

UNL to sponsor beef conference in September

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LINCOLN—Kenneth Eng wants to give something back to the industry in which he's spent his life.

To honor his late wife, Caroline, who died about three years ago, Eng has donated a total of around \$2 million to three universities to fund research on how to increase cattle efficiency in times of stress.

Along with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Dr. Kenneth and Caroline Eng Foundation has granted money to Texas A&M University and Oklahoma State University.

Eng spent most of his professional career in Texas, but is a Nebraska native, having been born in Boone County near Newman Grove.

On Sept. 12 and 13, UNL will host the first Cow-Calf Efficiency Symposium, which will present the findings of the research so far. The event will take place in the Johnny Carson Center.

Eng believes that semi-confinement systems can provide an answer to the problem of decreased feed due to drought. In semi-confinement systems, cattle are held in a dirt lot, with less space than a regular pasture. This reduces their energy output levels and allows them to be sustained on less feed.

"It's a good strategy if you are under drought stress," Eng said. "We've done so many things incorrectly; it's time to look at what might be good for the whole industry."

Today, only about 25 percent of available crop residue (such as corn stalks) are being used for cattle feed.

Larry Berger, the head of the animal science department at UNL, has worked with Eng for two

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years.

“He’s very creative,” Berger said. “He’s one of the out-of-the box type thinkers who likes to explore new things.”

UNL is currently working on a research trial in Mead and Scottsbluff. There is about a 15-20 inch difference in the amount of annual rainfall between the two regions, with Mead being wetter. The researchers will measure feed costs, animal performances and animal health and reproduction rates at each site.

“It provides an opportunity to help producers deal with the extended drought and this is new research that will give cattle producers in Nebraska alternatives to consider in feeding their cattle,” Berger said.

Eng said that he is looking forward to the event. “I’m looking forward to some really good new data being presented,” Eng said. “We hope to have a big crowd and I hope to see a lot of old friends.”

Pre-registration is \$100 and it costs \$125 at the door.

Several hotels are within walking distance of the event. To register, go to <http://go.unl.edu/cowcalfsymposium>.