Promoting Agricultural Literacy

By Ron Rosati, NCTA Dean

You are invited to join us on campus this Thursday at 3:30 p.m. for a compelling discussion about the importance of agricultural information and communicating the science of food production.

“What Does Agricultural Communication Mean in the 21st Century?” is the topic for a seminar led by agricultural broadcaster Orion Samuelson.

Hosted by the University of Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), the Lincoln event will be televised on NCTA’s campus in the Nebraska Agriculture Industry Education Center auditorium. It is free to the public.

If you’ve watched ag news on television or listened to ag radio over the past 50 years, you no doubt have heard articulate and probing interviews by Orion Samuelson. He is a familiar voice in our industry.

Samuelson presents 18 agricultural reports daily on WGN Radio in Chicago, and is syndicated with “National Farm Report” and “Samuelson Sez” commentary programs. He co-hosts the program "This Week in Agri-Business" with Max Armstrong.

“Given agriculture's growing complexity and the importance of feeding an increasing global population, clear communication about the science of food production is critical,” say ag communicators at IANR, which hosts the Heuermann Lectures.

As educators of individuals who are preparing for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries, our role at NCTA is to engage our students in these types of discussions. We not only assist them in understanding and applying the science of food, fiber and fuel production, but enhance their ability for clarity and articulation in their daily conversations as well as dialogue with consumers, customers and the public, in general.

Panelists joining Samuelson in what promises to be an enlightening conversation will be: Barb Glenn, an animal scientist and CEO of the National Association of State Directors of Agriculture; Marcy Tessmann, president of Charleston-Orwig, an integrated marketing business; Kevin Murphy, founder and president of Food Chain Communications, a marketing association for food-chain stakeholders; and Ronnie Green, Harlan vice chancellor of IANR and NU vice president for agriculture and natural resources.

I am glad we can provide this teaching opportunity for our students, and to be able to share it with our college community. Agricultural literacy should matter to each of us.

In our profession, agricultural literacy is important for all ages – from the kindergarten students just starting their formal educations, to 4-H and FFA youth delivering speeches, oral reasons and public demonstrations, to
college graduates entering the workforce and for producers, service industry and business representatives, educators and agricultural leaders at all levels.

The Heuermann Lectures, based at IANR, focus on providing and sustaining enough food, natural resources and renewable energy for the world's people, and on securing the sustainability of rural communities where the vital work of producing food and renewable energy occurs.

The lectures are made possible by a gift from B. Keith and Norma Heuermann of Phillips, long-time university supporters with a strong commitment to Nebraska's production agriculture, natural resources, rural areas and people.

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NCTA Mission:
The Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is devoted to a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology, food and related industries. The college provides open access to innovative technical education resulting in associate degrees, certificates, diplomas and other credentials.

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