

The DPH Practitioner



“Educating Leaders for Tomorrow’s Sustainable Plant Production Systems”

The drought and late frost out west really challenged my entomology research program in wheat, but thanks to the support of Dr. Lai, her lab, and a host of students (including DPH students Savannah Davidow and Alex Angel), some fantastic data was collected and we inch a little closer to helping wheat growers manage the wheat stem sawfly. Speaking of growers, they are facing some exceptional challenges in profitable wheat production this year and in spite of this challenge so many were so very generous of their time and cooperation as we continue to pursue wheat pest management trials and surveys this summer — thank you!

In other news, some of you are likely aware that my tenure home unit, the Department of Entomology, has been integrated into a new unit along with the Department of Plant Pathology as of this August. A new school has been formed that integrates the two units. The school has yet to be named, but I am looking forward to continuing my collaborations with all of the faculty in this new school. In other connected university activities, I will be serving as Chair of UNL’s Academic Planning Committee this fall. I am looking forward to working with this committee of university leaders to help build a brighter future for broadly shared governance and mission focus for our flagship campus!

Speaking of brighter futures — the Doctor of Plant Health program continues to grow! Inside this newsletter, you will read about three new DPH students that are joining us this fall: Julia Clouse, Eric Schultz, and Yvon Ukwishaka. If you are on campus, please join me in giving them a warm welcome! Also in this newsletter, you can read about the DPH program meeting up with the DPM program (Doctor of Plant Medicine, University of Florida) at the NAICC Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL (see *page 3 for photos*). We shared a booth next to the DPM program, and it was really great opportunity for students in the DPM and DPH program to meet up in person.

Additionally, the Exhibit Hall was packed with potential Plant Health Residency partners and our students took advantage of the opportunity to introduce themselves to the exhibiting organizations to grow their potential experiential learning opportunities.

Given the proximity of this conference to EPCOT, I also coordinated a “Behind the Seeds” tour for our students at the Living with the Land Greenhouse displays at EPCOT (where recent UNL Department of Entomology graduate, Hannah Stowe has been recently hired as Senior Scientist). We also participated in a panel discussion with all of EPCOT’s interns and staff. Students explained to the group the nature of the DPH program and why they were pursuing this particular degree — the discussion was really well attended! We had a great time reviewing all of the research that is done behind the scenes in the morning and then entered through the main gate to view the exhibits as guests. We are looking forward to having an exhibit booth again this year at the NAICC Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO.

Lastly, we have a fantastic line up of DPH Colloquium discussion leaders this fall! (see *page 2 for the colloquium schedule*) We really appreciate everyone who has agreed to take some of their time to meet with our students. Thank you!!



Doctor of Plant Health at the
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DPH Faculty Members

Kyle Broderick, *Coordinator,
Plant & Pest Diagnostic Clinic,
Plant Pathology*

Dr. Christian Elowsky,
*Assoc. Professor, Agronomy &
Horticulture*

Dr. Katherine Frels, *Asst.
Professor, Agronomy &
Horticulture*

Dr. Loren Giesler, *Professor
and Dept. Head, Plant
Pathology*

Dr. Tom Burkey, *Professor &
Interim CASNR Dean*

Dr. Tamra Jackson-Ziems,
Professor, Plant Pathology

Dr. Amit J. Jhala, *Professor &
Assoc. Dept. Head, Agronomy
& Horticulture*

Dr. Kyle Koch, *Assoc. Ext.
Educator, Entomology*

Dr. Louise Lynch-O'Brien,
Assoc. Professor, Entomology

Dr. Martha Mamo, *Professor
& Dept. Head, Agronomy &
Horticulture*

Dr. Justin McMechan,
Assoc. Professor, Entomology

Dr. Jill Motschenbacher,
*Assoc. Professor, School of
Natural Resources*

Peter Mullin, *Lecturer, Plant
Pathology*

Dr. John Ruberson,
Professor, Entomology

Dr. Christian Stephenson,
*Asst. Professor, Agronomy &
Horticulture*

Dr. Anne Vidaver, *Emerita
Professor, Plant Pathology*

Dr. Brian Wardlow,
*Professor, School of Natural
Resources*

Dr. Sam Wortman, *Assoc.
Professor, Agronomy &
Horticulture*

DPH Program Staff

Dr. Jeff Bradshaw, *DPH
Director*

Kelly White, *Admin. Asst.*

Welcome to the Doctor of Plant Health newsletter

The Doctor of Plant Health program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln is an innovative model for educating plant health practitioners. DPH is a professional degree parallel to a medical or veterinary degree, but instead, graduates are prepared to understand and diagnose plant health issues and manage the entire plant production system. Our program provides coursework and internship experiences that prepare you to make a difference in tomorrow's agriculture.

Graduates of the Doctor of Plant Health program are in demand worldwide for their comprehensive knowledge and experience, resulting in 100 percent job placement.

Interested in us? We're interested in you! Contact Dr. Jeff Bradshaw, DPH program director, at jbradshaw2@unl.edu, or call 402-472-3365 for more information. We look forward to visiting with you.



Congratulations to Lilly Buchholz, Recipient of the Anne Vidaver Plant Health Student Excellence Award



Lilly has been a model DPH student as she has excelled in interdisciplinary coursework. She has also completed a plant health internship with Kyle Broderick in the UNL Diagnostic Lab and will begin an internship in Raleigh, NC with Bartlett Diagnostic Services this fall.

The **Anne Vidaver Plant Health Student Excellence Award** was established to recognize the contributions from Dr. Vidaver in developing and establishing the Doctor of Plant Health (DPH) Program at the University of Nebraska. Her commitment to its central principles that encompass the education of high-level professional practitioners has been paramount to the establishment and success of the program.

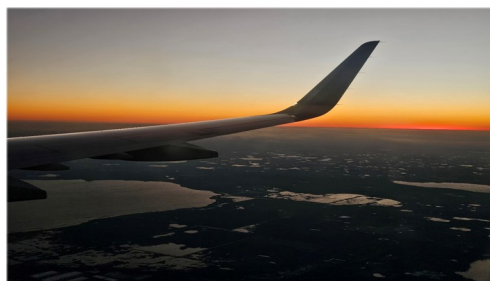
The Anne Vidaver Plant Health Student Excellence Award recognizes a Doctor of Plant Health student who demonstrates excellence above and beyond that demanded through the required curriculum of the DPH Program. Demonstrated activities for consideration include teaching, extension, research, leadership, and other outreach and professional development activities.

Colloquium Guests - Fall 2026

Date	Discussion Leader, role	Organization
25-Aug	Lilly Buchholz, Garrett Kuss, and Tyler Prow, DPH	DPH
1-Sep	Nick Arneson, Agricultural Projects Lead	The Nature Conservancy
8-Sep	Amanda Hodges, DPM Program Director	University of Florida
15-Sep	Tyler Leighton & Tony Jesina, Insurance & Lending	Farm Credit Services of America
22-Sep	Leslie Delserone & Alex Munoz, Libraries	UNL Libraries
29-Sep	Keri Carstens, CEO	Jord BioScience
6-Oct	Tom Eickhoff, CSO	Bayer CropScience
13-Oct	Ed Zaworski, Extension Specialist	Iowa State University/"I see Dead Plants" Podcast
27-Oct	Nathan Fortner, Founder/Executive Director & DPH alumn	East Gate Extension (EGX)
3-Nov	Todd DeKryger, Sustainable Ag Development	Nestle North America
17-Nov	Lindsay Overmeyer, Extension Agent & DPH alumn	North Dakota State University
1-Dec	Tina Bond, Field Research Coordinator	BioSafe Systems LLC
8-Dec	Jeff Bradshaw, DPH Director	University of Nebraska

DPH Students attend NAICC in Orlando, FL

Attendees: Dr. Jeff Bradshaw, Garrett Kuss, Lilly Buchholz, Genesis Thomas, Savannah Davidow, Kenzie Long, & Todd Steinacher.



Meet Our New Students!



Julia Clouse Julia is from Ames, Iowa, and recently graduated from Coe College with a double major in biology and environmental sciences with a minor in English. At Coe, her courses centered around ecology, conservation, and environmental systems, and an internship at an agricultural co-op expanded her interest in agricultural systems. However, her passion for entomology began much earlier with a middle school job shadow at Pioneer, where her curiosity about insects was first sparked, which led her to Nebraska.

She is beginning the Doctor of Plant Health program this fall at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln while also pursuing a master's degree in Entomology. Her research focuses on the ecological role of dung beetles and how they contribute to nutrient cycling, soil health, and sustainable grazing practices. Through the DPH and Entomology programs at UNL, she hopes to advance integrated pest management strategies that protect both crops and the environment.

Outside of the books, she enjoys hiking, birding, and watching new movies.



Eric Schultz is a Nebraska native currently residing in Seward County Nebraska. He obtained his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences for Agronomy and Mechanized Systems Management from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He then went on to obtain his Masters of Science in Agronomy from Iowa State University.

Eric has spent over 20 years in the industry on the research and development side for corn and soybeans.

He is pursuing the Doctor of Plant Health program to strengthen his knowledge of plant disease and management. He enjoys sharing with others what he has learned with a focus on agricultural production. His goal is to continue to educate people within the agricultural industry.



Yvon Ukwishaka Born and raised in Rwanda, Yvon Ukwishaka joined the Doctor of Plant Health program to bridge the gap between environmental research and field-level diagnostics. He holds both a Bachelor's in Integrated Science (2022) and a Master's in Natural Resource Sciences (2024) from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

Prior to the DPH program, Yvon served as an R&D Scientist and Lab Chemist at Rare Earth Salts, where he focused on the extraction, processing, and refining of rare earth and critical minerals. During his graduate studies, he collaborated with the Nebraska Water Center and SNR faculty to investigate the vadose zone and the impacts of nitrogen and heavy metals on groundwater quality.

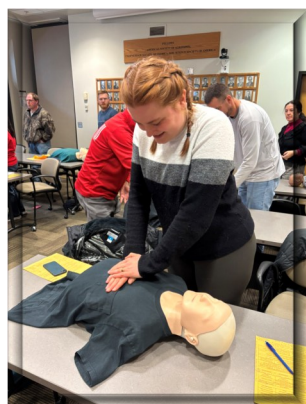
Yvon's professional background combines biogeochemistry with a deep commitment to sustainable water-food-energy systems. Within the DPH program, he is focused on nutrient management, global water-food security, and the use of holistic, integrated approaches to diagnostics. He is an active member of the American Chemical Society (ACS), the National Groundwater Association (NGWA), and the Nebraska Geological Society (NGS)"

Student Updates



Lilly Buchholz: For the past 8 months since I turned 29, I have been working through my '30 before 30' list. The list is comprised of 30 things I want to do before I turn 30. Most things I have done before like hiking a mountain and ordering a fancy bottle of wine at dinner but they are all things that are meant to either get me out of the house and be active, to spend more time with my friends and loved ones, or to learn something new and better myself. So far, I have completed 10 out of my 30: Do a Polar Plunge; do something different to my hair - I tried out a hair glaze and learned how to cut it myself; make and donate 50 scarves and hats; take a CPR class; try tinned fish - the fancy stuff, not just tuna; go to the Ren Faire; learn to read Tarot Cards; eat a footlong corn dog; Learn to tailor my clothes; Donate any of my clothes I have not worn in the past year - special occasion clothes not included. **I have also made solid plans to accomplish at least 5 more**

goals before the end of the summer: Host a party - I am planning my husband's 30th birthday party at the end of the month; run a race and get a medal - I am training for a 5k; order a bottle of wine at dinner; take a self-defense class; donate blood.



Many other things will be finished when I turn 30 like making a fancy coffee at home every Sunday and baking something new each month. I don't know if I will finish my whole list, but it has been fun trying new things and getting friends and family involved. This has been a fun way to say goodbye to my 20s and get even more excited for my 30s!

In addition to working through my 30 before 30 list, this summer I have been working in the Plant and Pest Diagnostic Clinic here at UNL again. I enjoyed it so much they took me back for a second summer! I have been learning more and have been able to work a bit more independently in the lab. I was also given

the opportunity to do my own research project and create a poster to present at the National American Phytopathological Society meeting in August. For this project I have been sampling lilacs and looking for different diseases that infect them here in Southeastern Nebraska. In addition to working in the lab, I have also been taking a class about transgenic plants and will be going on a 3-day disease tour across Nebraska at the end of the summer. Needless to say, I have been busy and I am looking forward to a nice break soon!



Kenzie Long: This summer was filled with lots of wheat, barley, and triticale during harvest in the small grains breeding lab under the advisement of Dr. Katherine Frels. What a privilege it is to be a part of such a hard-working lab all focused on the advancement of our next small grains cultivars.

Student Updates



Jae Horn: This summer was much-needed, and gave me an opportunity to step back, get outside, and find my footing again. One of my biggest highlights of the summer was getting engaged to my partner of 5 years in May!

I also made the most of the summer by traveling and spending as much time outside as possible. I went on a 3-day backpacking trip through the Badlands National Park, attended the Nebraska Start Party at Merrit Reservoir, and kayaked 13 miles of the Niobrara River! Each adventure provided a surreal moment to slow down, explore, and appreciate the outdoors.

While it can be difficult to step away from school, the summer reminded me how important it is to make space for life outside of the doctorate program. Taking a break, spending time outdoors, and reconnecting with the things that make me happy has helped me return with a clearer head and a renewed sense of

direction as I continue my doctoral journey.

I'm excited to be back and hopeful for what this next semester brings!



This summer, I joined the DPH program and was honored to receive the William J. Curtis Fellowship. Since becoming a DPH student, I have developed a growing interest in applying emerging geospatial technologies to agroecosystem management and agricultural decision-making. I spent the summer interning with the UNL Small Grain Breeding Lab under the supervision of Dr. Katherine Frels. My work focused on drone technologies to improve biomass prediction in winter triticale breeding and early selection decisions. This experience strengthened my interests in precision agriculture, remote sensing, and data-driven crop improvement. It also provided valuable opportunities to participate in field agronomic data collection, harvesting, and genomic laboratory work, offering a well-rounded perspective on the plant breeding process.

This fall, I will continue my work on UAV-based biomass prediction while joining the [Nastasi Wasp Lab](#) to explore the use of geospatial technologies for monitoring insect pests and assessing their potential impacts on crop productivity. I am excited to learn how these tools can support more effective management decisions and contribute to sustainable agricultural systems.

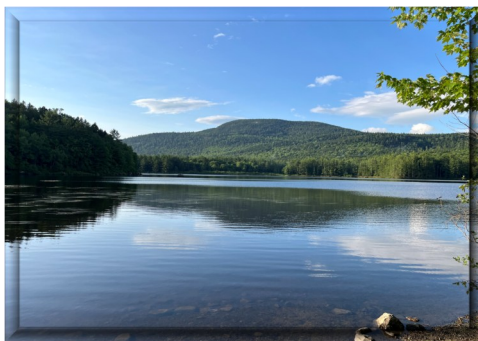
As I begin the Fall semester, I look forward to expanding my knowledge through coursework, collaborating with fellow DPH students, and gaining experiences that will help me integrate technology, research, and plant health solutions to address real-world agricultural challenges.



Eric Schultz helping at the York County Fair and the Youth Crop Scouting Competition.



Tyler Prow went east for his second residency this summer as a crew lead for the University of Vermont's Forest Health Monitoring program, part of the Forest Ecosystem Monitoring Cooperative (FEMC). The position was based out of Burlington, VT, but with plots all over New England, he got to explore public lands in every state in the region. As a crew lead, Tyler led a small team each week in collecting forest health data from long-established forestry plots representing the major northeastern forest types. A typical hitch might involve camping out all week, hiking up mountains, driving remote logging roads, and subsisting mainly off of Dunkin' breakfast sandwiches. Highlights of the summer included bonding with his coworkers, exploring northern Maine, visits from friends (including fellow DPHer Garrett Kuss) and his wife Amara, and discovering maple creemeees. He can't wait to be back in Cornhusker country!



Garrett Kuss: This being my last summer in my doctoral journey, I was adamant about making the most of it; and make of it I did. This summer I completed my final residency with Syngenta Seeds as a Field Research and Development Intern on the Trait Integration team. I was fortunate to stay in Nebraska this summer and bounced between two research stations: Waterloo, NE and Slater, IA.

My research focused primarily on innovations only a growing season or two from being in farmers' fields. This is the type of research that truly excites me because it allows me to work at the cutting edge of science while seeing products make a meaningful difference for those in the field. When I wasn't driving down I-80, I was in fields making nitrogen applications, performing root digs, and meeting others across the country, both within the company at industry tours across the Midwest and growers at our external trial locations.

My favorite memory of the job was my supervisor, Aaron Sindelar, and I modifying a golf club pushcart to have a small enough wheelbase and enough support to move a 60-lb backpack sprayer through the field, in order to get the weight off our shoulders and more consistently standardize application speed and height

Outside of work, I spent a lot of time playing cards and meeting my friends for our weekly pub trivia. I also took an extended weekend to visit fellow student Tyler Prow with our friend Michael Prophit at his residency in Burlington, VT. We hiked, visited historic sites, and sampled all the local breweries across the region. Finally, my girlfriend and I spent the school break visiting family, attending our friends' weddings, and sneaking in a concert or two.



I am excited to return to school and complete my degree, with a focus on finishing my doctoral document and taking the final steps toward earning my master's degree in entomology. My teaching responsibilities will also resume this semester as I prepare to teach Introduction to Plant Science and help the undergraduate Crops Judging Team prepare for competition.

I would love to connect with you all, and please keep in mind as I apply for full-time roles in field trialing and product advancement.



Genesis Thomas at the Lincoln Children's Zoo for the All Girl STEM Summer Camp.



DOCTOR OF PLANT HEALTH

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

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**THE MISSION OF THE DOCTOR OF PLANT HEALTH PROGRAM AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA–LINCOLN**

is to produce plant practitioners with broad expertise and experience across the various disciplines that impact plant health and plant management. These plant practitioners (plant doctors) will integrate from across this expertise to diagnose and solve plant health problems and to develop integrated plant and pest management systems that maximize the system's economic, environmental, and social sustainability.