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## NEBRASKA / NUSACC DELEGATION CONCLUDES HIGH-LEVEL VISIT TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND JORDAN

*30 Delegates Discuss Innovation, Sustainability, and Food Security*

*Expo 2020 and Gulfood Showcase the State of Nebraska*

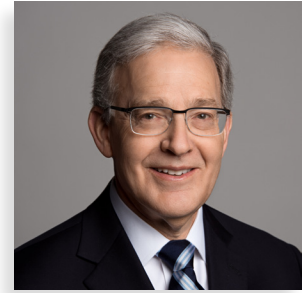


The Nebraska delegation visits Expo 2020 in Dubai.

The State of Nebraska and the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) recently completed a high-level trade & investment mission to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The mission revolved around the theme of *Innovation, Sustainability, and Food Security*, all of which are very timely topics. The delegation consisted of 30 leaders representing government, academia, agricultural associations, and the private sector.



“Wherever we went in the UAE and Jordan, we enjoyed the hospitality of the local communities,” noted **Hon. Robert Evnen, Nebraska’s Secretary of State**. “We identified numerous opportunities to build relationships between the region and Nebraska’s businesses and universities. We look forward to following up in the months ahead.”



Hon. Robert Evnen,  
Nebraska’s Secretary of State.



David Hamod,  
NUSACC President & CEO.

“Our Chamber was honored to partner with the State of Nebraska, and we are very grateful for the tremendous support that this delegation received,” said **David Hamod, NUSACC’s President & CEO**. “Decisionmakers in the region rolled out the red carpet for our delegates, and none of this would have been possible without strong support from the Arab chambers of commerce, the U.S. Missions, and the Embassies of the UAE and Jordan.”

## Nebraska: Punching Above its Weight

Nebraska’s population (two million) is a bit larger than that of Sharjah, UAE, but Nebraska consistently punches above its weight. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (2019), Nebraska ranks third in the United States in food production (following California and Iowa). Taken together, these three states produce nearly \$100 billion in agricultural receipts, approximately 27 percent of America’s food.

Nebraska is America’s top producer of quality beef, as well as a top producer of pulses, hay, corn, soybeans, sorghum, popcorn, and other grains. To achieve these high yields, Nebraska relies upon precision agriculture, including sophisticated water management and irrigation techniques. Nebraska’s expertise and technology were very well received in the UAE and Jordan, two of the most arid nations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

## Expo 2020 and Gulfood

The visit to the UAE revolved around [Expo 2020](#) and [Gulfood](#), two world-class events that allowed Nebraska delegates to explore commercial opportunities in the UAE and beyond.

Expo 2020, which wrapped up in recent weeks, represented the first time that the world’s fair has taken place in the Arab world. The event attracted an estimated 23 million visits from around the globe. Expo was one of the MENA region’s most ambitious undertakings, requiring \$7 billion in investment and 240 million hours of labor.

Nebraska was one of two U.S. agricultural states featured at the U.S. Pavilion at Expo 2020 and, for many international visitors, their first exposure to the Cornhusker State came during “Nebraska Day” at the Expo. In the same spirit, food practitioners were treated to special beef-cutting presentations at Gulfood, the International Centre for Culinary Arts in Dubai, and the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts in Jordan.

## High-Level Attention

The Nebraska/NUSACC trade & investment mission constituted one of the largest U.S. business delegations to visit Jordan and the UAE since the onset of the pandemic. As such, and because of the focus on sustainability and food security, the visit received very high-level attention in both nations, including top officials at numerous ministries.

In Jordan, the delegation was especially honored to meet with H.M. King Abdullah II, who received the Nebraska delegates at the Husseinayah Palace.



H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan received the Nebraska delegates at the Husseinayah Palace. He was joined by HRH Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of Jordan, the U.S. Ambassador, and members of the King’s cabinet.

**The Nebraska delegation’s visit received high-level attention by top officials in the UAE and Jordan. Below is a sampling.**

Abu Dhabi Investment Office (UAE)  
ADQ (UAE)  
Ministry of Climate Change & Environment (UAE)  
Ministry of Economy (UAE)  
Ministry of Energy & Infrastructure (UAE)  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Jordan)  
Ministry of Higher Education (Jordan and UAE)  
Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Supply (Jordan)  
Ministry of Investment (Jordan)  
National Center for Agricultural Research (Jordan)  
Royal Hashemite Court (Jordan)

More than 60 stories about the visit appeared in various media. (For a sampling of media coverage, click [here](#).)

The U.S. Missions to the UAE and Jordan, respectively, provided strong support for the Nebraska delegation's visit.

In his remarks at the Abu Dhabi Chamber, the **Hon. Sean Murphy – Chargé d'Affaires and Acting U.S. Ambassador to the UAE** – characterized Nebraska as a “world leader in agricultural innovation and technology,” an example of how “American innovation is powering a better future.” That state’s public university consortium, Murphy stated, is “among the top 100 institutions in the world for new U.S. patents, and Nebraska ranks number seven in the United States in bioscience research and development expenditures per capita.”



Hon. Sean Murphy, Chargé d'Affaires and Acting U.S. Ambassador to the UAE, is welcomed by H.E. Abdullah Mohamed Al Mazrui, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

He continued, “Nutrition and access to food are the foundation of a healthy society. American innovators are leading the way in developing technologies to secure safe, nutritious, and plentiful food supplies for our world. When we innovate new food solutions, lives are changed, and opportunities are created.”

Murphy concluded, “Abu Dhabi and the UAE are also home to bold ideas and innovative thinking, especially in food security and agriculture, and U.S. states like Nebraska are poised to be your partner of choice in these endeavors.”



At the “Taste of Nebraska” reception in Dubai, from left to right: Hon. Meghan Gregonis, U.S. Consul General in Dubai; Hon. Robert Evnen, Nebraska’s Secretary of State; Mr. David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO.

**Hon. Meghan Gregonis, U.S. Consul General in Dubai**, addressed delegates during a visit to the Dubai Chamber of Commerce. She noted, “It has been quite a journey for us all over the past two years. But the *good* news is that U.S. agricultural exports to the UAE are as strong as ever.”

“This strength is due in part to our wonderful farmers and ranchers,” Gregonis said, “and the amazing agricultural products they bring to market. The strength is also due in part to the excellent trading relationship between the United States and the United Arab Emirates.” Last year, she pointed out, U.S.

agricultural exports to the UAE – despite the pandemic – rebounded to over \$1 billion.

“Nebraska is in what we often refer to as the Heartland of the United States,” Gregonis concluded, “and I believe you are also in the hearts of many UAE consumers with your exceptional products. It is a great relationship made possible by great products and great people.”

In Jordan, at a “Taste of Nebraska” reception, **U.S. Ambassador Henry Wooster** highlighted the importance of people-to-people relations: “We are always thrilled when trade delegations like yours visit Jordan,” he said, “not only because of the commercial opportunities they present, but also because of the opportunities to build bridges between the American and Jordanian peoples, as well as mutually beneficial commercial ties between our business communities.”



Hon. Henry Wooster, U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, speaking at the “Taste of Nebraska” reception in Amman.

Wooster touted the U.S. - Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) – America’s first FTA with an Arab country – which entered into force in 2001. As a result of this FTA, he noted, the USA is “consistently one of Jordan’s largest trading partners,” doing \$3.2 billion in business in 2020.

In 2020, Wooster pointed out, Jordan imported 23,000 tons of beef, but only four percent came from the United States. “This represents an opportunity,” the Ambassador urged. “The United States is the world’s largest beef producer, and the State of Nebraska has always been one of our top beef exporters . . . Nebraska’s benefit for Jordan comes not only from *quantity*. The *quality* of Nebraska’s beef is consistently world class.”

In addition to agricultural trade, Wooster said, there are opportunities for technology transfer and innovation in this sector: “In partnership, we can enable Jordan to make the most of its scarce water resources by taking advantage of American advances in biotechnology, sophisticated animal husbandry, efficient irrigation, and sustainable farming.”

Wooster concluded: “Nebraska – and the experts at Nebraskan companies represented here – can help you produce food with less water and more cheaply, ultimately helping your business and Jordan’s stability.”

### **“America’s Breadbasket”**

Nebraska is an important part of America’s breadbasket, and mission delegates focused many of their presentations on sustainability and food security. Some of the state’s top agricultural leaders participated in this trade & investment mission, the first of its kind led by Nebraska’s Secretary of State.

Some of the associations represented included the [Nebraska Farm Bureau](#), [Nebraska Corn Board](#), [Nebraska Sorghum Producers](#), [Nebraska Grow Dairy](#), and a range of beef producers. (Nebraska sells quality *Halal* beef to the Arab world and beyond.)



**Cynthia Allen, Nebraska’s Assistant Secretary of State**, noted, “As an advisory member of the Nebraska Dry Bean Commission, I’m proud that this trade mission was beneficial for Nebraska producers. With the increased demand for food security in the MENA region, dry beans – also known as pulses – are a plant-based superfood that remains stable in storage.”



Cynthia Allen, Nebraska’s Assistant Secretary of State.

Two delegates representing [Nebraska Popcorn, Inc.](#) – the state’s largest vertically integrated popcorn company – joined the mission to expand sales beyond their current customer base of about 40 countries.

**Sponsors of the Mission:**

[Greater Omaha Packing](#), [Hampton Family Foundation](#), [Huvepharma](#), [Kelley Bean Company](#), [Nebraska Beef Council](#), [Nebraska Dry Bean Commission](#), [Nebraska Farm Bureau](#), and the [U.S. Meat Export Federation](#).

Nebraska is the epicenter of the Ogallala Aquifer, one of the world’s largest aquifers, covering 174,000 square miles across eight Great Plains states. The state is blessed with plentiful water, but water conservation is important to Nebraska’s farmers, ranchers, and cities. [The Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute](#), which participated in the MENA mission, is on the cutting edge of advancing solutions to water and food challenges.



Gustavo Oberto, President of Global Agricultural Irrigation at Lindsay Corporation.

Nebraska is also known for its precision agriculture, and two of the state’s leading producers of irrigation equipment signed up for the trade mission: [Lindsay Corporation](#) and [Reinke Manufacturing Company](#). Over 90 percent of pivot irrigation equipment manufactured in the USA comes from Nebraska, representing the most sophisticated – and efficient – systems of their kind in the world.

“The MENA region depends heavily on imports, and food security is more important – and more urgent – than ever,” noted **Gustavo Oberto, President of Global Agricultural Irrigation at Lindsay Corporation**. “Our technologies promote sustainability and self-sufficiency, which the Arab world needs. This visit to the UAE and Jordan connected us with numerous high-level decisionmakers, and I commend NUSACC and the Secretary of State’s office for doing an outstanding job of organizing this valuable and fruitful trade mission.”

## Forging Partnerships in Academia

Established in 1869, the University of Nebraska is a public land-grant research university that is proud of its three primary missions: Teaching, research, and service. The university welcomes partnerships with academic institutions around the world, including those in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Through its Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR), which is composed of 15 academic departments and 19 academic centers, the University of Nebraska at Lincoln: Supports evidence-based and data-driven research, education and extension activities; promotes natural resources and agroecosystems productivity, sustainability and resilience; and ensures diverse, prosperous, and healthy communities in the face of global change.



Dr. Chris Calkins, Professor Emeritus of Animal Science at the University of Nebraska, is world renowned for creating new cuts of beef to maximize usage and minimize waste, while enhancing tenderness and flavor. Dr. Calkins and Dr. Galen Erickson led three beef-cutting demonstrations in the UAE & Jordan.



Dr. Archie Clutter, Dean and Director of the Agricultural Research Division (ARD) at the University of Nebraska.

IANR supports a state-wide research and extension infrastructure and more than 400 faculty and their transdisciplinary teams. According to **Dr. Archie Clutter, Dean and Director of the Agricultural Research Division (ARD)** within IANR, “Our expert faculty teams at the IANR are developing solutions to complex problems related to water and food security through systems approaches that optimize biological, ecological and social factors. Discoveries and technologies from those teams are then validated and translated to practice through our extensive research and outreach facilities across the State of Nebraska that represent an extraordinary range of ecological and food production systems.”

More than a quarter of the delegates on the MENA mission were affiliated with the University of Nebraska, including IANR’s academic units, the [Food Processing Center](#), the [Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute](#), and the [Center for International Programs and Afghan Studies](#).

**Dr. Tala Awada – Associate Dean in the Agricultural Research Division** – helps to build connections and facilitate transdisciplinary activities in the IANR. She said, “Our team had great interactions with local universities, government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs. We were very pleased to explore synergies in areas related climate change, food security and food safety, food supply chain and biosecurity, sustainability, livestock production, water scarcity, digital agriculture and robotics, beef and meat science, and food processing.”



Dr. Tala Awada – Associate Dean in the Agricultural Research Division at the University of Nebraska.

During their visit to the UAE and Jordan, the academic delegates’ goal was to build relationships with local universities in order to encourage collaborative research and to promote exchange programs (faculty and students) with the University of Nebraska and its campuses. They succeeded.

The delegation's eight academics held high-level meetings with universities in the UAE and Jordan to explore cooperative programs.

Under the auspices of the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and the Abu Dhabi Education Council, professors held discussions in the UAE with such schools as Abu Dhabi University, Khalifa University, UAE University, and Zayed University.

In Jordan, under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, professors held discussions with the Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan University of Science and Technology, University of Aqaba, and the University of Jordan.

## Hospitality of the Arab Chambers

The chambers of commerce in the UAE and Jordan organized half-day economic forums and networking opportunities for chamber members and the Nebraska delegates. These events provided platforms to discuss partnership opportunities, corporate capabilities, and emerging trends in the region.

### *Abu Dhabi*

In his opening remarks at the **Abu Dhabi Chamber**, **H.E. Chairman Abdullah Mohamed Al Mazrui** stated, "This esteemed gathering truly reflects our common interest in strengthening our economic relations, especially between Abu Dhabi and the State of Nebraska." Mazrui highlighted the potential for commercial growth with Nebraska around the issue of food security, as well as innovation in Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).



From left to right: Hon. Robert Evnen, Secretary of State of Nebraska; H.E. Abdullah Mohamed Al Mazrui, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO.

Mazrui pointed out that Abu Dhabi was ranked the top smart city in the region in IMD's *Smart City Index* in 2020. In addition, he said, Abu Dhabi has been recognized as the safest city in the world and the happiest in the Middle East.

The emirate of Abu Dhabi, Mazrui noted, "ranked first worldwide in the latest *Global Entrepreneurship Index 2022*, making it the most preferred destination for start-ups globally." This is important to U.S. and UAE companies, the Chairman said, because "entrepreneurship is one of the drivers toward a diversified and futuristic knowledge-based economy."

Mazrui concluded, "We encourage American businesses to continue to set up their operations in our beloved country, to make use of the excellent infrastructure available, the preferential market access to the rest of the region, as well as recent legislative developments allowing full ownership of onshore companies."

### *Dubai*

At the **Dubai Chamber of Commerce**, **H.E. Faisal Belhoul, Vice Chairman**, and **H.E. Hamad Buamim, President & CEO**, welcomed Nebraska delegates to the Emirate of Dubai.

Belhoul noted, "Today's seminar touches upon a very important and fundamental issue for any country – food security. With the UAE being almost wholly reliant on food imports, food security is a national priority . . . the UAE imports 90 percent of what it eats."



Recent events have “brought major fluctuations to most industries around the world,” he said, “with the food sector being no exception.” But in the UAE, Belhoul suggested, the country has been able to “maintain continuous food supplies during turbulent times.”

Dubai has been a leader in sustainability, Belhoul noted, opening a Food Security Office back in 2017. The following year saw implementation of the National Strategy for Food Security, he said, “with the aim of making UAE the world’s best in the *Global Food Security Index 2051*.”

Today, Belhoul said, Dubai boasts a “first-of-its kind UAE Sustainable Agriculture System, which uses artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies for increasing agricultural production, managing crops, and more.”

The emirate is in the process of launching phase one of Food Tech Valley, “which aims to triple the UAE’s food production and serve as a global destination for start-ups and industry experts in the food ecosystem.” Innovation in farming, Belhoul concluded, is helping Dubai to “chart a course toward a more sustainable future.”

## Sharjah

**Chairman of the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), H.E. Abdallah Sultan Al Owais**, organized a welcome dinner at SCCI for the Nebraska delegates. He noted, “By facilitating Emirati and American companies’ access to promising opportunities in the two nations’ marketplaces, this meeting will help to strengthen the UAE-U.S. trade and investment partnership.”



Her Excellency Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri (center), UAE Minister of Climate Change & Environment, welcomes Nebraska delegates, led by Secretary of State Robert Evnen (center left) and NUSACC President David Hamod (center right).



From right to left: Hon. Meghan Gregonis, U.S. Consul General in Dubai; H.E. Faisal Belhoul, Vice Chairman of Dubai Chamber of Commerce; Hon. Robert Evnen, Secretary of State of Nebraska; H.E. Hamad Buamim, President & CEO of Dubai Chamber of Commerce; Mr. David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO.



Chairman of the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), H.E. Abdallah Sultan Al Owais, welcomes Nebraska delegates.

Al Owais went on to say, “Through these efforts, we have paved the way for new opportunities for the local companies and the Chamber members to sign cooperation agreements with international business communities [like Nebraska], in addition to highlighting the advantages of setting up businesses in the UAE.”



H.E. Dr. Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi (center rear), UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, discusses business development opportunities with Nebraska delegates.

Al Owais concluded, “SCCI aims to take advantage of this meeting to boost business and investment partnerships between the two sides by forging new partnerships that help develop Sharjah - Nebraska ties.”



H.E. Youisf Ahmed Al Ali (center), UAE Assistant Undersecretary for Water, Electricity and Future Energy Affairs at the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, discusses water conservation initiatives and technologies with the delegation.



Nebraska delegation at Jordan's Ministry of Higher Education.



Nebraska delegation at Jordan's Ministry of Water and Irrigation.



Nebraska delegation visits the University of Jordan.

## *Jordan*

**Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, H.E. Senator Nael Al-Kabariti,** accompanied Nebraska delegates to a number of ministerial meetings in Jordan, as well as the delegation's meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II.



H.E. Dr. Ayman Hussein Al-Safadi (center), Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Jordan, receives Nebraska delegates.

“For decades, Jordan has been one of America’s most steadfast and reliable partners,” Al-Kabariti said. “Today, our country serves as a hub for the region, and many U.S. companies are currently using Jordan as a springboard to Iraq and other markets.”



H.E. Yousef Mahmoud Al-Shamali (center), Minister of Industry, Trade, and Supply, joins H.E. Senator Nael Al-Kabariti, Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, in welcoming Nebraska delegates.

In meetings with government officials and private sector leaders, Jordan's food security emerged as a key issue. UNICEF claims that Jordan is the second most water-scarce country in the world, with annual renewable water resources at less than 100 m3 per person, significantly below 500 m3 per person, the threshold for severe water scarcity.



At the Jordan Chamber of Commerce Economic Forum, from right to left: Mr. David Hamod, NUSACC President & CEO; H.E. Senator Nael Al-Kabariti, Chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce; Hon. Robert Evnen, Secretary of State of Nebraska; H.E. Zaher Al-Qatarneh, Secretary General of Jordan's Ministry of Investment; Ms. Cynthia Allen, Nebraska's Assistant Secretary of State.

So, Jordan is looking for innovative ways to conserve water while also producing food for that nation's growing population. Enter Nebraska. "Jordan looks forward to benefiting from Nebraska's expertise in precision agriculture, resource management (especially water), and animal husbandry," said Al-Kabariti. "In addition, with some of the most sophisticated Internet creators and users in the Arab world, Jordan is ideally suited to support American technological expansion across the whole region."



Nebraska delegates visit Al Husseiniya Palace.

The palace houses the offices of H.M. King Abdullah II, other members of the Royal Family, and offices of the Royal Hashemite Court.

## Private Sector: Driving Innovation

The delegation's visit to the UAE and Jordan was a powerful example of private/public partnerships (PPPs) at work. Federal, state, and local governments in the USA and the MENA region partnered with Nebraska's private sector, which provided much of the innovation behind the delegation's visit.

**Anthony Goins, Nebraska's Director of Economic Development**, has been helping to spearhead efforts to create export opportunities for Nebraska companies. In remarks delivered during the delegation's visit to the UAE and Jordan, he described the Cornhusker State's growing innovation and diversity. "There is a reason why firms like Amazon and Google have invested billions here, and why we're home to some of the fastest growing tech companies in the United States, from Hudl to Opendorse," he said. "When you talk about the future capital of the Silicon Prairie, you're talking about Nebraska."



Anthony Goins,  
Nebraska's Director of  
Economic Development.

A sampling of innovative companies that participated in the trade & investment mission includes:

[Dignity Home Care](#) (for seniors and those with disabilities)

[Global Leadership Africa Summit](#) (September 10 – 17, 2022)

[Paraclypse](#) (insect control light systems for hospitals, factories, schools, shops, offices, etc.)

[Ratel](#) (cybersecurity and risk mitigation services)

[Saint Nicholas Trading Company](#) (serving emerging markets)

[Sokpoh Law Group](#) (specializing in immigration and international law)

[Zabuni](#) (the world's first regularly scheduled specialty coffee auction)

## Honoring an Emirati Trailblazer



H.E. Sheikha Lubna  
Al-Qassimi

At the Abu Dhabi Chamber, a Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to **H.E. Sheikha Lubna Al-Qassimi**, who held multiple UAE ministerial posts over the years. NUSACC's President & CEO, David Hamod, characterized Sheikha Lubna as a "role model and pioneer who has played an instrumental role in bringing our two nations closer together through commerce."

"During my time as minister, we witnessed incredible growth in the relationship," said Sheikha Lubna. "I attribute this not only to our governments' efforts, but also to the chambers and business leaders, who created a strong bond and reached common goals in increasing trade and investment. I was privileged to be part of this, and I thank NUSACC for its longstanding support for the UAE – U.S. commercial partnership."

Hon. Robert Evnen, Nebraska’s Secretary of State, commended Sheikha Lubna and expressed appreciation for the success of the trade and investment mission. “This trip provided our delegates with a great opportunity to open new markets in the MENA region, which clearly welcomes Nebraska’s technology and know-how,” Evnen stated. “We appreciate our strong partnership with the National U.S. – Arab Chamber of Commerce, co-organizers of this mission, and we look forward to future collaboration.”



The Treasury, Petra



Madaba Mosaics



Jerash



During the Nebraska delegation’s last day in Jordan, they visited historic Petra.



For five decades, the National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce (NUSACC) has served as a commercial bridge between the United States and the Arab world. Widely regarded as the voice of American business in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the Chamber serves nearly 50,000 members and stakeholders in the USA and across the Arab world. Awarded the E-Award for export excellence by the President of the United States, NUSACC is the only business entity in the USA that is recognized by the League of Arab States and the Union of Arab Chambers.

