

*If there ever was a divine intention ... if you were going to create the Garden of Eden for ungulates ... you would have conjured up Nebraska.*

*John Carter, Nebraska State Historical Society Senior Research Folklorist*

## **NET Television Documentary Explores History of Nebraska's Beef Industry**

LINCOLN, Neb. (May 14, 2008) -- When most Americans think about firmly-fleshed roasts or juicy steaks, they are thinking about beef.

During the 1950s and '60s, Nebraska's license plates carried the nickname "The Beef State." And with good reason, the beef industry is Nebraska's single largest industry, driving much of the state's economy.

The story of the cattle industry in Nebraska began more than a century ago with the state's clean, plentiful water and vast grasslands perfect for its advancement and success.

"Beef State," a co-production of NET Television and the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS), is a new hour-long documentary on the history of the beef industry in Nebraska airing statewide on Sunday, June 1, at 6 p.m. CT, repeating Monday, June 2, at 8 p.m. CT on NET1 and in high-definition on NET-HD.

Additional broadcasts of "Beef State" will air on NET2 on Wednesday, June 4, at 8 p.m. CT; Friday, June 6, at 7 p.m. CT; Saturday, June 7, at 1 and 3 p.m. CT; and Thursday, June 19, at 7 a.m. CT.

The hour-long program tells a tale of economic, ecological and cultural upheaval, as well as the personal stories of victory, loss and true grit that made Nebraska the Beef State. It weaves together historical background and human determination into a fascinating saga that takes viewers on a panoramic sweep through a century of American history.

It follows the first cattle drives into Nebraska and traces the impact of the industry on Nebraska through the state's settlement and homesteading eras, and the rise of cattle barons such as Bartlett Richards.

The story continues with the evolution of the modern ranch, following the growth of the beef industry through two world wars, the blizzard of 1949 and the rise and fall of the Omaha Stockyards.

Providing historical background and insightful commentary are NSHS senior research folklorist John Carter; David Wishart, University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor of anthropology and geography; and educators Moni Nation Hourt (Sioux County) and Gary Kastrick (Omaha).

Several contemporary Nebraska cattlemen are also featured, including Jack and John Maddux, Maddux Cattle Company (Chase County); Melvin Nation, foreman of the Coffee Ranch (Sioux County); and John Sibbitt, Sibbitt Cattle Company (Grant County).

"Beef State" will be the focus of NET's "Governor's Premiere" scheduled for Thursday, May 29, at the Cornhusker Hotel, 333 South 13th St. in Lincoln. Fred Childs, host of American Public Media's "Performance Today" series heard on NET Radio, will be the special emcee for the event, with Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman delivering the keynote address. Additional comments will be provided by NET General Manager Rod Bates and a representative from the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Beginning at 6:30 p.m., the event includes dinner and the screening, as well as a performance by the Third Chair Chamber Players.

The "Governor's Premiere" is a fundraising event for the NET Foundations with group tables and individual tickets available. For reservations and ticket information contact Jenny Herstein, director of annual giving for the NET Foundations, at 402-472-9333, ext. 556, or at [jherstein@netNebraska.org](mailto:jherstein@netNebraska.org).

Major funding for "Beef State" was provided by the Nebraska Beef Council, the Nebraska Cattlemen Association, Farmers Mutual of Nebraska, the Nebraska Corn Board and the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation.

NET1, NET2 and NET-HD are part of NET Television, a service of NET. For more information about "Beef State" visit [netNebraska.org/beefstate](http://netNebraska.org/beefstate), or for a complete NET Television program schedule, visit NET's Web site at [netNebraska.org/television](http://netNebraska.org/television).

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**NET Television:**

**NET1** is Nebraska's first public television broadcast service and includes PBS and award-winning, locally produced public television programming; **NET2** offers live coverage of the Nebraska Unicameral, and other news and public affairs programming; **NET3** is a 24-hour channel featuring the most popular how-to, travel and lifestyle series; and **NET-HD** presents high-definition digital broadcast programming displayed in a wide-screen format.