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The NEBLINE, March 2005

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SPECIAL INSERT:

Weed Awareness
Prepared by the Lancaster County Weed Control Authority

Extended drought across much of Nebraska in recent years, complicated by rapidly increasing energy prices, has put Nebraska’s farmers in an economic squeeze. Some irrigators are exploring the economic feasibility of switching energy sources. A thorough economic comparison calculates fuel, operating and ownership costs.

Estimating Irrigation Fuel Cost Differences

The University of Nebraska Biological Systems Engineering Department has analyzed hundreds of pumping plant test results and developed the Nebraska Pumping Plant Efficiency Curve (NPPC) (see Table 1, page 11). This criteria indicates the useful work one should expect per unit for each of the energy sources and irrigation systems.

Using the NPPC, irrigators can estimate expected energy consumption for each alternative energy source whenever the lift, system pressure and pumping rate are known. Multiplying the estimated energy consumption by the fuel price provides an estimate of energy cost for each fuel source, thereby giving an indirect comparison of prices for alternative energy sources.

One can compute price factors using the NPPC to compare each energy source to the others. For example, the expected work output per gallon of liquid propane (LP) is 6.89 while the work output of diesel is 12.5. For the energy cost to be equal between these two fuel sources, LP should be priced at 6.89/12.5 = 55.1% of the cost of diesel.

Table 2 (see page 11) presents equivalent price factors for the common irrigation energy sources. To compute equivalent energy prices for irrigation pumping, select an energy source on the left margin with a known price per unit (dollars per gallon, dollars per kWh). In that row, find the price factor in the cell under the second energy source. Multiply the known cost per unit of energy selected by the price factor to find equivalent energy cost for the second energy source. For example: If irrigation diesel is $1.00 per gallon, the price per gallon for LP that results in the same energy cost for pumping is $1.60 x 0.551= $0.88 per gallon. Interpretation: If LP can be purchased for less than $0.88 per gallon, the energy cost per hour is less for LP than diesel. If LP is higher than $0.88 per gallon, the energy cost is higher for LP than diesel at $1.60 per gallon.

Factoring Operating & Ownership Costs

Operating costs are dominated by the fuel cost component but repairs, labor and rental costs are also a part of the operating costs. Ownership costs include: return on capital investment, taxes, insurance and depreciation.

The annualized cost of an irrigation system depends on the design. Different systems have different costs. For example, a center pivot sprinkler system likely will have a higher initial cost and a higher pumping cost per inch of water delivered to the field, than a gated pipe system. However, due to improved irrigation efficiencies, a center pivot system nearly always requires less total water pumped to meet crop needs and fewer labor hours to irrigate as compared to a gated pipe system. The question is, will the savings in inches of water pumped plus savings in labor offset the higher pumping cost per acre-inch (due to higher system pressure) and higher ownership costs of the center pivot versus the gated pipe system?

The energy source selected dictates the type of power unit needed. The purchase price and expected service life is quite different when comparing spark ignition and diesel engines. The lower purchase price, lower maintenance costs and longer service life for electric motors can be a big plus when considering switching to electric power. However, the cost of bringing in three-phase electrical power, annual hookup charges and potential for load control during peak electrical demand periods, must be considered as well.

Rising Energy Prices Cause Some Irrigators to Consider Changing Energy Source

Tom Dorn
Extension Educator

Water Conservation Strategies

The drought has prompted a renewed interest in water conservation practices in crop production. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension has extensive resources on these practices which can be accessed online at lancaster.unl.edu/ag or lancasterns.unl.edu/crops/ or at the Lancaster County Extension office.

No-Till Farming

There has been increased statewide interest in learning to use no-till farming methods which save both fuel and soil water. Extension has more than 75 educational publications on the topic.

Improved Irrigation Management

Many crop producers are overwatering. Proper irrigation management can maximize water and energy efficiencies. UNL Cooperative Extension’s “Irrigation Management Home Study Course” can be ordered online at nsrc.unl.edu/homestudy/irrigation/

“Irrigcost” Interactive Online Spreadsheet Can Help Compare Costs

To help irrigators estimate costs, I’ve developed a user-friendly, electronic spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. “Irrigcost” helps compare different energy sources, operating and ownership costs. Costs are presented as total annual cost (dollars per year), annual cost per acre and annual cost per acre-inch of water pumped.

This spreadsheet is available at no cost on the Lancaster County Extension Web site at lancaster.unl.edu/ag/crops/ irrigcost/inputCPISC.xls — look for the file named “Irrigcost.xls Notebook.” You can download the file, e-mail it to your computer (downloading instructions are on the Web page) or you can run the program as an online version when you go to the World Wide Web page in Internet Explorer. See IRRIGATION COSTS on page 11.

The Nebraska Pumping Plant Efficiency Curve (NPPC), a new tool to help irrigators compare energy costs, is presented on page 14 - 15. It is available at no cost online at lancaster.unl.edu/ag/crops/ irrigcost/irrigcost.xls. The spreadsheet presents options for irrigation using different energy sources.

Alternative Crops/Limited Irrigation

Aided by University of Nebraska research and extension personnel, some farmers in western Nebraska are planting alternative crops requiring less water. Others are adopting strategies that produce optimum yields under limited irrigation. Recent studies in the Panhandle have demonstrated with proper management, it is possible to produce 80 percent of normal yield with only six inches of irrigation.

Extension Irrigation Engineer Dean Yonts, at the Panhandle Research & Extension Center near Scottsbluff, can be contacted at (308) 632-1238.

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2005 All-America Selections Winners

Gaillardia aristata ‘Arizona Sun’ Flower Award Winner

This gaillardia is red and yellow. Each 3 inch single flower has a red center and bright yellow petals. The bright colors are similar to the autumn colors of trees. Like many annuals, this plant produces flowers continuously. Even the spent blooms are attractive as tufts of seed. When grown in a full sun garden, ‘Arizona Sun’ is a compact plant reaching only 8 to 10 inches tall, spreading 10 to 12 inches. Blanket flower is native to the Great Plains and usually considered a perennial. ‘Arizona Sun’ performed as an exceptional plant the first year grown from seed. This AAS winner may overwinter, depending upon the severity of winter. ‘Arizona Sun’ flowers can be cut and used for summer bouquets. They may attract butterflies to the garden in search of nectar.

Vinca ‘First Kiss Blackberry’ Flower Award Winner

The first blue-flowered Vinca is an AAS winner named ‘First Kiss Blackberry.’ The large 2 inch single blooms have a darker eye which accentuates the violet blue color. For decades breeders have diligently worked towards a blue Vinca. Now ‘First Kiss Blackberry’ fills the color void. Gardeners will look for ‘First Kiss Blackberry’ plants to add to their collection. Proven to be heat and drought tolerant, mature plants will be about 11 inches tall and spread 16 inches, given adequate growing conditions. Easy to grow, this Vinca has a bright bloom in patio containers or combination plantings.

Zinnia ‘Magellan Coral’ Flower Award Winner

‘Magellan Coral’ blooms are radiant. They illuminate the garden. The fully double, dahlia flowered 5 to 6 inch bloom gleams with brilliant coral petals. The flower quality and color are superior to other zinnias. In addition to the color, ‘Magellan Coral’ plants are brimming with luminous blooms. Consistent flower production is an improved quality. Earliness to bloom is another exceptional trait. From sowing seed to first bloom requires only 6 to 9 weeks. Mature zinnia plants will reach about 15 to 17 inches tall and spread 15 to 19 inches, depending upon growing conditions. Like all zinnias, ‘Magellan Coral’ will perform best in a full sun garden. This AAS winner is adaptable to container gardening.

Eggplant ‘Fairy Tale’ Vegetable Award Winner

‘Fairy Tale’ is a petite plant with decorative miniature eggplants. The fruit appearance is as luscious as the taste. ‘Fairy Tale’ flowers are radiant white with violet stripes. The fruit are sweet, not bitter, with a tender skin and few seeds. The elongated oval eggplants can be picked when quite small at 1 to 2 ounces or they can be left on the plant until double the weight, and the flavor and tenderness remain. ‘Fairy Tale’ eggplants are recommended for marinating and grilling whole. The harvest can begin in just 49 to 51 days from transplanting. The petite plant reaches less than 3 feet tall and wide, perfect for container gardening. An eggplant has not won an AAS award since 1939, so ‘Fairy Tale’ is truly an exceptional new variety.

Winter Squash ‘Bonbon’ Vegetable Award Winner

‘Bonbon’ is a squash with three improved traits. They are restricted height, earliness and superior eating qualities. ‘Bonbon’ has an upright, semi-bush habit needing less garden space. Mature vine spread about 8 feet. When ‘Bonbon’ plants are transplanted into a full-sun garden, look for ripe fruit within 52 days, a few days earlier than other varieties. ‘Bonbon’ squash has thick sturdy flesh that delivers sweet flavor and creamy texture loaded with vitamin A. The dark green squash is painted with silver stripes and weighs about four pounds. Easy to grow, ‘Bonbon’ is not highly susceptible to diseases and is adaptable to any location where squash is grown.

Caring for Easter Lilies

We can thank Louis Houghton, a World War I soldier, for the popularity of the Bermuda lily, better known as the Easter lily, in this country. In 1919, he brought a suitcase full of hybrid lily bulbs to the southern coast of Oregon and gave them to families and friends to plant. The climate there was ideal for growing this lily, a native of the Ryukyu Islands of Japan, and by 1945, 1,200 west coast growers were producing bulbs for the commercial market. Up until that time, first Bermuda, and then Japan, dominated the U.S. export market.

Today, ten growers, most located along the California–Oregon border, in an area known as the “Lily Capital of the World,” produce 95 percent of all bulbs grown in the world for the United Easter lily market. They produce almost 12 million bulbs, shipping them to commercial greenhouses in the U.S. and Canada. Despite a sales window of only two weeks, Easter lilies are the fourth largest crop in wholesale value in the U.S. potted plant market, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Poinsettias, mums and azaleas rank first, second and third.

The cultivar most commonly grown for U.S. markets is the “Nelie White.” It is named for a lily grower’s wife and has large, white, fragrant trumpet-shaped flowers. When buying a lily, look for a plant with flowers in various stages of bloom from buds to open or partially opened flowers. Foliage should be dense, rich green in color, and extend all the way down to the soil line. This is a good indication of a healthy root system. Look for a well-proportioned plant, one about two times as high as the pot. You also should check the foliage, flowers and buds for signs of insects and disease. At home, keep your lily away from drafts and drying heat sources such as appliances or heating ducts. Bright, indirect light is best with daytime temperatures of 65 to 75°F. Water the plant only when the soil feels dry to the touch, but do not overwater. To prolong the life of the blossoms, remove the yellow anthers (pollen-bearing pods) found in the center of each flower. Do not throw away your Easter lily after it is done blooming. You can save the bulb and plant it outdoors. Easter lilies can be replanted outside after the blooms are gone. Plant the Easter lily outdoors as soon as the ground can be worked. Select a sunny site with well-drained soil. Set the top of the bulb six inches below the soil surface. Cut off the old flowers, but leave the stem intact. Leave the leafy back stem until it dies down in the fall, cut it off at the soil surface. After the leafy surface freezes in late fall, mulch the soil and do not remove the mulch until new growth begins in the spring.
How Do Honey Bees Survive the Winter?

Unlike other insects that go dormant during Nebraska’s cold winter, honey bees stay active in their hives even when temperatures are below zero. How do they do this?

The temperature in a properly managed hive never falls below 63°F. To maintain this temperature, workers form a tight cluster and surround the queen bee. By using stored honey as fuel, the workers shiver to generate metabolic heat. The bees on the outside of the cluster, insulate the cluster while the innermost bees generate heat. They continually rotate their position, alternating their role as a heat producer and heat retainer.

It isn’t unusual for a bee hive to lose two-thirds of its population between late summer and the following spring, but the beekeeper’s goal is to keep the queen and some bees alive and healthy until the hives warm up in the spring.

A strong honey bee hive needs at least 55-60 pounds of honey at the beginning of winter. Beekeepers usually check their hives in March to make sure there are adequate food reserves to last until mid-April. Another management technique that will reduce honey consumption is for beekeepers to place a winter wrap around each hive in November (see photo) and remove the wraps in mid-April. If you are interested in keeping bees, but don’t exactly know where to start, come to a Beginning Beekeeping Workshop on Saturday, March 12 (information at right). (BPO)

Ultrasonic Pest Repellents Are Not Effective

A number of ultrasonic repellents have been marketed to consumers who want a safer and easier way to control pests around the home. Ultrasonic repellents have existed for more than 25 years and are marketed through mail-order companies, home shopping cable channels and gardening magazines. They are readily being sold on the Internet and at hardware and other stores.

Ultrasonic devices claim to use ultra-high frequency sound waves to chase away pests from rodents to spiders. Some research shows ultrasonic devices can affect wild rodents in field situations and their travel routes. However, intensive research and evaluation from vertebrate pest specialists and research labs do not support the use of ultrasonic devices as an effective method to control or prevent pests.

One debunking study involved 20 ultrasonic units of different brands. The researchers used these units against rats and mice in indoor and outdoor pens and in field trials. The overall result was non-existent: there was no repellence for a day or so that was soon overcome, regardless of whether or not the frequency was variable, random or intermittent. Some units produced no noticeable effect on the rodents at all. There are plenty of non-toxic or low-toxic methods to keep pests outside. For mouse control, seal cracks and crevices larger than one-fourth inch. Eliminate weedy growth or vegetation near the house, where mice usually live.

Lastly, use snap traps inside the house at the earliest sign of mice. A particularly effective bait is a bit of softened caramel (yes, candy) pressed into the “trigger” of the snap trap. Caramel is highly attractive and cannot be licked off by mice. It also stays fresh for a long time. Live traps can be used, with or without bait — they work because of mouse behavior. Glue boards can also be used, but they must be thrown away after catching a mouse. Researchers have found ultrasonic devices are not effective for controlling insect pests, either.

Other methods take a bit more time and effort than plugging in an ineffective device, but remember, if it seems too good to be true, it probably isn’t true. (BPO)

Nominations Are Being Sought for the 2005 Lincoln-Lancaster County Environmental Awards

Do you know of an individual, business, community group, school or youth group who deserves to be recognized for their environmental stewardship efforts? If so, nominate them for a Lincoln-Lancaster County Environmental Award. Awards are given in the following categories:

Pollution Prevention for preventing pollution and waste from being created.
Waste Reduction and Recycling for reduction in the amount of waste sent to the landfill.
Water Conservation for reduction in water use, using water conservation techniques.
Cleanup/ Beautification for improvement in an area’s visual quality.
Residential/ Commercial Development for reducing waste during construction, using drought tolerant landscaping, energy efficient or green building techniques.
Environmental Education/ Awareness for new or unique efforts for providing or supporting educational environment programs; increasing awareness about local environmental issues.

Nominations may be made in more than one category if appropriate. Deadline for nominations is March 18.

To nominate someone, call Harry Heifer at 441-8035 or Gene Hanlon at 441-7043 for a nomination form. Or, complete the nomination form online at: www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/env/ eewf/ewfenviro/lke/ awards.htm

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Environmental Awards are co-sponsored by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and Lincoln Public Works and Utilities Department with generous support from many donors. (BPO)

Beginning Beekeeping Workshop

Learn to:
• manage honey bees by understanding their biology and behavior
• identify the best Nebraska honey plants
• install packaged bees
• manage honey bee diseases
• harvest honey and beeswax
• prepare your crop for market
• locate hives for best survival and production

Saturday, March 12, 9 a.m.—5 p.m.
Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry creek Road, Lincoln

Saturday, April 9, 9 a.m.—3 p.m.
Apiculture lab, Agricultural Research and Development Center (ARDC), near Mead

Cost: $15 per family — includes refreshments and a workbook for new beekeepers. One lunch is included in the registration. Lunch for each additional family member is $8.

For more information, call Barb Ogg at 441-7180

Everything Homeowners Need to Know About Termite Control

THURSDAY, MAY 19, 6:30—9:30 P.M.
Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry creek Road, Lincoln

Attendees will:
• Learn to identify termites and their damage
• Learn unbiased information about effective treatments, based on research results
• Learn why treatments cost so much
• Receive up-to-date reference materials
• Be informed consumers and make better decisions

Cost: $25
Call 441-7180 for more information

EWF needs volunteers

Volunteers are needed for Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in Earth Wellness Festival activities. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event.
Federal and state law states a private pesticide applicator must be certified and licensed to buy, use or supervise the use of restricted-use pesticides to produce an agricultural commodity on property they own or rent or on an employer’s property if the applicator is an employee of the farmer. No certification is needed if one will only be using general-use pesticides.

Four Private Applicator training sessions have been held previously but two additional sessions will be held in March. These are scheduled for Thursday, March 3 from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. and Wednesday, March 16 from 1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

There is a $15 fee collected at the training session. When the Nebraska Department of Agriculture receives the application from the training session, private applicators will be billed $25 for a license fee. This fee covers the three-year license period. (TD)

Pesticide Disposal Collection, March 16

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with University of Nebraska Extension, the Environmental Trust Fund, the Nebraska Agri-Business Association and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, will be holding a pesticide disposal collection day on Wednesday, March 16 at the Farmers Cooperative Grain elevator plant on North 14th Street, Waverly. Anyone with outdated or unwanted pesticides may bring them to the site from 8 a.m. until noon.

Pesticides should be brought in their original containers with label intact if possible, but pesticides which no longer have readable labels will be accepted. No pre-registration is required. There is no charge for up to 1,000 pounds of product from individuals or firms. A small fee will be assessed for the amount over 1,000 pounds.

Remember to protect yourself and your surroundings when handling waste pesticides. You may need to wear personal protective equipment or, as a minimum, unlined neoprene or nitrile gloves. If the pesticide container has been damaged, pack it in another container that will hold the product if the first container should rupture while being transported. Use a container that can be left at the collection site if it becomes contaminated.

Three main categories of pesticides will be accepted:

• Unused, unneeded, old or damaged pesticides (includes insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and fungicasts).
• Pesticides of all types (agricultural crops, livestock, homes, lawns, gardens, structural, commercial), including those in aerosol containers.
• Farmer-supplied electrical transformers containing PCB’s from renovator irrigation systems.

Since different wastes need to be handled and disposed of differently, products that fit in one of the categories above are the only ones accepted. Products NOT accepted include:

• Pesticide products in pressurized cylinders
• Waste oil or oil filters
• Antifreeze
• Paints, varnishes and thinners
• Cleaners and solvents

The Waverly site is one of about 20 sites across Nebraska selected for this pesticide collection program in 2005. Don’t miss the opportunity to dispose of unwanted pesticides! (TD)

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension is presenting “Acreage Insights - Rural Living Clinics” to help acreage owners manage their rural living environment. Upcoming workshops (listed with Lincoln dates) are:

• Create a Prairie With Native Grasses and Wildflowers — Thursday, March 10, 7-9 p.m.
• Acreage Landscape Management — Thursday, April 14, 7-9 p.m.

In Lincoln, clinics will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road. The workshops will also be offered in Omaha and Fremont.

Wildflowers in an acreage landscape create a natural, informal appearance and provide a changing palette of colors throughout the growing season. Native grasses reduce soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat. At "Create a Prairie With Native Grasses and Wildflowers," learn how to incorporate a wildflower planting, the necessary steps in establishment and how to maintain the planting in years to come.

Preregistration is $10 per person and must be received three working days before the program. Late registration is $15 per person. Note: If a minimum number of registrations are not received, clinics will be cancelled and preregistered participants will receive a full refund.

For more information or for a registration form, call the extension office at 441-7180 for a brochure or go online at lancaster.unl.edu/hort/Program/AgricInsightsClinics.htm.


Pruning Shrubs in the Landscape

Pruning is the most important maintenance practice for shrubs in the landscape. Rarely will you find a shrub in your landscape that does not require some pruning each year. Proper pruning will help the shrub produce a more attractive, vigorous, well-formed plant. Also, pruning will often increase flowering and extend the usefulness of your shrub.

Shrubs should be examined on an annual basis with some pruning carried out each year. Too many homeowners neglect their shrubs and fail to prune for several years. Shrubs become overgrown, with vigorous growth requiring heavy pruning to reduce the size of the plant, and in many cases permanent damage occurs.

Why Prune?

Pruning is a necessary practice to maintain healthy, vigorous shrubs and keep them within desirable size.

1. The first step in pruning is to remove all dead, broken or diseased branches. This is necessary to maintain the health of the shrub. Prune out such branches as soon as they are discovered.

2. Remove branches that are misshaped, crowded, rubbing or dropping on other branches. Rubbing limbs can cause injury to other branches and cause loss of vigor and death by crowding.

3. Prune to establish shape and size or thin the branches. This prevents shrubs from becoming overgrown and prevents the need for severe pruning to reduce the size of overgrown shrubs.

4. To stimulate flower and fruit development. Many flowering shrubs will produce more flower buds the following season if old spent flowers are removed from the plant when they lose their attractiveness. Azalea is an example.

5. To rejuvenate old, overgrown shrubs to restore their shape and vigor. When shrubs become overgrown heavy pruning is necessary to restore them to their normal shape and vigor. Forsythia is an example.

6. To reduce plant size to prevent crowding, or shading other plants.

7. To shape or train a plant in an unusual form. Fiddles, espalier, etc. are examples of this type of pruning.

When to Prune

Many people have a misconception that the only time to prune is during the winter when plants are dormant. Most landscapes will include different plants, which will require pruning throughout the year. Never hesitate to cut out tall, fast-growing or unsightly limbs while they are growing. If tip buds are pruned on new growth, lateral growth occurs and reduces the upward growth.

Knowing when to prune is just as important as knowing how to prune. To insure proper response of the plant to pruning, the flowering and fruiting habits of the plants must be known.

As a general rule shrubs that flower before July 1, should be pruned immediately after flowering. These plants develop flower buds during the summer for the following spring bloom. If pruning is delayed, any branching system is difficult to achieve if pruning is done after July 1. On small plants prune back limbs to stimulate growth of basal branches.

Do not shear:

Shearing destroys the normal shape of most shrubs. To reduce the size and to produce a more compact growth, cut out the undesirable longer limbs from inside the plant. Do not cut all limbs at the same heights.

Practice proper cutting techniques:

When making small cuts in heading back or thinning, cut at different lengths, 1/4 inch above an active bud. For some shrubs, removing the branch back to ground level is desirable. New shoots should be reduced to about 1/2 to 2/3 of their length to encourage lateral shoots to develop.

When removing limbs over 1 inch in diameter, cut back flush to the trunk, a large limb or to a side limb. These precautions are not always necessary on limbs smaller than 1 inch. (DJ)

Prune Trees Correctly To Maintain Proper Growth

Proper tree pruning is essential in developing trees with strong structures and desirable form.

When to Prune:

Trees require a high level of care to maintain their safety and aesthetics. Young trees that receive appropriate pruning measures require little corrective pruning when they mature. Pruning should be done with an understanding of how trees respond to each cut. Improper pruning can cause damage that will last for the life of the tree, or worse, shorten the life of the tree. Pruning removes dead branches and crowded or rubbing limbs. Routine pruning doesn’t necessarily improve a tree’s health; heavy pruning can be a significant health hazard in the form of the tree.

When pruning, there are certain principles to be considered when pruning young trees. Always have a purpose before you cut a limb. Proper techniques is essential. Learn where and how to make the cuts before picking up the pruning shears. Waiting to prune a tree when it’s mature can create the need for large cuts that the tree cannot easily close.

Pruning cuts should be made just outside the branch collar where the branch attaches to the trunk. For small trees, most cuts can be made with hand pruning shears. The scissor type, or bypass hand pruners are preferred when dealing with the anvil type. Cuts larger than a half inch in diameter should be made with lopping shears. Make sure tools are kept clean and sharp.

When pruning, it’s important to establish a strong scaffold structure. Scaffold branches provide the framework for mature trees. The goal in training young trees is to establish a strong trunk with sturdy, well-spaced branches. The strength of the branch structure depends upon the relative sizes of the branches, the branch angles and the limb spacing. These factors vary from tree to tree. Good pruning techniques remove structurally weak branches while maintaining the natural form of the tree. For most young trees, maintain a single, dominant trunk leader.

The amount of live tissue that should be removed depends on the tree size, shape and age. Young trees that are not pruned will require very little pruning. Young trees of some species may not tolerate the removal of masses of tissue without damage to the tree.

Pruning can be dangerous. If pruning involves working above the ground, or using power equipment, it’s best to hire a professional arborist that can determine what type of pruning is necessary to improve the health, appearance and safety of trees. (DJ)

Understand Liability

Issues Before Raising Livestock

You’ve finally managed to buy the acreage you always dreamed of owning. Not a real farm perhaps, but large enough to raise a few cows, a goat or two and the horse the kids always wanted.

Sounds like the dream of a lot of new country residents. As with most things, however, there are potential downsides to animal ownership, not the least of which is the liability an owner has if an animal strays and/or trespasses on another’s property. Livestock owners are liable for expenses incurred by the landowner if the animal causes property damage. If the landowner in such a case is responsible for any costs incurred, including any maintenance costs. If you are the landowner and someone’s livestock trespasses upon your property, you may take custody of that livestock. If you do, you are required to notify the owner that you have custody of the animal. If you do not know who owns the livestock, you must make a reasonable effort to determine the owner’s identity.

If your livestock strays upon a road or highway and is the cause of an accident, you are liable for damages, including medical expenses. For further information about livestock and liability, talk to your insurance provider. (DJ)
Eating Well as We Age, Part 2

How to Tell if Your Freezer Power Was Off

A gentleman had been traveling during the time when the electricity was off for several days in many homes in his community. However, when he returned home, his electricity was working and everything in his freezer was frozen solid. He proceeded to eat some food from the freezer and got sick. What happened? During the high school years. Reasons for not spending mealtime together include conflicting schedules among parents and teens, food dislikes, poor family relations and the desire for adolescents to be on their own. Would it surprise you families who share meals together have healthier eating habits as well as other benefits? According to the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, families who share meals more often have been associated with greater intakes of fruits and vegetables, less fast foods and greater nutrient intakes of dairy, protein, iron and vitamins. Frequent family dinners may also reduce the risk a teen will smoke, drink or use illegal drugs. The majority of teenagers eat with their family they eat healthier. Adolescents learn valuable lessons during mealtime, so how can we create a more positive atmosphere? Turn off the TV. Turn off the phone ringer or let the answering machine pick up calls. Talk about positive things at the table. How can we create a more positive atmosphere? How can we create a more positive atmosphere? 

Did You Know?
The Easter bunny isn’t the first one to think of dying eggs! Ancient Chinese, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all used decorated eggs in celebrating the arrival of the spring. The Chinese also brought scarlet eggs to the temple when introducing the newborns, and modern Chinese parents still present red eggs to their relatives and friends when children are born. Much nicer than cigars, don’t you think? Food & Fitness

Celebrating Easter

Mary Torell
Public Information Officer, NE Department of Agriculture Poultry & Egg Division

Egg Handling and Safety Tips

There are some important safe handling methods to remember this time of year when you’re doing egg cooking or hiding those eggs since eggs are handled a great deal in celebrating the arrival of this special time of year.

Did You Know?

• Eggs have multiple benefits that will help make a good diet. The words may be on the front or side of the food package. FDA makes sure these words are true. Use label claims like these to choose foods that help make a good diet. Look for “Nutrition Facts” Look at the serving size. 1. Find the percent daily value. The numbers underneath each of these nutrients is in one serving. 2. About 100 percent of each nutrient each day is usually healthy. If you’re on a special diet, like a low-sodium or low-fat diet, use the percent numbers to pick low-sodium and low-fat foods. Use “Nutrition Facts” Look at the serving size. 1. Find the percent daily value. The numbers underneath each of these nutrients is in one serving. 2. About 100 percent of each nutrient each day is usually healthy. If you’re on a special diet, like a low-sodium or low-fat diet, use the percent numbers to pick low-sodium and low-fat foods.

Egg Rolling

Many variations of egg rolling contests and games can be played. The egg rolling that takes place each year on Easter Monday on the lawn of the White House has become an American tradition, having been started by Dolley Madison in the early 1800s. The American Egg Board provides the specially decorated eggs for the occasion.

What to do:

• Buy low-cost foods, like dried beans and peas, rice and pasta. Or buy foods that contain these items, like split pea soup and canned beans and rice.
• Use coupons for money-off foods you like.
• Buy foods on sale. Also buy store-brand foods. They often cost less.
• Find your local church or synagogue offers free or low-cost meals.
• Take part in group meal programs offered through local senior center, Jewish or Catholic. Or, have meals brought to your home.
• Get creative. Call the food stamp office listed under your county government in the blue pages of the telephone book.

Reading Food Labels

Look for words that say something healthy about the food. Examples are: “Low Fat,” “No Cholesterol,” “Good Source of Fiber.” Look for words that tell about the food’s relation to a disease. A low-fat food may say, “While many factors affect heart disease, diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of this disease.” The words may be on the front or side of the food package. FDA makes sure these words are true. Use label claims like these to choose foods that help make a good diet.

Egg Salad Week

Making the Most of Mealtime with Tweens and Teens

How to Tell if Your Freezer Power Was Off

A gentleman had been traveling during the time when the electricity was off for several days in many homes in his community. However, when he returned home, his electricity was working and everything in his freezer was frozen solid. He proceeded to eat some food from the freezer and got sick. What happened? Actually, he was unaware there were any food safety problems. Here are a couple of easy ways to help detect this problem. If the ice cube does not evaporate and disappear. If the ice cube has melted down from its original shape, however, you know the power was off for an extended period of time.

For information on handling your food during a power outage, go to www.tis.usda.gov/food_security_and_emergency_preparedness/keeping_food_safe_during_an_emergency/index.asp

For more free egg recipe, egg decorating tips or information related to eggs and egg safety, contact Mary Torell, public information officer, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Poultry & Egg Division at 472-0752 or mmtorell2@unl.edu or call 472-0752.
A noxious weed control plan was developed that guided the operations of the Weed Control Authority for the year. This plan was approved and supported by the Weed Control Authority. A summary of these activities follows.

**Inspection Activity**

There were 6,592 inspections made of 3,029 sites on 20,829 acres during the year. We found 2,498 violations on 5,900 acres. Violations dropped 280 from last year.

**Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Program**

We found 1,067 infestations on 4,986 acres. The number of infestations decreased by 119 and acres decreased by 1,708. There were 122 more purple loosestrife infestations found. The number of infestations found by noxious weed is shown below. Of these sites, 882 were controlled by landowners. The Authority controlled 30 sites on 112 acres.

**City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program**

We found 1,431 violations as a result of 1,681 complaints. This was 161 less violations and 239 less complaints than in 2004. Voluntary compliance of landowners remained at 93 percent. Forced cutting had to be performed on 109 sites at the cost of $11,817. Of these, 88 sites had to be specially assessed for $14,218.

## Extent of Noxious Weeds in Lancaster County

Noxious weed acres in the county had been on a declining trend from 1993 to 2001. The major reason for this decline was the result of the control efforts of both public and private landowners. Weather conditions, for example, are a factor as well. In 2001, 2000, 2001 and 2004. It was dry in the fall and spring of 2000 and 2001 when most of the musk thistle germinates. Moisture conditions were good in the fall and spring of 2003 and 2004 resulting in more noxious weeds germinating from the persistent seed bank in the soil and making control more difficult.

Control efforts of landowners have remained strong during this period. The infestations on roadsides and railroads have been on a steady decline. Less than five percent of the infestations have been allowed to go to seed. There are many seeds dormant in the soil and will germinate when conditions are right. The key to long term control is to prevent seedling that will add to the seed bank.

## Expended Cooperation Efforts

The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority joined with ten other counties in eastern Nebraska and other partners in forming the Lower Platte Weed Management Area to address the eight noxious weeds and other invasive weeds. The first target effort is three weeds invading riparian areas along the Platte River and upstream. These three weeds are purple loosestrife, phragmites and salt cedar.

**Prevention Activities**

Inspectors were trained to be alert to noxious weeds and potential noxious weeds. We made 15 weed-free forage inspections and certified as being noxious-weed free. This included Nebraska Game and Park’s hay fields, straw that was going to be used for mulch on state roads and hay that was being transported for use to feed horses on a hunting trip.

**Awareness Activities**

A Weed Awareness insert was published in the February issue of the Lancaster County Extension N E B L I N E newsletter. The Authority Web site was maintained and updated. There were 40,814 hits, an increase of almost 14,000 hits from the previous year. Around 400 informational mailings were made to landowners in addition to the 2,500 violation notifications. An exhibit was displayed at the state fair and other locations.
Saltcedar Added to Nebraska’s Noxious Weed List

In order to protect Nebraska’s economy and the quality of its land, Nebraska Department of Agriculture Director Merlyn Carlson found it necessary to designate saltcedar as a noxious weed in Nebraska. The designation took effect on January 1, 2005.

Saltcedar is a dense, deciduous shrub or small tree that has the potential to significantly affect native vegetation throughout much of Nebraska. A native of Eurasia and north Africa, it was introduced into the United States as an ornamental.

Ornamental Plantings
Saltcedar has been sold for many years as various tamarisk species, also called tamarix. Seeds of ‘Pink Cascade’ and other selections of Tamarix can escape to waterways in the state. It is no longer legal to sell the seeds or plants of tamarix in Nebraska since it was designated a noxious weed. Existing plantings are also considered illegal and need to be removed.

Identification
Saltcedar is a deciduous tree (or shrub) with long slender branches and deep pink flowers. It grows to 6–26 feet tall. The branches often form thickets many feet wide. The narrow leaves are small and grayish green, often overlapping and crowding on the stems. Although the leaves have the appearance of an evergreen, they are actually deciduous.

The deep pink to almost white flowers crowd in many slender spikes, forming dense masses at the top of the branches. The flowers are about 1.5mm across, and have five petals. The seedpods are pinkish red to greenish yellow and will break into three to five parts when mature. A tuft of fine silky hairs adorns the tip of the tiny seeds.

The saltcedar’s bark is a reddish brown while the wood is soft and white. The smooth bark ridges and furrows with age. Tamarix have a deep taproot and extensive lateral rhizomes, which profusely branch upon contact with water.

Detrimental Impacts
Saltcedar has invaded riparian areas throughout the West. As an aggressive colonizer able to survive in a wide variety of habitats, saltcedar often forms monotypic stands, replacing willows, cottonwoods and other native riparian vegetation.

The stems and leaves of mature plants secrete salt, forming a crust above and below ground that inhibits other plants. Saltcedar has a long taproot that allows it to access deep water tables and interfere with natural aquatic systems. Saltcedar is an enormous water consumer. A single large plant can absorb 200 gallons of water a day. Saltcedar’s high water consumption further stresses native vegetation by lowering ground water levels and can also dry up springs and marshy areas.

Infestations also have detrimental impacts on wildlife. Saltcedar seeds have almost no protein and are too small to be eaten by most animals. In addition, its scale-like leaves offer little suitable forage for browsing animals. Studies indicate saltcedar is not favored bird habitat.

A single mature saltcedar may produce hundreds of thousands of seeds between April and October. The seeds are then dispersed by wind and water throughout the growing season. The seedlings are tolerant of water, saline soils and drought and may grow as much as a foot a month.

What makes non-native invasive plants such as saltcedar different from other introduced species is their ability to take advantage of disturbances to the native plant community to expand their limits. Once established, non-native invasive plants can spread rapidly because of the lack of natural enemies that keep plant populations balanced in their native range.

Foothold in Nebraska
Saltcedar has been documented throughout Nebraska. Infestations have been found along the Platte River from Wyoming to the Missouri River. Also, saltcedar is found along many of Nebraska’s southwest reservoirs as well as Lake McConaughy. Smaller infestations have been found on the Republican and Missouri Rivers.

Only two infestations are known in Lancaster County. Undoubtedly this number will increase as more monitoring is done and the public becomes more aware. A few ornamental plantings have been observed in Lincoln. Any sightings of saltcedar (ornamental or wild) should be reported to the Weed Control Authority at 441-7817.

Removal of Ornamental Plantings
The most effective control method is cutting down the shrub or tree and painting the stump surface immediately afterward with an herbicide (cut stump treatment). Herbicide must be applied within 10-15 minutes of cutting to prevent excessive resprouting from the stump. Follow up herbicide application is needed to treat sprouts from the root system. This usually will only be necessary for 2–4 years. All branches and trunk pieces must be removed from the site to prevent sprouting. Tamarisk branches touching wet ground have been known to sprout and send down new roots.

Noxious weed is a legal term used to denote a destructive or harmful weed for the purpose of regulation. The Director of Agriculture establishes which plants are noxious. These non-native plants compete aggressively with desirable plants and vegetation. Failure to control noxious weeds in this state is a serious problem which is detrimental to the production of crops and livestock and to the welfare of residents of this state. Noxious weeds may also devalue land and reduce tax revenue.

*Nebraska’s noxious weeds Spotted and Diffuse Knapweeds have not been found in Lancaster County.

In 2004, the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act states it is the duty of each person who owns or controls land to effectively control noxious weeds on such land. Pictured are Nebraska’s noxious weeds which can be found in Lancaster County.*

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Saltcedar
(2 known infestations in 2004)
Purple Loosestrife is Invading Lincoln’s Streams

As of 2001, state law bans the sale, offering for sale, distribution, planting or cultivation of purple loosestrife. This ban covers both Lythrum salicaria and L. virgatum. There are no exceptions for cultivars, hybrids or so-called sterile varieties. Sale violations of purple loosestrife should be reported to the Department of Agriculture.

Plants may have been purchased and planted legally before 2001, but are now illegal and should be removed.

Lythrum plants have many horticultural names, some of which are:
- Rose Queen
- The Rocket
- Morden Pink or Rose
- Fire Candle
- Atropurpureum
- Happy
- Morden Superbun
- Purple Spir
- Mr. Robert’s or Robert’s
- Lady Sackville

Currently, about 31 states have laws prohibiting Lythrum importation or distribution because of its aggressively invasive characteristics.

Control Methods

Any control method you select should be repeated for several years to catch missed plants and those reestablishing from seed or regrowth from root parts.

Hand Pulling/Digging

Small young plants can be hand-pulled, especially those rooted in loose soil. Be sure to get the entire root.

Ornamental purple loosestrife (Lythrum) in a landscape.

Roots left behind will resprout. Older plants are generally too big for pulling and are difficult to dig up. Avoid excessive soil disturbance. If this is unavoidable, consider chemical methods. Handle plants prior to the onset of seeds (which begins in early August), or cut and bag the seed heads to avoid spreading seeds. Removed plant parts should be placed in a garbage bag and put out for garbage pickup. Don’t throw them in your compost pile.

Herbicide Application

Careful use of herbicide is the most effective, efficient and least destructive means of removing large purple loosestrife plants. Currently glyphosate is the most effective active ingredient for killing loosestrife. It comes in two forms: (1) “Roundup” for use on dry sites and (2) “Rodeo” for use on wet or standing water sites. Glyphosate must be applied in late July or August to be most effective. It can be sprayed onto loosestrife foliage in a one percent solution. Glyphosate is a nonsystemic herbicide, however, and will kill any green foliage that it comes in contact with. Great care must be taken to avoid treating non-target plants. Follow all label instructions when using herbicides.

Lancaster County Weed Control Web site

The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority Web site at www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/cnty/weeds provides very useful information about the Authority’s program and activities and about weed control and management. The site is continually being updated.

Via the Web site, you can:

- Contact the Weed Control Authority.
- Make a weed complaint.
- Make a real-time search of current weed inspections.
- Look at a map of noxious weed locations in the county.
- See the latest listing of possible weed special assessments.
- Study noxious weed and weed abatement laws and regulations.
- Learn about noxious weed identification.
- Read about the County Noxious Weed and City Weed Abatement Programs.
- See plans and reports.
- Check on noxious weed controls.
- Learn about managing natural areas in an urban setting.
- Test your knowledge about Nebraska weeds.
- Link to other weed control Web sites.

Current Weed Inspections Search

You may access information on the Web site about any active inspection made by the authority.

All inspections are shown for sites with infestations not yet under control. You may search for individual sites by entering the address of the parcel, the parcel ID number or the owner’s name. You may also look at all the inspections for a weed problem: musk thistle, Canada thistle, leafy spurge, purple loosestrife or weed abatement in Lincoln.

Homeowners Need to Remove Lythrum Plants

As of 2001, state law bans the sale, offering for sale, distribution, planting or cultivation of purple loosestrife. This ban covers both Lythrum salicaria and L. virgatum. There are no exceptions for cultivars, hybrids or so-called sterile varieties. Sale violations of purple loosestrife should be reported to the Department of Agriculture.

Plants may have been purchased and planted legally before 2001, but are now illegal and should be removed.

Lythrum plants have many horticultural names, some of which are:
- Rose Queen
- The Rocket
- Morden Pink or Rose
- Morden’s Gleam
- Dropmore Purple
- Columbia Pink
- The Beacon
- Fire Candle
- Azorpuspareum
- Happy
- Morden Superbun
- Purple Spir
- Mr. Robert’s or Robert’s
- Lady Sackville

Currently, about 31 states have laws prohibiting Lythrum importation or distribution because of its aggressively invasive characteristics.

Control Methods

Any control method you select should be repeated for several years to catch missed plants and those reestablishing from seed or regrowth from root parts.

Hand Pulling/Digging

Small young plants can be hand-pulled, especially those rooted in loose soil. Be sure to get the entire root.

Many Lincoln homeowners have removed lythrum plantings from their yards. The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority has notified almost 1,000 homeowners they need to remove their ornamental purple loosestrife plantings. These homeowners and many others have voluntarily done so. Even though we think most of the ornamental plants have been removed, a plentiful supply of seeds have been transported to low-lying areas and will remain in the soil until conditions are right for them to germinate.

Many Lincoln homeowners have removed lythium plantings downstream from ornamental plantings. This includes Dead Man’s Run, Antelope Creek, Real Slough and their tributaries.

Taylor Park

Above Holmes Lake
How to Control Musk Thistle

When attempting to control musk thistle or plumelike thistle, it is imperative to prevent seed production. They are biennial weeds that reproduce only by seed. Each plant is capable of producing up to 20,000 seeds. The key to managing musk thistle is to prevent all plants from going to seed. Infestations occur in the same year after year but size of the infestations vary considerably due to climatic conditions. Greater weed control conditions in the fall, like we received in the fall of 2004, favor the germination of musk thistle seeds near the soil surface at these sites. These plants will flower the next spring if the plants are not controlled that fall or the next spring.

Control Steps
1) Scout the areas with past infestations in March and April for seedlings and rosettes. A seed bank has built up in the soil at these sites. These seeds will remain viable for eight or more years waiting for the right conditions to germinate.

Leafy spurge (Euphorbia esula) is a perennial plant ranging in size from 3-6 inches in height. A native of Europe and Asia, leafy spurge emerges early in the spring and gets a head start on vegetation in a race for space, sunlight, nutrients and water. Prolific seed production and an extensive root system give the plant a huge competitive advantage and make consistent, long-term control difficult.

Monitoring of areas with known or potential leafy spurge infestations is critical; adequate control is possible if management procedures are implemented in the early stages of infestation, before the root system gets fully established. The area needs to achieve 100 percent eradication of spurge, but infestations can be reduced to manageable levels with the use of herbicides.

Strategy
The control of well-established leafy spurge stands must be considered a long-term management program. A landowner must develop a permanent annual treatment plan to prevent the spread of larger stands, eliminate smaller infestations and prevent the spread of leafy spurge to uninfested areas. The extensive leafy spurge root system allows the plant to regenerate from depths as 15 feet or more for several years. No single treatment will eradicate this weed. A multi-year annual treatment program can provide long-term control.

If you have not yet achieved a high level of control, remaining isolated patches can be spot-treated, resulting in a less costly control program. This plant spreads by underground roots and there is always a fringe area of younger plants that do not bloom.

There are also roots underground that extend laterally beyond the young plants. A 15-foot perimeter should be treated to manage leafy spurge patches to control seedlings and at planting stages. Treated patches should be watched carefully for any regrowth and/or seedlings and retreated.

Musk thistle rosette
2) It is most effective to treat the entire area with herbicides in order to control all the small seedlings and rosettes and seedlings that have not emerged. Spot control of these sites usually results in a loss of escapes since not all the plants are observed and some plants germinate later. Use 2,4-D as a contact herbicide along with a herbicide that will add to the effectiveness of killing the plants present but also have residual to later germinating plants. Some of the herbicides that will provide residual control are Escort, Tordon 22K and Telar. Grano 480G, a combination of Tordon and 2,4-D, also may be used. Follow label directions. For more information, see: Prevention of bolting of the flower stem in May. Use 2,4-D along with a residual herbicide.

5) Scout these areas weekly and provide needed follow-up control until all the musk thistle plants acting as annuals due to a cool spring.

Mechanical Control
Severing the root of musk thistle a couple of inches below the soil surface will kill the plant. The entire root does not have to be removed. Hand cutting or mowing has to be done at weekly intervals to be effective. Fire has not proven to provide effective control. The plants survive prescribed burning, but can be easily found and controlled by other means after the burn.

Maintaining a good, healthy stand of grass is very effective prevention.

Environmental Trust Fund Grant
Just announced! The Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund has awarded a $250,000 grant (for a three-year period) to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture for its Nebraska Noxious and Invasive Weed program.

New Weed Control Legislation
Federal Act Establishes a Weed Grant Program
The Noxious Weed Control and Eradication Act of 2004 amends the Plant Protection Act to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a grant program to provide federal assistance to weed management entities to control or eradicate noxious weeds. It also:
- Sets forth criteria for making grants to weed management entities and for the selection for funding of weed eradication projects. Directs the secretary to give special consideration to states with approved weed management entities established by Indian tribes.
- Authorizes the secretary to enter into agreements with weed management entities for funding of weed eradication activities that take into consideration various factors, including: (1) the severity of the noxious weeds problem or potential problem; (2) the likelihood that the activities will prevent or reduce the weed problem or increase knowledge about resolving weed problems; (3) the extent to which the activities will provide a comprehensive approach to the control or eradication of noxious weeds; and (4) the extent to which the activities will improve the overall capacity of the United States to address noxious weeds problems; and
- Establishes the Noxious and Invasive Weed program.

Additionally, the amendment assigns two new responsibilities under the Noxious Weed Control Act. This is done by providing a series of transfers from the receipts of the Noxious Weed Control Cash Fund and directs a book to the noxious weed program.

Noxious Weed Control Act of 2004 amends the Plant Protection Act to mean to supplement, and not replace, other revenue sources. The amendment was intended to coordinate with the then pending federal legislation that would provide federal pass-through funds to encourage the formation of multi-stakeholder weed management entities and a grant program to encourage the formation of noxious weed programs as noxious weeds. Specifically, the amended act authorizes a series of transfers from the receipts of the Noxious Weed Control Cash Fund to the Noxious and Invasive Weed program.

Nebraska Act Creates Grant Eligibility
The 2004 unicameral amended the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act. The amendment provides additional cash fund support for the Noxious Weed Control Program. The new provisions are intended to align Nebraska Department of Agriculture’s (NDA) responsibilities under the Noxious Weed Control Act. This is done by providing a series of transfers from the receipts of the Noxious Weed Control Cash Fund to the Noxious Weed Control Cash Fund and directs a portion of revenues from future sales of the weed book to the noxious weed program.

Additionally, the amendment assigns two new weed management authorities to the NDA to enhance tools for responding to noxious weeds and invasive plants. Specifically, the amended act authorizes the director to (1) temporarily designate plant management regions; (2) authorize up to two (2) to administer a grant program to encourage the formation of multi-stakeholder weed management entities and other types of programs that provide weed control authorities to proactively address noxious weed control concerns and emerging invasive plant problems. The grant program is not specifically funded but the director is authorized to seek grants and other revenue sources. The amendment was also intended to provide an extension of the federal legislation that would provide federal pass-through funds to encourage eligible projects similar to those enumerated in the bill.

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Monitoring of areas with known or potential leafy spurge infestations is critical; adequate control is possible if management procedures are implemented in the early stages of infestation, before the root system gets fully established. The area needs to achieve 100 percent eradication of spurge, but infestations can be reduced to manageable levels with the use of herbicides.

Strategy
The control of well-established leafy spurge stands must be considered a long-term management program. A landowner must develop a permanent annual treatment plan to prevent the spread of larger stands, eliminate smaller infestations and prevent the spread of leafy spurge to uninfested areas. The extensive leafy spurge root system allows the plant to regenerate from depths as 15 feet or more for several years. No single treatment will eradicate this weed. A multi-year annual treatment program can provide long-term control.

If you have not yet achieved a high level of control, remaining isolated patches can be spot-treated, resulting in a less costly control program. This plant spreads by underground roots and there is always a fringe area of younger plants that do not bloom.

Planteau (imazapic)
Planteau applied in the fall at 8-12 ounces per acre can provide up to 90 percent control and control one year after treatment. The label recommends application from late-August to early September. A high level of control is imperative to prevent seedling reinfestation.

Chemical Control
Currently, the three most effective herbicides as for Tordon 22K, Plateau and Glyphosate (Roundup and others). Before using any herbicide always read the label for permitted uses on your site.

Tordon (picloram)
Tordon has been an effective herbicide for controlling leafy spurge. Tordon applied at two quarts per acre during flowering or fall regrowth can give 75 percent or more leafy spurge control the first year after treatment. A less expensive option for leafy spurge control is repeated annual treatments of Tordon applied at two pints per acre plus 2,4-D at one quart (four pounds per gallon concentrate) applied in late August to mid-October, but prior to a killing frost. Plateau should be applied with a methylated seed oil, (MD 21 and two parts per ace). The addition of 28 percent UAN liquid fertilizer to Plateau plus the MSO has occasionally increased long-term leafy spurge control. Plateau is safe to use around a variety of trees, many wildflowers and other legumes. Plateau is only available through county weed control authorities that have the Proper authority to sell. The closest county authority that has it available is Jefferson County Weed Control Authority, John McKee, Superintendent, 313 South K Street, Fairbury, NE. 68352, (402) 729-3602, jeffcoweed@diodecom.net

Glyphosate (e.g. Roundup) Glyphosate (e.g. Roundup) applied at a rate of one quart per acre from mid-July to mid-September can result in 80-90 percent control of leafy spurge. Note that glyphosate is a non--selective herbicide and it will kill grasses and other desirable plants. A fungous weed killer with 2,4-D at one pint at four pounds per gallon concentrate) the following year, (mid-May to mid-June) is necessary to prevent seedling reinfestation.

Prevention
Infestations occur where there is a seed bank in the soil and the conditions are right for germination and growth. Healthy vegetation provides competition and minimizes the survival of musk thistle seedlings. Care should be taken not to disturb weed seeds from infested sites or to use forage or seeds contaminated with noxious weed seeds. Equipment should be cleaned before leaving an infested site if it is possibly contaminated. Only weed-free certified forage and seed should be used.

Weed Awareness
How to Control Leafy Spurge

Equipment should be cleaned before leaving an infested site if it is possibly contaminated. Only weed-free certified forage and seed should be used.
Workaholism — Its Affect on Children

Take a moment to think about each of these questions...

• Are you a perfectionist?
• Are you driven to gain approval and success through your work?
• Do you work long hours for fear of being laid off?
• Do you have a hard time saying “no” to work requests?
• Do you find it almost impossible to rest and relax?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you may be a workaholic. Whether over-worked, addicted to work, or merely a habit, workaholism is a big problem because it can drive a wedge between the family. Many effects parents are dismayed to discover is the wedge between family members. Divorce rates among workaholics are high and children often have problems. Different children react differently to the presence of a workaholic parent. Some imitate the parent and try, unconsciously, to surpass their mother or father by working even harder. Others rebel, retreating into their own world that offers an abundance of alternative values, including rejecting school and work.

What can you do when your workaholic ways affect your kids?
• Have a heart-to-heart talk with your children about your own work habits.
• Be open with your children. Let them know you are aware of the harmful example you have been to them and then take action to make amends.
• Build into your schedule for play and relaxation.
• List your personal priorities and share them with your children.
• Talk to your child about the importance of play and down time.

Overcoming the effects of parental overwork is a long, slow process and it begins with you. If you are a “workaholic,” start now to develop a plan to move away from that mode and plan for healthier times with the family.
Shelly Everett

Shelly Everett, a 4-H volunteer in Malcolm, was nominated for the 4-H Volunteer of the Year award. She has been volunteering with Malcolm's 4-H club for four years.

Shelly Everett is also involved in other activities, such as volunteer work at the county fair. She enjoys working alongside other volunteers and helps with C.C.D. classes at a local church. She has also seen to it that all the girls have the opportunity to be an officer and know how to successfully run that office.

In addition to volunteering for 4-H, Shelly is also in the Malcolm Parent/Teacher Organization. She loves working alongside other wonderful parents as my project leaders for our club.

Shelly Everett is nominated by Michelle Bice, a 4-H parent, and Everett, the Malcolm Clovers 4-H leader. The Malcolm Clovers 4-H club was nominated by Shelly's parents, saying, "Shelly has encouraged each member to participate in the county fair and has gone out of her way to help anyone who needed it. Shelly has been an inspiration to my daughter as well as others. She has also seen to it that all the girls have had the opportunity to be an officer and know how to successfully run that office."

Shelly Everett received the Heart of 4-H Award in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. She has been the organizational leader of The Malcolm Clovers 4-H club for four years.

Pet Pals Participate in Holiday of Trees

For the second year in a row, the Pet Pals 4-H Club created homemade ornaments and decorated a tree for Heritage League of Lincoln’s “Holiday of Trees” which raises funds for various community projects. Club members had great fun making the ornaments, and the tree received many complements.

Cookies for City Impact

Two weeks before Christmas, the Extreme Green 4-H club wasn’t at the mall shopping for gifts. Instead they spent their time baking and decorating cookies—not for themselves, but for those who wouldn’t usually get Christmas goodies. They donated at least 10 plates of cookies to City Impact for use in their mission work. The goodies made included rosettes, sugar, peanut butter blossoms and lollipop cookies.

Pet Pals Participate in Holiday of Trees

For the second year in a row, the Pet Pals 4-H Club participated in Lincoln’s Star City Holiday Festival parade. Their entry themed was sledging. Club members dressed up as mitten and club parents dressed up as ski hats. The llamas were costumed as snowy hills with small sleds slung on their backs. The manure wagon (a four wheeler pulling a garden trailer) was disguised as a giant mug of hot cocoa complete with marshmallows and “steam” created by a fog machine.

Submit your 4-H news to Vicki at the extension office or on our website at lancaster.unl.edu. Nominations of co-volunteers welcome.

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4-H & Youth

Unicameral Youth Conference

The 2005 Unicameral Youth Conference will be held June 12-15. Youth gain a basic understanding of civic life, politics and Nebraska government while interacting with State Senators, legislative aides, policy experts and lobbyists.

Application deadline: March 1 for returning applicants and mentors and April 1 for first time applicants.

Leader Training, March 14

“Winter 4-H Warm-up,” a satellite teleconference with 4-H Leaders and interested volunteers, will be held Monday, March 14 at 7 p.m. Join us for changes for 4-H record books, resources for volunteers and new 4-H projects such as the Quilt Quest, Healthy LifeStyles, Fast Food and Youth in Motion. Please register by March 11 by calling 441-7180.

New 4-H Wristsbands

Green, silicone wristbands embroidered with “4-H Makes a Difference” are available for sale as a fundraiser for Citizenship Washington Focus (CWF). Cost is $3 apiece. To purchase, contact a CWF member or the extension office at 441-7180.

Speech & PSA Contest Registrations Due March 28

Effective communication is a valuable life skill which can use throughout one’s life. The 4-H Speech and Public Service Announcement (PSA) contests teaches and allows youth to practice speaking in front of others. These contests are open to all 4-H’ers—one need not be enrolled in a specific project to register. For more information, contact Deanna Karmazin at 441-7180.

Sunday PSA Contest, April 3

Due to the growing number of participants in this contest and the tapering of the district winners, the PSA contest will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center on Tuesday, April 5 at 6:30 p.m. PSA’s must be 60 seconds; topic is 4-H. Emphasis is on the presentation of PSA for radio. Contestants must give their PSA in person, no prerecorded tapes allowed.

4-H Life Challenge Contest Study Guides

The statewide 4-H Family and Consumer Science (FCS) Life Challenge contest for seniors will be held June 27–28 at UNL East Campus. The following project manuals will be used for the senior Life Challenge contest: Financial Champions, “Money Moves,” Book 2; Cooking Level 1; The Sitter; Youth in Motion and Fast Foods. The county-only Life Challenge contest for juniors will be held Wednesday, July 6 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Questions can be found on the following project manuals: The Road to Good Cooking, Sewing for Fun, Growing on My Own and Health A-Discovering Myself.

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Star City Llamas in Star City Parade

For the 7th year in a row, the Star City Llamas 4-H Club participated in Lincoln’s Star City Holiday Festival parade. Their entry theme was sledging. Club members dressed up as mittens and club parents dressed up as ski hats. The llamas were costumed as snowy hills with small sleds slung on their backs. The manure wagon (a four wheeler pulling a garden trailer) was disguised as a giant mug of hot cocoa—complete with marshmallows and “steam” created by a fog machine.

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DINE OUT FOR CWF

Bruegger’s Bagels, Feb. 21–27

Bruegger’s Bagels supports the fundraiser of the 4-H Citizenship Washington Focus Trip

Please present this certificate when making a purchase at any Lincoln area Bruegger’s Bagels from Monday, Feb. 21st – Sunday, Feb. 27th.

A full 20% of any food or drink purchases made at Bruegger’s Bagels during this time will be donated to the 4-H Citizenship Washington Focus Trip.

This certificate may be photocopied. Participant may use a certificate more than once in given week.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Bruegger’s Bagels</th>
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<th>Soups</th>
<th>Salads</th>
<th>Coffee</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6891 “A” Street</td>
<td>486-4994</td>
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</table>

This certificate is valid from Thursday, February 21 to Sunday, February 27, 2005. Certificate cannot be used in or around a Bruegger’s Bagels location. Valid during above dates only. Cannot be used to purchase gift certificates. Pretty good as far as small print goes.

Change in County Fair Static Exhibit Release Time

For the 2005 Lancaster County Fair will be released from noon to 2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 7. This includes both 4-H and Open Class static exhibits. (TK)

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Achievement Night

Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Night was held Feb. 1 at the University of Nebraska Westbrook Music Building. The evening was presented by 4-H Council with generous support from University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the UNL Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts. 4-H ers, 4-H clubs and 4-H leaders were recognized for their 2004 achievements. Lancaster County 4-H congratulates these youth who work throughout the year on their 4-H projects and commit themselves to excellence! We also thank the 4-H leaders who volunteer their time and talents!

For a complete list of award, scholarship and pin recipients (as well as additional photos) visit online at lancaster.unl.edu/4H.

2004 Outstanding 4-H Club Awards

The Lincoln Center Kiwanis Club presents Outstanding 4-H Club Awards to the top 4-H clubs participating in the Lancaster County Fair. There are three categories based on number of club members. One category winner is awarded the Wayne C. Farmer memorial cup as the overall Outstanding 4-H Club for the year. Clubs receive points based on all members’ total county fair exhibit and contest placings. The following clubs were recognized at a recent Lincoln Center Kiwanis meeting as well as 4-H Achievement Night:

2004 Outstanding 4-H Club Awards

Happy Go Lucky 4-H club of Bennet is the Category III winner (clubs with 13 or more members). The club’s 50 members were enrolled in 21 projects and entered 261 total exhibits at the Lancaster County Fair. Happy Go Lucky has won the award 15 times in this category since 1989. John Bruss is club organizational leader.

Shimmering Shamrocks 4-H Club of Lincoln is winner of Category I (7 members or less) — and winner of the Wayne C. Farmer trophy as overall Outstanding 4-H Club for the year. At the 2004 Lancaster County Fair, the club’s seven members were enrolled in 32 projects and entered 115 total exhibits. The club is winning this award for the second year. Becky McHenry is club leader.

Clovers & Company 4-H Club of Lincoln is winner of Category II (8–12 members). The club’s nine members were enrolled in 18 projects and entered 70 total exhibits at the County Fair. This is the fourth year Clovers & Company club is winner of this category. Kay Clinch is club leader.

AWARDS BOOKS

Animal Science: Kyle Pedersen
Citizenship & Civic Education: Karen Clinch
Communication & Expressive Arts: Kyle Pedersen
Environmental Education & Earth Science: Kyle Pedersen
Healthy Lifestyles: Laura Cassel
Personal Development & Leadership: Grace Farley
Plant Science: Kyle Pedersen
Science & Technology: Nicole Pedersen

The evening included select performances from students of the UNL Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, including a brass quintet (above), a presentation by an art student and theater monologues.

City of Lincoln Mayor Coleen J. Seng proclaimed February as “Nebraska 4-H Month” (see above). Noelle Badeer read the proclamation at Achievement Night.

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Lincoln Center Kiwanis (pictured at left): William Davis (left), Joel Keralis (right)
Lancaster County 4-H Council: Noelle Badeer, Ryan Cheney, Elizabeth Fry, Monica Fujan, Paige Moser, Marie Spomer
Lane Community: Kyle Schachenmeyer
4-H Teen Council: William Davis, Monica Fujan

4-H CAMP SCHOLARSHIP

New this year! Joyce Vahle Scholarship (pictured at right): Abbey Spencer

Marie Spomer (right) was awarded OUTSTANDING 4-H MEMBER. She has been a 4-H’er for nine years and an active Junior Leader.

Deb Arends (at right) received the 4-H MERITORIOUS SERVICE award for her 15 years of remarkable volunteer service.

Noelle Bader (left) and Paige Moser (right) were presented American Youth Foundation I DARE YOU! awards for striving to achieve their personal best.

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Get Money Back From Your Taxes: Earned Income Tax Credit

Lincoln’s Volunteer Tax Assistance Program

Many families that apply for EITC pay someone to complete their tax forms. This can often cost between $15 and $150 and can be more. Paying for tax preparation takes away the value of the EITC.

Volunteers throughout Lincoln are now offering free federal and state tax return preparation through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. The VITA is a national program providing free assistance to low income, elderly, limited English proficient and disabled individuals for preparing their tax returns and cannot afford the services of a paid tax preparer.

According to Miriam Bede, a tax specialist with the Internal Revenue Service, “The VITA program has provided free tax assistance to the Lincoln community for over 30 years. The volunteers are the heart of this program and represent the diversity present in this community.”

Vietnamese, Arabic, Hispanic, Indian, Russian and Bosnian speaking volunteers will be available at some locations for translation and tax preparation.

Volunteers are taught basic tax preparation techniques and technology, enabling them to easily handle most returns or at least know where to find the answer in the IRS quick reference guides. Volunteers are trained to prepare basic Forms 1040 tax returns, including, Social Security and retirement deductions, claims for the Earned Income Tax Credit, other tax credits and the comparable state tax forms. Volunteers do not prepare business or complex tax returns.

Free electronic filing of the Federal Tax return will also be available at some locations. Electronically filed tax returns greatly increase the speed of a refund and help reduce return errors. Combined with direct deposits, the refunds can be received within 10 to 14 days.

What You Need to Bring to Tax Preparation Sites:

• A photo identification.
• Social Security Cards (or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number) for yourself, spouse and dependents listed on the return.
• All wage and earnings statements (W-2).
• Any interest and dividend statements (Form 1099).
• A copy of last year’s return (if available).
• Child care provider name, address and tax ID number.
• A sample check if you want direct deposit of your refund.
• Any other information concerning income and expenses for 2004.

Lincoln VITA Program Tax Sites and Hours

All sites operate until April 15 and provide electronic filing unless noted. No appointment necessary!

Lincoln Action Program — 210 "O" St. (E-filing closes 2/27/05)
• Mondays, 1-4 p.m.
• Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
• Saturdays, 9-11:30 a.m.

Anderson Library — 3635 Touzain Ave.
• Tuesdays, 3-6 p.m.
• Thursdays, 4-6:30 p.m.

Elkhorn Library — 1530 Superior St.
• Mondays, 5-9:30 p.m.
• Thursdays, 4-6:30 p.m.

Benjamin Martin Library — 14th & N St.
(E-filing closes 2/27/05)
• Mondays, 10-1 p.m.
• Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m.
• Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
• Thursdays, 1-4 p.m.

Hawthorne Elementary School — 300 S. 48th St. (E-filing closes 2/24/05)
• Mondays, 4-7 p.m.
• Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m.
• Thursdays, 4-7 p.m.

Salvation Army — 2625 Potter St.
• Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
• Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

27th St. (No E-filing)
• Mondays, 1-4 p.m.
• Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
• Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
• Thursdays, 1-4 p.m.

Galewood Library — 14th & "N" St.
• Mondays, 10-1 p.m.
• Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m.

Spanish Language — 225 S. 25th St.
• Saturdays, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Hilltop Cabinet — 2300 S. "O" St.
• Mondays, 1-4 p.m.
• Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
• Thursdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
• Fridays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Scripps Elementary School — 260 S. 37th St.
• Mondays, 1-4 p.m.

Time is there like Nebraska

This Nebraska Student’s Homework is Homeland Security

Preston Meek, a junior engineering major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Miford North graduate, earned a prestigious Homeland Security Scholarship last fall. This scholarship supports his development and mentoring of the next generation of scientists as they seek to reduce America’s risk. Meek credits his early tutelage to the risk from my second experience at Nebraska. I think that along with my coursework, and... This is a great way to determine if a career in the beef industry is for you, plus make many new contacts!

If you are interested, application and additional information can be obtained from Deanna. Applications are due by March 15, along with a registration fee of $50. Information can also be obtained at animalscience.unl.edu/youth/beefsymp.htm.

The Nebraska Beef Leadership Symposium Application Deadlines for March 15

The annual Nebraska Beef Leadership Symposium applications are currently being accepted from any student in Nebraska or surrounding states. Students can also apply in person at the Beef Mentor Camps. Applications must be postmarked by March 15.”

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Irrigation Costs

Table 1. The Nebraska Pumping Plant Performance Criteria (NPC)

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<th>hp-h (energy unit)</th>
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<td>Electricity</td>
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Note: Table compares energy prices based on the Nebraska Pumping Plant Performance Criteria. It provides an estimate of equivalent energy costs for pumping water from the Nebraska Pecos Aquifer. It does not consider differences in ownership cost or differences in labor requirements, repair costs or annual hookup charges, if any. Fuel prices are constantly changing — over time, this could affect the relative cost ranking of one energy source versus another.

Table 2. Equivalent Price Factors for Irrigation Energy Sources

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<th>Energy Units</th>
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<td>14.124</td>
<td>69.718</td>
<td>7.785</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline</td>
<td>1.443</td>
<td>7.125</td>
<td>0.796</td>
<td>0.102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This table assumes a natural gas conversion rate of 100,000 BTU per 1,000 cubic feet (cf). To convert price per therm to equivalent price per gallon, multiply the price per therm by 0.2.

Animal Science Youth Field Day April 2

The Southeast Animal Science Youth Field Day will be held Saturday, April 2, 9–10 a.m. on UNL East Campus at the Animal Science Complex. All high school youth ages are invited to participate — no cost to attend! Fun activities will increase your science-based knowledge of animals. The event is sponsored by UNL Cooperative Extension. Pre-registration required. Contact Deanna at 441-7180.

The NEBLINE

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It started as an idea. Marty Cruickshank, 4-H staff member in charge of the Lancaster County 4-H horse program, saw a need for a club aimed at youth who want to participate in a 4-H horse project but don’t have access to horses. “I see a horseless club as a great way for kids who probably will never have a horse but have a love for the animal to learn about horses and hopefully have the opportunity to ride a little,” said Cruickshank. “It is also a chance for kids who are thinking about getting a horse to be around horses and find out if they really do want to take on the commitment. Kids and their parents can find out how to take care of a horse and what type of equipment is needed.”

Enter Jen DeBusk. She recently moved to Lincoln from California. She wanted to help with 4-H but didn’t feel ready to head up a riding club. Cruickshank mentioned the need for a horseless club and DeBusk bit immediately. DeBusk volunteered to be club organizational leader.

4-H Horse Stampede March 12

This third annual 4-H Horse Stampede will be held Saturday, March 12 at the Animal Science Building on UNL East Campus. The Stampeded consists of the 4-H state horse-related competitions: Horse Bowl, Public Speaking, Demonstration and Art contests. It is free to watch Stampede events. All 4-H members in the horse program are encouraged to attend — it’s a good way to see what the competition is about and to consider competing next year. Schedule is:

8–4 p.m. Art Contest Judging and Display
9 a.m. Demonstration Contests
10:30 a.m. Public Speaking Contests
7 p.m. Awards Presentation

*held at the Lancaster Event Center as part of the evening performance of Horse Expo

4-H Horse Program, call Marty Cruickshank at 441-7180. 4-H Horse program, call Marty Cruickshank at 441-7180.

The Lincoln Broomtails currently has ten members, and is always open to new members. For more information about The Broomtails club or 4-H Horse program, call Marty Cruickshank at 441-7180. 4-H is part of UNL Cooperative Extension.

If anyone would like to host The Broomtails for a visit to their horse barn, or to share a horse-related activity, please contact 4-H staff member Marty by calling 441-7180.

The Lincoln Broomtails decorated their club area and participated in the herdsmanship contest (in which clubs are judged on cleanliness of stall areas, attention to safety, care of animal and courteousness of members). Members took turns feeding and watering Libby. During the Western Horse Show, they handed out ribbons to winners.

4-H parent Kay said, “The members are learning what it realistically takes to take care of a horse. They haven’t done it full time, but they’ve done most of the steps.”

Last October, members of the Riding Wranglers 4-H club invited The Broomtails out to ride their horses. The Wranglers led the horses as Broomtails members rode, some for their first time. The Wranglers also gave a mini-clinic about the differences between English and Western horses, tack and riding.

The Broomtails visited a tack shop, “Tack ‘n Togs,” in December. Owner Marge Davenport showed club members different types of saddles, bridles and other equipment. “We try to do hands-on activity each month,” explains DeBusk.

The Lincoln Broomtails has ten members, and is always open to new members. For more information about The Broomtails club or 4-H Horse program, call Marty Cruickshank at 441-7180. 4-H is part of UNL Cooperative Extension.

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