Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Greg Ibach announced the availability of applications to the 2010 Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute (NAYI).

"NAYI is an opportunity for Nebraska youth to explore the agricultural industry and the future opportunities available to them," said Ibach. "As a former NAYI delegate, I believe that NAYI provides an opportunity for our future agricultural leaders to strengthen their leadership and networking skills."

Applications can be submitted by current high school juniors and seniors until April 15.

In its 39th year, NAYI expects to host approximately 140 students who will be selected based on their leadership skills, interest and involvement in agriculture. This year's Institute will be held July 6-10 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's East Campus.

NAYI features motivational speakers, discussion on agricultural issues and opportunities, a computer-simulated farm management game, formal banquet and a dance.

This year, the NAYI delegates will hear from cowboy, poet and humorist Baxter Black. Black will serve as the opening speaker.

The Institute is coordinated by the Nebraska Agricultural Youth Council (NAYC) which is comprised of 16 college-age men and women selected by NDA. NAYC's purpose is to provide young Nebraskans with a better understanding of agriculture, including agricultural opportunities available to today's youth.

Applications can be obtained from county extension educators, high school guidance counselors, and agricultural education teachers. Those interested can also contact the Nebraska Department of Agriculture at 800-422-6692 to receive an application or visit www.agr.ne.gov to fill out an application on-line.

Applications are due April 15.