



Community Focus

Ak-Sar-Ben Pioneer Farm Awards

For the 46th year, the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben and the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers will recognize Nebraska Pioneer Farm Families whose land has been owned by the same family for 100 years or more. Titled the "Nebraska Pioneer Farm Family Award," local recognition requires that the land of a family in Lancaster County must have been owned by some member of that family for a century or more. To date, over 6,000 families have been honored throughout Nebraska. Each honoree receives an engraved plaque and gatepost marker as permanent recognition of this milestone.



Public recognition and presentations will be made at the 2001 Lancaster County Fair. Applications are due no later than May 1, 2001. They can be picked-up at the extension office or by contacting the Lancaster Agricultural Society at 441-6545. (GB)



National Agricultural Week March 18-24, 2001

Nebraska Ag Facts

* Production agriculture contributes more than \$9 billion to Nebraska's economy each year.

- One of every four Nebraskans depends upon agriculture for employment.
- Every dollar in ag exports generates \$1.59 in economic activities such as transportation, financing, warehousing, and production. Nebraska's \$3.5 billion in ag exports translate into more than \$5 billion in additional economic activity each year.
- Nebraska has 55,000 farms and ranches; the average operation consists of 844 acres; average net income per farm ranged from \$30,000-\$60,000 during the last four years.
- Over 40% of the feed grains grown in Nebraska are fed to livestock in this state.
- Nebraska's livestock industry accounts for approximately 60% of the state's total agricultural receipts each year. Three out of four Nebraska farms have livestock or poultry operations.
- One American farmer/rancher produces enough food for 129 people—95 in the U.S. and 34 abroad.
- Of every dollar spent on food the farm value is 21 cents; 37 cents goes to labor used by manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers. The remaining 42 cents pays for marketing costs such as packaging, transportation, and advertising.
- In 1998, Nebraska's commercial banks loaned \$5.4 billion to finance ag production and real estate. Those loans involved 98.75 percent of Nebraska banks.

Nebraska's Natural Resources

- Nebraska's farms and ranches utilize 46.4 million acres—96% of the state's total land area.
- Nebraska is fortunate to have aquifers below it, making it possible to irrigate 8.1 million acres of cropland. If poured over the surface of the state, the water in those aquifers would have a depth of 37.9 feet.
- Nearly 24,000 miles of rivers and streams add to Nebraska's bountiful natural resources.
- There are nearly 23 million acres of rangeland and pastureland in Nebraska—half of which are in the Sandhills. (GB)



Strengthening Agriculture/ Natural Resources Education in Nebraska

"Appointed Task Force dedicated to promoting literacy in Agriculture and Natural Resources"

The Governor's Task Force on Agriculture and Natural Resources Education was appointed in the fall of 1999. This action was motivated because agriculture is Nebraska's most basic and singularly important industry.

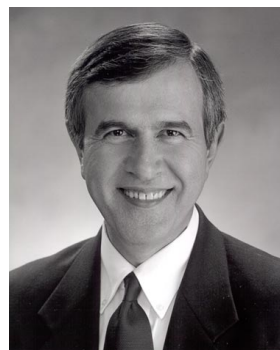
Task Force Mission

To provide leadership to integrate agricultural and natural resources literacy into the lives of all Nebraskans. To stimulate preparation of a more diverse, competitive, and productive workforce for agriculture and natural resources systems; enhancing the well-being of the state and its citizens.

Goals

- Facilitate dialogue between diverse stakeholders involved in agriculture and natural resources.
- Gather and disseminate information and provide quality education through a wide variety of delivery methods that are relevant to current and future needs of people as well as agriculture and natural resources.
- Advocate for systems, partnerships and alliances that enhance educational programs, opportunities and activities in agriculture and natural resources.

...urban and rural understanding is more essential today than ever before.

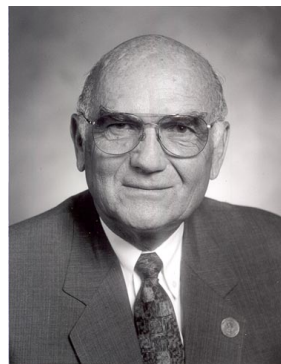


"A great deal of who we are as a state is tied to our agricultural and natural resources heritage. We want to synergize our natural resources, our land, our crops, our livestock and our people in order to continue this wonderful quality of life. And we must be the ones to do it."

-Mike Johanns, Governor, State of Nebraska

"Agriculture starts with the growing and harvesting of food and fiber and ends with almost everything we eat, wear, and use therefore making us who we are. While this industry continues to change we still have the responsibility of feeding the world and we need to be ready."

-Merlyn Carlson, Director, Nebraska Department of Agriculture



"Agriculture and wise use of Nebraska's natural resources will be key factors in the future of our state's economy. Education can help us to better address complex natural resources issues while maintaining and expanding the agricultural productivity that is so vital to the state's economy."

-Roger K. Patterson, Director, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources

Task Force members

Richard Alden, Auburn
Barbara Batie, Lexington
Lloyd Bell, Lincoln
Gary C. Bergman, Lincoln
Don Burks, Lexington
Gregg Classen, Chair, Omaha
Robert Dickey, Laurel
Ken Foster, McCook
Steve Gaul, Lincoln
Ken Gnadt, Grand Island
Sara Grell, Lincoln
Joyce Hardy, Chadron
Larry Hudkins, Malcolm
Don Hutchens, Lincoln
Frank Johannsen, Bayard
Richard Katt, Lincoln
Jill Kruger, Arlington
Michael Lundeen, Lincoln
Ed McCauley, Walthill
Neil Olsen, Omaha
Adam Pavelka, Bladen
James Pillen, Columbus
Chuck Pohlman, Norfolk
Marlene Rasmussen, Litchfield
Kim Schneider, Paxton
John Turnbull, York
Jerry Warner, Omaha
Judith Williams, Central City
Rachel Wise, Vice Chair, Omaha

"Agriculture is the basic and most important industry in Nebraska. It is dependent upon wise use of human and natural resources to be successful."

"There is a need to provide the leadership to integrate agricultural and natural resources literacy into the lives of all citizens, pre-kindergarten throughout life."

The coordinator for the Governor's Task Force is Richard Fleming, 300 Agriculture Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0709. Individuals interested in more information can contact Dr. Fleming at 472-8742 or by e-mail at rfleming1@unl.edu (GB)

Ag Awareness Festival Scheduled April 24-25

Come spend an educational day on the farm!!! All fourth grade students in Lancaster County, along with their teachers and parents are invited to attend the Ag Awareness Festival April 24 and 25 at the Lancaster Event Center. The festival will provide hands-on opportunities for students to learn about the importance of Nebraska agriculture in their lives. During the day, students

will focus on beef, dairy, swine, and crop production in the State of Nebraska. Students will receive hands-on learning opportunities about the production, technology, and by-products produced by beef, dairy, swine, and grains. These learning opportunities include interacting with cows, baby calves, and pigs, climbing on real farm machinery, and tasting the food produced from all of

these products. The Ag Awareness Festival is sponsored by the Ag Awareness Coalition, a body of representatives from several Nebraska agricultural organizations including the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County. Thanks to this sponsorship, **there is no charge** for the event and transportation costs to the Ag Awareness Festival **may** also be covered.

How does your class participate in the Ag Awareness Festival?

Registration is open to all fourth graders. To obtain more information or to register a class for either the April the 24 or the April 25 session, please contact Lance Cummins-Brown, Extension Educator at the Lancaster or Saunders County Extension Office at 402-441-7180 in Lincoln or 402-624-

8030 at the ARDC near Mead, or e-mail lbrown4@unl.edu (additional information can be found at the Ag Awareness Coalition website www.ag4kids.unl.edu). Each day will be limited to 300 students, so register early to secure your (fourth grade) place, **free of charge**, at the 2001 Spring Ag Awareness Festival!!! (LCB)