

The Update

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association

SPRING 2021

Ken Herz Awarded 2021 Outstanding LEAD Alum



Ken Herz, LEAD III.

Ken Herz (LEAD III) was awarded the 2021 Outstanding Nebraska LEAD Alum Award. Ken has been a dedicated ambassador for the advancement of agriculture in his local community, in Nebraska and nationally.

In 2000 Ken was nominated by the Lawrence Community Club for the AK-SAR-BEN Ike Friedman Community Leadership Award. He was one of eight individuals winning this award. He was instrumental in accomplishing a successful fund drive for a new ambulance for the Lawrence community and for a concession and restroom building in the local park. He was a volunteer fireman, EMT, and CPR instructor. He helped with the Scout and 4-H programs and coached three girls' softball teams each summer with girls from 5-18 years old. He purchased equipment and supplies for the teams using his own money. Ken was recognized by the Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department for serving over 22 years as a fireman and an EMT.

Ken and his wife, Glenda, were awarded the Little Blue NRD Tree Planter Award for conservation work. They planted over 900 trees and shrubs as windbreaks and to benefit wildlife. Ken was honored by the Nebraska Grain Sorghum Producers Assn. for nine years of service on their board. Ken and Glenda were selected as winners of the Mid-American Dairymen Young Cooperator Contest and then spent the next two years on a steering committee. They helped develop public relations filmstrips and an activity book called "Molly Moo." These items were distributed to all parts of Nebraska and they gave presentations to schools.

Ken served on the Board of Directors to form the Catherland Irrigation Reclamation District to bring irrigation water into the district. He was President of the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, served in leadership of South Central Cattlemen, the National Cattlemen's Beef Board of Directors and was elected President of the Nebraska Cattlemen at their convention in December.

Glenda taught elementary school in Broken Bow and in Lawrence. They have two sons, Aaron and Zach, who farm in the family operation of general farming, custom farming, cow-calf and confinement finishing.

Ken Herz is a credit to his community, his state and our country. Congratulations, Ken!

2021 Nebraska LEAD Alumni Virtual Conference

Legacy: Remembering our Past, Looking to the Future

The 2021 annual conference was held January 23 via Zoom. This was our first trial for this type of meeting, but with the great help and support from Mark Suhr, our social media coordinator and our president Matt Dolch, we were able to make it work. Thanks to all who attended. We were able to bring in three keynote speakers, have our annual meeting and add a few updates for the alumni and even add a “mixology” social hour at the end!



Mary Kay Thatcher, Federal Government and Industry Relations Representative for Syngenta.

Mary Kay Thatcher was one of the keynotes for our Zoom conference. She currently serves as the governmental and political representative for Syngenta. Mary Kay has had multiple years of experience working with strategies and policy on the national level. She gave a detailed update on what things look like in Washington D.C. in light of the recent election of President Biden.

Some of the topics she covered were:

1. Political appointees – there are over 4,000 appointees to be sworn in, 1,250 of those would require Senate confirmation.
2. Many topics of congressional review are on the table. These reviews require only 50 votes in the senate. Different things they will be reviewing will be the USDA pesticide exclusion, ethanol exemptions, and bans currently in place.
3. A Purdue study recently completed lists items that farmers are most concerned about. Some of these items are:
 - a. Environmental regulations
 - b. Income tax issues
 - c. Estate tax issues
 - d. Decreased support for ethanol

Mary Kay pointed out that the split in the Senate is closer than ever before, basically a 50/50 split between Democratic and Republican senators. It is basically the same in the House of Representatives. The next session will be very difficult with needing 60% of the vote on some of the issues.

There will be 34 seats up for re-election in 2022, fourteen Democratic seats and 20 Republican.

Mary Kay touched briefly on the China trade agreements. Last year China’s imports from the U.S. totaled only 64% of what had been projected, the lowest ever. One of the issues hurting trade with China are the tariffs. Exports won’t improve until tariffs are removed.

Trade with Mexico is also troublesome. Mexico has adopted new policy to ban glyphosates by January of 2024 as well as banning the usage of GM corn for human consumption also after January 2024. In addition they are extending the current pesticide bans to 183 products including Atrazine, 2-4D, Neonics and Pyrethroids.

A group of eight agricultural groups are working together to come up with some positive alternatives to issues affecting them. Their organization is called the Food and Agricultural Climate Alliance (FACA). Some of the items they are coming up with are a carbon bank, federal tax credits for carbon sequestration and more funding for conservation and research.

Thank you Mary Kay for the time you gave us during our annual conference and for your continued support for “all issues agriculture”. We do appreciate all you do.

Kristi Boswell joined us on our conference Zoom call to give us her insights on the future programming of the United States Department of Agriculture. She stated that farmers had a seat at the table for discussions regarding the Farm Bill and other aspects of the USDA under Sec. Perdue's tenure. She is hopeful this will continue under the new nomination (and now confirmation) of Tom Vilsack from Iowa.

Kristi urged the LEAD Alumni to be engaged with the active discussions on the implementation of the additional COVID-19 response. Secretary Vilsack will need data from us to help him make important decisions around issues such as bio fuels, drawing the line on including processing facilities in the support, along with the implementation of the formula cattle payments, per acre top-up provisions and the newly added textile provisions.



Kristi Boswell, former advisor to Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue

Another issue that will be coming up is climate change and conservation. President Biden has placed a large emphasis on the issue. In regard to climate change and conservation, Kristi stated that agriculture has a positive story to tell. We need to make use of all the various ways to communicate to talk about positive ways we are conserving, expansion of cover crops and new production techniques being used and the positive outcomes of that effort. She urged the alumni to talk about how new innovations can help these efforts and the need for innovation dollars to be included in the next Farm Bill.

Immigration was another topic Kristi discussed. Sec. Perdue worked on ag labor issues while he was in office to ensure farmers were allowed to seek legal labor from foreign countries. This is a highly regulated effort but desperately needed in order to secure a labor force needed here in the United States. The current administration is already looking at these provisions. She is hopeful at least most of the work done will remain for the future, but immigration will always be a hot topic for discussion.

The last item mentioned was how the recent increase of Ad Hoc payments with play into the Farm Bill discussions. Over the past few years, farmers have received direct payments as a response to disaster, COVID-19 impacts, and unlawful retaliatory tariffs straying away from recent risk management methods authorized in the Farm Bill. As farmers continue to need a strong safety net, Congress will have to balance recent reliance on direct support with traditional risk management tools like crop insurance, Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage.

Kristi's last advice was to get involved. Things will move quickly and we need to be at the table!

Note: Since this webinar, Kristi has joined the firm of Alston & Bird as Counsel in Washington D.C. advocating on food and agricultural policy issues.

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Joining us after the annual meeting was Steve Nelson, recently retired as President of the Nebraska Farm Bureau. His theme was "Megatrends in Agriculture". He stated it would be hard to make predictions as to what might happen in the immediate future. With the recent elections, changes are being made daily that affect our current policy.

Critical issues identified in a recent study were:

1. Change. This is going to be a huge part of our future in agriculture. A quote he likes to use is "If change on the outside is faster than the inside, the end is near".
2. We are rapidly shifting from an operational agriculture to a business agriculture.

# Board Showcases Cindy Zimmerman-Jaynes



*Cindy Zimmerman-Jaynes*

Believe it or not, a Frenchman encouraged me to apply for the LEAD program. Shortly after college I went to work for a seed corn company, and I soon found myself as the only American on their international team. “Frenchie,” as we affectionately dubbed my boss, took a farm kid from the middle of nowhere and gave me the world as he mentored me in international sales and logistics, along with incredible global travel opportunities. Frenchie held the LEAD program in high regard, and he encouraged me to apply for it knowing the opportunities it would hold for learning more about the interconnectedness of business and agriculture, not only in Nebraska but also in the world. I was a member of LEAD 24, and we had a great class. There were lots of laughs, and my favorite memories revolve around the deep relationships built. In fact, when I encourage others to join the LEAD program, I tell them the best part of being in LEAD is the people they will meet.

As for my career, it focused on international business and commodity trading for the seed corn company, a global grain trading firm, and German ag equipment company. I served as President of the Midwest

International Trade Association, was a board member of the Nebraska Logistics Council, and spent nearly a decade volunteering with Children’s Hospital, among other volunteer work. These days, I’ve traded my corporate office for the titles of stay-at-home mom and part-time farmer. My husband, Matt, works for Claas of America as Product Manager of their Forage Harvesters and hay tools, and we farm on the weekends. We live in Omaha with our two young children, six-year old Grant and two-year old Beau. Most days you can find me farming – either our corn and soybean fields near my hometown of Plymouth, or my living room carpet, where I make endless rounds with the boys and their farm toys. The LEAD program was a transformative experience, and I highly recommend it to anyone wanting to broaden their perspectives of Nebraska and the world!

## President’s Message



*Matt Dolch, LEAD XXXIII.*

**Legacy: Remembering Our Past – Looking to the Future**  
Greetings, Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association!

I would like to thank each of you who attended the 2021 Nebraska LEAD Alumni Conference and Annual Meeting! I am proud to be a part of an organization that is committed to our mission while remaining flexible in today’s world. We hosted a very positive number of virtual attendees, slightly larger than our typical in-person conference attendance. Our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association Board looks forward to continued work in reaching new alumni members across the state through technologies like Zoom, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

In reflecting on our 2021 Nebraska LEAD Alumni Conference and Annual Meeting, I want to thank several Nebraska LEAD Alumni members who were recognized through our new platform, Every LEAD

Fellow Has a Story. Those individuals included: Gerald Clausen (LEAD 1), Dan Duncan (LEAD VII), Cindi Allen (LEAD XXIV), and Anne Meis (LEAD XXXIII). Every LEAD Fellow does have a story, and we thank



these LEAD fellows for sharing their story with us. An update on the political scene from Mary Kay Thatcher, Sr. Manager – Federal Government & Industry Relations at Syngenta and Kristi Boswell, Senior Advisor to Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue provided valuable insights on what we can expect in the agricultural industry over the months and years ahead. Steve Nelson, Past President of the Nebraska Farm Bureau provided a very nice view of the Megatrends in Agriculture with details specific to Nebraska. On behalf of our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association membership, I extend a special congratulations to Ken Herz (LEAD III) for being selected as the 2021 Outstanding LEAD Alum. Ken has showcased exemplary accomplishments in the past and continues to shape the future of agriculture through his commitment and involvement.

This winter, we have experienced some of the coldest temperatures on record in our state. On February 15th, North Platte recorded -29 degrees, which broke the record of -23 degrees that has held since 1881. Scottsbluff matched a 1903 record of -20 degrees and Lincoln was a balmy -16 degrees, breaking the record of -11 degrees set in 1978. I appreciate remembering our past, but I am pleased to be moving to the spring months and warmer weather. I tip my cap to our LEAD Alums who are livestock producers. THANK YOU for your commitment to producing the highest quality animal protein and products while maintaining exemplary stewardship and animal husbandry practices.

The 2021 agricultural economy has started the year a bit slow as we look at the Perdue University Ag Economy Barometer. I have shared a snip of this index below. Also included below in Figure 26 is a view of the U.S. Farm Income Indicators from the USDA. US agricultural exports are expected to rise 12% to a record \$157B for the federal fiscal year that will end September 30th, driven by higher prices and larger quantities as global demand strengthens. As we look ahead to uncertain times in agriculture I have never been more confident in the leaders graduating from the Nebraska LEAD Program; past and future graduates. Many of you have seen the announcement, the Nebraska LEAD Program is set to resume this fall and fellowship applications for Nebraska LEAD Group 40 are now available. I challenge each of our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association members to ensure we are investing our time and energy into recruiting the next class of LEAD fellows. Make a phone call, send a text message, send an email, or simply have a conversation with those local leaders that shouldn't miss out on the LEAD experience.

I would like to thank the following Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association Board Members for their service and welcome our new board members who will be serving our association.

**Retiring Board Members:**

**Thank You**

- Steve Henry, LEAD II
- Dennis Nun, LEAD IV
- Craig Buescher, LEAD V
- Kim Peterson, LEAD XVIII
- John Nelson, LEAD XXIII
- Susan Nelson, LEAD XXVI

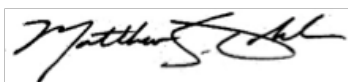
**New Board Members:**

**Welcome!**

- Randy Gangwish, LEAD IV
- Keith Volker, LEAD VIII
- Zach Suddarth, LEAD XVIII
- Larry Heyen, LEAD XXIII

In closing, thank you to our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association Executive Board for your work in the virtual environment and above all, thank you to our alumni members who are the heartbeat of our association. I look forward to seeing you in-person in the weeks and months ahead traveling throughout the great state of Nebraska.

Respectfully,



# Ireland & Northern Ireland - Travel dates – August 18-29, 2021



Our Ireland International Travel Study Seminar is now (once again) less than 6 months away, and sold out. This is going to be a wonderful travel study, filled with beautiful destinations and great agricultural visits.

We have been discussing and planning for this seminar since 2018 and are hoping that 2021 will be our year to travel to Ireland. Our line in the sand, stay or go date, will be May 1, 2021. If we need to cancel Ireland 2021, we will refund deposits and money paid to all travelers. We won't postpone another year, but hopefully be able to reschedule Ireland as a future destination.



Pat Heyen, National and International Travel Study Coordinator

We are busy making inquiries to the 2022 National Travel Study Seminar. We are reluctant to do too much as of yet, since everything is dependent upon COVID and travel regulations. I think you will be pleasantly surprised to see where we are planning our next adventure. Stay tuned, we will be announcing the destination soon.

As most of you are aware, attempting to make travel plans during the last year has been interesting to say the very least.

***“I haven’t been everywhere, but it’s on my list.” – Susan Sontag***

## Every Lead Fellow Has A Story



NE LEAD Alumni Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Leadalumni>

These four alums shared “their story” with us during our annual conference. Four great stories from four amazing LEAD fellows. Check out our Facebook page to see what they shared!

*Pictured are Dan Duncan (LEAD VII), Gerald Clausen (LEAD I), Anne Meis (LEAD XXXIII) and Cindi Allen (LEAD XXIV).*

# Ag Adventure Day 2021 – Is almost here !!

## When:

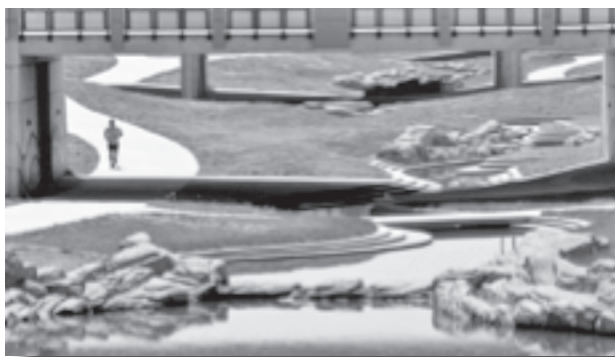
July 9, 2021 – we are doing a one day tour this summer as a way to ease into traveling together again. As in the past, this tour will be open to LEAD Alums, spouses, and Leadership Omaha graduates.

## Where:

All the tour stops will be in Lincoln – less travel time for our friends from Omaha and great places for both organizations to visit!

## What:

We will start out from the North Parking Lot at Innovation Campus in Lincoln.



Our first stop of the day will be at The Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. There we will learn about the Antelope Valley Flood Control Project. This was a collaborative effort between Lower Platte South, The Army Corps of Engineers, The University of Nebraska and the City of Lincoln. They also

received support from the NRCS, Natural Resources Development Foundation and the Department of Natural resources. We will be able to tour the site and find out how they incorporated flood control, recreation and beautification in this project.

Our second stop will be with Neogen Corporation where we will meet with Kenny Stauffer (LEAD 25). At Neogen, they partner with their customers to protect and enhance the world's level of food and animal safety. They offer solutions for the food, beverage, animal protein and agriculture industries, and



help their customers to safeguard their brands and create better products.

Lunch will be at Innovation Campus. Dan Duncan, Director and a LEAD 7 graduate will give us an

overview of the history and growth of this amazing site. We will also be able to tour some of the industries they have on campus. We hope to be able to tour the greenhouse, Innovation Studio and the Agriculture/Food Industry facilities while we are there.

Mark your calendars now for July 9. The registration form should be available by April 1 on our website – we hope many of you can join us!!

Nancy Eberle, Ag Tour Coordinator



**Steve Nelson**

**Continued from Page 3**

- 3. Urban influence in the Nebraska Legislature will continue to grow. We need to be aware of this happening.
- 4. In a changing world we need to be aware of new demands, but also challenges to cell-based protein, trade and the ability to move products around the world.
- 5. Overall, the trend in urbanization makes our public more disconnected from agriculture. This is a challenge for all of us.



*Steve Nelson*

Steve mentioned that the Nebraska farmers and ranchers are a growing minority. All of our future growth will come from the ability to succeed in the public arena. We need to find out how.

Thank you Steve for joining our Zoom annual conference and for all the work you accomplished as the President of Nebraska Farm Bureau. Best wishes for any endeavor you decide to embark on in the future!

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**Nebraska LEAD Alumni
2021 Executive Team**

Appreciation Gift to Matt Dolch



Matt Dolch, President and Nicole Bohuslavsky, Secretary, LEAD Alumni.



The Nebraska LEAD Alumni Board of Directors and staff want to thank Matt Dolch for his amazing leadership this past year. In appreciation, they presented him with this Huskers clock. Thank you Matt - for all you do !



Nate Blum, Vice President.



Cindy Zimmerman, Treasurer.

Nancy's Notes



Nancy Eberle, Executive Secretary

March is here and it's looking a little like spring might actually come soon:) I hope all of you survived the "deep freeze" in February. I can't say we want to go through that again soon. My hope is that with the coming of spring, COVID vaccinations are done or at least coming soon for all of us, and we can presume our former activities. For the first time in LEAD Alumni history we had zoom meetings, even for our annual conference. Although it's not our first choice, we are very fortunate that something like "Zoom" is available to individuals and organizations like ours.

Speaking of the annual conference/meeting, I want to send out a huge thank you to Matt Dolch and Mark Suhr who did the heavy lifting to make that offering possible. Our committee consisted of Matt, Mark, Tim Graff, Cindy Zimmerman-Jaynes, Nate Blum and myself. It was a team effort! If you would like to see a recording of our "day", please contact Mark Suhr to receive a link. The political overview received from the speakers is worth your time!

Pat Heyen, working with the international travel study and I, working with the Ag Adventure Tour have been having quite a time trying to put something together for those events. We have postponed, re-worked, postponed and are re-working again in an effort to get something going for later this summer. Keep your fingers crossed that we are successful.

Even though we have not been able to meet face-to-face, the Board of Directors and staffers have been hard a work keeping things going forward. Until we can all get together again, our wish to all of you is to stay the course, stay healthy and LEAD on

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~ CLASS NOTES ~

Gerald Clausen (LEAD I) was recently appointed as a "Senior Advisor" by the International City/County Managers Association to work with the Nebraska City/County Managers Association. The main duty of the advisor is "to help address the personal and professional needs of individual members." There are about one hundred such appointments throughout the United States. Congratulations Gerald - they certainly chose the best!

Nate Blum (LEAD XXXVI) shared that The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced his appointment to the 'Grains, Feed, Oilseeds and Planting Seeds Ag Trade Advisory Committee.

Congratulations to Matt (LEAD XXXIII) and Dana Dolch on the birth of their baby girl, Carsyn Jane Dolch.

# The Update

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*Please remember to submit important  
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### **NETWORK!**

Keep the spirit of the  
Nebraska LEAD  
Program ALIVE!

## **Update**

Update is the official newsletter of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association. The purpose of the publication is to keep you, a vital part of the LEAD network, linked with fellow alumni!