

## **Nebraska: Where the Cornbelt Meets the Range**

Produced by University of Nebraska Television and the Nebraska Centennial Commission

Narrated by Henry Fonda

Wide shots of a tornado cloud and thunder storm. As the storm passes, views of Nebraska fields, deer, bison, and sand hills emerge. Early settlers arrived to work the land and tame the prairie, and “gradually they were rewarded.”

View of open fields. Agriculture is the nation’s largest single industry, with the Nebraska farm as its focal point.

Henry Fonda, narrator of the film, introduces himself and notes his pride as a native Nebraskan. He adds that one of the state’s proudest achievements is the development of a vigorous, productive, and efficient agricultural enterprise. “This is our story.”

An aerial view of Lexington, Nebraska (population 6,200), begins the overview of Nebraska’s development. Every 24 hours, this is the number of people added to the population of the United States.

The University of Nebraska football team is shown playing at Memorial Stadium with 65,000 in attendance. This is the number of people added to the world’s population every eight hours—a fact which demonstrates the importance of Nebraska in the world’s food supply.

An aerial view of Nebraska points to the variety of foodstuffs produced in Nebraska: beef, wheat, corn, wild hay, grain sorghum. 48 million acres are devoted to agriculture in Nebraska: this represents 97% of the landmass of the state, the highest percentage of land devoted to agriculture among all the states. Two-thirds of the jobs in Nebraska are linked to agriculture and related industries (farming, manufacturing, transportation, and trade, for example).

Wide views of the sand hills (18,000 square miles, once called “the great American desert”) highlight the links with the cattle industry. Nebraska is the second-ranking cattle-feeding state in the nation. The cattle industry accounts for almost 50% of the state’s farm income.

Omaha stockyards: Omaha is the world’s largest livestock market and meatpacking center. Norfolk, Nebraska, is the largest livestock auction market in America.

Other agricultural enterprises in Nebraska include the dairy industry, sheep production (Nebraska ranks second), pork, poultry (chicken and turkeys), and egg

research. To support the agriculture industry, an abundant water supply and rich land are essential: Nebraska has both.

View of open farmland and Daniel Freeman's cabin. In 1862, Daniel Freeman filed a claim for Nebraska land and thereby became the first man in America to receive a Homestead grant. At that time, farming was labor-intensive: for every hundred bushels of grain, 200 hours of work were required. Today, the same hundred bushels require only four hours of labor. Nebraska is one of the leading states in corn production.

Farmer on tractor: grain sorghum is as important to our economy as corn. In the North Platte Valley, sugar beets and great northern beans are significant crops. Alfalfa meal production is also a major industry, especially in Dawson County. Wild hay is significant in the economy of north-central Nebraska (Nebraska ranks first in the nation). Soybeans are an increasingly important crop.

Wide shots of wheat fields highlight the importance of wheat in Nebraska. Fonda: "This is wheat country: just look at it!"

The agricultural enterprise is supported by many businesses in our towns and cities: meat-packing plants, facilities for the production of milk and butter, grain milling facilities. A view of the Vise-Grip factory highlights the importance of businesses producing farm equipment and tools for the farmer.

Farmer at his desk. The modern farmer in Nebraska is also a business man, a significant player in an industry in Nebraska worth more than \$8 billion. He has been assisted by developments in electricity, conservation, and irrigation.

Farm wife in her kitchen. Electricity has brought automation to the farm and the farm kitchen.

Nebraska has an abundant supply of underground water: the state ranks third in the nation in land under irrigation. Intelligent soil and water conservation practices have kept the land fertile and productive.

Farm machinery: the high cost of farm equipment requires collaboration between farmers and banks across the state. The farmer also relies on the transportation system to deliver his products to market.

Ongoing education is crucial for the continuing growth of the farm economy. The farmer takes advantage of the numerous educational opportunities available to him; the Cooperative Extension Service is one example. And the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education (Lincoln) and the University of Nebraska provide additional opportunities such as the annual Tractor Power and Safety Day at the University. Note also the 4-H Camp for children; the Aksarben livestock show; the Nebraska State Fair; and Future Farmers of America.

Nebraska has 26 colleges and universities. Agricultural and Home Economics education is centered at the University of Nebraska, a leader in agricultural research. That research is respected by the nation's scientific community and is made available to the state's businessmen-farmers.

The University of Nebraska is the home of the oldest and most respected tractor-testing facility in the world.

View of the Scotts Bluff Experiment Station, one of the University's outstate facilities doing research in climatic and soil conditions in specific areas. The world's largest animal research facility for livestock is being developed near Clay Center.

Education and research help to place Nebraska at the center of the agricultural enterprise worldwide.

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