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(Neb.)-Officials Encourage Residents To Celebrate State Agriculture



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 03/18/2013 09:42 AM

(LINCOLN)-Governor Dave Heineman today called attention to Nebraska's celebration of National Ag Week March 17-23. The governor unveiled a new agricultural magazine, announced agriculture poster contest winners and outlined community stops planned for March 19.

"Agriculture is our state's largest industry," said Heineman. "Our farmers and ranchers work hard to raise the food, fuel and fiber we all use in our everyday lives. For those efforts, they deserve our appreciation."

Heineman was joined by Lt. Gov. Lavon Heidemann, agriculture director Greg Ibach, Farm Bureau First vice president Mark McHargue, and the Brian and Hilary Maricle family, farmers from Albion.

"As a fourth generation farmer in Nebraska, I understand the contribution agriculture brings to the state and the world," said Heidemann. "Agriculture is our state's number one industry and it is important to raise awareness by celebrating National Agriculture week."

Ibach announced the availability of a new magazine called Nebraska Agriculture and You. The magazine, published by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA), is designed to share information about the state's agriculture industry with general consumers. The Maricles are featured in the magazine.

"These days many folks do not have a direct tie to a farm or ranch, so their knowledge of food production is limited. In addition, today's agriculture is also about fuel and fiber and all the agribusinesses associated with these things," said Ibach. "The magazine is designed to help people understand a little bit about each of these, as well as give them a grasp of how critical agriculture is to the economy in Nebraska."

The goal of NDA is to circulate the free, annually-produced magazine in settings where the general public can enjoy it, such as office lobbies of doctors, dentists, and hair salons. Nebraska FFA chapter members are helping

deliver magazines to these types of locations in 20 of the largest communities.

“FFA students will be fanning out to these businesses in the next several weeks,” said Dir. Ibach “We hope businesses will support this educational effort by placing the magazines in their lobbies.”

The magazine is available digitally at www.agr.ne.gov.

Additionally, Heineman announced the NDA Agriculture Poster Contest award winners. Each year elementary students have the opportunity to discuss agriculture while creating a poster to submit to NDA.

This year NDA had 2,987 entries, about double the usual amount. Winners include:

In the 1st and 2nd grade division:

1st place is: Trevor Goesch a second grader from West Boyd in Butte

2nd place is: Matt Cover a second grader from Weeping Water Public School in Weeping Water

3rd place is: Samantha Burch a second grader from Weeping Water Public School in Weeping Water

Governor’s Choice is: Noah Morlan a second grader from Weeping Water Public School in Weeping Water

In the 3rd and 4th grade division:

1st place is: Ryan Sand a fourth grader from Tri-County Public Schools in DeWitt

2nd place is: Johnny Kaczmarek a third grader from Holy Ghost Catholic in Omaha

3rd place is: Levi Belina a third grader from Howells Community Catholic School in Howells

Governor’s Choice is: Evie Schlickbernd a fourth grader from Guardian Angels in West Point

In the 5th and 6th grade division

1st place is: Tatum Vondra a sixth grader from Milford Elementary in Milford

2nd place is: Elizabeth Calderon a fifth grader from Knickrehm Elementary in Grand Island

3rd place is: Gustavo Matias a fifth grader from Knickrehm Elementary in Grand Island

Governor’s Choice is: Sierra Kile a sixth grader from St. Cecilia in Hastings

“It’s a fun way for students to explore their knowledge of farming and ranching,” said Heineman. “They are always very creative.”

This year the governor, Ibach, and state senator Ken Schilz will join Nebraska Farm Bureau president Steve Nelson to visit Tecumseh, Papillion, and Wayne for Ag Day community visits on March 19. The group will discuss issues such as livestock development, agricultural career opportunities, and agriculture’s role in the state economy during events at each stop.

“For us, farming and ranching isn’t just a job. It’s a way of life. Our belief is that there are few higher callings than helping provide the fundamental needs of food, fiber and energy for others,” said Mark McHargue. “Fortunately we live in a state with land and natural resources that gives us the ability to carry out our mission in providing

those basic needs not just for Nebraskans, but for people across the country and the world. We hope Nebraskans will join us during National Agriculture week in celebrating our state's heritage in agriculture." The following is a letter from Governor Dave Heineman:

Dear Fellow Nebraskans:

"During the week of March 17-23 people all over the nation will celebrate National Agriculture Week. I would like to remind all Nebraskans of this important week and encourage our citizens to take a moment to reflect on the importance of the agricultural industry in our state.

Farming, ranching and related agribusiness activities are responsible for approximately a quarter of our state's economic activity. Ninety-three percent of our state's land is used for agricultural production, and Nebraska is one of the top states in the nation for international agriculture exports.

Agriculture is our state's largest industry. Our farmers and ranchers work hard to raise the food and fuel we use in our everyday lives. For these efforts, they deserve our recognition and appreciation.

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture is celebrating National Ag week by announcing the new "Nebraska Agriculture and You" magazine, a publication designed to share information about the Nebraska agriculture industry with consumers. The free, annually produced magazine will be available in public places, including doctors and dentists offices as well as at public libraries, University of Nebraska Lincoln's Cooperative Extension offices and chambers of commerce. You can also view the magazine online by visiting the Department of Agriculture's website at www.nda.nebraska.gov.

Telling the story of agriculture to consumers is important, but sharing that message with our younger generation, many of which are two or three generations removed from a farm or rancher operation, also is necessary. That's why the Department of Agriculture hosts a statewide Agriculture Poster Contest each year. It is a way for elementary students to have the opportunity to discuss agriculture while creating their own works of art. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the contest, and this year's theme is *Nebraska Agriculture: What Farmers Do*. The Department of Agriculture received nearly 3,000 poster contest entries - doubling the amount of entries they typically receive. You can view the poster contest winners on the department's website.

In accordance with National Ag Day on March 19, I will be visit several communities in Nebraska with Department of Agriculture's Director Greg Ibach and the chairman of the Legislature's Agriculture Committee, State Senator Ken Schilz from Ogallala. We will be visiting with farmers and ranchers in Tecumseh, Papillion and Wayne. We will be discussing the important role farmers and ranchers play in our state's largest industry. I always look forward to this day, and appreciate the opportunity to visit with the farmers and ranchers in these communities.

As we celebrate National Ag Week, I'd like to personally thank the farmers and ranchers in Nebraska for their dedication and commitment to the land and animals in their care. If you see a farmer or rancher please thank them for the important role their play in producing the food and fuel we utilize every day."