

Mailson Freire de Oliveira 2023 Story: First months of challenges and opportunities

Commencing my role in September 2023, the initial five months were strategically dedicated to a multifaceted approach, focusing on networking, comprehensive onboarding, and continuous professional development. A significant portion of my efforts was directed towards successful grant writing, meticulous data analysis, and collection for ongoing research projects and CropWatch publications. In fulfilling my responsibilities, addressing stakeholders' inquiries emerged as a pivotal aspect of my role, and I actively engaged with 14 stakeholders, not only providing detailed responses but also cultivating partnerships to garner support for programming initiatives. As a newcomer to the field, I seized the opportunity to collaborate with seasoned colleagues, participating in the planning and execution of successful programs. This dynamic period of engagement and learning has laid a robust foundation for my ongoing contributions as an educator. Here are more details of my 2023 accomplishments.

Onboarding and professional development (51%):

In the course of my onboarding journey with UNL Extension, I seamlessly integrated into the system, establishing meaningful connections and engaging with the vibrant community within my office. My involvement extended beyond the confines of routine tasks as I actively participated in data collection initiatives and collaborated with colleagues in organizing and executing events. Notably, the collaborative atmosphere during onboarding led to the establishment of partnerships, culminating in the submission of a successful grant proposal. As part of my ongoing professional development, I took part in the Fall Conference, gaining valuable insights into building programs of excellence. My commitment to networking was evident in my interactions with stakeholders to garner support for an event we are organizing for 2024. These collective efforts not only enriched my understanding of extension practices but also underscored my dedication to contributing meaningfully to the objectives of UNL Extension. My experience at Husker Harvest Days proved to be a strategically invaluable opportunity to foster meaningful connections within the extension community. Networking with fellow extension educators and specialists allowed me to gain firsthand insights into various programs developed by UNL Extension, highlighting the substantial impact of extension services on farmers. Exploring the diverse array of programs reinforced my understanding of the pivotal role extension plays in supporting agricultural communities. Additionally, the chance to integrate at the Digital Agriculture booth provided me with a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of agricultural technology. Furthermore, engaging with the On-Farm Research Network at the event enhanced my appreciation for the practical and research-driven initiatives underway within the extension system. Overall, the experience not only broadened my professional network but also enriched my perspective on the multifaceted contributions of UNL Extension to the agricultural community.

Data analysis and collection for research projects and CropWatch publications (16%):

I actively participated in the development of two highly viewed CropWatch publications. The first publication addressed the critical issue of maintaining high uniformity in water application for center pivot systems, providing essential insights for efficient and sustainable agriculture practices in this publication I helped on data collection, processing and writing. The second publication focused on guiding farmers in estimating harvest losses in soybean and corn fields, offering valuable information to optimize yields for this publication I helped on writing the final text. Together, these publications garnered a total of 1254 views, reflecting the significant impact of our efforts in disseminating practical knowledge to the agricultural community. These accomplishments underscore our commitment to advancing agricultural practices and promoting the mission of our extension organization. I collaborated on six On-farm research (OFR) trials under the Highboy Project across eastern Nebraska helping on biomass collection this exemplifies the effectiveness of team efforts in collecting high-quality and high-quantity data on a topic of significant importance to the region.

Program planning and executing Confronting Cropping Challenges Program (10%):

The most impactful work in 2023 was undoubtedly under the category of projects, particularly those conducted directly with growers on their farms. Being an integral part of the planning and facilitation of the "Confronting Cropping Challenges" event has been a pivotal and rewarding experience. As a member of the team dedicated to addressing the current and emerging cropping issues in the northeastern region of Nebraska during the 2023 growing season, I actively contributed to the development and execution of a comprehensive program learning from other extension educators with more experience. Our primary objective was to provide producers with valuable insights and practical solutions that would aid them in making informed decisions for the upcoming 2024 season. Collaborating with experts and stakeholders, I played a key role in designing sessions that delved into the intricacies of the challenges faced by the agricultural community in our region. From exploring technological advancements to addressing climate-related concerns, the event aimed to equip producers with the knowledge and resources necessary to navigate the complexities of modern agriculture. Through meticulous planning, effective coordination, and insightful discussions, the "Confronting Cropping Challenges" program emerged as a successful initiative, fostering a collaborative environment and demonstrating our commitment to supporting the resilience and success of local producers. Participating in the planning and facilitation of the "Confronting Cropping Challenges" event was a transformative experience for me as a new educator, providing invaluable insights and skills that will undoubtedly enhance the effectiveness of my future programming endeavors.

Other contributions (23%):

Handling stakeholders' queries was a significant component of my role, and in 2023, I addressed about 11 questions through phone calls or walk-ins, dedicating approximately 15 hours to providing assistance and studying for answers. As awareness of my role as an extension educator for Dodge/Washington/Cuming continues to grow, these numbers are expected to rise significantly.

As a result of collaboration on data collection and CropWatch writing I submitted a grant as PI for the Soybean board based on the results we had from the project that we collect the data. The total of the expected revenue generation is more than 10,000 dollars.

I also dedicated considerable time to contribute to the planning of two upcoming events—the Soil Health Conference and the Eastern Corn and Soybean Expo scheduled for 2024.

Below are some additional contributions:

Professional Development

- Search Process Seminar
- Workplace Appreciation
- 2023 Fall Conference

Attending extension board meetings

- 1 meeting in Dodge County
- 1 meeting in Cuming County
- 1 meeting in Washington County

Serving as Search Committee

- 4-H Extension Instructor or Extension Educator position in Dodge County

Revenue Generation – grants submitted

- Eastern Nebraska Corn and Soybean Expo 2025 (co-PI) – Nebraska Soybean Board – **submitted**
- Artificial Intelligence to Detect Center Pivots With Poor Uniformity of Water Application (PI) – Nebraska Soybean Board – **submitted**