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# NEBRASKA CATTLEMAN

The ONLY publication dedicated to the Nebraska cattle industry.



June/July 2023 • Volume 79 • Issue 5

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# NEBRASKA CATTLEMAN

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## PRODUCTION

BluePrint Media LLC  
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PO Box 427 | Timnath, CO 80547

*Editor* | Lisa Bard

*Managing Editor* | Jessie Topp-Becker

*Copy Editor* | Larisa Willrett

*Designer* | Megan Sajbel Field

*Materials Coordinator* | Megan Sajbel Field

*Administration* | Leslie McKibben

## CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Bill Coe | Kristian Rennert

Meghan Anderson | Bob Rooney

## STATE | REGIONAL ADVERTISING

Amber Coleman

Mobile (402) 340-1588

acoleman@necattlemen.org

## NATIONAL ADVERTISING

The Powell Group | Wendy McFarland

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## LINCOLN

4611 Cattle Drive | Lincoln, NE 68521

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<sup>1</sup>Stromberg BE, et al. *Cooperia punctata*: Effect on cattle productivity? *Vet Parasitol.* 2012;183(3-4):284-291.

<sup>2</sup>Merck Animal Health National FECRT Database.



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### UNL REPRESENTATIVE

Tom Burkey, Lincoln, (402) 472-6423

\* member of the Executive & Finance Committee

## NEBRASKA CATTLEMEN STAFF

### LINCOLN OFFICE

4611 Cattle Drive, Lincoln, NE 68521  
Phone (402) 475-2333 | Fax (402) 475-0822  
Email [nc@necattlemen.org](mailto:nc@necattlemen.org) | [www.nebraskacattlemen.org](http://www.nebraskacattlemen.org)  
Executive Vice President | Laura Field  
[lfield@necattlemen.org](mailto:lfield@necattlemen.org)

Vice President of Operations | Lee Weide  
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Executive Assistant | Patty Goes  
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# Succession Planning with Non-Family Partners

By Callie Curley, Contributing Writer

**“**I’ve told my kids since they were young: ‘Never sell the ground.’”

That’s a line Brandon Dirkschneider, managing principal/president of Insurance Design Management, hears often from landowners before they’ve taken the first steps toward planning for the next generation on their farm.

But what if your kids don’t want to manage the farm after you’re gone? What if you don’t have any children at all?

According to Dirkschneider, “That’s when you’re looking not so much at a succession plan, but an exit strategy.”

can all begin working toward the same goals.”

Changing the course of the farm and ranch operation often requires a willingness to change and to face some truths about ourselves and the situation at hand.

“We don’t like perceiving we have less control over something we’ve spent our lives building, and there is no doubt that these conversations can be hard,” Dirkschneider says. “But making these plans actually ensures you have more control than you would without having a plan in place.”

## Agree on the Goals

Starting the conversation involves personal reflection by everyone involved before they can commit to agreeing on the goals and how those goals should be carried out.

If there are children who don’t wish to manage the farm, “The matriarch and patriarch of the family need to be on the same page and in agreement with the goals of the process,” Dirkschneider says. If there are children who don’t wish to manage the farm, they should still be part of the conversation to best understand the “why.”

Allan Vyhnaelek, recently retired University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension educator who spent years focused on farm transition and succession planning, encourages landowners to view their exit strategy as being completely separate from their “retirement.”

“Many of us put off planning for the future because we don’t have any interest in retiring,” Vyhnaelek says. “Planning for the future is not rushing anyone into retirement. It is preparing our family and our assets for the inevitable end of our lives.”

## What’s Most Important?

According to Dirkschneider, assessing what assets should be retained and what is no longer needed is a good place to start.

“The first thing you should look at is your equipment,” he says.

Many farm families have taken advantage of Bonus 179 depreciation for equipment they’ve purchased in the past several years, allowing them to avoid paying higher federal income taxes. Not having a next generation means



Regardless of whether the next generation is family or not, the whole process has to start with a conversation.

## Start the Conversation

Rest assured. This first step is almost definitely the hardest.

“Transition means change, and change is almost always scary for us,” Dirkschneider says. “Once we get these first conversations out of the way, we

That’s because, in Nebraska, landowners who have not established an estate and succession plan at the time of their death are subject to intestacy laws, which predetermine how your assets are distributed and to whom, without consideration to your family’s needs or situation.

Dirkschneider’s question for all landowners: “Who would you rather decide how your assets are going to be distributed? Some predetermined state statute or you?”

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that equipment won't be needed and selling means needing to recapture all the bonus depreciation as ordinary income and pay the respective federal and state income tax in the year the sale takes place.

"Suddenly, you're in the highest tax bracket and losing the majority to taxes," Dirkschneider says.

So, how can you plan for your exit while minimizing the tax liability you'll face?

## Work With Professionals

Whether you haven't developed any legal documentation of estate planning or it's been prepared for decades and not reviewed since, there is undeniable value in working with a team of professionals who will ensure your documents are in line with ongoing changes made by legislators and serving the best interests of you and your family.

"Every time legislators are in session, it seems like something changes that affects the validity of these important agreements," Dirkschneider says. "Working with a team helps to protect your assets and ensure your intentions are carried out."

# PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE WITH NCIG

Managing a successful operation takes time, strategy and planning years into the future. Estate planning and succession planning is equally important. Family farms account for 98 percent of U.S. farms, but only 10 percent of second-generation farms survive to the third generation. Unfortunately, more than half of operators planning to retire in the next five years do not have a succession plan.

Leaving an equal share of the farm or ranch to each child may not always be feasible, especially since operations are asset rich and cash poor. Life insurance benefits can help provide a more equitable inheritance, allowing children who are not taking over the farm to receive their fair share. Children who are taking over

the farm can purchase a policy to fund the purchase of the farm.

It's crucial to discuss plans with your children, explaining the reasoning behind the choices made and the care taken to be fair. By planning ahead, communicating with family members and seeking professional advice, you can help ensure a smoother transition of ownership and a more sustainable future for your operation.

NCIG offers Nebraska beef producers risk management services through a partnership between Nebraska Cattlemen and FNIC. Members have access to a variety of carriers with competitive rates and support from licensed professionals in claims, loss control, safety and compliance. Learn more at [nebrascacattlemen.org/ncig](http://nebrascacattlemen.org/ncig). ■ NC ■

## Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

"When there's a problem in farm succession planning, it's always either bad communication or no communication at all," Vyhnales says.

Whether the stakeholders in your operation are your family or non-family partners, clear and consistent communication is of the utmost importance. This includes timelines, phases of transition and being upfront about the financials and other business details you may be accustomed to keeping to yourself.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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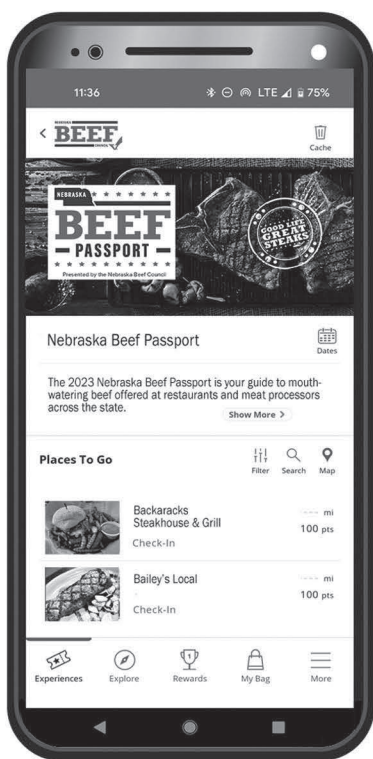
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## THE MANY WAYS TO CELEBRATE BEEF MONTH

May is Beef Month, and we are saluting the state's largest industry with campaigns to engage with beef-loving consumers. The third annual Nebraska Beef Passport program kicked off May 1, encouraging people to visit the 29 restaurants and 17 meat processors across the state that are known for offering outstanding beef.



Passport holders will enjoy special offers from select locations and earn points when purchasing beef products. The points can be used to redeem prizes and visits qualify as an entry into the grand prize beef bundle give-a-way. The program runs from May 1 through September 30.

Share your photos and experiences this summer through our social media campaign themed, “The Best Stories Start with Beef.”

Whether it's a Father's Day barbeque, a meal at an iconic Nebraska summertime event or just a simple picnic in the park, consumers can share how beef is a part of their summertime story. Entries can be shared through Facebook or Instagram by tagging @nebraskabeef and using the hashtag #NEBeefStories. Winners will be selected at random to receive prizes from the Nebraska Beef Council.



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## Foster Your Relationships

"If you're a landowner, especially in agriculture, you're probably a long-standing member of your community," Dirkschneider says. "You get to know the people around you, and you know who you trust and align with. Those are the people you need in your corner for these big decisions."

Leaning on those connections to identify someone who could manage your farm for the next generation can be as simple as asking if they know anyone seeking an opportunity and who might be compatible with your management style.

If no one in your community comes to mind as a potential future partner, there are other resources available. Nebraska Land Link, <https://cap.unl.edu/landlink>,

a joint venture by Nebraska Extension and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Agricultural Economics, is an online tool that allows landowners and land seekers to connect and form partnerships.

**"When there's a  
problem in farm  
succession planning,  
it's always either bad  
communication or no  
communication at all."  
— Allan Vyhnaelek**

What's most important in this process is setting (and clearly communicating) the terms of the agreement.

"Matching with a land seeker is not the same as hiring a laborer," Vyhnaelek says. "You'll need to work together to define the terms of your agreement, including a testing phase, a management phase and what future transfer will look like."

## It's Never too Early to Plan

Even if you see yourself farming for another 10 or more years, there is value in starting the conversations and getting plans in place.

"With just three to five years, you can plan your exit proactively and mitigate the tax liabilities associated with your exit," Dirkschneider says. "Waiting leaves you open to the risk of the unexpected, and will almost undoubtedly be a higher financial cost."

It also allows time for those involved to think through important tactical questions. Managing the sale of equipment, prepaid input costs, sale of grain in storage and managing the transition from active to passive operator, or bringing on a tenant to continue farming the land are all topics worthy of thoughtful discussion. ■ **NG** ■

## FAILING TO PLAN IS PLANNING TO FAIL

Five reasons farm and ranch transition plans fail:

1. No current estate or succession plan
2. Inadequate estate or succession plan
3. Insufficient capitalization
4. Failure to properly prepare the next generation
5. Failure to communicate and understand the "why"

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# Bruning Joins NC Board

By Jessica Rudolph, NC Director of Membership-Retention

## Nebraska Cattlemen Board of Directors

The Nebraska Cattlemen Board of Directors is comprised of 35 members who dedicate their time and experience to leading our association. Some may be curious about the makeup of the 35 board positions – here's an overview of the positions on the board.

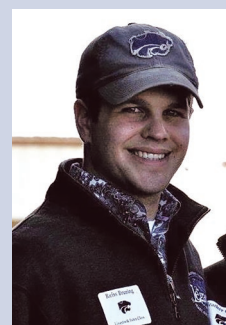
The NC Board's three officers are president, president-elect and vice president. The immediate past president serves as a board member. The Member Services Committee is included on the board of directors and includes the Member Services chair and a vice chair for each of the nine NC membership regions. The Allied Industries Council chair provides one unified vote on the board, representing NC associate members.

A chair and vice chair from the Seedstock, Cow-Calf, Farmer Stockman and

Feedlot councils hold board positions. The six Nebraska Cattlemen policy committees are represented by a chair and chair-elect. There are vice chairs for each committee that may vote in the absence of the chair or chair-elect.

The NC Board also includes ex-officio members. NC staff serve as the secretary and treasurer in an ex-officio capacity. Representatives from the Nebraska Livestock Marketing Association, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Nebraska Extension are also ex-officio board members. The board may have other ex-officio members, as warranted. No person may serve on the board of directors for more than four consecutive years unless they are serving as an elected officer.

A complete list of current board members may be found on page 8 of this issue.



## Reiss Bruning, Seedstock Council Chair

Reiss Bruning comes from a diver-

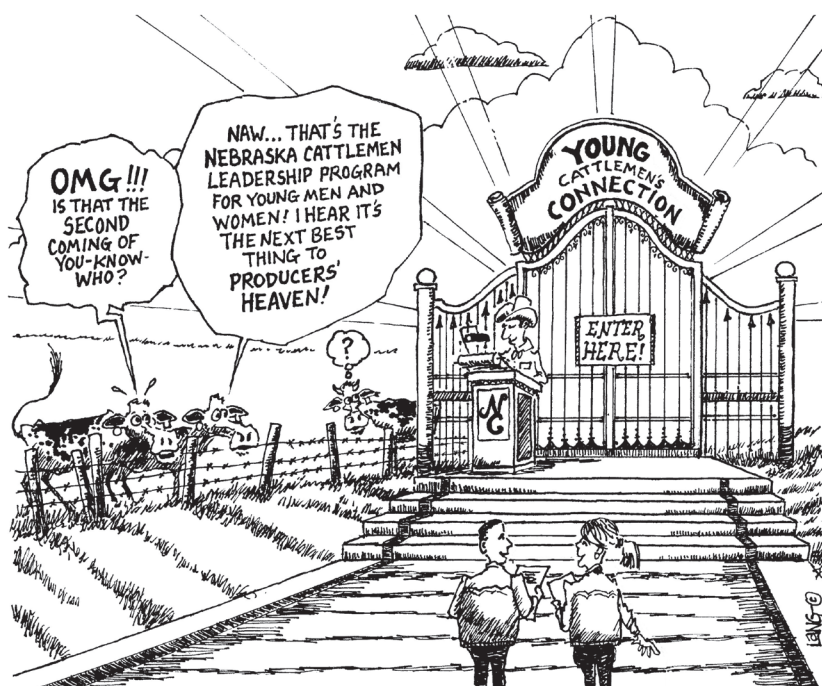
sified livestock background and is serving as the Seedstock Council Chair on the Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) Board of Directors. He describes their operation as conception to carcass. The Brunings host the annual Bruning Farms Production Sale, where they sell approximately 75 bulls each year. Bruning and his wife, Heather, live at the family feedlot near Bruning.

Bruning studied for two years at Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and earned a degree in animal science from Kansas State University. His favorite part about being involved in the beef industry is utilizing data to create a uniform product. He appreciates seeing start-to-finish genetics and wants to create an efficient and high-quality product. Bruning was first exposed to Nebraska Cattlemen by his grandfather and father who took him to NC Annual Conventions. He is a past participant of the NC Young Cattlemen's Connections and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association Young Cattlemen's Conference.

Bruning's favorite cut of beef is a rib-eye and his favorite side with it is a strip steak. In his free time, he enjoys traveling with his wife to national parks, being outdoors and watching football. He has served in other leadership roles and is currently on the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition Board and is his county fair's beef superintendent. Some of his mentors are Bill Rishel, Craig Uden and Brad Fahrmeier.

"Nebraska Cattlemen is unified progression," Bruning says. "I am excited to get seedstock breeders together to inform and educate customers about staying progressive and adding value to their beef." ■ NC ■

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*Big Mitchell*

**SAV EMBLYNETTE 5622**  
A maternal sister to the dam of lot 277.

**SAV EMBLYNETTE 2327**  
A maternal sister to the dam of lot 277.

**SAV HARVESTOR 0338**  
B-Date: 4-18-2010  
C A R Duke 104#  
S A V Blackcap May 4136  
S A V Net Worth 4200  
S A V Emblynette 7749  
Dam's WR 2/108  
Grandam's WR 6/114

**SAV EMBLYNETTE DIAMOND 6377**  
The Pathfinder grandam of lot 277.

**SAV HARVESTOR 0338**  
Bull 16687737  
C A R Tracker 904#  
C A R Miss Raindancer 421#  
S A V 8180 Traveler 004#  
S A V May 2397#

**SAV HARVESTOR 0338**  
Bull 16687737  
C A R Tracker 904#  
C A R Miss Raindancer 421#  
S A V 8180 Traveler 004#  
S A V May 2397#

BIRTH	WEAN	Rank in breed Top 1%	MILK	Rank in breed Top 5%	YEARLING	Rank in breed Top 1%	BW	10/25/16 Weight
+5.7	+68		+29		+120		87	892

205 WT 988 365 WT 1685 4.62

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• His outstanding Net Worth dam earned a weaning ratio of 108 on her first two calves. A daughter sold in the 2010 SAV Sale for \$8000 to Denny Topf in IA.

• His Pathfinder grandam continues to be a profit center at 15+ years of age. She has 20 daughters retained in the SAV herd and 109 direct progeny have sold in past SAV sales for an average of \$4200 to cowmen in Canada, Australia and Argentina.

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SAV **HARVESTOR** 0338  
#\*16687737  
4-18-2010 to 2-21-2023



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# I KNOW YOUR WELL

## *Program Empowers Students to Understand Local Water Quality*

By Ann Briggs, Public Relations and Engagement Coordinator, Nebraska Water Center

Access to quality water is critical for ranches and feedyards. Testing well water not only clues ranchers into potential problems with their water, but it can also indicate whether it is safe for people in their community to consume as well. Know Your Well is a program used to test well water across Nebraska at no cost to the community, while teaching local high school students valuable skills.

### The Know Your Well Program

From its inception in 2016, Know Your Well has brought citizen science into classrooms not only to increase domestic well-water testing throughout Nebraska, but also to highlight the vulnerability of groundwater quality and the importance of safe drinking water for rural residents and communities. Know Your Well is a Nebraska Environmental Trust-funded program training high school students to sample and test well-water quality.

In the past seven years, Know Your Well has been implemented in more than 28 school districts throughout the state. The program is coordinated through the school's agricultural and environmental science classes in partnership with local Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) and the Water Sciences Laboratory at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

(UNL). Other major program sponsors include Papio-Missouri River NRD and the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

Participating schools receive educational materials, sampling equipment, colorimetric testing kits and training to conduct domestic well sampling and water testing. The teachers receive a stipend, and participating students can receive scholarships from UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources as well as several participating NRDs.

Through Know Your Well, students survey and test local, privately owned wells for nitrate, nitrite, metals, anions, pesticides and coliform bacteria. Participants test these water quality metrics in the classroom and collect a second sample that is sent to the Water Sciences Laboratory for quality-assured testing. The results from the Water Sciences Laboratory tests are sent back to the participating schools, who then communicate the results to the well owners.

Students are encouraged to compare their test kit measurements with the laboratory tests and develop research projects about local well-water quality that include observations made during sampling. Many classes present their findings at science fairs, Nebraska Junior Academy of Science meetings, and city council and NRD Board meetings.

For many rural school districts, students will test their own families' wells. This provides valuable data for their own

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Launched in 2016, the Know Your Well program has brought citizen science into classrooms to increase domestic well-water testing throughout Nebraska.

In the past seven years, Know Your Well has been implemented in more than 28 school districts across Nebraska.

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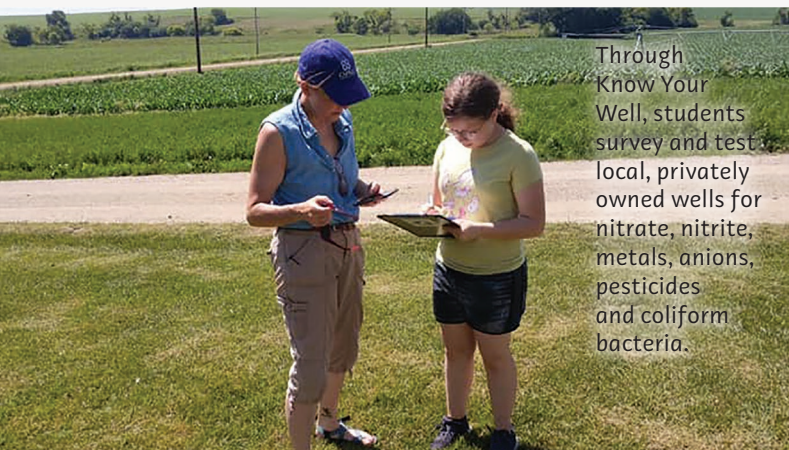
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use and makes the activity more engaging for the students because they have a personal stake in the test results.

Sara Brock, graduate research assistant with Know Your Well, spoke on the impact the program has for students and the community. “The community is giving students the chance to be trained and practice science literacy for decision-making using the real-world, quantitative values of their local resource,” Brock says. “Know Your Well supports learning and research in their immediate community while training students to make decisions on data that relates to them.”

If a well owner was to send a sample to a commercial lab, the same combination of testing would cost about \$300 to \$400. Know Your Well provides water-quality testing to well owners for free, while allowing well owners to receive high-quality results and providing experiential learning opportunities for students. Well-owner reports include recommended guidelines for drinking water. If a well owner is interested in being involved in Know Your Well, they can ask their local high school or NRD if the program is active in their area.



Through Know Your Well, students survey and test local, privately owned wells for nitrate, nitrite, metals, anions, pesticides and coliform bacteria.

## Future Growth Opportunities

Know Your Well has continued to grow over the years. Each new phase has allowed the program to expand in scope and impact through various grant opportunities. Know Your Well is now entering its third stage, led by the Papio-Missouri River NRD with partnerships between University of Nebraska at Kearney, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Chadron State College, Nebraska Water Center and Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute and 15 NRDs. Grant funding for phase three is primarily from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy. The latest grant provides funding to equip more than 50 Nebraska schools with Know Your Well training, kits and laboratory test results to highlight domestic well-water quality through multiple NRDs.

More than 1,000 private wells will eventually be tested. Students collect land use and other data to help determine vulnerability to contamination. Well owners are supplied with test results and provided with information to help them evaluate their water quality. Know Your Well is helping well owners and future water scientists in Nebraska know more about ground water in our state.

## Going Digital

The third phase includes additional science communication and educational resources for the program, as well as a partnership with UNL’s School of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) to develop a new mobile app called a progressive web application (PWA) that improves data collection for students and teachers. The traditional pen and paper data collection methods work but are cumbersome, time

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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consuming and increase chances of error in reporting. A CSE senior design team has been working with the Know Your Well research team throughout the 2022-2023 academic year to design this custom system.

Improving digital data collection will help Know Your Well make their data more accessible in the future. The

long-term goal is to develop a digital dashboard that synthesizes the data collected. The dashboard would make water quality data publicly accessible while still maintaining well owner confidentiality. This will help communities access current water quality data that is relevant to their specific part of the state.

## Know Your Well Benefits Students and Their Communities

Know Your Well is currently implemented in 15 NRDs across the state and is growing to an interdisciplinary team of nine different agencies. As the program continues to expand, Brock and the team are focused on providing valuable experiences for students. They plan to provide additional science communication opportunities for schools to share their data at statewide scientific conferences.

“The goal is to make this as inexpensive, relevant and engaging for local communities and schools to run as possible, and to make environmental chemistry and water quality data accessible,” Brock says.

Know Your Well is evolving to represent the truly interdisciplinary nature of hydrogeological sciences and management while opening doors for students to visualize many possible careers in groundwater and natural resources sciences. Brock summarizes the value to both students and their communities, saying, “By participating in a real science project that generates real data, and by evaluating the different methods of ‘classroom’ vs. ‘lab’ science, students can see those things aren’t so different. They get the opportunity to communicate that data to their peers and community.”

Know Your Well is an educational gem for Nebraska’s natural resources and on the forefront of citizen science research aimed at domestic well-water quality. As more schools participate, the team can grow groundwater science literacy at the high school level and observe the impact student scientists have on local management practices and the adoption of conservation behaviors. By giving students the tools and agency to participate in water quality discussions now, they may become leaders in groundwater stewardship later in their professional and personal lives. ■ NC ■





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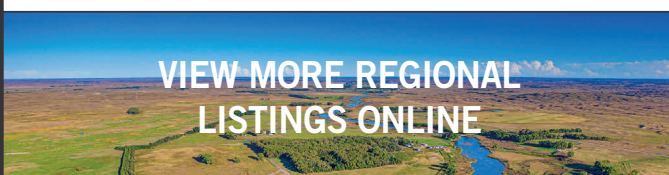
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The theme for the month of April was “Cattlemen at the Capitol” or “Boots on the Hill.” As a staff member, these are the days you live for at the Capitol! As Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) members, your engagement and voice during these events are vital in showcasing to policy makers what is happening in the countryside.

LB243, the property tax relief package! We ended the day with senators joining us for an evening meal. The steaks for the event were generously sponsored and cooked by Cuming County Feeders. It was a great day and it is always a privilege to have members advocating for policy changes at the Capitol! I invite all of you to join us for next

year's Cattlemen at the Capitol event!

Toward the end of April, leadership and NC staff set out for Capitol Hill during the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) Legislative Conference. NC President-Elect Jerry Kuenning, NC Vice President Richard Pierce, Eric Hansen and Quentin Dailey represented NC members as we advocated

our priorities on the hill.

In Nebraska, we are fortunate to have a congressional delegation that understands how vitally important the beef cattle industry is to Nebraska and our country. We spent the week meeting with our delegation, numerous agencies and NCBA on important issues facing Nebraska's beef producers.

Nebraska Cattlemen surveyed our members in August 2022 to help establish priorities for the upcoming 2023 Farm Bill. Fun fact – one-third of the current congress has never voted on a Farm Bill. This fact alone makes the education and advocacy process vital as we go through current negotiations

on the 2023 Farm Bill. As a reminder, the NC 2023 Farm Bill priorities are 1) keeping conservation programs voluntary; 2) strengthening risk management programs; 3) supporting disaster programs; and 4) protecting animal health. We also stressed that we oppose a standalone livestock title to be included in the Farm Bill, as it would open our industry up to potential overregulation and harmful mandates.

Another current area of interest we discussed was the Opportunities for Fairness in Farming (OFF) Act. The legislation is sponsored by Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) who has a history of attacking the livestock industry. The bill is being pushed by animal rights activist groups and is a direct attack on all checkoff programs. If enacted, this legislation would unravel widely supported, producer-directed marketing and research programs overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). While in D.C., we asked our delegation to strongly oppose this legislation in both the House and Senate. We debunked the claims made by the proponents of the OFF Act, primarily that checkoff dollars are not used to influence public policy or disparage other ag commodities. This is prohibited in current law, and USDA requires frequent audits of checkoffs and contractors to ensure compliance with this mandate.

As NC members gather at the Nebraska State Capitol or in Washington, D.C., on the Hill, we are reminded how important the grassroots process is in our organization. Thank you to the members who took time out of your busy schedules to advocate for the Nebraska beef cattle industry! Your voice matters on all levels of local, state and federal government. As we look toward the final stretch of the first half of the 108th Legislative session in Nebraska or negotiations in D.C., do not be afraid to reach out with any questions you may have. The Nebraska Cattlemen policy team is ready to be a resource for you and your operation. ■NC■



NC members gather at the Nebraska State Capitol for the annual Cattlemen at the Capitol event.

Cattlemen and women across Nebraska joined us for our annual Cattlemen at the Capitol event in early April. It was a successful day where members listened to Gov. Jim Pillen, Sen. Myron Dorn, Sen. Dave Murman, Nebraska Director of Energy and Environment Jim Macy and Nebraska Director of Agriculture Sherry Vinton. Each individual speaker touched on their legislative priorities, which included continued tax relief, education funding reform and behind-the-scenes insights of how the session is playing out. Participants got to visit with their state senators on NC priorities and witness the general file vote on one of those priority issues –

# NEBRASKA CATTLEMEN WEBSITE ALERT!

Nebraska Cattlemen partnered with MemberClicks to launch a new and improved website! While parts of our website will still be accessible to the public, Nebraska Cattlemen (NC) members can now enjoy exclusive members-only content and perks by logging into the membership portal with a unique username and password. If you are a current NC member with an email in our database, please be on the lookout for our launch email to setup your new username and password. Even if you have not previously submitted your email address to Nebraska Cattlemen, you will have the option to create a member profile with your current email address.

If you have any questions or concerns about the new login process, please call the office at (402) 475-2333. We understand the process of learning new systems can be intimidating, but NC staff is here to answer your questions every step of the way. Your patience during this transition is appreciated as we work to simplify and streamline our membership processes.

Here are some new features available to NC members by logging into their member profile on our new website:

- View upcoming events that you have registered for.
- Access all paid and open membership and Market Reporting Service invoices.
- Renew your membership.
- View if you have auto-renew enabled.
- View previously submitted forms or comments.
- View email history and open emails that were sent to you.
- Manage communication preferences.
- Edit contact information in your profile and all profiles associated with your business. ■ NC ■

The screenshot shows a member profile for 'Mr Cookie Monster'. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Profile, Invoices, Forms I've Taken, Email History, and Continuing. The profile includes a cartoon image of a blue cookie monster, the name 'Mr Cookie Monster', and a link to 'Jump To Profile Details'. Below this, there are fields for 'Joined' (3/20/2022), 'Last Renewal' (indicated by two dashes), and 'Expiration Date' (3/19/2023). To the right, a 'Balance' section shows '\$1,400.00' with a 'View Invoices' button. Below that, the 'Member Status' is 'Active', with a note that membership expires on March 20, 2023, and a 'Renew Now' button. A 'Change Password' link is also present. The 'About Me' section lists contact information: Username (mewantcookies), Contact Name (Cookie Monster), Full Name (Mr Cookie Monster), Organization (Sesame Street), Ice Cream (Cookie Dough), Email - Personal (melovecookies@cookies.co), Email - Additional 1 (None), Phone - work (None), and Address - Default (123 Sesame Street, Manhattan). An 'Edit Profile' button is located next to the 'About Me' section. On the right, a 'My Upcoming Events' section shows an event for 'THURSDAY, DEC 29, 2022' with a balance of \$400.00 and a 'View My Events' button.

An example of what NC members can expect their profile to look like on the association's new website.



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## Why Membership?

By Jessica Rudolph  
NC Director of Membership-Retention

# Arizona Native Finds Community in Nebraska's Beef Industry



called herself the ultrasound queen. She found a passion for reproduction in cattle and discovered a way to see God's creation.

"I enjoy the beef industry because producers can use their own philosophies, but we end up with the same product," McGibbon says. "I enjoy visiting other ranches and learning how to implement new ideas."

When McGibbon was a sophomore in high school, she started prospecting universities to attend. Her father took her to the Cattle Industry Convention & NCBA Trade Show where she met with various colleges. The next summer, she took a road trip to visit colleges. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) was not initially on her radar. She stayed at The Graduate in Lincoln and fell in love with Lincoln's Historic Haymarket, while also enjoying the UNL East Campus. She chose UNL because she could learn all aspects of the beef industry in Nebraska. She is a senior studying animal science with a minor in the Engler Entrepreneurship Program. She hopes to return home to run the ranch and start a reproductive development business alongside the operation.

McGibbon attended the inaugural Young Nebraska Cattlemen-Lincoln meeting. She has served as a director on the Young Nebraska Cattlemen-Lincoln Board and has enjoyed meeting people with a common interest. She says it would be uncommon for her to not be involved with a cattlemen organization. McGibbon attended the 2022 Nebraska Cattlemen Annual Convention and enjoyed the experience. She believes membership organizations are created for a purpose: to help members progress and make changes in their industry. Her family has been involved with the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association, Arizona Farm and Ranch Group, Arizona Farm Bureau and 4-H. In 4-H,

Izzy McGibbon is a Nebraska Cattlemen student member from southern Arizona who grew up working on her family's cow-calf and seedstock Red Angus operation, the Santa Rita Ranch. The ranch contains a diverse Sonoran Desert landscape of mountains, foothills and cacti; the elevation spans from 2,000 to 8,000 feet.

headquarters, and the registered herd is worked through the headquarters facilities once a year. Replacement heifers roam the mountains, while the rest of the herd stays in the valley, allowing cattle to better utilize the rugged terrain and keeping calves from being prey to mountain lions. Horses and mules are used to check cattle on the diverse ter-

rain. The operation also utilizes drones to monitor water and cattle.

The Santa Rita Ranch is made up of U.S. Forest Service lands, Arizona State Trust lands and the Santa Rita Experimental Range, managed by the University of Arizona. Due to endangered species on the ranch, pasture management is a high priority. McGibbon admires traditional ranching practices

but loves integrating progression and tradition.

Branding season is McGibbon's favorite, because she got to take off school and "be a cowgirl for a few days." When she was in high school, they bought an ultrasound machine. She learned how to pregnancy check cows and



Izzy McGibbon grew up working on her family's cow-calf and seedstock Red Angus operation in Arizona.

McGibbon's family has been ranching in Arizona since the late 1880s. Her great-grandfather left a life in the city to purchase the Santa Rita Ranch, and he continued to purchase small ranches to build what exists today. Weaned calves and those kept for a period of backgrounding are kept at the ranch

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

## June

- 1 BQA/BQAT Certification, Ithaca
- 2 BQA/BQAT Certification, Broken Bow
- 2-3 Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska, Pender
- 7 Nebraska Beef Ambassador Contest/Beef Advocacy Training, North Platte
- 7-8 NC Midyear Meeting, North Platte
- 13 Nebraska Stockmanship & Stewardship Program, Norfolk
- 14-16 7 Triangle 7 Cattle Co. AI Training, Akron, Colo.
- 15 Nebraska Stockmanship & Stewardship Program, McCook
- 15 Sandhills Cattle Association Convention & Banquet, Valentine
- 19 Sandhills Affiliate Golf Event, TBD
- 21-22 Sandhills Ranch Expo, Bassett

## July

- 26-Aug. 4 NC Scotland Journey Tour

## August

- 22-23 Certified Angus Beef Feeding Quality Forum, Lincoln

## October

- 23 BQA/BQAT Certification, Bridgeport
- 24 BQA/BQAT Certification, Hyannis
- 25 BQA/BQAT Certification, Lexington
- 26 BQA/BQAT Certification, O'Neill

## December

- 6-8 NC Annual Convention & Trade Show, Kearney
- 12 BQA/BQAT Certification, Beatrice
- 12 BQA/BQAT Certification, Norfolk
- 13 BQA/BQAT Certification, St. Paul
- 14 BQA/BQAT Certification, McCook
- 14 BQA/BQAT Certification, Ogallala

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involvement in other groups and various roles. The industry has provided me with endless opportunities to foster this passion through my involvement

**It is with great honor that I represent the Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation as the recipient of its 2022 Nebraska Beef State Scholarship.**

in the Krutsinger (formerly Nebraska) Beef Industry Scholars program at UNL, the Nebraska Angus Association serving as their state queen, the Nebraska Beef Ambassador program led by the Nebraska CattleWomen, the Young Ne-

WHY MEMBERSHIP? • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

she showed steers, created leatherwork and gained leadership skills.

"I gain insight and connections by being a member of Nebraska Cattlemen and other organizations," McGibbon says. "Don't be afraid to have a good handshake and introduce yourself to people. I've been humbled by connections made through Nebraska Cattlemen."

McGibbon prioritizes following beef industry issues, and she is passionate about water rights, property rights and producer compensation. Growing up, her family had a side business of selling grass-fed beef to consumers. She says there is a niche market for grass-fed beef in Arizona. She enjoys discussing and comparing grass-fed and grain-fed beef. In her free time, McGibbon enjoys watching sports, leatherwork and attending conventions. She enjoys traveling, even if it is to a cattle sale. In addition to the Young Nebraska Cattlemen-Lincoln Board, she is part of the American National CattleWomen Collegiate Beef Advocacy Program. Currently, she is considering attending graduate school and looks forward to her future career. ■ **NC** ■

braska Cattlemen serving as an affiliate director and officer, as well as the scholarships that have been made available through industry stakeholders.

It is with great honor that I represent the Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation as the recipient of its 2022 Nebraska Beef State Scholarship. I am forever grateful for the opportunities this scholarship has given me during the past year, as

well as those that are still to come. An industry cannot prepare its future for the youth, but rather prepare the next generation for the future that lies ahead. The Nebraska Cattlemen Foundation executes this philosophy perfectly through their continual investment in the state's youth. Thank you, again, for your support and for sharing your passion with me. ■ **NC** ■

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By Mike Boehm, Ph.D.

Vice President for Agriculture, University of Nebraska,  
Harlan Vice Chancellor, Institute of Agriculture and Natural  
Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln



## A Challenging Spring

**T**his spring, I was able to spend some time traveling the state, visiting Nebraska businesses and meeting with Nebraskans. During my seven years as vice chancellor for the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), meeting with farmers, ranchers, processors and community leaders has been the best, most rewarding part of the job. This tour was no different.

During public discussions in 11 different communities, we discussed a wide range of topics including workforce challenges; Nebraska Extension's efforts to stay engaged and remain relevant in the digital age; partnerships between the UNL College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and Nebraska's K-12 school partners; digital ag tools; economic development and entrepre-

neurship in rural communities; the growing need for services like child care and mental health resources; U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (USDA FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service program availability to cattle producers; and the importance agricultural literacy in a world where fewer and fewer people are connected to the food we grow and eat. The Nebraskans we met asked thoughtful questions, offered valuable insights and were so generous with their time during an incredibly busy time of year. As always, it was a privilege and pleasure to meet with the people our institute was created to serve.

One thing my colleagues and I heard loud and clear was that, for many, this spring has been particularly challenging. Much of Nebraska is experiencing drought and, increasingly, parts of

Nebraska are also experiencing wildfire. Unfortunately, I witnessed the destructive power of wildfires in the Sandhills, but I also saw the "art of neighboring" in support of those most severely impacted.

Historically, the fire season in Nebraska runs from June to September. However, since 2020, the fire season has been more-or-less continuous, according to the Nebraska Fire Service. Last year was the second worst fire season in Nebraska's recorded history, due in large part to severe drought conditions in parts of the state, combined with extremely high winds. So far, 2023 has experienced higher than average instances of wildfire, too.

Frequent instances of drought and wildfire underscore the need for continuous monitoring of weather conditions through a robust Nebraska Mesonet system. We are working with partner organizations to secure sustainable funding, and this spring hired a new Mesonet director, Ruben Behnke, Ph.D., who comes to Nebraska from the South Dakota Mesonet.

Additionally, Nebraska Extension's livestock systems team and the Center for Agricultural Profitability (CAP) have been working to provide resources to producers experiencing drought, including developing drought response plans, adapting management practices for times of drought and accessing information on federal relief programs at <https://beef.unl.edu/cattleproduction/drought>. As I write this, producers in 55 Nebraska counties are eligible for the USDA FSA Livestock Forage Disaster Program.

On a related note, UNL, in partnership with Nebraska Cattlemen, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, U.S. Meat Animal Research Center, Nebraska Farm Bureau and Nebraska Beef Council reconvened the Issue Advisory Group earlier this spring. This group brings together leaders and experts from across participating institutions to address emerging issues facing the Nebraska beef industry. I am grateful to



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

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The possibilities for youth are vast, and it is so important for all of us to help remove obstacles and keep cheering for them – just like those who cheered for me from the outside of that show ring all those years ago. ■■



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work among passionate, collaborative leaders who believe, as I do, that collaboration is key to our success.

Speaking of collaboration, I'm thrilled that construction on the new Klosterman Feedlot Innovation Center is well underway at the Eastern Nebraska Research, Extension and Education Center near Mead. Earlier this year, several IANR representatives shared

an overview of this project, which will include ample opportunities for collaboration with industry, producers, students and others, with the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. Among those who spoke during the meeting was Rebecca Sjostrand, who is currently working toward her doctoral degree in ruminant nutrition with Galen Erikson, Ph.D. Sjostrand grew up on

a swine operation in Iowa but ended up at Nebraska after an internship sparked her interest in beef production. She further honed her skills by taking part in UNL's feedlot management internship program.

"As a graduate student, it's pretty cool that this facility is coming here to the University of Nebraska. This will allow us to be involved in the most innovative research," she told the board. "The Klosterman Feedlot Innovation Center is the missing piece. Now, when students are going out to find jobs, including myself, I'm not just full of information, I also have those experiences."

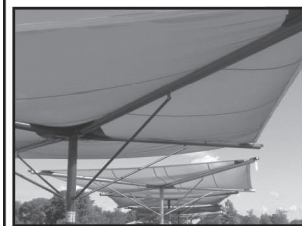
By the time this issue hits mailboxes, our graduate students will have had another valuable experience. After realizing a lack of public awareness about the nutritional and environmental benefits of animal protein, a group of animal science graduate students organized a symposium titled "Sustainable Protein: The Future of Nutrition," on May 9.

These students, all future professionals in the meat science and livestock industries, believe it is critical to do their part to share science-based knowledge about all aspects of animal agriculture. I was so proud of these students who represent the next generation of change makers, professionals and leaders for the animal agriculture industry, and I have no doubt that this critical industry will continue to thrive. ■NC■



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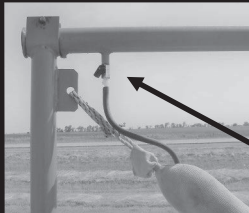


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