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The NEBLINE, October 2006

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Seven Steps to a Healthier Habitat in the Home

1. Keep It Dry
A house with a damp basement, unrestored leaks from plumbing fixtures or roofs, and baths or kitchens without fans, or that do not receive regular use, can harbor the moisture it takes to support significant mold growth. Mold has become the nemesis of many houses. In addition to damaging a house’s structure, mold can be a trigger for those suffering from asthma. Properly grading the landscape surrounding the house, as well as clearing gutters and downsputs can help reduce moisture entering a house through its foundation. Keeping anything made out of wood, paper or cardboard away from potentially damp surfaces can also reduce the chance of mold growth.

2. Keep It Clean
Carpeting is a depository for all kinds of things tracked in from the outside. Studies show that lead dust is commonly found in carpets in inner-city neighborhoods, and residue from pesticides and herbicides is found in carpets in suburbia. A hard-floor surface that has lead and pesticide residues that have been tracked in may present an even greater health hazard. To prevent tracking in pollutants from the outside, remember to remove shoes at the door or use “walk-off mats” on the outside and inside of entryways.

3. Keep It Pest-Free
Droppings from pests as well as their body parts are major triggers for people with asthma. Eliminating pests eliminates this threat.

4. Keep It Well Ventilated
As homes become more air-tight in an effort to reduce energy costs, air exchange in most homes has become a very important issue. A house needs a certain number of air changes each hour in order to circulate fresh air to both the people living there and the combustion appliances (such as gas furnaces, hot water tanks, dryers and stoves). Building scientists feel a need to install not only fans to help avoid moisture and control pollutant exhaust, but fans that bring fresh air into the entire structure on a continuous basis. As a result, numerous ventilation strategies and equipment are coming to the new-home market. It is very important that ventilation for the purpose of bringing in fresh air does not conflict with the exhausting of the combustion by-products of gas or oil-burning appliances. Modern appliances now commonly use sealed-combustion. They get their fresh air directly from the exterior of the house and they exhaust directly to the outside. Thankfully, the remaining ventilation needs of the home are not compromised.

5. Avoid Contaminants
Radon is naturally occurring, colorless, odorless, radioactive gas emitted from the earth’s crust. This gas, which forms a minute constituency of air near the ground, can seep into a house from the ground and can lead to lung cancer. Homes in high-risk areas should test for radon and take appropriate steps if air levels exceed EPA standards. Building materials and furnishings in homes often release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that over time can cause health conditions that range from respiratory distress to cancerous conditions. The presence of fire-retardant chemicals in many furnishings has become a recent consumer concern. Some of these chemicals are known to be hazardous to health, even though their purpose is to retard the spread of fire. There is also a concern that even the best ventilation systems and newly invented materials, modern mechanical systems and newly invented domestic goods, maintaining an awareness of possible threats to our safety and health at home is an ever-present challenge. For more information about these steps to creating and maintaining healthier living spaces, visit the Web site of the National Center for Healthy Housing at www.centerforhealthyhousing.org

6. Keep It Safe
A multitude of hazards in a home can cause injury or even death. Extension cords under a rug is a fire hazard, no railings on stairs and rugs that slide easily can cause falls, and cabinets with drugs or chemicals can lead to the poisoning of a child – to name just a few. There has even been a rash of children falling through window screens from two-story heights and higher. Effective steps in order to prevent protection, yet can be opened by an adult in case of a fire, can be installed.

7. Keep It Well Maintained
Occupants in a home play a critical role in maintaining it in a healthy manner. The best systems and materials can be put in place, but the homeowner must be able to use the equipment or materials effectively in order to prevent matters from growing worse. An unused bath or kitchen fan is an invitation to mold growth. An unattended sink trap that leaks for any duration can result in mold growth in the cabinets beneath it. Poor food waste handling can lead to pest infestation. Pets that are not properly groomed can become the source of allergens that can trigger asthma. Creating a healthier home environment is hardly a new subject, but each generation builds houses with new materials, modern mechanical systems and newly invented domestic goods, maintaining an awareness of possible threats to our safety and health at home is an ever-present challenge. For more information about these steps to creating and maintaining healthier living spaces, visit the Web site of the National Center for Healthy Housing at www.centerforhealthyhousing.org

By Jim LaRue

October 2006
State Fair Results
Lancaster 4-H’ers earn top awards.

Help Start A 4-H Club!
It’s easier than you might think!

— see page 8

— see back page
Reduce Grain Depth to Save Time/Energy When Drying Grain

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

The time required to dry grain in a bin is a function of the initial moisture content of the grain, the desired final moisture content of the grain, the temperature and relative humidity of the air passing through the grain and the rate of airflow through the grain. (cubic feet per minute per bushel.) Table 1 shows airflow resistance for shelled corn. More static pressure is required to push a given rate of airflow (cfm/bu) through grain as the depth of grain increases. Static pressure also must increase to push increasing rates of airflow (cfm/bu) through a given depth of grain.

Since drying time is directly related to the rate of airflow, we want airflow rates to be as high as practical when drying grain. The variable we can manipulate to our advantage when trying to reduce energy cost for fan operation is to reduce grain depth and lower the static pressure the fan must overcome.

If you were building new bins, you could plan to build larger diameter but shorter bins to keep static pressure low, while not sacrificing the number of bushels of corn at one time. Grain depth in the 27-foot bin would be 17.5 feet, whereas grain depth in the 30-foot bin would only be 14.2 feet.

When using the FANS computer program to compare these scenarios, provides some interesting results. It would take

1.54 cfm/bu through the 30-foot bin as needed for 1.25 cfm/bushel in the 27-foot diameter bin. For deep-bed, in-bin drying, drying time is directly proportional to airflow. The airflow in the 30-foot bin is 23 percent higher for the same horsepower and drying time would be 23 percent less in the larger diameter bin.

Already have your bins in place? The same principles can apply to existing grain storage facilities. You can save time and energy for fan operation by partially filling a drying bin instead of filling it to full depth. Since most producers move grain through drying bins into larger storage bins anyway, it takes only a little extra labor to dry small grain in smaller batches.

The FANS program can be downloaded at no cost from the University of Minnesota Web site at http://www.caee.edu/exten/postharvest/fans

Don’t Feed Fresh Silage too Soon

Bruce Anderson
UNL Agronomy and Horticulture Educator

You chopped that silage, packed it into the bunker and now you finally have some feed other than dry pasture for your cows. But what if it is too soon? Many times, crops stressed by drought or other factors will contain high levels of nitrates. Making these crops into silage is one good way to reduce toxicity of these nitrates because the fermentation process usually reduces the nitrate content of the feed. However, during the first few days of early fermentation the chopped forage begins to heat, converting those nitrates first into nitrates and, And, nitrates are as much as ten times more poisonous to cattle than nitrates. Later, these nitrates are neutralized and converted into other compounds that make them less toxic.

So, if you feed your freshly chopped forage before it has completed its full fermentation cycle, you risk giving your cattle highly poisonous feed. Its full fermentation cycle, you risk giving your cattle highly poisonous feed. Giving your cattle highly poisonous feed is toxic for your cattle. chopped forage before it has completed its full fermentation cycle, you risk giving your cattle highly poisonous feed. Giving your cattle highly poisonous feed is toxic for your cattle.

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It can be adjusted proportionately to regular silage using this information. Feed value stays high during drought because the olive and stalks retain many nutrients that normally go into the grain. If the corn is still standing in the field, harvest costs must be considered. These can be as low as $4–$5 a ton when yields are high and near the silo to over $10 a ton for fields with drought lowered yields that are several miles from the silo.

One final consideration might be to compare the silage to other potential feeds. With hay prices running around $80–$100 per ton, corn silage may be worth a couple dollars a ton more this year than usual.

10.55 horsepower (hp) to push 1.25 cfm/bu through 8,000 bushels of shelled corn in a 27-foot diameter bin. To push the same 1.25 cfm/bu through 8,000 bushels of shelled corn in a 30-foot diameter bin could only take 6.32 hp; a savings of 4.23 hp.

Assuming electricity cost is $0.08/kWh, and if one were drying shelled corn using natural air in mid to late October (assuming 20 days drying time), the drying cost in the 30-foot diameter bin could easily be $0.02 per bushel less than in the 27-foot diameter bin.

A management alternative would be to select a fan for the larger diameter bin which requires the same 10.55 hp but delivers more airflow. Once again, the easiest way to analyze this is to use the FANS program because it can calculate the interaction of the system curve and the fan curve. Trial and error showed it takes the same horsepower to push 1.54 cfm/bu through the 30-foot bin as needed for 1.25 cfm/bushel in the 27-foot diameter bin. For deep-bed, in-bin drying, drying time is directly proportional to airflow. The airflow in the 30-foot bin is 23 percent higher for the same horsepower and drying time would be 23 percent less in the larger diameter bin.

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So, if you feed your freshly chopped forage before it has completed its full fermentation cycle, you risk giving your cattle highly poisonous forage filled with nitrates. This problem is avoided by following a few simple steps. First, wait three or four weeks after chopping before feeding fresh silage. And two, test your silage for the presence of feeding. Then feed accordingly.

Having crops and pastures damaged by drought and hail is bad enough. Don’t make it worse by feed-
Spider Bite or Staph Infection? Diagnosis is Important

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

A new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found 59 percent of skin infections in emergency room visits were resistant to a major group of antibiotics including penicillin and methicillin. These infections are caused by a bacterium, known as methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA).

Many patients believe the infections were initially caused by a spider bite, perhaps because the lesion seemed to appear without any other associated injury. However, this scenario is also typical of MRSA infections which may start as a bump or pimple, which turns into a boil or abscess. These infections are often red, swollen, painful and have pus or other drainage.

An open wound may result from a brown recluse spider bite. However, brown recluse spiders do not transmit bacteria in their venom. Instead, they inject a cytotoxic venom into the flesh. The term cytotoxic means the venom kills cells and dissolves tissue around the bite. A brown recluse spider bite may take several months to heal and medical attention is often needed. Because MRSA infections may look superficially like brown recluse spider bites, they can be misdiagnosed, which may hinder recovery.

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The tissue around the bite. A brown recluse spider bite may take several months to heal and medical attention is often needed. Because MRSA infections may look superficially like brown recluse spider bites, they can be misdiagnosed, which may hinder recovery. In southeast Nebraska, documented bites from brown recluse spiders are relatively rare, due to the reclusive nature of this spider.

To determine if an infection is MRSA, a skin culture is needed to determine what type of bacteria is causing the infection and test it for antibiotic resistance. The doctor will then be able to prescribe antibiotics which are most likely to work. It usually takes several days to obtain the results of a skin culture. Most of the time, MRSA is easily treated.

Because the MRSA staph infections are increasing in the general population, it is important to see a doctor if a painful sore on the skin appears without any apparent cause. Correct diagnosis will speed recovery.

Tips to Prevent Recurrent Head Lice Infestations

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Almost all parents today have to deal with head lice. Experts believe head lice are usually transmitted by head-to-head contact.

Treatments are not as effective as they were a generation ago. Lice have developed resistance to the most commonly available over-the-counter (pyrethroid) products. Resistance means some lice will survive treatments and continue to develop and reproduce. Within a month or two, the child again will have a full-blown lice infestation.

What can parents do to prevent recurrence of head lice?

• Because of head lice resistance to pyrethrin-type products, parents should not rely on these commonly used over-the-counter products to cure a head lice infestation. One alternative product that may work well against resistant lice is called HairClean. Studies have shown it is at least as effective as Nix. Find it at your local food stores.

• Combing hair with a nit comb may be necessary to remove both live lice and eggs.

But, the tiniest lice are only a little larger than the egg and very hard to see. An electronic comb (Robi comb) can be useful to double check and make sure all the live lice are gone. This electronic comb will detect even the tiniest lice. This comb is available at many pharmacies and costs about $30.

• If repeated head lice infestations occur, all members of the household—even adults—should be checked for lice.

• Girls are more likely to get lice than boys. Girls with long hair are more likely to get lice than girls with short hair. It is advisable to pull back long hair or put it in a ponytail to keep it from dragging.

• Studies have shown head lice are not often found on floors, combs or brushes and clothing. It makes little sense to spray pesticides and launder everything. Instead focus efforts on the infested person.

Keep Out Unwanted Pests

Sonni Cochran
UNL Extension Associate

Cooler temperatures are here and you may find a few uninvited guests making their way into your home. Millipedes, crickets and wolf spiders are some common “accidental invaders” stumbling into homes trying to escape the chill of fall. Most of these visitors are not going to cause a problem because they won’t be able to survive in the home environment. Homes are too dry and there probably won’t be enough food to keep these pests alive.

Many of these short-lived visitors can be controlled without pesticides—a fly swatter, broom or vacuum will work nicely. Gently sweep the beneficial wolf spider into a jar and release it outside away from the house. Snakes who find their way into the home should also be captured and released.

Accidental invaders are not the only creatures looking for a safe haven. Mice and rats quickly take advantage of unobstructed openings around the home. These creatures, unlike accidental invaders, can take up permanent residence in your home damaging your property and possibly spreading disease. Their control can be more difficult and expensive if they become established.

Millipedes (left) and wolf spiders (right) are common “accidental invaders” in homes during fall.

To protect your home from “accidental invaders,” make sure all cracks around your property and possibly spread disease. Their control can be more difficult and expensive if they become established.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
UNL Extension in Lancaster County has many head lice resources you can trust for English, Spanish and Arabic available at the extension office or online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/lice

Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Oct. 14

The last hazardous waste collection for 2006 is Saturday, Oct. 14 from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. at the State Fair Park 4-H Youth Complex. These collections are for household only; not for business. Only residents of Lancaster and Lincoln County can bring items to collections. For more information, call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department at 441-8400.

Items You Can Bring for Disposal

Heavy metals: Items containing mercury such as thermostats or fluorescent light fixtures.

Solvents: mineral spirits, turpentine, paint strippers and thinners, oil-based paints, varnishes, stains, polishes and waxes.

Pesticides: weed killers, garden sprays, wood preservatives, roach powder, rat poisons. You may also bring EPA-banned products, like DDT, chlordane, 2,4,5-T, pentachlorophenol, silvex, PCP.

Combing with a nit comb is essential to removing eggs/nits and lice not killed by lice products.

Items containing PCB’s: Ballasts from old fluorescent fixtures and capacitors from old appliances including radios, motors and televisions.

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION
UNL Extension in Lancaster County has many educational resources about pest problems in and around the home. These resources are available at the extension office or online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest

The Nebline
http://lancaster.unl.edu
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October 2006
Environmental Focus

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Healthy Food in a Hurry!

If you’d like to prepare healthier foods, but are short on time, visit the “Cook It Quick” section of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County Web site at http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq.shtml

You’ll find quick and easy ideas for including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meat and dairy foods in your meals. Here is an example:

**Awesome Banana Walnut Shake**

Servings: 2 • Prep Time: 5 minutes

1 medium very ripe banana, frozen
1/2 cup vanilla low-fat yogurt
1/4 cup chopped California walnuts

Place banana, yogurt, walnuts, and 1 tablespoon honey in a blender. Blend on low speed until ingredients start to mix together. Then increase to high speed and blend until smooth. For a sweeter smoothie, add another tablespoon of honey. Serve immediately.

TIP: To make a frozen banana, peel and cut the banana into chunks. Wrap in plastic and place in freezer several hours or overnight.

Source: Recipe courtesy of Rosemary Mark for the Walnut Marketing Board. Find more great walnut recipes at www.walnuts.org

Nutrition Information: Calories, 267; Total Fat, 11 g; Saturated Fat, 2 g; Cholesterol, 3 mg; Sodium, 42 mg; Total Carbohydrate, 41 g; Dietary Fiber, 2.5

Food & Fitness

The A, B, C’s for a Healthy School

If you’re involved in programming with schools and their Wellness Policy, the Nebraska State Department of Education in cooperation with University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension has developed a new PowerPoint called “The A, B, C’s for a Healthy School.” You can download it at http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/healthy-schools.html or find it as part of the Nebraska A, B, C’s for a Healthy School Program. For more information, call 481-8886. Visit the State Department of Education website at http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/healthy-schools.htm.

The camp was for those who have completed kindergarten through fifth grade. The camp was designed with the Salvation Army’s Summer Day Camp. The camp ran from April through June and was sponsored by Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County. The campers had a great time learning about what foods were safe to eat and what foods should be thrown away.

Fruits and Vegetables — Fruit Jeopardy was the favorite lessons of the summer activity. The campers were asked to remember where they found the fruit and vegetables — what other places might they find the fruit and vegetables — what other places might they find the fruit and vegetables. The campers then tested their handwashing skills using glo-germ lotion and a black light. Food Safety BINGO allowed the campers to learn about what foods were safe to eat and what foods should be thrown away.

Fruits and Vegetables — Fruit Jeopardy was the activity of the day and allowed the campers to discuss what fruits they liked and disliked and how they might try to incorporate more fruit into their diet. The fruit and vegetable relay kept the campers on their toes as they sprinted back and forth with models of different fruits and vegetables — carrots, eggplants, apples, etc.

The NEP provided six lessons to 45-60 campers each week. Each lesson included a food preparation activity. The favorite lessons of the summer were:

• Food Safety — “Germ” boxes were hidden around the room. The campers had to find the “germ” boxes and report back to their leader about what they had found.

• Fruits and Vegetables — Fruit Jeopardy was the activity of the day and allowed the campers to discuss what fruits they liked and disliked and how they might try to incorporate more fruit into their diet. The fruit and vegetable relay kept the campers on their toes as they sprinted back and forth with models of different fruits and vegetables — carrots, eggplants, apples, etc.

The participants received an extensive handout with specific tips and easy, family-pleasing recipes for make-ahead meals.

**Make-Ahead Meals**

Free Seminar, Oct. 24

“Make-Ahead Meals” will be presented Tuesday, Oct. 24, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Plaza Conference Center, BryanLGH Medical Center East, 1600 South 48 Street, Lincoln. No cost to attend. Register by calling BryanLGH at 481-8886.

One way to eat healthier in our fast-paced world is to prepare meals ahead of time. Enjoy delicious homemade foods when you don’t have time to cook. Alice Henneman, registered dietitian and extension educator with University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County, will show you how!

Participants will receive an extensive handout with specific tips and easy, family-pleasing recipes for make-ahead meals.

**Healthy Eating**

By Alice Henneman, RD, UNL Extension Educator

A handful of nuts a day may be good for our health. Here’s a delicious way to include walnuts in your diet.

Drying and Roasting Pumpkin Seeds

Drying seeds and roasting seeds are two different processes. To dry, carefully wash pumpkin seeds to remove the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Pumpkin seeds can be dried in the sun, in a dehydrator at 115–120 degrees F for 1–2 hours, or in an oven on warm for 3–4 hours. Stir them frequently to avoid scorching. To roast, take dried pumpkin seeds, toss with oil and/or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250 degrees F for 10–15 minutes.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation at http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq.shtm

Nutrition Information: Calories, 267; Total Fat, 11 g; Saturated Fat, 2 g; Cholesterol, 3 mg; Sodium, 42 mg; Total Carbohydrate, 41 g; Dietary Fiber, 2.5

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**President’s Notes**

Alice Doane  
FCE Council Chair

Summing up in each dress, the next week we enjoyed the Johnson County Fair. At State Fair, I helped in the 4-H clothing division. While helping, I noticed more Civil War dresses and accessories. This must be the trend. I was happy to see 23 wool garments in the State Fair 4-H construction division. This will probably aid our statewide. Make it with Wool Contest in November. For more information on the wool contest, please contact the extension office or myself.

Our September Council meeting will be held Sept. 25, 1 p.m. with a program from Virginia (Vee) D. Gergen, development and administrative coordinator from Fresh Start Home. Refer to your letter as to what type of donations we will be collecting for Fresh Start that evening.

Remember to bring your blue sheet with all your volunteer hours of service. I read where Nebraska ranks 2nd in the Nation for volunteer work. It doesn’t take long for hours to add up. We still need a Council treasurer. There will be a group going to the State FCE Convention in St. Paul, NE — September 29 – October 1.
**Turn Fall Yard Waste Into Valuable Compost**

Leaves and other materials that clatter yards in the fall can be gathered and turned into high quality soil amendment for next year’s garden. Plus, developing a compost pile helps the environment as well as the pocketbook.

Compost improves the structure and moisture retention capabilities of the garden soils. Ingredients in your compost pile can include leaves, grass clippings, straw and non-woody plant trimmings. Branches, logs and twigs larger than one-fourth inch in diameter can be included, but they must first be shredded or cut up into smaller pieces.

Kitchens waste such as vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and eggshells are excellent potential ingredients. However, some organic materials that could cause a health threat or attract unwanted wildlife should be avoided. Such materials include pet feces, manure, bones, grease, whole eggs and dairy products.

Compost piles should be large enough to hold heat and small enough to allow air to enter the center. A typical compost pile must be at least 3 feet tall, 3 feet wide and 3 feet long to hold heat. Heat, height and width must be no more than 5 feet to allow air to the center of the pile.

Before building a compost pile, put 4 to 6 inches of chopped brush or other course material over the soil, which will allow air to circulate underneath the pile.

After creating a base layer, put on a layer of low carbon (green) organic material, such as grass clippings, 3 to 4 inches thick. Follow that with 4 to 6-inch layer of high carbon (brown) organic material, such as leaves or garden waste. Both layers should be damp enough to touch the touch, so if necessary add water to each layer with a hose. The material should be damp enough that a drop or two of liquid is released from a handful of it when squeezed. Finish with a 1-inch layer of garden soil or finished compost, which will introduce the microorganisms needed to break down the organic matter.

Mix these layers, except for the base layer, before adding more material to the pile. This ensures quick and even composting of the organic matter. Repeat the layering process to create the desired size of compost pile.

The compost pile can then be left alone, termed a 'passive pile', or can be maintained by turning or mixing the pile and adding water to keep the conditions prime for compost formation. Actively turned piles will break down more quickly and form finished compost much more quickly than a passive pile.

For active compost piles, rotate the compost about once a week using a pitchfork and be sure to incorporate new debris with the old. Excessive turning will cool the pile down and will take longer for compost to develop. Most plant disease organisms and weed seeds are destroyed during the composting process when temperatures in the center of the pile reach 140 to 150 degree Fahrenheit, which can be measured using a soil thermometer. However, in most compost piles it is impossible to mix efficiently enough to bring all wastes to the center. Consequently, incorporating large amounts of weeds with seeds or diseased plants into your compost pile may create problems.

Finished compost is dark brown, crumbly and earthy smelling. Small pieces of leaves or other ingredients may be visible. Stable compost can be blended into soil mixes and is suitable for most outdoor planting projects. When mixing ratios vary, 1 part compost is considered the minimum, 30 percent optimum and 50 percent maximum.
Choose, Store and Decorate Pumpkins and Gourds for Fall Displays

Colorful gourds and pumpkins have become popular fall decorations. Choosing the best ones and storing them properly is a crucial step in creating an attractive seasonal display.

Choosing

According to Laurie Hodges, Ph.D., UNL vegetable specialist, you should look for pumpkins and gourds that are fully mature. Pumpkins should have hard shells with a shiny surface that can’t be punctured by a fingernail. This test works out those that have been picked too early and will tend to rot. Also check for firm, bright green stems. Weak stems often are a sign that the plant had foliar disease. Mature gourds will be a dull color and will have stems or veins that are totally dry. Do not test gourds with a fingernail, as this may puncture or dent the skin and reduce the quality of the gourd.

Once the shell and stem have passed quality tests, pumpkin and gourd choices are purely personal. Misshapen ones are as safe to eat or handle as uniform ones. Blue pumpkins, white pumpkins, small pie pumpkins and other less common varieties are becoming increasingly popular.

After choosing pumpkins and gourds, there are many choices as to how to use them. Besides using them for cooking or other purposes, pumpkins and gourds may be carved, dried, polished or decorated. However, they must be stored properly so they don’t rot.

Washing

Washing and disinfecting pumpkins and gourds is not required, but it often helps keep them cleaner. Wipe down or wash the exterior with a dilute bleach solution, about one tablespoon of bleach per gallon of water. This removes surface bacteria and fungal spores.

Storing

After cleaning them, store the pumpkins or gourds in cool C but not freezing C dry locations where there is some air circulation, such as in a basement or garage. Keep them off the ground to prevent moisture from accumulating around them and causing them to rot. To do so, many growers store the pumpkins or gourds on straw. Other options include inside a cardboard box, on an upturned flower pot or on top of a couple bricks.

Avoid carving pumpkins more than a week before they’ll be displayed, as they’ll spoil more quickly.

Polishing

Polishing decorative pumpkins is another popular preparation for display. Acrylic liquid floor wax and polyurethane spray work well. Be sure not to eat pumpkins that have been treated in this way.

Drying

To dry gourds, leave them in an area that has good ventilation and is warm and dry, such as a garage or attic. Gourds should not touch each other while drying. They will shrink as they dry. Different sized gourds require different amounts of time to dry, but expect to wait several months. One way to tell if a gourd is dry is by shaking it. If the seeds can be heard rattling, it likely has dried.

A layer of mold may develop on the gourd during the drying process. Leave the mold until the gourd is completely dry; it usually will wash off them or can be rubbed off with a rough cloth or fine sandpaper. Dried gourds, if kept dry, will last indefinitely.

Re-Flowering Poinsettias

The poinsettia is a photoperiod plant, which means it begins to set buds and produce flowers as the winter nights become longer. The plants will naturally come into full bloom during January or February depending upon the flowering response time of the particular variety. This can be tricky to do outside of a controlled greenhouse environment because any stray artificial light such as that from a street light, pool light or household lamp could delay or halt the re-flowering of the plants.

Starting October 1, the plants must be kept in complete darkness for 14 continuous hours each night. This can be accomplished by moving the plants to a dark room or placing a large box over them. During this period, the plants require six to eight hours of bright sunlight and night temperatures between 60 and 70 degrees F. If the temperature is too high or too low, the setting of the flower buds may be delayed or halted. The blooming process may also be delayed or disrupted by any stray light that may shine near the plants during the critical dark period. This regime must continue for approximately eight to ten weeks in order for the plants to develop a colorful display of blooms for the holiday season. Obviously, the re-flowering process takes more than a little vigilance, perseverance and patience to be successful.

Weed Control on the Acreage

Living in the country just means you have more weeds to control. Learn how to identify and control many of the common weeds. You will learn about chemical and cultural control methods for specific weeds based on the weed’s life cycle and its most vulnerable growth stage.

Weed Control on the Acreage

Paraquat is a systemic herbicide. By killing the leaves the paraquat prevents the plants from getting enough energy and more. Learn design principles, plant placement, maintenance, and plants for a Nebraska-friendly landscape.

Nebraska-Friendly Landscapes

Nebraska-friendly landscapes enhance our living area by conserving and protecting water resources, providing biodiversity in plantings, conserving energy and more. Learn design principles, plant placement, maintenance, and plants for a Nebraska-friendly landscape.

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Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Youth Expo, Sept. 26–Oct. 1

The 79th Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Youth Livestock Exposition will be held Sept. 26-Oct. 1 at the Qwest Center in Omaha. More than 2,000 4-H families from an eight-state area participate in the Expo. For more information and a complete schedule, go to http://akserben.org/4-H.

4-H Entry in Star City Parade

Pictured is the 2005 4-H entry in the Star City Parade. 

Lancaster County 4-H members are invited to promote 4-H by participating in the annual Star City Parade. This year’s parade will be Saturday, Dec. 2 with the theme “Making Spirits Bright.” Join this exciting event by contacting Karen at 464-4129. The Star City Llamas 4-H club is coordinating the 4-H entry. Participants (including animals) must be in costume. 4-H Council is providing the entry fee.

State Fair Results

Congratulations to the Lancaster County 4-H members who showcased their talents at the Nebraska State Fair this year! Below are the Lancaster County 4-H Top Award winners and Rainbow Ribbon Recognition recipients. Complete results are online at http://4h.unl.edu.

Top Awards

Tori Knacke — Most Spirited Cat
Jasi Maahs — Best of Breed and Best Opposite Satin Rabbit
Kyle Pedersen — Top Floriculture
Alexis Spath — Senior Champion Holstein Dairy
Alexis Spath — Breed Champion Holstein Dairy
Jessica Stephenson — Best of Breed American Fuzzy Lap Rabbit
Jessica Stephenson — Clothing 2 Outfit Chosen for the Robert Hillestad Textiles Gallery Exhibition
Emily Taylor — Bronze — Dairy Goat Showmanship
Emily Taylor — Alpine Jr. Res Champion Dairy Goat
Emily Taylor — Alpine Sr. Champion Dairy Goat
Justin Taylor — Alpine Sr. Res Champion Dairy Goat

Rainbow Ribbon Recognition

Rainbow Ribbon Recognition is given to unique which have used special details — these may or may not be top placing items.

Thomas Cheney — Horticulture: Hot (non jalapeno) peppers
Callie Christensen — Youth in Motion Activity Book
Karen Clinch — Quilt Quest: Level III Quilted Exhibit
Kaley Cook — Child Development: Toy made for Preschool
Christina Mayer — Horticulture: Roma or Sauce Type Tomatoes
Christina Mayer — Horticulture: Salad Tomatoes
Kyle Pedersen — Floriculture: Flowering Potted Plant
Annaliese Saathoff — Decorate Your Duds: Garment Constructed from a Original Design
Nathan Smith — Heirloom Treasures/Family-Article
Karen Clinch — Quilt Quest: Level III Quilted Exhibit
Callie Christensen — Youth in Motion Activity Book

Final 2006 Group Testing, Sept. 30

In order to show at Districts and State 4-H Horse Shows, you must be at least 12 years of age and for everything but “in-hand” classes, you must have passed all Level II project advancement requirements. In addition, there are classes at state that do not require you to qualify for at districts, but you must have passed your Level III to enter.

The county deadline for district and state horse show entries, ID’s and level tests is usually the second week in May. Many riders find it difficult to have their horses ready to take a levels test so early in the spring. (We are talking March and April!) So, while your horses are “warmed up” from being ridden all summer, you might want to consider getting your testing done this fall.

There will be one final 2006 group testing for horse levels on Saturday, Sept. 30. The testing will take place in the morning at the Lancaster Event Center. We will use the warm-up arena in Pavilion II. Anyone wishing to test, please contact Marty at the extension office as soon as possible. Cut off date for signing up is Sept. 15.

Those of you who have signed up will receive a letter the week of Sept. 18 informing you of your ride time.

4-H Horse Awards Night, Oct. 3

The annual Lancaster County 4-H Horse Awards Night will be Tuesday, Oct. 3 at 7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road. Awards presentation includes the Wittstruck All-Around Champion, All-Around Trail, All-Around Barrels, Herdsmanship, top County Fair Judging and Incentive Awards.

The evening includes a pot luck. Please bring a meat dish and either a salad or dessert and your own table service. Drinks will be provided.

Come help celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of the 2006 Lancaster County 4-H Horsemen!

Two Horseless 4-H Clubs Invite New Members

New Club for Youth Who Love Horses But Don’t Have a Horse—Organizational Meeting, Oct. 16

Join a new 4-H “Horseless” 4-H club! Open to youth ages 8–18. Have fun with friends at meetings, social activities and tours. Learn interesting facts about horses, how to groom them, feed and care for them and safety around horses. The first organizational meeting will be Monday, Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln. Call Linda at 464-5964 for more details.

Broomtails Club for Families Who May Own a Horse Someday

The focus of the Broomtails 4-H club will be to help families who might like to own a horse someday, learn some of the ins and outs of owning a horse before getting one. Topics will include breeds and uses, choosing a horse, colors/markings, tack/equipment, horse safety, grooming and care. The club will meet every other week from May to August at Stillwaters Ranch located south of Lincoln on 68th Street. Enrollment is limited to eight youth ages 10–14. Membership is for one year. Call Jen at 792-3073 for more details.

4-H Horse Project Advancement Levels

Once all requirements for an advancement level have been completed, a copy of the level record sheet signed off by the leader or project leader, must be submitted to the extension office. Riders having successfully completed a new level will receive their certificate at the Horse Awards’ Night on Tuesday, Oct. 3. If you have any questions, please call Marty at the extension office at 441-7180.

Horse Bits

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In order to show at Districts and State 4-H Horse Shows, you must be at least 12 years of age and for everything but “in-hand” classes, you must have passed all Level II project advancement requirements. In addition, there are classes at state that do not require you to qualify for at districts, but you must have passed your Level III to enter.

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Those of you who have signed up will receive a letter the week of Sept. 18 informing you of your ride time.
**Career Portfolio Training, Oct. 10**

There will be a 4-H Career Portfolio training on Tuesday, Oct. 10, 7-9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. As you may know, last year the 4-H Career Portfolios replaced the old 4-H Awards Book. 

And by January 1, 2008 all 4-H’ers applying for awards will have to be converted to this new system. We encourage everyone to attend. We have many talented people in our county that should be recognized on the State and National level. 

If you have any questions regarding the new Career Portfolio or the training contact Deanna or Tracy at 441-7180.

Statewide Volunteer Training, Dec. 2

Save the date for the upcoming Volunteer R & R. This all day statewide volunteer training will be held Saturday, Dec. 2 in Grand Island. Consider attending this statewide volunteer training as it will help “retool and refuel” volunteer leaders. See next month’s Nebline for more information.

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**4-H Scholarships Due Jan. 1**

The Lancaster County 4-H program offers a variety of scholarships. Deadline is Jan. 1. Applications are available at the extension office or online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h.

**COLLEGE**

The following college scholarships are available to high school seniors active in 4-H:

- **4-H Council**—awards six $500 scholarships.
- **Lincoln Center Kiwanis**—awards two $1,000 scholarships.

**Teen Council**—awards two scholarships to 4-H’ers who are active in Teen Council and help with at least one major fundraiser.

**Lone Scholarship**—awards one $200 scholarship to a 4-H’er attending Raymond Central High School.

Note: two statewide scholarships—Martha & Don Romes Scholarship and Staats Custom Awards—have a deadline of Dec. 1.

**4-H CAMP**

The following scholarship goes toward attending 4-H summer camps:

- **Joyce Vahle Memorial Scholarship**—awards one $100 scholarship to a youth age 14–18. Applicants should currently be, or have been, enrolled in at least one sewing project.

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**Nominate Your Favorite 4-H Volunteer!**

A “Heart of 4-H Award” is awarded to a Lancaster County 4-H volunteer each month! Nominate your favorite 4-H volunteer or leader by submitting the following form (also available online at lancaster.unl.edu). Nominations of co-volunteers accepted.

nominate

Please explain why you are nominating person(s) (use additional paper if needed)

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**Award Nominations Due Jan. 1**

Nominations are needed for the following 4-H awards. Deadline is Jan. 1. Applications forms are available at the extension office or online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h.

- **4-H Meritorious Service**—presented to individuals or organizations which have exhibited consistent and strong support of the 4-H program. 4-H members are not eligible.

- **Outstanding 4-H Member**—presented to an individual who has excelled in their involvement with the 4-H program and is age 4 years or older. The basis for selection appreciates the variety and depth of 4-H activities.

- **I Dare You Youth Leadership Award**—awarded on behalf of the American Youth Foundation (AYF) to high school juniors or seniors who strive to achieve their personal best and make a positive difference in their community. Two 4-H members will be selected from Lancaster County. Lancaster County 4-H Council provides award recipients with a hardbound copy of William H. Danforth’s book, I Dare You!

- **4-H Teen Council Invites New Members!**

The Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council is a leadership organization for youth in grades 7–12. Meetings are held the second Sunday of each month at 3 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. 4-H Teen Council members are involved in several leadership activities such as organizing the 4th & 5th Grade Lock In and the Ice Cream Social at the Lancaster County Fair. Call Tracy at 441-7180 for more information or to join!

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**Chess Club Seeks New Members, 1st Meeting Oct. 8**

Join the Checkmates 4-H club and learn the tactics of chess and the secrets of good positional play, improve your game and learn new strategies. Players of all levels are welcome. Checkmates leader is James Walla. Both current 4-H members and those interested in joining 4-H are invited to attend. The club’s first meeting for the 2006-07 4-H year is Tuesday, Oct. 9, 7-9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. For more information, call 441-7180.

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**Shooting Sports Reorganizational Meeting, Oct. 12**

The Lancaster County Shooting Sports 4-H club will host a reorganizational meeting will be Thursday, Oct. 12, 7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. This meeting will focus on the BB/air rifle and trap disciplines as well as the possibility of starting an archery program. Both current 4-H members and those interested in joining 4-H are invited to attend. Total registration fee to join 4-H Shooting Sports 4-H club is $8, insurance included.

The Lancaster County Shooting Sports Trap Teams are planning on shooting SCTP this year. The teams are still recruiting for this season of high school trap shoot and the SCTP competitions. If you are in grades 6–12 and interested in shooting trap for Lancaster County 4-H, call Gene Veborg at 421-1274.

**Make A Difference Day is Oct. 28**

Make a Difference Day, Oct. 28, is an opportunity for 4-H’ers to lend their hands in service. For more information, go to http://www.usaweeden.com/dffday

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The Nebraska Children and Families Foundation is coordinating a statewide public awareness and education campaign called “Learning From Day One” to help parents, grandparent- ers and caregivers explore ways to turn everyday moments into fun learning opportunities. Studies of high-quality early childhood education programs agree positive early experiences for the very young yield enormous economic and social benefits. Findings have shown such programs can yield up to a $17 return on every dollar invested by reducing crime, healthcare costs, welfare dependency, the need for special education and job training.

Today, 35 percent of all Nebraska children under the age of three—the most critical period of development—do not have access to high quality early childhood experiences. Therefore, 35 percent of Nebraska’s much-needed workforce will be unprepared for success in school or at work. It is critical we invest now in learning and education of our youngest citizens in order to prepare them for a successful, productive life.

Primary sponsors of the Nebraska campaign are the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Nebraska Department of Education and local community agencies. University of Nebraska—Lincoln Extension is a partner and provides Nebraskans with practical research-based information about building strong families.

The national campaign Born Learning® is a key component of Nebraska’s Learning From Day One campaign. Born Learning® was developed by the United Way of America, Civitas, the Families and Work Institute and the Ad Council.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:

Learning From Day One will learn certain skills most easily during particular “windows of opportunity.”

These are times—a few weeks or months—when a part of the brain absorbs new information more easily than at any other time in life. Not surprisingly, much of the brain’s development occurs through play or educational experiences. Parents and caregivers can help by meeting the learning needs of their children.

What are some of these prime times for learning?

Here are some guidelines:

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT: The heart and the brain are connected.

Unpredictable events can be stressful and the brain can become stressed too. Children 1 to 5 years. Research has shown the cortex, the area of the brain that hears music, is the same area that does complex music.

MUSIC AND MATH SKILLS:

Research has shown that the brain has the ability to learn any language. Since the prime time for language learning is the first few years of life, babies are also able to learn second or third languages more easily during this period.

MUSIC AND MATH SKILLS:

Visual Development:

From Day One campaign research shows a person’s IQ predicts only a small part of career performance—emotional intelligence predicts about 80 percent of your career success. The part of the brain that regulates emotions, called the amygdala, learns very early how to be a “good citizen.”

This means emotions such as empathy, compassion, forgiveness and sadness are shaped by how the infant is nurtured.

GROCERIES + ITEMS = LEARNING

Quick Tip for Every Day Learning Moments With Your Child: Grocery Shopping

Going to the grocery store is a chore, especially at the end of a busy day. Grocery stores also offer many opportunities for learning that can make the experience less demanding. The store is like a collage in motion—there is so much going on. Talk about the things you see as you shop or have your child help to pick out certain items. The grocery store can be a bonding time with your children and teach them about healthy food choices, different items, shopping habits and the check-out process.

For example, if your grocery list calls for three cans of tomato soup, ask your child to get three cans of soup from the shelf in the produce area.

Prime Times for Brain Development

Holiday Gifts Needed for LPS 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 3 years old. Literacy is being emphasized again this year, so books and items to encourage reading are suggested (such as puzzles, puppets, small toys, etc. relating to story books). The goal is to give each child a gift. 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. This is an excellent project for 4-H, FCE and other community clubs. Individuals are welcome to participate.

Public Notice

The Lancaster County Board of Commissioner seek members of the community to serve on the Lancaster County Extension Board. The vacancies will be filled with terms beginning in January 2007.

Extension Board members represent and assist University of Nebraska Extension staff in Lancaster County with program issue areas that include Agricultural Profitability and Sustainability; Children, 4-H, Youth and Families; Food Safety, Health and Wellness, strengthening Nebraska Community interact and Quality Environment. The Board meets monthly.

Registered Lancaster County voters interested in serving a three-year term should complete an application for an appointment by November 1, 2006. Additional information and an application can be obtained from the Lancaster County Extension office, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528-1507, or phone 441-7180. Online applications are available at http://interlinc.cl.lincoln.ne.us/ ext/city/comms/boardsapp/pdf

GROUNDSHIP/CONSERVATOR TRAINING, OCT. 17

Have you recently been appointed by the court as a guardian or conservator for a minor or friend? Guardianship Training will be offered Tuesday, Oct. 17, 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Call 441-7180 to register. Guardianship Training is offered by UNL Extension in partnership with the Nebraska Supreme Court and Nebraska Bar Association. The training has been approved by the State Court Administrator. It is open to court-appointed guardians or conservators, and other interested individuals.

At the training, participants will learn:

• what guardianship is
• responsibilities to the court and to the ward
• financial responsibilities
• how to implement good decision-making practices

Eileen Krumbach, UNL extension educator and statewide program coordinator, will teach the class. A volunteer attorney or lawyer will be available to answer legal questions.

To register, call 402-362-5508 (UNL Extension in York County) at least two days prior to the training date. The cost of $15, payable at the door, includes educational materials and forms. Participants receive a certificate which indicates to the County Court they have completed the training.

Upcoming training dates are Nov. 21 or Dec. 12 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. For statewide training dates, call 441-7180 or go to http://extension.unl.edu/guardianship

HOLIDAY GIFTS NEEDED FOR LPS HEADSTART

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Public Awareness Campaign “Learning From Day One”
The University of Nebraska Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) is sponsoring a Community Conversation at Clinton Elementary School (1529 N. 29th St.) on Saturday, Oct. 14 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. The focus of this Community Conversation is on immigrants and refugees in the Lincoln community. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from a panel of immigrants and refugees discussing the joys and struggles of coming to a new community. Additionally, participants will be encouraged to dialogue with other community members about strategies and tools to foster immigrant participation in the community as well as enhance interethnic understanding.

No cost to attend. Free breakfast and child-care provided. Pre-registration forms are available. Please call Jan Harris at 472-0597.

ABC’s for Good Health, Oct. 5, 12 & 19

UNL Extension Nutrition Education Program (NEP) is presenting “ABC’s for Good Health,” a free series aimed at limited to moderate income women. If you are receiving assistance such as food stamps or Medicaid, you would qualify to attend this program. Upcoming dates are Thursdays, Oct. 5, 12 and 19. Choose between two time slots, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or 6-8:30 p.m.

Learn that good health is as easy as:

A) Aim for fitness – Increase your physical activity with a personalized walking program.
B) Build a healthy base – Use MyPyramid to guide your food choices.
C) Choose sensibly – Balance the foods you need and enjoy.

Participants receive:

• A pedometer and inspiration to stay fit
• A notebook with practical nutrition information
• A pedometer and inspiration to stay fit
• A pedometer and inspiration to stay fit

Sessions are held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road in Lincoln. Please register by Sept. 28. Call NEP at 441-7180 for more information or to register.

2006 Make It Yourself with Wool Contest

This contest offers both youth and adults the opportunity to promote the beauty and versatility of wool fabric and yarn. Personal creations in knitting, weaving, crocheting, spinning and weaving of wool fabric, yarn is encouraged. Categories and ages for this contest are:

• Preteen, 12 and under
• Junior, 13–16
• Senior, 17–24
• Adult, 25 and over
• Made for Other (any age)

The District III contest will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Rd, Lincoln on Saturday, Nov. 4 with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m. You may enter any district contest. For other district contest dates and locations, forms or more information, contact Tracy at 441-7180.

**Community Conversation on Immigrants & Refugees, Oct. 14**

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Help Start a 4-H Club!

4-H offers a wide variety of opportunities for you to discover your world, your community and yourself. YOU make your own choices and set your own goals!

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension 4-H Youth Development Program is open to all youth ages 5–18. Through learning-by-doing, youth gain practical skills and develop life skills.

Currently, there are more youth wanting to be in 4-H clubs than there are clubs. Families are encouraged to help organize a new club — which is a lot easier than you may think! Starting a 4-H club now gives plenty of time for members to work on projects for next year’s county and state fairs.

Club Organization

Clubs range from 4 to 60 members and are led (or co-led) by club leaders — often club members’ parents. Parents are encouraged to attend meetings.

Volunteers are the heart of 4-H. Adult leaders partner with youth members to complete projects.

Club leaders — Also known as organizational leaders, club leaders coordinate meeting times and agendas. They also are responsible for club enrollment information.

Project leaders — Clubs may or may not have project leaders who provide leadership for specific projects.

Parent Volunteers — Also known as assistant leaders, provide valuable guidance to youth.

Club officers — Youth members choose officers to run their meetings.

Over 150 Projects

Nebraska 4-H has more than 150 project areas. Age-appropriate project manuals are written by university experts. Most project manuals have accompanying leader guides.

In most clubs, members complete several projects a year. Some 4-H clubs focus on one particular project area, such as rabbits. Many youth exhibit their projects at the county and state fairs.

4-H Staff Guidance

4-H staff provides guidance and resources to club leaders.

Here’s a look at Lancaster County 4-H staff and their areas of responsibilities:

- Tracy Kulm manages all non-animal project areas. This includes clothing, food, home environment, engineering and general areas.
- Deanna Karmazin runs the 4-H livestock project areas.
- Marty Cruickshank manages the 4-H horse, rabbit and poultry project areas.
- Mary Jane Frogge runs the horticulture and conservation project areas.
- Gary Bergman oversees the Lancaster County 4-H program.
- Karen Evasco provides support to all 4-H areas.

Other Resources

Resource materials available to leaders include:

- Regularly-scheduled leader trainings
- The Nebline monthly newsletter
- 4-H pages
- Lancaster County 4-H Web site at http://lancaster.unl.edu
- Nebraska 4-H Web site at http://4h.unl.edu
- Mailings to club leaders
- County and State Fair can provide numerous ideas and inspirations for projects!

To Get Started

If you would like to help start a 4-H club, call Lancaster County 4-H at 441-7180.

Can You Guess It?

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

The answer was common milkweed seeds and seedpod.