2016

2016 Extension Highlights

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2016 Extension Highlights

NEBRASKA EXTENSION is your local connection to university research-based information. Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County is a partnership between Lancaster County, University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We extend knowledge, provide solutions and change lives in these educational program areas:

- Cropping & Water Systems
- Beef Systems
- Food, Nutrition & Health
- Community Environment
- Learning Child
- 4-H Youth Development
- Community Vitality

Pest Diagnostic Services – Throughout the year, Lancaster County residents and commercial professionals bring insects, pests and wildlife scat to the Extension office for identification and control recommendations. This past year, new Extension Educator urban entomologist Jody Green (pictured right) and Extension Associate wildlife expert Soni Cochran assisted with approximately 1,620 walk-in requests, email questions and phone calls.

Biosolids Land Application Program – Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County coordinates distribution and application of biosolids* to agricultural cropland for the City of Lincoln. Since 1992, more than 750,000 tons of biosolids have been recycled, extending the life of the landfill an estimated five years. Pictured is Biosolids Coordinator Dave Smith.

Nutrition Education Program (NLP) – NLP helps families on limited budgets make healthier food choices and choose physically active lifestyles by teaching the knowledge and skills to improve their health. Last year, NLP staff completed lessons with 449 enrolled adults (1,831 teaching contacts) and reached 7,345 youth (13,321 teaching contacts). Pictured are Extension Assistants Nicole Babcock (second from left) and Jessica Meuleners (far right) teaching youth in a cooking club at Culler Community Learning Center.

New Successful Farmer Series – Extension Educator Tyler Williams (pictured) organized and was a presenter at a new Successful Farmer Series. 33 individuals attended one or more of the 7 workshops covering 16 topics.

- For the topic of Rental Rates/Landlord-Tenant Communications, surveys showed at completion, 93% of respondents planned to make changes. 3 months later, 41% had already made changes.
- For the topic of Farm Bill Programs, surveys showed at completion, 86% of respondents planned to make changes. 3 months later, 53% had already made changes.

Food Waste Prevention Resources – Extension Educator Alice Henneman’s focus this year was teaching consumers how to reduce food waste for their personal benefit and to help protect our planet’s resources. Educational methods included in-person presentations, print and web articles, social media and PowerPoints for teaching use. After Henneman’s Makeover Your Leftovers class, 87% of 90 survey respondents said they will make changes based on what they learned.

Emerald Ash Borer Seminars – In 2016, Emerald Ash Borer was confirmed in Eastern Nebraska. Extension Educators Sarah Browning (pictured) and Jody Green teamed up with Laurie Stepanek of the Nebraska Forest Service to present 4 seminars to homeowners. 209 participants learned how to assess ash tress as candidates for treatment, along with treatment options. Feedback indicated the workshops were extremely helpful. One attendee said, “Thanks for the breadth and depth of information provided. Excellent, knowledgeable speakers.”

Early Childhood Development Trainings for Child-Care Providers – 690 child care professionals attended 33 early childhood trainings taught or coordinated by Extension generating 129 in-service hours approved by the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services. Pictured is Extension Educator Jaci Faged (upper left) teaching the science domain of the Early Learning Guidelines.

Food & Health

- 4-H Clover College – new 4-H Coordinator and Extension Educator Tracy Anderson (pictured) has organized Clover College since 1998, growing it from 11 to 58 workshops! This year’s Clover College was attended by over 170 youth with a total 1,023 class registrations. A pre- and post-survey of 18 youth participating in the Control the Flow workshop indicated:
  - Before the workshop, 50% would like to have a job related to science.
  - After the workshop, 83% would like to have a job related to science.

* Biosolids are organic solids separated from wastewater and biologically processed to make them safe to use as a fertilizer.

4-H Youth Development

Early Childhood

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Four New Staff Positions Added

What an exciting year of continued growth in the Lancaster County Extension office! In 2016, we welcomed four new positions to our team: 4-H Coordinator, Urban Entomologist, Growing Healthy Kids Educator and Domestic Water/Wastewater Management Educator.

Many positive impacts were made as a result of these staff additions. An increased number of Lancaster County youth gained skills in healthy lifestyles, career development and leadership, all while becoming confident, caring and contributing citizens. Nearly 2,300 individuals and agency staff received direct education on bed bugs, head lice and a multitude of other pests in and around homes. Local expertise for managing water safety and quality will now be a readily available resource for homeowners and local and state agencies not only in Lancaster County, but across Nebraska.

For 2017, I am excited to watch additional growth as we are in the process of hiring Extension Educators to lead the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed). The new staff join a vibrant team working together to help Lancaster County residents use research-based knowledge in their daily lives.

Karen Wedig
UNL Extension Educator & Unit Leader

New Growing Healthy Kids Educator
Alyssa Hovlovic presenting a fitness activity to 2nd graders.

New Water Educator
Meghan Sitter was a panel speaker at the Nebraska Water Center’s 2016 Water Symposium.

Benefit to People

“I've found the information provided by Nebraska Extension to be invaluable in formulating Lincoln City Libraries' response to bed bug issues through their trainings. I've learned how to identify materials which may be contaminated so they can be immediately isolated and treated or removed from the collection. Extension provided training for our staff and are available to answer any questions we have.”

Katie Murtha, Librarian, Bennett Martin Public Library

“I have seen firsthand the immense impact of the Nutrition Education Program cooking club and informal nutrition education opportunities shared with our diverse students. These students were able to gain a comprehensive understanding through hands-on activities that introduce them to a variety of resources in nutrition. Our students love cooking club and the feedback has been so positive with parents saying they now try club recipes at home.”

Troy Mack, School Community Coordinator, Culler Middle School

“Being new to this part of Nebraska, Extension helped with vegetation that was native to this area. I had never seen a locust tree before and the cottonwood trees are twice the size of the ones out in western Nebraska.”

Ray Carr, acreage owner

“4-H has provided me with valuable skills that I will use throughout my life. 4-H has enhanced my leadership, communications and organizational skills – to name a few. I have learned through my years of 4-H how to manage my time in order to timely complete projects. I have also learned how to explain projects through the interview judging process, which also provides constructive feedback for future projects.”

Anna Sump, 4-H youth

4-H Youth Development

“4-H Youth Development

4-H Clubs - With more than 80 clubs ranging from 5 to 77 youth members, clubs are an important part of the Lancaster County 4-H program. 4-H clubs are led by adult volunteers and often hold regular meetings, elect youth officers, recite the 4-H pledge, learn together and do community service projects. Many club members participate in contests and fair events. Pictured are Little Green Giants 4-H club members making circuits as part of the 4-H electricity project.

4-H at Lancaster County Super Fair - At the 2016 Super Fair, nearly 730 4-H/FFA exhibitors showcased approximately 5,360 exhibits (including static exhibits, animals, contest entries and Clover Kids exhibits). The Super Fair provides 4-H youth an opportunity to showcase the projects they’ve worked on throughout the year. Pictured is the beef showmanship senior champion being congratulated by the judge.

4-H School Enrichment Programs - Lancaster County 4-H presents several programs in local schools, including: Garbology (2nd grade), Embryology (3rd grade), Ag Literacy Festival (4th grade), Earth Wellness Festival (5th grade), Nutrition Education Program (K-5th grades in qualifying LP5 schools) and Growing Healthy Kids (K-2 grades in the rest of LP5 schools). These curricula meet Nebraska Curriculum Standards (except Ag Literacy Festival). Last year, 3,583 students in 51 local schools participated in Garbology, learning about waste and the environment. Extension Assistant Teri Hlava (pictured) gives presentations to classrooms about the “study of garbage.”

4-H School Enrichment Programs – Lancaster County

4-H Engages 33,099 Youth
Nebraska Extension’s 4-H positive youth development program emphasizes hands-on learning in the areas of science, ag literacy, healthy lifestyles, career development and citizenship/leadership. In the past year, 33,099 Lancaster County youth were engaged in 4-H programs, including clubs, school enrichment, after-school/summer sites and camps.

Conference Facility: A Center for Community Learning

As part of Extension’s commitment to community learning, the Lancaster Extension Education Center conference facility is available to other nonprofit and governmental organizations at a nominal cost. In 2016, more than 92 agencies held approximately 5,453 hours of conferences and meetings in the facility. Pictured is the Lincoln Early Childhood Conference.

Conference Facility: A Center for Community Learning

Extension’s Volunteers Worth Over Half a Million Dollars!

In 2016, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County benefited from an estimated 1,429 volunteers who helped extend the reach of programs such as 4-H and Master Gardeners. The volunteers’ estimated 24,443 total hours of service are worth nearly $525,769 to our community! Pictured are Master Gardener volunteers presenting a composting demonstration.

Extension’s Volunteers Worth Over Half a Million Dollars!