



..... STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH

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I just got back from a wonderful experience called the 2016 Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska. For you that are not aware of this event, it was formed in 1997 by a small group of beef industry leaders who wanted to create an organization to promote beef as part of a healthy diet – and in the process, do some good by raising money for cancer research. The Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska is a 501(c)(3) charity focused on ensuring that the money raised goes to cancer research and local health and wellness programs for which it is intended. Let's this week take a closer look at this annual event for "Funding a Cure".

This weekend saw the 19th annual Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska being hosted by the Trevor and Torri Lienemann family at their "Lienetics" Ranch south of Lincoln near Princeton, NE. I have gone to several of these events, but this made it especially satisfying this year, for obvious reasons. It just seemed even more special when you share your last name with those that worked so hard to put this on. I am so proud of Trevor, Torri and the entire family who spent years in planning, coordinating and readying their beautiful home ranch for this event. You have to be amazed and very thankful that God has put people like them and all the other countless people who contributed so mightily to this important happening on this earth. I know Trevor will tell you that he said he would do this because of a Lienemann genetic defect that doesn't allow a response of "No" when asked to do something, but I guarantee that it goes far beyond that. This family is extraordinary and special!

As I mentioned, I have attended several of these events, not only for the social benefits of seeing good friends and acquaintances but to help in any way I can to fight cancer. Not only is my wife and I both survivors of this horrible disease, we both have lost relatives. I lost my mother, a younger sister and several other relatives; and my wife lost both of her parents to this scourge to mankind. I would doubt that anyone I know has not been affected either with loved ones or someone they know by this insidious disease! You have a tendency to take it personal when you are effected - so close to your heart. It certainly makes it a mission to buy tickets, participate in raffles and auctions to help in any way you can.

I would bet that those cattlemen that started this would not have even guessed that this event in the 18 previous years has raised almost \$13 million for cancer research in the state up to this point. The very first event that was hosted by Sheryl Graff of Ainsworth, NE netted \$95,000, which at the time seemed a very great start. And now to give an idea what may be attained this year is that it has increased incrementally each year since with over one million dollars on several occasions, with the record amount of a combined \$2,120,477 in 2013 when it was hosted by Ralph & Beverly Holzfaster Family of Paxton, NE and the Neal Hansen Family of Sutherland, NE. I am sure we will soon learn this year's amount, but with over 4,000 people in attendance and the generous contributions from sponsors and incredible bidding by those in attendance, you would expect another impressive sum, from which the proceeds will go to benefit cancer research in Nebraska.

Nebraska's Own National Cancer Institute Designated Cancer Research Center will receive ninety percent of the money raised at the 2016 Nebraska Cattlemen's Ball which will provide funding for the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center in Omaha. The Buffett Center is a member of the alliance of leading cancer centers known as the National Comprehensive Cancer Network. The Buffett Center coordinates cancer research, patient care, and education. Through four research programs, the center facilitates and applies the newest findings regarding the causes, diagnostic procedures, prevention, and treatment of cancer. It seems that cancer has been elusive across the world and it feels good that Nebraska takes the lead!

It may interest you that in 2013, as a result of a generous gift from Pamela Buffett, ground was broken on a new cancer center complex on the UNMC main campus, with an estimated completion date of 2016. The Cancer Center complex will include a brand new 10 story cancer research tower, a multidisciplinary outpatient clinic that includes surgical, medical, and radiation oncology, an infusion center, a radiation treatment facility, and an inpatient cancer hospital. That was a great start and the funds collected from donations from events like "Brave Enough to Wear Pink" and this "Ball" bolsters this work!

It should also be noted that ten percent of the funds raised at the 2016 Nebraska Cattlemen's Ball will be distributed to deserving local organizations that provide healthcare, medical, and related services to the southeastern Nebraska communities that have helped organize the event. Over the sixteen-year history of the event, nearly 99 percent of the money raised has gone directly to medical research and healthcare programs in Nebraska. As you can ascertain, the Cattlemen's Ball has been held in spots all across Nebraska, benefitting each of those areas through the hard work and cooperation of those involved. If you want to see a little history of where these have been held and what has been raised you can go to the official website for the story on each year's effort. Just go to: <https://cattlemensball.com/the-history-of-giving-families/>

With a great deal of the proceeds each year going to the University of Nebraska Medical Center it was really gratifying to see our new UNL Chancellor, Dr. Ronnie Green, and his wife Jane so intimately involved in the planning and conducting of this year's Ball. I think that speaks volumes about the man who has shown his love and support for Nebraska and Nebraska's agriculture industry in his former role as NU Vice President and IANR Harlan Vice Chancellor and now as Chancellor at this great University. It was also good to see NU President Dr. Hank Bounds and several other UNL dignitaries not only attend, but being a part of this year's 2016 Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska. It makes you proud to be a part of this Institute!

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: dlienemann2@unl.edu or on the web at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/webster>