



Derek Heeren, PE

Derek Heeren, PE, is the recipient of the 2023 Heermann Sprinkler Irrigation award for promoting excellence in sprinkler irrigation management through needs-driven research, engagement with stakeholders, and teaching and mentoring students.

Heeren is an irrigation engineer and an associate professor in biological systems engineering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). He teaches courses in agricultural systems technology and agricultural engineering, advises undergraduate and graduate students, and is coadvisor for the Agricultural Systems Technology Club. Students working with Heeren get hands-on experience with irrigation technology while working with industry partners. The overall objective of his teaching program is to prepare students to be wise managers of irrigation, water resources, and agricultural systems. He has been advisor or coadvisor for 7 PhD students, 11 MS students, and 17 undergraduate research assistants (with students being from 9 countries).

When Heeren saw the need for a high-quality textbook on irrigation management, he led the process of finishing a textbook which had been initiated by former irrigation faculty at UNL. He partnered with ASABE, secured funding to cover publication costs, coordinated with the other coauthors, added new material, and served as the general editor. Titled *Irrigation Systems Management*, this textbook and associated teaching materials are

being used for courses in at least 10 universities in 3 countries. Heeren leads research programs with an objective of enhancing both the sustainability and the profitability of agricultural production in Nebraska and the Great Plains. His focus is on irrigation management, sprinkler irrigation systems, and irrigation technology. His research is also based on stakeholder needs and connects with industry, including projects with Lindsay Manufacturing, Valmont Industries, and Irriga.

A 20-year member of ASABE, Heeren has served as chair of NRES-241 Sprinkler Irrigation committee, chair of NRES-24 Irrigation Group, as well as chair for the Nebraska Section of ASABE. Heeren believes that non-technical events can help promote a sense of community in ASABE. An example of this is the prayer breakfast at the ASABE Annual International Meeting, which he leads every year. Heeren has also been involved in the Irrigation Innovation Consortium and serves on its Research Steering committee.

Heeren has authored or coauthored 59 refereed journal articles, 1 book, 33 conference proceeding papers, and 11 other publications. He has won several awards including the A.W. Farrall Young Educator award from ASABE, the Distinguished Alumnus award from South Dakota State University, and the ASABE Superior Paper award.