

From: Michael Zeleny
Sent: Wednesday, August 21, 2019 6:03 AM
To: Rodgers, Meghan - OC, Washington, DC
Cc: Westcott, Nick - OSEC, Washington, DC
Subject: RE: Topics for discussion
Attachments: UNL 2019 ag stories.docx; UNL ag programs of excellence.pdf

Hi Meghan,

Yes, we're excited to meet you and your team and for Friday's town hall. For background information on agriculture at our university, attached are some ag-related stories from the past year and also some areas of strength at our university. If you have questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

These are a few questions that Chancellor Green would like to discuss with Secretary Perdue:

- 1) American agriculture has led the world in innovation, productivity, and efficiency for a long time – certainly since the mid-20th century – resulting in the most abundant, affordable, and safest food supply in the world. How are you feeling about the position of American agriculture in today's world economy?
- 2) We certainly have seen a major landscape change in the past several years in the arena of international market development and trade – and particularly in its acute impacts on the ag and food sector. Being the 4th largest ag economy in the US, Nebraska's agricultural industry clearly has much at stake in terms of access to robust international markets and customers. What are we doing in terms of expanding access to those international markets for fair and successful trade of American agricultural products?
- 3) As you're aware, Nebraska has faced severe flooding this past year, resulting in loss of life, livestock, homes and farms, and livelihood for many Nebraskans. This disaster has united Nebraskans in many ways – literally sticking together in all kinds of weather. What advice do you have from the federal perspective about recovery and future opportunities?
- 4) As you know, agriculture is one of the industries in our economy which requires a high level of skilled workers, often with high levels of immigrant professionals. How do we resolve this dilemma in terms of immigration policy?
- 5) You have the privilege of serving as the leader of the US Department of Agriculture – sharing in common with the Land-Grant Universities having been founded in that seminal period of the 1860s under President Abraham Lincoln – of whom we are very proud to have in our University's name. Can you talk a little about the breadth and depth of USDA across all of its mission areas in 2019?

Additional potential questions, if time allows:

- 6) One of the primary drivers for the leadership of American agriculture has been the major prioritization and investment in research and innovation over the years of the partnership between the federal government, states, and local communities through Land-grant universities. Nebraska has been one of the premier land-grant universities in the country now for 150 years and has been proud to be an international leader contributing much of that innovation in ag and natural resources, among other areas – a prime example is center-pivot irrigation, or more recently the technology leading to dicamba resistance – in fact we are sitting here today in the fabulous Raising Nebraska learning environment which highlights much of that

innovation. Several years ago, the US lost that leadership position in science and technology investment in the food and ag space and we have now been surpassed by China and Brazil in public R&D investment. Is that a concern, and if so, how do we address this issue?

- 7) USDA is in the process of relocating two of its agencies in the Research, Education, and Economics mission area outside of the Capital region to a new home base in Kansas City. This relocation is designed to gain financial efficiencies in operations of the agencies and to locate them closer to the heart of agricultural production in the country – i.e. to stakeholders. There has been considerable debate about this decision and its implementation since the initial announcement was made in August of 2018. Can you speak to the expected positive impacts of the moves of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the Economic Research Service on enhancing the capabilities of USDA to deliver on research, education, and innovation as well as economic research to inform ag policy?
- 8) As you know, Nebraska is celebrating our sesquicentennial anniversary as the people’s Land-grant university for this great state this year – our actual birthday was February 15th – and the Nebraska State Fair is marking its 150th as well -- what advice would you give to us as we look to the next 25 years of our history?

Again, please feel free to reach out anytime (my cell: [REDACTED]) if you have any questions. Best wishes for safe travels to Nebraska.

See you Friday!
Mike



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From: Rodgers, Meghan - OC, Washington, DC <meghan.rodgers@usda.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 20, 2019 3:38 PM
To: Michael Zeleny <mike.zeleny@unl.edu>
Subject: Topics for discussion

Hey Mike –

I hope that you’re having a good week and are excited for Friday like we are. I wanted to reach out to see if you had those topics we discussed sorted out with the Chancellor – I want to be sure to include them in the Secretary’s briefing documents. Like I said last week – the topics can really cover anything the Chancellor wants to talk about – from the farm economy, trade, Secretary Perdue’s travels and work as Secretary, this years’ prevent plant and disasters, etc. Let me know if you guys have anything specific that I can include in our materials.

Thanks for the help, looking forward to meeting you on Friday.

Meghan



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“Gap growing between irrigated, rain-fed crop yields” (Aug. 12): <https://go.unl.edu/nrni>

Suat Irmak, professor of biological systems engineering; and Meetpal Kukal, a postdoctoral research associate in biological systems engineering, have quantified the benefits of irrigation among nine U.S. crops — corn, soybean, spring wheat, winter wheat, sorghum, cotton, barley, oats and alfalfa — by analyzing yields from 1950 to 2015. The study helps illustrate the benefits and limits of irrigation across the United States.

Local/regional media: Nebraska Ag Connection

National media: Phys.org

“Registration open for international trade conference” (Aug. 12): <https://go.unl.edu/mv3u>

Registration is open for a one-day international trade conference hosted by the Clayton Yeutter Institute of International Trade and Finance, in collaboration with the Nebraska Farm Bureau. “What’s on the Horizon for International Trade?” is Oct. 10 at the University of Nebraska College of Law, Hamann Auditorium. The conference is free and open to the public.

Local/regional media: Rural Radio Network

“Stalk-worn sensor to measure crops’ water use” (July 31): <https://go.unl.edu/7msk>

James Schnable, associate professor of agronomy and horticulture, and Iowa State University colleagues are developing a wearable sensor that can measure a crop's sap flow in real time to determine water usage. The researchers hope to better understand and eventually improve how crops respond to drought.

Local/regional media: KOLN/KGIN, North Platte Telegraph, Omaha World-Herald (2X), York News-Times

National media: AgFax, Farms.com, soon to be BBC News

“Analysis finds U.S. ecosystems shifting hundreds of miles north” (June 24):

<https://go.unl.edu/79ob>

Caleb Roberts, postdoctoral research associate; Craig Allen, professor in the School of Natural Resources; and Dirac Twidwell, associate professor of agronomy and horticulture, have found evidence that multiple ecosystems in the U.S. Great Plains have moved substantially northward during the past 50 years, a phenomenon likely linked to human influences such as climate change. The findings could inform the development of an early-warning system that would give land managers decades to prepare for ecosystem shift or collapse, allowing them to accommodate or foster the change rather than simply reacting.

National media: Phys.org, Yale Environment 360

“Study of sorghum-munching aphids earns NSF award” (April 17): <https://go.unl.edu/d2zj>

Joe Louis, assistant professor of entomology, has earned a five-year, \$1.5 million Faculty Early Career Development Program award from the National Science Foundation to continue his research into helping sorghum naturally resist sugarcane aphids.

Local/regional media: The Fence Post, High Plains Journal, Nebraska Farmer, North Platte Telegraph, Scottsbluff Star-Herald

National media: AgFax, Farms.com, 13 Ag Connection websites

“Nebraska Extension offers resources to flood victims” (March 22): <https://go.unl.edu/wobv>

Nebraska Extension provided a flood resources webpage, <https://flood.unl.edu>, which served as a resource hub for families, homeowners, businesses and producers facing flood cleanup. The Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center near Mead and Haskell Ag Lab near Concord also served as donation locations for hay bales and fencing materials for livestock owners and managers impacted by the flood.

Local/regional media: Norfolk Daily News, North Platte Telegraph, Omaha World-Herald, Seward County Independent

“Husker researchers develop livestock-monitoring technology” (March 21):

<https://go.unl.edu/vfop>

An interdisciplinary team has developed precision technology to help livestock producers continuously monitor animals and use the resulting data to improve animal well-being. The system processes video footage from livestock facilities — day and night — and applies machine learning, which uses statistical algorithms to help computer systems improve without being explicitly programmed. It identifies individual pigs and provides data about their daily activities, such as eating, drinking and movement.

National media: Pork magazine

“NSF award boosts Roston’s research into freeze-tolerant crops” (March 7):

<https://go.unl.edu/m9p7>

Rebecca Roston, assistant professor of biochemistry, has earned a five-year, nearly \$850,000 Faculty Early Career Development Program award from the National Science Foundation to study how more than 30 species of plants respond to freezing. The long-term goal is to engineer freeze-tolerant crops.

Local/regional media: North Platte Telegraph

“Genes to proteins: Efforts enriching nutrition of popcorn, sorghum” (Feb. 18):

<https://go.unl.edu/v40q>

David Holding, associate professor of agronomy and horticulture, and colleagues at the Beadle Center have spent years working to raise levels of a vital amino acid, lysine, that’s scarce in the protein of several cereal grains. By adopting different approaches — one traditional, the other emergent — the team has now managed to roughly double the lysine content of both popcorn and sorghum.

National media: Phys.org

“Researchers aim to reduce nitrogen fertilizer use” (Nov. 28, 2018): <https://go.unl.edu/kym6>

Today’s agricultural researchers are turning to plant genomics to find solutions for growing crops more sustainably with fewer inputs, including nitrogen fertilizer. A Husker research team and collaborators at the Alabama-based HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology envision a solution that would reduce nitrogen fertilizer use without sacrificing yield or profit: plants bred with the ability to use nitrogen more efficiently than today’s crops.



Agricultural Areas of Strength

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Secretary Sonny Perdue's visit to Nebraska

August 23, 2019 | [Nebraska State Fair](#)

University Background and Agricultural Programs of Excellence

All entries are hyperlinked for additional information.

- [University of Nebraska–Lincoln](#)
- [Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources](#)
- [Center for Biotechnology](#) and [Plant Transformation](#)
- [Center for Plant Science Innovation](#)
- [Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute](#)
- [Developing the Next Generation of Rwandan Agricultural Leaders](#)
- [Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program](#)
- [Food Allergy Research & Resource Program](#)
- [Food Processing Center](#)
- [Nebraska Extension](#)
- [Nebraska Food for Health Center](#)
- [Nebraska Innovation Campus](#) and [Greenhouse Innovation Complex](#)
- [Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#)
- [Rural Futures Institute](#)
- [Yeutter Institute for International Trade and Finance](#)

