11-1-2005

The NEBLINE, November/December 2005
Community Food Programs Help Limited-Resource Families Eat Healthy

Hunger and malnourishment are not limited to third-world countries. Currently, 180,000 children suffer from food insecurity and do not know where their next meal will come from. Seventy-six thousand children are enough to fill Memorial Stadium.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods.” There are numerous reasons people may not be able to afford adequate food, including: • Jobs which do not pay enough to meet basic needs • Costs of child or elderly care • Loss of income • Medical emergencies • Other changes in life circumstances

Money for groceries often becomes the “elastic” part of the income which tends to be spent for higher priority basic needs, such as rent and utilities.

Both federal supplemental food programs and local emergency food programs are vital to sustain many families through tough times.

Federal Supplemental Food Programs

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service has several nutrition assistance programs which provide limited-resource people access to food, a healthful diet and nutrition education.

• FOOD STAMPS is the nation’s first line of defense against hunger. Food stamp eligibility is based on income, family size, household resources and other factors. Households in Nebraska must have incomes below 133% of the poverty line (for example, $35,798 for a family of 4). On average, food stamp benefits provide 78 cents per meal per person. In July 2005, 117,625 Nebraskans benefited from food stamps.

• WOMEN, INFANT, CHILDREN (WIC) serves pregnant, breast-feeding, postpartum women, infants and children up to age five. Eligibility includes incomes up to 185% of the poverty line (for example, $35,798 for a family of 4). Monthly WIC vouchers range from $33.51 to $122.

• SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PROGRAMS are the largest child nutrition programs. Children of families eligible for Food Stamps and/or WIC are eligible for free or reduced breakfasts and lunches at school. Last year, 463,330 breakfasts and 1,777,713 lunches were served to limited-resource youth at Lincoln Public Schools.

• SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM is for school-aged youth at income-eligiblecomo. Lincoln–Lancaster Health Department coordinates this program at over 25 sites.

• COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL MENTAL FOOD PROGRAM is for seniors over 60, pregnant or postpartum women, and children up to age 6.

The federal government provides food choices, “says Dr. Wanda Kozlewski, UNL extension specialist and statewide coordinator of the Nutrition Education Program. “Nutrition has a direct impact on people’s health, which, in turn can improve productivity and quality of life while reducing illness and associated health care costs.”

Get Involved in the Fight Against Hunger

If you qualify for federal supplemental food programs, please apply. Food Stamps local contact: Health and Human Services at 471-7000 or online at http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/afss/stamps.htm. WIC local contact: Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department at 441-6200 or Family Service at 441-8655.

Encourage income-eligible families to participate in supplemental food programs. Ask if they need help filling out the applications.

Donate your time and resources to non-profit agencies such as the Food Bank of Lincoln, Emergency Food Pantries System, Matt Talbot Kitchen, The Gathering Place Soup Kitchen, Salvation Army, Good Neighbor Center, Tabitha Meals on Wheels, People’s Care Mission and FoodNet.

Teach a young parent or a child how to prepare healthy meals. Join a 4-H club or access 4-H foods manuals to teach your children at home. Phone: 441-7180. Web site: lancaster.unl.edu/4h

Advocate for people who can’t advocate for themselves through involvement with Center for People in Need at 476-4357 or online at http://centerforpeopleinneed.org or Nebraska Appleseed at 438-8853 or online at http://www.neappleseed.org

NEP Teaches People How to Stretch Their Food Dollar

The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) partners with numerous local agencies, coalitions and classrooms to teach:

• budgeting food dollars
• saving money through meal planning
• saving time by fixing quick and easy meals
• keeping food safe to eat
• feeding infants and children
• preparing nutritious snacks
• growing your own food
• using food stamps
• preparing healthy meals

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 3.1 million people in Nebraska are food insecure. Currently, 97,311 adults and 31,686 children are eligible for Food Stamps. NEP reaches eligible families through a variety of programs.

Nutrition Education Program staff member Heidi Schmitz (right) compares sugar content in popular beverages with a Head Start parent. Food choices affect families’ physical and dental health for a lifetime.

University research shows for every dollar of NEP funding, there is a projected health care cost savings of $2.07 to $5.29.

Further Reading

• Food stamps local contact: Health and Human Services at 471-7000 or online at http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/afss/stamps.htm. WIC local contact: Lincoln–Lancaster County Health Department at 441-6200 or Family Service at 441-8655.

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For More Information

For a list of the primary agencies which provide food assistance in Lancaster County, see page 10 of this issue or go to www.lancaster.unl.edu
While soybean rust has been in the spotlight since last November, soybean cyst nematode (SCN) may cause the greatest losses to U.S. and Nebraska soybean producers. In many cases, producers are not familiar with SCN, or only look for it when there is a problem in a soybean field and all other possibilities have been eliminated.

To increase the awareness of SCN and better define its distribution, the Nebraska Soybean Board provided funding for free sampling kits ($20 value) to be distributed through extension offices to farmers in counties where soybeans are grown.

Each kit contains a bag for you to submit a sample to the Plant & Pest Diagnostic Clinic at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and directions for collecting a soil sample. You will need to collect a soil sample and submit it to the clinic by December 31, 2005.

You can sample for SCN any time during the year. After harvest is a good time to sample if a field didn’t yield as expected and you want to determine if the lower yields are related to any other factor such as weather, flooding, insect infestations or weed pressure. During the growing season, if you notice areas in a field where the soybeans don’t look as healthy and it can’t be explained by any of the factors above, it is also a good time to sample.

Since there is a limited quantity of these kits available, they will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis to farmers stopping by the extension office to pick them up. To benefit as many farmers as possible, limit one kit per farm operation.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**Agricultural Tax Planning for 2005**

**Editors note:** The Nebraska Farm Business, Incorporated (NFBI) formerly Nebraska Farm Business Association remains closely associated with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. The information about NFBI or the schedule of services and fees charged to members, call NFBI at (402) 464-6324 or access their Web site at [http://www.nfbi.net](http://www.nfbi.net)

**Tax Planning Strategies**

Tax planning strategies are always important and always considered, knowing all the rules your tax preparer may use could help you make the right decisions for your operation.

Here are a few tried and true strategies that may work for your operation.

- **Calculate your accrual net farm income**
  - This is a key to knowing what the farm is truly making so you know where the “place” your tax dollars go.

- **Maximize the use of the tax safe harbor**
  - This has put several tests into place to determine if income is qualified income may not be as simple as taking the net income from Schedule F. Some common sideline activities that cannot be included would be the sale of seed, custom work, etc. The IRS has allowed for a safe harbor to be taken by taxpayers whose sideline activities do qualify the net income may not be as simple as taking the net income from Schedule F. Some common sideline activities that cannot be included would be the sale of seed, custom work, etc. The IRS has allowed for a safe harbor to be taken by taxpayers whose sideline activities do qualify the net income may not be as simple as taking the net income from Schedule F. Some common sideline activities that cannot be included would be the sale of seed, custom work, etc. The IRS has allowed for a safe harbor to be taken by taxpayers whose sideline activities do qualify the net income may not be as simple as taking the net income from Schedule F. Some common sideline activities that cannot be included would be the sale of seed, custom work, etc. **The deduction is a reduction in either wages paid by the employer. For example, if Jim, a sole-proprietor, generates $100,000 of farm income in 2005, he would qualify for a $3,000 deduction ($100,000 x 3%), in order to receive the deduction, Jim must also have paid at least $6,000 in wages to his employee. If he pays no wages, he receives no deduction. The IRS has put several tests into place to determine if income is qualified, income is set to increase, a wage rate high enough in 2010 should be considered. The deduction is a reduction in income and does not reduce self-employment taxes. The tax savings may not be great enough to make the deduction worthwhile, but planning with a tax preparer should be a priority.**

- **Depreciation Reminders**
  - The Self-Employment Tax Limit for 2005 is $105,000 (the state limit is still $52,500). There are no bonus depreciation amounts available for assets purchased after September 12, 2004 (30 percent and 50 percent in the past). If you have questions regardingruishment, feel free to contact Tina Barrett at tina@nfbi.ne.
Nebraska Arboaretum Speakers Bureau

Kathy Anderson
UNL Extension Specialist

As winter approaches, horses need a different kind of care to stay in good health while they fight the cold weather. Much of horse care depends on where they are kept during the winter, says Kathy Anderson, Ph.D., UNL horse specialist. If horses spend winter in a pasture, their shoes should be removed. Often, ice and snow can build up and cause the horse's feet to become injured. Horses in wintered indoor, their hooves should at least be trimmed and reset.

Nutrition requirements change in winter. It's important to maintain a condition score of six to seven. A horse in this condition has enough fat across its flank, neck, ribs and down its topline that it would be necessary to push a little to feel the bones. The nutritional value of winter pasture grass is low, and horses should be fed some type of hay — round bales, square bales, grass hay or alfalfa — as well as salt and mineral. Stalled horses nutritional requirements don't change much from summer. Be sure the horses always have an open water source. If horses are kept outside, their coats should be allowed to grow. This isn't as critical for horses kept inside but unless they are in a barn, horses should be covered in blankets to keep them from getting sick.

Tree Selection & Care — Outstanding and overlooked trees for the Great Plains landscape. How can we help trees thrive?

Outstanding Shrubs for Nebraska — Outstanding and overlooked shrubs for the Great Plains landscape. How can we help trees thrive in our climate?

For Fire for Phlox — No group of American plants can equal the genius Phlox for its preeminence in the wild and in the garden.

Enliven Your Gardens! — Tips for design and maintenance ideas to create a low maintenance landscape. How can we help trees thrive?

Great Plants for the Great Plains program — This presentation explains the GreatPlants program. What is the program and why does it exist?

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum — A closer look at the programs and accomplishments of this unique, nationally recognized organization.

Plains Scapes — A closer look at the natural landscape of the Great Plains, how it evolved and how it can serve as the inspiration for more sustainable community landscaping.

The Wonder of Trees — Inspirational look at trees across the world and what they mean to our lives.

Plant it Right — Design and planting recommendations for successful landscaping projects.

Proven Perennial Performers (native and hardy exotics) — This presentation will discuss the use of hardy herbaceous perennials to create a low maintenance landscape.

Woody Plants for Nebraska/Great Plains — An informative discussion of some of the better trees suited for use in Nebraska and/or the Great Plains.

Woody Plants in Nebraska — A closer look at the use in Nebraska and/or the Great Plains.

Another two acres of well-managed woodland should be constructed where one is indefinitely. This path is different from a commercially focused farm, but is very appropriate for many families.

What are floral shrubs? Plants commonly grown in Nebraska with decorative stems, such as curly willow or redtwig dogwood, that are harvested for use in decorative arrangements. Who buys them? Wholesale and retail florists. Can you really make a profit with these plants? Yes, you can! Join us for this presentation by the Nebraska Woody Florals group to learn the basics of the important acreage enterprise, including plant species, planting and growing requirements and marketing techniques. Marketing and sources of plant material will also be discussed.

Pre-registration for the clinic is $10 per person and must be received by Nov. 7. Late registration is $15 per person. For more information or to register, contact extension at 441-7180 or go to the Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web site at http://acreage.unl.edu.
Thanksgiving — the Tradition Continues

Mary Torell  
Nebr. Department of Agriculture  
Turkey & Poultry Division

Turkey has been a part of Thanksgiving celebrations for generations. Today, the traditional turkey is more tender and is prepared with these tips:

**Stuffing the Turkey**

- Frozen turkey, like all other foods, should be thawed in the refrigerator, never at room temperature. When foods are thawed at room temperature, surface bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels at temperatures 40°F and above.
- To thaw turkey in its original packaging, place in a shallow pan and place in refrigerator 3 to 4 days, or about 5 hours per pound of turkey, to completely thaw.
- To speed up thawing, keep turkey in its tightly sealed plastic bag and place in pan or sink and cover with cold water. Change water every half hour.
- Turkey will thaw at the refrigerator approximately 30 minutes per pound of tur- key. The stuffed turkey should be prepared and cook turkey when it is thawed. Do not remove giblets or neck from turkey. Commercially frozen stuffed turkeys should not be thawed before roasting. Follow package instructions.

**Preparing the Turkey for Roasting**

- Remove giblets and neck from turkey. Rinse turkey with cold running water, drain and pat dry with paper towels to remove excess water.
- Rub skin of turkey with canola oil or margarine and add some paprika. This will aid in browning of the turkey skin.
- Place breast side up, in a large cooking bag. Then place in large shallow roasting pan (about 2½ inches deep). Note: If using a cooking bag, follow the instructions provided with the bag, and reduce the amount of total roasting time. Never use a paper brown bag. Roast the turkey in a preheated 325°F oven, following roasting times as listed. The internal temperature of the turkey as registered on a meat thermometer should reach a minimum of 180°F in the thigh before removing the turkey from the oven.

**Stuffing Tips**

The USDA does NOT rec- ommend stuffing the bird, but if your family insists on it, keep these tips in mind:

- Stuffing should be prepared and stuffed into the turkey immediately before it is placed in the oven for cooking. If preparing the stuffing ahead of time, wet and dry ingre- dients should be refrigerated separately and combined right before stuffing the turkey.
- Stuff the turkey loosely as the stuffing expands as it cooks, about 1/4 cup stuffing per pound of turkey. The stuff- ing should be moist, not dry, since heat destroys bacteria more rapidly in a moist envi- ronment.
- Cook the stuffed turkey in a minimum 325°F oven, and use a meat thermometer to mea- sure final doneness. Stuffing should reach 165°F.

**Storing Leftovers**

Refrigerate turkey and all other foods promptly after the holiday meal, or within two hours of cooking. Cut all the turkey meat from the bones and store in shallow, covered containers. When refrigerated at 40°F or below, cooked turkey will keep up to two days, and up to four months in the freezer when frozen at 0°F or below.

The Poultry & Egg Division offers two brochures, “Take the Guesswork Out of Roasting a Turkey” and “Carving The Whole Turkey” free upon request. Contact Maureen Burson at 472-0752, or go to http://www.nebraskapoultry.org. If you con- tact Maury, you will receive a $2 off coupon for a NORBEST tur- key, a Nebraska grown product.

FREE Healthy Desserts Presentation, Nov. 15

“Fast & Healthy Everyday Desserts” part of BryanLGH Medical Center’s “Eating Well” series — will be presented Tues- day, Nov. 15 from 7–8:30 p.m. at the Plaza Conference Center, BryanLGH Medical Center East, 1600 S. 48th Street in Lincoln. Alice Henneman, registered dietitian and UNL Extension Educator, will show you how to quickly make "everyday desserts" for a sweet and healthy ending to meals! Participants will receive an extensive handout which includes tips and recipes. No cost to attend. Register by calling BryanLGH at 481-8886.

$stretch Your Food Dollar with Leftover Turkey

Mary Torell  
Nebr. Department of Agriculture  
Poultry & Egg Division

Preparing turkey is easy, especially when you follow these guidelines:

**Preparing Turkey**

- Turkey is tender. Stir in lime juice and zest.
- Stir the rice and salt. Reduce heat to low; cover and cook for 1 minute. Add 4 cups water and bring to a boil. Stir in rice and salt. Reduce heat to low; cover and cook for 15 to 18 minutes until all water is absorbed and rice is tender. Stir in lime juice and zest.

Approximate nutrient content per serving: 126 calories; 3 gm protein; 3 g, or the National Turkey Federation’s Web site at http://www.eatturkey.com.

**Turkey Roasting Times**

Approximate timetable for roasting a turkey at 325°F. Make sure you use a meat thermometer to determine doneness.

8 to 12 pounds
2 to 3 hours
3 to 3½ hours
12 to 14 pounds
3 to 3½ hours
3½ to 4 hours
14 to 18 pounds
3½ to 4½ hours
4 to 5 hours
18 to 20 pounds
4 to 4½ hours
4½ to 5 hours
20 to 24 pounds
4 to 5 hours
5 to 5½ hours

Homemade Casserole Sauce Mix

2 cups nonfat dry milk  
1/8 cup cornstarch  
1/4 cup instant chicken bouillon  
2 tablespoons onion dried flakes  
1 teaspoon dried, crushed thyme (optional)  
1 teaspoon dried basil, crushed (optional)

Combine all ingredients and store in an air-tight container. To use as substitute for one can condensed soup, mix a cup of the dry mix with 1/4 cup cold water in a saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened.

This recipe for homemade sauce mix can be substituted for canned condensed cream of chicken soup called for in many recipes.

Source: Food Preparation. UNL Nutrition Education Program

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Ginger Citrus Rice

2 tablespoons canola oil  
2 tablespoons fresh ginger root, peeled and grated  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 large lime, zested and juiced  
Basmati is a long-grained rice with a fine texture. It can be found in Indian and Middle Eastern markets and some supermarkets.

In a 3- quart saucepan over medium heat, heat canola oil until very hot, but not smoking. Add ginger root, cumin and cook for 1 minute. Add 4 cups water and bring to a boil. Stir in rice and salt. Reduce heat to low; cover and cook 15 to 18 minutes until all water is absorbed and rice is tender. Stir in lime juice and zest.

Alice Henneman  
RO, UNL Extension Educator

Here’s a recipe from Mary Torell, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, Poultry and Egg Division, for a side dish that can be served with your Thanksgiving turkey.

Here are a few ways:

- Carvable turkey on biscuits, toast, pasta, rice or mashed potatoes.
- Casseroles using leftover turkey, vegetables, macaroni, noodles or rice.
- Salads — try salad greens with a dressing of turkey.
- Sandwiches — hot or cold, ground or sliced turkey. Homemade Casserole Sauce Mix is an economical, low-fat fix and quick way to make creamy pasta. Simply mix in a favorite veg- etable for a healthy, colorful meal. A NEP graduate who had lost the recipe when her family moved, called to request another copy as it is one of her favorites. Senior citizens find this an easy way to add calcium to their diet. This mix costs approximately 18 cents per serving, compared with 86 cents for a can of creamed soup.

Hungry Families Receive Turkey and the Trimmings

The Center for People In Need will distribute $10 vouchers to limited-income families for their Thanksgiving celebration. Vouchers can be redeemed at local supermarkets for turkey, ham or other items. Contact 476-4357 or visit http://www.centerforpeopleinneed.org to learn how to receive (or donate) a voucher.

Lincoln Action Program will provide additional food for holi- day meals. Contact 441-4515 or http://www.lancaster.unl.edu. November/December 2005

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For additional information on roasting turkeys or turkey recipes, go to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture’s Web site at http://www.nebraskapoultry.org, or the National Turkey Federation’s Web site at http://www.eatturkey.com.
Halloween Safety

Halloween is an exciting time for children and adults. Parties and going “trick or treating” can be fun if safety precautions are taken.

Crime prevention and safety tips to follow:

- Do not leave your home unattended.
- Set a specific time limit for children to be out.
- Instruct your children to stay put at your home.
- Children should never be allowed to go out alone.
- Always know who your children are with.
- Always escort your children.
- Adult escorts should take flashlight.
- Children should walk, not run, to avoid tripping.
- Turn your porch light on to make it easier to see your home.
- Instruct your children to stay in their own neighborhood and to trick or treat at homes having porch lights on.
- Children should carry trick or treat bags with strong straps or handles. This allows a child to carry the bag in one hand, leaving the other hand free.
- At night, children should stay on well-lit streets.
- If the costume is made of dark material, attach reflector tape on the costume to increase nighttime visibility.
- Children should wear comfortable, proper fitting costumes and shoes.
- Children should use non-alcoholic facial makeup instead of costume makeup.
- Check all treats before eating them.

Keeping Family Connections Strong During Holidays

Holidays can be a source of stress and conflict. With the increased pressures of work, families, holidays may remind us of broken relationships or involvements with others who make us uncomfortable or make gatherings complicated.

Activities Which Can Build Relationships

- Look at the activities you are involved in. Are they necessary? Do you pull together as a family or pull apart? What activities do you need to do and which can you bow out of? Take time to discuss with your family the activities important to each of you. Conti- nue this discussion about the impact of activities on family life.
- Start new ones that build your relationships together. Here are some ideas:
  - A party to run out alone.
  - At night, children should stay on well-lit streets.
  - If the costume is made of dark material, attach reflector tape on the costume to increase nighttime visibility.
  - Children should wear comfortable, proper fitting costumes and shoes.
  - Children should use non-alcoholic facial makeup instead of costume makeup.
  - Check all treats before eating them.
Pantry Pest Prevention
Sonni Cochran
UNL Extension Associate

Here are some helpful tips to reduce your chances of having a pantry pest infestation.

Commonly Infested Products:
• Stored foods: flour, cereals, cracked grains, baking mixess, processed food mixes, crackers, macaroni, cured sausages, powdered milk, dried fruits, nuts, popcorn and spices.
• Pet foods, birdseed, ornamental corn and dried flower arrangements.

Tips to Prevent Pantry Pests:
• Buy foods in package sizes that can be used up in a short time — within two to four months. Use older and/or opened packages before new ones.
• Store your food in insect-proof containers (screw-top glass, heavy plastic or metal).
• Store susceptible foods in the refrigerator or freezer.
• Keep food areas and areas where pets feed and birdseed are stored clean. Exposed food — even tiny crumbs — will attract insects.

What Type of Bait?
The Victor® Web site says to use peanut butter, oats, choco-late, pretzel (tied with string) or nesting materials, like a cotton ball (for females). In my opinion, a far more effective bait is a small piece of caramel. Unwrap a square of caramel and soft it in your hand until you can knead it. Tear off a small piece of caramel and press it in the curl of the trap. One caramel can be used to bait several traps. The reason that caramels work so well is that mice cannotlick the cakoff (like they do with peanut butter). Caramel cannot get rancid or moldy and mice are very attracted to it. Cheese isn’t a very good bait because mice don’t really like it.

Where to Place Traps?
Place traps in areas where you see droppings or know that mice travel. Place the trap against the wall with the bait pedal facing the wall. There are two reasons for placing traps like this. First, mice tend to travel in pathways along walls rather than in open areas because they have poor eyesight and feel their way along vertical objects. With their whiskers, placing the traps with the bait pedal facing the wall prevents mice from jumping backward to avoid getting trapped.

Use Enough Traps
One mistake trappers make is not using enough traps to get rid of the mice quickly. If the mouse population is high, millions of traps. If you are concerned about children or pets, set traps before you go to bed and remove them when you wake. Mice are generally nocturnal, although sometimes you can catch mice during the daytime.

When discarding a dead rodent, handle it with gloves and put it in a sealed container and place it in the garbage. To make this easier, use a pair of pliers to dislodge the rodent from the trap. Traps can be reused, but, if you can’t deal with a dead rodent, you can throw the trap away with the captured rodent.

Glue Boards
A slightly more ex- pensive alternative to snap traps are glue boards, which catch and hold mice attempting to cross through them. Mice can’t climb or catch their flies. Again, place glue boards along walls where mice travel. Two or three glue boards placed side-by-side will be more effective than individual boards. Or, use larger glue boards designed for rats.

The glue is non-toxic, but very sticky so do not use glue boards where children or pets can contact them. If glue from a glue board contacts the fur of a pet or the skin of a child, it can be removed with mineral or vegetable oil. Glue boards should be inspected regularly and, if a mouse is caught, discard it in a plastic bag.

Disadvantages of glue boards are they lose their effectiveness in dusty areas and temperature ex- tremes can influence the stickiness of the glue.

What About Ultrasonic Devices?
Mice can hear sounds in the ultrasonic range. However, a significant amount of research does not support the use of these devices as a practical and cost-effective method of controlling rodents. These devices are sold to unsuspecting people who would be better served by buying the cheaper and more effective snap trap.

Choosing Bird Seed
Sonni Cochran
UNL Extension Associate

Bird feeding provides an excellent opportunity for you to feed new or more species common to Nebraska backyard feeders. When choosing feeders, learn about the common species that you want to attract. This will also help you decide what types of feeders you would like to use.

No matter what feeder you choose, wild birds prefer fresh, high-quality seed. Some common- seed mixes may contain “filler” seeds and may not be as fresh. Read the package carefully. If there is a high percentage of fillers like millet, cracked corn, oats, wheat or milo, the birds will pick out the few sunflower seeds and waste the rest. Some experienced bird feeders recommend 75 percent of the seed you offer should be black oil-type sunflower.

Try making your own mix. It may cost you a little more money, but you’ll have far less waste, so you’ll end up saving money. Here is a blend of sunflower seed:
• 25 pounds of black-oil sunflower seed
• 10 pounds of white proso millet
• 10 pounds of cracked corn
Pour the seeds into a rodent-proof, metal container. A new, clean metal trash can works well. You can use a broom handle to mix the seed up. Your container should be in a dry, cool place like an unheated garage.

Check the seed often for mold. If any seed appears to be moldy, throw it out. If you plan to store your bird seed in the house, keep it in the dry, relatively pest-free pantry pest infestations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
UNL Extension in Lancaster County educational resource 304 “Managing Insect Pests” is available at the extension office or online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/EnviroPest/factsheets/304.htm

FOR MORE INFORMATION
UNL Extension-NeibGuide G669 “Backyard Wildlife: Feeding Birds” is available at the extension office or online at http://ianrpubs.unl.edu/wildlife/g669.htm
Common Houseplant Problems

Gifts For The Gardener

Mary Jane Frogge
UNL Extension Associate

Need an original or unique gift idea? Here are some gift suggestions for the gardener in the family or someone who just appreciates the outdoors.

Holiday plants are always a welcome gift to any home. They add color and holiday accents to interior surroundings. The traditional red poinsettias are popular, as are the newer flower colors of pink, white and yellow. Other possibilities are Christmas cactus, red gloxinia and kalanchoe.

The outdoor gardener might like to receive a certain tool to make the job of spring gardening easier. Soil working tools like rakes, hoes and spades may be difficult to wrap and still be a surprise, but they are always welcome. Pruning tools, like hand shears and hoes, even small saws, are easier to wrap and may be used right after the first snowfall or early in the winter.

A home weather station that measures minimum-maximum thermometer, a rain gauge and a weather log is a good gift. Do not overlook the possibility of a gardening magazine subscription.

There are a number of other stress-inducing factors that may cause problems. Many people over water their houseplants by maintaining the soil constantly wet. This can cause root rots that impair ability to replace moisture loss. A plant may grow out the pot so that its top is out of balance with the amount of soil in which it is planted. Such plants quickly exhaust the supply of water present in the soil and must be watered frequently. Constant watering sometimes compacts the soil of large leaves and smooth foliage such as rubber plant are especially slow to heal from injury.

Leaf spots are quite variable in appearance, depending upon the organism or disease causing the injury. A leaf spot may involve the entire portion of the leaf or part of it. The damaged area appears bleached, gradually turning brown, and eventually collapsing. In severe cases, resulting from chemically induced injury or exposure to temperature change due to droplets of cold water usually are smaller. They generally are yellow, sometimes giving them more margins conforming with the shape and size of the drops of chemical solution or water that caused the injury. A number of leaf spot diseases are caused by fungi and bacteria. Symptoms usually are small, water soaked spots, gradually enlarging and turning brown. There also may be considerable yellowing around the margins of the spots. These diseases rarely develop under the dry atmospheric conditions prevalent in most houses. They are most common on plants recently brought into the state from southern propagating areas.

Occasionally, leaf spots develop in the vicinity of feeding sites caused by sap-sucking insects, such as aphids, scale and mealybug. Plant surfaces in the vicinity of these insects often are covered by a glistening, sticky honeydew.

To control leaf spots you can attempt to destroy affected leaves, avoid sprinkling water on the foliage and provide adequate air circulation. If insects are involved, correctly identify the pest causing the problem. Control sap-sucking insects by washing leaves, petioles and stems with a damp cloth or treating with a commercially-prepared pyrethrin spray for house plants. Rubbing alcohol also may be applied to insects such as mealybugs with cotton swabs. Systemic insecticides also will control sucking insects.

Yellowing leaves are often caused by nutrient deficiency, especially nitrogen, but also may occur as a result of a sudden reduction of light intensity. Dieback, drooping, dieback and rubber plant are especially susceptible, as are larger pot-bound specimens of other plants. Applications of nitrogen fertilizer may reverse the development of this condition when yellowing has just started. Be cautious about fertilizing plants during the winter months. Plants growing under low light intensities are easily injured by over-fertilization. Older leaves are slower to respond, as are leaves in which yellowing is advanced. Leaves and succulent shoots become limp or wrinkled, usually recovering when water is supplied. This may be evidence of water shortage or over-abundance of water followed by the development of root rot. Over-fertilization also can cause wilting. To control wilting, check drainage, check for root rot, check for problems causing unusual rapid loss of water or alter watering schedule.

Sap-sucking insects such as scales can leave a sticky honeydew on plant surfaces.

A plant which has outgrown its pot quickly exhausts the water present in the soil.

Leaf spot caused by bacteria

Leaf spot caused by cold water

Gloxinia or plant book as a gift. A many larger book section on cacti with well stocked sections on these and related topics. Garden centers and nurseries also offer a variety of textbooks on individual plants as well as cultural practices. Someone with a new one might like a book on plant selection and landscaping, while people with a well established garden and landscape might better use information on maintenance and pruning practices.

Children love to garden, but they are too outside. Too little tools and weed controls are available for them to use. In addition to choosing children’s gardening books, flower press, worm composting, mini gardeners, books, flower press, worm composting, mini gardens, and stepping stone kit and seeds of their favorite vegetables or flowers to plant in the garden just for them. If you have a non-gardening friend or relative you want to introduce to gardening, consider a total package with plant, contain- er and growing media, along with a how-to plant care.”

There are many gift ideas for people who like to spend time outdoors. At the many state parks in the area. To make their adventure more enjoyable consider giving them a 2006 state park card pass to get into the park, a compass and identification books on wild flowers, birds, insects, butterflies, trees, tracks or mammals. Other useful items would include binoculars to look for things far away; pocket magnifier to see small things close up, sports or explorer’s watch, canteen for water, disposable camera, hiking boots, sun screen and insect repellant.

Gifts for people who appreciate the outdoors in their own back yard may include bird feeders with bird seeders or a compost bin. Gifts for them might be a bird bath at their front house, but- terfly realease/kite, outdoor thermometer, rain gauge, wild flowers or hemlock seeds. Some people may just wish to sit back, relax and enjoy the outdoors. Gifts for them might include a porch swing, garden bench, hammock and a sub- scription at Nebraska-Kansas magazine.

Mary Jane Frogge
UNL Extension Associate

Horticulture

November/December 2005
November

Sandi Kroll

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Sandi Kroll as winner of November’s “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Eight years ago, Sandi helped found Star City Kids, which has become one of the largest 4-H clubs in Lancaster County. Sandi is organizational leader and has helped teach many classes and club projects.

Sandi was nominated for the Heart of 4-H Award by Susan Frohsk, a project leader for Star City Kids, saying, “Sandi helped start Star City Kids and has been active for many years. She is very enthusiastic.”

“I love seeing the children grow and learn new things and skills that will benefit them for the rest of their lives,” says Sandi. “I also enjoy watching the kids sign up and seeing the friendships develop and grow from year to year. I also enjoy learning from the other moms and watching them teach classes. We have always had an outstanding group of moms working with our kids.”

Sandi lives in Lincoln with husband Nathan and their three children. Jacob, Emily and Sarah are all members of Star City Kids. Sandi homeschools the two youngest. She is also on the leadership team of a homeschool support group and teaches a 6th-grade girls class at her church.

Congratulations to Sandi! Volunteers like her are indeed the heart of 4-H!

December

Kirk Gunnerson

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Kirk Gunnerson as winner of December’s “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Kirk has volunteered for 4-H for 13 of his 12 years. He currently serves on the 4-H Council and Rabbit VIPS Committee. He is also the leader for BB/Air rifle portion of the Lancaster Shooting Sports program.

“I like being a 4-H volunteer because it allows me to continue working with my kids in a setting outside of school,” says Kirk. “My favorite experiences have been putting on the County Fair Shooting Sports contest, my involvement with 4-H Council, and helping get other individuals involved as volunteers for a cause.”

“Even though Kirk is a relatively new volunteer, he has taken a leadership role in many 4-H duties,” says 4-H staff member Tracy Kuhl. “He has stepped up and is willing to go the extra mile.”

Kirk lives in Lincoln with his wife Brandy and their children, Krista and Bailey, who are all members of 4-H.

Congratulations to Kirk! Volunteers like him are indeed the heart of 4-H!
2005 Horse Awards Night

The 2005 Horse Awards Night was held Oct. 4. The evening recognized top achievements at the 2005 Lancaster County Fair and other events throughout the past year. Congratulations to the Lancaster County Horse 4-H’ers, parents, leaders and teachers — what an awesome year you all had! A complete list of youth recognized and additional photos are online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h.

2005 Horse Incentive Awards

4-H’ers logged the hours they spent working with or learning about their horses. Feeding, grooming, riding, 4-H meetings and watching educational videos would be examples of activities you could do to count toward the program. Some activities counted for double hours such as giving demonstrations, giving speeches, being on the hippology team and coming to the Knowledge Club meetings. The more hours invested, the more valuable the award!

- 40 to 79 hours — Skyler Kinney, Betha Grace Prange, McKenzie Beach and Ben Cruickshank.
- 160 hours or more — Kate Rawlinson, Melissa Ebeling, Alison Daharsh, Cassie Sell, Ashley Dennerberger, Robin Shannon, Hannah Sass, Camille Sass, Samantha White, Gabby Warner, Hope Ellen Wehling, Rebecca Wehling, Ashley Wiegand, Allison Dennerberger, Lisa Booton, Jessica Harris, Sara Novotny, Elizabeth Harris, Nicole Zulike and Shelby Chubbuck.

Herdsmanship Award

The Herdsmanship award is presented to the 4-H Horse club who collectively keeps their stall areas, alleys and animals clean, neat and attractive at the Lancaster County Fair. This year’s winner, The Flying Hoofs, has won this award 12 out of the past 13 years. Best County Fair Decorations was awarded to The Young Riders 4-H club.

Judging Awards

The Horse Judging Contest emphasizes how much 4-H members know about horses as they judge four or more classes of horses. Senior division participants also give oral reasons.

- Top Ten Judging Elementary Division — Josh Krueger as Champion, Maggie Moore, Kelsey Wolf, Ryan Zulke, Chelsea Beach, Alexis Christen, Bailey Peterson, Ashley Dennerberger, Sammy Moore and Taylor Wilhems.
- Top Ten Judging Senior Division — Cassie Krueger as Champion, Joanna Duhachek, Mindy Leach, Morgan Marshall, Anna Russell, Jenni Shrader, Jessica Fitl, Amy Tice, Maria Gammanck and Lisa Booton.

All-Around Trail

The 2005 Lancaster County Fair All-Around Trail Award winner is Ben Leach.

All-Around Barrels

The 2005 Lancaster County Fair All-Around Barrels Award winner is Amanda Essink.

Wittstruck Award

The Wittstruck Award is awarded to the All-Around Champion at the Lancaster County Fair. To get this award, the rider must ride in classes from at least three of the four following categories: Showmanship (which is mandatory), speed events, performance events, and pleasure events. Before the fair takes place, riders must designate six events that they want counted toward this award. Points are awarded based on ribbon placing. The 2005 Wittstruck All-Around Award winner is Gabby Warner. Gabby not only got purples in all six events, but had either Grand or Reserve Champion placings in all six!

Ak-Sar-Ben Youth Expo Results

Seven Lancaster County 4-H members participated in the 78th Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Youth Livestock Exposition held Sept. 27-Oct. 2 at the Qwest Center in Omaha. Congratulations to all! Complete results are online at http://www.aksarben.org.

Melissa Raisch was named the Champion 3 yr. old Shaffle Bit Western Pleasure Horse Exhibitor as well as Reserve Champion Premier Horse Exhibitor.

Dusty Ehrlich was named Reserve Champion Junior Pole Bending Horse Exhibitor.

Top three Horse Judging winners (L–R): Cassie Krueger (senior), Hannah Coffman (junior) and Josh Krueger (elementary).

The Flying Hoofs 4-H Club won the Horse Herdsmanship Award.

Trophy sponsor Dick Confer (left) presented the All-Around Trail Award to Ben Leach.

Trophy sponsor Franklyn Manning presented the All-Around Barrels Award to Amanda Essink.

Trophy sponsor Drayna Wittstruck presented the All-Around Champion Award to Gabby Warner.
**Food Assistance Directory**

It takes both public and private funds and an extensive network of volunteers, non-profit agencies, churches and businesses to help feed Lancaster County families in need. The Lincoln-Lancaster Food and Hunger Coalition provides the network to coordinate these community programs. 

"Agency cooperation in Lancaster County Nebraska is by far the best I’ve experienced in the seven communities which I’ve served,” says Randall S. Jones, executive director of the Lancaster County American Red Cross. “We work together for a common cause and as a result are better able to meet our community goal of fighting hunger.”

Local emergency food isn’t designed for long-term support of families in need. Federal supplemental food programs such as Food Stamps and WIC are the most reliable source of nutrition for those in need. Below is a list of the primary programs and agencies which provide food assistance in Lancaster County. Please call prior to a visit to make sure times and dates are current. Availability of emergency foods varies from day to day based on donations. If you would like to volunteer time, food or funds, please call the agency directly.

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### Federal Supplemental Food Programs – for Extended Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOOD STAMPS</strong></td>
<td>Food Stamps is the nation’s first line of defense against hunger. Food stamp eligibility is based on income, family size, household expenses, and other factors. Households in Nebraska must be below the poverty line to be eligible ($25,155 annually for a family of 4). On average, food stamp benefits provide 78 cents per meal per person. Call for an appointment or details.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.trajectory.ne.gov">www.trajectory.ne.gov</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**NOTE:** Foodnet assists the Food Assistance Directory, please call 471-4151 to verify program availability.

### Local Emergency Food Programs – for Short Term Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LINCOLN ACTION PROGRAM</strong></td>
<td>Linnet agency in Lincoln which helps people access emergency food and move toward self-sufficiency. Office hours M–F 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Call at least a day ahead to receive a food box on Tue or Wed. Limited food boxes may be available Thursdays. Perishable foods available Mon, Tue and Thu 1–3 p.m. &amp; Tue 5–7 p.m. USDA commodity foods available Wed 12–3 p.m. Member agency of the Food Bank network and the Emergency Food Pantries System. Other assistance: clothing, utility assistance, computer lab, and more.</td>
<td>2617 Y Street 68503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRIES SYSTEM</strong></td>
<td>12 congregationally-based Emergency Food Pantries collect, sort, and distribute a 7-day supply of nutritious food to families-in-crisis via 19 human service agencies. All Emergency Food Pantry requests are screened via Lincoln Interfaith Council Office. Individuals and families can be served once every 3 months. Hours to call for screening: M–F 9 a.m.–noon &amp; 1–4 p.m. Call or access Web site for complete list of agencies.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lincolninterfaith.org/humfood.htm">www.lincolninterfaith.org/humfood.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOODNET</strong></td>
<td>Foodnet provides mostly perishable foods such as fruits, vegetables, dairy products, bread to all needy families. Foodnet has over 400 total volunteers and over 70 businesses that donate food. All food, labor, distribution sites and vehicles for hauling are donated. Anyone that is in need of food is welcome to pick up from any site. Call or access Web site for list of sites.</td>
<td>820 N 25th Street 68502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PEOPLE’S CITY MISSION DISTRIBUTION CENTER</strong></td>
<td>Largest church-based pantry in Lincoln. Call in advance for a 7-day food box. Hours: M–Tue &amp; Thu–Fri 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Preference given to families; single adults rarely served unless disabled. Member agency of the Food Bank network and the Emergency Food Pantries System. Other assistance: housing, clinical services, clothing, some diapers, limited financial assistance for utilities, etc.</td>
<td>182N 25th Street 68502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CATHERGICAL SOCIAL SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>Chaplain services are also made available. <em>Please note: The following is a partial list of programs and services available.</em></td>
<td>3700 Sheridan Blvd 68506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SALVATION ARMY</strong></td>
<td>Provides hostel and office space for area organizations. A hot, noon meal is served to clients who are under the poverty line: $25,155 annually for a family of 4.</td>
<td>210 O Street 68508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOOD NEIGHBOR CENTER</strong></td>
<td>Apprentices needed, call first. Start taking calls at 9 a.m. Hours for food boxes are M–Thu 10 a.m.–4 p.m. and Fri 9 a.m.–12 p.m. &amp; 1–4 p.m. Bread and produce available Fri 9:30–11:30 a.m. Member agency of the Food Bank network and the Emergency Food Pantries System. Other assistance: dental care, early childhood education, employment; health and housing services, youth tutoring and senior center programs.</td>
<td>4600 Cedar Circle 68524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INDIAN CENTER</strong></td>
<td>Call M–F 8 a.m.–5 p.m. for an appointment; 7-day food box. Bread available Wednesdays, 8 a.m. through afternoon. Member agency of the Food Bank network and the Emergency Food Pantries System. Other services: educational programs, emergency food, employment; health and housing services, youth tutoring and senior center programs.</td>
<td>1100 Military Road 68508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FOOD BANK OF LINCOLN</strong></td>
<td>Provides services to eligible Nebraskans of all cultures. Member agency of the Food Bank network and the Emergency Food Pantries System. Also works with some businesses directly for food donations. Other assistance: clothing, utility assistance, computer lab and more.</td>
<td>4820 N 24th Street 68504</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Local Food Programs – Meals

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GATHERING PLACE SOUP KITCHEN</strong></td>
<td>Serves free meals daily from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 5:30–6:30 p.m. seven days a week. Works primarily with homeless men, women and children as well as the working poor. Member agency of the Food Bank network and the Emergency Food Pantries System. Other assistance: clothing, housing and health services.</td>
<td>444 Cherrywood Road, Suite A 68528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MATT TALBOT KITCHEN AND OUTREACH</strong></td>
<td>Provides a hot, noon meal to individuals in Lincoln who are elderly or disabled. You may choose to receive meals once a week, once a month, or daily, if on a short or long-term basis. Meals provided, regardless of ability to pay, thanks to assistance from Tabitha Foundation.</td>
<td>210 O Street 68508</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**NOTE:** northeast Food Pantry, located at Bethany Christian Church, is part of the Emergency Food Pantries System. Director Virginia Carter (pictured) has volunteered at the pantry for 11 years.

### Nutrition Education

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<td><strong>NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (NEP)</strong></td>
<td>Provides free recipes and information on how to stretch your food dollars. After completing six lessons, participants graduate and receive a free cookbook. Participants learn in small groups at agency sites or individually through mail and phone visits. Call to see if you are eligible to participate.</td>
<td>444 Cherrywood Road, Suite A 68528</td>
</tr>
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Food Programs

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The Emergency Food Pan-
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families received 441,315 meals
worth $319,953 through the
Food Pantries.

The Food Bank serves over 1,000
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Lincoln Action Program (LAP) is the lead agency which
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Many Myths and Facts Surround Christmas Trees

Along with legends and traditions, myths about Christmas trees have become as prevalent as the ornaments on their branches.

One such myth is that all Christmas trees come from pristine forests and, therefore, it is shameful to use a real tree instead of an artificial one. In fact, 98 percent of all real Christmas trees used each year are grown on farms as sustainable crops, just like corn or pumpkins. Another myth is that real Christmas trees are a fire hazard. How many times have you seen a burning Christmas tree in the local news? According to the National Fire Protection Association, fewer than 0.001 percent of all real Christmas trees have been involved in a fire. With proper care, real Christmas trees maintain their freshness and moisture throughout the holiday season. Many people think that a real Christmas tree causes allergies. While it is quite possible that a person can be allergic to tree pollen or even tree sap, it is not as widespread as many believe. A real tree itself doesn’t produce pollen during December. It may collect dust, mold or other allergens, but so can other household items.

—By Dennis Adams, Nebraska Forest Services

Norris Public Power Sponsors Holiday Ornament Contest

Hey crafty kids and parents! Put your creative thinking caps on and participate in the Norris Public Power District’s first-ever Holiday Ornament Contest. The contest is open to all ages, and the only requirement is that you, or your parents, be Norris Public Power customers. 4-H members are encouraged to participate!

Guidelines:
- One entry per customer.
- Homemade entries please — no store bought ornaments.
- No limits on size or dimensions, but ornament must be able to hang on a tree.
- Include your name, address, phone number and age along with your ornament.
- First, second and third place cash prizes will be awarded. Entries are due by Dec. 1. Entries can be mailed to 606 Irving Street, Beatrice, NE 68310. Entries will not be returned.

As a community service, we will be donating the ornaments to the local Mother to Mother Ministry Group for their annual Christmas tea. For more information, call Susan Barnard at (402) 228-2811.

Holiday Gifts for Headstart

A good community service project for the holidays is helping the less fortunate by providing gifts for the Lincoln Public Schools Headstart Program. This program is in need of over 500 gifts for children birth to 5 years old. Literacy is being emphasized this year, so books and items to encourage reading are suggested. Items, such as puppets, activity books, puzzles, small toys, etc., relating to the story would be fun for the children. Gifts should be unwrapped and recommended cost is up to $5. Bring gifts to the extension office by Dec. 1. For more information, contact Lorene at 441-7180.

4-H Volunteer T-Shirts Available

4-H volunteer T-shirts with above pocket design are available for sale at the extension office. Shirts are burgundy, 50/50 blend and available in sizes: S, M, L, XL & XXL. Cost is $6.50.

U.S. Drought Monitor Map

As of Oct. 11, Lancaster County was in moderate drought conditions.

Nicole Pedersen Cultivates High Marks at National Horticulture Convention

Lancaster County 4-H member Nicole Pedersen earned high marks at the 2005 National Junior Horticultural Association (NJHA) Convention held October 7-10 in Aurora, Ohio. Nicole was one of six Nebraska youth attending NJHA. They also visited the Holden Arboretum, Klyn Nursery, the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame and the Great Lakes Science Museum.

Nicole’s honors included:
- Placed 13th (out of 27) in the Open Division Horticulture Contest
- 1 of 3 National Award Winners in Extemporaneous Speech age division 15-18
- Grand Award Winner for Youth Coordinator (this is a leadership award) (grand awards are a step above the national award and are a special recognition designated by the judges — not all contests have Grand Award Winners)
- Elected as Western Director Officer for the National Junior Horticultural Association 2005-06

“I’m very excited about my role as an officer for the association, and even more excited because next year the convention will be held in Omaha,” says Nicole. “So now I’m starting to plan next year’s convention. We need volunteers, presenters, sponsors, and youth interested in horticulture. Our statewide goal is to take 25 youth to convention! The convention is open to all youth ages 15-22 and has divisions for kids as young as 5!”

Anyone who is interested in helping plan next year’s convention can e-mail Nicole Pedersen at ccstar@mac.com.

Abigail Gabel Receives Top Presentation Award at State Fair

Congratulations to Lancaster County 4-H member Abigail Gabel who earned received one of eight 4-H Top Presentation Awards at the Nebraska State Fair for her “Fun Fun” presentation using LCD, slide, video or overhead projector.

4-H Strategic Plan Survey

Share Your Opinion!

Nebraska 4-H is in the process of developing goals for the next five years. Please give your feedback about what’s important to you by filling out an online survey. Lancaster County 4-H’ers are encouraged to share their input at http://4h.unl.edu. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.