The NEBLINE, March 2006

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SPECIAL INSERT: WEED AWARENESS
Prepared by the Lancaster County Weed Control Authority

Weed Awareness

3005 Annual Report

Purple Loosestrife
Leafy Spurge
Canada Thistle
Musk Thistle

In This Issue
March
Urban Agriculture . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Environmental Focus . . . . . . Authority
County. The authority has also provided the inspection and administration of the City of Lincoln since entering into an interlocal agreement.

Our mission is for the Lancaster County, Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act states it is the production of crops and forage. The Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act makes it unlawful to cause or permit the spread of noxious weeds outside the city limits of Lincoln.

These non-native plants compete with native plants for light, water, and nutrients. They can also displace native species and reduce biodiversity.

The North American Weed Management Association.

3 Camp Facilities

With three unique Nebraska locations at Halsey, Gretna and Alma, there are over 40 day and overnight camp sessions and there is something for everyone. Since the Eastern Nebraska 4-H camp near Halsey is closest to Lincoln, many Lancaster County youth attend camps there, however, local youth also attend camps at the other two locations.

The 4-H camps and centers all meet or exceed 300 standards established by the American Camping Association. The Eastern and State camps have been certified for several years. Last year, the South Central camp also became certified.

Wide Range of Activities

Some 4-H camp sessions offer a range of activities while others focus on a specific theme. For example, “Explorer Elementary” camps are loaded with adventures such as the T.R.U.S.T. rope course, canoeing, shooting sports and creek stomping, and “Aquatic Bliss” camps focus on wet experiences such as water slides, fishing and mud Gau Gau.

Most camps include one to three overnight stays in comfortable cabins. Four camps aimed at youth ages 5–8 are one-day camps — and adult chaperones are invited! This year, there are four exciting new camps: “Focus on 4-H,” “Take a Friend, Make a Friend — World Celebration,” “CSI – Gretna,” and “Lights, Camera, Action — Arts/Drama Camp.”

How to Register

2006 4-H Summer Camp brochures have complete information about all camps as well as registration forms. Brochures are available at the extension office or online at http://4h.unl.edu/camps/. New this year, register online at 4h.unl.edu! Save 10% by registering before April 1.

A variety of lengths, interest areas, locations and prices, 4-H camps fit perfectly with your child’s summer activities!

Date Camp Audience Early Bird/Eve

EASTERN NEBRASKA 4-H CENTER, GRENTA
May 27 Kids - N - Crazy Day Camp ages 5-8 $25/$28
June 5-8 Focus on 4-H ages 8-15 $162/$178
June 9-10 Take a Friend, Make a Friend ages 8-11 $85/$93
June 12-15 Niobrara Tube Trip ages 11-15 $302/$332
June 19-23 Boldly Bound ages 8-11 $127/$140
June 20-22 Take a Friend, Make a Friend ages 8-11 $127/$140
June 26-29 Biking Bound ages 8-11 $302/$332
July 5-8 Explorer Elementary ages 8-11 $162/$178
July 10-14 Outdoor Skills - Nebraska Game & Parks ages 8-11 $262/$288
July 11-13 Take a Friend, Make a Friend ages 8-11 $127/$140
July 14-28 Aquatic Bliss - Elementary ages 8-11 $262/$288
July 24-28 Aquatic Bliss - Middle School ages 11-15 $262/$288
July 29 Kids - N - Water Day Camp ages 5-8 $25/$28
July 31-Aug 3 Take a Friend, Make a Friend - World Celebration ages 8-11 $162/$178
July 31-Aug 3 Nebraska Canoes, Cast, & Climb Adventure ages 14-19 $302/$332
Aug 4 Kids - N - Crazy Day Camp ages 5-8 $25/$28
Aug 5 Kids - N - Water Day Camp ages 5-8 $25/$28
Aug 7-9 CSI - Gretna ages 11-15 $127/$140
Aug 10-11 Take a Friend, Make a Friend ages 8-11 $85/$93

NEBRASKA STATE 4-H CAMP, HALSEY
May 30-June 2 Sandhills Sampler 1 ages 11-15 $164/$180
June 5-8 Sandhills Canoe and Fish Combo ages 11-15 $229/$252
June 5-8 Explorer Elementary ages 8-11 $164/$180
June 8-9 Take a Friend, Make a Friend ages 8-11 $73/$80
June 13-16 Sandhills Academy ages 14-19 $245/$269
June 19-22 Outdoor Skills - Nebraska Game & Parks ages 11-15 $202/$227
June 23 Kids - N - Crazy Day Camp ages 8-11 $25/$28
June 26-30 Outback Hike ages 8-11 $214/$235
June 26-28 Explorer Elementary ages 8-11 $114/$125
June 26-30 Explorer Elementary ages 8-11 $114/$125
July 5-7 Explorer Elementary ages 8-11 $114/$125
July 11-14 Niobrara Tube Trip 1 ages 11-15 $197/$216
July 18-21 Niobrara Tube Trip 2 ages 11-15 $197/$205
July 23-26 Focus on 4-H for Girls ages 11-15 $214/$235
July 27-30 Focus on 4-H for Boys ages 11-15 $234/$255
July 31-Aug 3 Sandhills Sampler 2 ages 11-15 $164/$180

SOUTH CENTRAL 4-H CENTER, ALMA
June 4-6 LifeExtravagant Camp ages 11-15 $194/$213
June 12-15 Explorer Elementary ages 8-11 $158/$174
June 14-17 Your Horse and You ages 11-15 $218/$234
June 15-17 Take a Friend, Make a Friend ages 8-11 $98/$108
June 19-22 Discovery Ranch Camp ages 8-11 $206/$226
June 19-22 Survivor Camp - Fishing/Wildlife Adventure ages 8-11 $158/$174
June 26-30 Lights, Camera, Action - Arts/Drama Camp ages 11-15 $218/$234
June 26-29 Take a Friend, Make a Friend ages 8-11 $158/$174
June 27-29 Explorer Elementary ages 8-11 $110/$121
July 5-8 Technology Camp ages 8-11 $158/$174

*Chaperones attend, they must pay a lunch fee of $5

10% early bird discount by registering before April 1!
Shamrocks for St. Patrick’s Day

Oxalis is a group of over 300 species of small plants that produce clover-like leaves. Oxalis regnellii is commonly known as ‘ever-blooming shamrock.’ The shamrock is well worth considering for the home garden.

Shamrocks are among the best of the indoor plants because they are easy to grow and have a long bloom period. They can be brought indoors anytime from fall through spring. The flowers come in a variety of colors, including white, pink, red, purple and yellow. The foliage not only comes in green, but also variegated or purple. Oxalis plants have slender flower stems and fairly low growing foliage that looks like enormous clover leaves. Their leaves and blooms are sensitive to light, and only open on sunny days. During the dark or cloudy weather the flowers close and the leaves fold up.

The shamrocks will usually bloom about 2 months. Water when the soil is barely dry to the touch and fertilize monthly.

—Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Hints for Starting Transplants

Starting flower and vegetable plants at home can be fun. Growing quality transplants requires a sterile, well-drained growing medium, proper temperature and moisture conditions and adequate light. Since the home is usually not the best environment for growing transplants, problems occasionally develop.

Poor or erratic germination of seed may be caused by improper planting, for example, planting too deep. Uneven moisture and cool temperatures can also cause problems. Medium to large seeds are sown at a depth of two times their minimum diameter. Fine seed is usually dusted on the surface of the seedbed. Cool potting mix temperatures, below 70 degrees Fahrenheit, decrease germination.

Maintain the proper germination temperature and even moisture conditions for rapid, uniform germination.

Damping-off, caused by several fungi, is a disease of small plant loss. Seedlings may develop water-soaked spots on their stems near the soil surface, then collapse and die. Environmental conditions usually associated with damping-off are a poorly drained potting soil and over-watering. Damping-off can be prevented by using clean container, a sterile, well-drained potting mix, and by following good cultural practices. Previously used containers should be washed in soapy water, then disinfected by dipping in a solution containing one part chlorine bleach and nine parts water. Flower and vegetable seeds need an evenly moist potting mix for good germination. A seedling tray or pre-sterilized potting soil to dry somewhat between waterings.

Tall, spindly growth is a common problem when growing transplants indoors. Poor or insufficient light, excessive watering, high temperatures, excessive fertilization and crowded growing conditions are factors which contribute to spindly growth. Once the seeds have germinated, move the seedlings under artificial light. It is best to place the seedlings under artificial light. It is not necessary to have a fancy plant stand. A standard fluorescent shop fixture with one cool and one warm fluorescent tube works fine. For best results, the lights should be 1 to 2 inches above the seedlings. Raise the light above the seedlings grow. Leave the lights on 12 hours each day.

When the first pair of “true leaves” appear, pot the transplants. The potting soil should be somewhat dry between waterings. The best quality potting mix is short, stony and dark green. Green algal or brown fungus stains are easily prevented by using potting mix and soil surface or petals of pot. While their appearance generally causes little harm, their presence usually indicates excessive moisture levels. Allow the potting mix to dry somewhat before watering.

A lack of essential nutrient produces characteristic deficiency symptoms. Phosphorus and nitrogen deficiency symptoms sometimes occur on vegetable and flower seedlings. Phosphorus-deficient plants frequently have purplish leaves and poor growth is stunted. Yellow lower leaves may indicate a nitrogen deficiency. Other symptoms of a nitrogen deficiency are stunted growth and small leaves. Apply a soluble fertilizer made especially for seedlings. Fertilize weekly with a one-quarter strength solution. While there are obstacles to growing transplants indoors, home gardeners can produce good quality transplants if they follow good cultural practices.
Red Flour Beetles

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

I first realized we had a flour beetle problem when I was making cheese sauce for scalloped potatoes. I dropped three peas into the saucepan and immediately noticed a couple reddish-brown beetles floating in the butter. Not being particularly squeamish, I quickly picked them out and added cheese sauce. (And yes, we did eat the scalloped potatoes, with no negative consequences.) But, I also decided it was definitely time to see what was going on in the cupboard.

I found a few more beetles in the flour canister, which wasn’t airtight. And, there was a huge beetle infestation in an unopened bag of flour. This infestation was so remarkable we took photos. (See figures.) I also noticed the large infestation gave off a very foul, musty smell.

These pests are red flour beetles, Tribolium castaneum. They are also called “bran bugs”. Adult beetles are about 1/8-inch long and small enough to squeeze into packaging and canisters. They are most common in flour, but also have been found in breakfast cereals, cornmeal, crackers, oats, dry pet foods, milk chocolate, powdered milk and spices. Red flour beetles can breed year-round indoors where it is warm. Red beetles larvae hatch from eggs and are cream-colored, slender and wavy. They have six legs and forked projections at the last rear body segment. Red flour beetles can fly and can squeeze through window screen during summer months when they are active outdoors. But, based on the size of the infestation, I think the flour was already infested when I brought it home from the grocery store. I bought it (on sale) about two months before I found the infestation. Managing red flour beetles and other pantry pests in the kitchen requires searching thoroughly and throwing all infected food away. No chemicals are needed.

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Pocket Gophers in Your Alfalfa? UNL Wildlife Researcher Needs Your Help!

Pocket gophers are ro-dents that live in the soil. They get their name from their flat head, short neck, powerful shoulders and large claws on their front paws. These adaptations help them dig their burrows and live underground. Pocket gophers are often confused with ground squirrels. They are not the same as 13-lined ground squirrels which are often seen during the daytime.

Pocket gophers spend most of their time in their sealed tunnel systems. The mounds they create are typically fan-shaped, and tunnel entrances are usually plugged, keeping intruders out of burrows. The burrow system of one pocket gopher can cover several hundred feet; one gopher can dig hundreds of mounds in a year’s time. No wonder they are so destructive! They are pests of alfalfa and native grassland and can reduce field productivity by 20-50 percent, depending on the gopher population. When they tunnel, they damage and feed on roots. They also feed on above-ground plants, particularly green, succulent vegetation. In our area, they prefer alfalfa fields, but pocket gopher damage at: http://icwdm.org/inspec-tion/gardengrass.asp?Mounds Stephen Vanatsi, UNL Wildlife project coordinator is conducting a research project to determine the most efficient trapping method for controlling pocket gophers. He is looking for area farmers willing to give him permission to trap pocket gophers on their alfalfa fields. To be included in the study, farms must have pocket gophers present and have had no pocket gopher control measures for at least one year. He is looking for fields within a one-hour drive of Lincoln. This research will only take a few days.

Do not bring: latex paint (except May 20), medicines, fertilizers, explosives and ammunition. Batteries, antifreeze and used oil will not be accepted because these items can be recycled.

These collections are for household only; not for businesses. Only residents of Lincoln and Lancaster County can bring items to collections.

For more information, call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department at 441-8140.
Collection of Unwanted Pesticides, 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 Thursday, March 16 at the Farmers Cooperative Company Fertilizer Plant, Waverly.

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

- Unused, unneeded, or damaged pesticides (includes insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and fumigants).
- Pesticides of all types (agricultural crops, livestock, homes, lawns, gardens, structural, commercial, and local use in aerosol containers).
- Farmer-supplied electrical transformers containing PCB’s from reno- vated irrigation systems.
- Gasoline cylinders
- Waste oil or oil filters
- Antifreeze
- Paint, varnishes and thinners
- Cleaners and solvents

The Waverly site is one of 20 sites across Nebraska selected for this pesticide collection program in 2006. Don’t miss the opportuni ty to dispose of unwanted pesticides!

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Energy Source</th>
<th>Engine output</th>
<th>Pumping Plant</th>
<th>Energy Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diesel</td>
<td>Natural gas</td>
<td>Propane</td>
<td>Gallon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gallon</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>12.20</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>9.66</td>
<td>10.69</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.79</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training

Commercial applicators are persons who apply restricted-use pesticides for any purpose on any property other than property owned or rented by the applicator or for compensation to another person.

The actual current irrigation system cost is $2.18 per gallon. As this is being compared to the NIPC for liquid propane (LPG), it would not pay to switch from diesel to LPG. The actual current irrigation system cost is $2.18 per gallon as diesel has a lower relative energy cost compared to LPG. Conclusion, at current energy prices, it would not pay to switch from diesel to LPG.

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

Worried About the High Cost of Fertilizer? Come to a Biosolids Workshop, March 9

The current cost of anhydrous ammonia is $410/ton. You can save money by fertilizing with biosolids. To learn about Lincoln’s Biosolids program, attend an educational workshop, Fertilizing Crop Lands with Biosolids, held Thursday, March 9 from 3:30–8:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln.

Presented by extension and City of Lincoln personnel, the workshop is aimed at farmers who might want to participate in the Biosolids Land Application program, though anyone may attend. Please preregister by Tuesday, March 7 by calling 441-7180. If you have any questions, please call 472-1632.

Biosolids are organic solids separated from wastewater and biologically processed during wastewater treatment to make them safe for land application. UNL Extension in Lancaster County is coordinating a tour of biosolids application on biocrust land for the City of Lincoln Wastewater and Solid Waste Division.

Workshop attendees will learn:

- using biosolids reduces fertilizer costs and increase yields
- biosolids improves soil tilth, especially on poor or eroded soil
- biosolids increases organic matter and water holding capacity
- how wastewater is processed and made safe for application
- how regulations determine application rates and locations
- how GIS and GPS technology is used in Lincoln’s Biosolids Program

Program will also include a tour of the Theresa Street Wastewater Facility.
Pollination Requirements for Tree and Small Fruits

In the flower, pollination is the transfer of pollen from the anther to the stigma. After pollination and fertilization, fruit set occurs. There are two types of pollination. Self-pollination occurs when the pollen is transferred from the anther to the stigma on the same flower, from another flower on the same plant, or from another flower on the same plant, or from a flower on another plant of the same variety. Self-pollinated plants are said to be self-fruitful. Many plants cannot pro-
duce fruit from their own pollen and are considered self-unfruitful. These plants require cross-pollination for fruit set. Cross-pollination is the transfer of pollen from one plant to the flower of a genetically different plant or variety. Pollination is an important factor when selecting and planting tree and small fruits. A list of pollination requirements for the various fruits is presented below. Keep these fruiting requirements in mind when browsing in garden centers or looking through garden catalogs.

APPLES
Most apples are self-unfruitful. A few varieties, such as Jonathan and Golden Delicious, set a good crop without cross-pollination. However, for maximum fruit production plant at least two different varieties.

APRICOTS
Few apricot varieties are reliably hardy in Nebraska. Moorwood and Sungold are hardy and self-unfruitful. Plant at least one of each for proper pollination.

PEARS
Most pears are self-unfruitful. A few varieties, such as Kieffer, will set a fairly good crop without cross-pollination. However, for maximum fruit production plant at least two different varieties.

PLUMS
Japanese plums are self-unfruitful. European plums are partially to entirely self-fruitful. Hybrid plum varieties (crosses between American and Japanese plums) are self-unfruitful. European plums will not pollinate the hybrid plums and vice versa.

CHERRIES
- Sour or pome cherries are self-unfruitful.

Strawberries, Currants, Gooseberries

Peaches
Most peach varieties are self-fruitful.

Nectarines
Most nectarine varieties are self-fruitful.

Fig trees that require two different varieties for pollination should be planted within 50 to 100 feet of one another to ensure good fruit set.

Pears Most pears are self-unfruitful. A few varieties, such as Kieffer, will set a fairly good crop without cross-pollination. However, for maximum fruit production plant at least two different varieties.

Plums Japanese plums are self-unfruitful. European plums are partially to entirely self-fruitful. Hybrid plum varieties (crosses between American and Japanese plums) are self-unfruitful. European plums will not pollinate the hybrid plums and vice versa.

Cherries - Sour or pome cherries are self-unfruitful.

SMALL FRUITS

Type of Farm Enterprise and Crop(s) Produced

Don Jasssen
UNL Extension Educator

Note: This is part of a series of articles related to acreage enterprises.

The crops you grow and any other services or processing offered by your farm are the products of your farming techniques. Choosing the correct production technique, specific crops to grow, and marketing channel services or processing offered by your farm are the products of your farming techniques. Choosing the correct production technique, specific crops to grow, and marketing channels requires some thought and planning.

Production Technique

Consider the following farming methods are used to produce crops. The three most commonly used on small farms are:

1. Conventional—utilizes synthetic pesticides and fertilizers and depends on mechanization for farm operations.

2. Organic—integrates farming practices, utilizes organic pest controls and fertilizers and relies more on labor and low levels of mechanization for most farm practices.

3. Sustainable—perhaps a hybrid of the two methods above, sustainable farming techniques minimize synthetic pesticide and fertilizer use and decrease possible pollution.

Your choice of farming method will affect the costs associated with your business and the amount of income from products grown and how and where the products are marketed.

Type of Crops—Traditional or Specialty?

The easiest crops to grow are those that have a long production history in your area. Specialty or nontraditional crops or varieties provide some security. There are no surprises besides weather and prices. If a crop has been grown in your area for a long time, there will be equipment, custom operators and plenty of free advice. These products include familiar options such as tomatoes, corn, sheep and so on.

Growing a diversity of crops can spread the risk of changes in the growing environment or market price in a given year. There is a risk, however, in trying to grow too many crops, particularly when you require very different skills and equipment.

When you begin to look into specialty or nontraditional crops, you must spend much more time on research. These crops might be new to your area or on the cutting edge for the nation. Such crops might include medicinal herbs, exotic livestock or varieties of traditional crops new to your area. New crops might have little production information available. There will be a lot of on-the-job learning ahead of you. The consolation is that when you have perfected the production system, assuming the product appeals to the public, you will be the market for your company.

Some small farmers are able to grow specialty crops profitably. However, marketing is critical to their success. As with any enterprise, it is necessary to do a good job assessing wholesale and retail customer demand. You have to decide where to sell the product and how to maintain markets and customers. These crops always are difficult to identify and generally involve a higher level of risk than traditional crops that already are well known in the market.

Before you invest any significant amount of money in a crop, you should know the crop’s biology, production technology and marketing options in some depth. You should be able to put together a cash flow and enterprise budget for your particular farm for each crop. In many cases, it’s possible to grow the crop on a small scale to give you a feel for production economics. However, faculties tend to compound as the size of the cultivated area increases. Sometimes you can hire yourself out to a farm producing the crop and thereby gain invaluable experience. It’s important to read everything you can get your hands on and to talk to all sorts of people about the enterprise you’re considering. Understand thoroughly and use the traditional production system for growing a crop before making major changes. Look for parts of the production system you can contract out while you learn the rest of the process. For example, you could learn to grow container nursery stock by buying rooted cuttings at first rather than building a greenhouse and propagating the cuttings yourself.

Look for enterprises that can grow incrementally (without major new investments in land or equipment) as your skills, finances and marketing ability increase. Examples include container stock, Christmas trees, fresh vegetables and beehives.

Crop rotation (not growing the same crop on the same land each year) can be important in some crops for disease management and weed control. Rotation requirements can quadruple your acreage needs.

Marketing

Small farmers generally are at a disadvantage compared to large farmers in the wholesale market. Large farms usually are able to produce greater volumes of product over a longer time period at a lower cost to the wholesale buyers. Therefore, most successful small farmers choose to market their product directly to consumers via one or more of the following methods:

- Roadside stands
- Farmers’ markets
- Community supported agriculture (CSA) or subscription farming
- Restaurants and public institutions
- World Wide Web
- Other direct marketing techniques

There are many exciting examples of small farms that profitably produce nursery stock, high quality small fruits, culinary and medicinal herbs, specialty livestock, tree fruits, vegetables and numerous other crops. Often, there is a value-added component to the enterprise, such as jam production from fruit. Farms might offer nontraditional services such as farm-based meal and breakfast operations. A small farm with a high-quality product max and a good plan for getting those products into the hands of consumers can do exceedingly well.

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"Acreage Insights — Rural Living Clinics" are designed to help acreage owners manage their rural living environment. This series of seminars are presented by University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension at various locations in the state.

The seminars will be held in Lincoln at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherryck Road on Thursdays from 7–9 p.m. Pre-registration is $15 per person and must be received three working days before the program. Late registration is $15 per person. For more information or a registration form, go to the Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web site at http://acreage.unl.edu or call extension at 441-7180.

Mar. 16 • Vegetable Gardening

Successful vegetable gardens are the result of careful planning, including vegetable variety selection. Tips include:

- Vegetable varieties suitable for Nebraska gardens and each variety’s unique attributes.
- Insect and disease control — learn to identify common pest and disease problems and strategies for controlling them

April 13 • Horse Nutrition & Management

This clinic will cover basic horse nutrition and efficient feeding management practices, including:

- Nutrient requirements of horses at different ages, activity levels and stages of production
- Determining body condition and how feeding management can change the body condition
- Effectively using different feeds and roughages (such as hay) to meet nutrition requirements

Urban Agriculture
Easy-Does-It Mango Sauce

Did you know one cup of diced mango has just 107 calories and provides 25 percent of your daily value for vitamin A? Is a mango fairly mangled by the time you peel it? How about making mango sauce?

For a quick dessert, pour mango sauce generously over a scoop of lowfat ice cream. Simply pop the mango pieces into a food processor or blender and process until desired consistency. A mini food processor works great when processing a small amount of mango. For more information and pictures on peeling and slicing a mango: http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-mango.htm

By Dana Willeford
UNL Extension Assistant

Health and good nutrition are a top priority, but lets face it, so is family time and food that tastes good! While canned foods have been around for a long time, they have many benefits that make them a hot item for a pantry! These benefits include convenience, cost effectiveness, year-round availability and versatility. According to studies by the University of Massachusetts, canned ingredients are similar in nutrition to frozen or fresh foods in the main ingredients that are processed. In addition, using canned food reduces the preparation and cooking time, therefore, less time is spent in the kitchen and more time with the family!

Frequently Asked Questions About Canned Foods
(Adapted from Canned Food Alliance at http://www.meatall.org)

Q. Does canned food have expiration dates?
A. Canned products have a “for best quality use by” date stamped on the bottom of the can. “Expiration” dates are rarely found on canned food.

Q. How long does canned food remain edible and retain its nutritional content?
A. Canned food has a shelf life of at least two years from the date of processing. Its safety and nutritional value may go well beyond two years, but it may change in quality, like change of color or texture.

Q. How long is it between the date of processing and the date of purchase?
A. In a well-run grocery store, foods on the shelf will be rotated on a regular basis with continuous turnover. However, if you want to find the date a particular product has, some food companies use a series of numbers or letters that may contain a date. To break the code, call the toll-free number or write to the address on the product.

Q. Are canned foods high in sodium?
A. Canned food is packed and heat-sealed into the can at the peak of flavor. In some canned food, salt might be added to enhance the food’s taste. However, canned food has a variety of options. For consumers who are sensitive to sodium, many canned foods are available in low-salt and no-salt alternatives.

Six Can Chicken Tortilla Soup

6 servings
1 (15 ounce) can whole kernel corn, drained
2 (14.5 ounce) cans chicken broth (add an extra can for a more brothy soup)
1/2 (10 ounce) can chunk chicken
1/2 (15 ounce) can black beans
1/2 (10 ounce) can diced tomatoes with green chile peppers, drained
Tortilla chips
Low-fat shredded cheddar cheese

Combine all canned products in a large saucepan or stock pot. Simmer over medium heat until heated through. Serve over tortilla chips and top with shredded cheddar cheese.

Source: Nebraska Nutrition Education Program 2006 Calendar
About the Weed Control Authority

The Weed Control Authority is responsible for implementation of the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act throughout Lancaster County. The Authority has also provided the inspection and administration of the City of Lincoln’s Weed Abatement Program since entering into an interlocal agreement with the city in 1996.

Mission and Goals

Our mission is for the education of the public concerning noxious weeds and to exercise the necessary authority to obtain effective control of noxious weeds county-wide and the education of the public concerning weed abatement and to exercise the necessary authority to cut and clear overgrown weeds and worthless vegetation in the City of Lincoln.

1. Make the landowners of Lancaster County aware of the legal requirements and benefits of controlling noxious weeds.
2. Make the citizens of Lincoln aware of legal requirements and benefits of cutting and clearing overgrown weeds and worthless vegetation.
3. Efficiently and effectively exercise authority when necessary to obtain acceptable noxious weed control.
4. Improve efficiency and effectiveness of operations through management techniques.

The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority approves an annual noxious weed control plan that guides the operations of the staff for the year. It sets forth an overall goal of obtaining voluntary compliance with the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act and the City of Lincoln’s Weed Abatement Program. Efforts are directed at making landowners aware and receptive to the requirements of the law and ordinance and willingness to comply. The inspection program is used to identify properties requiring follow-up actions to obtain compliance. Compliance is obtained with 70–75 percent of the notifications being a personal contact, card or letter rather than a legal notice.

### Inspection Activity

A total of 7,175 inspections were made of 3,301 sites on 23,848 acres during the year. We found 2,839 violations on 5,723 acres. Violations increased 341 from last year, requiring 583 more inspections. There are four county inspectors outside the city limits of Lincoln and there are three inspectors in the city of Lincoln. Funds from a National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Grant provided for a seasonal inspector for two months to make inspections for purple loosestrife along the streams in Lincoln. The inspection season lasts from April until December.

**Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Program** — Infestations were found on 1,004 sites covering 4,908 acres. These infestations were found as a result of 2,388 inspections on 1,160 sites. The number of infestations found decreased by 63, but the acres remained about the same. There were 114 less purple loosestrife infestations found. This decrease was the result of less ornamental plantings found. There were 17 new wild infestations found along streams that were escapes from the ornamental plantings. The number of infestations found by noxious weed is shown above. Of these sites, 791 were controlled by landowners. The Authority controlled 42 sites on 30 acres. The fall inspection of musk thistle was reduced because of the dry weather. Conditions were not good for optimum control. Control was deferred to spring on 74 sites.

**City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program** — Even though the weather conditions were dry, weed abatement demand was greater. The number of weed abatement violations increased by 404. This created a 28 percent increase in inspection workload. There were 4,787 inspections made on 2,141 sites on 1,060 acres. There were 1,835 violations as a result of 1,674 complaints. There was a continuing emphasis on obtaining voluntary compliance of landowners. Almost 94 percent of owners cut their overgrowth after notification. This was accomplished with 70 percent of the notifications being other than legal notifications. Bankruptcies continue to be a problem. We published 142 notifications in the paper. Forced cutting had to be performed on 107 sites at the cost of $13,962. Of these sites, 81 had to be specially assessed for $10,557.

### Public Awareness

The major information efforts are a four-page Weed Awareness special insert in the March Lancaster County Extension Newsline, and maintaining and updating Internet Home page. There are 11,000 copies of the Weed Awareness insert published and there were 44,723 hits on the Web site in 2005. Other informational efforts include over 1,000 special mailings, almost 3,000 notifications of violations, several news articles and a state fair exhibit.

### Other Activities

Other activities include making inspections for weed-free forage certification, participating in the Lower Platte Weed Management Area, attending required continuing education sessions and actively participating in the Nebraska Weed Control Association and the North American Weed Management Association.

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**Learn to Recognize Nebraska’s Noxious Weeds**

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.*

- **Musk Thistle**
- **Leafy Spurge**
- **Purple Loosestrife**
- **Canada Thistle**
- **Saltcedar**
- **Plumeless Thistle**

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 be found in Lancaster County.*
When Will Weeds Bloom?

When noxious weeds bloom depends whether you are in eastern Nebraska or western Nebraska or if the growing season is warmer or cooler than normal. Plants will bloom earlier in eastern Nebraska and earlier if the growing season is warmer. The concept of growing degree days was developed to predict the dates for growth stages for crops. Growing degree days can also be applied to other plants.

Growing Degree Days

The concept of growing degree days (GDD) resulted from observations that plant growth and development are more closely related to an accumulation of temperature above a certain base than time alone. The base temperature is a threshold below which growth does not take place. A base temperature of 40°F is commonly used for cool-season crops and 50°F for warm-season crops.

GDD for a particular day are obtained by subtracting the appropriate base temperature from the average daily temperature. Thus, on a day with temperature averaging 60°F, the GDD for a cool-season plant such as noxious weeds would be 60 - 40 = 20. For a warm-season crop such as beans, GDD would be 60 - 50 = 10.

GDD and Stages of Growth of Nebraska Noxious Weeds

The Weed Control Superintendent of counties in counties having an official Nebraska Weather Station were asked to record the dates that 50 percent of the musk thistle, Canada thistle, plumeless thistle and leafy spurge reached their key stages of growth. These observations were made in 1995 and 1996, and the observed dates that 50 percent of the noxious weeds reached each of its growth stages was matched up with 40°F GDD data from the weather stations. Observations were made at a range of GDD required to reach each growth stage. Following is the average GDD required to reach the key growth stages for each of the observed noxious weeds and the date that this would occur in Lincoln in an average year.

GDD by Stage of Growth and Lincoln Date

This information can be used to project the dates the noxious weeds would reach each of its growth stages in a normal year or a year that varied from normal by tracking the accumulations of growing degree days.

When the weeds start growing.

For More Information

- See plans and reports.
- Check on noxious weed controls.
- Learn about managing natural areas in an urban setting.
- Test your knowledge about Nebraska weeds.
- Visit other weed control Web sites.
Much of the state is now organized into weed management areas (WMA). Eight of the nine have formed in the last four years. The Lower Platte Weed Management Area, which includes Lancaster County, was formed in 2002. It began as an organized effort to fight the non-native weeds invading the Lower Platte River and then encouraged counties upstream to organize and fight these weeds before the seeds could come downstream. The purpose of creating a WMA is to bring together, among landowners and others to manage common weed problems in a common area. County weed control authorities had been developing annual noxious weed control plans and have been cooperating with public and private landowners and others in carrying out the noxious weed programs. But the WMA’s allow for a more formalized way to involve others and to address common problems across a common area and not stopping at county lines. The recently recognized common problem of three non-native plants invading riparian areas along streams, has been a major impetus to become organized. Purple loosestrife became a noxious weed in 2001 and saltcedar became a noxious weed in 2005. Phragmites or common reed is not yet designated as a noxious weed, but is a major concern. Recent amendments to the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act allowed for emergency designation of saltcedar and provided for a matching grant program to encourage the formation of multi-stakeholder WMAs with provisions for federal and other sources of funding. The Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund awarded a $250,000 grant to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture to initiate this matching grant program. Five of the WMA’s, including the Lower Platte Weed Management Area, just received approval for grants from this program.

An example of the Web-based mapping program showing purple loosestrife infestations along the Platte River, online at http://www.lowerplattewma.org.

Weed Awareness

Lower Platte Weed Management Area

Lancaster County Weed Control Authority is participating in the fourth year of the multi-county Lower Platte Weed Management Area (LPWMA). This project targets non-native invasive weeds invading the natural areas along the Platte and Missouri Rivers and their drainage areas. This project is detecting, preventing and controlling three invasive weeds (purple loosestrife, saltcedar and phragmites) in 10 counties of central Nebraska. The three targeted weeds are invaders of the riparian area along the Platte and Missouri Rivers. These plants are still in the early stages of invasive plant population dynamics. If left uncontrolled, they will enter the colonization phase (population explosion phase). This would create majors in just replacing the vegetation they replace. The Lower Platte River provides the majority of the endangered interior least tern breeding habitat in Nebraska and contributes significantly to the threatened piping plover habitat. These birds nest on sandbars and sandpits along the river. Nearly 10 percent of the entire interior least tern breeding population nests along this portion of the river. Sandbar habitat is also critical to migratory shore birds, waterfowl and other wading birds. Purple loosestrife and phragmites invade these areas, making them less desirable habitat. A natural restoration process will take place by removing the non-native plants and allowing for natural regeneration from existing native plants and banks.

Efforts are being made throughout the area to promote awareness and provide organized control efforts. Assistance is being provided to the 855 landowners along the Lower Platte River in developing control plans.

Accomplishments in 2005 included:

• Almost 2,000 acres have been controlled by partners and landowners exceeding the goals set.

• A public service billboard is being displayed for 12 months at sites along the interstate in the project area.

• There are 7 kiosks placed at high traffic locations including the Henry Doorly Zoo.

• A Web site has been developed and maintained.

• A Web-based mapping program has been developed.

• A Lower Platte Weed Management Area brochure has been completed.

• Exhibits and displays placed at several events.

• Informational tours given to public and landowners.

• Numerous newspaper articles have been printed on invasive and noxious weeds.

• Efforts to increase local funding has included presentations at seven Natural Resources Districts.

• Letters to all landowners and meetings with public and corporate landowners.

LPWMA is promoting aggressive organized control efforts upstream. We encouraged 42 counties upstream in forming five multi-stakeholder WMA’s with provisions for federal and other sources of funding. The Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund awarded a $220,000 grant to the Lower Platte Weed Management Area, just received approval for grants from this program. This would create major impacts on the riparian area along the Platte and Missouri Rivers. These plants are still in the early stages of invasive plant population dynamics. If left uncontrollled, they will enter the colonization phase (population explosion phase). This would create majors in just replacing the vegetation they replace. The Lower Platte River provides the majority of the endangered interior least tern breeding habitat in Nebraska and contributes significantly to the threatened piping plover habitat. These birds nest on sandbars and sandpits along the river. Nearly 10 percent of the entire interior least tern breeding population nests along this portion of the river. Sandbar habitat is also critical to migratory shore birds, waterfowl and other wading birds. Purple loosestrife and phragmites invade these areas, making them less desirable habitat. A natural restoration process will take place by removing the non-native plants and allowing for natural regeneration from existing native plants and banks.

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Professional Invasive Weed Associations

Participation in the Nebraska Weed Control Association (NWCA) and the North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) has been a priority of the Lancaster County and Nebraska noxious weed programs. The control authority has contributed to these associations through dues, and by its membership and participation of itsstaff. Following is a summary of some of the key benefits obtained.

Professional Improvement and Certification

NCWA sponsors four continuing education sessions a year. NAWMA has a program that provides a Certified Manager of Invasive Plants which includes Internet available training and resource materials, certification exam and continuing education requirements.

Funding Needs

NAWMA has been a part of the steering committee of the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Pulling Together Initiative grant program which has provided funds for five areas in Nebraska including Lancaster County. A federal “2004 Noxious Weed Control & Eradication Act” was passed with the support of NWCA and NAWMA. When funded, this law will make federal matching funds available to local weed control efforts. NWCA worked with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the Cultural Committee of the Unicameral making noxious and invasive grants available to get dedicated funding to the Nebraska Noxious Weed Program. Eight projects received grants from funds provided by the Nebraska Environmental Trust including the Lower Platte Weed Management Area.

Improved Laws and Authorities

NAWMA prepared a model invasive plant management act. NCWA working with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the Cultural Committee of the Unicameral used some ideas from the model act to amend the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act to provide a matching grant program, emergency noxious weed designation and dedicated funding for the Nebraska Noxious Weed Program. This improved act will help trigger the formation of seven weed management areas in the state.

Sharing Information

Both NWCA and NAWMA have Annual Conferences and NAWMA publishes a quarterly newsletter that provides for an exchange of information, education, training, weed management practices, programs and technologies. Both associations have Information Web pages. The NWCA address is http://neweed.org and NAWMA address is http://nawma.org.

Coordinated and Uniform Efforts

NAWMA worked with states (including NWCA) and provinces in establishing standards for a Weed-Free Forage Program and coordinating the development of invasive plant management standards. NWCA is making a statewide Web-based weed mapping program available with funding from the Missouri Department of Conservation.

The continued interaction of weed management professionals not only provides these and other benefits, it reenergizes the participants and improves the quality and quantity of performance.
Spotted Knapweed is continuing to invade the streams in the city of Lincoln. Seventeen new infestations were found in 2005 as a result of intensive survey effort. This brings the total of wild infestations of purple loosestrife found to 45 since 2001. The seed source for these wild plants is from the ornamental lythrum plantings that have been made in yards throughout the city. Many homeowners had mistakenly been told these ornamental plants were sterile and would not produce viable seed. The plants may have been self-sterile but are capable of pollinating with other lythrum plants and produce viable seed. When carried by water to a location without other plants, the viable seeds can germinate and become wild infestations of purple loosestrife. Purple loosestrife is a serious threat to wetland biodiversity. It can spread and form dense stands which block out other plants. The tall plants can change the habitat of wetland and wetway sites so the species that used to grow there are no longer able to survive. If allowed to spread, it will colonize water margins, ponds and shallow lakes, affecting wetland wildlife. Purple loosestrife also has the potential to clog drainage and irrigation ditches. Each plant is capable of producing millions of seeds, which are mainly dispersed by water. Pieces of plant will also take root. Its ability to reproduce prolifically and spread also contribute to its weedyness. This potential for rapid spread and increase in population size mean if we are to have a realistic chance of getting on top of the problem, we have to act quickly. Until 2001, purple loosestrife was available through garden centers and nurseries. However, it has now been designated a noxious weed under the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act. This means it can’t be propagated or sold. We have requested almost 1,000 homeowners remove plants. Those homeowners, along with many others, have removed the plants. Landowners with the wild plants have been asked to remove these infestations. They are doing so and are providing follow-up control in following years. Homeowners that still have plants are requested to remove them and to encourage others to remove plants they may have. Any ornamental or wild plants should be reported to the Weed Control Authority.

More Purple Loosestrife Along Streams

Purple loosestrife is continuing to spread into the streams in the city of Lincoln. Seventeen new infestations were found in 2005 as a result of intensive survey effort. This brings the total of wild infestations of purple loosestrife found to 45 since 2001. The seed source for these wild plants is from the ornamental lythrum plantings that have been made in yards throughout the city. Many homeowners had mistakenly been told these ornamental plants were sterile and would not produce viable seed. The plants may have been self-sterile but are capable of pollinating with other lythrum plants and produce viable seed. When carried by water to a location without other plants, the viable seeds can germinate and become wild infestations of purple loosestrife. Purple loosestrife is a serious threat to wetland biodiversity. It can spread and form dense stands which block out other plants. The tall plants can change the habitat of wetland and wetway sites so the species that used to grow there are no longer able to survive. If allowed to spread, it will colonize water margins, ponds and shallow lakes, affecting wetland wildlife. Purple loosestrife also has the potential to clog drainage and irrigation ditches. Each plant is capable of producing millions of seeds, which are mainly dispersed by water. Pieces of plant will also take root. Its ability to reproduce prolifically and spread also contribute to its weedyness. This potential for rapid spread and increase in population size mean if we are to have a realistic chance of getting on top of the problem, we have to act quickly. Until 2001, purple loosestrife was available through garden centers and nurseries. However, it has now been designated a noxious weed under the Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act. This means it can’t be propagated or sold. We have requested almost 1,000 homeowners remove plants. Those homeowners, along with many others, have removed the plants. Landowners with the wild plants have been asked to remove these infestations. They are doing so and are providing follow-up control in following years. Homeowners that still have plants are requested to remove them and to encourage others to remove plants they may have. Any ornamental or wild plants should be reported to the Weed Control Authority.

Wild purple loosestrife in Lincoln (symbols with dots were found in 2005)
FAMILY & COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) CLUBS

President’s Notes — Alice’s Analysis

Alice Doane  
FCE Council Chair

As new presi-
dent of Family and Community Education (FCE) Council, I will introduce myself. My name is Alice Doane. My husband, Ted, and I live on a farm east of Waverly. We moved to Nebraska because Ted’s job in Extension in 1953. We then moved to UNL in 1956. His job has taken us to Turkey in 1964 and to Af-ghanistan in 1975. This is his 50th year with the University. We have two daughters, Bon-nie and Kortnee, and two granddaughters. They are a parent, grandparent or family friend, this program is for you. Whether you are a parent, grandparent or family friend, this program will help you better understand the health of children.

• Thursday, March 23  
— Core Giving: Challeng-es and Rewards
UNL Extension Educator Lorene Bartos will present this les-sion which will examine how a person can best meet the needs of an elderly parent or disabled person. Utiliz-ing community resources, maintaining the personal health and satisfaction of caregivers and determining ways to help with environ-mental and health needs will be addressed. Relationship dynamics of the person in need and the caregiver, in addition to other important issues are discussed in aid in making preliminary plans.

Council Meeting  
March 27  
The FCE Council meeting will be Monday, March 27, 7 p.m. (Note the change to Monday for evening meeting.) The program will be making Easter embroi-dered cards. Supplies will be furnished, cost will be $3.50 payable at the meeting. All FCE members are invited to attend. Call Pam at 441-7180 by March 20 so supply packets can be prepared. Bethline and Live and Learn Clubs are hosting the meeting.

FCE Scholarship Applications Due  
April 1  
A $300 scholarship provided by the Lancaster County FCE Council is avail-able for a graduate of a high school in Lancaster County or a permanent resident of Lancaster County majoring in family and consumer science or a health occupation. This is open to full-time students be-ginning their sophomore, ju-nior or senior year of college in the fall of 2006 or who have completed two quarters of study in a vocational school. Applications are due April 1 in the extension office.

How Well Do You Know Your Child?

As parents, we sometimes are so busy taking care of our children’s physical need we lose track of some of the details of their lives. This activity will help you to make you aware of how much — or how little — you know about your son or daughter.

Directions: Grab a pen and try to see how many of the following questions you can answer. Don’t be surprised if you get stumped along the way. When you know the answer, ask your child to correct your worksheet.

1. What is your child’s favorite toy?
2. What embarrasses your child the most?
3. Who is your child’s closest friend?
4. If your child could do anything they chose for a day, what would it be?
5. What is your child’s favorite TV show?
6. What was the last movie your child saw?
7. What is your child’s favorite thing to do after school?
8. Which is your child’s favorite dinner: steak and salad, hamburger and fries or chicken and corn?
9. What has been the biggest disappointment in your child’s life this year?
10. Who is your child’s favorite singer or music group?
11. If your child had a choice to buy a pet, what would it be?
12. Which would your child rather do: wash dishes, mow the lawn, clean their room or vacuum the house?
13. Do your child’s friends call them by a nickname? If so, what is it?
14. What really makes your child laugh?
15. What was the last problem your child came to you for help with?
16. What gift would your child most like to receive?
17. What does your child do when they are proud off?
Summary: If you get more than 15 right, congratulations! You are a parent to be proud of. From 11-15? Not bad, but try to pick a little more attention. Fewer than 11? You need to spend a little time catching up on what’s new with them.
18. Are there any things you might enjoy making up a “How Well Do You Know Your Parents?” test for your child to take and ask them to make up another “How Well Do You Know Your Child?” test for you?

Strong Family Ties

Many working parents try to plan a little extra time with their children. But what about extra time with your young teens? Sixth and seventh grad-ers who have strong family attachments and are encour-aged by their parents to be independent are least likely to engage in high-risk activities that could affect their health according to research at the University of California, San Francisco. The study found students with strong family ties are less likely to have ridden in a car with a driver under the influence of drugs or alcohol, to plan sexual intercourse in the next year, or to have en-gaged in physical fights. These students were also least likely to try alcohol, marijuana or cigarettes. Researchers say the results question the emphasis placed on the belief teens are most strongly influenced by their peers. Friends are important because they show emotional bonding with family members during adolescence plays a valuable and protective role in teenage health.
Lone Star 4-H Club Assists With Cleanup After Chapelles’ Barn Fire

Last August, lightning hit Gordon and Ellen Chapelles’ barn and started a fire which burned the building down. Luckily, the Chapelles heroically made it out of the barn safely.

The Chapelles have been involved with Lancaster County 4-H for more than 33 years. They are former club leaders and hosted the Pioneer Livestock Show each spring to give 4-H’ers experience showing their animals in public. Ellen was named the Heart of 4-H Award winner in July 2004. The Chapelles have long sponsored livestock trophies at the Lancaster County Fair.

After the fire, several Lone Star 4-H Club members and their families who live near the Chapelles herefords made it out of the barn and/or advice, “says Barb. Ron says he likes to keep busy — thing more than they may have been without your support.”

Ellen clean up debris. “My wife and I would like to express our most sincere ‘Thank You’ to everyone for all the great help you gave in the cleanup effort after our big barn fire,” says Gordon. “All the hard work was greatly appreciated and was a much needed high point after the devastation of the fire.”

Barb and Ron Suing

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Barb and Ron Suing as co-winners of March’s “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Married for 37 years, the Susings began volunteering for 4-H when their three children joined 4-H. Barb was leader of the Creative Towngirls 4-H club for 16 years, was a 4-H Recruiter, has been 4-H Food Superintendent at the Lancaster County Fair for 25 years and has been a longtime volunteer at the Nebraska State Fair.

Ron was leader of the Hills Heroes 4-H club for 6 years, has taught Rocketry at Clover College for 10 years, has been 4-H Engineering Superintendent at the County Fair for 20 years, was Aerospace Superintendent at the State Fair for many years, and has taught and judged Rocketry throughout the state.

The couple also sponsors plaques at the County Fair. “I like watching our youth grow up and maybe be something more than they may have been without your support and/or advice,” says Barb. Ron says he likes to keep busy — right now he has enough to do he will have to live to 135 years old. Barb adds, “Our favorite 4-H experience is attempting to stay young with the children and watching our own eight grandchildren participate in 4-H.”

The Susing live in Lincoln. Ron has been a teacher at Lincoln High for 17 years. Barb has been an RN in Coronary Care at Bryan-Lincoln East for 27 years. Barb reputably babysits their grandchildren. Ron volunteers with youth through their church. He is also a Southeast Community College advisor and president of the Southwood Neighborhood Association.

Congratulations to the Susings! Volunteers like them are indeed the heart of 4-H!

Nominate your favorite 4-H volunteer by submitting the form online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h or available at the extension office. Nominations of co-volunteers welcome.
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 at 4-H Achievement Night:

**2005 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 at 4-H Achievement Night:

**Rabbits R Us 4-H Club of Lincoln** is the 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 2005 Lancaster County Fair, the club's five members were enrolled in approximately 32 projects and entered 128 total exhibits. The club is winning this award for the third time. Becky McHenry is club leader and there are four assistant leaders.

**Shimmering Shamrocks 4-H Club of Lincoln** is the 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 2005 Lancaster County Fair, the club's five members were enrolled in approximately 32 projects and entered 128 total exhibits. The club is winning this award for the third time. Becky McHenry is club leader and there are four assistant leaders.

**Cool Clovers 4-H Club of Lincoln** is the winner of Category II (8–12 members). The club's 10 members were enrolled in approximately 43 projects and entered 115 total exhibits at the County Fair. The club is winning this award for the first time. Gene and Shari Lohr were club leaders (Jean Pedersen is current leader).

**Collegiate Scholarships**

- Lancaster County 4-H Council — $500: (pictured above, L–R) Amanda Peterson, Nicole Pedersen, Alyssa Fiala, Whitney Davis, Karen Clinch, Laura Cassel
- Lincoln Center Kiwanis — $1,000: Whitney Davis, Alyssa Fiala
- Lane Community — $200: Conner Christensen (pictured at right)
- 4-H Teen Council — $250: Karen Clinch and Alyssa Fiala
- 4-H Camp Scholarship — $100: Spencer Farley (pictured at left with 4-H Council president Cindy Fiala)

City of Lincoln Mayor Coleen J. Seng proclaimed February as "4-H Month" (see above). Rachel Pickrell read the proclamation at Achievement Night.
Keep More of What You Work for with Free Tax Preparation

Lincoln’s Volunteer Tax Assistance Program

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 who require assistance in preparing their tax returns and cannot afford the services of a paid professional tax preparer.

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 Schedule A for itemized 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 forms greatly increase the speed of files’ returns and help reduce return errors. Combined with direct deposit, the return can be received within 10 to 14 days.

What You Need to Bring to Tax Preparation Sites

• photo ID and Social Security Card (or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number — ITIN) if preparing self
• income and expenses for 2005 (Forms 1099)
• payment of last year’s return
• interest & dividend statements (Forms 1099)
• any other information concerning your income and expenses for 2005
• your spouse, if you have a joint return — they must be present to sign the required forms

New and Outgoing Lancaster County Extension Board Members

Lancaster County Extension welcomes its newest extension board member appointment — John Chess. Since 1973, John has worked for the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department. He is currently, an Environmental Health Supervisor with the water program. John earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and his Master’s Degree in Public Administration from University of Nebraska-Omaha.

Reappointed to second three-year terms, were Kendra Penrod and Oscar Rios Pohirieth who both work for Lincoln Public Schools.

Lincoln Extension Board members assist extension staff in establishing and accomplishing extension education program goals and objectives. The work in partnership with University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension on priority issue areas of:

• Agriculture Profitability and Sustainability
• Children, Youth and Families
• Food Safety, Health and Wellness
• Strengthening Communities
• Water Quality and Environmental

Outgoing board member Phil Rooney was recognized during the January board meeting for his long-time dedication and service to Lancaster County Extension.
February
21 4-H Horse Knowledge Club Meeting ......................................... 7 p.m.
23 Community & FCE Leader Training Lesson "Health of Children" 1 p.m.

March
7 Commercial Pesticide Appraiser Initial Training ................................. 9 a.m.
12 4-H Livestock Meeting ............................................................... 7 p.m.
14 Fertilizing Crop Land with Biosolids ............................................. 3:30–8:30 p.m.
14 4-H Horse Knowledge Club Meeting ............................................. 7 p.m.
20 Pesticide Disposal Collection, Farmers Co-op, Waverly .......................... 8 a.m.–Noon
20 14-H Horse Knowledge Club Meeting ............................................. 7 p.m.
27 Family & Community Education (FCE) Council Meeting ....................... 7 p.m.
27 Earth wellness festival, Southeast Community College

Lecture on “Aggression and the New American Girl,” Feb. 23
Dr. James Garbarino, a leading authority on child development and youth violence, will present “See Jane Hit: Aggression and the New American Girl” on Thursday, Feb. 23 from 4–6 p.m. at the UNL City Campus Union, 14th & R Streets in Lincoln. The lecture is free and open to the public.

Garbarino is the author of more than 150 articles and 20 books, including his most recent book, “See Jane Hit: Why Girls Are Growing More Violent and What We Can Do About It.” See Jane Hit is not just a powerful wake-up call; it’s a clear-eyed, compassionate prescription for real-world solutions.

This is the first in a series of Signature Speakers presented by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Education and Human Science in collaboration with the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth Families and Schools and the UNL Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

Sheep, Swine and Goat Workshop, March 13
A free workshop has been scheduled on sheep, swine and goats, Monday, March 13 at 6:30 p.m. at the Kimmel Event Building in Syracuse. This clinic will feature specialized speakers and demonstrations on animal selection, grooming and showmanship along with feeding and nutrition. Clinic is open to anyone. If you have any questions or would like to register call Deanna at 441-7180, or Jim Baumam at 794-5465.

Environmental Award Nominations Due March 16
Nominations are being sought for the 2006 Lincoln–Lancaster County Environmental Awards. Do you know of an individual, business or group who deserves to be recognized for their environmental stewardship efforts? If so, please call Harry Heafner at 441-8035 or go to http://www.lincoln.ne.us/city/health/environ/klick/awards.htm. Deadline is March 16.

Entries for Master Conservationist Program Due April 1
Youth and adults who have implemented soil and water conservation practices in both rural and urban areas are eligible to enter the 2006 Master Conservationist Recognition Program. The deadline for entries is April 1.

The Master Conservationist program includes categories for production agriculture (farming and ranching), residences, communities and private businesses as well as youth groups and individuals. Master Conservationist program brochures are available at the extension office.

The Master Conservationist program is sponsored by the Omaha World-Herald and the UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Recognition plaques will be presented at the annual NARD banquet Sept. 25 in the Kearney Holiday Inn.

For more information, go to http://neapubs.unl.edu/mas- terconserv.pdf or contact Dick Fleming at 472-8742 or e-mail rffmpeg@unl.edu.

At Nebraska, this Lincoln Student Works Smarter, not Harder
Alexis Wismer, a junior industrial and management systems engineering major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Lincoln Christian alum, knows there isn’t one solution for every problem. In her major, she uses her critical thinking to make work safer, easier and more rewarding.

This year, she is redesigning laparoscopic surgical Center and observed surgery, had us work on their tools. It’s a research – I have gotten to know.

UNL Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture. We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, for assistance contact UNL Extension in Lancaster County at 441-7180.

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Enter an Exhibit at the County Fair

You are encouraged to participate in YOUR county fair by entering exhibits or competing in one of the fun contests. The 2006 Lancaster County Fair will be held Aug. 2–6 at the Lancaster Event Center, 84th and Havelock, Lincoln. This year’s theme is “A Slice of the Good Life.” As usual, there is FREE admission.

FREE parking and FREE entertainment! The Open Class, 4-H & FFA Fair Book includes all the information needed to enter an exhibit or participate in a contest. Anyone can enter “Open Class” categories, which include youth divisions (no entry fee for youth). Fair Books will be mailed to previous Open Class participants by mid-March, and will be available at numerous locations, including:

- Lancaster Extension Education Center
- Lancaster Event Center
- Super Saver, Russ’s Market, H. Veye and Bag ‘N Save stores
- Oscar Drug store
- Lincoln City Libraries
- Lancaster County village banks, post offices and co-ops
- It will also be online at www.lancastereventcenter.com
- Lancaster County village banks, post offices and co-ops

More information is available at 472-2805. 4-H members are encouraged to apply for a scholarship — application is on the Web site. Save by registering before April 1!

Explore Career Options at Big Red Academic Camps

The 2006 Big Red Summer Academic Camps are a chance for high school youth to spend time investigating an interest or potential career, explore the UNL campus, meet people from across the state and have lots of fun.

“By attending the camp, I was inspired to be more creative and try new things with fabric,” said a participant at last year’s Fashion Design Big Red Summer Academic Camp. “I learned so much more about the campus and the careers in textiles and design that the college offers.”

Held in June, Big Red Summer Academic Camps feature 18 career exploration camps hosted by Nebraska 4-H and UNL faculty members. The camps are residence camps held on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. Housing and food are provided.

After spending several fun-filled days exploring a specific topic such as movie-making or fashion design, youth showcase their work at a special “capstone event” which family members are invited to attend.

Brochures and registration forms are available at http://bigredcamps.unl.edu or at the extension office. For more information, call 472-2805. 4-H members are encouraged to apply for a scholarship — application is on the Web site. Save by registering before April 1!

New this year

Feb. 7, Lancaster County was 

Did you guess it? Find out at http://lancaster.unl.edu

As of

It will also be online at www.lancastereventcenter.com

http://lancaster.unl.edu/