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In This Issue...

- * ARDC FEATURE - Forestry
- Consider the Natural Resource for Your College Education!!!
- Four Decades of Windbreak Research at the ARDC
- The People Behind the Research
- Woody Florals Applied Research Jump-Starts Producer Enterprises
- * Assisting the Community
- * Calendar of Events
- * Caryl Carstensen Retires
- * Director's Comments
- Welcome 2005!
- * Get Your Green Thumb Ready!
- * Magnet School Updates
- National FFA Convention
- * Mark Your Calendar for These 4-H Events
- 4-H Leaders Training and Banquet
- Market Beef Weigh-In Dates
- Quality Assurance Training
- * Record Turnout at Soybean Day
- * Upcoming Ag-Related Education Opportunities
- Nebraska No-Till Conference
- Nitrogen Management Training
- NSFGPP Annual Growers Conference
- Private Pesticide Applicator Training
- * Winter Programs Offer Crop Management Education

ARDC Director's Comments

Welcome 2005!

by Daniel J Duncan, ARDC Director

It is with great pleasure and anticipation we welcome a new year at the ARDC. During 2004 faculty and employees working at the ARDC made several improvements to facilities, successfully started and completed/continued research projects, and hosted many visitors in educational activities. All in all we had a successful year due to the efforts of nearly 400 faculty, staff and students that worked on the ARDC.

As much as we accomplished in 2004, I am even more excited about what may transpire in 2005.

Completion of the beef feedlot expansion is one of the exciting additions for the New Year. This addition will enable faculty to obtain grants and contracts that were turned down in the past due to space limitations. In conjunction with the feedlot construction, a small center pivot will be erected immediately east of the feedlot holding pen. This will enable easy dispersal of the runoff effluent through the center pivot. The pivot will cover existing row crop and pasture areas. The pasture area under the new pivot will be converted to row crop production, and some of the row crop production immediately south of the feedlot expansion will be converted to pasture as part of the overall plan.

Other major projects that should occur during 2005 include enhanced communication (data and voice) capabilities, installation of a RTK base station and related equipment, and construction of a new shop and office building to replace current activities in the Load Line #2 area.

In the coming months, I will be able to share with you other exciting news and happenings at one of the most unique agricultural research facilities in the nation...the ARDC! Happy New Year! □

Woody Florals Applied Research Jump-Starts Producer Enterprises

By Scott Josiah (Assistant Professor) & Christine Meyer (Grad Student), University of Nebraska School of Natural Resources

Producers on small to mid-sized farms in the Midwest today can rarely make a living from conventional agriculture alone. With shrinking profit margins caused by rising costs and declining prices, capital and chemical-intensive conventional crops are marginally profitable on smaller farms. Most small-to-medium size producers require substantial off-farm income to survive economically, creating new stresses on farm enterprises and the families that run

ARDC Feature Unit FORESTRY RESEARCH



them, and forcing many small-to-mid-size farmers to abandon agriculture altogether. And many acreage owners are looking for innovative

ways to earn some income from just a few acres. New, more sustainable agricultural models are clearly needed that are profitable in the short-term, are family and environmentally friendly, and have low capital inputs.

To directly address these questions, the University of Nebraska installed a 40-acre alley-cropping research/demonstration trial at the ARDC in 1999. This trial is composed of shrubs that produce commercially valuable specialty woody crops (primarily woody florals and fruit). These woody plants are planted in widely spaced rows in a working agricultural field, with corn, beans or wheat grown between the rows.

After six growing seasons (and four harvests) woody florals have demonstrated superior income-producing potential. For example, beginning 2 to 3 growing seasons after planting, we now annually (in winter) harvest and sell thousands of dogwood, curly willow and pussy willow stems (3-5' long) with values ranging from approximately \$0.25 to \$0.50 per stem (and gross returns ranging from \$10 to \$24/shrub/year, depending on species). Since the project's inception, a number of growers have installed their own plantings and are now harvesting and selling stems.

The project has worked closely with the Nebraska Florist Society, Nebraska Woody Floral Growers, individual wholesale florists, and Heartland Nuts N' More, a newly established specialty woody crop producer-owned processing and marketing cooperative.

Upcoming Ag-Related Educational Opportunities

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, in cooperation with other organizations, will offer various opportunities to enhance your knowledge or receive training in the next few months. Please mark your calendars and call (402)624-8030 or (800)529-8030 if you have any questions.

*** NEBRASKA NO-TILL CONFERENCE**

- Monday, January 31 in Holdrege @ 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, February 1 at the ARDC @ 9 a.m.
Come learn from top-notch speakers! Pre-registration required - call 402-624-8030 for details or to register. "Managerial Accounting For Farmers Considering No-Till" will be presented by Jack Schmitt, no-till farmer of Scott City, Kansas. He will also discuss managing cornstalk residue. Dr. Ray Ward, Ward Laboratories of Kearney, will discuss fertilizer application in no-till and will field no-till fertilizer questions. Paul Hay, NU Extension Educator will present no-till's greatest allies. There will also be a farmer panel moderated by Paul Jasa, Extension Engineer.

*** NEBRASKA SOYBEAN AND FEED GRAINS PROFITABILITY PROJECT (NSFGPP) ANNUAL GROWERS CONFERENCE**

- Tuesday, March 8 at the ARDC
Obtain valuable crop production-related information from on-farm research projects conducted on area farms. The program is free to NSFGPP members. There is a \$10 fee for non-members.

This issue of *Extended Visions* contains numerous educational and training opportunities - Opportunities range from ways to help you earn more \$ per acre, deal with pine wilt in your back yard, recertify for pesticide application, and more!
Read on & register today!

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Forestry has held numerous field days to both inform potential growers about the plants, and via hands-on workshops, to teach



Hands-on workshops teach participants about processing and marketing. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, in partnership with Nebraska Woody Florals and Heartland Nuts N' More will conduct a Woody Floral Business Workshop on Saturday, January 15 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Valparaiso, NE. Learn from growers, University specialists, and woody florals business people how to grow, harvest, and market woody florals. Cost is \$15, which includes lunch, break food, and handouts. Call 402-472-9869.



producers how to process and market the material. By working closely with woody floral growers, key questions were quickly identified, limiting their enterprises and profitability, and designed studies to address these information needs. For example, growers needed to know when woody florals were at their peak color, so they could harvest as early as possible to beat the competition. They also wanted to know how to store stems to maximize color, flexibility and longevity.

Christine Meyer, graduate student at University of Nebraska-Lincoln's School of Natural Resources, and an employee of the School and of the Nebraska Forest Service, took on the timing and storage questions as part of her research.

Field experiments at the ARDC were conducted to determine optimal harvest times for stems of Scarlet Curles willow, "Flame" willow, "Bailey" and "Cardinal" Redosier dogwood, and Yellowtwig dog-

WOODY FLORALS - Cont. from P. 1

wood in 2003 and 2004. Data collection began in August and ended in December, with stem color being assessed initially and on a weekly basis for 10 weeks. Optimal harvest time for the woody floral species tested varied from early to late fall. 'Scarlet Curls' and 'Flame' willow stems attained the darkest color (red or red-orange) at an early stage and were harvestable in early November. 'Yellowtwig' dogwood stems had the most brilliant color (bright yellow) in late November. 'Cardinal' dogwood stems attained a darker color (salmon) value more quickly than other dogwoods, and were harvestable from early October until early December. Beginning in mid-November was the best time to harvest 'Bailey' dogwood stems. Most stems can be harvested periodically throughout the winter season and sold, however, a late fall harvest of all species prevents wildlife damage and frequent visits to the same field. Mid to late winter or spring harvests have shown tip die-back and wildlife damage.

Markets for woody florals can be year round, but stem lifespan in storage is limited. To address this issue, storage experiments were conducted to determine the best way to prolong the window of availability of high quality cut branches. Six cultivars, "Scarlet Curls" willow, curly willow, pussy willow, "Bailey" and "Cardinal" Redosier dogwood, and yellowtwig dogwood were selected for cold storage trials and harvested at the beginning of December. The stems were placed in buckets for each of three treatments; storage in water, storage in a water/floral preservative solution, and storage in a water/bleach solution. Branches were stored in a walk-in cooler and in an outdoor shed at ambient conditions. Stems were monitored for change in stem color, flexibility, tip die-back, and dormancy from January through June, 2004, on a weekly basis. Optimum storage conditions were found to be placing the branches in the cooler, upright in a 1:10 water/bleach solution. Stems do best in this environment if used within 3-4 months. After this period, the upper 5-10-cm of each cultivar begins to appear to show die-back, a fade in color intensity, and decreased flexibility, and thus can not be used in the floral industry. □



Four Decades of Windbreak Research at the ARDC

By Jim Brandle, Professor
University of Nebraska School of Natural Resources

For almost 40 years, the main objective of forestry research at ARDC has been to determine the bene-

fits of shelterbelts or windbreaks on crop production. Over the years, researchers and graduate students have focused on the impacts of shelter on crop yield and understanding why yields increase.

For winter wheat, the average yield increase is about 15% due mainly to protection of wheat during the winter. Incidence of winter kill in protected areas is sharply reduced, resulting in higher stand densities and greater yields. In the case of soybeans, the structure of the soybean canopy is changed. Plants are taller with longer internode lengths resulting in more light reaching the lower levels of the canopy. With more light, photosynthesis increases in the lower levels of the canopy, and when yields are collected by layer, yields in the lower 6 inches of the canopy of sheltered soybeans increase. Over the years, soybean yields showed a 15-20% increase in yield as a result of windbreaks. In the case of corn, average yield increases are about 12%. So far our research has not identified the direct cause of corn yield increases but we suspect that more rapid plant development, earlier tassel emergence and fertilization, and the reduced chance of water stress during the grain filling period may be among the factors involved in the increase in corn yields.

Our attention has shifted in the last five years to quantifying the other values of windbreaks to the agricultural ecosystem. A recently completed study identified over 20 different tree and shrub species that have become established in the windbreaks at ARDC. This added diversity increases the habitat value of windbreaks by providing a variety of food resources to wildlife. We have conducted studies on bird use of windbreaks (with Ron Johnson, a wildlife biologist in the School of Natural Resources) and determined that windbreaks provide significant habitat to many of our native species.

We have looked at the distribution and over wintering of bean leaf beetles (with Steve Danielson of Entomology) and found no significant difference between sheltered and unsheltered fields. In contrast, a positive correlation has been found between the presence of predatory insects such as lady beetles and the type of windbreak present. Windbreaks with deciduous trees such as green ash provide good over wintering habitat in the leaf litter while windbreaks with eastern redcedar or pine offer little protection to the over wintering insects. This type of research continues, as well as studies designed to research the behavior of birds in and around windbreaks in an effort to determine just how much woody cover is required for various types of bird species.

Cooperative efforts with Terry Klopfenstein, University of Nebraska Animal Science Department, have focused on the production of livestock and timber under a silvopastoral system. Taking into account both timber and livestock returns, the silvopastoral system is more productive than either timber or livestock alone. While not a common practice in eastern Nebraska, silvopastoral systems are very economical in the Nebraska Pine Ridge area.

Finally, we are quantifying the role of windbreaks for carbon sequestration. Windbreaks have an advantage over other carbon storage practices in that not only is carbon stored in the wood of trees, but there are significant reductions in carbon dioxide emissions as a result of the installation of a windbreak. The land upon which a field windbreak is planted is removed

The People Behind the Research

Scott Josiah is an Assistant Professor in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's School of Natural Resources and is also a State Extension Forester. Josiah works with Extension and applied research concerning forestry, agroforestry, specialty forest products, and forestry/agroforestry adoption theory.

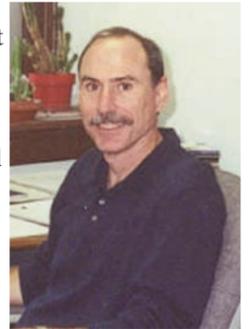
He provides statewide technical and extension support for rural forestry, agroforestry, periurban and community forestry; specialty forest product development and marketing. He also provides testing/facilitating peer-to-peer extension methodologies and programs.

He is interested in creating sustainable and profitable agroforestry and woody agriculture-based land use systems. This is a broad field, and it is highly collaborative. The research has several components, including testing of specialty woody crops, product and market analysis, and the design and evaluation of alternative land use systems. To accelerate the spread of these systems, he conducts studies to determine the factors that affect their adoption by landowners.

All together, these studies aim to establish a new model for agriculture in Nebraska and the central United States. This approach combines woody plants in conservation plantings that improve and protect the environment, generate new sources of income, enhance rural economic development and encourage landowners to adopt these practices across the landscape. Josiah also conducts seminars, presentations, workshops, field days and short courses on a wide range of tree and forestry-related topics, reaching people in Nebraska, seven other states and Canada.

He began working at UNL in December of 1998. Before coming to the university, he worked overseas in tropical developing countries on and off for roughly 15 years, participating in both short- and long-term assignments that focused on wildland fire, forestry and agroforestry.

Josiah has a bachelor's in forest resource management and silviculture (the art and science of producing and tending a forest) from the State University of New York, a master's in botany and soil science from Southern Illinois University and a Ph.D. in forest management and policy from the University of Minnesota. □



Scott Josiah

Bruce Bolander is the Unit Manager of the Forestry research area at the ARDC. He also helps maintain the research area at the Horning Farm in the Plattsmouth area for forestry-related research. Bruce has worked at the ARDC since 1977 and has a Bachelor's Degree from Kansas State University. He and his wife, Debbie, live near Greenwood. They have a son and a daughter.



Bruce Bolander (above) and Mike Cieslik

Mike Cieslik, Ag Research Technician, also assists with research projects at both the ARDC and the Horning Farm. He assists with equipment, field records, planting, spraying and other various duties. He has worked at the ARDC since 1985 and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He and his wife, Marsha, live near Weston and have two sons. □



Consider the Natural Resources for Your College Education!!!

Undergraduate major programs in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's School of Natural Resources are designed to help students understand the interactions among natural resource systems and evaluate the impacts of humans as stewards and managers of these systems.

Programs include:

- * Environmental Soil Science
- * Environmental Studies with a specialization in Natural Resources
- * Fisheries and Wildlife
- * Natural Resources & Environmental Economics
- * Rangeland Ecosystems
- * Water Science



Pre-degree programs include:

- * Pre-Forestry (2-year program for transfer, administered through SNR)
- * Pre-Natural Resources Program (for undeclared students preparing for a major in natural resources)

To learn if this experience is for you, hear from someone who's been there. Students can tell you about their time in the School of Natural Resources and what they like best. Visit the following website...
http://snrs.unl.edu/prospective_students/meet_our_students. □

AG-RELATED EDUCATION - Cont. from P. 1

*** NITROGEN MANAGEMENT TRAINING**

- March 15 * 7 pm and March 16 * 9:30 am* ARDC Research & Education Building
All producers using fertilizer in the LPN-NRD must attend nitrogen certification at least once every four years.

*** PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING**

- January 18 1:00-3:00 pm - January 19 6:30-9:30 pm - January 22 9:00-Noon
Private pesticide applicators with expiring certification and those seeking first-time certification will need to attend certification training sessions in 2005. The training cost is \$15 per person and will be held at the ARDC Research & Education Building. □

WINDBREAK RESEARCH -
Cont. from P. 2

from production, resulting in fuel savings from those acres not farmed.

Windbreaks are advantageous even though there is some loss in production from acres planted to trees and some loss in yield in the area immediately adjacent to the windbreak. The yield increases in the areas sheltered by the windbreak more than make up the lost bushels from these two areas. Thus, total crop yield is increased because of the windbreak protection.

There is also a decrease in input costs due to fewer acres farmed, an increase in carbon storage in the wood of the windbreak trees and a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions because we are using less fuel.

If we consider other types of windbreaks such as those around farmsteads, the energy savings are even greater. Research from the region indicates that a good four or five row farmstead windbreak will save as much as 20 to 30 percent of the energy needed to heat the home. With today's energy prices, this magnitude of savings can be significant. Furthermore, a savings in energy use means a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions and thus an environmental benefit to society. □

Learn about the scientific principles of integrated weed management (IWM) and how to apply them in practical field situations. Five CCA credits or one graduate college credit will be granted.

Study the fundamentals of IWM using practical examples from Nebraska, as well as current issues in weed science, such as weed management strategies to reduce weed resistance to Roundup. This class will deliver information on the need for and timing of weed control, as well as money-saving strategies (\$5-20/acre) that provide for the environmentally sound use of herbicides.



Caryl Carstensen Retires

Caryl Carstensen, an Ag Research Technician with Swine Research Unit at the ARDC, retired in December. Caryl was responsible for various maintenance, electric, heating and AC, mechanical, carpentry, and masonry projects. He started with Swine Unit in 1989. Caryl is pictured receiving a certificate of appreciation from Dan Duncan, ARDC Director, and Matt Anderson, Swine Unit Manager □

Winter Programs Offer Crop Management Education

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension begins its annual Crop Management Winter Programs in November and December with two precision agriculture workshops. The training sessions include indepth information from the university's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources faculty and staff. Continuing education credits for the Certified Crop Advisor program are being sought.

Fees include lunch, refreshment breaks, workshop materials and an instruction manual.

For more information or to register, call University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension at (402) 624-8000, e-mail kglewen1@unl.edu. Descriptions of the workshops follow.

-- **Soil Fertility - Basics** * January 14 * 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. * University of Nebraska ARDC. Non-credit (No CCA credits)...Good prep for those taking the CCA exam, good refresher for the experienced professional. \$65 by Jan. 7/\$75 after Jan. 7.

-- **Corn Rootworm Distance Education Workshop** * February 4 & 11 * University of Nebraska ARDC and University of Nebraska Northeast Research and Extension Center at the Lifelong Learning Center in Norfolk
Day 1 - 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m./Day 2 - 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

This distance education workshop will be delivered on two consecutive Fridays. Each day will differ in content. Both include a question/answer session. Call for pricing.

Day 1 includes: corn rootworm fundamentals-biology; corn rootworm fundamentals-effects of weather on corn rootworm biology and performance of rootworm-control products; corn rootworm situation in 2004 in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, and other states, and results from 2004 corn rootworm control efficacy trials.

Day 2 includes: a recap of first workshop; issues associated with corn rootworm management including soil insecticides and seed treatments, YieldGard Rootworm corn, and adult corn rootworm suppression, variant western corn rootworm, extended diapause, and management of corn rootworms in 2005.

- **Integrated Weed Management** * February 17 * 8:30 am - 5:00 pm. * University of Nebraska ARDC

Flyers, registration, & detailed information online at:
<http://ardc.unl.edu/training.htm>



JANUARY

5	4-H Council Meeting	7:00-9:00
10	NSFGPP Consultation	8:00-5:00
12	4-H Leaders Banquet	6:00-9:00pm
14	CMWP-Soil Fertility Basics	
	Private Pesticide Applicator Training	
	- Jan. 18 - 1:00-4:00	
	- Jan. 19 - 6:30-9:30 p.m.	
	- Jan. 22 - 9:00-12:00	
24	NSFGPP Consultation	8:00-5:00
26	Train the Trainer Quality Assurance	7:00-9:00
28	NSFGPP Consultation	8:00-5:00
29	Commercial Vegetable Program	9:00-3:30

FEBRUARY

1	Nebraska No-Till Conference	9:00
2	Quality Assurance	7:00-9:00 p.m.
4	CMWP-Corn Rootworm Satellite Training	
5	Deciduous & Evergreen Shrubs for Nebraska Landscapes	9:00 -11:00
8	NSFGPP Consultation	8:00-5:00
9	NSFGPP Consultation	8:00-5:00
11	CMWP-Corn Rootworm Satellite Training	
12	Pine Wilt & Beyond: Insect & Disease Control for Nebraska Trees & Shrubs	9:00 -11:00
17	CMWP-Integrated Weed Management	
19	Great Annual & Perennial Plants for Nebraska Gardens	9:00 -11:00
26	A Beautiful Landscape With Less Work: Sustainable Landscape Management Techniques	9:00 -11:00

MARCH

1	CMWP - Digital Agronomy	8:00-4:30
7	Shooting Sports Training	6:00-8:00 p.m.
8	NSFGPP Annual Research Update	
9	Quality Assurance Training	7:00-9:00 p.m.
14	Shooting Sports Training	6:00-8:00 p.m.
15	State Dairy Association Meeting	8:00-5:00
15	Nitrogen Management Training	7:00 p.m.
16	Nitrogen Management Training	9:30
17	Clover College Learn Fair	6:00-9:00 p.m.
21	Shooting Sports Training	6:00-8:00 p.m.
24	Public Speaking Contest	6:00-8:00 p.m.

Digital Agronomy for Increased Yields and Profits

8:45 am - 4:30 pm.

February 25 - University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte

March 1 - University of Nebraska ARDC

March 3 - Lifelong Learning Center, Norfolk

REGISTER EARLY...MAXIMUM ENROLLMENT FOR THIS WORKSHOP IS 30 PARTICIPANTS PER SITE TO ENSURE HANDS-ON TRAINING! Registration will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Although a limited number of computers will be available (first to register have priority on available computers), participants are encouraged to bring their own laptops for the hands-on training sessions.

7 total CCA Credits applied for. Learn about trends and emerging opportunities in use of advanced information technologies for improving crop management decisions to increase yields and profit. Learn how to use Hybrid-Maize - a computer simulation model that can: (1) estimate field-specific yield potential of dryland and irrigated corn, (2) help identify optimal hybrid selection, plant population, and irrigation regime, and (3) perform in-season, real-time yield forecasts. Course also includes hands-on training in use of WeedSOFT- a computer decision-support system that identifies weed management options in terms of impact on yield, profit, and water quality..

\$65 by Febr. 15/\$75 after Febr. 15. Software not included, but can be purchased at \$35 each for Hybrid-Maize and WeedSOFT. □

current issues in weed science, such as weed management strategies to reduce weed resistance to Roundup. This class will deliver information on the need for and timing of weed control, as well as money-saving strategies (\$5-20/acre) that provide for the environmentally sound use of herbicides.

Topics include: importance of weed biology and ecology; critical period of weed control - pros and cons, weed thresholds, weed shifts and weed resistance-- why do they occur, biologically effective dose -- save money and environment, benefits and concerns with herbicide-tolerant crops, and IWM - basic rules of thumb.
\$65 by Febr. 10/\$75 after Febr. 10.

Further training is offered through the UNL Department of Agronomy and Horticulture. The department provides CEU credit, college credit or stand alone non-credit course options. Courses are designed for the working professional in the agronomic and horticultural sciences, and postgraduate students seeking in-depth knowledge of emerging issues and new approaches in many areas of agricultural technology. Delivery approaches vary. Some classes are presented as 1 or 2 day workshops with the option of continued projects for credit. Some are delivered via internet and videostreaming. A complete listing can be found at http://agronomy.unl.edu/distance_ed/. For more information, call (402) 472-2811. □

Mark Your Calendar for These 4-H Events



* 4-H LEADERS TRAINING AND BANQUET

If you haven't registered for the 4-H Leaders' Training Banquet, do so TODAY!!!! It will be held on **Wednesday, January 12th**, at the Saunders County Extension Office located at the ARDC Research and Education Building. Registration begins at 6:15 p.m. with the meal starting at 6:30 p.m.

This is a good time to interact with other leaders and learn new ideas. Leader training is open to any leader, parent or adult interested in helping with and learning more about the 4-H program for the upcoming year. Please sign up by January 10 so that adequate preparations can be made.

* MARKET BEEF WEIGH-IN DATES - JANUARY 22 & MARCH 26

Weigh-ins for 4-H Market Beef weigh-in will be on January 22 and March 26 at the Wahoo Sale Barn from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Your animals do not need to be broke to lead at this time.

* QUALITY ASSURANCE TRAINING

Quality Assurance is again required for all 4-Hers showing beef, sheep, swine, goats, dairy, poultry and rabbits. This training is required annually unless a written test is passed. **Club leaders and older 4-H members can attend a leaders and trainers session on January 26 (for leaders and trainers) so that they can teach the class at their local club meetings. General training sessions will be held on February 2, March 9, June 7 and June 9.** □

Get Your Green Thumb Ready!

Please contact Sarah Browning, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension at (402) 727-2775 or by e-mail at sbrowning2@unl.edu, for information or to register for any of the horticultural programs listed below. *You can learn more about these and other horticulture topics at <http://hortparadise.unl.edu>. For acreage information, please visit <http://acreage.unl.edu>.*

Get ready for greener days with these programs that will be offered at the University of Nebraska ARDC Research and Education Building from 9 a.m.- 11 a.m. on the dates noted below. Pre-registration is requested by January 30, however, walk-ins are accepted. There is no registration fee for the sessions.

- * **February 5 - Deciduous & Evergreen Shrubs for Nebraska Landscapes**
- * **February 12 - Pine Wilt And Beyond: Insect & Disease Control for Nebraska Trees and Shrubs**
- * **February 19 - Great Annual & Perennial Plants for Nebraska Gardens**
- * **February 26 - A Beautiful Landscape With Less Work: Sustainable Landscape Management Techniques**

Commercial Field Vegetable Production Clinic

January 29, 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m. * ARDC Research & Education Building

This workshop features Dr. Charles Marr, Kansas State University Extension Horticulturist for Vegetable Crops. Dr. Marr's focus, through extension programming and research, includes commercial vegetable production, management and handling.

Program highlights include what's new in field tomato production in 2005, integrated spider mite control, and weed control in melons. There will also be a question and answer session, giving growers a chance to get answers to their individual production problems.

The cost is \$30 per person, or \$50 per couple (includes lunch and an information packet). Programs coming in late February/March as part of the *'Creating A Horticulture Paradise'* program series that will be held at the Cuming County Courthouse in West Point and the Dodge Extension office in Fremont include:

- * **February 22, More Of A Good Thing: Vegetative Plant Propagation**
- * **March 1, Mushrooms: Collecting and Growing**
- * **March 8, Designing and Growing Beautiful Container Plantings**
- * **March 15, Great Perennial Plants for Nebraska Gardens**
- * **March 22, Weed Identification & Control in the Lawn and Landscape**

Master Gardener Training

Training for 2005 will be held on Thursdays from March 3 through April 14, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. at the Dodge County Extension Office 1206 W. 23rd Street in Fremont. Through the Master Gardener training sessions and workshops, you'll become a more knowledgeable gardener and will have the opportunity to share this knowledge with your community. You will have access to a wealth of information that can make you a better gardener and you will also meet lots of interesting people who share your love of gardening. □

Assisting the Community...

Each year the employees of the ARDC and Cooperative Extension in Saunders County partner with Saunders County Head Start to locate a family who could use a little assistance during the holidays. This year a family of five was "adopted" and gifts were provided through employee donations. A monetary donation was also made to the VFW Christmas Fund. □



M.E.A.D

Making Education in Agriculture Different

National FFA Convention

by Trisha Larson, Mead FFA Student

On the evening of October 26, 2004, seven members of the Mead FFA Chapter departed from Lincoln and headed for the 77th National FFA Convention. Our charter bus traveled 12 hours and put on 740 miles before reaching our destination of Louisville, Kentucky.

Ashley Janecek, Cody Moravec, Josh Sladky, Trisha Larson, Brittany Nelson, Dan Parsons, and Duane Campbell represented the Mead FFA Chapter. We were just a small number of the 48,000 students that made up the "Sea of Blue." There was much to achieve by attending the National Convention, such as - it helped us develop leadership skills, explore career opportunities, and it challenged us to set high goals for our future, just as the theme of the special event suggested: Learn, Lead, Succeed.

We learned much from motivational speakers such as Joe Theismann, a former pro football player, and Linda Larson who spoke on power, passion, and pizzazz. It was also a special treat to see and hear from National Officer Amy Rasmussen, a graduate of Mead. Adam Rasmussen flew out to be with his sister as she delivered her retiring address. Amy held the national office of Central Region Vice President during the 2003-2004 year.

There was a career show that had exhibits in the hundreds that represented agriculture industry professionals and numerous colleges from across the nation. The FFA band and choir provided entertainment. We also attended two dances.

Our sponsor and escort for the week, advisor Mr. Rutt, lined up a tour of the Louisville Slugger Museum, a haunted morgue, and dinner at Joe's Crab Shack for our enjoyment.

"Meeting new people from different states was my favorite part about National Convention," replied Josh Sladky. "Everywhere I looked there was a different state represented!"

We took advantage of the experiences and all that the week had to offer. We realized that the National Convention is something we will always remember. It gave us the unique opportunity to appreciate the many aspects of FFA and agriculture. □



Record Turnout at 2004 Soybean Day

Soybean growers turned out in record numbers at the 2004 Nebraska Soybean Day and Machinery Expo held at the Saunders County

Fairgrounds in Wahoo. Over 400 producer from 28 Nebraska counties and two states attended the event.

Producers also visited with various commercial exhibitors, viewed new farm equipment, and learned about soybean rust at a special exhibit.

Sue Martin of the popular ag marketing show *Market to Market* was the featured speaker. She discussed the outlook on the corn and soybean futures for the next 6 months.

Live demonstrations were presented on grain truck mechanical compliance and traction using a mechanical sled and tractor.

Other presenters included NU researchers and specialists, Nebraska Soybean Board representatives, soybean growers, and the Nebraska State Patrol Carrier Enforcement. □



Sue Martin, presented to the large audience on hand, but also took the time to discuss markets with producers during breaks.

