NIBS Workshop Speakers

Craig Allen

Tala Awada

Kate Brooks

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NIBS Speakers Biographies

Craig Allen, callen3@unl.edu
https://snr.unl.edu/aboutus/who/people/faculty-member.aspx?pid=647
Craig Allen is the Director of the Center for Resilience in Agricultural Working Landscapes (CRAWL). He is most interested in understanding the links between land use or land cover change, and resilience in social-ecological systems. He conducts both applied and theoretical research on the impacts on resilience, and focuses on working landscapes in Nebraska, using empirical, experimental and spatial tools. He is also interested in how invasions can affect the resilience of ecosystems and other complex systems, and how land management affects resilience on working lands. He is on the Board of Directors for the Resilience Alliance, and Editor in Chief of Ecology and Society.

Tala Awada, tawada2@unl.edu
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Tala Awada is an Associate Dean/Director in the Agricultural Research Division at the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, a Professor of Plant Ecophysiology in the School of Natural Resources, and a Fellow of the Robert B. Daugherty Global Water for Food Institute, University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL). She co-leads the Nebraska Long-term Agroecosystem Research network (ARS/USDA and UNL partnership). She conducts research in the areas of plant ecophysiology in working and natural landscapes, ecology of invasive species, and vegetation cover change as impacted by climate variability and change and anthropogenic management.

Kate Brooks, kbrooks4@unl.edu
https://agecon.unl.edu/faculty/kate-brooks
Kate Brooks is an associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. Brooks interests and experiences span throughout the livestock industry. Brooks' research interests have primarily dealt with meat and livestock economics with topics ranging from livestock production economics to the analysis of forage and livestock insurance to consumer preferences.Brooks has studied consumer decision making and differences between consumers stated (survey and choice experiments) and revealed (scanner data) preferences. She has also studied the inconsistencies between consumers' food buying behavior and their voting behavior as well as willful ignorance.

Mark Burbach, mburbach1@unl.edu
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Mark Burbach is a Geoscientist in the Conservation and Survey Division, School of Natural Resources (SNR). He directs the SNR graduate specialization in human dimensions. This specialization focuses on the study of the driving forces behind people's natural resource management decisions. It explores such factors as beliefs, values, and attitudes and how these affect natural resource management and policy. Mark conducts basic and applied research on human behavior and the environment. His research efforts have ranged from exploring farmers' adoption of conservation practices to assessing large-scale water resource management. He finds studying why people do the things they do, particularly with regard to the natural environment, fascinating and exciting.

Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, cburkhartkriesel1@unl.edu
https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/panhandle/cheryl-burkhart-kriesel/
Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel is a Professor and Extension Specialist – Rural Prosperity Nebraska, located at the University of Nebraska Panhandle Research, Extension and Education Center in Scottsbluff. She brings to the position over 25 years of community development experience focused in the areas of new resident recruitment and retention, tourism development and community planning. Currently she teaches a GPIDEA (Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance) graduate course in Community Engagement. In addition, she contributes to the Department's Community Development Certificate program with a course focused on workforce development. Dr. Burkhart-Kriesel has held leadership roles on several state and regional boards, including Nebraska Workforce Development, South Platte Natural Resource District, Nebraska Wheat Growers and most recently has been a member of the Blueprint Nebraska statewide planning effort. In 2019 she was asked to participate in the USDA's National Rural Workforce Innovation Network (RWIN).

Archie Clutter, aclutter2@unl.edu
https://www.unl.edu/chancellor/topadmin/deans_directors/aclutter.shtml
Archie C. Clutter became Dean of UNL's Agricultural Research Division and director of the Agricultural Experiment Station in September 2011.

Galen Erickson, gerickson4@unl.edu
https://animalscience.unl.edu/faculty-staff/galen-e-erickson
Galen Erickson is a Professor of Ruminant Nutrition and the Nebraska Cattle Industry Professor of Animal Science.

Samodha Fernando, samodha@unl.edu

https://animalscience.unl.edu/faculty-staff/samodha-c-fernando

Samodha Fernando is a Professor in the Department of Animal Science and Nutritional Biochemist. Areas of special interest is Microbial Ecology. Courtesy appointments in the School of Biological Sciences, Food Science and Technology, the Nebraska Center for Virology, and the Nebraska Food for Health Center.

John Gamon, jgamon@unl.edu

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John Gamon is a Professor and Quantitative Remote Sensing Scientist in the School of Natural Resources. His background is in botany, and plant ecophysiology, with over 30 years of experience in optical detection of plant physiology and functional diversity. Methods include lab analyses, fieldwork, and airborne and satellite remote sensing, with projects spanning tropical to arctic biomes in both natural and managed ecosystems. His studies have explored biodiversity through spectral diversity, ecosystem productivity with remote sensing and eddy covariance, and northern ecosystem responses to climate change using satellite remote sensing. Recent projects have included ABoVE (NASA), PhotoProxy (European Space Agency), "Dimensions of Biodiversity" (NSF and NASA), and several rangeland research projects in Alberta (Canada), and the Midwest. John Gamon founded "SpecNet" (http://specnet.info), a non-profit that fosters collaborative approaches to developing novel proximal remote sensing technologies.

Christopher Gustafson, cgustafson6@unl.edu

https://agecon.unl.edu/faculty/chris-gustafson

Christopher Gustafson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. His primary research focus lies at the intersection of consumer decision-making processes and food choice, with an emphasis on health outcomes. He uses experiments, surveys, and other empirical approaches to study the impact of information, beliefs, and knowledge on consumer choice and valuation of products and product attributes. Two recent areas of interest are methodological approaches to improve the external validity of economic experiments in complex markets and the interaction of attention and the timing of information in consumer decision-making.

Tonya Haigh, thaigh2@unl.edu

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Tonya Haigh is a Research Assistant Professor and the Social Science Coordinator for the National Drought Mitigation Center. Her research focuses on the adaptive capacity of agricultural producers and others to cope with drought. She is interested in connecting social science with climate science by informing the development of stakeholder-driven resources and tools. She has worked with ranchers, advisors, and researchers to develop the Managing Drought Risk on the Ranch website (https://drought.unl.edu/ranchplan) and has provided social science expertise to the development of climate decision support tools for Corn Belt producers and specialty crop growers.

Andy Little, alittle6@unl.edu

https://snr.unl.edu/aboutus/who/people/faculty-member.aspx?pid=2470

Andy Little is an Assistant Professor of Landscape Ecology and Habitat Management, and Wildlife Extension Specialist with the School of Natural Resources.

His primary research focus is improving the ability of wildlife conservationists and managers to understand wildlife-habitat relationships in an increasingly human-dominated landscape. He studies the ecology and management of ungulates, mesopredators, and gamebirds; wildlife-habitat relationships; landscape ecology; and predator-prey ecology.

As a Nebraska Extension and research scientist, his goals are to create innovative solutions to the growing wildlife conservation and management needs in a multi-functional Nebraska landscape where there are competing interests for agricultural production, wildlife conservation, and ecosystem services.

Rob Mitchell, rob.mitchell@usda.gov

https://agronomy.unl.edu/mitchell

Rob Mitchell, USDA Research Agronomist and Adjunct Professor, is interested in conducting research that helps producers successfully establish and manage perennial grasses. His research focuses on improving establishment and management practices for perennial grasses, developing perennial grasses for bioenergy, and finding the best use of marginally-productive cropland.

Jay Parsons, jparsons4@unl.edu

https://agecon.unl.edu/faculty/jay-parsons

Jay Parsons is a Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics. Areas of special interest are production economics, operations risk, risk management, decision analysis, systems modeling, and farm and ranch management.

Daren Redfearn, dredfearn2@unl.edu

https://agronomy.unl.edu/redfearn

Daren Redfearn is a Professor of Agronomy and Nebraska Extension Forage and Crop Residue Specialist. Dr. Redfearn is a member of a multidisciplinary team focused on enhancing and developing forage-based beef production systems. His research and extension program emphasizes annual and perennial grass management, converting cropland to forage production, and evaluating forages that can be integrated into economical and resilient crop-forage-bioenergy agricultural production systems. He also serves as Program Leader for the Water and Integrated Cropping Systems (WICS) Team co-leading a group of technical area experts in water and cropping systems to build collaborative relationships and foster engagement to address complex issues in agricultural production and natural resource systems. He is a member of the American Society of Agronomy and Crop Science Society of America and served as co-editor for Volume II of Forages: The Science of Grassland Agriculture and as editor and co-editor for Crop, Forage, and Turfgrass Management. He received his Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in Agronomy from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with B.S. degree from Texas Tech University in Animal Science.

Matt Spangler, mspangler2@unl.edu
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Matt Spangler grew up on a diversified crop and livestock farm in Kansas. He received degrees from Kansas State University (BS; 2001), Iowa State University (MS; 2003), and the University of Georgia (PhD; 2006) and is currently a Professor and Extension Beef Genetics Specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He works as part of a team with colleagues at UNL and US MARC to improve genetic/genomic selection tools and methods.

Mitch Stephenson, mstephenson@unl.edu
https://agronomy.unl.edu/stephenson
Mitch Stephenson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture. Areas of research interest include plant-herbivore interactions, grazing methods, timing of grazing, targeted livestock grazing, grazing distribution and behavior, social association patterns of cattle, feeding site selection and low-stress herding.

Gary Sullivan, gary.sullivan@unl.edu
https://animalscience.unl.edu/faculty-staff/gary-sullivan
Gary Sullivan is an Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Science. His area of special interest is meat processing, with an overall research focus of improving the quality, safety, and shelf life of value added and processed meats. Specific research topics include identifying factors influencing spoilage and microbial populations of meat products; impacts of ingredients and processing techniques used in processed meats to meet current market trends; and the influence of food safety interventions on quality of meat products.

Andrea Watson, awatson3@unl.edu
https://animalscience.unl.edu/faculty-staff/andrea-k-watson
Andrea Watson is a Research Associate Professor in the Department of Animal Science. Areas of focus are protein utilization by beef cattle, nutrient cycling through agricultural systems in Nebraska, and developing distance education curriculum. She currently coordinates a Beef focused specialization for Masters of Applied Science students.

Ruth Woiwode, ruth.woiwode@unl.edu
https://epd.unl.edu/profile/rwoiwode2
Ruth Woiwode is an Assistant Professor in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and an Extension Specialist. An area of special focus is animal handling and its effects on outcomes.