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Calendar of Events

Dec. 20–21: Graduation. Department’s “Salute to Graduates” reception Friday at 2:30 p.m. in Keim Hall commons area.


Jan. 7: Crop Production Clinics at the Gering Civic Center, Gering. Visit http://cpc.unl.edu for details.

Jan. 8: Crop Production Clinics at the Sandhills Conv. Center, North Platte.

Jan. 9: Crop Production Clinics at the Adams County Fairgrounds, Hastings.

Jan. 10: CASNR Teaching & Learning workshop, NEU, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

Jan. 14: Crop Production Clinics at the Younes Conference Ctr., Kearney.

Jan. 15: Crop Production Clinics at the Auditorium in York.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to faculty, staff, students and friends of the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture! UNL and the department will be closed Dec. 23, 2013 through Jan 1, 2014, as part of the annual holiday shutdown.

Rerucha wins initial Business Plan Competition

Aaron Rerucha, a senior Horticulture major, won the first-ever Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program Business Plan Competition on Dec. 6, 2013. Rerucha, from David City, Neb., took home the $4,000 grand prize. Jordyn Lechtenberg, a senior Agribusiness major in the Engler Program, took runner-up and won $1,000.

The Business Plan Competition, held in the UNL Law College auditorium, was a first for the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program that aims to support and encourage entrepreneurship among UNL students. Located in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, this program was created thanks to the support of the Paul F. and Virginia J. Engler Foundation.

The two-day competition featured agribusiness-oriented business plans only. Ten out of 20 applicants were selected to compete in a rigorous semi-final round Dec. 3. Rerucha and Lechtenberg were chosen to move on to the finals Dec. 6.

Each student presented plans for 10 minutes then took questions for 10 minutes from a panel of judges in both series of competitions. There were two panels of judges for the semi-final round. Robin Coulter of Coulter Ranches, John Miller of Oxbow Animal Health, and Ed Pallesen of Goldman-Sachs made up the first panel. Judges for the
Calendar of Events

Jan. 16: Crop Production Clinics at the Beatrice Country Club, Beatrice.


Jan. 20: Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday, UNL offices closed.


Jan. 22: Crop Production Clinics at the Lifelong Learning Center, Norfolk.

Jan. 23: Crop Production Clinics, Saunders County Extension Center, Mead.


Jan. 29: IANR All Hands Meeting, 9–11 a.m., Nebraska East Union (NEU).


Feb. 13: Quarterly Staff Meeting, 1–2 p.m., 150 Keim.

Feb. 14: Valentine’s Day Event, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m., 150 Keim.

Feb. 27–March 1: 17th Annual Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Forum and Trade Show, Kearney Holiday Inn, Kearney, Nebraska.

March 6, 2014: NAIPSC Webinar Series with Jeremy James, Univ. of Calif., on “Plant traits driving seedling establishment following invasive plant control,” noon.

March 20, 2014: NAIPSC Webinar Series with Rod Lym, NDSU, on “Leafy spurge and Canada thistle control with herbicides and effect on native forbs,” noon.

Dillinghams Welcome New Baby Boy

John & Jenny Dillingham welcomed new son, Henry Frederick, on Friday, Nov. 22, 2013 (just in time for Thanksgiving!). Henry weighed 8 pounds, 12 ounces and was 21 inches long.

At left, Henry is pictured with his Dad and Mom, and big brother, Jack. He also has a big sister, Addy.

Dad says he & Mom are adjusting to Henry’s sleep schedule with limited success. John is the personnel generalist with the HAPPI Business Center.
**New Hires for Agronomy & Horticulture**

Please welcome, **Dr. Dirac Twidwell**, who joined the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture on Nov. 4, 2013, as a rangeland ecologist.

Dr. Twidwell previously worked at Oklahoma State University as a post-doctoral research associate. He received his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, his M.S. from Oklahoma State university, and his B.S. degree from Missouri University of Science and Technology. Originally from North Platte, Neb., he is joined in Lincoln by his wife, Kristin, and two children, Marin, 3, and Caius, 7 months. Dr. Twidwell's hobbies include golfing, pheasant hunting and fishing.

The Department of Agronomy & Horticulture is pleased to announce that **Joanne “Annie” Vance** joined the office Nov. 11, 2013, as the receptionist/office associate. Vance comes to the department from The Legacy Retirement Community where she was the front desk receptionist there.

Originally from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Vance attended Iowa State University and then transferred to UNL, which she completed a B.S. degree with a major in Agronomy.

She is married to Buzz Vance, who works at the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. She and Buzz have been married for 31 years and have two children, Anthony, a student at UNL majoring in broadcast journalism, and Jeremy, a student at Hastings College majoring in web communications.

In her spare time, Vance loves to read, walk and take care of their dog, Kirby, participate in women's bible study groups, and help her husband with their home honey business. She has lived in Lincoln for more than 35 years.

“It is a wonderful city and I love that it is a university town,” said Vance.

**Department Celebrates with Holiday Luncheon**

Nearly 150 employees and friends of the Department of Agronomy & Horticulture celebrated the holidays by attending a staff appreciation luncheon Dec. 13. The buffet lunch included grilled chicken, salad, fruit, potato or minestrone soup, and dessert bars or Christmas cookies.

Dr. Gaussoin introduced new employees and nearly a dozen pointettias were given as prizes.

Irvin Schleufer was announced as the latest winner of the SAC Special Contribution award. Irvin is an Agronomy Research Technician III at the South Central Research Lab in Clay Center. Congratulations Irvin!
Nominees Sought for Holling Teaching Award

Nominations for the annual Holling Family Teaching Excellence Awards in Agriculture and Natural Resources are due on Jan. 10, 2014. Nominations may be made by peers and/or administrators who feel that a particular individual effort is deserving of special recognition. The nomination should include specific information on how an individual’s work matches the award criteria.

**Categories**

1) Senior Faculty Teaching Awards, $5,000 per individual;
2) Junior Faculty Teaching Awards, $3,000 per individual; and
3) Teaching Assistant Awards, $1000 per individual.

The Holling Family Fund for distinguished teaching is to recognize outstanding contributions by faculty and teaching assistants in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR), Extension (only faculty in agriculture and natural resources subject areas), and the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA). Faculty recipients must hold faculty appointments in CASNR, Extension or NCTA. For criteria and nomination details, see http://casnr.unl.edu/LinksforFaculty-andStaff/FacultyAwards#Holling_Family_Award.

News from the HAPPI Business Center

**Travel Updates**

Pre-trip Travel Authorization (T.A.) forms are required any time an employee or student travels on behalf of the university outside Nebraska. After the person returns from his or her trip, an expense voucher must be completed to get reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. Expense vouchers must be completed within 60 days of the final day of the trip. State law requires detailed receipts that are fully itemized, including the amount, date, place, and character of the expense. Original signatures are required ideally with a colored pen. Current travel forms may be found on the Sapphire website: https://sapphire.nebraska.edu/gm/folder-1.11.19843?mode=EU.

**Mileage Rate**

The new mileage rate is .56/mile down from $.565/mile. This new rate becomes effective Jan. 1, 2014. For more information, see: http://travel.unl.edu/policies/mileage-reimbursement.

**Membership Dues**

Requests for reimbursement for membership dues should be turned in within 60 days of the payment. Membership requests should not be held until the conference date.

**Gratuities**

Travelers will be reimbursed for reasonable gratuities. The tip amount should reflect the quality of service received or the prevailing custom for that particular service. A 15 percent tip is customary for a meal. If an employee has not included gratuity on the receipt, gratuity should not be included in the reimbursement request.

**Holiday Closing Dates**

UNL will be closed Monday, Dec. 23, 2013 through Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014, except for essential designated operations. Regular and temporary employees eligible for holiday or floating holiday leave would use the following posting determinations:

- Dec. 23 & 24 — Floating holiday, vacation or leave without pay
- Dec. 25 — Holiday
- Dec. 26 & 27 — Floating holiday, vacation or leave without pay
- Dec. 30 & 31 — Vacation or leave without pay
- Jan. 1, 2014 — Holiday
- Jan. 2 — Return to work