Local Dairy Entrepreneurs Are Filling Market Niches

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

High grain prices have brought about unprecedented increases in land values and cash rental rates and have been seen as a windfall for cash grain producers. The other side of the story, and one that doesn’t make the headlines as often, is the negative effect high energy and grain prices have had on the meat animal feeding and dairy industries. I interviewed two dairy producers in southeastern Nebraska who have taken the initiative to develop value-added products to market for consumers. This is their story.

**Legacy Dairy and Creamery**

Dairy farmers Rex DeFrain and Jerry Bond joined forces in 2007 to produce and sell their own liquid milk products under the brand name Legacy Milk. They presently supply product to 45 grocery stores plus three coffee houses in 14 towns from Omaha to Kearney.

I interviewed Debbie DeFrain at the Legacy Milk bottling plant in Hallam. The following dialog is excerpted from the interview:

**Q. Why did you decide to start your own liquid milk company?**

**A.** Our two dairies are both small by today’s standards. We milk 120 to 150 cows at the How-de (DeFrain) Dairy near Fairbury and the Bond family dairy milks 68 to 80 cows at their Bonderosa Dairy by today’s standards. We milk 120 to 150 cows at the How-de (DeFrain) Dairy near Fairbury and the Bond family dairy milks 68 to 80 cows at their Bonderosa Dairy.

We were getting squeezed out by the big dairies that relocated in Nebraska from other states. We simply couldn’t survive on the milk price we were being offered and the cost to haul our milk to the milk company was getting so expensive, it was eating up much of potential profit. We decided to apply for a block grant to start up our own business to fill a niche in the liquid milk market. We received the block grant in 2007 which has made it possible for us to build Legacy Dairy and Creamery in Hallam.

**Q. What do you consider to be your market niche?**

**A.** We sell high-quality liquid milk from cows not fed any hormones. Our milk is sold in environmentally-sustain

able returnable glass bottles. We believe glass bottles give us many advantages beyond the environmental aspects. Glass does a better job of protecting the milk from oxidation than plastic. Milk must stay cold to remain fresh. Our thick glass bottles hold the cold better than plastic when sitting on a pallet in the back of a grocery store waiting to be put in the dairy case. This extends the shelf life of the milk. Large milk companies not only remove butter fat from the raw milk, they remove some of the other milk solids as well. We do not remove any of the milk solids other than butter fat. We are told, our milk tastes better and we believe it is better for you.

Besides selling the usual choices (whole milk, two percent, one percent and skim milk), we have found a market niche with our flavored milk. The list includes chocolate, strawberry, root beer, vanilla, cotton candy, monkey milk (banana) and several others. We use only natural flavors. Natural flavors are more expensive than artificial flavors but we are after the higher-end market and you certainly can tell the difference in taste.

**Q. Are you marketing all of the milk you produce on your own farms through Legacy Dairy?**

**A.** Yes, our own and more. Last year we have started buying some milk from a third small dairy to meet the demand for our products.

**Q. What research did you do before deciding to start your business?**

**A.** We got help from Bellevue University with our market research and the College of St. Mary helped us do an economic feasibility study. We have done demos and passed out taste samples at grocery stores. Perhaps the best market research we could have done was to have a sales booth at the 2007 Nebraska State Fair. We sold 4,800 pints of flavored milk in three days before we ran out of product. Some of our best repeat customers were the folks from the other food stands.

**Q. Are you looking into producing any new products?**

**A.** Yes, we are exploring the possibility of making cheese, butter and flavored butter.

**Q. What three pieces of advice would you give to other entrepreneurs wanting to break into the food market?**

1. Go for the high-end market and produce a better quality product than any of your competitors. 2. Diversify or die. 3. Listen to your customers and give the kind of service only small owner-run companies can give.

**Jisa Farmstead Cheese**

Dave Jisa farms nearly 2,000 acres and operates a 300 head dairy in rural Butler County. Jisa began making and marketing his own brand name cheese a little over three years ago. Jisa Farmstead Cheese can be found in regional Hy-Vee and Bakers supermarkets and is carried by numerous locally-owned grocery stores in southeast Nebraska. I recently interviewed Mr. Jisa on his farm.

**Q. How did you become interested in producing cheese?**

**A.** My wife’s family has been in the cheese business for many years. Her brother is still running a cheese plant. So I have been somewhat familiar with cheese making for a long time. I had a good friend and mentor when I was about 18 years old and he was about 80.

see Jisa Cheese on page 12
**Effect of Fuel Price Increase on Production Costs**

Most folks, however, don’t track fuel consumption by field operation and need a research-based estimate to compute the effect of a price increase on overall production costs. A good reference for fuel use estimates is Minnesota Farm Machinery Economic Cost Estimates for 2008. Table 1 presents the estimated fuel use for various power units, based on estimates in the Minnesota publication. Table 2 presents estimates of fuel consumption per acre for field operations. Note: The fuel use per acre for field operations is independent of implement width. Combine the disks for one with a 20-foot width and the other with a 30-foot width; it would take 50% more power to pull the 30-foot disk (assuming the same travel speed, depth, etc.) but since the disk would be tilling 50% more acres per hour, the fuel use per acre would be the same for either scenario.

Source: Fuel consumption information in Table 1 and 2 is taken from Minnesota Farm Machinery Economic Cost Estimates for 2008, by William Laurino, Extension Economist, University of Minnesota. This publication is available online at [http://www2.agriculture.mn.gov/FuelCostEstimator](http://www2.agriculture.mn.gov/FuelCostEstimator).

**TABLE 1. DIESEL FUEL COST PER HOUR FOR VARIOUS POWER UNITS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Power Unit</th>
<th>Fuel Use</th>
<th>Cost/hr</th>
<th>Cost/hr</th>
<th>Cost/hr</th>
<th>Cost/hr</th>
<th>Cost/hr</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>$8.91</td>
<td>$12.87</td>
<td>$16.34</td>
<td>$22.28</td>
<td>$22.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425 HP 4WD</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>$16.83</td>
<td>$24.31</td>
<td>$30.86</td>
<td>$42.08</td>
<td>$43.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2. DIESEL FUEL COST PER ACRE FOR FIELD OPERATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment Type</th>
<th>Cost/acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tillage</td>
<td>$0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Cultivator</td>
<td>$0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Till Planter</td>
<td>$0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grain Drill</td>
<td>$0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prussell Drill</td>
<td>$0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-Till Drill</td>
<td>$0.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How to Measure Small Quantities of Pesticide**

To measure small quantities of pesticides using a number of different measuring devices.

1. A measuring cup (Dedicate a measuring cup for garage use only. Never use the same cup that is used for cooking.)
2. A tablespoon (If you will be mixing your pesticides from the silverware drawer, check your pouring volume by pouring a measured volume from the spoon designated for pesticides to check the actual volume.)
3. A disposable syringe calibrated in milliliters (These are sold at veterinary supply and farm supply stores). This is my personal favorite because you suck chemical into the syringe instead of pouring chemical from the bottle into an open measure which can spill on your hands or clothes. A syringe accurately measures any volume up to its full capacity.

The calculations below demonstrate how to compute the chemical needed for our example using these three fluid volume measuring devices.

1. 1 fl.-oz. / fl.-oz. cup = 0.24 Cup per tank. Add just under 1/4 cup of product per tank.
2. 1 fl.-oz. x 2 Tbsp per ounce = 0.8 Tbsp. Add just under 4 Tbsp per tank.
3. 1 fl.-oz. x 296 milliliters (ml) / fl.-oz. = 56.2 ml. Add just over 56 ml per tank.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

I have written an Excel worksheet based on the diesel fuel costs used in this article which shows the cost per hour for farm units and the cost per acre for selected field operations each year since 1999. This worksheet is available to the public at [http://lancaster.unl.edu/~ag_farm/ FuelCostEstimator](http://lancaster.unl.edu/~ag_farm/ FuelCostEstimator) online.

**Calibrating Hand-Held Sprayers**

Do you need to spot spray weed patches in the lawn or pasture with a hand-held sprayer? We will discuss a methodology that ensures you apply the correct amount of chemical through a sprayer, if you are satisfied with the spray pattern.

**Measure Spray Output**

1. Note the “full” mark on the sprayer tank. This mark shows the capacity of the sprayer tank.
2. The recommended amount of product to apply per acre.
3. I recently came across a simplified method of calibrating hand-held sprayers. This methodology works for calibrating either compressed air sprayers or sprayers with a motor driven pump to create pressure (pump up) sprayers or sprayers with a motor driven pump to create pressure (pump up) sprayers.
4. The following procedure illustrates the steps required to properly calibrate hand-held sprayers. Most of the procedure is the same whether you are using a compressed air or powered sprayer. Labeled text applies only to compressed air sprayers.

**Determine the Amount of Chemical to Add to the Tank**

1. Divide the useful capacity of the tank (step 2) by the spray output, GPA (step 6) to determine the decimal fraction of an acre covered by each tank of spray solution.
2. Read the label to determine the volume of product recommended per acre.
3. Multiply the volume of product per acre (step 8) by the fractional acre covered per tank (step 7) to determine the amount of product to add per tank of spray.

**Measure a test area 18.5 feet x 18.5 feet square. Then spray in the manner you would normally do and record the time in seconds to "treat" the test area.”

**Example**

- **Note the full mark.**
- Tom measured the useful volume of the spray tank and found it to be two gallons. (Step 2)
- **Test spray pattern.** (Step 3)
- He measured and marked a test area 18.5 x 18.5 feet. Then he measured the time in seconds to “treat” the test area. (Step 5)
- **Spray a test area 18.5 feet x 18.5 feet square.** Then spray in the manner you would normally do and record the time in seconds to “treat” the test area. (Step 6)
- He measured and marked a test area 18.5 x 18.5 feet. Then he measured the time in seconds to “treat” the test area. (Step 7)
- **Divide the useful capacity of the tank by the spray output.** GPA (Step 8)

**Table 1**

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**How would you measure an Excel worksheet based on the diesel fuel costs used in this article which shows the cost per hour for farm units and the cost per acre for selected field operations each year since 1999. This worksheet is available to the public at [http://lancaster.unl.edu/~ag_farm/ FuelCostEstimator](http://lancaster.unl.edu/~ag_farm/ FuelCostEstimator) online.**
Practice Water Conservation to Lengthen Septic System Life

Jan Hygstrom
UNL Project Manager and Sharon Skipton
UNL Water Quality Educator

Conserving water to reduce the amount of wastewater that needs to be treated and distributing water flow to the septic tank over an extended period of time, will extend the life of a system. Wastewater should remain in the septic tank long enough, at least 24 hours, for heavy solids to settle out, forming sludge and light solids to float to the top, forming scum. Except immediately after pumping, a septic tank contains wastewater to its full capacity at all times. As a gallon of wastewater flows into the tank from the house, a gallon of effluent flows out of the tank into the drainfield. If wastewater moves in and out of the tank too rapidly due to constant flow for extended periods of time or heavy water flow at any given time, solids remain suspended in the wastewater and may move with the effluent out of the tank and into the drainfield. Solids can clog a drainfield, decreasing its ability to treat wastewater. This can lead to costly repairs or even replacement.

Conserve water and spread out wastewater usage by following these suggestions:

• Wash dishes or clothes in late in the day, rather than three or more loads in one day.
• Install low-flow water fixtures, low-volume toilets and low-water-use appliances when they need replacing.
• Check for and repair leaky faucets, toilets and other leaks in the plumbing system. Leaks can account for almost 15 percent of all wastewater that goes into a septic system.
• Take short showers.
• Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth or shaving.

If purchasing a water softening unit, select one with demand-initiated regeneration. These types of units automatically determine when to regenerate by keeping track of the number of gallons of water used by measuring the change in the electrical conductivity of the resin bed or by sensing a change in water hardness. These regenerate and use water based on when the system needs it, rather than on a set time schedule. Most people find that a demand-installed system regenerates less frequently than one with a timer.

Despite all efforts, biting flies may still be a problem. If biting flies get inside the house, space sprays can be applied to kill them. Remove all people and pets from rooms, turn off air handling systems, apply the product according to label directions and wait about 10-15 minutes before entering the room. Keep room vacant as long as the label recommends.

Crack and crevice treatments can be used to treat areas where laundry enter the house. Areas to be treated would include cracks around doors and windows.

Biting flies usually rest on vegetation or the sides of houses before entering or before biting people. Numbers of biting flies around houses can be reduced by applying outdoor barrier treatments to places flies would contact before biting or entering the house. Be sure to apply all products according to label directions and to locations listed on the label.

Don’t Mistake Blossom End Rot for Mold on Tomatoes

Kim Todd
UNL Landscape Horticulture Specialist

Late spring and early summer are common times for garden plants, such as tomatoes and peppers, to develop signs of blossom end rot. As a result, gardeners should be cautious not to overlook sunken, blackened areas of mold because they may be indicators of a more serious problem. Blossom end rot is a physiological disorder caused by calcium deficiencies in plants. The signs of the disorder commonly occur on the first fruits of each growing season. Irregular, sunken black spots will appear near the plant blossom and often lead to fruit that is mushy and flat. Blossom end rot may eventually destroy the entire fruit. Once it has established itself, it cannot be treated.

Blossom end rot is not a mold itself. However, it can contribute to the growth of mold on fruit. In the presence of moisture, mold will grow near a lesion where blossom end rot has already weakened a plant. To prevent blossom end rot, it is important to prevent the tie-up of calcium in the soil. Providing a consistent moisture supply and maintaining pH levels from 6.5 to 7 are good methods of ensuring the plant will receive enough calcium and other important nutrients.

Control of Biting Flies

Many of the biting flies, like black flies, horse flies and deer flies breed in water or in muddy areas near ponds and swamps. Consequently, it is very difficult for individuals to attempt control of these biting flies by reducing breeding sites. Stable flies breed in decaying grass or crop clippings, hay residues and silage. Because they are extremely strong fliers, the source of the infestation may be located up to several hundred miles away.

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Many biting flies are active at certain times. Avoid outdoor activity during these peak biting times. Horse flies, deer flies, black flies and stable flies are usually most active during the day. Most of the biting flies are also most active in late August through October or November. If it is necessary to go outdoors into areas where biting flies are prevalent, wear protective clothing. Long sleeved shirts, long pants will protect arms, legs and head from bites. If necessary, apply a repellent labeled for biting fly protection. Apply products according to label directions. Reapply as needed and as recommended on the label. Most repellents do not work as well for biting flies as they do for mosquitoes; therefore, they have to be reapplied more often.

Most biting flies bite in still air. Increasing air movement in porches, patios and picnic areas will keep biting flies away, but will not usually provide complete protection. Burning candles, coals and torches containing citronella or other biting fly repellent will sometimes help reduce bites. Burning these items produces a smoke which repels biting insects. Most biting flies will usually rest on low vegetation until they detect a host. Pruning shrubs, mowing weedy areas and opening up the environment for air flow will reduce numbers of biting flies in an area.

Try to keep windows closed during periods of high activity. Remove cracks around doors and windows.

Avoid outdoor activity during these peak biting times.

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Add “Star” Appeal to Fruit Dishes

Sprinkle your fruit dishes with “stars” to add “star” appeal. Use a star-shaped ice cube tray to form the stars. The stars in this picture were made by using a food processor to mix two parts fruit (fresh or frozen) to one part flavored yogurt. Don’t worry about overestimating the amount you’ll need to make — any remaining mixture makes a good snack!

If necessary, stop the food processor occasionally to push the mixture down the sides. Fill ice cube tray with mixture. Freeze until firm, about 3 hours. Stars maintain their shape best if left in the ice cube tray until served. Cover with plastic wrap and freezer foil after they are frozen, if you plan to use them a day or so later.

Do not pop stars out of the ice cube trays right away, let them sit a minute or so to warm slightly and loosen. Experiment with different fruit and yogurt combinations. Pineapple and vanilla-flavored yogurt would make attractive stars to toss in with a mixture of red and blue berries for the Fourth of July. Several shapes in addition to stars are available in local stores and Internet sites selling kitchen wares.

$stretch Your Food Dollar by Using Dry Milk

Instant nonfat (powdered) milk is a nutritious, convenient and economical alternative to fresh milk. Powdered milk contains calcium, protein, vitamin A and vitamin D. It is also low in fat and cholesterol. Using powdered milk costs 20 percent less than fresh milk. This is a savings of over 70 cents a gallon.

Dry powdered milk is easily reconstituted by mixing 1/3 cup with 1 cup water to make 1 cup of milk. The milk can be used for drinking or baking. The taste of reconstituted milk improves when the mixture is chilled. Add milk powder to increase nutrition in cream soups, cereal, beverages and yogurt.

The following recipe is great for the summer while providing calcium, protein and vitamins.

Frozen Fudge Bars

Makes 4 bars, 4 servings each

4 cups hot water
3/4 cup granulated sugar
3 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons cocoa
2 cups hot water 1/2 cup dry milk powder
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Put water in medium sauce pan and bring to a boil. While water is heating, measure sugar, flour, cornstarch, salt, cocoa and milk powder in a medium bowl and mix well. When water boils, add the milk/cocoa mixture and beat well. Adjust heat so mixture simmers and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Pour into molds or small cups and insert a handle or spoon. Freeze.

Adding Flavored Milk to Food

New or updated resources added to the FOOD Web pages include:

- Basic Foods for Fridge, Freezer and Cupboard (1 page grocery list) http://lancaster.unl.edu/Food/BasicFoodsForCupboards.pdf
- Healthy Cooking with Fresh Herbs http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/cookingfreshherbs-color.pdf
- Food Safety Myths (slide show) http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/mythb-s/index.htm
- Name that Food! (slide show) http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/name_that_food/index.htm
- Temperature Conversion: Fahrenheit and Celsius http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-temps.shtml
- Ingredient Substitutions http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-ingredients.shtml
- Now, You’re Cooking with Brown Rice! http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-brown-rice.shtml
- Grill It Safely http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/grill-flyer.pdf
- Cracking the Date on Egg Cartons http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-egg-dates.shtml
- Put in the Big Racks First http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-pics.shtml

Fresh Food, Fun, Friendly People: Farmers’ Markets!

Amy Peterson, MS, RD and Alice Henneman, MS, RD
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Educators

Farmers’ Markets offer a variety of fresh, locally-produced fruits, vegetables, bakery and meat products in a festive atmosphere. Visit one of the local Farmers’ Markets and check out the many locally produced foods, such as those shown here. Keep the farm-fresh flavor at its peak with the following tips:

Go directly home from the market! Avoid side trips. Foods will decline in quality and perishable foods like meats and eggs can pose food safety problems if left sitting in your car.

Different fruits and vegetables require different temperature and humidity levels for proper storage. Some foods that taste best stored at room temperature include: melons, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatos and winter squashes. Store them in a clean, dry, well-ventilated place, away from direct sunlight and away from areas where meat is prepared.

Some produce can be ripened on the counter and then stored in the refrigerator. Examples include: nectarines, peaches, pears and plums. Avoid placing produce in a sealed plastic bag on your countertop. This shows ripening and may increase off-odors and decay from the accumulation of carbon dioxide and depletion of oxygen inside the bag.

Refrigerate fruits and vegetables in perforated plastic bags to help maintain moisture yet provide air flow. Unperforated plastic bags can lead to the growth of mold or bacteria. If you don’t have access to commercial, food-grade, perforated bags, use a sharp object to make several small holes in a food-grade plastic bag (about 20 holes per medium-size bag).

Wash produce thoroughly. Wash produce just before preparing or eating. Fresh produce has a natural protective coating that helps keep in moisture and freshness. Washing produce before storage causes it to spoil faster. Remove and discard outer leaves. Rinse under cold, running water just before preparing or eating. Do not use soap or detergent as it can get into produce and make you sick. Rub briskly — scrubbing with a clean brush or hands — to clean the surface. Dry with a clean cloth or paper towel.

Rinse produce even when the peel is removed — such as for melons. Bacteria on the outside of produce can be transferred to the inside when produce is cut or peeled. Once you have cut through the protective skin of fruits and vegetables, bacteria can enter. Refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within TWO hours!
June is busting out all over, so the song goes. Be sure you get your flag out to celebrate and show your respect for our independence on June 14, Flag Day. Our flag has a proud history, it was at the lead of every battle fought in America. It stands proudly on the surface of the moon.

Today, as America's we have every right to be proud of our country, our Nation and our Flag. In 1899 in Spokane Washington, Sonora Dodd was in church listening to a Mother's Day sermon and thought we should also honor our Father's. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Happy Father's Day to all fathers. Remember your father with a red rose if he is living and a white rose if he is not.

The good old summer-time will arrive June 20. We will all be looking for a cool spot. Bring a friend to Sizzling Summer Sampler, July 16.

June is Home Safety Month— Tips for creating a safer home

Home-related injuries result in nearly 20,000 deaths and 21 million medical visits on average each year. Families can take steps to create a safer home environment and prevent such leading hazards as falls, fires, burns and poisonings. Here are a few suggestions:

• Keep stairs and pathways clear of clutter.
• Promptly wipe up spills and splashed bath water.
• Test the temperature of your hot water. If it is higher than 120°F, turn down the water heater dial.
• Keep all household products in their original packages. Packaging includes useful first aid information in the event of accidental exposure or ingestion.
• Keep all medicines, including vitamins, in their original, childproof containers and store them high up out of children's reach. Discard all medications and prescriptions that have expired.
• Keep all cleaning supplies and medications and prescriptions that have expired out of children's reach. Discard all medicines and prescriptions that have expired.
• Don’t leave cleaning buckets unattended. Even those with a small amount of liquid pose a danger to “top heavy” toddlers. If the child falls into a bucket, it may not tip over and he or she could drown. Even the water in the toilet can be a hazard to toddlers, so make sure all family members remember to close the lid.
• Place throw rugs over a rug liner or choose rugs with non-skid backs to reduce your chance of falling.
• Post the Poison Control Center phone number (1-800-222-1222) by every land phone in your home and save it on your cell phone.
• Install child-safe locks on cabinets where you keep cleaning supplies and medicines. Never assume a cabinet is too high for a curious, climbing toddler.
• Check all smoke alarms to make sure they are in working order.
• Don’t leave cleaning buckets unattended. Even those with a small amount of liquid pose a danger to “top heavy” toddlers. If the child falls into a bucket, it may not tip over and he or she could drown. Even the water in the toilet can be a hazard to toddlers, so make sure all family members remember to close the lid.
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Emerging Pest: Emerald Ash Borer

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Emerald ash borer (EAB), Agrilus planipennis, is a small (1/2-inch) metallic green, highly destructive beetle discovered in southeastern Michigan in 2002. Experts believe this beetle arrived several years prior to its discovery, infesting solid-wood furniture and other material from shipments from its native Asia.

Adult beetles feed on ash foliage, but cause little damage. However, the larval (the wood-inhabiting, or wood-boring) stages) feed on the cambium: the tissue between the bark and wood of ash trees and kills the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Unlike other tree-feeding beetles, EAB feeds on and kills healthy ash trees. Since its discovery, EAB has killed more than 30 million ash trees in Michigan alone with tens of millions more lost in Ohio and Indiana. In Indiana, EAB has been found feeding on foliage of beech trees. If you see this beetle reaching Nebraska, homeowners own their want to think twice before planting ash trees in their home landscape. The Nebraska Forest Service no longer recommends planting ash trees in the state. Emerald ash borer has not been found in Nebraska so far. But, it is important to stop the spread of this beetle quickly if you see it. Peak emergence of the beetle is in June. Beetles will be found feeding on foliage of ash trees. If you see this beetle or think your ash tree may be infested, contact Nebraska State Entomologist Julie Van Meter at 471-6847.

Because of the inevitability of this beetle reaching Nebraska, homeowners own their want to think twice before planting ash trees in their home landscape. The Nebraska Forest Service no longer recommends planting ash trees in the state. Emerald ash borer has not been found in Nebraska so far. But, it is important to stop the spread of this beetle quickly if you see it. Peak emergence of the beetle is in June. Beetles will be found feeding on foliage of ash trees. If you see this beetle or think your ash tree may be infested, contact Nebraska State Entomologist Julie Van Meter at 471-6847.

The pear-shaped, egg-shaped white fruits. While typically eaten when young and popular in Thai cooking. The green and white striped eggplant is commonly sold as a novelty item. The attractive, star-shaped flowers are usually purple, sometimes white, yellow, orange or red, sometimes striped or shaded. The flesh is a creamy white and speckled with tiny brown seeds. Harvest dates vary from 45 to 90 days after transplanting seedings into the garden. Eggplants are generally classified by the shape of their fruit. There are five basic groups: globe, elongated or cylindrical, egg-shaped, specialty and pea eggplants. Each category offers a choice of eggplants in varying colors, sizes and type of harvest. In the variety descriptions the number of days from transplanting to harvest is shown in parentheses. The most common type in North America is the oval eggplant that has large, deep purple, pear-shaped fruits. These types are most commonly grown for stuffing, baking and grilling.

Mid to late June is an excellent time to take out seedlings of short day length start new plants. Some shrubs which can be propagated in this way are apricots, lilacs and viburnums.

Keep a close eye on the quality of your spring crops. Hot weather causes leaves to yellow and fall off. It is common to see brown and green leaves on plants grown in the shade. Do not, by any means, prune the plant or cut it down and move the plant back outside. The plant will die. If you do not have much room to landscape, consider using some of the many dwarf varieties available. These plants are very slow growth and stay small, so there is little pruning necessary. There are numerous dwarf evergreens, flowering trees and shrubs from which to choose.

Dishab chrysanthemums to flowers to large, beautiful blossoms on strong, sturdy stems. To do this, remove the small side buds along the stems which form in the axils of the leaves. This will allow all of the food reserves to be used for one large flower rather than many smaller ones.

Plant annual flowers in tubs or large containers for the porch or terrace. Make sure there are holes in the bottom to provide good drainage.

Remove leaves from fruiting bulbs after it turns yellow and begin to dry. Set out bedding plants to cover the bare spots using care not to become the base of the plant.

Watch for and control blackspot and powdery mildew on rose foliage.

Use bar muffin around young trees to protect them from lawn mower damage.

Special care for shrubs such as viburnums, lilacs and forsythias should be pruned as soon as they are done blooming.

In most cases, blossom-no-toms to tomatoes, peppers, squash and watermelons can be prevented. Do this by maintaining uniform soil moisture by mulching and watering correctly. Planting in well-drained soil and not cultivating deeper than one inch within one foot of the plant. Also avoid the use of high nitrogen fertilizers.

Eggplant is introduced to the United States in the early 1800s by our third president, Thomas Jefferson. An avid gardener, Jefferson was interested in discovering new plants and grew many flowers and vegetables from around the world in his extensive gardens at Monticello.

Classification and Varieties

Eggplants are frost-tender, herbaceous annuals that are usually grown as annuals. The branched plants reach 2 to 4 feet tall and are covered with hairy leaves, sometimes having tiny spines. The attractive, star-shaped flowers are usually purple, sometimes white and produce edible fruit that may be black, purple, green, white, yellow, orange or red, sometimes striped or shaded. The flesh is a creamy white and speckled with tiny brown seeds. Harvest dates vary from 45 to 90 days after transplanting seedings into the garden. Eggplants are generally classified by the shape of their fruit. There are five basic groups: globe, elongated or cylindrical, egg-shaped, specialty and pea eggplants. Each category offers a choice of eggplants in varying colors, sizes and type of harvest. In the variety descriptions the number of days from transplanting to harvest is shown in parentheses. The most common type in North America is the oval eggplant that has large, deep purple, pear-shaped fruits. These types are most commonly grown for stuffing, baking and grilling.

Black Beauty (80 days) is the classic eggplant with deep purple skin and white flesh. The large 8 to 10 inch fruits can weigh up to a pound. Dusky hybrid (65 days) is an improved variety that produces smaller, 3 to 7 inch purple-black fruits on produc
tive plants that have disease resistance to mosaic virus (TMV). Japanese varieties are typi
cally smaller and come in a variety of shapes and sizes skinned in beautiful, deep purple or light violet colors, sometimes blended with white or green. The skin is tender so fruits do not need to be peeled. These varieties are great for stir-frying, grilling, sautéing and pickling. Ichiban hybrid (68 days) has long 5-inch fruits that are very deep purple, almost black in color. In addition to delicious flavor, this variety is slow to set seed and very productive. Another early variety is Orient Charm hybrid (60 days) which produces 8 to 12 inch long fruits that are glossy black in color and nearly seedless. Orient Charm hybrid (65 days) has fruits that are pale lavender, light pink, rose or pastel pink striped with white. Recently, two varieties have won the prestigious All-America Selections Award, the first eggplant to win in almost seventy years. Both have excellent flavor and texture, and are highly productive over a long harvest period and widely adapted throughout North America. Fairy Tale hybrid (53 days) won in 2005 for its elegant white fruits stripped in violet and purple shades. Fruits can be picked when small, only 1 to 2 ounces for a unique miniature eggplant or left on the plant to double in size without losing any flavor or tenderness. The new Hansel hybrid (55 days) is a 2008 award winner that produces clusters of glossy, dark purple fruits borne over a long season on plants that out yield traditional varieties. Fruits can be harvested when only 2 to 3 inches in length or left to grow to a full 6 to 10 inches long. Round, egg-shaped eggplants come in a variety of colors. Easter Egg (32 days) is a fast maturing variety with highly ornamental, egg-shaped white fruits. While it is commonly sold as a novelty plant, the fruits are edible. The green and white striped Kermit hybrid (60 days) is about the size of a golf ball and popular in Thai cooking. Turkish Italian Orange (75 days) bears brilliant orange, egg-shaped fruits that are typically eaten when young and green. There are many specialty and heirloom eggplants available. Bambino hybrid (43 days) is a true baby vegetable with miniature 1-inch eggplants produced on dwarf, 12-inch plants. This is an excellent ornamental choice for edging and containers. Calliope hybrid (64 days) is an Indian-type eggplant with beautiful oval fruits with a rich purple skin streaked with white. Fruits can be harvested when only 2 inches for baby eggplants or allowed to reach 4 inches. Casper (70 days) is an elongated white eggplant with 6-inch fruits on compact plants. Rosa Bianca (88 days) is the classic Italian heirloom variety prized for the extremely creamy interior flesh and beautiful skin in shades of rose, lavender and white.

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Garden Preferences

Soil—Eggplants prefer a rich, fertile soil with plenty of organic matter. Add well rotted compost or manure before planting. If needed, work in a balanced, time-released fertilizer when preparing the soil.

Sunlight—Plant eggplants in full sun or partial shade. See EGGPLANT on page 10
Some pests, like ants, are nuisances. They don’t really cause much damage, but annoy us. Other pests eat vegetable and crop plants, which ultimately increases the cost of food. A few pests, like mosquitoes, transmit important diseases that disable or even kill people. Most people understand benefits of using pesticides to control pests, but more and more of us are also concerned about possible harmful effects of pesticides on the health and safety of our family and pets. Results from a recent survey by the University of Kentucky showed most people believe pesticides cause cancer. Whether this is true is not yet known, but all of us can agree it is good to minimize exposure to pesticides.

In this discussion, pesticides include insecticides, which kill insects; herbicides, which kill weeds. Some other types of pesticides include fungi-cides (kill fungi) and rodenticides (kill mice and rats).

From Family Study
Researchers at the University of Minnesota decided to find out if pesticides get into the bodies of pesticide applicators and their family members. They wanted to know if practices used to prevent exposure to pesticides actually reduced pesticide concentrations in the bodies of applicators.

This study looked at 95 farms, the three pesticides of interest were glyphosate, a herbicide commonly sold as Roundup®, 2,4-D, a herbicide found in many weed control products, and chlorpyrifos, an insecticide sold as Lorsban® and Durban®.

To look at pesticide levels, researchers took blood samples from the person who applied the pesticide and his/her immediate family members. The study showed chlorpyrifos and 2,4-D were always detected in the body of the person who applied the pesticide. But, what was unexpected was low levels of these pesticides were often found in spouses and children, even when they did not have direct contact with the pesticides.

In this study, 100 percent of all family members (farmers, spouses and children), had detectable amounts of the insecticide chlorpyrifos in their bodies. The highest amounts of pesticides were found in applicators who did not follow pesticide label instructions. These applicators:
- Did not wear chemical resistant gloves while mixing pesticides.
- Spilled the pesticide during mixing and spraying operations.
- Had skin contact with pesticides during handling.
- Used repaired spray equipment without wearing chemical-resistant gloves.
- Smoked during mixing and spraying operations.

Conversely, farmers who carefully followed label instructions and observed safety precautions had lower levels of pesticides in their bodies.

Risks from Pesticides
The health risk of an individual to a pesticide is a function of its toxicity and the exposure to the pesticide. Pesticide toxicity is measured by how much pesticide is needed to kill a rodent population. A very small amount of one pesticide might produce a toxic effect, while a much larger amount of another may not. The signal words on the pesticide label indicate the acute toxicity that may occur with exposure to the pesticide.

What Might be Lurking in That Sack of Oranges?
Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

In late February, a 4-H family brought a very large, light brown spider into the Lancaster County Extension office. It was a spider I had never seen before. The family speculated the spider may have came into their house in a sack of oranges bought at the grocery store. We took it to Jim Kalisch, extension entomologist, for identification.

After consulting with Rick Vetter, arachnology research at the University of California, Riverside, Jim reported this spider to be a female Giant Crab Spider, Oli o giganteus. This large spider is native to the southwestern United States. These spiders wander about at night in search of prey and overcome them by their speed. The female spider has an interesting egg laying behavior. She crawls under large curved pieces of tree bark and other hiding places where she constructs an egg sac and entombs herself inside the sac with the eggs. The female remains inside the egg sac until their spiderlings hatch. Jim is going to give this female spider the right care and hope she constructs an egg sac.

While it is always good to be cautious around unknown spiders, giant crab spiders are not dangerous venemous and these spiders are not aggressive toward humans. A lot of people bring us speci mens of what makes us do we more interesting. Many thanks!

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

Insect Photography Workshop Offered June 21

Do you like nature photography? Do you own a camera? Need a new hobby? If you can answer “yes” to any of these questions, you may be interested in attending a workshop that focuses on close-up photography of insects. UNL Extension will present an Insect Photography Workshop on Saturday, June 21, 9 a.m.–Noon at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln. Cost of this workshop is $30/person or $40/couple who can share a reference book. Attendees are encouraged to bring their camera.

Jim Kalisch, extension associate of UNL Department of Entomology, will share his knowledge about close-up photography. Jim is a regular on UNL’s insect photography Workshop registration Form.

In addition to receiving workshop information, attendees will be given a reference book. Later in the summer, attendees will have the opportunity to submit photos to be critiqued. Best photos will be featured in a calendar given to attendees at the end of the summer. It is expected attendees will have a basic understanding of photog rap hy fundamentals, but not necessarily taking good close-up photos. Ages 14–18 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. For more information, contact Barb Ogg at 441-7180. Register by submitting form below before the end of June 13. Space is limited, so sign up early!
The Lancaster County 4-H Speech contest was held April 20. New this year was a Cloverbud Kids division. Participation was high and the youth ages 5–7 gave their first public speech. This was also the first year the 4-H Public Service Announcement (PSA) contest was held; via audio — 4-H’ers submitted entries on cassette tape or CD. The number of entries was significantly more than previous years, so this format will be repeated next year.

In both contests, the top three winners in each division (listed below) will go on to regionals. Held May 29 at UNL East Campus, Photos are online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h for top PSAs will be posted online in June.

Senior Speech top winners: Erica Peterson, Elizabeth Boender and Jessica Stephenson

Junior Speech top winners: Hanna Ronnau (1st), Morgan Chipps (2nd), Liza Christensen (3rd)

Senior Speech top winners: Jessica Stephenson (1st), Elizabeth Boender (2nd), Erica Peterson (3rd)

INTERMEDIATE SPEECH: Elii Deermont (1st), Hanna Ronnau (2nd)

JUNIOR SPEECH: Samantha Leyden (1st), Molly Noel (2nd), Anne Greff (3rd)

SENIOR PSA: Jessica Stephenson (1st), Rachel Pickrel (2nd), Erica Peterson (3rd)

INTERMEDIATE PSA: Kaya Green (1st), Hannah Ronnau (2nd), Elii Deermont (3rd)

JUNIOR PSA: Jaime Stephenson (1st), Morgan Chippes (2nd), Liza Christensen (3rd)

4-H Speech & PSA Contest Winners

Horse Course Challenge to be a County Fair Contest

The first ever 4-H Horse Course Challenge will be part of the Lancaster County Fair! It will be held Thursday, July 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln.

There will be three age divisions: elementary, junior and senior. The Horse Course Challenge will cover material from lessons 1–15 and 17–25 of the e-mail Horse Course. The testing will include identification questions and a written test. Premiums and ribbons will be awarded at the fair. The top 10 ribbon placings, Reserve and Grand Champion Trophies will be announced and awarded at the 4-H Horse Awards Night. Study up cowboy/girl!
Premier Animal Science Events, June 30 & July 1
If you are interested in participating in UNL’s Premier Animal Science Events, Monday, June 30 through Sunday, July 1, please call Deanna at 441-7180 to let her know of your interest by May 27. Teams are forming now for poultry, meats and livestock judging, livestock quiz bowl and livestock quiz. This great opportunity to learn about livestock, explore UNL’s East Campus and make new friends from across the state.

Free Sewing Help on Wednesdays
Lancaster County 4-H and Bernina Sewing Center are partnering to provide 4-H members free expert sewing help. Every Wednesday from 6:30-8 p.m., youth are welcome to bring their sewing machines and a 4-H project. Participants can sew and have their questions answered by experts. If you are a sewing machine does not make good button holes or will not sew through six layers of denim, you will need a sewing machine available for rental. The Bernina Sewing Center is located inside Hancock Fabrics 6800 S.P., Lincoln.

New Breeding Gilt Show at Ak-Sar-Ben
A breeding gilt show has been added to the Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Livestock Exposition this year. If you are interested in show环ing, registration forms are due into the office by June 15. Forms are available at the extension office or online at http://akbaron.org/4-H

Ak-Sar-Ben Feeder Calf Show New Rule
If you are planning to exhibit feeder calves at the Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Livestock Exposition, they will need to be DNA tested by June 15. To set up an appointment, call Deanna Karmazin at 441-7180.

Living Workshops
3-Day Workshops
3-Day Workshops
Insect Collecting for Beginners
Learn the most common insect orders and make your own starter collection. You will collect aquatic insects so come dressed to enjoy the outdoors. WED, WEDNESDAY, June 18–20; 10:15-12:15 PM. AGES 10 & UP • FEE $15 INSTRUCTOR: Barb Ogg, Extension Educator
2-Day Workshops
Checkmate One
Beginning chess players learn rules and pieces of the board. Skills and play complete games! TUES & WED, TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY, June 16–17; 10-12:15 PM. AGES 10 & UP • FEE $5 INSTRUCTOR: James Walla, 4-H Volunteer Leader
La "fierita española"
Learn basic Spanish vocabulary and pick up key gestures and voice. Prima la musica, segui la danza! This is an easy step by step way to learn the basics of dance. More detailed Spanish classes are offered throughout the year. TUES, WED, JUNE 16-17; 6:30-8:30 PM. AGES 8-12 • FEE $3 INSTRUCTOR: Jill Greff, 4-H volunteer
1-Day Workshops
Primitive Rope Making
Learn rope making as it was done by the indigenous cultures. Learn techniques using natural and artificial materials from the woods or prairie. TUES, JUNE 17; 8:30AM AGES 8 & UP • FEE $3 INSTRUCTOR: BJ Spring, 4-H Volunteer
Survival Skills
Learn basic survival skills on a one day course. TUES, JUNE 17; 8:30-11:30 AM AGES 8-12 • FEE $3 INSTRUCTOR: Susie Seaton, 4-H Volunteer
What’s the Point?
The basic stitches used to make beautiful pictures, trims, and pillows. Participants will receive a hoop, floss, needle, practice material and more. TUES, JUNE 17; 7:30PM AGES 10 & UP • FEE $5 INSTRUCTOR: Chris, Jessica & Mekeva Zeid, 4-H Volunteer
Super “Clicking” Create costumes, cards, place cards and recycled items found around the house. TUES, JUNE 17; 7:30PM AGES 8 & UP • FEE $3 INSTRUCTOR: Jann Rutt, Extension Intern
Style Revue Style Revue at county fair will be here! Learn how to dress for this workshop and learn new styling procedures and practice your modeling style. TUES, JUNE 17; 7:30-9:30 PM AGES 8 & UP • FEE None INSTRUCTOR: Jenna Edwards, 4-H Volunteer
3-Day Workshops
Aquariums Beads
Learn the basics of making beaded jewelry. Make more than one piece of jewelry 12:45-2:45 PM AGES 8 & up • FEE $10 INSTRUCTOR: Wendy O’Brien, Aquarium Beads & Gifts, Inc
Creative Crafts Create your masterpiece in this fun workshop. TUES, WED, JUNE 16-17; 6-8 PM AGES 8 & UP • FEE $5 INSTRUCTOR: Jessica Bauman, Extension Intern
The Kitchen
It’s easier than it looks to mix and make many foods at home. Learn mixing and shaping techniques through this hands-on workshop. TUES, WED, JUNE 16-17; 5-7 PM AGES 8 & UP • FEE $5 INSTRUCTOR: Lorena Bartos, Extension Educator
Imagination Galore Make a costume; express yourself through imagination and to create characters through gestures and voice. Wednesdays, June 18-23; 5-7 PM AGES 8-10 • FEE $5 INSTRUCTOR: Tali Haiva, Extension Assistant
Hooded Towels Learn to create temporary tattoos, how to use an airbrush? AGES 10 & UP • FEE $10 INSTRUCTOR: Michael Catron, Do Kwan Taekwondo
Basketball Basics Learn higher level skills to outplay your competition and improve your basketball skills. Instructor’s famous dunks or other tricks will be included. FRI, JUNE 20; 10:15-12:15 PM AGES 8 & UP • FEE $10 INSTRUCTOR: Michael Catron, Basketball Player, Evan Kucera
Fabulous Face Painting Learn how to paint awesome designs on faces, arms and legs. FRI, JUNE 20; 10:15-12:15 AM AGES 8 & UP • FEE $10 INSTRUCTOR: Jhoni Kucera, Paradise Face and Body Painter
4-H & Youth Summer Camp 2008
The Nebraska 4-H Youth Office is excited to announce our 2008 camps! Each camp is designed for 4-H youth to have fun and learn a new life skill in a low pressure environment. Participants should be in grades 3-8. For more information, call Tracy at tkulm1@unl.edu or 441-7180.

10 4-H Washington Group Forming Now!
Any Lancaster County youth ages 14-18 can join 4H Citizenship Washington Focus (CWV), a summer citizen program which culminates in a nine-day, intensive trip to Washington D.C. in June. 2010. CWV delegates learn about the importance of and their roles as citizens. Get the inside scoop on how government really works from prominent guest speakers and from Senators and Congressmen themselves. We will take a few more days to discover the wonders of New York City. Youth who sign up now are able to start earning funds through organized fund raisings. A $100 deposit is needed to reserve your spot. For more information, contact Deanna Karmazin at 441-7180.

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Keep Your Family Safe in Rural Areas

Since 2004, ATV’s have been the leading cause of agri-cultural fatalities in Nebraska, averaging over five deaths each year. Children under 16 and injured over 30,000 seriously enough to be taken to the emergency room. Parents can help stop this trend by following and teaching the ATV riders in their families some basic safety techniques.

ATV’s are not toys. They are not appropriate for children under six years of age. For children between 6 and 12 years only the smallest (50 cc) machines are suitable. Not only do young children lack the physical size and strength to operate a motorized vehicle safely, their ability to think through situations, their motor skills and their perception are not fully developed. ATV’s are difficult to ride and require constant attention to avoid accidents.

Between the ages of 12 and 16, youth should learn on and ride only mid-size ATV’s (70 - 90 cc). Adult-sized machines should be reserved for teens over 16 who have reached their full physical size.

Arrange for a training course. A hands-on training course offers youth the opportunity to receive experience operating an ATV under the supervision of a certified instructor. Practicing basic maneuvers on safe terrain gives teens confidence in handling the vehicle under your guidance.

Helmets save lives — insist on them! With your children, select helmets that fit them and their style. It is estimated helmets could have saved the lives of about 25 percent of those who died from head injuries in ATV accidents. The risk of head injury without helmet protection is twice as high as when an injured wore a helmet. Don’t let them meet as an option; make them part of using the ATV.

Absolutely No Passengers! ATV’s are designed for one operator. Their unique handling characteristics require focus and maneuverability from the driver. A second person seriously impairs the driver’s ability to shift weight, steer and control the vehicle.

No paved roads. In Nebraska, the only time an ATV can legally be on a paved road is to cross it directly. ATV’s are meant to be used on terrain. They react awkwardly and are difficult to control on pavement.

While all-terrain vehicles have been a workhorse for farmers and ranchers, families need to take the time to educate each youth how to operate them safely. The biggest risk factors leading to injuries are drivers operating too fast, poor driving behavior, such as excessive speed and avoiding curves. Parents can ride with their children.

If you have an ATV, sit down with your children this week and review rules for the use of the ATV. You will also need to decide the consequences. Loss of ATV privileges might be a good one! If the ratios are high, make an appointment for a rider course from your local ATV dealer. If your children are where there is an ATV, you should also discuss your expectations and teach them how to handle situations where there are few or no rules — such as no speed limit, no marked lanes and the two most important safety devices to protect operators from death during tractor overturns.

As parents, it is important to both teach and model safe behavior when riding a tractor. When teaching and supervising teens, practice these tips:

• Securely fasten your seat belt in tractors with ROPS or cabs.

• Reduce speed when turning, crossing slopes, and on rough, muddy or slick terrain. Avoid slopes that are too steep for safe operation.

• No riders. Riders are allowed only for teaching or supervising purposes.

• Be sure everyone is clear before moving.

• Set brakes and use park locks, if available.

• Remove keys when leaving the tractor.

Young children should NEVER be allowed to ride along on a tractor.

Higher, Grandpa, higher! Gleefully shouted 4-year-old Mikey Dobbepuhl to his grandfather, Harlow. His grandfather was feeding cattle with a front-end loader on a brisk March day in South Dakota. Mikey loved shadowing his grandfather’s every move at chore time, even on a snowy-packet winter day like this one. As he had done many times before, Mikey jumped in the scoop of the tractor-loader. With Mikey in tow, his grandfather drove toward the haystack. Once there, Harlow briefly glanced downward. Horrified, he saw Mikey’s body lying in the snow. “I was hoping the soft snow would have cushioned his fall,” he thought. “How did this happen?”

A half hour later he saw Mikey’s body in the snow. “I was hoping the soft snow would have cushioned his fall,” he thought. “How did this happen?”

Drowning ranks second only to motor vehicle mishaps as the most common cause of accidental death for children under the age of 16. In Nebraska, children under age four are at especially high risk. Even adults are at risk when muddied in silt, plants and fish. It takes only a few moments and an inch of water for a child to drown. Small children have been known to drown in 5-gallon buckets.

Most drowning, however, occurs when children fall into or accidentally falls into a pool or pond. Small ponds can look inviting, but many times they are deep with a sudden drop-off. The person can go from skimming deep water to water 50 feet deep in seconds. Additionally, weeds growing near the water can entangle a person, making it difficult or impossible to return to the surface. If you live close to a pond or irrigation source, take steps this summer to keep your family safe.

• Provide children over 3 years with swimming lessons.

• Fence off ponds and other water areas as feasible.

• Be sensitive to the fact that the pond in your yard may attract children with a friend or adult.

• Insist children use personal flotation devices, such as buoyant vests, cushions or rings.

• Keep rescue equipment near water areas. Purchase a flotation device or make one from a gallon plastic jug and attach a rope. Install a safety post near the pond. Tie the rope to the top of the post. Add a laminated poster with instructions on how to use and other safety tips near the top of the post.

• Teach older children and teens “Reach, Throw, and Wade”, so they do not risk their lives to help a drowning victim.

• Be sure you and your family know how to get help quickly. Older teens and adults should learn CPR.

• Never swim during storms or lightning.

Swimming rates are three times higher in rural areas than in urban areas and often occur in ponds and irrigation canals. Summer and water go together, so keep your family safe by selecting an adult supervision of young children and teaching water safety measures to all family members.

Eggplants offer endless opportunities to grow when grown correctly. You can grow eggplant for fresh eating, canned, preserved or for growing plants to sell. Eggplant are best used fresh but will keep for up to 7 days from harvest, if stored properly.

Eggplants are a type of is used for cooking. There are different types of eggplants: the small-fruited or the large-fruited variety. Eggplants are typically grown in the United States, and are one of the 10 most popular vegetables grown in the United States. Eggplants are members of the nightshade family, and are grown for their edible fruit, which is a large, round, fleshy, edible part of the plant. Eggplants are often used in a variety of dishes, including soups, stews, and salads. They are also used in a variety of other dishes, including curries, pickles, and sauces. Eggplants are a type of vegetable that is known for its high nutritional value, with a variety of vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin C, Vitamin K, and potassium.
Camp Counselors & Mentors Needed
Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center and South Central 4-H Center are still in need of counselors and cabin mentors for the upcoming camping season. They are especially in need of males between the ages of 15 and 17. 4-H Council will reimburse Lancaster County youth the cost of counselor training. For more information, go to http://4h.unl.edu/camp or contact Tracy at 441-7180.

Nebraska 4-H Robotics & GPS/GIS Camp, June 16–20
Nebraska 4-H is offering a 4-H Robotics and GPS/GIS Camp for middle-school students (grades 6–8) in Lincoln June 16–20. Tuition is $125. For more information, go to http://4h.unl.edu/camp or call Kevin Kramer at 472-2718.

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Still Time to Sign Up for 4-H Summer Camps!
4-H Summer Camps & Trips are open to all ages 5–19 — need not be in 4-H. It is not too late to sign up! Specializing in leadership development and team building, 4-H summer camps create positive memories which last a lifetime. With three unique Nebraska locations at Halsey, Greta and Alma, there are more than 40 camps ranging from half day to five days/four nights. Some camp sessions offer a range of activities while others focus on a specific theme. Most camps include one to four overnight stays in comfortable cabins. 2008 4-H Summer Camp brochures have complete information and registration forms — available at the extension office or online at http://4h.unl.edu/camp.
Sandy Talbert

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Sandy Talbert as winner of June’s “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. Sandy grew up in 4-H and was a junior leader in Colorado. In Kansas, when her daughter was old enough to join 4-H, Sandy started a 4-H club and was leader for five years. After moving to Nebraska in 1991, her daughter joined a club led by Barb and Ron Suining (who are still active volunteers) and Sandy helped. Sandy has been one of the 4-H Food Superintendents at the Lancaster County Fair for 16 years. She has also volunteered for 4-H at the Kansas and Nebraska State Fairs. “I like being a 4-H volunteer because I enjoy working with youth of all ages and help them to grow through learning things in areas of their interest,” says Sandy. “I love to see when kids learn something new and the excitement of getting their projects done and the honors they win at the fair. I have even learned different ways to do things from the youth and other 4-H leaders.”

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

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

Dear 4-H Friends,

Thank you for the great evening of family fun at Elliott School. Children practiced their aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games and aim, throwing and catching with games. They were able to play catch with Nebraska football players — what a thrill. The group of loving and unique rabbits taught everyone something new. I’d never thought everyone was sticking straight up! I don’t think the face painters ever got a break the entire evening! Thank you so much for setting everything up and cleaning up. It was amazing how quickly it happened. Most of all — thank you for sharing your talents with Elliott School children.

Sincerely,

Deann Currin, Principal and Elliott School children

Jisa Cheese

continued from page 1

He was a visionary and he encouraged me to always be thinking a step or two ahead of the crowd. When most small cheese plants were going out of business or being purchased by industry giants, he decided the time was right to buy the equipment I would need to build a cheese plant. While it was at a price I could afford to pay, it’s a good thing I got started when I did, because now, equipment for small scale cheese plants is nearly impossible to find.

Q. Did you hire an engineer to design your cheese plant?

A. No. I hired a former cheese plant manager with many years of experience to help me design the basic system. I also worked very closely with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) — Dairies and Foods Division. I wanted to know what the equipment requirements were and what types of equipment they would approve before I went looking to buy. The people from the NDA, especially Dan Borer and his team, have been a great help through the whole process of designing my equipment. I also got help from the NDA with designing my boilers and scales so they would pass inspection.

Q. Considering how busy you are with farming, on the scale you do, and the long hours involved with running a cheese plant, how do you get stores to carry your product?

A. I look for niches I can fill. For example, I look for niches I can fill. We produce several flavored types of cheese we make in stores. How do you get stores to carry your product?

Q. I know you sell some cheese to cheese plant?

A. Yes, marketing milk production to the milk plant is staggering. The annual bill for hauling milk averages $16,000 to $17,000. This is a huge expense, but it is necessary to keep the cheese plant running. We use milk from our own dairy and also buy milk from neighboring producers. We process the milk at a local dairy plant, which allows us to keep our costs down.

Q. How did you get started in the dairy business?

A. My family has been farming for many years, and I always knew I wanted to be a dairy farmer. I graduated from the University of Nebraska with a degree in animal science and began working in the dairy industry. Eventually, I decided to start my own dairy operation.

Q. What pieces of advice would you give to other entrepreneurs wanting to break into the food market?

A. 1. Do your homework. 2. Find a niche you can fill. 3. Don’t expect to turn a profit in the beginning.

Nearly 400 Attended Kiwanis Karnival

Approximately 400 4-H families and Elliott School children and their families attended this year’s Kiwanis Karnival held April 12 at Elliott Elementary School. Lincoln Center Kiwanis sponsors the free, family event by providing snacks and prizes. Twelve 4-H clubs created and ran carnival-type games for the kids.

Members of Rabbit R Us 4-H Club brought rabbits for youth to pet and learn about.

Can You Guess It?

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

Did you guess it from the May Nauna?
The answer was a mole tunnel

U.S. Drought Monitor Map

As of May 13, Lancaster County was not in drought conditions.

For the most recent map, visit http://drought.unl.edu/dm

Source: National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln