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University of Nebraska Lincoln Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

2003–2004 ANNUAL REPORT

444 Cherrycreek Rd., Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528 • (402) 441-7180 • Web Site: lancaster.unl.edu

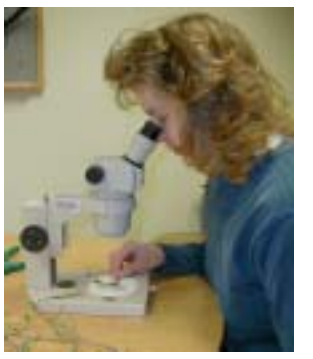
Extending the University's Research-Based Resources to You

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension accomplishes the University's land-grant mission by delivering reliable, research-based information that you can use every day. We develop and deliver educational programs which strengthen individuals, families, businesses and communities:

- **Nutrition & Food Safety**
- **Pests & Wildlife**
- **4-H & Youth Development**
- **Yard & Garden**
- **Farms & Acreages**
- **Home Environment**
- **Community & Leadership Development**

ABOVE: Dr. Scott Josiah, state extension forester, explains his research on hazelnut cultivars to Extension Master Gardener volunteers.

LEFT: Pictured are 4-H staff presenting a paper recycling activity at earth wellness festival. Students learn it takes 250 gallons of water to make enough paper pulp for an average-sized Sunday newspaper.



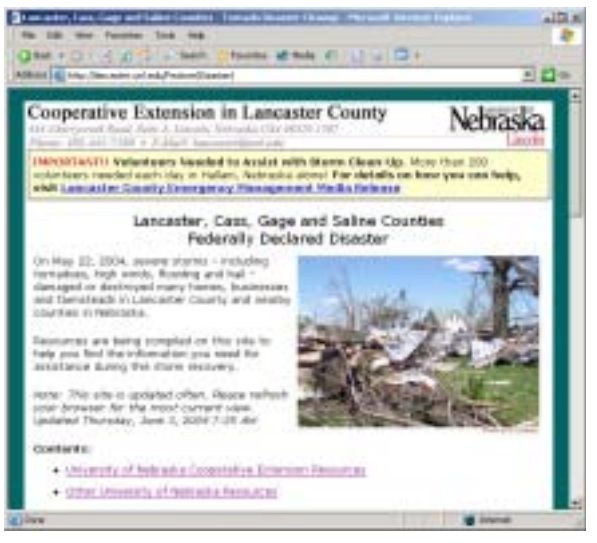
RIGHT: Lancaster County Extension has a diagnostic lab to assist residents in identifying plants, plant diseases, insects and pests. Staff use this information to make control recommendations.

Rapid Response to Local Needs

Storm Recovery Resources

On May 22, 2004, severe storms — including tornadoes — damaged or destroyed many homes, businesses and farmsteads in Nebraska, including Lancaster County.

The next day, UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County created a storm recovery section on its Web site, which continues to be updated with resources on:



- inspecting homes for structural damage
- evaluating damage to trees; pruning tips
- assessing hail, wind and flood damage to crops
- clean-up guidelines and tips
- weather safety information
- links to other University of Nebraska resources, local government Web sites, local agencies and national resources

These resources have received **17,920 hits**.

Extension staff and university specialists also sent relevant information to local media and responded to many storm-related inquiries from residents.

In June, extension joined the Nebraska Disaster Recovery Organization which was created to help people with unmet needs.

Itch Mite Epidemic Hits Lincoln

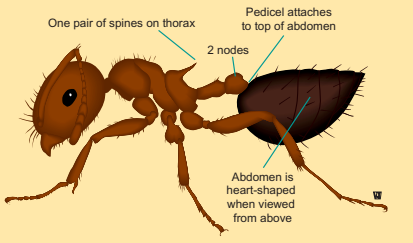
UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County staff, health department officials and university specialists worked together to determine and solve this year's epidemic of mystery bites in Lincoln.

Sticky traps placed in Lincoln neighborhoods revealed the presence of microscopic "itch mites."

In early September, Lancaster County Extension began receiving phone calls about unusual itchy bug bites. Staff identified a pattern to these calls and contacted UNL's Entomology Department and the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department — who confirmed they were also receiving similar calls. Extension sent out a media release and collected information from callers. Within a couple weeks, university specialists identified the source of the bites as microscopic mites, *Pyemotes herfsi* — also called "itch mites" — which prey on the small fly maggots causing "leaf edge" galls on pin oak leaves. This mite species was new in the United States, previously known to exist only in Europe.

New in 2004

Ant Identification Resources



Lancaster County Extension staff developed the following ant identification resources of the most common household ant pests in Nebraska:

- Detailed color illustrations
- Actual size
- Description of workers
- Habits
- Control methods

These resources have received more than **56,778 hits** since being posted on the Web site at lancaster.unl.edu/enviro/ants in January. *Identification of Structure-Invading Ants in Nebraska* was recently published as an Extension Circular (EC04-1570).

Handwashing Bean Bag Toss Game

(L–R) Joyce Jensen, LLCHD, and Alice Henneman, Extension Educator

Lancaster County Extension and the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) developed a bean bag toss game, "Sink Those Germs," to promote handwashing to youth. This educational game can be used in schools, child care centers, homes and events such as health fairs.

Game materials — including a poster and coloring sheets — are free online at lancaster.unl.edu/food/sinkgerms.htm and have been downloaded more than **5,000 times**.

NEP Lessons at Camp Abbott, Clinton CLC

Nutrition Education Program staff present a healthy snack experience at Clinton Community Learning Center.

The Lancaster County Nutrition Education Program (NEP) created two new partnerships to present nutrition lessons at after-school and summer programs: Clinton Community Learning Center (CLC) and

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Elbert C. Dickey, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act; for assistance contact UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507, 402-441-7180. TDD capability available.

Extension Helps Nebraskans Put Knowledge to Work

From NU to You

NU Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County contributes to the University of Nebraska's land-grant mission by extending reliable research-based information to the public for use in everyday life.

Considering today's fast-paced society, extension engages residents in Lancaster County and beyond, 24-hours a day, by utilizing multiple delivery methods:

- Programs and workshops
- Publications
- Phone calls
- Person-to-person
- Content-rich Web site
- Internet e-mail
- Radio/TV/Video/Satellite
- Displays and exhibits
- Youth groups, activities and schools

In addition to direct outreach, extension trains individuals who, in turn, impact or teach others. This includes business professionals, service industry workers, health professionals, teachers, childcare providers, government employees, master gardeners and volunteers.

Lancaster County extension collaborates with more than 125 agencies, organizations, businesses and school systems to develop and deliver educational programs. We value our community partnerships as a way to leverage our resources and reach even more people. To our partners, we say thank you.

And finally, a salute to the hundreds of volunteers who are essential to extension's success. Your dedication to programs such as the 4-H youth development program, master gardeners, Nutrition Education Program (NEP) and **earth wellness festival** greatly add to our community and quality of life. We appreciate your important contributions.

Gary Bergman,
Extension Educator and Unit Leader

Nutrition & Food Safety

- Nutrition, food safety and food preparation
- Stretching food dollars

Farms & Acreages

- Farm management
- Crop & livestock production
- Acreage owner programming
- Managing water resources

Pests & Wildlife

- Insect pest identification
- Low-toxic solutions
- Wildlife educational resources

Yard & Garden

- Horticulture education
- Plant problem diagnosis
- Master Gardener volunteers
- Yard waste management
- Managing water resources

Home Environment

- Indoor air quality
- Home maintenance & safety
- Reduce, reuse, recycle

Community & Leadership Development

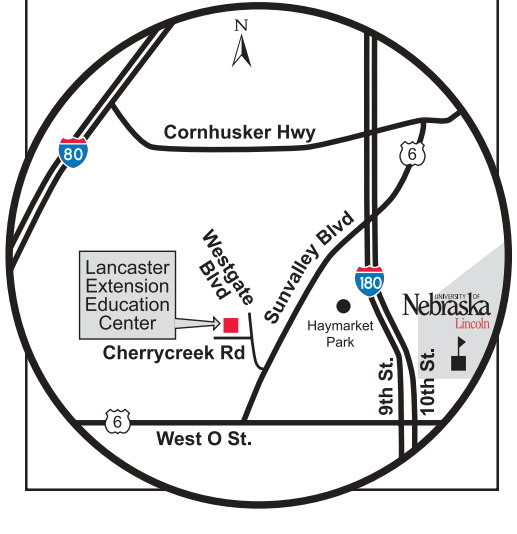
- Neighborhoods
- Organizations
- 4-H and youth
- Families
- Family & Community Education (FCE) clubs

"Our community is very fortunate to have a talented extension staff dedicated to extending the knowledge of our land-grant university. As an extension board, we collectively see the impact extension brings to Lancaster County and beyond."

—Clarice Steffens, president
Lancaster County Extension Board

Lancaster Extension Education Center Facilitates Community Programs

As part of extension's commitment to community learning, the conference facilities at Lancaster Extension Education Center are made available to other nonprofit and governmental organizations at a nominal cost. Last year, more than **4,300 hours of conferences and meetings** were held at the Education Center.



Youth in 4-H Program

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H youth development program is open to all youth ages 5–19. In the past year, **4-H reached 22,994 youth** in Lancaster County. Emphasis is on teaching practical skills and developing life skills through learning-by-doing. Lancaster County 4-H consists of several components:

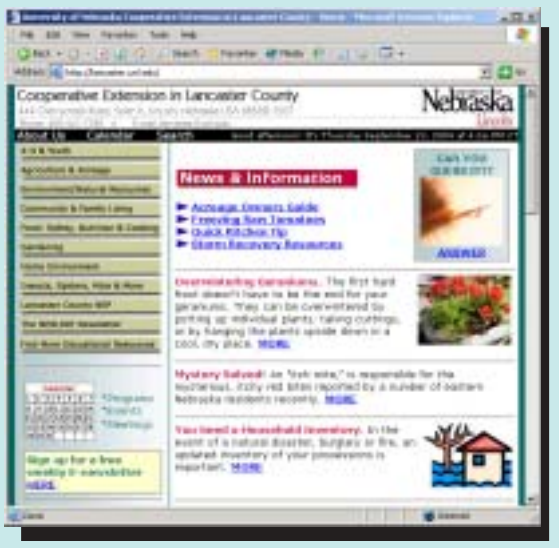
- **Organized clubs —** Youth work closely with adults to complete projects.
- **Projects —** Youth can choose from more than 150 projects. Project manuals are written by university experts.
- **School Enrichment —** 4-H programs for classrooms include: Garbology, Vermicomposting, Embryology, Blue Sky Below My Feet, Earth Wellness Festival, Ag Awareness Festival, Nutrition Education Program and 4-H Water Riches.
- **4-H Embryology Web Site —** EGG Cam and other resources online at lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Embryology
- **Activities —** 4-H staff organize several educational events each year, such as Clover College and County Fair activities.
- **Leadership Opportunities —** 4-H Teen Council, 4-H Council, Citizen Washington Focus (CWF) group and more.

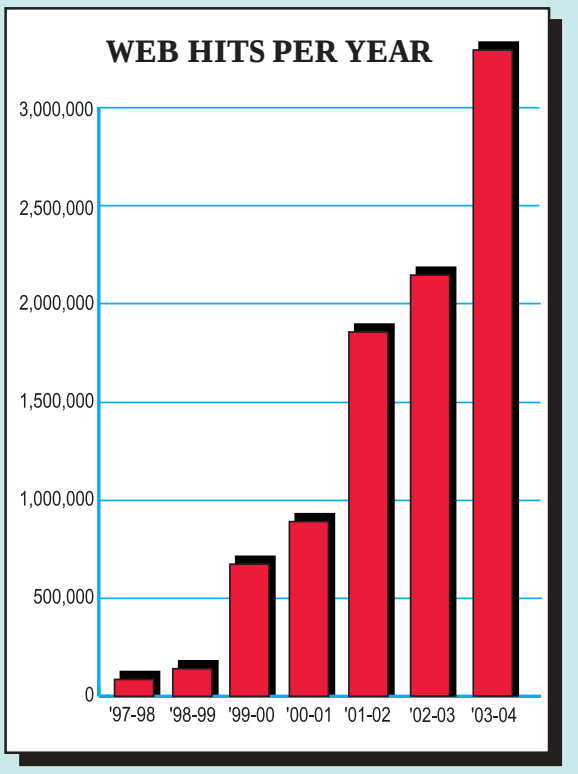
Lancaster County 4-H'er Nicole Pedersen qualified to attend the National 4-H Horticulture Judging Contest.

Web Site Has More Than 4,000 Pages of Content, 3.3 Million Hits Annually

UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County's Web site, lancaster.unl.edu, has more than 4,000 pages of content and receives nearly 3.3 million hits annually. The Food Web site continues to be rated "Among the Best" by Tufts University Nutrition Navigator.

Visitors can easily navigate the site and find extensive educational resources in extension's program areas. The site is updated daily and has interactive features such as online registration forms, searchable database, Egg Cam, movie clips, quizzes and Master Gardener Diagnostic Center. Not only do Lancaster County residents, Nebraskans and Americans utilize the site, the site also has Web users from more than 100 countries monthly.





"Thanks for clueing me in to 'my' extension, telling me how to deal with woodpecker damage, et al. I came for 'Cook it Quick,' but there is so much available here."

—Lancaster County Web user

Staff Honors, Awards and Accomplishments

Extension Educator Tom Dorn — inducted to Gamma Sigma Delta, the honor society of agriculture.

Extension Educator Alice Henneman — Community Health Award presented by Lincoln-Lancaster County Board of Health; 2004 Distinguished Extension Educator Award presented by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension; Educational Technology 2nd place Team Award presented by National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Scientists; invited to present "Choices for a Healthy School Nutrition Environment" at Nebraska Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NAHPERD) and Action for Healthy Kids Conference; invited to present "Using the Internet for Food Safety Education" at National Association of Food and Drug Officials regional meeting; contributed to *Cooking Healthy Across America* book published by American Dietetic Association Food and Culinary Professional Practice Group; contributed to *Nutrition Care Manual* published by American Dietetic Association.

(L–R) City of Lincoln Mayor Colleen Seng and Extension Educator Alice Henneman

Extension Assistant Vicki Jedlicka — 2003 Annual Commissioner's Award of Excellence presented by Lancaster County Commissioners; Award of Excellence presented by Lancaster County Agricultural Society.

Extension Associate Deanna Karmazin — 2004 Outstanding Extension Associate Award presented by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension; Achievement in Service Award presented by the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association (NCEA) 4-H Section as well as the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA); Fair Person of the Year presented by Lancaster County Agricultural Society.

(L–R) Extension Educator Alice Henneman, Extension Associate Deanna Karmazin, Extension Assistant Zainab Rida, and Director of Cooperative Extension Elbert Dickey.

Extension Educator Barb Ogg — invited to present "Integrated Pest Management For Daycare Providers" in Kansas City.

Extension Assistant Zainab Rida — 2004 Extension New Employee award presented by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

Extension Support Staff Karen Wedding — November 2004 Commissioner's Award of Excellence presented by Lancaster County Commissioners.

4-H Staff — Lancaster County 4-H staff presented a poster session at the 2004 national conference of National Association of Extension 4-H Agents (NAE4-HA) about developing an annual marketing plan for 4-H.

Staff Recognized for Years of Service — Extension Educator Lorene Bartos (35 years); Extension Support Staff Pam Branson (30 years); Extension Associate Karen Wobig (5 years).

Discover Practical and Life Skills

By next June, 51 CWF'ers will have raised a total of $97,818 through various fundraisers for their June 2005 trip to Washington D.C.

Lancaster County 4-H'er Hannah Spencer had the top 4-H Multimedia Presentation — a new category this year — at the State Fair.

Two Lancaster County Horse Judging Teams qualified to represent Nebraska at national competitions in 2004. In January, the team (above, L–R) of Dana Hahn, Melissa Raisch, Katy Cockerill and Esther Anderson placed 4th nationally. In October, Cassie Krueger, Joanna Duhachek, Morgan Marshall and Mindy Leach placed 11th nationally.

This past year, $6,100 in 4-H scholarships were awarded to graduating seniors.

Katy Cockerill's pencil drawing (left) won Grand Champion Award in the first ever State 4-H Horse Art Contest.

New in 2004

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Camp Abbott (a nine-week youth enrichment program sponsored by the Capitol Sports Foundation and The Ethel S. Abbott Sports Complex). More than **480 youth** participated in these nutrition lessons.

"Plants for Problem Places" Video

Don Janssen discusses plants with low-water needs suitable for hot-dry places.

Extension Educators Don Janssen (of Lancaster County) and John Fech (of Douglas/Sarpy Counties) developed the sixth of UNL Cooperative Extension's series of horticultural videos which can be used as training tools for the commercial horticulture industry or as educational tools for interested individuals. "Plants for Problem Places" and other videos (now available on DVD) can be ordered online at lancaster.unl.edu/hort.

4-H Partnership With Lincoln City Libraries

At the 4-H wildlife workshop, youth made tracks with animal paw print stamps, stickers and stencils.

Lancaster County 4-H and Lincoln City Libraries (LCL) initiated a partnership. In this first year:

- Several 4-H'ers volunteered for the summer reading program
- 4-H presented two series of workshops, "Wild in Nebraska" (with the help of the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and Pioneer Park Nature Center) and "Paper-a-Plenty" as part of LCL's summer reading events.
- 4-H and LCL compiled two "4-H Discovery Bags," one for wildlife and one for arts & crafts.

Horseless Horse 4-H Club

One eager member of the Lincoln Broomtails donned cowboy boots and a bicycle helmet for her first horse ride.

Lancaster County 4-H started its first "horseless horse" club (second in the state) for youth without horses who want to participate in a 4-H horse project. The Lincoln Broomtails 4-H club currently has 10 members who do activities such as researching horse breeds and participating in herdsmanship duties at County Fair. The Riding Wranglers 4-H club recently gave members of the Lincoln Broomtails an opportunity to ride by sharing their horses with them.

New in 2004

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4-H Kids Ag Discovery Zone at County Fair

"Milking" a wooden "dairy cow" was one of many activities at the Kids Ag Discovery Zone.

New at the Lancaster County Fair was a free 4-H Kids Agricultural Discover Zone. It featured hands-on activities and exhibits to help youth see, touch and smell agriculture. Activities included: climbing a tractor, "milking" a "cow," touching unprocessed sheep wool and seeing a 1,000 pound boar!

"Resources for Educators" on Food Web Site

This year, a special section, "Resources for Educators," was created on extension's Food Web site at lancaster.unl.edu/food/resources.htm. Educational materials are provided in downloadable formats useful for teaching: posters, handouts, displays, games and PowerPoint presentations. Most of these resources are free, some have a small fee.

Acreage Insights: Rural Living Clinics

Instead of an annual Acreage Owners Expo presented at one location, UNL Cooperative Extension presented a series of 10 "Acreage Insights: Rural Living Clinics" at three locations, each seminar focusing on a different topic such as waste water treatment, weed control and windbreaks. 152 people attended the clinics held in Lincoln.

People's Choice 4-H Awards

Jeremy Bradford Morgan's cucumbers were chosen "Plant or veggie that looks most like a person"

Lancaster County 4-H introduced its first annual People's Choice 4-H Awards at the Lancaster County Fair.

A Look at Some Program Impact Numbers

of University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County programs from Oct. 1, 2003–Sept. 31, 2004

Extension responded to more than **33,300 phone calls, walk-ins and e-mails** from the public requesting information.

Extension uses multiple delivery methods to extend the university's research-based information to residents. Information flows both ways — extension responds to needs and concerns.

34,300 tons of biosolids were delivered and applied to 1,169 acres of crop land, **worth $850,000 to farmers** and **saving taxpayers $340,000** by keeping this recyclable material out of the landfill.

Biosolids are organic solids separated from wastewater and biologically processed. Extension coordinates distribution and application of biosolids to agricultural cropland for the City of Lincoln Wastewater and Solid Waste Division. Studies have shown the nutrient value of biosolids worth at least $25 per acre for the first year's crops.

An estimated **20,000 tons of yard waste** were kept out of the landfill, **saving taxpayers $556,749**.

Extension educates residents on how to successfully compost yard waste in their own backyards and on the benefits of mulching grass clippings. More than 110 residents attended one of 19 composting workshops conducted by extension, and an estimated 2,000 people participated in an informal, self-guided tour of the composting demonstration site at University Place Park.

9,510 pounds of pesticide containers were collected and recycled through the Pesticide Container Recycling program.

Agricultural pesticide containers are collected and ground into small chips to be recycled into parking lot tire bumpers, fence posts, traffic lane markers, pallets and more.

Research shows for **every dollar of NEP funding**, there is a projected **health care cost savings of $2.07–$5.29**.

The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) helps limited-resource families learn to prepare nutritious and safe foods while stretching their food dollars. Last year, more than 1,800 adults, 2,289 youth and 100 seniors participated in NEP.

Crop producers taking the online **Irrigation Home Study Course** indicate an average savings of $4.22 per acre — an estimated **total savings of $3.5 million**. Of the attendees at Financial Record Keeping workshops, 82% expected to make better management decisions and 58% expected to save time and/or money. Participants of the **Crop Protection Clinic** estimate the value of the program to be $5.37 per acre — a **total benefit of $1.6 million**.

Agricultural profitability and sustainability is an extension priority issue.

The average value of a termite treatment is more than $1,500. Extension's **termite control information** could be **worth more than $2 million** to Lincoln homeowners.

Online termite resources received nearly 35,000 hits, 86 people (including 13 Realtors) attended this year's Termite Control workshops, hundreds of people requested information and articles were published in local media. A post-workshop survey has found 82% of attendees obtained information that saved them money, 98% obtained information needed to better protect their property.

The 4-H youth development program **reached 16,658 youth** in Lancaster County. There were **4,262 4-H exhibits** showcased at the 2004 Lancaster County Fair.

4-H is open to all youth ages 5–19. Youth can belong to a club, be an independent member, participate in 4-H activities such as Clover College, or participate in 4-H School Enrichment projects.

Last year, UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County programs benefitted from **1,338 volunteers investing 51,925 hours** of time for a total value of **$892,590**!*

Extension trains and supports, as well as coordinates the efforts of, a variety of volunteers: 4-H leaders and superintendents, Master Gardeners, Family Community Education (FCE) volunteers and Nutrition Education Program (NEP) volunteers. In addition, 4-H and FCE members often volunteer in community-related projects.

**Independent Sector values volunteer time at $17.19 per hour.*