

Dear Editor:

April 22 will mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, a day that was started to inspire awareness and a better appreciation of the environment.

Certainly there are a great number of people who should be recognized for their efforts, and farmers should rank right up there with them. After all, farmers have worked with soil and water for centuries, and we continuously strive to become more efficient and produce more corn for feed, food, fuel and fiber every year—on the same or less land.

Back in the 70s, when Earth Day was started, Nebraska farmers harvested well below 100 bushels of corn per acre. Over the last three years, we've averaged more than 160 bushels per acre—with many farmers pushing 250 bushels per acre.

This increase in productivity allows us to produce more corn with less water, less fertilizer and less energy.

While we've become so productive, we've also figured out new ways to use corn to replace products that aren't environmentally friendly. Like ethanol to replace petroleum-based gasoline, and corn-based PLA to replace petroleum-based plastics and fibers.

Both are cleaner and greener and come from agriculture. And certainly with continued research, more products like this will be around in the future, as will be the ability to produce more corn even more efficiently.

Right now, we're at the beginning of planting season. And this year, like all years, farmers will strive to do even better. Each year we learn a bit more and become a bit more efficient. It's what every farmer has done since farming began. That's why every day is Earth Day for farmers.

Sincerely,

F. Jon Holzfaster

Paxton