

Reflections

Perhaps you've already heard of the proposed University of Nebraska Institute for the Rural Future we're working toward as a university.

If not, I'd like to begin to acquaint you with it here.

Like the Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Institute, the proposed Institute for the Rural Future will draw on expertise from all four NU campuses, as well as capitalize on the wisdom and input of our constituents.

President Milliken calls this proposed Institute one of the University's highest priorities, and strongly supports it.

Still in the talking stages, the NU Institute for the Rural Future is a work in progress heading toward a hoped-for formal launch in mid-2012.

The vision is that this proposed Institute will provide internationally recognized intellectual leadership in working to develop research and education needed for today's information and technology-based economy.

We'll work with Nebraskans to define the future direction of Nebraska's rural landscape, with a desired collective outcome of a 2.5 percent reduction in the median age in rural Nebraska counties by 2025, and a 2.5 percent or greater increase in nonmetropolitan population.

Together the entire University of Nebraska system will work with Nebraskans to strengthen and sustain successful rural and urban communities.

I say rural and urban because in Nebraska, focus on one is not complete without an understanding of how the two, dependent upon each other, are themselves communities intertwined. NU can and must contribute to understanding that interdependence, a point made strongly in an April 1 think tank session on community planning, design and development to which we invited a small number of experts from around

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Ronnie D. Green
NU Vice President and
Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

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.*

April 2011

UNL furthering Ethiopia relationship

Developing relationships between the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the east African nation of Ethiopia are helping create a greater understanding of food and water security.

Ethiopia, like the U.S. and other nations worldwide, faces issues related to water quality and quantity, said Martha Mamo, IANR soil scientist and coordinator of a federally funded project that took her and three UNL faculty colleagues to Ethiopia last year.

Project collaborators are IANR climatologist Tsegaye Tadesse and crop physiologist Teshome Regassa; and UNL anthropologists Shimelis Beyene, Mary Willis and Raymond Hames.

All understand the culture and speak one or more of Ethiopia's major ethnic languages. Their research with focus groups last year is leading to a followup baseline survey addressing nutrition, agricultural practices and livestock, as well as water.

"Water is a big issue, a concern to all the villages we visited," Mamo said. "These challenges won't be solved in two or three years."

While in Ethiopia, the UNL faculty established collaborative agreements with Haramaya University in Harar and Wollo University in Dessie, which are expected to lead to student and faculty exchanges and study abroad opportunities.

Additional funding is being sought from the U.S. National Institute of Food and Agriculture's International Science and Education grants program to provide international experiences in Ethiopia



IANR's Teshome Regassa, in ball cap, and Martha Mamo, in white blouse, meet with a Wollo University collaborator, right, and villagers during a 2010 trip to Ethiopia to establish relationships to help create a greater understanding of food and water security.

Courtesy photo

for UNL students and faculty, and to develop a global food security curriculum for UNL students, Mamo said.

In December, team members participated in a roundtable discussion on food security and technology in Washington, D.C., to facilitate networking with the Ethiopian Embassy and others.

In May scholars from Haramaya and Wollo universities are on the program of the global Water for Food Conference in Lincoln. The May 1-4 conference is hosted by the Robert B. Daugherty Water for Food Institute at the University of Nebraska, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Also on the conference program is anthropology graduate student Annie Cafer, who completed her thesis work in south Wollo on health, nutrition and agricultural productivity. Cafer is the first student to conduct research under the UNL-Ethiopian partnership.



Reflections (continued from page 1) the state and nation. Their input helped representatives from our campuses think about this specific topic, and the Institute idea in general.

One of the chief take-aways was that not only is there support for the idea of establishing an Institute for the Rural Future, there also is the belief that, if done right, Nebraska will be a national leader in this important area.

We envision seven foundational pillars for the Institute for the Rural Future, and a director who will coordinate all programs in those pillars across the university system. Current thinking is that each of the pillars will have directors or co-directors to lead that pillar's team. The pillars are:

- Rural Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Leadership;
- Rural Community Planning, Design and Development;

- Rural Education and Youth Development;
- Rural Health and Nutrition;
- Rural Agri/Ecotourism and Recreational Development;
- Rural Infrastructure — Transportation and Technology Access;
- Rural Legal Practice and Policy.

In February we began connecting the dots across NU campuses through a Breeze session to discuss the Institute for the Rural Future with people identified as working in this area.

Following that, we began mapping the expertise of session participants who expressed interest in the Institute to better assess where our current strengths are, and where we might need to grow.

If you have interest in being part of this work, please send your name, email address and a note expressing your interest to Jill Brown, jbrown14@unl.edu, to receive a short survey about your interests.

We are moving forward using resources already allocated to this purpose in the Rural Initiative, Center for Applied Rural Innovation, and UNL Extension, all of which we expect will be part of the new Institute in some way.

Meanwhile, we are seeking funding from both private and public sector sources to provide endowed support to enable an additional \$5 million annual base operating budget.

May 9-10, 2012, we'll host a national conference on the future of the rural Great Plains. We expect it will attract 400 or more state, national and international attendees.

This is an exciting time to be at work for Nebraska. Stay tuned for further developments!



Check it out: Ronnie Green's blog: <http://ianrblog.unl.edu/>.

FFA convention tops 2,570 participants



Jill Brown

Nebraska 2010-2011 FFA officers all are students in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, and met with UNL Chancellor Harvey Perlman prior to the April 6-8 convention and election of new officers. From left are former vice president Kerry Swanson of Imperial FFA and biochemistry sophomore; former secretary Debra Wray of Ord FFA and agribusiness freshman; former vice president Alec Ibach of Sumner-Eddyville-Miller FFA and agricultural economics freshman; former president Jordyn Lechtenberg of Ainsworth FFA and agribusiness freshman; Perlman; former vice president Mollie Wilken of Crofton FFA and animal science freshman; former vice president Dakota Olson of Boone Central FFA and agribusiness freshman; and former vice president John Bader of Centennial FFA and biological systems engineering freshman. The 2011 state convention had more than 2,570 FFA high school participants.

Gompert services held

Terry Gompert, UNL Extension educator in Knox County since 1983, died March 25 in Norfolk. He was 66.

The Scottsbluff native received his bachelor's degree from Colorado State University and his master's from UNL. He served with the International Voluntary Service in Laos from 1966-1968, raised hogs, and was involved with extension in Colorado and in Logan and McPherson counties. Services were March 30 in Creighton.

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

Grad directs complex global transactions

Twenty years ago, if you had told Doug Sterkel he would be working in New York City some day, he would've considered it a joke.

"I would've laughed until my ribs hurt," said Sterkel, who grew up on a livestock and grain farm near Edgar.

Turns out, it's no joke. For the past 12 years, Sterkel has been managing director at AgriCapital Corporation in New York City. AgriCapital is an agribusiness-focused investment banking firm that represents individuals, families or companies in mergers or acquisitions, raising capital and various corporate finance consulting projects. Most assignments involve representing the sellers of privately owned ag-related businesses, although clients also include large corporations such as Monsanto, Bunge or Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica.

"We're somewhat like a general contractor for mergers and acquisitions transactions working across all the functional areas of a company from finance to legal to human resources," said Sterkel, who earned a bachelor's degree in animal science in 1990 from the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. He also earned an MBA with emphasis in finance and international business from Loyola University in Chicago.

He often works with clients for nine to 12 months in complex transactions to obtain the best price and the best structure in the sale of a company.

"It can be real rewarding when clients put their trust in us, and the end result of months of hard work is a transaction that is good for the owners and good for their employees," Sterkel said.

Many times, clients are selling a family-owned business. "One of the challenges is that there can be a lot of emotion when a privately held company that's been in the family for a long time is being sold," he said.

The majority of AgriCapital's business is in North America, but, Sterkel said, "Virtually every situation we've become involved in has an international component. American agriculture has become very global."

While his work is challenging, it is also fun, he said. "I get to see a lot of different aspects of agriculture in different parts of the country and different parts of the world."

Sterkel's CASNR education has served him well in his global business experiences. "It was a very good, well-rounded education. I studied animal science and nutrition but I also learned about agronomy and other areas of agriculture. Being a little bit of a generalist has been beneficial," he said.

— Linda Ulrich



Doug Sterkel

Program to benefit military children

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension has been tapped to develop content and provide programming for a nationwide educational program that will help prepare the children of military families to be successful as they enter the school system.

The program is a part of a joint effort by the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of Agriculture called the Military-Extension partnership, which is aimed at better serving military families.

The three-year project aims to deliver professional development in 13 states for children of military families who live off base, including reservists or National Guard members. These children are often unconnected to base support, and because of the stresses of frequent relocations or overseas deployment, can enter the school system behind their peers academically and socially.

UNL Extension will work with counterparts at Pennsylvania State University to develop and deliver content for the project, expected to strengthen skills of more than 28,000 child and youth development professionals and improve quality of services to nearly 280,000 military children through age 12. The material being developed also is expected to be useful to other Nebraska child-care providers and those serving out-of-school programs.

Kathleen Lodl, extension assistant dean, and Tonia Durden, assistant professor of Child, Youth and Family Studies, are principal investigators on the project.

Professional vet med program accredited for seven years

Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine, which shares a professional program in veterinary medicine with IANR's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, has received seven-year accreditation.

The American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education conducted the accreditation process. Team members were at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in December, evaluating CASNR's School of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, where the Nebraska partnership of the professional program is based.

SVMBS Director David Hardin said the team evaluated 11 standards including organizational structure, budgets, facilities, curriculum and external constituents.

"We received full accreditation with no deficiencies" in March, Hardin said. "Accreditation is a product of dedicated faculty and dedicated students and support of upper administration."

"The accreditation recognizes the success of our partnership with Iowa State University in a very positive way," said Steve Waller, CASNR dean.

In 2007, ISU and UNL launched a four-year professional program in veterinary

medicine, where 25 Nebraska students annually start their first two years in Nebraska and complete their last two years at ISU. Facilities were upgraded at both campuses, and new faculty added at Nebraska. Nebraska's inaugural class will graduate this May.

"We're very proud of our first group," Hardin said. "Our goal is to get as many to return to Nebraska as possible."

The ISU-UNL approach to regional veterinary education is a model for Utah State University and Washington State University, which will begin a similar program in 2012, Hardin added.

Awards ...

ORCA/IDEA awards

UNL professors Stephen Baenziger and Stephen Taylor are among those recognized this spring for the University of Nebraska's most prestigious awards for research, teaching and engagement.

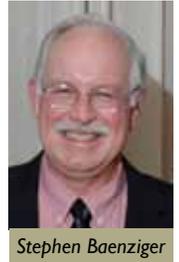
Baenziger, Eugene Price Distinguished Professor in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, was honored with the Outstanding Research and Creative Activity Award. In his 25 years at UNL, the internationally known wheat breeder has helped feed more people and improve lives in Nebraska and around the world. Baenziger is the only American serving on the Board of Trustees for the International Rice Research Institute; he will be the first to hold the new Nebraska Wheat Growers Presidential Chair, an endowed professorship created through a licensing

agreement between NUtech Ventures and Bayer CropScience. Reflecting the strength of UNL's wheat research program, the agreement includes plans for Bayer CropScience to establish its first North American wheat breeding station near Lincoln.

Taylor earned the Innovation, Development and Engagement Award. It recognizes faculty members who have extended their academic expertise beyond the boundaries of the university to enrich the broader community. His 35 years of research in food safety and toxicology have made Taylor an international authority in the areas of sulfite sensitivity and food allergies. He has published more than 250 manuscripts on these topics and has worked extensively with the food industry, regulatory agencies, clinicians and allergic consumers. In 1996

Taylor organized a highly successful food industry-funded consortium, the Food Allergy Research and Resource Program, at UNL. FARRP provides confidential food allergen analysis to the food industry and conducts research, outreach and distance education. It now is North America's largest food allergy testing laboratory.

They were recognized April 10 at the UNL Honors Convocation at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts.



Stephen Baenziger



Stephen Taylor

NHAA honoree

IANR ruminant nutrition scientist and professor Terry Klopfenstein was named an honoree in the Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement, and Gage County Extension Educator Paul Hay was inducted into the NHAA during an April 1 banquet.

Hay's 31 years in Gage County have helped the county achieve the highest percentage of non-till dryland and irrigated production of any Nebraska county, and the highest percentage of miles of terraces.

Klopfenstein, an Ohio State University graduate, has conducted research in feeding corn byproducts from the ethanol and sweetener industries. That saves Nebraska cattle producers and feeders more than \$100 million annually, and also has affected decisions to build and expand ethanol plants in Nebraska and the Midwest.

He has advised more than 160 master's and doctoral students. The Terry Klopfenstein Student Excellence Award endowed with the UNL Foundation provides scholarships and stipends for undergraduate and

graduate students pursuing degrees in animal science and ruminant nutrition.

Klopfenstein has served as president of the Federation of Animal Science Societies and president of the American Society of Animal Sciences. Among his numerous awards and honors are the American Society of Animal Science Morrison Award, Fellow Award, Teaching Award and Nutrition Award.



Terry Klopfenstein

Dinsdale Family Faculty Award

Maria de Guzman, Child, Youth and Family Studies researcher, extension specialist, mentor and teacher, received the Dinsdale Family Faculty Award for 2010 recognizing outstanding teaching, research and outreach on April 18.

de Guzman's nominators credit her contributions to the team 4-H curriculum "Health Rocks!" for positively affecting youth and that nationally has had 60,000 youth participants in the last two years; She also co-led its national

evaluation. de Guzman has designed accountability evaluations for many organizations, and co-chaired the community assessment workgroup for Boys and Girls Clubs of America as the group assessed the need for a youth facility in Lincoln. She helped the Center for People in Need with data management, analysis and a report of findings; and is helping the organization conduct a depth study on the impact of poverty on family functioning and youth well-being. She also studies

cultural development and attitudes of children and families of U.S., Philippine, Mexican, Mexican American, Brazilian and Turkish cultures.

Said one nominator: "She is a bright, young star who is creatively making many, many contributions on numerous levels."



Maria de Guzman

Exemplary Service Award

Michael Overturf, agricultural research technician III at the Meat Animal Research Center at Clay Center, is the recipient of the 2011 IANR Exemplary Service Award. Overturf's nominators say his 41 years of work at MARC includes countless animal surgeries and an unwavering respect toward animals and animal research. Supporters say he is "beyond reproach" in honesty, organization, patience, discipline and regard for others. A hunter safety instructor for 25 years, Overturf also received IANR's OEA in 1986, the University's Kudos in 1987 and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration award for outstanding service in 1996.



Michael Overturf