180 Importance and Practices of Interaction with Producers and Industry for Land-Grant Animal Science Faculty: How are These Practices Developed and Implemented?, Jack C. Whittier1, Ivan Rush1, David Lalman2, Allison M. Meyer1, Kim Mullenix4, 1University of Nebraska, 2Oklahoma State University, 3University of Missouri, 4Auburn University

Abstract: The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 created colleges to “benefit the agricultural and mechanical arts” and established one college per state “where the leading object shall be…to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture…to promote liberal and practical education”. Further, the purpose of Smith-Lever Act of 1914 is “to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to agriculture…to encourage the application of the same”. From this legislation the role of universities was established to research and disseminate scientific information to various audiences. A key component of these legislative charges is the feedback loop between university faculty, producers, and industry professionals to assure the continuance of “liberal and practical education”. This feedback loop ensures that relevant information is pursued by faculty and provides an avenue for producer needs to be communicated back to faculty. Development of personal relationships between stakeholders and faculty is an integral part of the information flow. On-farm research and in-person educational programs, along with on-the-ground visits by faculty, have historically served an important mechanism for information flow and feedback. However, across the U.S., Animal Science undergraduate enrollment has increased dramatically while faculty and field staff extension FTEs have declined. Funding for such has remained stable over the past 20 years. These trends resulted in prioritization for undergraduate teaching and grantsmanship among faculty. The advent of electronic communications has diminished personal face-to-face interactions and on-site visits by faculty to production entities. Consulting with producers at their business often is most rewarding in learning and respected by producers, however this interaction is sometimes viewed as “service” which is viewed as a low priority by some administrators. This symposium will examine best practices by faculty to ensure land-grant universities align with the legislative mandates established by Congress and benefit from valuable interaction with clientele.

Keywords: producer interaction, land-grant faculty,