



..... STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

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I had the best afternoon and evening a working man could even imagine on Saturday, March 25. Webster County and lots of other friends showed up to celebrate my life and time as an educator in this county as I come to the end of my career. Most appropriately the event was held at the Webster County Fairgrounds in Bladen, which has had an integral part of my life with my love of livestock and particular love for youth in the livestock industry. I could not even attempt to count the number of animals I have watched or the young people showing them. I think fondly of the shows that I have been involved with at those hallowed grounds and all the people who enjoyed it with me. In fact this year will mark my 45th Webster County Fair, as just 45 days into the job I was thrust into my first one and never looked back! I have heard the phrase many times "If these walls could talk." I would use that in a different way..."If these barns or this arena could talk, what tales they could tell!"

It is hard to believe that I am coming up on 44 years as an educator right here in this county. First as an ag education instructor and FFA Advisor at Blue Hill High School for 28 years and the last 17 years as an Extension Educator for the University of Nebraska. Add one and a half years as an ag teacher in Logan View High School near Hooper, Nebraska and you come up to about 46 years in education. It doesn't seem possible as that time has gone by in very rapid fashion.

Working with the two high schools, UNL, Nebraska Extension and particularly Webster and Clay counties and the other fine people in South Central Nebraska has been such a wonderful experience, and I will cherish the memories forever. It is bitter sweet for me, but it has come that time in my life that it is time to move on. I have to convey that, although these have most certainly been some of the best years in my "Book of Life", I am looking forward to the next chapter. These past 46 years in education have been challenging, rewarding but also very satisfying, and it is extremely hard for me to "Pull that trigger" It is extremely difficult to step away from the career and the people that surround me, but it is time.

I fervently hope that I have left a mark as a person, an educator and leader, but perhaps more importantly as a dedicated and loyal servant to students of all ages, to this County, State and industry that I love so much! It has truly been a labor of love and I could not have chosen a better profession or people to spend it with. I came to this county 44 years ago and fell in love with it, the people within and particularly the young people they produce. Never lose sight of the value of these young 4-H and FFA kids. We are blessed to have them and I have been more than blessed in having the opportunity to work with them. I have always said when asked why I chose this profession and my pat answer is "It is all about the kids!"

Words are not sufficient to convey my thanks to everyone who has had a part in my career in any capacity over the years. Whether it was administration, fellow teachers and students in the high school, the County Extension Board, the County Supervisors, the Webster County Agriculture Association, I was very lucky to be in the career that I loved and have an innate affinity for. I had wonderful secretaries, office managers and assistants both in my teaching career and with UNL Extension. This has been a team effort and I will miss those associations beyond compare. Webster County has the best! Please give them the support they so richly deserve as they will forge ahead with the uncertainty of my replacement!

It should be noted that at this time that is an uncertainty as the State of Nebraska and UNL with short budgets which have resulted in a hiring freeze and it will all depend upon how the Nebraska economy fares to how soon we will have an Extension Educator in Webster County again. Until that time I am confident that the great people of Webster County will understand and will still utilize our office because there is a plan in place to see to the needs of our clients and continue the support we endeavor to bring to our youth, farmers, ranchers and homeowners with questions and the need for research based information to aid in their decisions, needs and requirements. Even though I may not be there to field questions or put on seminars, classes, tours or seminars, the broad scope of educational materials and contacts for other area specialists and educators will still be there. It is my hope that with the eight county regional outreach area and expertise in the beef systems for a state whose engine is driven by the beef industry that Webster will be a priority fill as soon as the economy allows.

I want to personally give thanks for the opportunities and support that have been given me over the years. I have grown personally and professionally and am thankful for the people that I have worked for and with. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with my coworkers and the people within Webster County. I just pray that I have contributed a positive difference in Nebraska Agriculture, organizations, adults and particularly the youth within. I will always keep those associations close to my heart as I step away from this endeavor. As I depart from the duties that I so much cherish I want to say a big hearty "Thank You!" I could not have had a better home and place to work. I can honestly say that I never once did not want to go to work! This has been my life and as I go beyond the boundaries of familiarity and look at a different horizon I wish everyone nothing but the best. I think you all know that my heart will always be with this county and 4-H and FFA programs.

The time certainly has gone by fast, but my time in this endeavor is about over. I have decided to hang up my spurs and ride off into the sunset. This has been a tough decision for me because I have come to love this county and the people within it and across our borders. I am so proud of this county and especially our 4-H and FFA members – young and old! It has been a labor of love for me and I appreciate all the support over the years. It has been a good ride and I will always appreciate all the memories that I take with me. I am certain I will bump into a lot of you – but until then Adios Amigos!

The preceding information comes from the research and personal observations of the writer, which may or may not reflect the views of UNL or Nebraska Extension. For more further information on these or other topics contact D. A. Lienemann, Nebraska Extension Educator for Webster County in Red Cloud, (402) 746-3417 or email: dliennemann2@unl.edu or on the web at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/webster>