It is with great pleasure I write to you in the inaugural joint newsletter, which represents the Nebraska Corn Board and the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. We’ve come a long way in our efforts to become a more unified industry under the “Nebraska Corn” brand. As you all know, we work better when we’re working together, and that’s just what we’ve done over the last few years.

However, there will always be a need to have two organizations. The Nebraska Corn Growers Association is working to create and increase opportunities for Nebraska corn farmers through advocacy, education, partnerships and leadership development. The Nebraska corn checkoff is focused on creating opportunities for corn farmers through research, market development, promotion and education, but is unable to be involved in policy issues on the state level, due to state statutes. We’re committed to continue working together where we’re able to, and we’re always striving to strengthen Nebraska’s corn industry.

Agriculture has been in the news a lot in recent months. In this inaugural issue of the quarterly newsletter, you can read up on ag trade, E15 reform and the farm bill. We hope to be able to rely on your farmer voices as a variety of policy issues are debated in Washington, D.C. and other key issues closer to home in the Unicameral. Be on the lookout for our Action Alerts in 2019 where we’ll urge you to get involved during these discussions to help amplify Nebraska’s corn industry.

Also, in this issue, find out what we’re doing with the Nebraska corn checkoff to further the Nebraska Corn Board’s mission to promote the value of corn by creating opportunities.

I hope you all have a joyous holiday season and a happy new year. Thanks for all you do for the corn industry, and I look forward to working with you in 2019.
I have learned if you would ever like to pass the time quickly, do something you really enjoy. Serving as president of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association has been an honor and a privilege. Past members who volunteered their time—a long with many great staff members—have helped NeCGA earn a great reputation for advocating for our farmers. This has been an experience I will never forget.

To say that 2018 has been a challenge would be a definite understatement. When we talk weather, many Nebraska farmers experienced all the extremes. We have had too much rain and not enough rain. It’s been too cold or too warm. Along with that we’ve had strong winds and hail throughout the year.

And it seems like there really wasn’t much of a spring and not much of a fall either—just winter and summer. The bright side of all this is that many farmers have realized one of their best crops ever.

Oh, by the way, did you hear there are a few tariffs in place? I keep telling myself to be patient; this will all be settled soon.

There are many positives in development at this time. There is a pending agreement with Mexico and Canada. Talks with China are also looking a little better. And it looks like we may have some new trade partners from some new countries. And if you add President Trump directing the EPA to allow E15 year-round, we are headed in the right direction.

And let’s not forget about property tax. With the recent election, there will be some new faces in the Unicameral, but dealing with the overreliance on property tax for school funding will continue to be important. Quality education should always be a top priority and funding for that should be structured in such a way that it doesn’t put a financial burden on property owners of this state.

NeCGA will be there making sure the interests of Nebraska corn farmers are represented and heard as our policymakers consider their options—both in Lincoln and in Washington, D.C.

While there will always be issues to deal with, friends and family won’t always be with us. That is why it is so important headed into the holiday season to take time from our busy lives and spend it with the special people in our lives.

Thank you for supporting the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. It has truly been my pleasure serving as president of this organization.
Nebraska Corn well-represented on national stage

On October 1, two Nebraska corn farmers began national leadership roles with the National Corn Growers Association (NCGA). Lynn Chrisp began his term as president of the organization and Deb Gangwish started with the NCGA Corn Board. Gangwish joins Brandon Hunnicutt on the Board, who was elected in 2017.

As president of NCGA, one of Chrisp’s main responsibilities is to serve as the lead voice for the more than 40,000 dues-paying members of the organization. His key priorities with NCGA are to expand the ethanol industry, ensure successful ag trade and advocate for the completion of a strong farm bill.

Chrisp farms near Hastings and has a long history of leadership for the corn industry. On the state level, Chrisp previously served as chairman of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association Government Relations Committee with oversight for state and national issues along with responsibilities for Nebraska’s leadership program to Washington, D.C. He has also led an effort to establish a cooperative agreement resulting in operations for Nebraska Corn. Away from corn grower activities, Chrisp has had the privilege of serving as member and chairman of Nebraska’s Southern Public Power District’s Board of Directors.

On the NCGA Corn Board, Gangwish serves as the liaison to the Freedom to Operate Action Team and as its representative to BNSF. Locally, Gangwish is a CommonGround volunteer, participates in the Soil Health Partnership and serves as a director on the board of the Nebraska Corn Growers Association. She farms with her husband, Paul, on their farm near Shelton.

Farmers Begin National Leadership Roles

Hunnicutt chairs NCGA’s Engaging Members Committee and serves as the association’s representation to Field-to-Market. On the state level, Hunnicutt is vice chair of the Nebraska Corn Board. He is also a past president of both the Nebraska Corn Growers Association and the Nebraska Agricultural Technologies Association. He farms with his family near Giltner.
Nebraska Corn was pleased to see President Trump direct the EPA to begin the necessary regulatory steps to allow for year-round sales of E15 earlier this fall. E15 is a blend of 15 percent ethanol and gasoline approved for all vehicles 2001 and newer.

Nebraska Corn and the National Corn Growers Association have been advocating for year-round sales of higher blends of ethanol like E15 for some time. Outdated regulations currently require retailers in many areas of the country to stop selling E15 during the summer months. Updating this regulation will give consumers year-round access to a fuel choice that can save them between three and 10 cents per gallon.

It will also further environmental policy goals because E15 and other higher blends produce lower evaporative and tailpipe emissions. The outdated regulation was issued before the EPA approved E15 in 2011.

We are hopeful that the President’s commitment will become a reality by next summer. For more information about E15 visit nebraskacorn.org.
Trade has been on the minds of corn farmers across the nation for many months now.

Earlier this year, the United States, Canada, and Mexico announced an agreement in principle on an updated North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), renamed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). NAFTA has been a resounding success for America’s corn farmers and has grown seven-fold as an export market since it was enacted.

Nebraska Corn is thankful two of our most important markets are secured and some certainty has been injected back into our relationships with Mexico and Canada.

We are still in the process of reviewing the agreement to determine fully how it will impact agriculture, and there are still many steps that have to take place before the new agreement can be ratified. Nebraska Corn and NCGA will continue to follow the process closely.

NAFTA has been a resounding success for America’s corn farmers.

Impact of USMCA being reviewed

A team of buyers from Mexico visits a Nebraska feedlot to hear Dr. Galen Erickson (left) of UNL talk about the advantages of feeding distillers grains to cattle. Mexico is a major customer for Nebraska corn and distillers grains.

Producers await action on new Farm Bill

As of this writing, Nebraska Corn is still waiting for Congress to pass a new farm bill. Leaders of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have agreed in principle to compromised language. The Nebraska Corn Growers Association and National Corn Growers Association, at press time, are awaiting release of the agreement.

Nebraska Corn is urging farmers to continue to share with their representatives the importance of passing a new bill prior to the adjournment of the lame duck session. This should be a top priority for members on both sides of the aisle.

Times are tough for agriculture right now and a new farm bill would help provide some certainty for farmers as they look ahead to the 2019 growing season.
Greetings, fellow Nebraska corn farmers! I’m currently enjoying my first few months as the chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board. I look forward to ensuring our state’s corn checkoff always stays true to its mission to promote the value of corn by creating opportunities. Prior to this leadership role, I have served on the board since 2013 as the District 1 director, and I have farmed near Friend for over 30 years. Along with my brother and nephew, we grow irrigated and non-irrigated corn and soybeans and we feed cattle.

We’ve experienced a lot of exciting changes on the Nebraska Corn Board over recent months. We welcomed two new members to our board. Gov. Ricketts appointed Ted Schrock as the District 6 director and Andy Groskopf as the District 8 director. Ted farms and ranches in Phelps County and Andy farms in Scotts Bluff County. We’re all looking forward to the new perspectives and ideas each of these leaders bring to Nebraska’s corn checkoff.

Our industry has been the topic of a lot of national debate over the last several months. While some of the issues may sometimes frustrate us, we’re always thinking optimistically and working for that light at the end of the tunnel.

Obviously, trade continues to be on the forefront of all of our minds. We’re encouraged by the progress on the U.S. Mexico and Canada Agreement, and we’re working to ensure this moves forward. We must also be mindful of the rest of the world and continue to work on current and future agreements to ensure our farmers always have strong markets for the plethora of products we produce.

I’m also encouraged by the President Trump’s commitment to our ethanol industry. However, we’re far from the finish line. We need to continue to engage with our congressional leaders and consumers to ensure year-round E15 comes to fruition.

Again, it is my privilege to serve as the chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board and I look forward to serving you in 2019. As the corn checkoff enters its 41st year, you can be assured your investment is advancing the industry through research, market development, education and promotion.

I hope you had a successful 2018 harvest or will wrap up soon if there are still a few remaining acres! Stay tuned to nebraskacorn.gov in the coming weeks as we unveil our new website, which will feature a wealth of information relating to our industry.
Mark Wilkins, professor of biological systems engineering and food science and technology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, has been named Nebraska Corn Checkoff Presidential Chair. The Nebraska Corn Board made a $2 million commitment to the University of Nebraska Foundation in 2014 to establish the permanently endowed chair. The endowment provides annual support to the university’s Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources for research and development related to corn demand.

“We’re excited to have Mark Wilkins as the first Nebraska Corn Checkoff Presidential Chair,” said David Merrell, immediate past chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board. “Our mission has always been focused on promoting the value of corn by creating opportunities. Through this position, we look forward to exploring new uses of corn that will benefit our state’s farmers and economy.”

Wilkins has been with the university since 2016. As director of the Industrial Agricultural Products Center, he works to build new partnerships across campus and with industry to develop new and innovative products that add value to agricultural crops.

“Developing new markets is critical to the long-term sustainability of the corn industry,” Wilkins said. “I look forward to working with university and industry partners to identify opportunities to increase the demand for corn, which will be beneficial for producers in Nebraska and beyond.”

Before coming to Nebraska, Wilkins was a professor of biosystems and agricultural engineering at Oklahoma State University, where he taught courses in bioprocessing, food processing and renewable energy. Wilkins holds a bachelor’s degree in agricultural and biological engineering from Purdue University. He earned his master’s and doctoral degrees in agricultural engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

To learn more about the Industrial Agricultural Products Center, visit https://agproducts.unl.edu. 

“I look forward to working with university and industry partners to identify opportunities to increase the demand for corn, which will be beneficial for producers in Nebraska and beyond.”
Recent trade missions to the U.S. connect foreign buyers to American farmers

During the month of October, the Nebraska Corn Board hosted two trade missions which consisted of major U.S. corn buyers from Mexico and Saudi Arabia. The trade teams met with Nebraska farmers, suppliers and exporters of corn and corn co-products to better understand U.S. corn production, marketing and exporting logistics. The visits were coordinated in collaboration with the U.S. Grains Council, which works to develop export markets for U.S. agricultural products, such as corn, distiller’s dried grains with solubles (DDGS) and ethanol.

“American farmers have sustainably been growing quality agricultural products for generations,” said David Bruntz, chairman of the Nebraska Corn Board and farmer from Friend. “With 95 percent of the world’s population living outside of the United States, we must develop and maintain positive trade agreements with our global customers. By inviting these customers to the U.S., we’re able to help them understand our supply chain, so they’ll feel more confident doing business with American farmers. This undeniably has an economic value to our state and our country, but we’re also helping provide feed, fuel and fiber to the world.”

While in Nebraska, the Mexican grain buyers met with local corn farmers, Aurora Cooperative and Gavilon to better understand the U.S. value chain of white corn to Mexico from harvest to shipping. Nebraska is the largest white corn producing state in the country, and Mexico has historically been the largest importer of U.S. white corn. From Nebraska, the group further explored the American white corn industry through stops in Missouri and Kentucky.

How the West was won: Promoting ethanol adoption in Colorado

Keeping on brand with the mission of the Nebraska Corn Board—to promote the value of corn by creating opportunities—the checkoff partnered with Kansas Corn and Colorado Corn to further develop the ethanol industry in Colorado. This collaborative effort was able to couple resources from two larger corn producing states reach higher population areas where ethanol potential is high.

The front range region of Colorado, which consists of a large area from Colorado Springs to Fort Collins, is the primary target of the campaign, due to its high population density and relatively low consumption of mid-to higher blends of ethanol.

The campaign consisted of a combination of television, radio, digital and transit advertising. An educational session was also conducted for mechanics, to help them understand the positive attributes of clean-burning American Ethanol.

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Saudi Arabian grain buyers tour Farmers Cooperative in Beatrice to learn more about Nebraska’s corn and sorghum industries.

Both trade missions, from Mexico and Saudi Arabia, represented only two of 21 international teams that were in the U.S. in October. The 21 teams consisted of more than 200 grain buyers who participated in Export Exchange, a bi-annual event sponsored by the U.S. Grains Council, Renewable Fuels Association and Growth Energy.

(continued on next page)
Recent trade missions to the U.S. connect foreign buyers to American farmers

This year’s Export Exchange took place Oct. 22 through Oct. 24 in Minneapolis. The purpose of the event was to connect global grain buyers to over 300 domestic suppliers.

While the Mexican team visited Nebraska to learn about the white corn supply chain prior to Export Exchange, the grain buyers from Saudi Arabia came to Nebraska after the event concluded. Saudi Arabia is the eighth largest overseas importer of U.S. corn, importing 3.7 million metric tons in market year 2017/2018, and is the second largest buyer of U.S. sorghum, importing 280 thousand metric tons during the 2017/2018 market year. The imported commodities are frequently used in dairies, feed and poultry companies.

The Nebraska Corn Board partnered with the U.S. Grains Council to coordinate the missions. The U.S. Grains Council works in more than 50 countries and the European Union to market U.S. grains and their related products to build long-term demand from loyal customers. This work is also supported by funding from the USDA through the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) program in the U.S. farm bill.

While in Nebraska, the Saudi Arabian team visited the farms of Steve Wellman, director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, and Don Bloss, past chairman of the National Sorghum Producers. As major feed grain buyers, this team wanted to better familiarize themselves with U.S. corn and sorghum production. In addition to visiting Nebraska corn and sorghum farms, they visited Farmers’ Cooperative in Beatrice, the Aurora Cooperative corporate office and Pacific Ethanol, both in Aurora, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

“We really had several great conversations with both teams over the last several weeks,” said Roger Berry, director of market development with the Nebraska Corn Board. “Our governments may not always see eye-to-eye, but these customers are so eager to learn more about U.S. agriculture. They want to be partners with American farmers in helping to meet the growing demands of their people, which is a major reason we host these trade teams. We have products to sell and we want to be able to show the world that U.S. agriculture is open for business.”

“Recent trade missions to the U.S. connect foreign buyers to American farmers.”

Mexican grain buyers examine an ear of white corn in Friend. During their visit, the team also visited with farmers and seed corn dealers.
Nebraska Corn participates in consumer-focused tailgate in Lincoln

As the Nebraska Cornhuskers braced for their first victory of the season early on October 20, the Nebraska Corn Board and Nebraska Corn Growers Association partnered with the Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska (AFAN), and other agricultural commodity groups, to host the Game Zone Nebraska Farmers and Ranchers Tailgate Party. The event took place in the parking lot at the Fallbrook Super Saver in Lincoln.

The event, which has taken place for the last three years, is designed to show appreciation to consumers who purchase and enjoy quality food produced by our state’s farmers and ranchers. The tailgate also provides an opportunity for consumers to connect with the ag industry and ask questions to better understand how food is grown and raised.

Attendees received a free breakfast, which consisted of foods that represented Nebraska’s vast agricultural industry. The meal consisted of bacon, eggs, donut and bagel bites, beef steak samples and chocolate milk. To round off the balanced breakfast, Nebraska Corn gave attendees small bags of Doritos and mini cans of Coke to demonstrate the versatility of corn as an ingredient in food products. The snacks were conversation starters, which helped Nebraska Corn staff explain the different types of corn grown and the many uses. The Doritos were purchased from the Frito Lay plant in Gothenburg and were displayed alongside a photo of the Andy Jobman family, who grows white corn for Frito Lay.

“Showing an actual farmer near the product was extremely eye opening for a lot of the attendees of the tailgate,” said Kurtis Harms, Director of Communications with the Nebraska Corn Board. “Many consumers had no idea Nebraska was the top white corn producing state in the country, and they were surprised to learn this white corn is likely in the snacks they enjoy every day.”

Tailgate sponsors included: AFAN, CommonGround Nebraska, Midwest Dairy Association, Nebraska Corn Board, Nebraska Corn Growers Association, Nebraska Cattlemen Association, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Nebraska Farm Bureau, Nebraska Pork Producers Association, Nebraska Poultry Industries, Nebraska Soybean Board, Nebraska Wheat Board, Nebraska Hop Growers Association and Super Saver.

Many consumers were surprised to learn about the many ways corn contributes to the foods they enjoy.
Trade Matters at 2018 Husker Harvest Days

There were a lot of new things to see at Husker Harvest Days this year! New signs and sidewalks welcomed visitors to the Commodities Building on Main Street.

The theme inside was #tradeSTILLmatters to Nebraska farmers! Local corn grower volunteers encouraged visitors to sign the large Trade Matters banner as well as postcards that were sent to Nebraska’s congressional delegation in Washington D.C. Visitors who signed the banner and a postcard were rewarded with a Trade Matters T-shirt. Local volunteers also spent a lot of time talking with potential members.

Growers who joined or renewed their membership with NeCGA walked away with a green fleece blanket to show off their NeCGA pride. It was a successful year Husker Harvest Days and we look forward to 2019!

Dave Bruntz of Friend signs the large Trade Matters banner during Husker Harvest Days.

New sidewalks and signage debuted at the Commodities Building on Main Street at Husker Harvest Days in September.

The theme inside was #tradeSTILLmatters to Nebraska farmers!

Nebraska Corn was on hand at the 2018 Husker Harvest Days to answer questions, provide updates and talk about membership in NeCGA.
trade matters
to Nebraska’s corn farmers.

95% of the world’s population lives outside the U.S.

Exports account for 38% of annual farm cash receipts.

1 in 3 bushels of U.S. corn is exported in some form.

Red meat exports add 45¢ per bushel to the price of corn.

The U.S. exports ethanol to 77 countries.

Top 5 export markets for U.S. corn:
- Mexico
- Japan
- Colombia
- South Korea
- Peru

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