



Community Focus

Nebraska Pioneer Farm Awards

The Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation and the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers welcome nominations for the 47th Annual Nebraska Pioneer Farm Awards. The program honors farm families in Nebraska whose land has been owned by members of the same family for 100 years or more.

To date, nearly 6,000 families in 93 Nebraska counties have been honored at various

county fairs. Honoree's receive an engraved plaque and gatepost marker as permanent recognition of this milestone.

The awards will be presented at the 2002 Lancaster County Fair. Nomination forms are available at the extension office or Lancaster County Fair office, 4100 North 84th street. Nominations must be received by the Lancaster County Fair office no later than May 1. (GB)

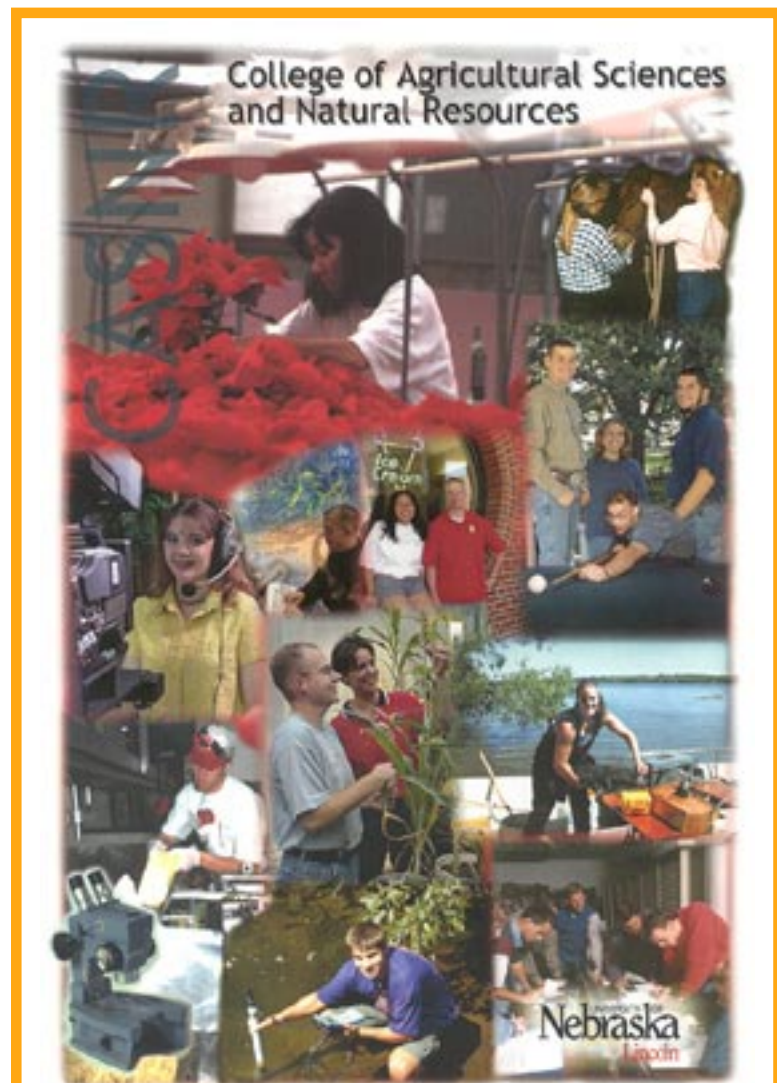
Cultural Insights: The Pilgrimage (Hajj) to Makkah



Ali Alkhazraji
Extension Volunteer In Service To America

The Hajj is an annual event for Muslims. Every Muslim who is physically and financially able has a duty to make the pilgrimage once in a lifetime. It is a journey to the House of Allah in Makkah (Ka'bah), Saudi Arabia. Hajj symbolizes the unity of mankind and its annual assembly of Muslims from all over the world. About two million people go to Makkah each year from every corner of the globe. The annual Hajj is performed in the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. Male

pilgrims wear special simple clothes which strip away distinction of class and culture so that all stand equal before God. The rites of the Hajj include circling the kaaba seven times between the hillocks of Safa and Marwa, as Hagar did during her search for water. Then the pilgrims stand together in Arafat and ask God for what they wish and for his forgiveness. This is often thought of as a preview of the day of judgment. The end of Hajj is marked by a festival, Eid Al-Adha, which is celebrated with prayers. This and Eid-al-fitr a feast-day commemorating the end of Ramadan are the major annual festivals on the Muslim calendar.



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National Agriculture Week March 17-23

American agriculture celebrated its first National Agriculture Day in 1973. Since the beginning, Ag Day has been a chance for the general public to say "thanks" to the hard working men and women of agriculture.

This year National Agriculture Week is March 17-23 and National Agriculture Day is March 20. These are coordinated by the Agriculture Council of America (ACA) which cooperates with other agriculture groups and organizations.



National Agriculture Day March 20

Meeting the Challenge

As populations increase, American agriculture must meet the global needs for food and fiber now and into the future. Progressive, technologically advanced production systems will be needed to meet this need. Educating tomorrow's consumers, today's students about modern agriculture will set the stage for an understanding public of the future.

Working Together

Historically, there has

always been strong, broad-based support for the National Agriculture Day program. Organizations and companies across the United States get involved in promoting American agriculture during the National Agriculture Week.

In 1999, National Ag Day introduced a new campaign, "America's Largest Classroom on Agriculture," designed to reach the general public and provide the opportunity for year-round visibility for both National Ag Day and American Agriculture. Based on the idea that informed consumers make

informed choices, the campaign recognizes today's students as tomorrow's consumers.

Showcasing the Stars

"America's Largest Classroom on Agriculture" is setting the stage for the stars of ag literacy. Each year during National Agriculture Week, the ACA shines the spotlight on existing year-round ag literacy efforts to further the impact of excellence in education.

This initiative is a cooperative effort between the Agriculture Council of America, Project Food, Land & People, Agriculture in the Classroom, and involves organizations like the Future Farmers of America, 4-H and other ag literacy focused groups. This effort results in over 500,000 school children, annually, from across the nation taking time to consider agriculture's role in daily life.

For more information about National Agriculture Week or for education materials for students, visit the ACA's Web site at www.agday.org.

Nebraska Agriculture 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 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 percent of the feed grains grown in Nebraska are fed to livestock in this state.
- Nebraska's livestock industry accounts for approximately 60 percent 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 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.
- There are nearly 23 million acres of rangeland and pastureland in Nebraska—half of which are in the Sandhills.
- Nearly 24,000 miles of rivers and streams add to Nebraska's bountiful natural resources.
- 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.

Nebraska's Top National Rankings

- 1st**
 - Commercial livestock slaughter, all species, 2000—11,198,044,000 lbs.
 - Commercial red meat production, 2000—7,104,900,000 lbs.
 - Great Northern beans production, 2000—2,040,000 cwt.
- 2nd**
 - Commercial cattle slaughter, 2000—7,616,700 head
 - Alfalfa meal production, 1999—141,100 tons
 - Commercial cattle slaughter, 2000, live weight—9,556,855,000 lbs.

- Cattle on feed, Jan. 1, 2001—2,550,000 head

3rd

- All cattle and calves, Jan. 1, 2001—6,600,000 head
- Corn for grain production, 2000—1,014,300,000 bushels
- Grain sorghum production, 2000—35,000,000 bushels
- All dry edible beans production, 2000—3,230,000 cwt.
- Pinto beans production, 2000—749,000 cwt.
- Cash receipts from all livestock marketings, 1999—\$5,424,870,000
- Sorghum silage production, 2000—220,000 tons

4th

- Land in farms and ranches, 1999—46,400,000 acres
- On-farm storage capacity, 2000—1,040,000,000 bushels
- Commercial grain storage capacity, 2000—692,391,000 bushels
- Cash receipts from all farm marketings, 1999—\$8,555,037,000

6th

- Commercial hog slaughter, 2000—6,270,900 head
- All hogs and pigs on farms, Dec. 1, 2000—3,100,000 head
- Harvested acres of principal crops, 2000—18,637,000 acres

7th

- Alfalfa hay production, 2000—4,185,000 tons
- Soybean production, 2000—173,850,000 bushels

Source: The Nebraska Agriculture Fact Card. A cooperative effort of the Nebraska AgRelations Council, Nebraska Bankers Association and Nebraska Department of Agriculture. February, 2001 (GB)