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The LEAD Review

Director’s Update

By Dr. Terry Hejny, Director
Nebraska LEAD Program

The good news is that the Nebraska LEAD Program has an excellent reputation for developing knowledgeable and effective leaders for Nebraska agriculture and beyond. With the graduation of LEAD 36 last month, we now have over 1,050 graduates and there are not enough pages in this newsletter to even begin to list their service to agriculture, our communities, state, and nation. We are so proud of them. I believe our graduates and the work they do are the equity we have in our program. The bad news is that not everyone knows about LEAD, understands the rigorous seminar schedule and commitment that participation requires, or recognizes the importance of the program for the future of the industry. Have you helped us spread the word about the need for leaders in agriculture? Every day, American agriculture is positively and profoundly impacted by a graduate of the Nebraska LEAD Program. That’s a message that’s too important to remain a secret!

We are once again recruiting our next class, and I ask each of you to help in our recruitment effort. I have said it before, but it is important enough to say again, “The strength of our program depends in large part on the strength of our applicant pool.” We firmly believe our participants learn as much from each other as they do from the many speakers, travel seminars, and other parts of our curriculum they are exposed to. A strong, diverse applicant pool allows our selection committee to seat a class that is purposefully chosen to maximize their collective learning experience. To be considered for LEAD 38, which will begin in September, application materials must be received in our office by June 15. Please help us spread the word about our Nebraska LEAD Program.

Lastly, I thank you for allowing me the honor and privilege to serve as the Director of the Nebraska LEAD Program.
A Message From the Chair of the Board

I am writing this message as Cathy and I prepare to depart for Peru as part of a group of 38 LEAD Alumni on the LEAD Alumni International Study Tour. The LEAD experience continues to make a difference in our lives.

The LEAD Program was started in the early 1980’s as agriculture and rural economies faced economic challenges. We are once again facing challenges in some sectors of the ag economy and our state budget.

As we face challenges in life, we are best served by being well informed and educated on factors that are impacting those challenges.

The LEAD Program provides numerous opportunities for LEAD Fellows to make a difference in a challenging environment by:

1. Improving communication skills.
2. Better understanding the state, national and international policies that impact the ag industry.
3. Viewing first hand the domestic and international consumer preferences for our ag products.
4. Sharing their own knowledge with fellow LEAD Fellows.

As we face challenges in the ag economy, which translates to challenges in the state economy, we are well positioned to solve these issues with over 1,000 LEAD Alumni making a difference in their businesses, communities, and our great state of Nebraska.

LEAD prospects may find an excuse to not apply because “it is not the right time”. The LEAD Program has made a difference in our lives and I encourage all prospects to fill out the application and be a part of making a difference.

Thank You to Departing NALC Board Members

The Nebraska LEAD Program extends its thanks to outgoing Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council board members, Leland Poppe (LEAD XIII) and Jarid Childears (LEAD XX) for their dedication to our mission: “To Prepare and Motivate Men and Women in Agriculture for More Effective Leadership,” and for their years of service to our board.

Without the volunteer service of individuals such as these, ours would not be among the elite leadership development programs in which we are currently counted.

LEADing the Way!

Cindi Allen (LEAD XXIV), Mark Jagels (LEAD XI) and Hilary Maricle (LEAD 34) have been selected by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to serve on Nebraska’s Farm Service Agency Committee.

Don Hutchens (LEAD I) has begun service as President of the Agricultural Builders of Nebraska and was selected as the 2018 Nebraska Hall of Agricultural Achievement Honoree.

Bryan Barrett (LEAD XXVIII) was elected Secretary and William Rhea III (LEAD XVIII) was elected Treasurer for the Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council. Tracy Olson (LEAD 31) and Jolene Messinger (LEAD 33) were elected to their first term on the NALC Board of Directors.

Thank You, Al Stark!

Anyone who knows or has worked with Al Stark is familiar with how cheerfully and tirelessly he works on those things for which he has a passion. We are fortunate that Al has a long-standing passion for agriculture and the Nebraska LEAD Program. Al donates his computer skills to help the LEAD Program keep family and supporters up-to-date with the goings-on of our group during the International Study/Travel Seminar. We continue to be grateful to Al for his donation of his time and would like to take this opportunity to thank him again for his enthusiastic and generous help.
Letter Campaign

Revelation

Shana Gerdes

In February, I read an article about a woman who wrote to our current President six days a week, every week, of his first year in office. That’s 313 letters, but who’s counting?

She began writing because her views diverged from the President’s on many topics and she wished to give him insight into why she held the beliefs she did. To make her points more fact-based and therefore hopefully harder to brush off, she determined to research all her queries and concerns before putting pen to paper. Through her research she learned how to better express her views and came to better understand counter views. She also came to the conclusion that, “If you want to know the truth you got to spend the time looking for it,” she said. “You have to educate yourself…no one else is going to do it for you.”

I couldn’t have said it better myself.

sgerdes2@unl.edu

A Farewell

Kimberly Braaten

For those who aren’t aware, I left the LEAD Program on February 28 as I have accepted a position with the State of Nebraska. Although I am excited for this new opportunity, I am sad to leave because of the friendships I have developed, and I will miss Terry and Shana as well as all of you. During my time with the LEAD Program, every person I encountered was welcoming and always willing to help answer any questions I had. I sincerely hope each of you will continue to be active in the LEAD Program, share the mission of LEAD, and of course, continue to recruit for the program. I am very grateful for the time I spent with such an important program, and it is safe to say that the LEAD Program is something that will stay close to my heart. I wish you all many blessings and much success in your future endeavors.

Congratulations and Condolences

Congratulations:
Philip (LEAD XXIII) and Sharon Ottun on the birth of their daughter, Ruby Beretta on September 23.  
Mat (LEAD 34) and Kyla Habrock on the birth of their daughter, Fallon Lincoln on October 31.  
Lance (LEAD 34) Atwater and Krystal Connolly who were married on November 11.  
Adam (LEAD 37) and Kelsey Grabenstein on the birth of their daughter, Stella Jewell on November 27.  
Jordan (LEAD 34) and Megan Feller on the birth of their son, Barrett Thomas on December 1.  
Luke (LEAD 37) and Ashley Beckman on the birth of their daughter, Eleanor Lynn on December 9.  
Blake Bierman (LEAD 35) and Rebecca Black on the birth of their daughter, Clara Jane on January 19.  
Leander Hopkins (LEAD 35) and Paige Steinle who were married on March 3.

Condolences:
The Nebraska LEAD Program mourns the loss of Todd Gerdes of LEAD XVIII who passed away on December 6.

The Nebraska LEAD Program also mourns the passing of Bryce Neidig. Bryce served as President of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation from 1981 until retiring in 2002, served on the Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council’s Board of Directors for two terms from 1987 until 1992 and was the 2012 recipient of the Allen G. Blezek Friend of LEAD Award.

We also pass on our condolences to the family of Terry Dittmer (LEAD XVII) on the passing of his father; the family of Becky Randall (LEAD XXIX) on the passing of her step-father; the family of Mark Knobel (LEAD IV) on the passing of his mother; the family of Ben Steffen (LEAD XXIV) on the passing of his mother; and the families of Neal (LEAD XXIII) and Deb (LEAD XXX) Neidig on the passing of Neal’s father and Kathy Neidig (LEAD XXIV) on the passing of her father-in-law.
Our Mission: To Prepare and Motivate Men and Women in

2018 International Study/Travel Seminar to Argentina, Chile and Uruguay

When a farm-raised Nebraskan learns they will be traveling to South America, several things may come to mind. Thoughts of rainforests, rivers, and mountainous terrain may materialize as though you were watching a Discovery Channel documentary. Vague memories of high school social studies courses may surface—mostly lectures about past dictatorial governments in South America. Or perhaps the mind may conjure up images of low-tech farming methods that surely must be in practice there because, well, their agricultural production processes can’t possibly be as advanced as those used in the U.S. Surely in terms of government, culture, and overall modernization, we can’t have much in common with our southern counterpart... Can we?

As LEAD 36 began hearing presentations shortly after arriving in Chile, it became apparent some previously held conceptions were not just inaccurate, but flat-out wrong. Were it not for intermittent language barriers, similar topics covered could have been presented in Logan County, Nebraska, and would have been just as relevant. Topics ranged from U.S. based trade groups trying to increase demand for U.S. wheat to farm equipment dealers merging new technological capabilities with the changing demands of producers. The Chilean adoption of technology in commodity crops (such as GMO’s) is very high. It was interesting to learn that advances in the marriage between precision agriculture and specialty crop production exist on a commercial scale as well. Never has this writer seen a John Deere dealership selling row crop tractors as well as state of the art harvesting equipment for orchards. On the afternoon of January 8, while in Santiago, we visited the U.S. Embassy. Here we met and received briefings from our Ambassador to Chile, Carol Perez, as well as Marcela Rondon, Agricultural Attaché, and Sergio Catalan, Agricultural Specialist.

LEAD 36 at the Presidential Palace of Chile
By Skip Hecox, Ryan Stien, Thomas Klouer and Ty Walker

irrigation water can be scarce and arable land even harder to find. The focus for producers is on high quality specialty crops. During the last years of Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorial regime (late 1980’s), the economy was retooled. It became more liberalized to follow a more neo-liberal economic model. Since that time, Chile’s economy has offered a case study in how an agricultural export economy, based on free market principles, can thrive in the modern global marketplace. Chile maintains free-trade agreements with over 80 countries (including the U.S.) and has one of the most stable economies in Latin America. Thanks to these trading relationships and its climate, Chile’s producers are contenders of note in the production of fruits and vegetables worldwide, while possessing only a fraction of the land resources of their competitors.

During previous seminars, Dr. Hejny and several other LEAD Alumni warned our group of the temptation to go into an international seminar experience with the assumption that U.S. agricultural producers, practices, and culture are the standards by which all others should be compared. I must admit that regardless of those warnings, thoughts of that nature weren’t far from my mind as LEAD 36 flew south. However, after the experience of South America, it is my belief that U.S. producers could benefit from lessons learned there. Not only are South American producers growing many of the same crops as American farmers, but in many areas, they are successfully diversifying crop production away from commodities to meet global market demands and maximize profitability. During our early morning visit on January 10 to the Lo Valledor market in Santiago, we saw thousands of shoppers representing grocery stores, restaurants, and even large families. All the produce was sold by early afternoon. This happens every day of the week! Our visit certainly put farmer’s markets in a whole new perspective!

After our visit with the Lo Valledor Market, LEAD 36 began the drive to Valparaíso. On the way, we made a stop at Curacavi. Curacavi is similar in size to Kearney and has a mixture of agrarian residents and individuals who commute to Santiago. We met with a government ag expert (like our extension agents), a veterinarian, and the assistant mayor. We had a great exchange of information with our tour guide helping us overcome the language barrier.

We found Valparaíso to be a beautiful coastal city with very rich heritage. Founded in 1536, it has served as a primary port on the Pacific and still plays this role today! LEAD 36 visited Hapag-Lloyd, a logistics company, that facilitates the transport of goods around the world. They have a large office in Valparaíso coordinating the movement of Chile’s produce to grocery stores worldwide! One thing Nebraskans in agriculture take pride in is understanding how our food is grown and produced. It was humbling to see all the steps involved in...
making sure we have access to fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year!

The following morning, we began our journey to Rancagua. On the way, we visited a tomato farm. Here, we had a great exchange of information regarding growing practices. The tomato farm consists of 35,000 acres and the tomatoes go from field to sauce can within 12 hours of harvest! Our travel continued to the Massai Agricultural Services facility, a seed production research farm. The research farm was in a truly beautiful location nestled at the base of the Andes Mountains. We not only learned about Massai seed production and research, but also about how they operate a production fruit farm. LEAD 36 was able to sample some of the fresh fruit. The cherries were the best I’ve ever tasted! At the end of our day of travel, we arrived in Rancagua and had dinner complimented by an amazing sunset.

While in Rancagua on January 12, we met with state and regional ag officials and visited a joint Chile-USDA inspection facility. This facility made sure no harmful insects or plant life were being shipped with produce destined for the United States. This cooperation made for a more streamlined import process for goods coming into our ports. It was comforting to observe the safeguards that are in place to reduce the risk of invasive species entering our country.

Our final visit in the Rancagua region was to an R & D firm focused on new innovations for ag products. One such product we learned about was leather made from fungi. With our Nebraska backgrounds, and upcoming stops in the beef producing countries of Argentina and Uruguay, it was interesting to see leather substitute solutions being made. We returned to Santiago that evening for our last night in Chile before an early flight to kickstart the next leg of our journey.

Wheels up! Early on January 13, LEAD 36 took a short flight from Santiago to Buenos Ares. On our first evening in Argentina, we attended “Senor Tango” for dinner and entertainment. The tango show was very enjoyable and gave our group a glimpse into Argentine culture. Interestingly, the show started off with a video of Argentine history, including some references to Eva Peron. Eva Peron was the wife of Argentina President Juan Peron and remains one of the most beloved figures in Argentina. One might equate her to a figure like JFK in the United States. We were excited for what Argentina held and the learning experiences that were sure to take place!

Because of the tribute to Eva Peron the night before, we made an impromptu visit to the La Recoleta Cemetery before leaving the city. La Recoleta consists of approximately 5.5 hectares of incredibly extravagant mausoleums comprised of many architectural styles. The entire cemetery is laid out in sections like city blocks and house a large number of former presidents, generals, and national icons, including Eva Peron.

We visited his soybean and corn fields. They looked very similar to those in eastern Nebraska. We then enjoyed another wonderful authentic Argentine asado, sponsored by Claas Argentina at Mr. Forcat’s home.

On the morning of January 16, we visited the U.S. Embassy and received a briefing on Argentine agricultural policy from Lazaro Sandoval, Agricultural Attaché and Kenneth Joseph, Agricultural Specialist to Argentina (as well as Uruguay and Paraguay). In a stark reminder of Argentina’s unfortunate past, we heard firsthand accounts from people who were forced to relinquish their entire savings to the government. After lunch, we visited the Ministry of Agriculture for a presentation and interactive discussion regarding foreign trade with the Secretary of Agriculture of Argentina, Guillermo Bernaudo and his staff.

After breakfast the following morning, LEAD 36 toured Mercado Liniers livestock market in the historic Matadero neighborhood of Buenos Aires. This market, dating back to 1901, sees approximately 5,400 head of cattle auctioned daily. Its style differed a great deal from its North American counterpart, in that stock remained in pens outside as people moved from one pen to another, buying entire pens where they stood. The class also took note that all the stock that leaves Mercado Liniers must go directly to slaughter. The cattle’s body condition was considerably different from slaughter weights in the U.S. Being mostly grass fed and several months younger, animals were routinely 500 lbs. lighter than what is customary back home. We then visited Mercado Central. The Mercado Central is the largest fresh fruit and vegetable market in Argentina. Although there are 60 such markets across the country, Mercado is unique in that it is owned in cooperation between the city, province, and state.

After lunch, LEAD 36 caught a ride on the Buquebús Ferry to cross the Río de la Plata. We arrived in Colonia del Sacramento in southwestern Uruguay. The Río de la Plata is a large body of water that empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Though it is...
generally spoken of as a river, the Río de la Plata is considered by some geographers to be a large bay or marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean. If considered a river, as most Argentines regard it, it is the widest river in the world, with a maximum width of about 220 kilometers. After debarking in Colonia del Sacramento, we enjoyed a short bus tour before dining together in the city center area.

We began our first full day in Uruguay north of Colonia del Sacramento at a government sponsored research site, INIA (Instituto Nacional de Investigacion Agropecuaria). While traveling, our guide, Ricardo, shared with us some history of the area. In the last 15 years many hectares were converted into farmland from pasture and dairies (much like what happened in the United States when corn was selling for $7/bu). This was due, in part, to higher commodity prices and Argentine farmers/outside investors buying land in Uruguay. Uruguay does not have an export tax on their commodities. This attracted Argentine investors—Argentina had a 30% export tax on commodities until this year. We learned the average farm size is about 200–300 hectares or about 500 to 700 acres. Prime farmland in Uruguay sells for $8‒10,000/hectare and less prime land sells for $3‒5,000/hectare. Interestingly, their real estate tax is only $7/hectare but the farmers complain it’s too high.

As we travelled, the countryside looked familiar with gently rolling hills quilted with soybeans, pastures, and an occasional corn field. The trees were tall with many plantings of Eucalyptus. However, the occasional palm tree reminded us we weren’t in Nebraska.

Dr. Andres Quincke greeted us when we arrived at the INIA research center. He earned both his masters and Ph.D. in soil science from UNL and was familiar with our part of the country. His wife, Dr. Veronica Ciganda, also greeted us. She also earned her masters and Ph.D. at UNL. The research center, one of five in Uruguay, is similar to UNL Extension research sites. It is funded partially by the government, and partially by farmers via a tax levy. Andres presented information on soil health, specifically regarding organic matter. Their flagship study has been ongoing for nearly 60 years and focuses on a unique cropping system that incorporates seeding pastures within a regular crop rotation—the total rotation is 7 years. By incorporating pastures, the organic matter in the soil increases significantly over time. He stressed the importance of the long-term study because the benefits of this type of rotation were not discovered until nearly 20 years after the research began.

After lunch we departed INIA for the Tolman family farm, La Soledad. The meticulously manicured farmyard was located about ¼ of a mile off of the main road with several outbuildings, a shop, and a house. We were welcomed by the family with homemade alfajore cookies, sandwiches, and cool water. We met the farmer, Alejandro, his wife (bookkeeper and cook), and his 2 daughters—both studying at the University in Montevideo. Alejandro was unable to speak English so his agronomist spoke to us and translated for him. They farm 772 hectares (25% of which is rented), 520 of which are cultivated. Soybeans are their core business, but they’ve recently implemented a crop rotation very similar to the one researched at INIA to improve their soil health. They recognized that the continuous cropping systems used in the past were not sustainable. He emphasized the importance of long-term sustainability for future generations of farmers—we heard this at other farms in South America as well. This is not something farmers emphasize in the United States, but probably should.

The crop rotation used by La Soledad is as follows:
- Year 1: Pasture/Soybeans
- Year 2: Rapeseed/Soybeans
- Year 3: Barley/Wheat/Soybeans
- Year 4: Cover crop (often oats)/Soybeans
- Year 5, 6, 7: Pasture

Temporary fencing is built in 1 hectare plots where there is pasture, essentially dividing the field into large strips. Approximately 180–200 cattle are moved from plot to plot, through the field, each day. After 3 years, they will terminate the pastures and plant soybeans.

After the presentation we visited a soybean field located adjacent to his farmyard. We noticed several “skips” in the field and learned that these “skips” were due to rock formations—big boulders that extended deep into the soil. The soybeans had a long maturity: 5–6. We then visited one of Alejandro’s pastures and the Holstein steers grazing it—the grass and cattle looked very healthy. There were ant hills on the access road where we stood, and a few ants found their way up some people’s pant legs!

This was clearly a progressive farm. The Tolman family is a member of a CREA group which we learned about in Argentina. It’s essentially a group of about 10 farmers who meet regularly to review each other’s practices, finances, etc. with the idea...
of improving each other. This communal approach is in stark contrast to what we saw in Chile where farmers don’t trust each other. I liked the idea of CREA, but I don’t think such a model would work in the United States. Farmers here are too independent and often guard their financial and crop production records closely.

The drive from the Tolman farm to Montevideo felt similar to a Nebraska highway as we travelled through small towns, saw implement dealerships, churches, and gas stations. We arrived at Montevideo in the evening and checked into our hotel. We then went out in groups to find dinner as there were many dining options nearby.

On January 19, after breakfast at the hotel, we headed toward the Parliament Palace for a meeting with Senator Jose Morin. Senator Morin comes from a long line of distinguished politicians in Uruguay, four of which have been presidents. He said the largest issues facing Uruguay right now are the cheap dollar (not good for exports), roads, and high gas and electricity prices. Some of this sounded familiar. When asked if he had any advice for young leaders, he said, “Be yourself, always. Don’t change who you are.” This adage has served him and his family well.

Uruguay’s government is structured similarly to the United States with two houses of congress and an executive branch. Elections are held every 5 years—for everyone. The next election is in 2019. One notable difference between the United States and Uruguay is campaign finance. In Uruguay the government reimburses all candidates $10 for every vote cast in their favor, no matter the election outcome. So, 500 votes equals $5,000. This system may encourage people of lesser financial means to run for political office.

After meeting with Senator Morin we took a tour of the Legislative Palace (equivalent to our U.S. Capitol). The building was impressive and full of symbolism with detailed woodwork, marble, granite, and other pieces of art.

After the tour we went to the old market for lunch. It had many small restaurants to choose from and lots of asado (barbecue). At this point in our journey, many of us were looking for non-red meat options. There were also vendors in the area selling artwork and other items unique to Uruguay. Our group spent a fair amount of money there! We then took a bus tour of Montevideo. The city felt cleaner and newer than Buenos Aires and Santiago. During the tour someone asked our tour guide, who was born and raised in Montevideo, what it was like to live through the dictatorship in the 1970s. Her response surprised me. She said crime rates had been lower and people felt safer (as long as you weren’t a guerilla). I’ve always thought of a dictatorship as something bad, as a selfish power-grab, but after listening to someone who lived it and experienced it, I realized there might be a time and place for such a system of government.

That evening we enjoyed a farewell dinner at El Milongon. The dinner and show were excellent and were a great way to experience Uruguay’s history and culture. We observed a different version of Tango here than in Buenos Aires—a little less showy and more down to earth, which I think is fitting for the little bit of Uruguay we experienced.

On Saturday morning, January 20, LEAD departed our hotel for the very modern-looking Montevideo airport, which wasn’t much larger than Omaha’s airport. We flew to Santiago and slowly but surely navigated our way through multiple lines and immigration check points before getting to our gate for our flight to Dallas.

We arrived in Dallas at about 5:00 a.m. on Sunday and wearily made our way through the checkpoints, immigration, and customs. Many of us were watching the Nebraska weather closely, hoping the forecasted winter storm would hold off long enough for all of us to make it home. Our flight, and all of our luggage, arrived in Omaha at about 1:00 p.m., ahead of the storm.

Many in LEAD 36 have echoed what most alumni say after returning from an International Study/Travel Seminar in that we are thankful both for what we have here in the U.S., and for the things our agricultural system does well. However, I will go one step further in saying I feel we have a better perspective on what we can do better as an industry. This international experience has challenged LEAD 36 to think beyond our borders and about how to adapt to a changing global landscape. Historically, the U.S. producer has led the way in terms of efficiently producing the quality food, fiber, and fuel the marketplace demands. Today the marketplace is becoming more global. This presents challenges and opportunities. We have no doubt the U.S. producer will continue to be successful in the constantly changing global landscape. Our new friends in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay know as we do, our world is getting smaller and we are all global citizens.

Nebraska LEAD Group 36 would like to express its appreciation to the Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council and its Board of Directors, Vice Chancellor Michael Boehm and IANR-UNL, Dr. Terry and Pam Hejny, our many donors and sponsors, our families and friends, and our entire LEAD family for making our International Study/Travel Seminar possible.
Our Bold Beginnings

This first year of my LEAD 37 fellowship has exceeded my expectations! I had been prepared to travel and learn more about the ag industry. The LEAD Program’s stellar reputation for excellence results in an array of speakers that show up ready to teach, learn, and inspire our engaged classes. I was not expecting to be so changed by this program only half way through. Getting to understand the complexities of how industry and government interact has been the most impactful experience for me so far. I know that I have at my fingertips, a wealth of industry knowledge as well as friendships with my classmates and what we have learned together. I can’t wait to see what this next year holds with LEAD and am already looking for ways to extend my LEAD experience past the 2 years included in this fellowship.

—Bree DeNaeyer, Seneca

The Nebraska LEAD Program has opened my eyes to issues that affect each of us on a local, state, and national level and is also giving me the tools I need to make a positive impact on our world. The opportunity to meet government and industry professionals is second-to-none, but the bond I have formed with my classmates has been my favorite part of the program. It’s great being surrounded by the intelligent, motivated members of my class. The knowledge and friendships I’ve gained in the LEAD Program will last a lifetime.

—Clay Govier, Broken Bow

The LEAD Program has showed me the importance of organizing a team, being challenged to move from words to action, and given me the tools to be successful. Through my LEAD experience I am more confident in my thoughts and processes, which translates to professional and personal growth as a leader.

—Megan Grimes, Lincoln

Contemplating whether this was the right time in my life to take on such a commitment and apply for the LEAD Program was a life changing decision. Looking back, it may have seemed like the odds were against me, but I am truly grateful to have been selected to be part of class LEAD 37. I have gained a better understanding of my own approach to leadership and have acquired new ideas to optimize and sustain my potential. Every seminar brings a feeling of excitement to interact with my fellow classmates, the opportunity to meet and make new connections with other leaders, and fresh perspectives and tangible action plans for taking charge and inspiring leadership throughout my organization. My goal is to apply this leadership preparation in my profession, my community, and my state—specifically by understanding, recognizing, and fostering the right leadership qualities in myself and others.

—José Valles, Kearney

Thank You 2018 Banquet Sponsors

We extend our thanks to:

- Nebraska Agribusiness Club
- Omaha Agribusiness Club
- LEAD III

for supporting the Nebraska LEAD Program by underwriting a portion of the cost of the Annual Recognition Banquet. Their continued, generous support allowed us to hold a fine dinner program to honor our LEAD 36 Fellows.

Congratulations LEAD 36

March 9, 2018, the following Nebraska LEAD 36 Fellows received their program completion certificates.

Jennifer I. Arp, Kennard
Nate Bell, Broken Bow
Shane Bendfeldt, Gibbon
Scott Bieck, Trumbull
Ben H. Blomendahl, Lincoln
Nathaniel Keith Blum, Lincoln
Joseph Dorshorst, Hay Springs
Robert “Skip” Hecox, Stapleton
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Dustin Lee Smith, Plattsmouth
Ryan Stien, Kearney
Shane P. Terrell, Gothenburg
Justin Trompke, Loomis
Nora Turner, Lincoln
Kelsey Vala, Gretna
Ty Walker, Arthur
Kimberly Wilkens, Gibbon
Establish Your LEAD Legacy

Individuals provide billions of dollars each year in support to their favorite charities and non-profit organizations. Organizations like the Nebraska LEAD Program are highly dependent upon the generosity of such donors through both annual contributions and through established endowments and other long-term gifting programs.

People contribute for a host of reasons including: social obligation, establishing a legacy, personal desire to make a difference, as well as to take advantage of tax provisions that incentivize charitable giving.

For most who have accumulated wealth, it is the result of a lifetime of hard work by one or more generations. Proper estate planning allows one to preserve accumulated assets, for the benefit of family or charity, including organizations such as the Nebraska LEAD Program, and to minimize the amount lost to estate taxes.

Controlling one’s assets requires planning on your part. Planning must include both what you can do now during your lifetime, as well as what happens after your passing. Gifting assets during your lifetime allows you, rather than someone acting upon your behalf, to clearly determine the beneficiaries of your assets and allows you to see the results of your contributions.

Save the Date!
The Nebraska LEAD Program Recognition Banquet for LEAD 37 will be held March 15, 2019. LEAD VII Alumni, you will be invited to celebrate with a 30 Year Reception & Dinner.
Applications are available for Nebraska LEAD Class 38.

Applications are available for Nebraska LEAD Class 38. The application deadline is June 15, 2018.

Seminars begin fall 2018.

Class 38.

Nebraska LEAD Class 38

Applicants Wanted

To apply for

Applications are available for Nebraska LEAD.

The 2018 Allen G. Blezek Friend of LEAD recipient, Paul Eveland, of Ames, Nebraska, with Matt Dolch, Vice President of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association. We are indebted to Paul Eveland for his foresight, vision, and leadership in the establishment of the Nebraska LEAD Program and the Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council.

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