2009 Impact Report

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Southeast Research and Extension Center

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension specializes in developing research based educational programs and delivering them to your local community in a variety of interactive educational ways. Our goal is to help you turn information into solutions so you can improve your business, community, or personal life.

The Southeast Research and Extension Center is part of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The headquarters is located at the August N. Christenson Research and Education Building located at the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Mead. Faculty are also located on the UNL East Campus, and in 28 county offices in southeastern Nebraska. We are unique because we serve both urban and rural communities.

Each day Extension makes a difference in the lives of adults and youth living in southeast Nebraska. Our efforts rely increasingly on partnerships with county government, business, industry, schools, communities, and foundations. Our programs change as we listen to the needs of the people we serve.

Public Value:

- Adults and youth who make healthy food and exercise choices reduce future health care costs.
- Youth who engage in science, engineering, and technology exploration will contribute to new innovations and scientific discoveries as adults.
- Producers who increase production of high quality food products while protecting the environment meet the challenge of feeding the growing world population.
- Producers who operate profitable farm enterprises sustain the economics of rural communities.
- Producers who improve irrigation efficiencies contribute to the sustainable use of groundwater and reduced energy consumption.
- Acreage owners who manage water and land resources result in sustainable development in peri-urban areas and watersheds.
- Entrepreneurs build local economies by providing jobs, supporting other businesses, and retaining young workers in the community.
Food, Nutrition and Health

Nebraskans learn how to select, prepare, and store foods for optimum nutrition and safety. Adults and youth choose physically active lifestyles.

Impact:

- **The Garden Grocery: Food Safety & Selection at the Farmers’ Market**, statistics for the first 2-1/2 months materials were on the web, showed 2,830 educators downloaded educational materials reaching an additional 145,000 people.

- “Fresh from the Farmers’ Market” YouTube Channel video has received 1,672 views in the first eight months and is featured on the Nebraska Local Foods Network website.

- **Nutrition Education Program (NEP)** enrolled 3,211 adults reaching almost 12,000 family members with graduation rates reaching 72%. The program also reached 3,739 youth in school classrooms. Impact evaluations show 70% of participants improved food buying, 77% improved nutrition practices, and 57% improved food safety. A cost-benefit analysis shows that for every $1 invested in Nebraska EFNEP, up to $8 was saved in future health care costs.

- “Nutritionknowhow.org” blog has 105 posts/articles with an average of 1,300 hits/month. The blog has won several regional and national awards. Email blasts to schools helped decrease the risk of H1N1 and increase food safety.

- 670 adults and youth took nutrition and food preparations classes. 95% of the parents of youth participants reported their children are more interested in food preparation. Adults indicated significant improvement such as (1) eating foods from all food groups, (2) taking appropriate portion sizes and (3) being physically active for at least 30 minutes a day.

- 668 metro restaurant managers and culinary arts students participated in ServSafe and hand washing to reduce the risk of H1N1. The health department has noted an increase in sanitation scores.

- 1,200 youth were trained by the Health Rocks! volunteer team. 509 (74%) said the interactive nature of HR! was a better and more effective way of learning about substance abuse. 652 youth (83%) learned about decision-making and dealing with stress.

- 1,200 students learned the importance of MyPyramid and 1000 learned the importance of hand washing. Teacher surveys found that 85% increased their knowledge of healthy diet and physical exercise and 90% could make healthier food choices after completing the programs.
Water, Climate and Environment

Crops: *Producers adopt irrigation and conservation practices that will reduce agricultural water use and protect soil and water quality.*

**Impact:**
- 400 producers participated in the Nebraska Agricultural Water Management Demonstration Network (NAWMDN) saving an average of 2.6" of irrigation water/acre for corn and 2.1" of water/acre for soybeans resulting in $2,814,000 and $2,270,000 respectively in energy costs. The UNL Water webpage has over 200 ETgage sites registered from 37 counties.
- 226 producers from 62 counties participated in five *Growing Corn Responsibly* training sessions. Growers made decisions on 1.3 million acres and estimated the training value to be $12 million. 60% will adopt irrigation water use technology; 63% will adopt irrigation scheduling and 63% will reduce irrigation energy input costs.
- 376 growers attended *Soybean Management Field Days* at four locations representing 315,819 acres and saving $8.56 per acre or $2.7 million. Respondents improved water efficiency practices (44%) and nutrient management (53%).
- 770 total participants attended seminars on reducing *irrigation energy consumption* by efficiencies in pumping plants. 50% indicated they would improve efficiency.
- Over 1,000 land owners in 6 counties attended workshops on wind energy covering land rights, negotiations, liability, contracts, and payment methods. One wind association was formed and 63 landowners have signed contracts on 19,000 acres.

Community: *Homeowners and acreage owners will utilize strategies to protect urban watersheds.*

**Impact:**
- 474 homeowners participated in 14 programs teaching sustainable landscape principles of reduced water, pesticides and fertilizer use to urban landscapes. Participants stated they would use backflow devices on hoses to prevent contamination of municipal water sources and avoid chemicals washing into the street contaminating surface water.
- 82 *onsite wastewater* professionals and NE Game and Parks employees serving 1,750 systems attended training. One community included septic maintenance in their town wellhead protection plan. 32 homeowners in high risk areas were trained.
Child and Youth Development

Learning Child: Individuals and families have safe, supportive, and financially secure environments

Impact:

- 2,375 parents attended parenting classes and family nights learning about communications, understanding and involvement for a safe and supportive environment for children.

- 258 guardians learned to better serve their wards and meet the legal guardianship responsibilities outlined by the Nebraska Supreme Court. 97% understand their responsibility to the court and to their wards. More than 3,350 have been trained since 2005.

- 1,491 divorcing parents took court-mandated Parents Forever classes. 94% understand the effect of divorce on children and 96% understood ways to resolve conflict.

- 935 Nebraska Medicare beneficiaries were assisted with drug or health plan enrollment saving $646,000. Savings since 2005 is estimated to be $2,844,870.

4-H Youth Development: Youth develop entrepreneurship skills and apply science and technology to 4-H projects.

Impact:

- 1,048 youth and 200 adults in non metro counties participated in 25 Science Engineering and Technology (SET) workshops including the National Youth Science Day Biofuel Blast.

- 700 youth learned about GPS, energy, wind power, the environment and chemical safety. Students made their own wind turbines and were able to lift objects and produce electricity.

- 3,077 youth in 120 metro schools formed in-school 4-H clubs with the 4-H staff teaching six hours in SET. 13,630 urban youth in 419 classrooms participated in 4-H SET. 81% stated that SET skills would be important in their future.

- 361 youth participated in ESI entrepreneurship projects. 55% of youth reported that they had new ideas for becoming an entrepreneur.

- Military 4-H Clubs provided hands-on programs for 150 youth at Offutt Air Force Base. Youth learned about healthy lifestyles and SET, while being supported during difficult times.
Crops for the Future

Agricultural producers and industry professionals make informed decisions and adopt technologies and practices to optimize inputs and energy costs.

Impact:

- 602 producers and industry professionals representing 3% of Nebraska's row crops attended 11 Crop Management & Diagnostic Clinics. They valued the clinic at $8.35/acre.

- On-farm research participants attribute $14,000 of annual whole farm profitability. Studies were shared with over 1,000 producers. Producers have found that reducing seeding rates by 40,000 seeds/acre had little effect on soybean yields and saved $12/acre.

- 434 participants from 5 states attended two Nebraska No-Till Conferences influencing crop management on 227,228 acres. The potential value was approximately $3.7 million. 87% will make changes in their business/operation based on what they learned at the event.

- Producers learned valuable information as a result of the development of cropwatch.unl.edu (110,300 views in 8 weeks) and a Husker Harvest Days event Crops for the Future (over 12,000 clientele).

- Producers received help with grain drying with the development of a new Excel model to calculate costs and efficiencies.

- Over 200 participants in 7 counties learned about the impact of Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) on soybean yield and management practices to reduce this impact in fields.

- 700 producers attended farm bill educational programs on the new ACRE program. Improved farm bill decisions generated $7,630 per producer or more than $5 million.

- 350 producers attended Farmers and Ranchers College; survey participants indicated a potential impact of over $1,040,000 with changes they plan to implement. One producer said, "This program builds on my confidence for the industry. It inspires me to be more disciplined, work smarter, and get enthused about growing my business for the future."

- 295 producers participated in marketing and risk management conferences or workshops Total impact would be an increase in average revenue of approximately $5,400 on a corn-based farm with 800 acres.
Livestock producers adopt new technologies and management practices to improve production and protect the environment.

- **Beef profitability** workshops reached producers in five eastern Nebraska counties with 2,450 beef cows and 2,900 head of feeder cattle. 80% planned to modify feed practices and 83% planned more comparison of supplement costs on a cost per pound of protein.

- 3,190 elementary school youth attended programs to learn about livestock and crop production. Hands-on activities helped youth understand issues related to food production. Teachers reported students gained knowledge in ruminant nutrition, agriculture technologies, swine, dairy, and forages.

- **Farmer Rancher Cow/Calf College** held at USMARC reached over 80 cattle producers. Cattlemen indicated the estimated value of the information on global economy and production issues would help them at $9.62/head or over $1.6 million.

- More than 90 college students (6,500 head of cattle) attended UNL clinics on management practices to improve reproductive efficiency, genetic decisions, and management of body condition scores. 91% indicated information would improve profitability. 43% will pursue a 4-year degree.

- **Four-State Beef Conference** focused on storing co-products, drylotting beef cows and systems approach to whole herd. The producers managed 3,000 cows, 1,000 stockers and 1,110 head in feedlots. 96% learned new information on drylotting and 87% on whole heard management.

- 10 clients representing 892 cows reported a $15 per cow impact after completing the Beef Cow Basics Home Study Course.

- Pasture management workshops focused on new pasture management strategies. 84% reported knowledge gained on pasture management and increased weed and brush control. A project with NRCS, Big Indian 319 and Tall Grass Prairie Initiative on 1,296 acres produced grazing improvements of $20,000 per year.

- **Nebraska Comprehensive Nutrient and Manure Program** team certified producers who valued the training at an average of $550/operation or $2,200/year.