



# NEBRAGRINEER

News  
from the Nebraska Section  
March, 2022

### 2020 - 2021 Nebraska Section Officers

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### Chair's Corner

Greetings Nebraska Section ASABE members and welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of the Nebragrineer! Inside, you will find some great information on what has been going on around the Nebraska Section. You will also find a brief preview of the upcoming summer activities, a recap of the fall 2021 meeting, a department update from the department head, Dr. David Jones, and updates from the Nebraska Section officers.

I hope that everyone enjoyed the 2021 Nebraska section meeting back in November. I personally think that in person meetings allow attendees to connect in ways one does not get from a virtual experience. I was very glad to see the strong support for this gathering especially given that it was outside of Lincoln.

Following our successful meeting, I would like to thank everyone for their voluntary contribution of section dues. As a result, we have been able to continue to support student teams through the remainder of 2021. These funds are used to help cover competition supplies and travel expenses. As a reminder, when filling out your ASABE dues registration later this year, please consider a voluntary contribution. It is through these contributions that the Nebraska Section is able to fund student activities.

As a reminder, the 2022 Annual International Meeting is being held on July 17-20, 2022 in Houston, Texas. If you plan to be a part of it, head to the ASABE website and register!

On behalf of the Nebraska Section officer team, thank you for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you at upcoming events. If anyone has any questions, comments, or news to share to the Section, please don't hesitate to let us know.

**Austin H Lammers**  
**Nebraska Section Chair**



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## Department Update

I hope this newsletter finds you all healthy and ready for Spring! As the weather warms, I invite you to visit us in Chase Hall to see our progress on building renovations. Touring the first floor of Chase Hall, you'll notice that renovations have been completed for our computer lab and student study space. You'll also find a large screen projector showcasing videos of faculty research, celebrated alumni, and student club activities. Don't forget to stop by the Dinsdale Family Learning Commons (formerly CY Thompson Library) to experience the \$22.5 million investment in its redevelopment and renovation.

In 2021, BSE said farewell to Suat and Sibel Irmak who transitioned to Pennsylvania State University for new positions. We wish them all the best. Michael Kocher retired after 32 years of distinguished service to students and the university. We are grateful for his dedication and service. We welcomed three new faculty: Andrew Hamann, Wei-Zhen Liang and Yu Pan. Dr. Hamann is a research assistant professor and Biomedical Engineer within the Pannier Lab, Dr. Liang is a Research Assistant Professor at the Panhandle Research & Extension Center in Scottsbluff and Dr. Pan is a research assistant professor in Chase Hall.

Faculty honors this past year included Dr. Yufeng Ge who was awarded a Harold W. Eberhard Professorship, Angie Pannier received the inaugural Swarts Family Chair of Biological Systems Engineering and Dr. Santosh Pitla was selected for the Research Leaders Program.

Our student clubs were highly competitive. The BSE Fountain Wars club earned a 2nd place win at the 2021 ASABE Fountain Wars Competition and the UNL ¼ Scale Team placed second at the 2021 International ¼ Scale Tractor Student Design Competition. Congratulations for an outstanding effort!

BSE held our first in person celebration event on November 18, 2021. The BSE Fall Awards

Celebration honored our Hall of Fame recipients. The Hall of Fame is awarded to esteemed colleagues who have provided valuable leadership to the department. Our Hall of Fame recipients included Kent Wichelt, Carol Swarts and Glenn Hoffman. This celebration also marked the awarding of the inaugural 2021 Early and Mid-Career Excellence Awards for Alumni. These new alumni awards seek to recognize graduates who have excelled and provided valuable leadership in their profession. Dr. Timothy Martin received the inaugural 2021 Early Career Excellence Award for Alumni and Suzanne Ebert received the inaugural 2021 Mid-Career Excellence Award for Alumni. We extend our congratulations to all honorees.

We are proud of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni for their accomplishments, especially during the ongoing difficulties due to the pandemic. We continue to work diligently to ensure the safety of our community and are continually looking for ways to enhance learning and provide community and for our students, faculty and staff during these difficult times.

Best regards,

**David Jones**  
**Department Head**  
**Biological Systems Engineering**  
**University of Nebraska-Lincoln**  
[david.jones@unl.edu](mailto:david.jones@unl.edu)

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*Dr. Carol Swarts, BSE 2021 Hall of Fame inductee*

## **Biological Systems Engineering Fall Awards Celebration**

The following awards were presented at the 2020/2021 BSE Fall Awards Celebration held November 18, 2021.

### **2020 Awards:**

#### BSE 2020 Hall of Fame Inductee:

Kent Wichelt

#### UNL Parents Association – Certificate of Recognition for Contribution to Students:

Roger Hoy, Nicole Iverson, Deepak Keshwani, Cheryl Pflueger, Santosh Pitla

#### ASABE PEI Professional Engineer of the Year:

Michael Kocher

#### COE Holling Family Distinguished Teaching/Advising/Mentoring Award:

Suat Irmak

#### COE College Faculty Research & Creative Activity Award:

Angie Pannier

#### Gamma Sigma Delta Research Award of Merit:

Angie Pannier

#### 2020 BMES Class of Fellows:

Angie Pannier

#### Gamma Sigma Delta – The Honor Society of Agriculture – The Extension Award of Merit:

Suat Irmak

#### SWCS Soil & Water Conservation Society: Conservation Research Award:

John Gilley

#### NACTA John Deere Award:

Santosh Pitla

#### ISPA Pierre C. Robert Precision Agriculture Young Scientist Award:

Joe Luck

#### Merck Animal Health High-Quality Pork – Precision Farming Award:

Tami Brown-Brandl

#### Nebraska Extension Excellence in Extension Team:

Paul Jasa

### **2021 Awards:**

#### BSE 2021 Hall of Fame Inductees:

Carol Swarts and Glenn Hoffman

#### COE Holling Family Distinguished Senior Faculty Teaching Award:

Michael Kocher

#### COE College of Engineering Faculty Service Award:

Yufeng Ge

#### COE College Staff Awards for Exemplary Service and Support:

Alan Boldt

#### ASABE Fellows Class of 2021:

Terry A. Howell, Jr, Suat Irmak

#### ASABE Larry W. Turner Young Extension Professional:

Daran Rudnick



ASABE A.W. Farrall Young Educator:  
Santosh Pitla

ASABE Netafim Microirrigation:  
Suat Irmak

ASABE Educational Blue Ribbon Award:  
Suat Irmak

ASABE ADS/Hancor Soil and Water  
Engineering:  
Suat Irmak

ASABE G.B. Gunlogson Countryside  
Engineering:  
Richard Stowell

ASABE Superior Paper Award:  
Xin Qiao

UNL Family and Friends' Recognition Awards  
– Certificate of Recognition for Contributions  
to Students:  
Cheryl Pflueger

NC State University College of Agriculture  
and Life Sciences Outstanding Young Alumni  
Award:  
Deepak Keshwani

BSE Early Career Excellence Award:  
Timothy Martin

BSE Mid-Career Excellence Award:  
Suzanne Ebert

**Congratulations to our Alumni,  
Faculty, and Staff!**

## Soil and Water Resources Club



*Members of the Soil and Water Resources Club, Fall 2021.*

This fall semester, the SWR Club has been busy trying to restore the club's attendance and activity back to pre-pandemic levels. The officers started the year by recruiting at club fairs and hosting a few regular meetings. The club also listened to a guest lecturer, underwent a wetland cleanup, planted trees at Branched Oak State Recreation Area, and had a cookout after the tree planting. The club plans on finishing the semester with a tour of the Theresa Street Water Resource Recovery Plant. The 2021 fall semester has been a success for the SWR Club, and the 2022 spring semester is expected to be just as involved and enjoyable.

**Max Hansen, Kennadi Griffis, and Thomas Hudson**  
*Soil and Water Resources Club Officers*



## 2021 Nebraska Section ASABE Fall Meeting

We held our 2021 Nebraska Section ASABE Fall Meeting on November 12, 2021. The theme for this year’s annual meeting was “Engineering at Work in Production Agriculture”, with a tour to Four Aces Dairy Osmond, NE, a new robotic dairy facility with cutting-edge technology including both robotic milking and a Lely Vector robot that mixes a feed ration in the kitchen, based on the needs of a specific group of cattle, and delivers the feed to the trough.

After the robotic dairy tour, we had a meal in

Norfolk, NE. During the meal, we had presentations – “The Last Frontier: Automation and Precision Livestock Management” by Dr. Tami Brown-Brandl, and “Before We Get Started, Does Anyone Want to Get Out? Courage and Creativity for Career Challenges” by Dr. Derek Heeren. We also presented our section awards this year (see “2021 Section Award Recipients” for more details).

**Derek Heeren**  
*Program Chair*



## 2021 Section Award Recipients

The Nebraska section of ASABE proudly honored four individuals at the 2021 Section meeting held at the Black Cow Fat Pig restaurant in Norfolk, NE.

### Outstanding Contributions to Nebraska Agriculture

**Mr. Terry Hejny**, Director of the Nebraska LEAD Program, was presented with the 2021 Outstanding Contributions to Nebraska Agriculture Award.

### Engineer of the Year

**Ms. Mara Zelt**, UNL Schmidt Lab, was presented with the 2021 Nebraska Section Engineer of the Year Award.

*This award is given to an ASABE member of the Nebraska Section to recognize the outstanding achievement of an individual during the past year or as a culmination of efforts over previous years.*

### Outstanding Contributions to Nebraska Agriculture

**Ms. Brittani Wacker**, Senior Agricultural Engineering major, was presented with the 2021 Outstanding Student Recognition Award.

*This award is given to an individual who has had a profound effect on the development of agriculture in the state of Nebraska. The recipient of this award need not be an ASABE member, and the award recognizes an individual who has influenced many facets of Nebraska agriculture including production, business, education, industry, politics and the environment.*

### Caleb Lindhorst Inspire Award

**Ms. Jaci Kurkowski**, Senior Agricultural Engineering major, was presented with the 2021 Caleb Lindhorst Inspire Award.

*The Caleb Lindhorst Inspire Award recognizes an ASABE member of the Nebraska Section who has inspired others through uncompromising perseverance and personal commitment to excellence and achievement.*



*Below: Mara Zelt accepting the 2021 Nebraska Section Engineer of the Year Award presented to her by Dr. Amy Schimdt. Upper left: Ms. Brittani Wacker accepting the 2021 Outstanding Student Recognition Award presented to her by Dr. Roger Hoy. Upper right: Ms. Jaci Kurkowski accepting the 2021 Caleb Lindhorst Inspire Award presented to her by Dr. Roger Hoy.*

## Aaron Vancura Awards Chair

## Treasurer's Report

As of October 31st, 2021, the ASABE Nebraska Section has an account balance of \$7,572 and 201 distinct memberships.

Our section receives voluntary dues when members pledge additional support during their ASABE membership registration. These funds have been used to support ASABE-sponsored student activities including the UNL Fountain Wars, Quarter Scale, Huskerbot teams, and Aurora Robotics. Please consider supporting these student activities by adding a voluntary donation to your membership registration.

## Kurtis Charling Secretary-Treasurer/Membership Chair



## Annual International Meeting



The 2022 ASABE Annual International Meeting will be held in person July 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> in Houston, Texas. Watch for details and make plans to attend this exciting event now by visiting: <https://www.asabemeetings.org/>

## ASABE Event Calendar

### Midwest Regional Student Rally

- Dates: March 5, 2022
- Location: Iowa State University

### Graduate Student Lightning Talks

- Dates: March 30, 2022
- Location: Zoom

### ASABE Book Club

- Dates: April 6, 2022
- Location: Zoom

### FE & PE Kickoff Webinar

- Dates: April 13, 2022
- Location: Zoom

### Sustainable Energy for a Sustainable Future Conference

- Dates: May 16-19, 2022
- Location: San Jose, Costa Rica

### ASABE Annual International Meeting

- Dates: July 17-20, 2022
- Location: Houston, Texas

### International Symposium on Mechanization, Precision Horticulture, and Robotics: Precision and Digital Horticulture in Field Environments

- Dates: August 14-20, 2022
- Location: Angers, France

### Nebraska Section Meeting

- Date: TBD, Fall 2022
- Location: TBD