LINCOLN—A new report from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln outlines the potential for expansion of the state's livestock industry.

Ronnie Green, vice president of agriculture and natural resources for the University of Nebraska, discussed the report today (March 6) at the Governor's Ag Conference in Kearney.

"We all know that livestock is big business in Nebraska," Green said. "Clearly there are opportunities to expand the industry to ensure further economic success in our state."

Greg Ibach, director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, welcomed the report.

"The report outlines exciting rural development opportunities through the livestock sector," Ibach said. "But it also outlines the critical role local community leaders and public policy makers still have in helping Nebraska achieve its full potential."

The 24-page report, prepared by faculty in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's agricultural economics department, notes that the "Nebraska advantage," a reference to the state's unique mix of crop, livestock and biofuel production, has served the state well. However, the report notes, in some respects Nebraska's livestock industry has fallen behind those in other states.

The report, prepared in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, outlines potential expansion scenarios in beef cattle, dairy cattle, pork and poultry. It outlines potential obstacles and benefits.

The report concludes: "At this juncture it would appear that the livestock component of this unique system has considerable potential for further expansion. In fact, the long-term economic sustainability of the total crop/livestock/biofuel system and its ability to thrive in the future may hinge upon such expansion as global demand for food products, especially protein-based products, rises. The market forces, both domestic and global, are well positioned to allow investment in and expansion of this state's animal industry in the coming decade."

“As the state’s land-grant university,” Green said, “we are hoping to use this report as a way to start a statewide conversation about this potential, understanding that all Nebraska citizens have a stake in this matter.”

The report is posted online at the agricultural economics department’s website, http://agecon.unl.edu/.