

DOCTOR OF PLANT HEALTH: A NEW INTER-DISCIPLINARY PROGRAM FOR PLANT HEALTH PRACTITIONERS. Gary Hein, John Lindquist, Mark Bernards, and Lowell Sandell; Director, DPH Program, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Extension Educator, Agronomy and Horticulture Department, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68583.

Individuals with integrated knowledge and management skills are needed to deal with the complex and frequently interacting challenges to plant health. To meet this demand for plant professionals, the Doctor of Plant Health (DPH) program is now being offered by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The program is the second of its kind in the United States. The DPH degree is for students interested in a successful career as a plant health practitioner to address these complex needs. In the DPH program, students will be trained broadly across multiple disciplines (entomology, plant pathology, plant science, soil science and weed science). In addition to this broad training, students will be required to undertake extensive internships where they will learn to integrate their broad knowledge to address plant management issues. In these experiential learning opportunities, emphasis will be on the development and implementation of plant and pest management systems and on the diagnoses and management of all biotic and abiotic plant health challenges. The curriculum is broad-based, but students may emphasize crop or plant areas such as field crops, ornamentals, specialty crops, turf grasses, landscapes, or other professional interest areas, including regulatory or business management. Students completing the program will have career opportunities in industry, crop consulting, government, extension, and other private practice. Industry and government, both local and national, have indicated a desire to hire graduates with this type of training.