

## Perspectives

When I came to the position of Harlan vice chancellor in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources in 2001, the university was excited about one of the best budget expectations for some time.



**John C. Owens**  
NU Vice President and  
Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

Within months that optimism gave way to grim determination to save seed for future plantings as, over several years, we endured five legislatively mandated budget cuts that took \$6.6 million from our budget. That was followed by four years of UNL enrollment shortfalls that resulted in further cuts.

As I exit this position June 30, 2010, we again have been cutting budgets, determined to do all we can to protect the teaching, research, and extension education programs so vital to Nebraska's successful future.

It has, at times, been a hard road. My thanks to each of you who stepped forward throughout the decade to help ease the load.

Thank you, faculty, staff, and students, for all you have accomplished. Thank you, constituents and supporters, for all you have given. Thank you, each of you, for every good idea, for your good will and courage, for each time you put a shoulder to the wheel and pushed a little harder to move the Institute forward.

It has been a joy to see our student enrollment numbers rise, and to watch our well-qualified graduates take their places in the world.

It has been exciting to add innovative, new academic programs, ranging from forensic science to plant biology and so many more.

In 2004 we welcomed the federally funded Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to UNL. We formed the School of Natural Resources, renovated what now is Hardin Hall to be a spectacular academic building, and we created the Department of Statistics.

(continued on page 2)

# The Leading Object

*The Morrill Act of 1862  
established a Land Grant University  
in each state where  
**The Leading Object**  
would be instruction  
in agriculture and related fields.*

June 2010

## India partners in crop improvements

Another brick has been laid in IANR's foundation to expand plant science research opportunities in semi-arid climates.

IANR agronomists Ismail Dweikat and Tom Clemente, and biochemist Ed Cahoon, were part of a group traveling to ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) at Hyderabad, India in February to further relationships between ICRI-SAT and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

ICRISAT, along with global partners, conducts research through genomics and other means of crop improvements to help millions of people overcome hunger and poverty, particularly in the dry tropics.

Dweikat is especially interested in sweet sorghum and pearl millet because of their tolerance for drought and insect resistance, and high performing yield for livestock feed, human food, and biofuel.

ICRISAT has 40,000 lines each of sorghum and millet, Dweikat said, adding IANR and ICRISAT exchanged some germplasm before the trip.

For humans, sorghum is beneficial because it contains no gluten, a protein that cannot be tolerated by some people.

For biofuel, sorghum contains high sugar and can outproduce corn biomass by two to one, Dweikat said. Traditionally, however, the "poor man's crop" has had



IANR agronomy researcher Ismail Dweikat watches a woman sort chaff from pigeon peas during a trip to India in February. The trip will further relationships between ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics) and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Ed Cahoon

little interest in the Midwest, he said, as mainstream efforts have focused on corn.

With modifications, corn ethanol plants could be converted to sorghum ethanol, Dweikat said, and leftover sorghum could be used for electricity, gas, or cellulosic ethanol. In India sorghum also is used to make paper.

Cahoon and Clemente represented the university's Center for Plant Science Innovation, and described the trip as beneficial for plant breeders to make personalized connections. Cahoon said he was impressed with the impact that agricultural research at ICRISAT is having on the improvement of small farming in semi-arid regions. Clemente said he is working on a seed grant for

(continued on page 3)

## Perspectives (continued from page 1)

We initiated a Ph.D. program in Integrated Biomedical Sciences, and one in Natural Resources. Last year we launched UNL's Doctor of Plant Health degree, only the second such program in the country.

We started a professional program in veterinary medicine with Iowa State University. In 2009 we announced UNL's School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

We celebrated and dedicated the multimillion dollar Kimmel Education and Research Center in Nebraska City, the Wagonhammer Education Center with its Ray Bohy Conference Room at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory, and the Barta Brothers Ranch Headquarters.

Tremendous research results in so many disciplines increased the world's body of knowledge. Extension education programs helped Nebraskans put that new knowledge to work all across our state. We led the nation in per capita 4-H enrollment.

We were, in four words, at work for Nebraska. Every single day. In so many ways. At work for Nebraska.

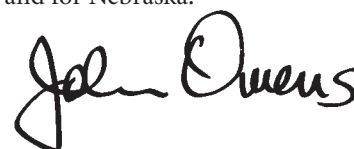
It has been my very great privilege for some 10 years now to work with people passionate about fulfilling Nebraska's land-grant university mission. Thank you. Your dedication to carrying the resources of this great university to the people we serve is nothing short of inspirational.

Because of you, the Institute is well positioned for future accomplishments with the leadership of Ronnie Green

when he becomes the new vice chancellor. Because of you, the Institute will continue to be an economic engine for Nebraska, providing the knowledge and education Nebraskans need.

Because of you, and IANR's staunch advocates who we can never thank enough for their vision and support, and the good people of this state, it has been a privilege, each day, in good times and in hard times, to serve as IANR vice chancellor and NU vice president.

Thank you. As I metamorphosize into an extension faculty member July 1, I look forward to continuing to work with you, and for Nebraska.



## Loyal customer base feeds Dairy Store tradition

The Dairy Store on the University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus is more than rich, flavorful cheeses and ice creams — it is a tradition.

"The Dairy Store is an icon of not only the university, but of Nebraska," said Rolando A. Flores, head of the Department of Food Science and Technology, and director of the Food Processing Center.

The mainstay at Holdrege Street and Dairy Store Drive had 1,000 tour visitors the first half of 2010 — the same number as in all of 2009, Flores said.

Home to the UNL Visitors Center on East Campus, the store helps attract potential students to the university, helps alumni stay connected, and helps develop entrepreneurship. The store also is a training ground for research and development and new products, such as a gluten-free bread developed by a FST student.

Recently, Flores said the operations manager of the store's Dairy Plant helped an area business launch its own cheese-making operation.

Jonathan Hnosko, the plant's operation's manager, said historically the store carried four cheddar cheeses and eight semi-soft Husker cheeses. He is experimenting with aging cheeses, which he said brings out their unique flavor characteristics. In addition, Hnosko said he made an 800-lb. batch of Monterrey Jack with cracked peppers and chives, and Cambridgeshire, the dairy plant's own version of White Stilton with blueberries and cranberries.

"We're branching out and doing different things," he said, noting that the store has made approximately 100 different ice cream flavors since it began, as well as sherbets and frozen yogurt.

The Dairy Store is expected to cover its operating costs, Flores said, but current university regulations don't allow it

to make a profit or allow Dairy Store products to be sold in commercial outlets. Flores added the store receives no preferential treatment when it comes to serving residence halls and other campus outlets.

However, Internet sales of cheese gift boxes and ice cream have enhanced the store's business, and shipping to states such as New York is not unusual.

"The customer base is very loyal," Flores said.

In the last couple of years, the Dairy Store has seen more traffic for its daily lunch specials and afternoon happy hours.

In states where the dairy industry no longer is prevalent, many university dairy stores have closed. Not so in Nebraska.

"We're building on 93 years of tradition," Flores said. "We're building to our centennial in 2017."

Editorial - Cheryl Alberts • Layout - Anne Moore

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln does not discriminate based on gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

The Leading Object is published monthly for all IANR staff members by Communications & Information Technology. Questions or story ideas may be directed to the editor at  
103 ACB, 0918; via e-mail (calberts1@unl.edu) or via fax (402-472-0025).

Read *The Leading Object* at <http://ianrhome.unl.edu/leadingobject>.

## A decade of relaying IANR success stories

Describing a decade of great accomplishments by others is one of the best aspects of leading the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said John Owens, who June 30 steps down as University of Nebraska Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR.

"I've had the great privilege of telling the story about every nook and cranny of the Institute," Owens said, "And the accomplishments of our faculty, students, and staff are tremendous."

Increased enrollments, both in IANR's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, are high on the accomplishments list he often talks about.

"I feel really good about these increased enrollments and the quality education our students receive to prepare them for exciting careers," Owens said. He said what he won't miss from his current position is stress created by shrinking budgets and program reductions.

Owens, an entomologist, plans to finish his career as a UNL Extension faculty member housed primarily at the Kimmel Education and Research Center at Nebraska City.

"I want to return to Nebraska some of the professional skills I have," he said.

"I am excited about the opportunity provided UNL Extension to use the expertise of Dr. Owens to create science-related learning experiences for youth,"

said UNL Extension Dean Elbert Dickey. "His passion for 4-H and entomology will serve us well."

A current 4-H state and national extension thrust works to attract more youth to science, technology, engineering, and math to help lead the nation in progressing through the 21st century.

Owens said Kimmel and other UNL facilities can help generate youth excitement about science and mathematics using invertebrates as an attraction. Owens also said he will strive to facilitate graduate student research at Kimmel, and expand its extension personnel already there.

Ernie Weyeneth, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Kimmel Foundation, said Owens' ability to attract students as well as faculty to the facility and the community will draw them in and give greater exposure to Kimmel and the region.

Owens also plans to serve as a visiting scientist at the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome. He expects to evaluate extension systems in 94 developing countries, and help develop closer relationships among land-grant universities and the FAO in its international efforts to defeat hunger.

"What better calling can one have in the last few years of a professional career?" Owens said. "That's what it's all about."

## Facilities improvements

Facility improvements is another of the areas in which John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR, cites IANR accomplishments during the past decade.

"Every major building that needed work has had some done," Owens said, adding the renovation of Hardin Hall's 157,000 square feet to become home to the faculty and staff of the Institute's School of Natural Resources was an "unprecedented feat" during an impossibly tight budget environment. The Keim Hall and Animal Science complex renovations also will be tremendously important to UNL's accomplishments in agronomy and horticulture, as well in animal science.

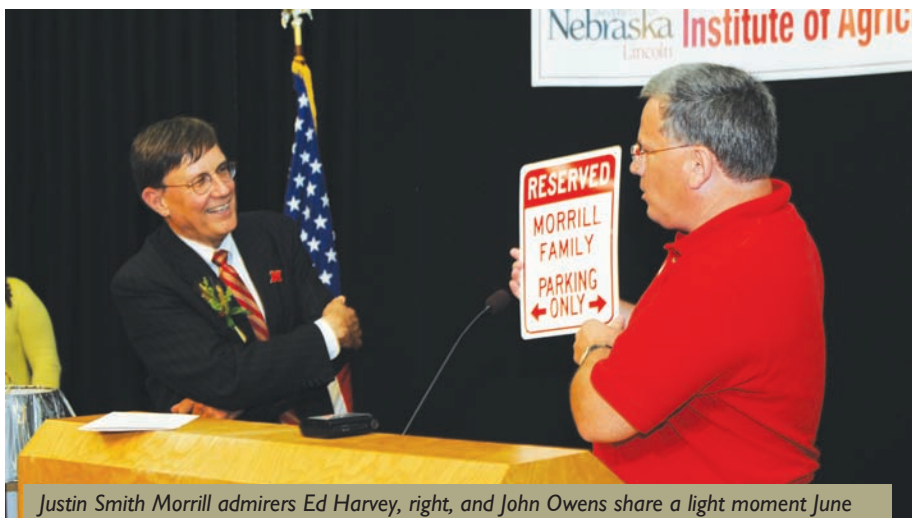
"We have some of the best research and education facilities away from the main campus you will find anywhere in the nation," he said, nothing that in addition to on-campus renovations, completion of off-campus facilities improvements since 2001 include:

- Snyder Building, West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte, 2002.
- Wagonhammer Education Center and Ray Bohy Conference room, Whitman, 2005.
- Barta Brothers headquarters, Rose, 2005.
- Kimmel Education and Research Center at Nebraska City, 2005.
- Panhandle Research and Extension Center feedlot expansion, 2007.
- Southeast Research and Extension Center move to the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead, 2009.
- Haskell Agricultural Laboratory office, structural, and technological renovations, Concord, 2009.

### India (continued from page 1)

a doctoral student to work on developing insect-tolerant pigeon peas, another crop being researched at ICRISAT.

The trip was a continuation of the February 2009 visit to India by several UNL representatives led by Chancellor Harvey Perlman to begin establishing relationships between the university and India.



Justin Smith Morrill admires Ed Harvey, right, and John Owens share a light moment June 18 during the tribute to Owens' decade as NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR, and showcase of IANR. Harvey directs the Justin Smith Morrill Scholars program, which started during Owens' administration.

Brett Hampton



## Van Tassell to head ag economics

Larry W. Van Tassell, a professor and department head at the University of Idaho, is to become head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln by mid-August.

Van Tassell has headed the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Idaho since 1999, and has worked at the University of Wyoming and University of Tennessee; and at Texas A&M, and Brigham Young universities, where he earned his degrees.

Van Tassell has taught 15 different undergraduate and graduate classes, including six he developed. At Idaho he led development of a new undergraduate curriculum — the first significant revision in 30 years — and revision of the graduate curriculum.

He also has been involved in obtaining more than \$1.2 million in research funding.



Larry W. Van Tassell

## Hanson receives Omtvedt award

An Omtvedt Innovation Award has been presented to an agricultural economics professor whose 36 years of teaching and advising have made him an agribusiness legacy.

The award was presented June 16 to Ronald Hanson, Neal E. Harlan Professor of Agribusiness, by John Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR.

Hanson helped develop the UNL Agribusiness Program, the first time in the land-grant university system that two colleges, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and the College of Business Administration, collaborated to offer one program.

In the classroom, Hanson brings in business professionals to help students better understand real-life case problems and solutions. An outstanding teaching scholar, Hanson has earned 19 national and regional teaching awards, and 26 campus-wide recognitions.

The Omtvedt Innovation Awards are provided by Leone and the late Neal Harlan. They honored Irv Omtvedt on his retirement with funding to provide the awards, which recognize areas of strength and promise within the Institute, as well as innovative research and programming by IANR faculty, staff, and students.

Both Owens and Hanson are the first to carry the Harlan name in their respective titles.



Ronald Hanson is recognized for his teaching and advising with an Omtvedt Innovation Award presented June 16 by NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor John Owens. From left are Owens, Leone Harlan, Hanson, and Irv Omtvedt.

Brett Hampton

## Plant pathologist retiring after 45 years

When Anne Vidaver came to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln with her husband, George, in 1965, to assume a post-doctoral position in biochemistry, women in academics — especially married women — were unwelcome. When that position did not materialize, Vidaver was offered space and some resources in the Department of Plant Pathology. There she proved herself within six months by obtaining her own grant funds. She became a member of the faculty in 1972 and full professor in 1979.

When Vidaver retires July 1, she will have made many scientific discoveries and have many “firsts” to her credit: the first woman department head in IANR; first married woman hired to a tenure track in IANR; first woman department head in plant pathology worldwide; first woman to direct UNL’s Center of Biotechnology; and first married woman with children to be named president of the American Phytopathological Society.

Vidaver also is the first and only woman to serve as chief scientist for USDA.

Her plans include seeing more of her grandchildren, traveling for fun, and growing more gesneriad plants.



Anne Vidaver

## OEA ...

Rebecca Cederberg, research analyst for the Department of Animal Science, has received the Outstanding Employee Award for Managerial/Professional Staff for May/June.



Rebecca Cederberg

Comments from letters supporting her nomination read, “Rebecca is proficient, organized, and analytical; these qualities make her an integral component in the success of the research projects in the Reproductive Biology Lab.” Another read, she has “found ways to make daunting tasks seem less stressful with her upbeat attitude and excellent sense of humor ... she is the glue that holds the laboratory together.”

Cederberg received \$350 and a lapel pin.

## Forester is adviser

Scott Josiah, Nebraska State Forester and director of the Nebraska Forest Service since 2005, was selected in May by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to serve on the Forest Research Advisory Council. The council convenes the nation’s top forest research professionals from federal, state, and nongovernmental organizations to advise the USDA on priority research needs.

Josiah, a forester for 34 years in New York, Minnesota, Haiti, and Guam, has been with the university since 1998.



Scott Josiah