A Kenyan delegation of eight government officials and university faculty, led by Harry Kimtai, Principal Secretary for Livestock in the Ministry of Agriculture, toured the rangelands of western Nebraska and eastern Colorado from Feb. 21-24. Prior to their tour, the group attended the Society for Range Management’s 73rd Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado Feb. 16-20 in preparation for hosting the Joint XXIV International Grassland Congress and XI International Rangeland Congress Oct. 24-30 in Nairobi, Kenya.

A highlight of their Nebraska tour was visiting the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s (UNL) Gudmundsen Sandhills Laboratory (GSL). They met a number of individuals including Dr. Walter Schacht, interim director, Center for Grassland Studies, Carol Ott Schacht, IANR leadership consultant, John Nollette, assistant GSL manager, Rob Ziegler and Tasha King, UNL graduate students, and Shelly Kelly, program director, Sandhills Task Force.

Dr. Schacht provided a tour of the GSL ranch emphasizing 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 and outreach programs, and the infrastructure and resources needed for university field laboratories and research ranches.

A number of programs were reviewed including the GSL Nebraska Ranch Practicum, Open House, and Youth Field Day, the Center for Grassland Studies’ annual Nebraska Grazing Conference, and the Youth Range Camp, a collaborative effort among the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Sandhills Task Force, and UNL. The group was impressed by the GSL ranch and lab facilities, and intrigued by the involvement and funding support of the ranching community and other stakeholders. Establishing communications and collaborations in outreach and education programs on rangelands was extremely appealing to the visitors. 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.