Written by Elizabeth Barrett Wednesday, 03 November 2010 23:28 -



A focus on agriculture literacy.

Learning is a two-way street at the Monsanto Water Utilization Learning Center.

About 9,000 visitors have walked through the front door since the center opened in June 2009.

Center manager Chandler Mazour said visitors may not realize that they offer a unique experience while at the learning center.

Although the learning center is designed to help High Plains farmers produce and conserve more, Mazour said Monsanto is a better place because of what employees learn from visitors.

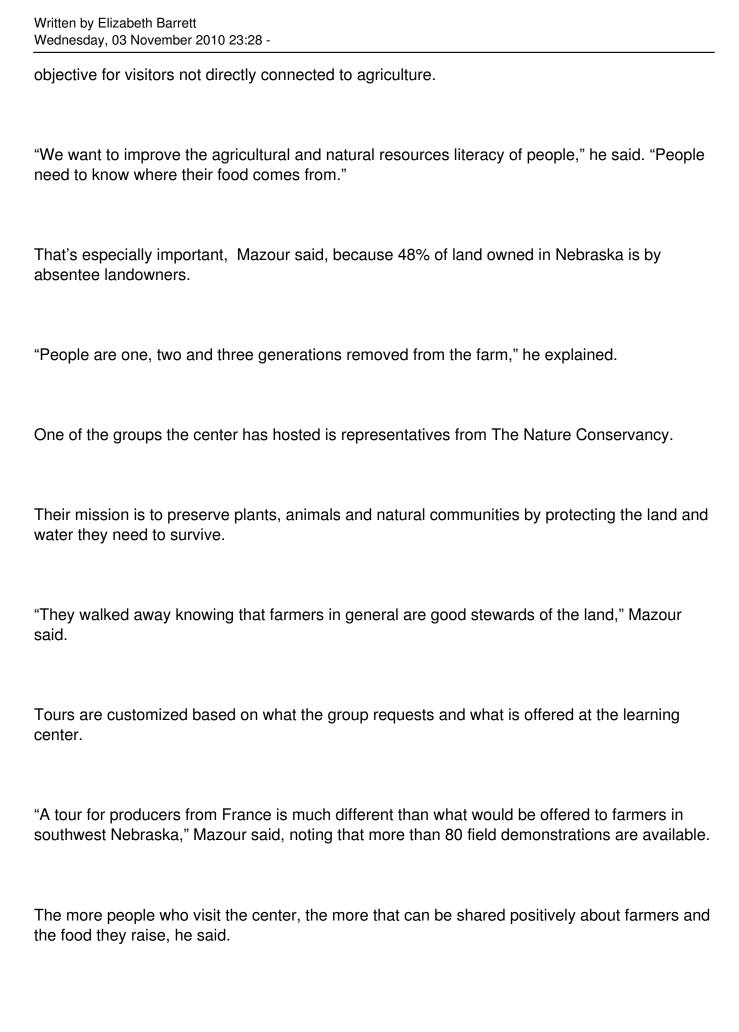
In fact, he said the employees that lead tours are asked to share notes from what visitors relate which are recorded and discussed at staff meetings.

Of the visitors, Mazour said 70% are farmers, dealers and retailers, 25% represent other interests with crop consultants making up 5%.

Outside of the United States, visitors have come from Japan, Spain, Switzerland, Sri Lanka, Kenya, France, Germany, Israel, Brazil and India.

In addition to the center showcasing innovation in agriculture, Mazour said there's a secondary

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"That's a good thing for agriculture," Mazour said.

Another opportunity for information sharing was a visit last August by top Monsanto officials, including chief executive officer Hugh Grant, and investors.

"We were able to discuss the unique challenges farmers face in the High Plains," he said.

Challenges included such things as time constraints from raising both crops and cattle, trials with irrigation and dealing with extreme weather, Mazour said.

"These are senior leaders in the company who make a lot of decisions," he said. "Their commitment to come here means a lot to

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