NORTHEAST NEBRASKA AG CONFERENCE

Co-sponsored by the Bow Creek Watershed Project
& Bazile Groundwater Management Area Project

December 17, 2024

Lifelong Learning Center
Northeast Community College
Norfolk, NE

NORTHEAST NEBRASKA AG CONFERENCE IS

PRESENTED BY:

PARTNER SUPPORT IS PROVIDED BY:

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A MESSAGE TO ATTENDEES

Welcome to the Northeast Nebraska Ag Conference!
We are excited to have you here today and hope you find the event to be worth your valuable time. We have worked hard to provide pertinent information on topics of growing interest in agriculture.

Events like this have changed the course of farms and ranches for the better. As event planners, we never know what topic or speaker will resonate with attendees, so we strive to bring a variety of topics and speakers to the event. In addition to the wealth of knowledge available from the session speakers, there are hidden gems of knowledge all around you.

At every table there are two types of people: one who needs to hear something and one who needs to say something. It may not necessarily be to each other, but they are there, nonetheless. We have been the ones who needed to hear something; a new idea or an old idea applied in a different way that allowed us to make a change in our ag operations. We have been the ones who needed to say something; sharing an idea that we have tried or sharing a resource with other farmers. We know the power of being part of the community sitting around the tables, listening to the speakers and then discussing it over lunch, because we have been there. That is why we are so excited to offer this event to you!

It is easy to get excited about the ideas discussed while you are here. However, it is easy to get overwhelmed by the details of implementing them at home. So today, we encourage you to talk to strangers. Find someone who is at the same place you are with these ideas. Find someone who has already implemented some of them or someone who has not implemented as many as you have. Write their information in the back of the book (we left a spot just for that!) so you can connect with them later. Don't be afraid to talk to the speakers and connect with them later when you are planning your crop rotations, grazing plans, or management changes. They would all be happy to hear from you and support you, because the chances are high someone supported them!

The Northeast Nebraska Ag Conference Planning Team

AGENDA

8:00 - 8:30	Registration / Visit Sponsors & Exhibitors
8:30 - 8:45	Welcome
8:45 - 9:45	Keynote Session: Rick Clark
9:45 - 10:00	Break / Visit Sponsors & Exhibitors
10:00 -11:00	Concurrent Breakout Sessions #1
11:00 -11:15	Break / Visit Sponsors & Exhibitors
11:15 - 12:15	Concurrent Breakout Sessions #2
12:15 - 1:30	Networking Lunch
1:30 - 2:30	Concurrent Breakout Sessions #3
2:30 - 2:45	Break / Visit Sponsors & Exhibitors
2:45 - 3:45	Closing Session: Making It Work Here
3:45 - 4:00	Closing Comments / Door Prize Drawing

SEE THE SCHEDULE ON FOLLOWING PAGE FOR DETAILS

Continuing Education Credits (CEUs)

- Agronomy and crop advisor credits are available for each session. The sheets will only be available during the session. The room moderator will have the sign-in sheet in each room. If you have questions please see Joslynn in the atrium.
- Nitrogen Certification credits with the NRDs for the BGMA are available by signing in with Joslynn in the atrium.
- Sign up for Bow Creek Watershed Project education credits with Joslynn in the atrium.

We know you have important businesses and they don't stop because you are here. **Please silence phones** as a courtesy to presenters and your fellow attendees. If you need to take a phone call, please, step outside the session and away from the doors.

Bow Creek Watershed Project

The Bow Creek Watershed Project (BCWP) was established by the Lewis & Clark NRD in 2020 to address water quality concerns in the Bow Creek. Bow Creek is listed as impaired for E. coli bacteria, an indicator of fecal matter in the stream. The BCWP focuses on supporting volunteer adoption of best management practices that improve water quality through education and incentive programs. Funding for the project is provided by LCNRD, Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, Nebraska Environmental Trust, and Nebraska Water Sustainability Fund. If you are interested in more information contact Becky Ravenkamp, BCWP Coordinator by calling 402-254-6758, by email at bravenkamp@lcnrd.org or stop by the LCNRD office in Hartington.

Bazile Groundwater Management Area Project

The Bazile Groundwater Management Area (BMGA) Project is an ongoing joint effort of the Lewis & Clark, Lower Niobrara, Lower Elkhorn, Upper Elkhorn NRDs, and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, to curb the rise in nitrate concentrations. By offering educational opportunities, establishing demonstration sites, and offering cost-share on select Best Management Practices (BMPs), one of the Project's goals is widespread adoption of BMPs across the area. BMPs are designed to give the producer more efficient control over inputs while reducing the environmental impact. If anyone is interested in adding BMPs to their operations, contact BGMA Coordinator Lisa Lauver at 403-371-7313 or llauver@lenrd.org, or your local NRCS office.

General Information

Special thanks to Northeast Community College for allowing us to use their wonderful venue and Chartwells Dining Services at Northeast Community College for providing meals.

Share your experience with #NNAC24 on social media!

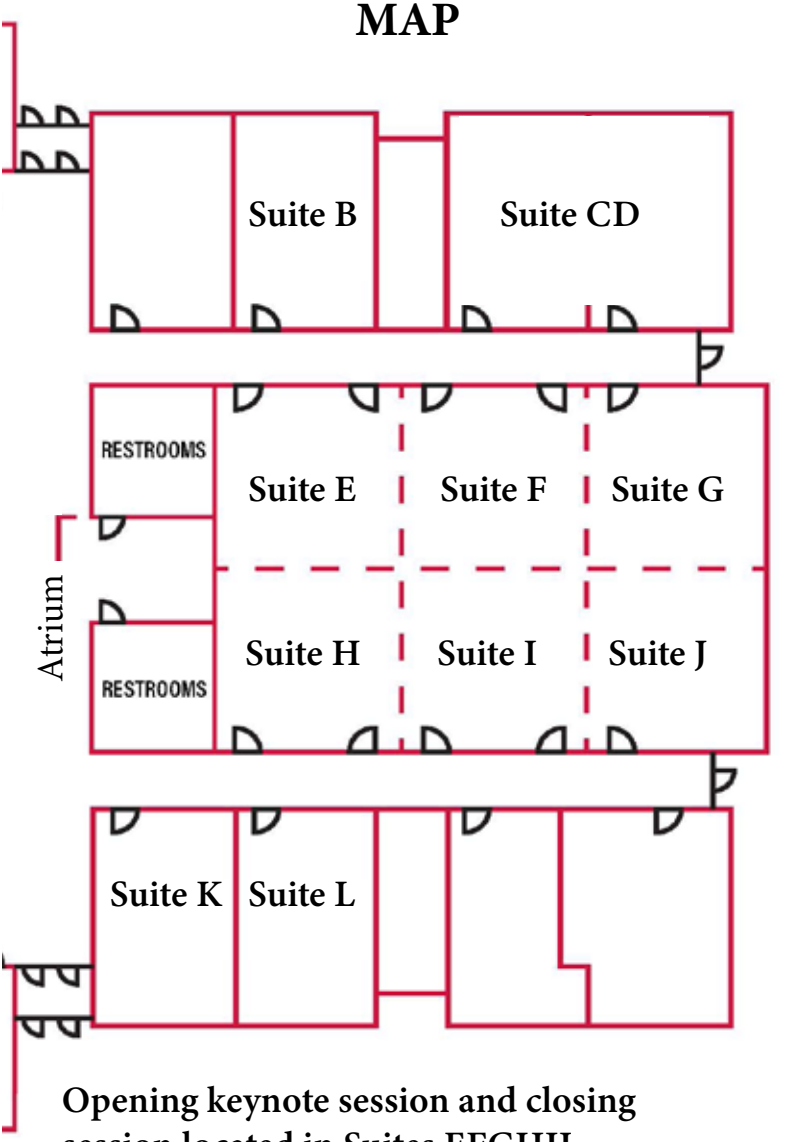
Northeast Nebraska Ag Conference

8:00 AM	Registration / Visit Sponsors	
8:30 AM	Welcome	
8:45 - 9:45 AM	Rick Clark - Increasing Farm Profits	
9:45 - 10 AM	Networking Break	
	Suite FGIJ	Suite B
10:00 - 11:00 AM	Farm Weird - Jason Mauck (1 CEU CM)	Erosion and Soil Health: Past, Present, Future - Nathan Mueller, NRCS (1 CEC SWM)
11:00 - 11:15 AM	Networking Break	
11:15 AM -12:15 PM	Cream of the Crop: Striving for Organic No-till - Rick Clark (1 CEU NM)	Practical Application Tips: No-till Equipment - Paul Jasa (1 CEU CM)
12:15-1:30 PM	Producer Networking Lunch / Vendor time	
1:30 -2:30 PM	Carbon Intensity Score and Ethanol Tax Credits - Mitchell Hora (1 CEU Sust.)	Biology Made Easy - Jim Williams (1 CEU NM)
2:30 - 2:45 PM	Networking Break	
2:45-3:45 PM	Making It Work: Local Farmer Panel -	
3:45-4:00 PM	Closing Comments/Door Prizes	

with Conservation (1 CEU CM)		
Suite CD	Suite K	Suite L
From Dis-ease to Abundant Life - Roy Thompson (1 CEU CM)	NiRIA NRDs - Nitrogen Reduction Cost Share Program (1 CEU NM)	Changing Soils - Don't Give Up Now! - Bob Noonan (1 CEU IPM)
Biological Farming- John Heerman (1 CEU NM)	Measuring Soil Carbon: A Key to Understanding Farm Health- Dr. Caro Cordova (1 CEU SWM)	Improve Pasture and Cropland by Grazing Covers & Summer Annual Forages - Austin Baldwin (1 CEU PD)
Profit Partners: Covers & Cows 365 - Keith Berns (1 CEU CM)	What Confident Nitrogen Management Looks Like: Leveraging Data and In-Season Application to Boost Profits & Stweardship - Jackson Stansell (1 CEU NM)	Value-added Products Panel: Flowers, Flour, and Dough: Matt Lance, Julie Stahly, Kenny Reinke (1 CEU CM)
Junior Pfanstiel, Jeff Steffen, Curt Morrow, & Art Tanderup (1 CEU CM)		

Thank-you Jeffery Steffen for being the 2024 Northeast Nebraska Ag Conference emcee.

LIFELONG LEARNING CENTER MAP



Opening keynote session and closing session located in Suites EFGHIJ.

Breakout sessions located in Suite B, Suite CD, Suite EFGHJI, Suite K, and Suite L.

The event is sold out so please fill all seats.

Booths located in Suite EFGHIJ and Atrium.

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Tony Sanderson.....Subdistrict 4
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KEYNOTE SESSION 8:45 AM - 9:45 AM

Increasing Farm Profits with Conservation Systems - Rick Clark
Suite EFGHIJ 1 CEU CM

Rick Clark will share his journey of adopting a systematic approach to regenerative farming and how that has increased farm profitability. Focusing on a regenerative soil health management system, he uses nature to replace costly farm inputs. Learn how he manages the system on his farm and how you can do the same on yours.

Rick Clark is a 5th generation farmer that cares deeply about soil health and human health. The principles of soil health are the foundation of his regenerative organic stewardship systematic approach. The farm has been no-tilling for 18 years and using cover crops for 14 years. The farm has removed all inputs of fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide, seed treatments, and tillage. We are building a regenerative system that is profitable and viable for the next generation.

Farm Weird - Jason Mauck
Suite EFGHIJ 1 CEU CM
Through trial and error, Jason has developed "constant canopy" cropping systems that produce more profits from less inputs with a by-product of a healthier soil and environmental footprint. It is all about time, space, and sunlight. The Constant Canopy Cropping System uses relay cropping, essentially a special version of double cropping, where the second crop is planted into the first crop before harvest, rather than waiting until after harvest as in true double-cropping.

Erosion and Soil Health: Past, Present and Future - Nathan Mueller, NRCS
Suite B 1 CEU SWM
Even though soil erosion has been reduced through adoption of no-till and other conservation systems, adoption of all four soil health principles could further reduce erosion and increase soil health. Cover crops and conservation crop rotation are practices that could be leveraged more in northeast Nebraska to reduce soil health resource concerns. Nathan will discuss the barriers to adoption, value of crop rotation and cover crops, and management considerations.

From Dis-ease to Abundant Life: Soil Health and Human Health - Roy Thompson
Suite CD 1 CEU CM
Roy and his wife Meredith, along with their three kids, ranch and farm in north central SD. In 2015 Roy had a radical health transformation that changed the trajectory of his life. That transformation has changed the way Roy sees food and farming. He has since been moving down the regenerative path for his farming and ranching operation. This session will highlight the journey from dis-ease to creating abundant life in both his physical body and his farm and ranch business.

Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act (NiRIA) - NeDNR, LCNRD, LENRD, LNNRD, UENRD
Suite K 1 CEU NM

The Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act (NiRIA) was passed by the Nebraska Legislature as LB1368 and signed into law in April 2024. NiRIA is authorized to start with the 2025 growing season and run through December 31, 2029 with $1 Million currently allocated to the program. Alexa Davis, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR), will give an overview of LB1368. Representatives of the LCNRD, LENRD, LNNRD, and UENRD will be available to answer questions about their application process and requirements. Applications will be taken by each NRD in the state until January 15, 2025. Come learn about LB1368 and the application process for your NRD.

Changing Soils: Don't Give Up Now - Bob Noonan
Suite L 1 CEU IPM

Implementing a suite of conservation farming practices has profound impacts on the soil ecosystem. Recognizing and anticipating the changes will help you capitalize on your conservation system. Bob Noonan, Northeast Community College Agriculture Instructor, will discuss the changes in weed pressure, insect pests, and soil characteristics within the context of conservation farming in northeast Nebraska.

BREAKOUT SESSION #2 11:15 AM - 12:15 PM

Cream of the Crop: Striving for Organic No-till - Rick Clark Suite EFGHIJ 1 CEU NM

Rick Clark is most proud of incorporating regenerative farming practices and achieving all acres being certified organic. He calls it regenerative organic stewardship with no tillage. The system will suppress weeds and build soil health with cover crops and no tillage. Rick also cares deeply about human health, as it is another important driver behind the organic no till style of farming. Rick is building a system that will be viable and profitable for generations to come. This session will take a deep dive into how all the pieces of the system must work together to achieve organic no-till.

Practial Application Tips: No-till Equipment- Paul Jasa Suite B 1 CEU CM

No-till planters, drills, and air seeders have to cut and handle residue, penetrate the soil to the desired seeding depth, establish proper seed-to-soil contact, and close the seed-vee. Keeping these four items in mind, a producer can evaluate the strengths or weaknesses of any piece of planting equipment and make any adjustments or changes necessary to make no-till seeding successful. The presentation contains tips to improve stand and emergence uniformity and discusses many of the common features and attachments and where they might be needed to improve performance.

Biological Farming - John Heerman Suite CD 1 CEU NM

Following nature's example, John Heerman has expanded and intensified his crop rotation. Understanding and harnessing the power of natural nutrient cycling has led John to explore alternatives to commercial fertilizer. He has used alternative commercial products, compost, and compost extracts to reduce his commercial fertilizer needs. John will explain how his systems approach with living plants and alternative nutrients has allowed him to cut expenses without cutting production.

Measuring Soil Carbon: A Key to Understanding Farm Health - Dr. S. Carolina Córdova
Suite K 1 CEU SWM

Soil organic carbon (SOC) is vital for assessing soil health and agricultural productivity. By tracking SOC changes, farmers can gain insights into their farm's carbon balance and overall ecosystem performance. The recommended approach involves sampling at various depths up to 3 ft, ideally every decade, during consistent seasonal timings when crops are not growing. This method ensures accurate measurement of SOC, crucial for developing sustainable farming practices. By tracking SOC changes, producers can enhance soil health and contribute to climate change mitigation by increasing the carbon storage in their farms. Understanding SOC dynamics empowers farmers and crop advisers to make informed decisions that improve soil resilience and productivity, ultimately leading to healthier soils and more sustainable farming systems. Join Dr. Córdova in exploring how measuring SOC can transform your approach to agriculture, benefiting both your farm and the environment.

Improve Pasture and Cropland by Grazing Covers and Summer Annual Forages - Austin Baldwin
Suite L 1 CEU PD

With low commodity prices, discussions around alternatives to corn and soybean rotations are coming up more often. At the same time livestock producers are battling with cedar encroachment on grazing lands. Working together, farmers and livestock producers have an opportunity to increase the soil health and resiliency of their land while securing a profit for both operations. Austin Baldwin will discuss the new Nebraska NRCS practice Summer Annual Forages. This practice supports the growth of forage on cropland to feed cattle that need to be pulled off pasture/range to grow fuel for prescribed burning as part of a cedar management program. With the current crop and pasture prices this idea makes dollars and cents with or without government programs.

About Us

AFAN provides one-on-one services to producers to help them understand opportunities, collaborates with communities to facilitate growth, and supports the recruitment of ag-based businesses.

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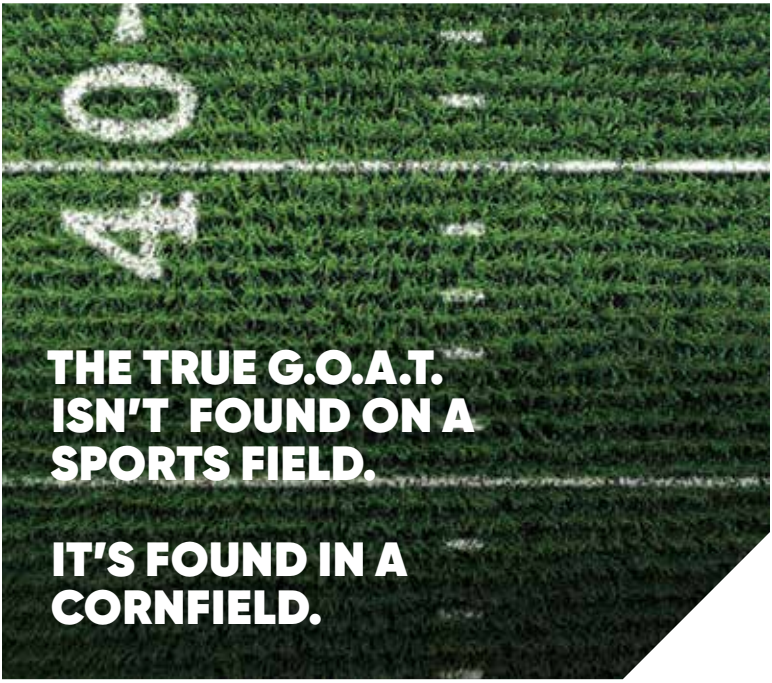

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Carbon Intensity Score and Ethanol Tax Credits - Mitchell Hora

Suite EFGHIJ 1 CEU Sustainability

Carbon Intensity and 45Z (ethanol tax credit) are amongst the hottest topics in ag. Low-carbon biofuels start their journey on the farm. Join Mitch to learn how you can determine your carbon intensity score and position your business to get paid for conservation. Understanding the huge opportunities quickly approaching with ethanol markets and how to negotiate with your local market will help you avoid the "wild-west" feeling of carbon markets.

Biology Made Easy - Jim Williams

Suite B 1 CEU NM

Jim Williams made his first compost as a young boy in 1969. When he moved to Herrick, SD and started farming it made sense to bring compost into his system. Jim has developed his own system for scaling up composting for commercial agriculture use. In this session Jim will share how he creates biology the easy way for use on his farmland and pastures. He will walk through creating his 50 ft long compost piles, extracting the compost, creating seed soaks, and spraying biology onto the land at a working farm level.

Profit Partners: Covers & Cows 365 - Keith Berns

Suite CD 1 CEU CM

With farm profits predicted to fall in 2025, producers are looking for alternatives to the corn/soybean rotation. At the same time livestock producers are always looking for forage. Keith Berns, Co-owner of Green Cover has been working with large ranches, some in northeast Nebraska, to create a year-round grazing system on irrigated and non-irrigated fields. He will review the financial potential and what cover crop species lend themselves to this type of system.

What Confident Nitrogen Management Looks Like - Leveraging Data and In-Season Application to Boost Profits and Environmental Stewardship - Jackson Stansell
Suite K 1 CEU NM
Every crop is different - different weather, different planting date, different seed, and more. Each of these factors influences nitrogen demand and utilization, meaning nitrogen must be managed differently each year. Doing this correctly and confidently is hard. Emphasizing in-season applications and incorporating data-driven decision making can drastically improve the certainty of nitrogen management decisions and push your operation toward more profitable and efficient outcomes that also improve your stewardship. Jaskson will discuss what confident nitrogen management looks like and how to leverage in-season applications and data to achieve it.

Value-added Farmer Panel: Flowers, Flour, and Dough - Matt Lance, Julie Stahly, Kenny Reinke
Suite L 1 CEU CM
Farmers and ranchers from across Nebraska will share how they are making more money from farm or ranch products by creating added value.
Livestock integration means something different to Matt Lance. As a beekeeper Matt sees plants from a different angle; their flowers and pollen. Matt uses beehives to pollinate cash crops. This improves crop yields and honey production. Stacking these enterprises together can bring sweet rewards that open up opportunities for different crop rotations. The Stahly farm increases value by milling their commodity wheat into flour. They are selling flour into local grocery stores. Julie will share their motivation and journey into the flour market. You don't have to process and retail your products to create added value. Using the Regenified™ Program Kenny Reinke is receives a premium for his farm products without hauling it far from home. This session will include extended Q&A time so you can learn more about the idea of adding value to your farm and ranch products.

CLOSING SESSION 2:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Making It Work Here, Local Farmer Panel - Curt Morrow, Junior Pfanstiel, Jeff Steffen, Art Tanderup

Suite EFGHIJ 1 CEU CM

There is a difference between theory and practice. Local farmers from the four BGMA NRDs will share with you how they are putting the ideas discussed today into practice here in Northeast Nebraska. Conservation has improved the financial position of these system thinkers. Learn practical application tips and the economics behind their changes.

Panelist:
Curt Morrow "farms" differently than most people. All his irrigated cropland has been converted to grass and vegetable production. Using rotational grazing principles and daily moves, the land provides what the animals need without additional nitrogen. The decision to convert his ground was driven by the understanding he could not afford the equipment needed to farm with three quarters of ground, especially when commodity prices dropped. Perennial grazing systems eliminate the need for expensive farming equipment and protect the sandy soils on his farm. Curt has served on the Lower Niobrara NRD Board since 2009.

Junior Pfanstiel farms with his wife Katelyn and their 4 children near McLean, Nebraska. After exiting the retail ag industry and being fed up with high input prices, he dove head first towards regenerative farming practices. Junior is an agronomy enthusiast and started a business called Outside The Box Agronomy. His farm operation is in the process of transitioning to organic crop production. In 2022 he received the Lower Elkhorn NRD's Sustainable Agriculture Award.

Jeff and Jolene Steffen farm around 600 acres in northeast Nebraska about 10 miles south of the South Dakota border. About 500 of these acres are row crops. They currently grow corn, oats, soybeans, buckwheat, cereal rye and peas for cash crops. They also graze cow calf pairs on full season annual cover crops and winter graze cover crops and crop residue. They have been continuous no-till for 30 plus years but only in the last 10 years have they really concentrated on soil health with cover crops being implemented on the entire farm. Jeff and Jolene also raise non-GMO soybeans and Oats for certified seed. Jeff is on the Nebraska Natural Resource Commission and serves on the Lweis & Clark NRD Board. They also love nature and wildlife: as West Bow Creek runs through the middle of their farm.

Art Tanderup and his wife Helen own and operate a small family farm north of Neligh, NE. They grow corn, soybeans and rye. In 2002, Art made a conversion to no-till farming. A couple years later, he added cover crops to the operation. They also winter some cattle. Art grew up on farms and ranches in northeast Nebraska. He graduated from Wheeler Central High School in Bartlett. He has college degrees from Northeast Community College, Wayne State College and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He taught school in Naper, Orchard and Tekamah-Herman. For three years he served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. In 2011 they moved to Helen's family farm by Neligh. Art currently serves on the Nebraska Farmers Union Board of Directors and the Upper Elkhorn NRD Board.

BREAKOUT SESSION SPEAKERS

Austin Baldwin

Austin Baldwin is a farmer and rancher in Knox County, NE. Austin, his wife Ali, and their two sons live in Bloomfield, NE. He runs a cow/calf livestock operation with his father in which they graze rangeland, cover crops, and cornstalks. His farming operation includes corn, alfalfa, oats, and cover crops.

Austin serves as the Resource Conservationist for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Bloomfield, NE. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Soil Science and minor in Agronomy from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Soil health is a passion of his and he serves on the NRCS Nebraska Soil Health Committee. Austin works with many forward-thinking producers on developing grazing and forage systems that benefit both rangeland and cropland systems.

Keith Berns

Keith Berns combines over 25 years of no-till farming with 10 years of teaching Agriculture and Computers. In addition to no-tilling 2,500 acres of irrigated and dryland corn, soybeans, rye, triticale, peas, sunflowers, and buckwheat in South Central Nebraska, he also co-owns and operates Green Cover Seed, one of the major cover crop seed providers and educators in the United States. Through Green Cover Seed, Keith has experimented with over 120 different cover crop types and hundreds of mixes planted into various situations and has learned a great deal about cover crop growth, nitrogen fixation, moisture usage, and grazing utilization of cover crops. Keith was honored by the White House as a 2016 Champion of Change for Sustainable and Climate-Smart Agriculture. Keith also developed the SmartMix Calculator™ one of the most widely used cover crop selection tools on the internet. Keith has a Masters Degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Nebraska and teaches on cover crops and soil health more than 30 times per year to various groups and audiences. Keith also was appointed by Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts to be part of the Nebraska Healthy Soils Task

Force and had the privilege of serving as the chairman. He enjoys spending time with his beautiful wife Audrey and their 7 children and their families, including the 11 grandkids!

Dr. S. Carolina Córdova

Dr. S. Carolina Córdova is an Assistant Professor and Statewide Soil Health Specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Department of Agronomy and Horticulture. As an agroecologist specializing in soil health and ecosystem processes, her research focuses on carbon sequestration, nitrogen fixation, and long-term resilience in diverse cropping systems. Dr. Córdova co-leads the WICS Soil Health Team in Nebraska and is a member of the Long-term Agroecosystems Research Network (ARS-USDA) and the Nebraska Strategic Ag Coalition. With experience in both the U.S. and Latin America. Dr. Córdova's work contributes significantly to advancing regenerative agricultural practices and soil health on regional and global scales.

Rick Clark

Rick Clark is a 5th generation farmer from Williamsport, IN. The main goal on the farm is to build soil health and achieve balance with Mother Nature. Rick has developed and is constantly improving a systematic approach to regenerative farming. He has received several awards including: the 2022 National No-Till Innovator of the Year, 2017 Danone Sustainable Farmer of the Year, Land O' Lakes Outstanding Sustainability Award, Regional winner of the American Soybean Association's Conservation Legacy Award, and the 2019 Field to Market Sustainable Farmer of the Year award.

John Heerman

John farms in the semi-arid region of eastern Colorado. As a young farmer he is playing the long game of soil health. Receiving 17 inches of annual precipitation he must capture and utilize every drop. Growing up in a winter wheat-tillage fallow system, no-till was the first change John implemented when he returned from UNL with an

economics degree. Watching the NRCS rainfall simulator in 2014 prompted him to prioritize keeping the soil covered. That triggered a system redesign to incorporate cover crops and other cash crops besides winter wheat. John now raises a variety of crops including winter wheat, rye, rye and hairy vetch, millet, oats and peas. More intensive cropping systems have allowed him to decrease herbicides and more to more natural nutrient management.

Mitchell Hora

Mitchell Hora is the Founder and CEO of Continuum Ag, a soil health data company on a mission to help a million farmers boost profitability through better soil health. With Continuum's TopSoil platform, Mitchell is revolutionizing ag tech, now with CI Certification—a new MMRV product that enables farmers to earn premiums for low-carbon grain while maintaining secure data control. A seventh-generation Iowa farmer, Mitchell is recognized on Forbes' 30 Under 30 list and was named a Soil Health Champion by the National Association of Conservation Districts for his leadership in sustainable agriculture.

Paul Jasa

As an UNL Extension Biological Systems Engineer Paul develops and conducts crop production educational programs to help growers improve profitability, build soil health, and reduce risks to the environment. Across the years, he has worked with planting equipment, tillage system evaluation, soil and water conservation, residue management, crop rotations and, more recently, cover crops and soil health. With Paul's experiences gained from research and Extension activities, he has become one of the best sources of information in the Midwest on no-till planting equipment and system management to protect and build the soil. Paul admits, if there is a mistake to be made with no-till, he's either made it himself or has seen it done. More importantly, he has learned from those mistakes and shares that information in presentations that stress the systems approach and the long-term benefits of continuous no-till.

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Matt Lance

Matt Lance owns Lance Honey Farm. Located in central Nebrask., Lance Honey Farm specializes in supplying bees across the state to backyard beekeepers and helping hobbyists thrive in their prospective goals. Bees provide pollination services to a large number of plants, including commodity crops. Matt has partnered with producers growing alternative crops across the state that results in unique and sought after honey.

Jason Mauck

Jason Mauck is obsessed with narrowing the gaps of agriculture. An apostle of relay cropping, Mauck, is blazing a new path using cash and cover crops in unison. One middle at a time, the maverick grower is uncovering clues and running wide open toward greater farming efficiency. Jason works 3,000 acres of corn, soybeans, and wheat, in addition to 25,000 hogs per year. His company, Constant Canopy, is developing cutting edge farming methods and currently holds the Indiana state record for the highest yield per acre for soybeans and has developed scaelable systems for corn yields that surpass most high-test plots.

Nathan Mueller

Mueller grew up near Hooper, NE on the family dairy farm. He earned BS and MS degrees from UNL and a PhD from K-State all in agronomy. He previously worked for the South Dakota State University as an assistant professor and served the last 10 years as a UNL Extension Water & Cropping Systems Educator. Mueller started July of 2024 as the USDA NRCS Nebraska State Soil Health Specialist where he has statewide responsibility for providing planning assistance and field implementation of soil health management systems for the public, NRCS personnel, and partners.

Bob Noonan

Bob Noonan grew up on a grain and livestock farm near Cornlea, Nebraska. He lived on the home place for 63 years until recently retiring from farming and moving to Norfolk. His operation consisted of mostly grain and seed corn production, growing for Garst Hybrids and then for LG until 2021, but he also raised hogs for many years. Mr. Noonan is currently employed as a diversified agriculture instructor at Northeast Community college, where he teaches agronomy classes. He just completed an 8-year study on soil health practices with The Soil Health Partnership and the Local and State NRCS. Bob brings his passion for agriculture to the classroom every day, where he teaches the students the importance of conservation and regenerative agriculture.

Kenny Reinke

Kenny Reinke farms near Neligh, NE. Looking for ways to improve farm profitability Kenny turned to extended rotations and cover crops. Capitalizing on his farming system Kenny enrolled and became certified through the Regenified™ program. Now the same grains bring a premium through the Regenified™ market.

Julie Stahly

Bob and Julie Stahly started Homestead Grains in 2023 as a flour business to direct sell their grain crops. Their goal is to provide flours and meals that have a higher nutrition level. When Bob and Julie learned about soil biology and using compost extract to coat seed, they realized that this could be the way to step away from synthetic inputs. Using sea salt minerals in place of synthetic fertilizers also captured their attention. Along the way, they realized that they were growing a food product that was raised without chemicals applied to it and that consumers might be interested in food grown this way. The response from consumers has been encouraging. Today, Homestead Grains offers whole wheat flour, non-GMO cornmeal, and sorghum flour. They continue to work with the grains they grow to see what other food items can be made from them.

Jackson Stansell

Born in Colorado but raised in the deep South, Jackson came to Lincoln, Nebraska in pursuit of graduate education agricultural engineering with the goal of helping farmers grow more efficiently and environmentally friendly. Through his master's work, Jackson developed the prototype N-Time software that has since become Sentinel's primary product. Jackson graduated with a M.S. in Agricultural and Biological Systems Engineering, and started on a Ph.D., prior to founding Sentinel in September of 2021. Jackson hails from the southeast corner of Alabama and calls Dothan, Alabama – the self-proclaimed "peanut capital of the world" – home. When Jackson isn't leading Sentinel, he enjoys spending time with his wife Jaime and their pets (dog - Rio and cat - Wampus). He also enjoys spending time on various outdoor hobbies, sports, cooking, music, and home improvement projects.

Roy Thompson

Roy Thompson farms and ranches with his wife, Meredith, and their three children near Akaska, SD. They use regenerative practices to grow crops and manage their grazing land, and they have begun a grass-fed and grass-finished beef enterprise. Thompson credits consuming regeneratively grown food with curing his Crohn's disease. "I started watching YouTube videos featuring Gabe Brown," Roy says. "What he was saying about regenerative agriculture and soil health made sense to me. At the end of one of the videos, Gabe included his phone number, so I called it, expecting a secretary or someone else to answer. Instead, it was Gabe who picked up. I was shocked that it was actually him. After chatting with him for a while, Gabe recommended that I read Jon Stika's book, *A Soil Owner's Manual*. After more reading and learning, I began implementing soil health practices and following the six principles of soil health." Roy and his wife, Meredith, also started looking to stack enterprises by raising grass-fed and grass-finished beef, using adaptive stewardship grazing methods to maximize soil biology and improve the nutrient

density of their beef. Roy says Meredith wasn't initially sold on the idea, but then she tasted some steaks and burgers from their cover crop-finished beef. "She said, 'This is alright. I can definitely eat this beef.' So that got me really excited," Roy says. Roy says that had it not been for the adversity he experienced through his battle with Crohn's disease, he probably wouldn't have been led down the path of regenerative agriculture—a path that has transformed his health, his soil, his farm and his family's future.

Jim Williams

Jim Willams farms in Herrick, SD. He has a four- year rotation of corn-corn-soybeans-wheat with cover crops three years out of four. He recently retired from owning cattle but rotationally grazes cattle on a per head per day basis. Utilizing a suite of practices he has eliminated tillage, fungicides, insecticides, pre-emergent herbicides, and chemical fertilizer on his farm. The practices include compost, no-till, and cover crops. He builds his own compost and extracts it on site just before spraying it. His theory is following anything bad (herbicides, tillage, etc.) with good biology will help restore the resilience of the system.

Dan Gillespie Soil Health Fund

Dan Gillespie was passionate about soil health. Over his 33-year career with NRCS he influenced the adoption of no-till and other conservation farming practices in Nebraska and the greater region. Dan hosted soil health meetings in this facility for several years and we are excited to be following in his footsteps.

Dan was a true believer, practicing what he preached on his Battle Creek "sand farm". Anyone who witnessed his rainfall simulator presentation couldn't help but be moved to adopt conservaiton practices.

The Dan Gillespie Soil Heath Fund honors and continues Dan's passion by supporting educational events for youth, current farmers and ranchers and others involved in agriculture. Learn more at: www.nebcommfound.org/give/dan-gillespie-soil-health-fund.

Notes:

People I met today:

NORTHEAST NEBRASKA AG CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Becky Ravenkamp- Bow Creek Watershed Project Coordinator
Lisa Lauver- Bazile Groundwater Management Area Coordinator

Alexa Davis- Nebraska DNR
Amy Timmerman- UNL Extension
Andrea Basche- UNL
Annette Sudbeck- Lewis & Clark NRD General Manager
Bekah Poppe- NRCS
Ben Beckman- UNL Extension
Brandon Rosberg- NRCS
Brian Bruckner- Lower Elkhorn NRD General Manager
Carlos Villarreal- NRCS
Connor Baldwin- Lower Elkhorn NRD
Caro Córdova- UNL
Connie McCarthy- Lower Niobrara NRD
Dennis Scheuth- Upper Elkhorn NRD General Manager
Jeff Steffen- Northeast Nebraska Producer
Jessica Russell- NDEE
Jim Olson- NRCS
Joslynn VanDerslice- Upper Elkhorn NRD
Julie Wragge- Lower Elkhorn NRD
Junior Pfanstiel- Northeast Nebraska Producer
Katja Koeler-Cole- UNL
Kent Zimmerman- Nebraska DNR
Liz Lienemann- Lower Elkhorn NRD
Nathan Mueller- NRCS
Noah Hovorka- NDEE
Reed Trenhaile- Lewis & Clark NRD
Robin Sutherland- NRCS
Wade Ellwanger- Lower Niobrara NRD General Manager

Please thank the members of the planning committee for their work, it was truly a collaborative process!

NORTHEAST NEBRASKA AG CONFERENCE

IS PRESENTED BY:

Lewis & Clark NRD

Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District

Lower Niobrara Natural Resources District

Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District

Nebraska Good Life. Great Water. Dept. of Natural Resources

Nebraska Strategic Ag Coalition

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

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