

## Dawson Co. now 'livestock friendly'

Written by Gothenburg Times  
Thursday, 27 March 2014 14:02 -

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Dawson and Merrick counties were announced Tuesday as Nebraska's newest counties to receive the Livestock Friendly County designation through the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

"The designation of Dawson and Merrick counties as Livestock Friendly is a fitting way to celebrate Ag Week in Nebraska," said Gov. Dave Heineman. "Agriculture is our state's most important industry, and livestock production is an essential part of success. Being part of the Livestock Friendly program is significant and it is a great way to recognize the tremendous positive impact the livestock industry has on Main Streets and the local economy."

With the addition of Dawson and Merrick counties, there are now 26 counties designated as Livestock Friendly through the state program. These counties join Adams, Banner, Box Butte, Cuming, Dawes, Deuel, Dodge, Gage, Garden, Grant, Hitchcock, Holt, Jefferson, Johnson, Kimball, Keith, Lincoln, Morrill, Otoe, Saline, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Wayne and Webster counties.

In Dawson county, Gov. Heineman presented the Livestock Friendly certificate to Dawson County commissioners Dean Kugler, Bill Stewart, Dennis Rickertsen, P.J. Jacobson and Everett Hagan.

Each county will receive road signs bearing the program logo to display along highways. The state program is coordinated by the Department of Agriculture.

Department of Agriculture Director Greg Ibach said the official designation makes a positive statement about each county's commitment to rural economic development through livestock production.

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“It is clear from the submitted materials that county officials have given some purposeful thought to supporting the livestock industry,” he said. “We are pleased to welcome both Dawson and Merrick counties into the program.”

To apply for a livestock friendly county designation, the county board must hold a public hearing and pass a resolution to apply. A completed application is then submitted to Department of Agriculture for review. Local producers or community groups can encourage their county board to submit a livestock friendly county application.