

Gov. Dave Heineman previewed the schedule for the 2011 Governor's Ag Conference, being held Tuesday and Wednesday, March 1-2 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney.

The theme for the 23rd annual conference is "Nebraska Agriculture: Powering the Economy in Challenging Times."

"This annual event allows agricultural producers and leaders to come together and learn more about their industry and ensure the industry remains strong," Gov. Heineman said.

The conference begins at 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, with opening speakers Troy and Stacy Hadrick of Advocates for Agriculture, which bring a common sense approach to the discussion of animal agriculture.

The "Celebrate Nebraska Agriculture" reception follows, featuring a wide variety of Nebraska food products and local entertainers Habitat 4 Harmony.

Conference activities resume at 9 a.m. on Wednesday with speakers slated to discuss the relationship between agriculture and the regional, national and international economic climate.

The keynote presentation will be delivered by Paul Schickler, president of Pioneer Hi-Bred, DuPont's global advanced seed genetics operation. He will discuss a range of issues impacting the agriculture worldwide including international trade, currency issues and the global economic climate.

Featured speakers include Dale Moore of Policy Directions based in Washington D.C., who will discuss designing a new Farm Bill in the current economic and federal budgetary climate.

Jason Henderson of the Omaha Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City will provide an update on the regional economy and agriculture's role in the economy in the past, present and future.

Dr. Brad Lubben with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will discuss regulatory issues and their potential impact on agriculture and the economy, including a review of recent cap and trade legislation.

NDA Director Greg Ibach said, "Attendees can expect a wealth of information about emerging issues and how those issues affect their agricultural operation or business."

Those interested in agriculture issues are invited to attend. The registration fee covers participation at activities on both Tuesday and Wednesday.

Registration is available online at www.agr.ne.gov, or by calling NDA toll-free at (800) 831-0550.