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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**USDA FAS Administrator Ken Isley and Former Husker/Olympian Curt Tomasevicz  
Added to Governor's Ag Conference Program**

LINCOLN – Today, Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Steve Wellman announced the addition of two speakers to the 2019 Governor's Ag Conference, March 4-5, in Kearney. Curt Tomasevicz, Olympic bobsledder and former Cornhusker, will speak at the "Celebrate Nebraska Agriculture" reception on Monday, March 4, and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Administrator Ken Isley will be the keynote speaker at the Tuesday, March 5, luncheon.

"Administrator Isley works around the world to expand trade and export opportunities for American agriculture," said Wellman. "We all know how important international trade is to Nebraska farmers, ranchers and agribusiness leaders and we look forward to hearing an update from Administrator Isley on the work being done to foster and grow international agricultural trade efforts."

Curt Tomasevicz will share his message "Have No Fear" with conference attendees during the reception on Monday, March 4. Tomasevicz was a running back and linebacker at UN-L from 2000 to 2003 and spent 10 years competing for the U.S. National and Olympic bobsled teams and is a two-time Olympic medalist.

The Governor's Ag Conference gives producers and agri-business leaders in Nebraska an opportunity to discuss the state's number one industry and how to support future growth in agriculture. The conference begins Monday, March 4, at 3:30 p.m. with a panel presentation featuring Nebraska entrepreneurs and recruiters. The panel includes representatives from three innovative Nebraska companies and three organizations involved in recruiting companies to Nebraska.

On the entrepreneur side, the panelists are Vishal Singh with Quantified Ag; Lukas Fricke with ChorChek; and Mitch Minarick with FarmAfield. The three people representing business recruitment are: Phil Kozera with Bio Nebraska; Dan Duncan with Innovation Campus; and Bryan Slone with the Nebraska State Chamber.

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The “Celebrate Nebraska Agriculture” reception featuring food and beverages from Nebraska and speaker Tomasevicz will begin at 6 p.m. Monday evening.

The conference resumes on Tuesday, March 5, at 9 a.m. with a presentation from Jim Smith, executive director of Blueprint Nebraska, an organization that is spearheading a statewide, citizen-led economic development initiative.

Next on the agenda will be Governor Ricketts, NDA Director Wellman and Nebraska Department of Economic Development Director Dave Rippe. The panel will update conference participants on legislative initiatives in agriculture and highlight the work being done between state agencies to grow Nebraska.

Following the panel presentation will be Jim Wiesemeyer, with Pro Farmer, giving participants an update on the national farm bill and trade policy and how they will impact farmers and ranchers nationwide as well as here in Nebraska.

Administrator Isley will wrap up the conference as Tuesday’s luncheon keynote speaker.

The Governor's Ag Conference is coordinated by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and is co-sponsored by Farm Credit Services of America. This year the conference is at the Younes Conference Center in Kearney. A \$125 registration fee covers participation at activities on both Monday and Tuesday. After Feb. 18, the conference registration fee increases from \$125 to \$145. Registration and additional information is available online at [www.nda.nebraska.gov](http://www.nda.nebraska.gov), or by calling NDA toll-free at (800) 831-0550.

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Note: Members of the media are invited to attend the conference. Please contact Christin Kamm at [christin.kamm@nebraska.gov](mailto:christin.kamm@nebraska.gov) to make arrangements.