

*Food processing,
research plant
in planning stage*

Within the next few years, Nebraska may have its own food processing and utilization plant, a UNL faculty member has said.

Larry Branen, head of the department of food science and technology, said Nebraska is working on the development of the Midland Center for Food Research, which should help Nebraska economically and agriculturally.

"There is an interest in the state and at UNL in food processing and food utilization," Branen said. "This would be done to attract more processors into the state and process more food in Nebraska and then ship the food out, rather than send the

food out to other states in its raw form."

Some members of the department of food science and technology are studying the feasibility of such a center. Branen said there are many centers across the country similar to the one planned for Nebraska.

"We are spending a year here studying various successful centers across the country," he said. "Each one is different so it will take some time to look at all of them and put one together for Nebraska."

The Abel Foundation of Lincoln and the Department of Economic Development each have donated \$10,000 toward the development of such a center, which Branen estimates could cost \$20 million to

build.

"The center would help us to better utilize Nebraska commodities," he said.

Branen said it will take five to 10 years to have the operation working at the level currently discussed. He said he anticipates that the staff will be comprised of people living in Nebraska.

"We'd like to see the place staffed by some of the university faculty, graduate students and others," he said. "The people staffing the center would be from Nebraska, so there would be new job openings, so it would be good for both business and agriculture."

