THE DOC RYAN CALVES HAVE LOTS OF VIGOR WITH
EXPLOSIVE EARLY GROWTH."- JOHN MOHLEN**



**Doc Ryan bull calf at
Scott Angus Cattle, Nebraska.**

**“I BELIEVE OUR BULL
CUSTOMERS WILL BE
IMPRESSED!”**

- DOUG WORTHINGTON

Doug Worthington, manager of Vintage Angus Ranch in Modesto California, says, “The calves started hitting the ground in January and we are very pleased. *The Doc Ryan bull calves have the bone and extra body needed to make the right kind of bulls. I believe our bull customers will be impressed!*” Doug continued, “The female calves look like females. They have great length and beautiful fronts with the depth of body needed to make great cows in the future.”

**“THE DISPOSITION ON DOC
RYAN CALVES IS
SECOND-TO-NONE, AND THE
FERTILITY [OF THE SEMEN]
WAS VERY GOOD FOR US.”**

- MARLON SCOTT

Marlon Scott and his wife, Kelly, own and operate Scott Angus Cattle in Belgrade, Nebraska. Marlon said, “When I first saw Doc Ryan, I immediately knew how to breed to him. He is an improver. When used correctly, he will take the holes out of just about everything.” Marlon continued, “*Last, but not least, the disposition on his calves is second-to-none, and the fertility [of the semen] was very good for us.*”

Ed Raithel, manager of Herbster Angus Farms, says “They’ve exceeded all expectations and are very vigorous at birth. What surprises me the most is the amount of muscle and style the Doc Ryans have, and how easy they came. *They have a WOW factor unlike any other set of carcass-bred calves that I’ve seen.* The consistency we’ve seen when used on all cow types is awesome. There are no throwaways.”



**Doc Ryan heifer calf at
Mohnen Angus, South Dakota.**



**Doc Ryan bull calf at
Herbster Angus Farms, Nebraska.**

“THEY HAVE A WOW FACTOR UNLIKE ANY OTHER SET OF CARCASS-BRED CALVES.”- ED RAITHEL

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SUMMER IN THE SANDHILLS

By Natalie Jones, Contributing Writer



Dewy mornings in the saddle morph into afternoons stacking hay in the blazing sun, the steady pump of water straight from the Ogallala Aquifer, notes of the meadowlark and beef sizzling on the grill are all part of a day's work during summertime in the Nebraska Sandhills.

Raised as the fifth generation on the 122-year-old Diamond Bar Ranch north of Stapleton, I can think of no better way to grow up, raised to be a steward of the land and livestock and leaving everything under my care better than I found it. Our ranching continues with the tradition of raising cow-calf pairs and Quarter Horses on carefully managed pastures.

Family owned and operated since 1901, our operation is, of course, de-

pendent upon my family's hands-on management and holistic mindset. Working alongside my parents, Robert and Susanne Jones, and three younger siblings, Shaylee, Grant and Lance, is something truly unique, and something I continually remind myself not to take for granted.

Continuing to harness the power of the wind, sun, fertile rangeland and meadow ground to raise livestock and hay as generations did before us is the name of the game all summer long. It takes someone like a Sandhiller to have a deep reverence for the land, livestock, wildlife and a distinct know-how to manage the natural resources together in perfect harmony.

For the Jones family, the beginning of summertime in the Sandhills comes

when brandings give way to breeding season and moving pairs onto summer range. With help from friends and neighbors, the calves are marked with the Diamond Bar brand, one of the oldest registered brands in the state. From there, our Angus and Red Angus pairs graze native Sandhills range until they are weaned in the fall.

Summertime remains a highly anticipated season when the hills green up and become lush with switchgrass, sand bluestem, Indiangrass and prairie sandreed. While riding through the pasture, my dad will quiz my siblings and me on how well we know our grasses. Our days are filled with the hustle and bustle of synchronizing and heat sorting heifers horseback to artificially inseminate, and putting out bulls and stallions for the next cycle. From sunup to sundown we are working to monitor the health of the cattle and colts growing by their mothers' sides, checking tanks, putting out salt and mineral, and fencing.

Rotating the herd through summer pastures is a priority to keep ranch resources healthy and more productive. Lots of miles trailing pairs in soft sugar sand also serves as the perfect time to break in a young horse or stick with my favorite faithful ranch horse. There's no better sight than showing the herd to the next fresh pasture, loaded with native grasses and a full tank of water.

Robert Jones stands at the top of the stack while multiple generations of the ranch work together to mow, rake and sweep hay to the slide stacker along the South Loup River.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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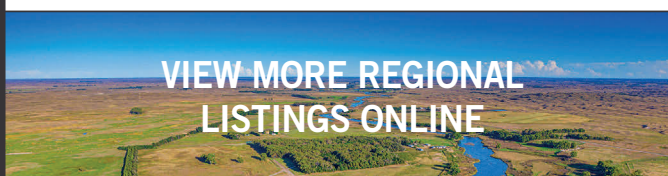
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Alfalfa bales stand out against the fog and rolling hills on the Diamond Bar Ranch.

SUMMER IN THE SANDHILLS • CONTINUED
FROM PAGE 22



Diamond Bar Ranch pairs take advantage of the lush native grass after being moved into a fresh summer pasture in Logan County.

Late summer 2021 range with Diamond Bar's Red Angus pairs grazing in the background.



During wet years, I love to hear the squish of my horse's hooves going through low spots of the valley and having the chance to pause and have a pasture picnic with the family during a long cattle drive.

We are fortunate to be located along the South Loup River and surrounding sub-irrigated meadows, serving as a valuable resource year-round. Once harvested with real horsepower, my family now harvests meadow hay by the tons using straight rakes and sweeps to stack hay with a slide-stacker and round bales. With thunderheads growing closer, there's always a rush to hurry and put up one more stack or bale those last few windrows before the rain hits. This is the native forage the ranch solely relies on for winter feed.

Stacking hay, rounding up cattle and virtually everything that takes place on the ranch requires a crew of people. Growing up on the ranch, I think the most valuable lesson I've learned is how to work together as a team, and I'm fortunate to be able to call that team family.

Spending my summers in the Sandhills, I am constantly reminded of my parents', grandparents' and great-grandparents' work ethic and resilience in ranching through droughts, blizzards, tornadoes, market crashes and more. I've always admired the spirit and dedication of my ancestors as stewards of the land, while producing an excellent product in the heart of beef country in Nebraska. ■NG■

The 2021 branding crew at the Diamond Bar Ranch, with Robert Jones standing, center. Photo courtesy of Sam Raetz



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In Good Hands

By Micky Burch, Contributing Writer

Nelson Mandela said, “The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow.” For Lydia Vinton, tomorrow is here.

After graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in December 2021, Vinton returned home to Whitman to help on the ranch before starting her teaching career in Ogallala this fall.

A commercial Angus cow-calf operation, the Vinton ranch has locations in both Arthur and Grant Counties. The location in Arthur County is the homeplace, while Vinton currently resides a bit closer to Whitman in Grant County.

This spring, the workforce at the ranch included Vinton, her dad and a good hired hand. Manning the north place, Vinton had watch over the first-calf heifers, which calve approximately three to four weeks ahead of the cows.

The Vintons use horses extensively on their operation. Toward the end of calving, Vinton and her dad started breaking colts, and the crew had brandings at each location.

“We don’t raise horses, but we use horses a lot on our operation, and my dad and I train and break horses,” she explains. “We use them for work, so it’s very practical for us.”

You could say the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, as Vinton’s mom teaches in Mullen and serves as the ranch office manager. She also has two

sisters who are married and come home to help when they can.

Roots

Vinton attended Arthur County Public Schools through the eighth grade, then transferred to Mullen for high school.

“Coming from a small school, I was involved in about everything you can be involved in – that’s just how it goes in those itty-bitty towns,” she says of being involved in speech, One Act, FCCLA, FFA and multiple sports.

Still, agriculture was a priority. “I knew from a young age I wanted to be involved in ag and I loved it,” she states. All through high school and her freshman year of college, Vinton was planning on becoming a veterinarian. “Being a state FFA officer changed my mind on that,” she explains. “It made me realize I loved the classroom and the teaching side of things.”

During her senior year of high school, Vinton’s ag teacher, Abby Ford, encouraged her to apply to be a state FFA officer. Vinton remembers her ag teacher saying, “At the very least, the interview process would be a great experience for you.”

Once the process started and Vinton learned more about state FFA office, she quickly became “all-in” and worked for a position. The entire process was



The Vinton ranch spans two locations in Arthur and Cherry counties. This spring, Vinton has been manning the north place by Whitman where the heifers were calved. *Photo courtesy of Nicholas Lattin.*

a success and Vinton was named the 2017-18 Nebraska State FFA Secretary. Among the highlights of being a state FFA officer were business and industry tours, sponsored by the Nebraska FFA Foundation. “I got to go visit, eat lunch with, learn about and tour all sorts of different ag businesses and companies across the state of Nebraska,” she says.

Local chapter visits also played a big part in Vinton’s duration as a state FFA officer. “That’s what I attribute to why I am now going to be an ag teacher,” she says of switching college majors from pre-vet to agricultural education. “All those chapter visits and classroom time I spent doing workshops with high school students.”

Also, while in Lincoln, Vinton was involved with the Honors Program, Sigma Alpha professional agricultural sorority and Collegiate Farm Bureau.

Going into the fall, Vinton is looking forward to starting her career as a teacher but is also excited about continuing a cattle business initiated by the students at Ogallala. “It’s a heifer development program,” she explains. “We’ll sell them as bred heifers in December.”

She’s also planning to remain involved in the family operation as she owns her own small herd of cattle.

With young leaders like Vinton up and coming, agriculture is in capable hands. ■ NC ■



Though she’s starting her teaching career this fall at Ogallala High School, Vinton plans to remain involved in the family ranching operation where she owns her own small herd of cattle.

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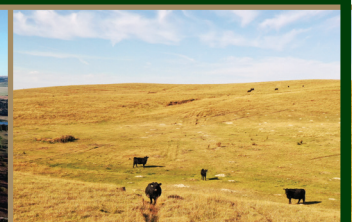


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I feel overwhelmed with gratitude and blessed to be the next dean and director of Nebraska Extension. It's been quite a journey, beginning on a farm in North Dakota where I began my education in a one-room schoolhouse, and eventually arriving at the University of Nebraska where I am humbled to be entrusted with one of the top Extension systems in the country.

Nationally, Extension is 108 years old. It has grown, contracted, grown some more and slowly evolved over those years. Most historians write that Extension started in 1914. The real start of Extension was in 1910 when Teddy Roosevelt was president.

Roosevelt was born into a New York City blueblood family of prestige and position. He was a bit sickly as a child, very bookish and very smart. In 1884, after he married and became a father, he lost his beloved wife and his mother to dysentery within hours of each other.

He was distraught. His friends advised him to go West to deal with his grief. He traveled to the end of the rail line at Medora, N.D. He bought a ranch and, for two years, worked with the ranchers and cattle and lived in the great outdoors. It changed him. He became healthy, strong, worked with his hands, hunted and became an agriculturist, conservationist, outdoorsman and cattleman. He became a champion of the common man.

Under his administration, the Agriculture Department conducted a survey in 1910 concerning rural life in America that was completed by more than 65,000 rural Americans. Among the needs expressed by the respondents was access to relevant, up-to-date, science-based information coming from land-grant universities. In 1914, Congress passed the Smith-Lever Act, which established the Cooperative Extension Service. A cooperative fund-

ing effort among the federal, state and county governments, the creation of Extension was based on a need identified in that 1910 survey.

In some ways, this mission of Extension hasn't changed much. We still provide up-to-date, science-based information to the people we serve. What changes is the kind of information people want and how they want to receive it. It is essential to understand the communities we serve, their needs and their expectations. This is how we remain relevant.

Relevance. Relevance means our Extension specialists and faculty at the university have a responsibility to keep up with the latest research and developments. It means establishing professional development opportunities for their colleagues and Extension educators to disseminate across Nebraska. It also means staying abreast of policies and trends at the national and state levels to assure that Nebraska Extension is ready when called upon. It calls for people who can anticipate needs.

Relevance means our county-based educators and staff are boots on the ground, continually listening to needs at the local level. It means learning from our stakeholders what the real needs are and how we can move our collective expertise to the next level. It means conducting on-farm/ranch research to answer relevant, real-world problems with solutions that can be realistically implemented.

Relevance means sharing the latest information in almost every mode of communication possible, because no two stakeholders are alike. Relevance is communicating a message that the end user can hear and understand.

Relevance means our stakeholders openly share their needs with our Extension personnel to define the researchable question. Disclosing and uncovering needs requires trust, honesty and a shared commitment to co-learning. Often the original need is actually a symptom of a larger problem, and the true need lies close by. Case

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By Jeff Willis
NCIG Director

Nebraska Wildfires



What type of loss scenario comes to mind when you consider purchasing insurance? Many people think about fires and the immense damage they can cause to their homes or businesses. Fire is one of the top causes of property damage resulting in an insurance claim, with water, wind and hail also reaching the top of the list. In Nebraska, we're familiar with wind and hail and, while fires do occur, we don't consider ourselves a state known for wildfires. Oddly, in April we were part of a *New York Times* article with Arizona and New Mexico about wildfires increasing in size and intensity. The fires burned throughout our state, fueled by dry conditions and high winds. Unfortunately, we had numerous firefighters injured as they fought to contain the fires.

We purchase insurance to protect ourselves from unpredictable events like fires. The cost of repairing or replacing our lost or damaged property can quickly add up. Add the sudden timing of an event, and many of us would have

a hard time covering the costs without insurance.

Wildfires are the type of claims scenarios NCIG helps clients with. Commercial property insurance is a part of this protection, as it covers your physical assets. For example, it can provide coverage for a fire that destroyed one of your buildings and everything inside. It can also cover your equipment, important documents, computers, property belonging to others, fencing and exterior signs that become damaged or destroyed.

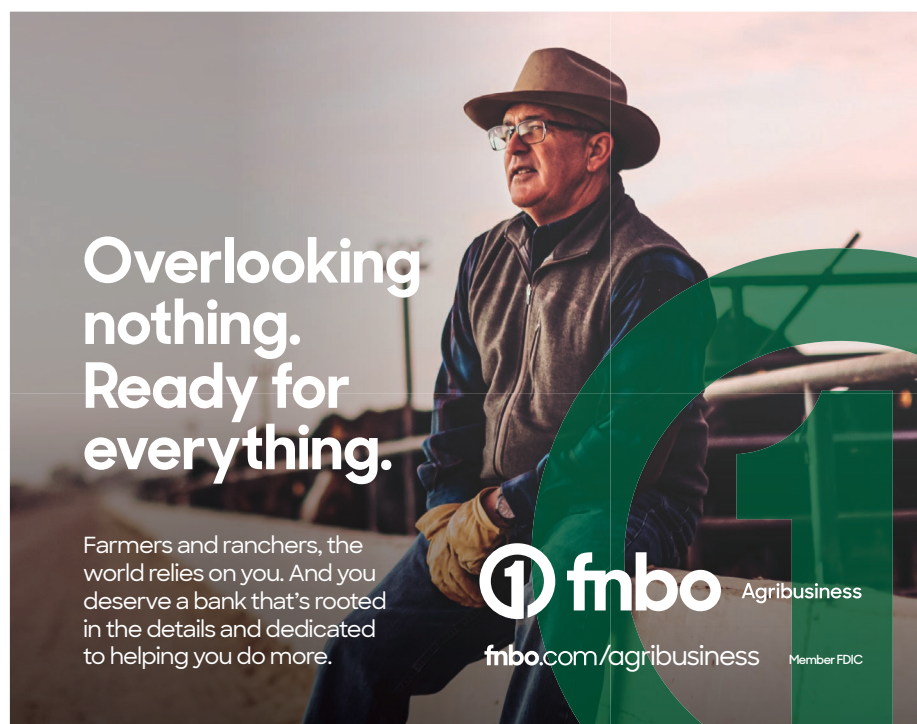
NCIG has procedures and tools focused on evaluating and placing proper coverage. We use our proprietary tool, called a RiskMAP, as the first step. It starts the conversation about your unique exposures and may help reveal new coverage needs or items that may be underinsured. For example, does your operation utilize UTVs or ATVs? Some insurance companies may require specialized policies or endorsements before providing coverage for this equipment that may be a vital part of your operation.

Attention to detail is part of what makes NCIG different. We ask "Why?" and dig into policy details to ensure our clients get results. An important part of any commercial property insurance policy is whether it uses replacement cost (RC) or actual cash value (ACV) to determine the payment for a loss. Replacement cost refers to the amount to repair, replace or rebuild the property with comparable materials and quality without deducting any amount for depreciation. Actual cash value subtracts depreciation in the calculation of the cost to rebuild or replace the property. Taking an inventory of your buildings and property and reviewing the cost to replace or repair them can help determine if replacement cost or actual cash value fits your needs. We understand that not all situations are the same and determining which payment type is right for you may not be the same as your neighbor, and it may not be the same today as it was a couple years ago. We meet with our clients regularly to review details like this and make adjustments if needed.

We also review the items that property insurance usually does not cover like earthquakes and floods. As we're learning with wildfires, it's not wise for us to ignore the potential for floods and earthquakes to affect us in Nebraska. We may be in the middle of the country with no oceans nearby or large fault lines, but water and seismic activity can still cause damage in our state. In March 2019, our state experienced major flooding along the Missouri, Elkhorn, Platte, Loup, Blue, Niobrara and Cedar rivers. The season's ice jamming, deep snow levels and significant rainfall were contributing factors that led to multiple areas of damage around Nebraska. On April 24, 1867, Nebraska experienced its first significant earthquake, and we've had at least seven originated within our boundaries since then. It may be worth considering additional coverage to protect from these perils.

NCIG, powered by FNIC, helps our clients have coverage in place that

(CONTINUED)



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protects the assets they have worked hard to build. We work with you to review the kinds of perils and causes of loss you may encounter, like wildfires, floods and hail, and review ways to protect from those losses. We're here for you. We can review your current commercial property insurance policy for free. Please contact Jeff Willis, NCIG director, at NCIG@necattlemen.org or (402) 861-7045.

About NCIG: NCIG was established as a partnership between Nebraska Cattlemen and FNIC, formerly The Harry A. Koch Co., to provide you, Nebraska's beef producers, with risk management services specific to the work you do. This joint venture is a valuable benefit for current and new Nebraska Cattlemen members. With NCIG, you have access to a variety of leading carriers to provide a vast selection of products at competitive rates. Our team of licensed professionals provides support with claims, loss control, safety and compliance. You also have access to personal and employee health insurance options, including access to a direct primary care program powered by Strada Healthcare. Learn more at nebrascacattlemen.org/ncig. ■NC■

GUEST EDITORIAL • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

in point: A ranch may have a scours problem in its calves; however, the real problem may be breaks in biosecurity protocol that allow the scours problem to occur.

In life and in Extension, perfect solutions are not attainable. But if, together, we pursue science- and evidence-based answers to the needs before us, Extension will be relevant. Relevance for the common man.

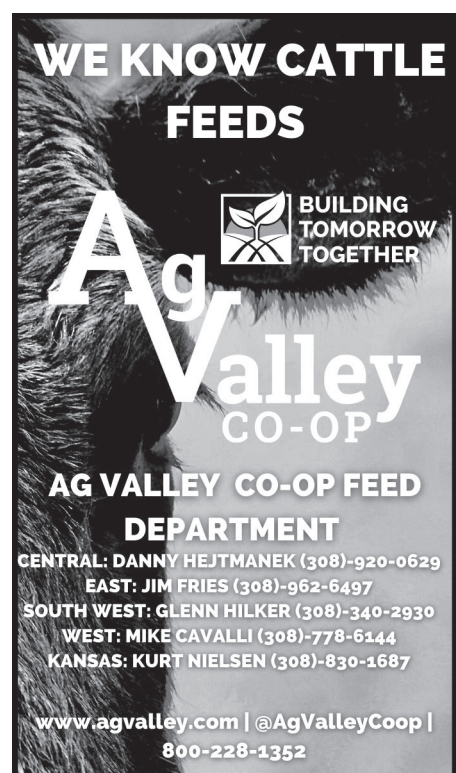
Teddy Roosevelt said he would have never become president of the United States if it hadn't been for his time in North Dakota, living among the farmers and ranchers. I would not be able to do this job as dean and director of Nebraska Extension if it had not been for my time among this nation's farmers and ranchers. Let's be relevant. Go Big Red! ■NC■



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Legislative Power Plays

The second half of the 107th Nebraska Legislature adjourned *sine die* on April 20. With no veto overrides to address, the legislature's final day consisted primarily of ceremonial matters, including the traditional session-ending speech from Gov. Ricketts and farewell addresses from departing state senators.

Passing 119 of 593 bills earned legislators a “wow” rating from the governor.

Tax relief, public safety, water investments and allocating the more than \$1 billion in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds earned his highest praise as massive accomplishments achieved during a short, 60-day legislative session.

"I have just one word for the session and this body," Gov. Ricketts said. "Wow! Wow, what fantastic work you have done in this short, 60-day session."

Historic work that will have generational impact.”

Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) leadership and staff worked diligently prior to and during the session to put into action the power plays necessary to execute NC member priorities. The shining star that resulted was LB873. For those following along during session, the procedural gymnastics and political power plays utilized by NC staff and allies to advance the largest tax relief package in Nebraska's history were exactly what put our crew in "boss cow" position at the front lines of the legislature.

LB873 delivers \$3.4 billion of additional tax relief to Nebraskans through tax year 2027. For context, LB873 provides 12 times more tax relief than any tax relief bill passed prior to the Ricketts' administration. This bill provides an estimated \$886 million annually for property tax relief for all Nebraskans. Specifically, this bill secures \$681 million for property taxes paid to K-12 schools by putting a floor under the current refundable income tax credits created in 2020 and adjusts the Property Tax Incentive Act by including \$205 million more in relief for property taxes paid to community colleges. Tax savings for property taxes paid to community colleges will be phased in over five years and are estimated to grow from 20 percent to 60 percent of the property taxes paid. Property tax relief in both categories will increase based on property valuation growth up to 5 percent annually to mirror average inflation.

Status of NC 2022 Legislative Priority Pass Bills

LB723 Briese

Change provisions relating to the calculation of tax credits under the Nebraska Property Tax Incentive Act.

- Amended into LB873.
- Signed into law by Gov. Ricketts.

LB783 McDonnell

Appropriate federal funds to the Department of Economic Development for the beef processing industry.

- Amended into LB1014 at \$20 million.
- Signed into law by Gov. Ricketts.

LB953 J. Cavanaugh

Change provisions relating to open burning permits and provide limitations on liability and nuisance relating to land-management burning.

- Remains in committee; will not advance this session.

LB1160 Wishart

Appropriate federal funds to the Department of Environment and Energy for reverse osmosis systems.

- Amended into LB1014 at \$4 million.
- Signed into law by Gov. Ricketts.

CONTINUED)

Additionally, LB873 reduces income taxes over the next five years by lowering the individual income tax rate from 6.84 percent to 5.84 percent and lowering the corporate income tax rate

from 7.1 percent to 5.84 percent. It also eliminates income taxes on social security income.

That's not all! Nebraska Cattlemen saw success on nearly all measures designated as priority bills, in addition to other bills of interest to our members. While we didn't see 100 percent success, we employed the necessary power plays to expend political capital where neces-

sary to advance bills that would have the largest impact for our members.

We cannot quantify the level of gratitude we have for members who took time to testify, call or write their senators, travel to meetings and take late night and/or early morning phone calls. It has truly been an honor to represent member policy this session! ■ Ng ■

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST TO NEBRASKA CATTLEMEN PASSED THIS SESSION AND SIGNED BY GOV. RICKETTS DUE TO EFFORTS OF NEBRASKA CATTLEMEN LEADERSHIP AND STAFF:

- LB1261 Murman – Adopt the Nebraska Higher Blend Tax Credit Act and change tax credit provisions under the ImagiNE Nebraska Act and the Nebraska Advantage Rural Development Act.
- LB848 and LB848A Halloran – Change provisions of the Animal Health and Disease Control Act relating to catastrophic livestock mortality.
- LB805 Hughes – Change provisions of the Black-Tailed Prairie Dog Management Act, the Nebraska Wheat Resources Act and the Noxious Weed Control Act.
- LB984 Moser – Change sales and use tax collection fees. (Included LB941 – Provide a sales and use tax exemption for net wrap.)
- LB1144 Friesen – Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Telecommunications Regulation Act and the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act.
- LB873 Friesen – Change provisions relating to corporate and individual income taxes, taxation of social security benefits and property tax credits.
- LB1014 Hilgers – Appropriate Federal Funds allocated to the state of Nebraska pursuant to the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.
- LB1015 Hilgers – The Perkins County Canal Act.
- LB758 Brandt – Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Farm-to-School Program Act.



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welfare concerns regarding beef. Over the course of our stay, my mom and I shared pieces of our story and what true beef production looked like. By week's end, she wanted pictures of the cows and reports from the show. We left her with a new perspective on animal agriculture and an interest in putting beef back on her plate.

One of the hotel staff noted our non-business attire and strange hours and started asking questions.

While reflecting on the many ways the beef community has poured into my life, I realize how incredibly unique the beef industry is in its commitment to young people. I am confident that agriculture can grow youth and leaders in a way nothing else can.

Our early morning interactions throughout the week revealed that she had been recruited to a vegetarian lifestyle – influenced by a documentary claiming adverse health risks and

This experience shaped my understanding of the importance of each of my interactions with consumers. It was the start of my journey to become a beef advocate. Ultimately, these personal interactions can do a lot to either erase or confirm what consumers have already heard and believe. So, what is the beef industry doing to prepare youth to be that influential voice? To build up its next generation of leaders? From my experience, they are doing a lot.

While reflecting on the many ways the beef community has poured into my life, I realize how incredibly unique the beef industry is in its commitment to young people. I am confident that agriculture can grow youth and leaders in a way nothing else can. The work ethic. The perseverance. The drive to serve and be part of something greater than yourself. This industry has created remarkable programming to equip, encourage and support its next

CONTINUED)

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generation of leaders, including junior breed organizations, youth ambassador programs, travel and tour opportunities, and leadership development conferences, just to name a few.

I was blessed to be involved in state and national junior breed associations, which allow juniors like me to serve in leadership positions and develop public speaking skills, salesmanship traits and a network of passionate cattlemen from across the country.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) afforded me a host of new opportunities. Livestock judging developed my decision-making skills and the ability to defend my decisions. Block and Bridle gave me the chance to plan and host industry-related events like the 101st National Block and Bridle Convention. The Nebraska Beef Industry Scholars program allowed me to stay up-to-date on industry issues, understand policy and coordinate the Nebraska Beef Summit. The network among UNL and other ag entities provide incredible internship opportunities like mine with the U.S. Meat Export Federation, exploring international beef marketing.

As I prepare to graduate with degrees in animal science and agricultural and environmental sciences communication, I see the value the beef industry has placed on educating the next generation. I was honored and humbled to receive the 2021 Nebraska Beef State Scholarship – just one example of the financial commitment from beef organizations such as the Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation.

I can't begin to express my gratitude for your investment in me as a future leader of the beef industry. The many opportunities and experiences I have had the pleasure of being a part of were all driven, funded or supported by the beef partners in this state and around the country. Thank you to the beef family for your intense dedication to ensuring a promising future for those of us who are passionate about continuing our legacy in beef production. Let's all look to have that positive interaction with the consumer we meet today! ■NC■

Nebraska Cattlemen Events

PAC Committee Seeks Donations

There has not been a more important time for the beef industry to be politically engaged. As Nebraska's urban population steadily grows, beef producers will continue to face challenges in the state legislature. Funds raised by the Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) state Political Action Committee (PAC) allow Nebraska's beef producers to have their voices heard by state legislators and government officials. The NC state PAC is working hard to raise funds by hosting events quarterly around the state. The committee is seeking donations for silent and live auctions. Suggested items include restaurant certificates, travel packages, sporting and event tickets, home decor and themed baskets. Only Nebraska Cattlemen members are eligible to

donate to the state PAC. Save the date for PAC in the Pasture on Aug. 9 at the Kraye Angus Ranch in Mullen.

Farmer-Stockman Summer Tour

The Farmer-Stockman Council has teamed up with Platte Valley Cattlemen to host the upcoming summer tour on Monday, June 20. Scheduled stops are Holsteins Unlimited, Adam Pieper and Kit Held Seed & Chemical in the Leigh area. More information will be sent out with times and locations. Farmer-Stockman Council members are asked to RSVP at info@necattlemen.org or by calling Bonita Lederer, NC director of producer education, at (402) 450-0223. ■NC■

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Why Membership?

By Jessica Rudolph
NC Director of Membership-Retention

Nebraska Cattlemen Supports Youth



Nebraska Cattlemen has no shortage of ways in which it supports, champions, mentors and develops youth into adult, active and contributing members of the agricultural community. Below are a few choice examples.

Exeter Feeders and Breeders

The Exeter Feeders and Breeders celebrated its 80th Feeders Day Banquet this year with a full day of activities. The festivities commenced with a fun run the morning of March 26. Following the fun run, the affiliate held a workshop for FFA students. Members from the Wilber-Clatonia, Milford, Exeter-Milligan-Friend and Fillmore Central FFA chapters attended. The event's purpose was to provide students with the chance to present to agricultural professionals. The students practiced speeches and presentations for Nebraska FFA State Convention. Farmers, ranchers and business professionals from Exeter Feeders and Breeders watched the presentations and asked questions. The students also provided updates on the activities happening in their chapters.

Additionally, the Exeter Feeders and Breeders purchased a Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) student membership for each workshop participant. Youth under the age of 24 are eligible for NC student membership. Students can leverage their membership by attending meetings, networking with professionals, voting in committees and participating in youth events. The FFA students learned about the opportunity and importance of being involved with NC.

"The idea to purchase student memberships came from NC staff. We

thought, instead of going on tours, we could invest in youth. We are going to continue the FFA workshop for years to come; it was well received. Youth are the champions of the future of the ag industry," says Cory Rains, past president of Exeter Feeders and Breeders.

94th Nebraska FFA State Convention

The 94th Nebraska FFA State Convention occurred in Lincoln April 6-8, 2022. Nearly 5,000 FFA members attended to compete in contests and experience the first in-person convention since 2019. The convention theme was "Empower." NC is proud to sponsor awards that empower youth to learn about agriculture.

Nebraska Cattlemen sponsored the Beef Production-Placement proficiency award, which is for students employed at a beef cattle operation. The award focuses on a student's Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE), which is an individualized project that encourages students to explore career areas. The Beef Production-Placement award winner was Josey Booth of the Neligh-Oakdale Chapter. She will be representing Nebraska at the National FFA Convention in October. Josey is employed at her family's feedlot and enjoys sorting cattle, loading trucks and record keeping.

"I am very proud to be competing at National FFA Convention in this award area. I am excited to represent Nebraska as a woman in a male-dominated industry," Booth says. "I liked putting this project together and seeing how I've grown over the years."

After graduation, Booth will remain working at the feedlot while finishing college at Northeast Community College. She wants to grow her cow herd and hopes to own and operate a feedlot in the future.

NC also sponsors the Overall Livestock Management award. The Livestock Management contest tests students on livestock production knowledge. The competition includes beef cattle, dairy cattle, equine, poultry, sheep and swine. The students are tested by identifying feedstuffs, interpreting genetic information, demonstrating quality assurance tactics and displaying marketing and business knowledge. Students also must identify key individuals in government positions and membership organizations, including Nebraska Cattlemen. The winner of the 2022 Livestock Management contest was the Shelton FFA Chapter.

During convention, I presented a workshop about Nebraska Cattlemen. As a former Nebraska FFA state officer, I always enjoy interacting with students. Fifty FFA members attended the workshop. The workshop's objectives were:

1. Learn about the beef cattle industry's importance to Nebraska;
2. Understand the structure and purpose of Nebraska Cattlemen; and
3. Discuss current beef industry issues.

The students were fired up to learn about issues in the beef industry. We discussed NC's priority bills in the legislature and efforts on the federal level. The students learned that NC lobbyists work on policies that come from the membership. I presented the NC student membership opportunity to FFA members. Hopefully, I empowered them to take action on issues in the agriculture industry.

Youth in Nebraska are the future leaders of the beef cattle industry. It is imperative to expose youth to Nebraska Cattlemen and encourage them to get involved. To apply for student membership or learn more about membership offerings, visit <https://nebrascacattlemen.org/members/>. ■ NC ■

Calendar

June

- 3-4 Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska Inc., Weeping Water
9 Beef Ambassador Contest, Valentine
9-10 NC Midyear Meeting, Valentine
12 Northeast Nebraska Cattlemen Steak Fry, Wayne
16-18 7 Triangle 7 Cattle Co. AI Training, Akron, Colo.
20 Platte Valley Cattlemen & NC Farmer-Stockman Tour
20 Sandhills Cattlemen Affiliate Dismal Day, Mullen

July

- 11 BQA Certification, Chadron
12 BQA Certification, Bassett
12 BQA Certification, Broken Bow
13 BQA Certification, North Platte
14 BQA Certification, Kearney
14-16 American National CattleWomen "Wired" Event, Grand Island
25-28 Cattle Industry Summer Business Meeting, Reno, Nev.

August

- 2 Cattle Edge Webinar with FNBO, online
9 NC Board of Directors Meeting, Lincoln
9 PAC in the Pasture, Mullen

October

- 3 BQA Certification, Ogallala
4 BQA Certification, Lexington
5 BQA Certification, Geneva
6 BQA Certification, Columbus
7 BQA Certification, O'Neill
7 BQA Certification, Bridgeport
11 NC Board of Directors Meeting, Lincoln

December

- 12 BQA Certification, Norfolk
13 BQA Certification, Beatrice
13 BQA Certification, St. Paul
14 BQA Certification, McCook
14 BQA Certification, Thedford

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Vice President for Agriculture, University of Nebraska,
Harlan Vice Chancellor, Institute of Agriculture and Natural
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Welcoming Students, Serving Nebraska

We just wrapped up our spring semester, and what a semester it was. From January until mid-May, East Campus buzzed with activity, as events and activities returned to pre-pandemic levels, and our faculty, staff and students doubled down on their classes, research and Extension work.

Our campus was particularly excited to welcome student conferences, conventions and competitions. We were thrilled to host the 101st National Block and Bridle Convention in late March at the Nebraska Innovation Campus and in the Animal Science Complex. At the same time, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) in Curtis hosted the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture National Judging Contest. Collectively, these events brought 800 future agriculture leaders from across the country to our state.

Students who attended the judging contest, which was held in North Platte, participated in judging events in crops, dairy and equine management, among other topics. Participants came from 42 colleges across the country.

Students who attended the Block and Bridle Convention spent a day touring agricultural operations in Nebraska and heard from a wide range of speakers, including University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) faculty members and Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program graduates. Both groups got a taste of Nebraska agriculture and Nebraska hospitality, and we hope at least some

decide to return to Nebraska, either to continue their education or contribute their talents to our ag industry.

We were also thrilled that the Nebraska FFA State Convention returned to Lincoln for the first time in two years. More than 6,000 students – an all-time record – attended. They competed in contests, attended a career fair and learned about many aspects of leadership and agriculture. Some high school seniors even attended a signing ceremony for students who are bound for NCTA or UNL's Institute of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (IANR) come this fall.

Campus excitement wasn't limited to just student events these past few months. We also were able to make several announcements about future projects, some of which have been in the works for months or even longer.

In April, JBS announced it was giving the University of Nebraska Foundation \$700,000 for construction of the Feedlot Innovation Center (FIC) at the Eastern Nebraska Research, Extension and Education Center near Mead. This gift, along with gifts from several other donors, including John and Beth Klosterman of David City and Farm Credit Services of America, will allow for expansion of a world-class facility designed to attract innovators from the public and private sectors who have potential value-added solutions for feedyards. By design, the FIC is a technology and innovation proving ground that will place a premium on

private-public partnerships. Construction is set to begin later this year and calls for two cattle confinement barns, 18 commercial-sized open-lot pens, a feed- and water-intake technology barn and a facility designed to study animal welfare associated with various equipment used for animal handling.

Once the project is complete, it will be an amazing research facility for our faculty and students. But this project is about much more than UNL. The Feedlot Innovation Center will create real-world facilities to test new precision technology, solve environmental challenges facing the beef cattle industry and improve cattle performance and welfare while comparing different environments and housing systems. Ultimately, it will serve as a testbed that industry partners, producers, entrepreneurs and others can use to try new prototypes and ideas and see what works.

Similarly, we announced plans in February to build the Small Meat Processing Plant of the Future, which we envision as a multi-disciplinary center to strengthen the meat industry in the region. The plant will be located in and alongside existing UNL Animal Science facilities and will serve as a processing hub for local and regional cattle and swine producers, as well as a prototype for other small processing facilities.

Plans call for facility and equipment upgrades to the Loeffel Meat Laboratory harvest and processing facility on East Campus, to hire and train staff to maintain consistent harvest operations and establish a suite of resources – including a range of workforce training programs – available to those looking to set up or expand small processing operations.

Like the Feedlot Innovation Center, the Small Plant of the Future will bring together UNL students, faculty and staff with cattle producers and industry partners. This kind of collaboration is what we should be doing as a land-grant university. I am hopeful both projects can be examples of how IANR and UNL projects can serve Nebraska. ■

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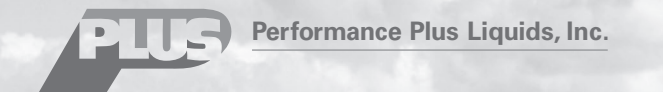
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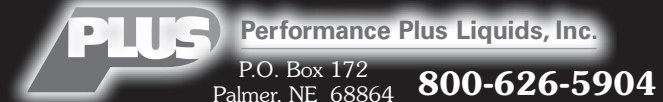
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