

# Cornhusker Economics

## Nebraska National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA)

NAMA PALOOZA, the 2025 Agri-Marketing Conference, was held April 9-11 in Kansas City, MO. The conference is an annual event that brings together National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) professional and student members. There are 27 professional chapters and 32 student chapters from across the U.S. and Canada. The conference is a great opportunity to foster connections between students and professionals in marketing, advertising, communications, promotion, sales, and public relations.

Each year's conference features keynote speakers and workshops open to professionals and students. This year's featured speakers included,

- John Rossman on *BIG BET LEADERSHIP for ChatGPT: Your Playbook for Disruptive Technologies* and
- Kindra Hall, who spoke on *Stories that Stick: The Irresistible Power of Strategic Storytelling*.

The conference hosted a Producer Panel and offered two workshops with multiple break-out sessions. The workshops included,

- *Equipping Your Small Marketing Department to Survive and Thrive* and
- *Management Track*.

Two student competitions are held each year at the conference—Sales and Marketing Plan. Awards are given to the top six individuals or teams. Nebraska did not have participants in the Sales Competition, but it had a great Marketing Plan team that competed. Each year, a select group of NAMA members meets throughout the fall and spring semesters. They



2025 Nebraska NAMA Marketing Team (left to right). Airlee Freeman (junior, Lyman, SC), Grace Timm (junior, Chappell, NE), Ashley Bonifas (freshman, Roseland, NE), Zoe Ganzman (senior, Mission, KS), Brianna Johnson (freshman, Wymore, NE), and Marissa Davis (junior, Karval, CO).

identify an innovative agriculture or food product, commodity, or service that is an input for, or output of, an agricultural application, for which a return to the producer can be demonstrated. They do a considerable amount of research on the product—differentiating factors, what need or demand it meets, competing products, trends that indicate it has promise in the market, customers most likely to buy, and more. This information is used to develop a marketing plan for the product. The culmination of the team’s work is the plan presentation at the annual Agri-Marketing Conference.

This year, Nebraska NAMA’s marketing team chose to market *Sauce in the City Creamy Protein Sauce*, a line of high-protein, healthy, and nutrient-dense pasta sauce. The product, which incorporates blended cottage cheese, was developed through a partnership between Sauce and the City and Hudson Valley Dairy Cooperative. It was marketed to *Healthy Eaters* and *True Foodies*--customer segments in the Mid-Atlantic region who love to be involved in the community, lead active lifestyles, choose healthier foods, and buy local and fresh ingredients. The key states for the target market were New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and New Jersey. The team was in a challenging first round. Two teams advanced from each of six heats in the round. The two teams that advanced from Nebraska’s heat made it through the second round and to the finals (top six teams).

Winning plans are often based on food products, but this year’s top six plans were a mix, with four agricultural input products—and lots of advanced technology.

- *EyeScout*: AI-driven camera system that detects early signs of pink eye in cattle (Missouri)
- *Shell’d*: Peanut-based plant protein powder supplement (Mississippi State)
- *REVITA-HIVE*: Amino-acid-based treatment for varroa mites in bee colonies (New Mexico State)
- *Chocolate Lab Cocoa*: Cultured cocoa, using cocoa bean genetic material (Wisconsin-Madison)
- *AGROFLEX*: Wireless, remote-operated robotic tractor control system (Saskatchewan)
- *ScoutSense*: AI camera system that captures precise images of vegetables and enables early treatment (Abraham Baldwin)

We welcome product ideas to use for the Marketing Plan competition—agricultural inputs or outputs—but the bottom line is that we must be able to show a return to producers.

In addition to the annual conference, the Nebraska NAMA student chapter hosts speakers at monthly meetings, conducts fundraisers, has socials, and works with the department’s other clubs to coordinate an annual industry tour when feasible. The 2024-2025 monthly meetings included speakers from the Nebraska Corn, Soybean, and Wheat Boards, UNL Center for Agricultural Profitability, and Frontier Cooperative.

Keep up with Nebraska NAMA on Instagram @Nebraska\_NAMA.

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