A delegation of eight government officials and university faculty from Kenya, led by Harry Kimtai, Principal Secretary for Livestock in the Ministry of Agriculture, toured the rangelands of western Nebraska and eastern Colorado from February 21-24, 2020. The group attended the Society for Range Management meeting in Denver from February 16-20 in preparation for hosting the upcoming joint International Rangeland and International Grassland Congress to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from October 25-30, 2020. A highlight of their tour was a stop at UNL’s Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory (GSL) on Saturday February 22 where they met with Dr. Walter Schacht, Interim Director, Center for Grassland Studies, John Nollette, Assistant GSL Manager, Rob Ziegler and Tasha King, UNL graduate students, and Shelly Kelly, Program Director, Sandhills Task Force.

Schacht took them on a tour of the ranch showing them current research projects on grazing management, prescribed fire and haying on subirrigated meadows, dormant-season grazing, and new technologies in precision management/monitoring of rangelands and beef cattle. Besides the research and application of these new technologies, the Kenyans were particularly interested in extension/outreach programs and the infrastructure and resources needed for university field laboratories and research ranches. A number of programs were reviewed including the Ranch Practicum, Open House, and Youth Field Day at GSL, the Nebraska Grazing Conference organized by the Center for Grassland Studies, and the Youth Range Camp as a collaborative effort among the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Sandhills Task Force, UNL. The group was impressed by the ranch and lab facilities and intrigued by the involvement and funding support of the ranching community and other stakeholders. The Kenyans were very interested in establishing communications/collaborations in outreach and education programs on rangelands. Following the GSL visit, the group continued their tour with Drs. Jim O’Rourke and Ron Bolze of Chadron State College and the Nebraska Grazing Coalition.