

5-2001

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CONNECT

Termites, bats, roaches—even rattlesnakes—are all a part of the Pest Man’s work

People welcome the Pest Man. Dennis Ferraro, a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator known for his termite expertise, earned his “Pest Man” nickname through regular appearances on Omaha television and radio, as well as at workshops. He provides facts on termites’ complex caste system, such as one queen can live up to 20 years and have 80 million offspring.

“My whole background has been termites,” Ferraro said.

After college he worked for a pest control company for nine years, then joined extension in Douglas/Sarpy counties in 1990. Ferraro teaches subterranean termite biology and damage, economics and control to homeowners, pest control companies, commercial food establishments and real estate agents.

His information helps real estate agents and appraisers earning continuing

education credits at the Randall School of Real Estate in Omaha.

“Anyone who sells real estate for any length of time will come across termites,” said Susan Geschwender, school president. She added termites can damage transactions as well as property, so real estate agents are “expected to know about those things.”

Ferraro’s workshops consistently exceed participants’ expectations and “people walk out of them happy,” she said.

Occasionally even pest control professionals get stumped by a particularly difficult termite case. Roger Lisko, branch manager for Orkin Pest Control in Omaha, said 90 percent of homes can be treated effectively, but when construction styles present challenges in termite treatment, he calls Ferraro.

Ferraro’s technical knowledge and state-of-the-art tools have been “very, very helpful” as the two put their heads together, Lisko said.

Termite workshops for homeowners help build consumer confidence, Ferraro said, because they lessen anxiety and frustration and people are better able to



Clyde Ogg

Dennis Ferraro, NU Cooperative Extension educator in Douglas/Sarpy counties who is known for his termite expertise, offers workshops about the wood-hungry insect. Here he prepares to treat the Halsey Nebraska State 4-H Camp lodge for termites.

make decisions and save money.

About 1,000 homeowners have attended approximately 20 workshops taught by him, Barb Ogg, NU extension educator in Lancaster County, and Clyde Ogg, NU pesticide education specialist, since 1995. Participant surveys show knowledge gained provided an average savings of \$312 per person, Ferraro said.

To continue his research and stay on his toes, Ferraro treats an occasional home or building, being careful to avoid competing with private enterprise. He also volunteered to treat the Halsey Nebraska State 4-H Camp lodge using donated chemical.

Because of his expertise, Ferraro is called to give legal depositions about a

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Dean's comments

There's nothing like having someone look you in the eye and ask, "So what have you done for me lately?"

I know it's a threatening question in some contexts, but when someone asks me what University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension has done for Nebraska lately, I am delighted to tell of extension's important contributions throughout the state.

The following pages provide wide-ranging examples of what extension does for Nebraska. There are so many others—such as these three:

*Children who don't receive immunizations may suffer lifelong health problems and even death, but the cost and accessibility of vaccinations can keep some families from getting timely childhood vaccinations.

Since 1970, extension in Gage County has worked with the Beatrice Community Hospital and Health Center and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to provide free immunization clinics. From 1988-2000, the clinic has saved families \$1.7 million by giving 47,377 immunizations to 11,499 children.

The average savings of \$101 per child is significant because many family health insurance policies don't cover immunizations.

*Nebraska ranks fifth nationally in soybean production. To remain competitive, the state's soybean growers need the latest information on everything from emerging market trends to

the latest management options.

Extension teams with the Nebraska and United Soybean boards to offer

Soybean Management Field Days that provide information to help producers maximize efficiency.

In 2000, more than 540 people attended four sessions around the state.

Participants surveyed said the knowledge they gained at the field days is worth an average of about \$11 per acre or \$2.27 million in total value, based on the participants and acres involved. About

90 percent of those surveyed said they expect to change their soybean field operations after attending the one-day workshops.

*Extension's nutrition programs reach a broad spectrum of Nebraska residents, from refugee families in Lincoln to long-time Nebraskans in rural areas. Extension helps low-resource clients improve how they budget and shop, and what they eat, which boosts their self-sufficiency.

In the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2000, over 7,300 families, 7,200 youth and 1,100 older adults participated in these programs. The state's program was one of three nationwide to receive a National Food Stamp Program/USDA Excellence in Nutrition Education Award in 2000.

Oh, yes. It's a treat to tell people what extension has done for Nebraska lately!

*Elbert Dickey
Interim Dean and Director
University of Nebraska
Cooperative Extension*



Elbert Dickey

CONNECT

May 2001

Volume 1, Number 2

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Connect is published three times a year by the Communications and Information Technology unit at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln under the auspices of the Dean of University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

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There is no charge for this newsletter. Each issue describes a few of University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's ongoing, widely diverse programs. The newsletter is an informal report to interested taxpayers. Please send comments, questions and subscription requests to: Editor, NU Cooperative Extension Connect, 108 Agricultural Communications Building, P.O. Box 830918, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68583-0918.

Upon request, this publication can be made available in an alternative format for people with disabilities. For assistance call (402) 472-3031.

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Partners with Nebraska

Land-grant universities work with the people they serve. NU's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources does so in priority areas of food, agriculture, agribusiness, natural resources, people and communities. We teach, discover new knowledge through research, and extend that new, unbiased information across the state and beyond through extension.



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Parents Forever workshops help parents understand the impact of divorce on their children

When parents divorce, children sometimes feel responsible. Their behavior may change, often leaving parents at a loss as to how to help them, said Gail Brand, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator in Seward County.

Brand, who organizes extension's Parents Forever workshops in Seward County, said the workshops provide research-based information for parents going through divorce.

Parents Forever's purpose is to help parents understand the impact of divorce on their children and to help children cope with family changes, she said.

"Kids usually get trapped in the middle," Brand said, adding Parents Forever "gives parents the guidance to help their children through a difficult time."

The six-hour workshop addresses the grief cycle, knowing what is normal behavior for children, helping parents know what to say to their children, and more. Participating parents praise it, said Cindy Strasheim, NU extension educator in Clay County and a Parents Forever program coordinator.

"A lot of people will say immediately that this class is very good and every parent should take it," Strasheim said.

Danyelle Fluckey of Giltner, who attended Parents Forever in December 1999, said it helped her understand her 3-year-old daughter's behavior.

"I thought it was a very important program. It brings you back to remembering to think about her first rather than the divorce," she said.

Since its beginning in 1999, Parents Forever has educated 287 adults and impacted 685 children, Strasheim said. The program is underway in three judicial districts in 16 counties in southern, eastern and southeastern Nebraska.

In Holdrege and Hastings, a companion program called Kids Talk About Divorce is offered for children. It teaches children ages 5-18 communication and coping skills, recognition of grief and loss stages, anger management and how to



Cindy Strasheim, NU Cooperative Extension educator in Clay County, displays the "Talking, Trusting, Feeling" game used as a nice breaker for youth to identify emotions in the Kids Talk About Divorce program.

interact with parents on emotional issues.

Eight to 10 children have participated every month since the program started last fall, Strasheim said, adding it likely will be expanded to other parts of the state.

Parents Forever began after the 1998 passage of LB777, which provided judges the opportunity to require a parenting class for parents filing for divorce. Currently the two district judges in the 10th Judicial District require the class, and it may be recommended in other districts.

"The requirement is often met with grumbles and groans from the parties, but after they complete the program most are glad they went," said 10th Judicial District Judge Terri Harder.

Leslie Crandall, NU extension educator in Phelps-Gosper counties, teaches the workshop in Holdrege and has heard positive feedback.

"Parents for the most part are thrilled to get this information," she said.

— Lori McGinnis

Brand can be contacted at (402) 643-2981; Strasheim at (402) 762-3644; Crandall at (308) 995-4222.

Past participants say 4-H public speaking helps

Improved self-confidence and self-expression are benefits of University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's 4-H public speaking program, past participants say.

Sandra Stockall, 4-H specialist at NU's West Central Research and Extension Center in North Platte, worked with extension staff in 11 counties on a survey of 58 randomly selected 4-H alumni who graduated from high school between 1988 and 1993.

Those surveyed were asked what life skills they learned participating in 4-H public speaking contests.

Ninety-five percent said they increased self-confidence; 94 percent said they enhanced their ability to express themselves; 97 percent said they learned to stand before a group; 95 percent said they learned delivery techniques and communication skills; 91 percent said they learned to relate to an audience.

"The real benefit is their ability to verbally defend decisions they make and stand up in front of people and present their ideas. That is critical," Stockall said.

Nebraska's 4-H county speech contests usually are in the spring, Stockall said. Junior division speakers, 8-11, can choose their subject, while intermediate, 12-13, and senior, 14-18, division speakers must speak about 4-H.

County contest intermediate and senior division winners advance to one of five extension district competitions, and senior division winners go from there to the state contest at the Nebraska State Fair in Lincoln, Stockall said.

— Lori McGinnis

Stockall can be contacted at (308) 532-3611, Ext. 135.

Acreage Owners Expo offers a variety of topics

The number of Nebraska acreages has risen dramatically in the last decade, especially outside of Lincoln and Omaha, said Jim Peterson, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator in Washington County.

Half the people living in his own county, he said, are now on acreages.

Some acreage owners move to the country and enjoy quietly walking the pathways of their property, Peterson said, while others want to raise buffalo, llamas, organic gardens and more.

No matter what their reasons for choosing acreages, however, once there owners often encounter new situations, such as wells to drill, trees to plant, wildlife to manage, Peterson said.

Extension's yearly Acreage Owners Expo offers owners and prospective owners knowledge on ways to care for their property. The one-day expo provides something for everyone, from planning windbreaks and turf, to building horse fences, to establishing wells and ponds, said Peterson, an expo coordinator. The most frequent questions about rural living concern water quality, he added.

This year's expo is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 18 at NU's Agricultural Research and Development Center at Mead. Peterson said it will include discussions to help rural newcomers better understand their traditional farm neighbors.

More than 500 people have attended the last three Acreage Owners Expos, some more than once, Peterson said. He noted that of 400 participants at the last two, 182 responded to a survey and said knowledge gained there saved an average of \$350 each.

— Cheryl Alberts

Peterson can be contacted at (402) 426-9455.

Initiative aims to create community awareness, provide education a

Information technology continues to evolve, and so does the work of University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

Extension is leading a Technologies Across Nebraska initiative to create awareness and provide communities with education and support as they make decisions concerning their information technology future.

This work is a natural outgrowth of extension's tradition of providing knowledge that people can use in their lives, said Beth Bimstihl, extension associate dean and an initiative leader.

"Extension needs to play the role and it needs to become a major part of our mission," said Jim Emal, an NU information technology specialist who leads the initiative with Bimstihl.

More than 40 organizations, agencies and educational systems are part of a Technologies Across Nebraska Partnership working cooperatively to help communities create awareness of, access to, and abilities to use information technology. The partnership hopes to eliminate the so-called "Digital Divide" in Nebraska, Bimstihl said.

The Digital Divide refers to a telecom-

munications technology access gap along income, ethnic, educational and especially rural-urban lines. It has captured the attention of U.S. Rep. Tom Osborne, R-Neb., who recently hosted 3rd District listening sessions concerning the perceived lack of broadband or high-speed Internet service in rural areas.

The main cause of the Digital Divide is not lack of availability of high-speed Internet service, Emal said, adding every Nebraska community has the necessary infrastructure through telephone companies or wireless and satellite providers.

Some residents are not aware of the importance of advanced technology, and without the demand companies are unlikely to invest in the electronics and software needed to deliver it, Emal said.

Extension educators throughout Nebraska are being asked to help increase awareness. Eight educators are working half time on the issue, leading educational programs and teaching Internet-based classes. In addition, the goal over the next two years is to add four more educators specifically skilled in information technologies and community education through the NU biennium budget request process.

"We're going to muster all of the troops," Emal said. "This will become an important part of the Cooperative Extension mission."

The Technologies Across Nebraska Partnership believes the successful advancement of technology can lessen migra-



Brett Hampton

Beth Bimstihl, NU Cooperative Extension associate dean, and Jim Emal, NU information technology specialist, are leaders in the Technologies Across Nebraska initiative. Both presented information during a recent gathering of initiative partners in Lincoln.



Brett Hampton

About information technology

tion from rural areas, help communities become more competitive globally and help businesses enhance their economic viability, Birstihl said.

Scott Sidwell, executive director of the Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO) and a member of the Technologies Across Nebraska Partnership, said many rural counties are struggling to catch up with technological advances.

Some people may not understand that a lack of technology disadvantages them economically and educationally, Sidwell said.

In a recent issue of the NACO Countyline newsletter, Sidwell wrote that unless telecommunications technologies are increased in courthouses, businesses, schools and homes in rural Nebraska, residents will lose out on opportunities for education, employment, business development, government services and health care.

“Such a technology disadvantage could be the difference between a growing community and no community,” Sidwell wrote.

“Some communities are really on top of it,” Emal said, while other communities made efforts toward advanced technology but did not continue, and still others have yet to begin tackling the challenge.

It is up to each community to make decisions about the use of information technology, Birstihl said, adding it’s a tremendous opportunity for them.

“Even in a town of 500, you have to decide what kind of technology access you need,” she said.

Extension’s work in this area “will continue to evolve,” Birstihl said. “This is a journey, this is not a destination,” because information technology will be ever-changing.

— Lori McGinnis

Emal can be contacted at (402) 472-7145; Birstihl at (402) 472-2966. Or visit <http://technologiesacrossnebraska.unl.edu>

Sidney committee works to increase technology education

When Connie Hancock arrived in Sidney five years ago as a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator in Cheyenne and Kimball-Banner counties, she was surprised to learn that Sidney had no local Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Now, thanks to the progressiveness of the community, Sidney has two ISPs and other options will soon be available, she said.

Hancock worked with the Sidney Chamber of Commerce to start the Cheyenne County Technology Committee. The committee consists of local governmental leaders, school officials, business representatives, high school students and others, all working to increase technology education and develop infrastructure.

“Through the technological education program, we’re attempting to help our rural communities compete globally,” said Hancock, one of eight NU extension educators across the state with half-time assignments as information technology educators. She also serves on a committee promoting the Technologies Across Nebraska initiative.

Last fall the Cheyenne County Technology Committee surveyed 600 Sidney residents and 200 businesses to learn their current and future telecommunication needs. Fifty percent from both groups responded, indicating that people are wanting more education about the use of technology from a community and business perspective, Hancock said.

“People are aware of the importance of technology but don’t fully understand the potential of how it affects the way they do business,” she said.

Hancock, who teaches classes to help people navigate the Internet and businesses learn the advantages of the World Wide Web, said interest is strong, especially among older citizens wanting to communicate via e-mail with out-of-town family members. But, continued



Karen DeBoer

Connie Hancock, standing, NU Cooperative Extension educator in Cheyenne and Kimball-Banner counties, demonstrates the Master Navigator course to Lynn McKinney, her secretary.

education is needed for people to fully understand the available options, she said.

Cheyenne County Commissioner Harold Winkelman took Hancock’s Master Navigator class because he had a computer but knew little about the Internet.

“It was a great class. It familiarized me with the Internet, e-mail and web sites,” said Winkelman, who wants to take more computer classes as they become available.

John Allen, director of NU’s Center for Applied Rural Innovation, has worked with Hancock on technology issues and said as access to technology increases in Cheyenne County, businesses and individuals will benefit through more choices and lower costs.

“Because of the advanced assessment and planning that the technology committee has initiated and been involved with, Cheyenne County will be better positioned to participate in a global economy,” Allen said.

— Lori McGinnis

Hancock can be contacted at (308) 254-4455; Allen at (402) 472-1772.

Producers gain latest tools for fact-based decision making at Farmers and Ranchers College

Frank Bruning has long believed agricultural producers should have opportunity for continuing education. That's why the Bruning State Bank president and his officers supported a Farmers and Ranchers College, a series of four workshops on marketing held in winter 2001 in south central Nebraska.

"It used to be hard work and tending to business equaled success but it's not that way anymore," Bruning said. The college workshops help producers "educate themselves and spot opportunities... it sharpens them and makes them think out loud."

Together, agribusiness and University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension can offer a higher level of programming than can be offered individually, said Terry Hejny, NU extension educator in Fillmore and Thayer counties, and a Farmers and Ranchers College organizer.

The college brought the best presenters to meet local needs and gave producers the latest tools so they can make well-balanced decisions based on facts, Hejny said.

In-depth marketing was needed and needed to be "very relevant right away," Hejny said, because commodity prices have been so low that integrated marketing is the only way to save some area agricultural livelihoods. Workshop topics covered grain contracting, meeting the

market demand for cattle and risk-assessed marketing using crop insurance.

One workshop featured Art Bamaby, a Kansas State University agricultural economist, who explained how a type of crop insurance could guarantee revenues. That information was vital for Bill and Gina Hudson of Belvidere to continue farming in 2001, Gina Hudson said.

"The way things are now with agricultural commodity prices, you need to be updated on things that are happening," Gina Hudson said. "A lot of us don't have time to go back and take a class on marketing."

Hejny said he was surprised that all together more than 400 people attended the four workshops, some of which had standing room only.

Based on a 75 percent after-the-meeting survey return of participants, Hejny said producers estimated the average value of the crop workshops was 6 cents per bushel on an estimated 27 million bushels of corn — \$1.62 million



Terry Hejny, NU extension educator for Fillmore and Thayer counties, does some follow-up figuring with Farmers and Ranchers College participant Gina Hudson of Belvidere.

Cheryl Alberts

collectively — and \$19 for each of 15,000 head of cattle — \$285,000 collectively.

Next year's college topics have yet to be determined by steering committee members, some of whom hear producer concerns daily, Hejny said. Committee members include producers, agribusiness and extension representatives from Thayer, Fillmore and Clay counties. The first college workshop was piloted in March 2000.

The college stems from a legislative task force study, Hejny said. He added it is supported by agribusiness because agriculture and agribusiness need each other for communities to stay viable, but the college is not a platform for advertising.

"They leave their titles and businesses at home," Hejny said. "We try to keep that part out of it."

— Cheryl Alberts

Hejny can be contacted at (402) 759-3712.

The Pest Man

(continued from page 1)

dozen times a year — sometimes for both plaintiffs and defendants, because he presents facts without taking sides.

Ferraro and other extension staff are piloting workshops for real estate agents to cover home environmental health issues such as radon, asbestos and indoor air quality. He also helped Dave Keith, NU urban integrated pest management specialist, develop extension's annual Urban Pest Management conference that draws at least 200 pest control company

representatives.

Besides his termite work, Ferraro routinely does training dealing with roaches, bats and snakes. At Scotts Bluff National Monument he has put transmitters in rattlesnakes to track their movements.

It's all part of a day's work for the Pest Man.

— Cheryl Alberts

Ferraro can be contacted at (402) 444-7804.

Backyard Farmer now in its 48th season, answering yard and garden questions each week

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's Backyard Farmer is back for its 48th season, continuing its tradition of answering call-in questions live on the air, and adding monthly themes and guest panelists.

Broadcast each summer since 1953, Backyard Farmer airs 7-8 p.m. Central Time Tuesdays through Aug. 28 on the Nebraska Educational Television Network. It is rebroadcast at later dates on NETV2.

The program also is videostreamed live and archived at: <http://backyardfarmer.unl.edu/>. Web links are available for gardening publications, news releases, even specific questions, said Brad Mills, NU Backyard Farmer producer. People can type in a key word — bluegrass, for example — and all answers to previous questions related to that word appear.

Elbert Dickey, interim NU extension dean and director, said every week

Backyard Farmer responds to Nebraska yard and garden issues in urban and rural areas. A rotating panel of extension experts and gardening industry guests answer on-air questions.

Monthly themes are: May, landscape design; June, water; July, landscaping for wildlife; August, landscaping Nebraska style.

A December NU extension survey showed people in an estimated 58,000 households said they watched Backyard Farmer every week or every other week, said Jim Randall, NU extension communications specialist for broadcast media. Of regular viewers, 97 percent said the program provided recommendations and advice applicable to their lawns and



Brett Hampton

NU Cooperative Extension Backyard Farmer panelists include: (front, left to right) John Watkins, plant pathologist; Jennifer Chaky, educator for plant diagnostics; Kim Todd, lecturer, agronomy/horticulture; Roch Gaussoin, turf specialist; Fred Baxendale, entomologist; (back, left to right) Dave Keith, entomologist; Loren Geisler, plant pathologist; John Fech, educator for horticulture and program host.

gardens, while 83 percent said they changed gardening practices or sought additional information because of the show.

— Cheryl Alberts

Mills can be contacted at (402)472-9715; Dickey at (402)472-2966; Randall at (402)472-9718.

Every Woman Matters outreach efforts raise awareness of health screenings' importance

The percentage of Nebraska Panhandle women receiving mammograms is up dramatically since University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension began its outreach efforts for Every Woman Matters, a program encouraging women to be screened for breast and cervical cancer, said Jamie Goffena, extension educator in Dawes and Sioux counties.

Goffena noted that in 1995, when extension received a grant from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to provide education and enroll Panhandle women in the Every Woman Matters program, only 9 percent of Panhandle women received mammograms.

That percentage increased to 40.2 percent in 2000, she said.

Every Woman Matters encourages breast and cervical cancer screenings, and covers screening costs for women 40 and older with low to moderate incomes who

are uninsured or underinsured. Goffena said costs could be \$350 or more without insurance coverage.

"The Every Woman Matters program has been very beneficial to women to help them take care of their bodies," Goffena said.

Every Woman Matters began in the Panhandle in 1992. Since then, the program has enrolled 3,775 Panhandle women, 3,061 of whom have had breast and/or cervical cancer screenings, said Dee Hiatt, DHHS data manager for the program.

Today extension promotes Every Woman Matters in Scotts Bluff, Sioux, Dawes, Sheridan and Box Butte counties, Goffena said.

Extension has raised awareness of screening importance by promoting the program through health fairs, county fairs, media announcements and business contacts, said Linda Boeckner, extension

Every Woman Matters Panhandle program coordinator at the Panhandle Research and Extension Center in Scottsbluff.

"We've had an impact in making people aware," Boeckner said.

Goffena said the American Cancer Society reports breast cancer ranks second nationally among cancer deaths in women, but mortality rates declined significantly during 1992-96, likely because of earlier detection and improved treatment.

"Early detection saves lives. With early detection breast cancer can be treatable. It doesn't necessarily mean death," Goffena said.

— Lori McGinnis

Boeckner can be contacted at (308)632-1256; Goffena at (308)432-3373.

Computerized farm record keeping provides producers with ready info for decision making

Producers seeking profitability in agriculture today must know their exact profits—and losses.

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's computerized farm record keeping winter workshops teach ways to do that.

Chuck Burr, NU extension educator in Clay County, said computerized record keeping tells producers the bottom line of each commodity, as well as each farm within an operation, and computer record accuracy may help producers justify loans with their lenders, and save time and money with accountants.

Computer records facilitate knowing where the operation stands at any time, quickly comparing one time period to another, and exploring various input and commodity scenarios, he added.

"It's important that people start doing some enterprise analysis. From a business standpoint it's important to know what part of the operation is making the most money—or losing the most," said Burr, who is updating the workshop computer program to a double entry form of accounting for even more detail.

Ken Spray of Clay Center took Burr's beginning and advanced computerized record keeping workshops. He said he's "extremely pleased" with the instruction and now has a complete picture for his corn, soybean and beef operation.

Since 1994, an estimated 240 participants from 188 operations have attended computerized record keeping workshops in six south-central counties. Burr said a 1997 survey of the first 150 participants drew 48 responses, a 32 percent return, from producers who in total farmed over 43,000



Cheryl Alberts

Chuck Burr, NU Cooperative Extension educator in Clay County and a computer farm record keeping workshop instructor, helps producers understand the bottom line of their operations. Burr is updating the computer program to a double entry form of accounting for greater detail.

acres. Of those 48 people, one-fourth estimated the value of knowledge gained in the workshops at an average of \$1,000 each, Burr said.

— Cheryl Alberts

Burr can be contacted at (402) 762-3644.

Check out Cooperative Extension's web site at:
<http://extension.unl.edu/>



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