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The NEBLINE, December 2000

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To remain competitive and survive in the current economy, farmers must be insightful, innovative, and ready to make changes. In recent years, conventional wisdom has encouraged diversification with alternative enterprises and increased on-farm processing, packaging, and other means for adding value to raw products before they leave the producer’s hands. While this makes good sense, making diversification and value-added strategies work can be challenging. It must be remembered, the objective of diversification is to spread risk, not to increase it through poorly conceived undertakings. Success or failure can depend on a number of factors; one of these is good information. Before plunging into new, costly ventures, the following advice is worth heeding.

Starting Points to Consider
• Talk to others who are already doing it. If you don’t know anyone already involved in the enterprise, locate the state, regional, and national groups involved and get a list of local contacts. Avoid being awed by too much hype. If possible, talk to some folks who’ve tried and failed. We often learn more from failure than from success.
• Read all you can about your proposed enterprise. The popular farm press commonly picks up on new trends and feature articles. Furthermore, there are typically a wealth of newsletters and journals that arise following the introduction of new crops and other enterprises. Diversification may not actually increase profits. What it can do is make profitability more reliable by smoothing out the ride between good and bad years.
• Be flexible. When dealing with niche enterprises, it is often necessary to move quickly in response to rapidly changing market conditions. Farmers must constantly be on the lookout for ways to improve and innovate.
• Think (wholistically). Consider more than just immediate, short-term profits when investigating new crops and enterprises. Diversification may not actually increase profits. It may be more important to be in a position to adjust your production to changing market conditions.
• Establish your market connection BEFORE you grow your crop. This is especially critical for highly specialized commodities like edible soybeans. The seeds of edible soybeans are often colored differently than conventional beans making them difficult or impossible to sell through conventional channels as a fallback option.
• Become techno-smart. Get comfortable with the idea of using the phone and the computer to market your products. The Internet also offers a new, rapid means of accessing information on new topic areas. If you don’t own a computer, you can usually get net access at your local library.

What it can do is make profitability more reliable by smoothing out the ride between good and bad years. There may be additional benefits. Perhaps adding a new crop to the rotation will reduce problem pests...or maybe it will build soil fertility. Develop a whole-farm business plan and study carefully how well a new enterprise can be integrated.

A Few Diversification and Value-Added Options
Edible soybean production
Sweet sorghum syrup manufacture
Pulse (dry bean & pea) crops
Grass seed production
Certified organic production
Milling & packaging liner
Exotic grains (amaranth, quinoa, etc.)
Vegetable crops (DJ)
Winter weather adversely affects growing conditions for houseplants. Proper care during the winter months can help insure the health of these plants. Most houseplants grow well with daytime temperatures of 65 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit and night temperatures of 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures below 60 degrees Fahrenheit or rapid temperature fluctuations may damage some plants. Keep houseplants away from drafts and hot air vents. Also make sure houseplant foliage doesn’t touch cold windows.

Many houseplants prefer a humidity level of 40 to 50 percent. Unusually, the relative humidity found in many homes during the winter months may only range 10 to 20 percent, a level too low for many houseplants. Humidifiers are an excellent way to increase the relative humidity in a single room or throughout the entire home. Simple cultural procedures can increase the relative humidity around houseplants. Group plants together. The water evaporating from the soil, plus water lost through the plant foliage or transpiration, will increase the relative humidity in the immediate vicinity of the houseplants. Another method is to place the houseplants on trays or saucers filled with pebbles or gravel and water. The bottoms of the pots should be inset so that water can accumulate under the saucers, raising the plants above the water level. Misting houseplants is not an effective method to increase relative humidity. Mistng would have to be done several times daily to appreciably raise the humidity level and is simply not practical. Houseplants require less watering during the winter months than in spring and summer. Actively growing plants need more water than those at rest during the winter months. Plant species also affects watering frequency. Ferns prefer an evenly moist soil and should be watered frequently. Cacti and succulents, on the other hand, should not be watered until the potting soil is completely dry. The majority of houseplants fall between these two groups. Most houseplants should be watered when the soil is barely moist or almost dry to the touch. When watering houseplants, water them thoroughly. Water should freely drain out of the bottom of the plants. If the excess water drains into a saucer, discard the water and replace the saucer beneath the pot.

Houseplants need to be fertilized periodically when actively growing in the spring and summer. Fertilization is generally not necessary during the winter months because most plants are growing very little or not at all. Indoor gardeners can begin to fertilize houseplants in March or April as growing conditions improve and the plants resume growth. Fertilizers are available in numerous forms: liquids, water soluble powders, tablets, spikes, etc. Regardless of the fertilizer type, carefully read and follow label directions.

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To prevent houseplants from bringing new insects into your house, inspect your plants regularly to keep ahead of any potential insect problems. (MJM)

Ways to Attract Birds
- **Plant shrubs and trees which bear fruits eaten by birds.**
- **Add a bird bath to your yard.**
- **Provide birdseed in feeders throughout the year.**
- **Install birdhouses designed for particular species.**
- **Use ground covers instead of lawn. These areas will provide an excellent hunting ground for birds that feed on worms and insects.**
- **Vary vegetation heights to accommodate birds with different feeding and nesting level preferences.**
- **Provide nesting materials such as many crevices in which birds can dig and probe for insects. Combine the mound with a garden pool for an especially attractive feature.**
- **Plant flowers which produce birdseed as well as blooms.**
- **Provide a birdhouse. When the weather changes, it may be attractive to some birds.**

Air Layering Tropical Plants

**Horticulture information center**

**NUFACTS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week 1-800-832-5441 or 441-7188 in the Lincoln area To listen to a NUFACTS information center message, call the number above on a touch-tone phone. Call then enter a three-digit number listed below. Call 441-7188 to receive a brochure with all the NUFACTS message topics. (MJM)**

**NUFACTS**
117 Tree Snow Damage
120 Christmas Tree Care
124 Wood for Fireplace
137 Deicing Salt Injury
190 Amaryllis
192 Swedish Ivy
213 Prayer Plant
214 Houseplant Insects
215 Cyclamen
216 Poinsettia
218 African Violet Care
219 Poinsettia Care
220 Winter Houseplant Care
221 Holiday Cactus Blooming
222 African Violet Care

**Amaryllis Care**

What do you do with an amaryllis bulb you got for the holidays now that it is done flowering? Throw it out? NO! With proper care you can get it to bloom again the next year.

When the flowers are done blooming, cut off the old flower stalk. Do not cut off the green leaves. Water the plant at least once a week and place it in a sunny window for a few weeks. After the danger of frost is past, amaryllis plants can be placed outdoors in a sunny spot. Pot the pot and put the bulb into a flower bed among your other garden plants. The bulb is storing food for next year’s flowers during this time. Granting the plant adequate watering, fertilization, and light will pay dividends in larger or more flowers next year.

In the fall, the amaryllis should be moved indoors before a hard frost. Watering and fertilization should be reduced and the yellowing leaves can be removed from the top of the bulb. Place the pot in a cool cellar or room to “rest” for one or two months. Move the plant to a sunny window and start watering and fertilizing once new growth begins. (MJM)
Pheromone Traps Help Control Pests

Barb Ogg
Extension Educator

Pheromones are natural chemicals produced in the body of an animal that help it communicate with other members of its species. Many animals use male-specific chemicals to attract a mate. Pheromones are active at night and cannot rely on chemical cues because they are nocturnal. Scientists have identified pheromones in more than 200 species of insects, cockroaches, scale insects, butterflies, and moths, beetles, flies, and bees. The most common type of pheromone is a sex attractant that is released by a female when she is receptive and ready to mate. Even though we cannot detect the odors, males of the species can smell a receptive female from long distances, even miles. To do this, males need specialized antennae with many receptors that can detect the specific "odor" of the pheromone molecule. Many species of insects rely on pheromones for mate location often have antennae that are more elaborate than females. Scientists call this sexual dimorphism. Many moth species have sexual dimorphism—indicating chemical cues are used to locate mates. It makes sense for males to rely on chemical cues over visual cues. This makes them active at night and cannot rely on sight for locating mates. Male insects are not always just the pursuer, however. Once the male gets close to a female, he may produce a short range pheromone of his own, a sort of aphrodisiac, attractive to the female and is part of the courtship process. After mating, the males may produce an aphrodisiac pheromone to continue the courtship. Scientists have isolated pheromones from pest insects and, depending on the species, have devised strategies to help control populations. Sometimes pheromones are used in conjunction with sticky traps as a monitoring tool to detect the presence of the pest. Knowing when the first insects are present can be helpful in timing insecticide applications more accurately. Pheromones have also been used to disrupt mating by "dumping" so much sex attractant that the males cannot find the "real" females. Another type of pheromone that some insects release is called an aggregation pheromone and attracts large numbers of the same species. Stick insects baited with aggregating pheromones will attract both sexes and can be used as a direct control method. 

The advantages of pheromones are that they are species specific and non-toxic to non-target species. They make them ideal as a least-toxic control method. Right now, the most common uses for pheromone traps in homes are Indian meal moths and German cockroaches. Indian meal moths (IMM) are often called "millers" and can be seen flying around the house. They are only about 1/2 inch long, but, if you look closely, you will notice they are nicerocolor (copper-colored and tan). Larvae are yellowish-white worms, with a dark head capsule, and feed on grain products, flour, nuts, bird seed, and dry dog food. IMM pheromone sticky traps will only capture males because the pheromone is the female sex attractant, but they can be useful in detecting early infestations before they get out of control. Traps will be effective for two months and can be purchased at many hardware stores, discount stores, and pest control supply companies. The German cockroach is the most difficult cockroach to control, but the development of pheromone sticky traps, baited with an aggregation pheromone, is a useful in a cockroach control program. Because it is baited with an aggregation pheromone, the sticky trap attracts both males and females. It may not completely control a German cockroach infestation, but can be used in conjunction with other controls. For more information about using pheromone traps, German cockroach or pheromone traps, call the extension office at 402-441-7180. (BPO) 

Environmental Focus

“Green” Gifts

Give a Gift of Knowledge

Children are fascinated by all the creatures living in our environment. Looking to encourage this curiosity? You can gift your family the nature Field Guides are wonderfully pocket-sized guides to the natural world. You can find guides on identifying butterflies, spiders, butterflies, moths, snakes, birds, fish, wildflowers, trees, and much more. There are many different series of guides that can be used. Golden Guides and Peterson’s First Field Guides are kid friendly, however, they may not have everything you find. In that instance, you may need to use a field guide in detecting that creature more than once. If your gift breaks, can it be fixed? Or will it just be thrown away? Is it made out of recycled materials? Does the gift come with a lot of packaging? Can the packaging be recycled? Could you gift a gift that is a “thing”? For example, could you promise to do someone’s chores for a week? Or teach someone about your favorite hobby? (Source: Ranger Rick)

And finally, did you know 82 percent of Americans would rather receive a photo album of times shared growing up than a store-bought gift? (Source: Center for a New American Dream-Commissioed Holiday Poll, November, 1998) (BPO/SOC)

Sneaky Rodents can be Tough to Catch

In nature, rats and mice are among the most important sources of prey for many animals. Over the past 70,000 years, humans have become the primary predators of some domestic rodents, in turn, have evolved anti-predator behaviors which increase their survival. There are several innate characteristics of rodents that help them to avoid danger. 

• Secretiveness. By their nature, rodents are secretive — nesting, feeding, and hiding in areas that are quiet and undisturbed. They are active at night when people are quiet. Inside buildings, as in the wild, they like to move in contact with surfaces, running along walls, squeezing into holes and between objects, and darting beneath pallets and appliances. They also eat in corners and tight spaces rather than open areas. 

• Quickness. To escape their natural predators, the rodents have evolved to run quickly or jump explosively within a split second. The house mouse has been clocked moving at an unbelievable speed of 12 feet per second. “popcorn” jumping. This last minute jump may propel the mouse. (BPO)

1. If you have a serious pest problem, call the extension office at 402-441-7180. (BPO)

•  Look for animal tracks in your yard. Be sure to examine them closely, you will notice they are more closely packed together, than tracks of birds or similar size animal.

• Take your parents ice skating. If you have the extra money, you could purchase a gift certificate for a relaxing massage. Purchase garden tools or kneepads (kneepads were Barb’s favorite gift from last year...find kneepads at the hardware store).

• Make a "coupon" to clean house for a family member.

• Purchase a certificate for skating, art, or gymnastics lessons.

• Purchase a gift certificate for a relaxing massage.

• Give a state park sticker.

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• Make a “coupon” to clean house for a family member.

• Volunteer to run errands for a family member.

• Assist a relative with home repair.

• Purchase a gift certificate for a relaxing massage.

• Take your family on a camping or fishing trip.

• Purchase a gift certificate for a relaxing massage.

• Give a state park sticker.

• Make a donation to a friend or family member’s favorite cause or charity.

Before you buy anything, consider the following questions: Is your gift something that can be reused more than once? If your gift breaks, can it be fixed? Or will it just be thrown away? Is it made out of recycled materials? Does the gift come with a lot of packaging? Can the packaging be recycled?

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Farm Views

Discussion on Crop Biotechnology

Weed and insect control has been a challenge for farmers for centuries. Following World War II, pesticides were developed and widely adopted by farmers. While most are safe and effective if used properly, some were not, and in isolated cases, were harmful to the market.

Genetic engineering offers a way to alter crops to resist insect pests or become toxic and environmentally safer herbicides. In the 1980s, Monsanto, and affiliated seed companies, launched the commercial sale of Round Up Ready soybeans. By 1999, 57 percent of the U.S. soybean acreage was planted to transgenic soybeans.

In cotton, and Colorado potato beetle in potatoes. Once the target insect ingests a few bites of infected leaf tissue, the fungus becomes established in the gut and spreads throughout the body. The fungus eventually kills the insect by attacking the central nervous system, causing paralysis and death.

Genetic engineering offers a way to alter crops to resist insect pests or become toxic and environmentally safer herbicides. By introducing genes from one plant into another, it is possible to create plants that are resistant to certain insects or diseases. This can be achieved through traditional breeding methods or through genetic engineering techniques such as biolistic transformation.

In the 1980s, Monsanto, and affiliated seed companies, launched the commercial sale of Round Up Ready soybeans. By 1999, 57 percent of the U.S. soybean acreage was planted to transgenic soybeans. The most common transgenic crop is the Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis) protein, which is toxic to certain insects. When the insect consumes the Bt protein, it is broken down by digestive enzymes and produces a toxic substance that affects the insect's gut.

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The most obvious method of determining the presence of the endophyte in tall fescue is poor animal performance and the characteristic health problems described above. Because the endophyte grows within the plant, it is not possible to use a diagnostic lab to detect the endophyte. Consequently, little or no research has been conducted in Nebraska on grazing or haying fescue, and therefore, little is known about a potential problem with toxicity in fescue. Fescue is not native to Nebraska, but is sometimes grown as a turf grass in Nebraska and several other states. Fescue is used as a turf grass in Nebraska and several other states. Fescue is used as a turf grass in Nebraska and several other states. Fescue is used as a turf grass in Nebraska and several other states. Fescue is used as a turf grass in Nebraska and several other states.

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Nebraska Nuts Add Holiday Flavor

From Thanksgiving through New Year’s, holiday foods traditionally include many foods native to the American Midwest such as turkey, cranberries, potatoes, etc. Additionally, many nuts are native to Nebraska and can enhance meals and snacks, giving them a local flavor. Here is a sampling:

Black walnuts - a delicious native nut that imparts unique flavors to dressings, sauces, and other dishes.

Northern pecans — a smaller version of the pecan we all know and love. It is considered by many to be sweeter and richer tasting than its more southerly cousins. It works well with many dishes and desserts. This nut tree, a result of years of selection and research, produces fine nuts right here in Nebraska.

Hazelnut – its rich but mild flavor, is a wonderful addition to many foods. These is the in-shell hazelnuts found in the grocery store are grown in the Pacific Northwest, Turkey or even though hazelnuts are native to eastern Nebraska. New hybrids that produce larger nuts than our natives are being tested to see how well they will grow and produce in Nebraska.

Shellbark and Shagbark hickory nuts – some of the finest tasting nuts in North America and compliment any meal.

Chestnuts – wrap up your holiday evenings relaxing in front of the fireplace with your family and roasting terrific chestnuts.

Most of these nuts are available from specialty food shops and over the Internet.

Consider planting your own nut trees for your own fresh supply, or local marketing, or at least to feed the squirrels! (DJ)

Deforestation in United States

There is a common misconception in America that the country is being deforested. Some environmental groups show pictures of logged areas in the Pacific northwest and try to claim the forest is destroyed leaving the average person with the misconception America is rapidly being deforested. Also, natural disasters such as large wildfires and large areas of trees blown down by wind also create an image the United States is being deforested. But the actual numbers reveal this is false. This is according to the American Forests magazine, the land in forests have changed little the last 70 years despite millions of acres of logging, wildfires, and blow downs. The United States was estimated to be about 54 percent forested (1219 million acres) in 1960. Forested acres reached a low point around 1920 at 600 million acres. The latest national inventory figures from 1992 reveal 737 million acres of forest or about 32 percent of the country is forest. So, how has the amount of forested land remained the same even with logging, wildfires, and blow downs?

In the south (Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, etc.), land logged is replaced by logging with the abundant rain in the south, logged areas are forested in just a few years. In the forests of the northern states, aspen is the dominant species. Aspen sprouts prolifically from the following large forest fires. In five to six years after logging, aspen forests are so thick, a person can barely walk through them. In other types of forests, trees in adjacent woodlands provide the seed for establishing the next forest following fires or logging. As humanities, we have a natural tendency to think once a forest is cut or burned, it is gone forever. But nature is much more resilient. In most of the United States, the woodlands have been logged once, twice, and in some places three times, yet these areas of land are still forested. As is said in forestry, cutting a tree does not lead to deforestation, but not planting a tree, can. (DJ)
“Do You Know What You Are Eating?”

“Do you know what you are eating?” Approximately 400 fifth grade students will answer this question as they participate in the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) School Enrichment classroom experiences. The education kits, developed by NEP professionals, are used by classroom teachers for a two week period.

NEP staff begins the nutrition unit by delivering the kits to the classroom and providing an educational lesson. They present a hand washing program where all students and teachers have proper hand washing using the “Glitter Bug” lotion and the ultraviolet light. It’s amazing to hear the “oohs” when they realize how hard it is to get hands clean. Upon completion of the program at Elliott school, a classroom teacher said, “the students are doing a much better job of washing their hands everyday.” The kits contain many hands-on learning experiences. The students conduct a science experiment in which they divide into two groups. One group of students wash their hands, the other does not. They cut up apples and place them in a sealed bag for the 2-week period. It is quite evident by the amount of mold growth, which bag is which. At Elliott school, one student said, “I’m going to wash my hands before I eat from now on.”

5th grade students making “Peanut Butter Bites.” A favorite activity in the kit is the game “Who wants to be a Healthy Snacker?” Students are asked a series of three nutrition questions, from easy to difficult. They have four multiple choice answers. Similar to the TV show, they have three lifelines: ask a friend, poll the audience (classroom), and 50/50. They especially like the “HOT SEAL” sign on the contestant’s chair. Students demonstrate knowledge of what they learn by naming the five major food groups and the six nutrients they study.

Students have the opportunity to mix together an “orange soda”. By mixing the ingredients, including 12 teaspoons of sugar, they realize how much sugar they could consume from soda. They also learn the ingredients are not from the five major food groups. One student at Elliott Elementary school said, “They should make a pop with all the nutrients in it.”

Teachers typically teach five to ten hours of classroom education by using the nutrition kits. At the conclusion, NEP staff provides the classrooms with the opportunity to make “Peanut Butter Bites.” All supplies are furnished and the students actually make their own healthy snack. (see recipe below). They receive a take-home parent’s letter with the recipe and information on how to enroll.

See EATING on page 11

Handling Holiday Leftovers When Dining Out

By Alice Henneman, R. D., Extension Educator, Joyce Jensen, Registered Environmental Health Specialist with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and Marie Hamorts, Ph.D., University of Nebraska Department of Nutritional Science and Dietetics.

The holiday season typically includes a special time spent dining with family and friends. If asked what we planned to make for that holiday meal, many of us might answer: RESERVATIONS!

Eating out removes many decisions, but still includes several important choices. After deciding what to order, whether to have dessert, and how much to order, one must decide how to handle the leftovers. Here are five ACTION STEPS to take with leftovers:

1) Leave Your Leftovers If You Can’t Refrigerate or Freeze Them Within Two Hours From Time of Service.

Two hours is the maximum time perishable foods should be at room temperature. This INCLUDES the time they’re on the table during your meal. Just ONE bacteria, doubling every 20 minutes, can grow to over 32,768 bacteria in five hours! Perishable foods include:

- meat, poultry, and seafood;
- dairy products;
- cooked pasta, rice, and vegetables; and
- fresh, peeled, and/or cut fruits and vegetables.

Also, if food is left out too long, some bacteria, such as staphylococcus aureus (staph), can form a heat-resistant toxin that cooking can’t destroy.

One of the most common sources of staph bacteria is the human body. Even healthy people carry staph—according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s “Bad Bug Book,” staph bacteria are present in the nasal passages and throats and on the hair and skin of 50 percent or more of healthy individuals. Staph bacteria also may be found in facial blisters, cuts, and lesions.

Most likely, the only way you’ll know if a food contained staph bacteria is when someone

See LEFTOVERS on page 11

Cook It Quick! Tips and recipes for cooking healthy foods in a hurry. www.lancou.edu/food

FREE monthly Food Reflections e-mail newsletter. To be added to the mailing list, e-mail Alice Henneman at AHNENEMAN1@UNL.EDU

Nutrition Education Program for limited Resource Families

Karen Wobig Extension Assistant

Food & Fitness

It’s Prime Time for Prime Rib

Preparing a prime rib for your holiday dinner couldn’t be easier. Here’s a yearly favorite recipe from Ann Marie Bosshamer, Nebraska Beef Council (NBC).

Here’s a recipe from Ann Marie you might enjoy.

6 to 8 pounds well-trimmed beef rib eye roast

Seasoning:

6 large cloves garlic, crushed
1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
1 teaspoon cracked black pepper

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Place roast, fat side up, on the roasting rack in the shallow F. Place roast, fat side up, on the roasting rack in the shallow pan. Insert meat thermometer into the thickest part, not touching bone or fat.

Season as desired and place in the oven. Do not add water.

Remove roast when thermometer reaches 5 to 10 degrees below final desired doneness, 135 to 140 degrees F for medium-rare or 150 to 155 degrees F for medium. (Final temperature after standing 15 minutes following removal from oven should be 145 degrees F for medium rare and 160 degrees F for medium.)

5) Tent roast loosely with aluminum foil and let stand for 15 minutes.

6) Tent roast loosely with aluminum foil and let stand for 15 minutes.

Classic Beef Rib Eye Roast

Makes 8 to 12 servings.

Total preparation and cooking time: 2 1/4 to 3 1/2 hours
6 to 8 pounds well-trimmed beef rib eye roast

Seasoning:

6 large cloves garlic, crushed
1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
1 teaspoon cracked black pepper

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Combine seasoning ingredients. Press evenly into surface of beef roast, a roasting rack, and a meat thermometer.

3) Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Place roast, fat side up, on the roasting rack in the shallow pan. Insert meat thermometer into the thickest part, not touching bone or fat.

4) Season beef as desired and place in the oven. Do not add water.

5) Remove roast when thermometer reaches 5 to 10 degrees below final desired doneness, 135 to 140 degrees F for medium-rare or 150 to 155 degrees F for medium. (Final temperature after standing 15 minutes following removal from oven should be 145 degrees F for medium rare and 160 degrees F for medium.)

6) Tent roast loosely with aluminum foil and let stand for 15 minutes.

The roast will continue to rise and you can carve across the grain. Enjoy!

Here’s a recipe from Ann Marie you might enjoy.

Clean Hands Campaign

Have fun using “glo-germ” to teach handwashing to youth and adults. Receive handouts for your group and a copy of reproduction ready handwashing activities. Call Alice Henneman (441-7180) to schedule a time to checkout the Clean Hands Kit and receive your materials. Kit must be checked out and returned within the same week. Available on page 1 first, served, basin. This activity can be used with any number and takes about 20 minutes, depending on the size and age of your group. (AH)
Clarice’s Column

Clarice Steffens
FCE Council Chair

It’s a very rare Sunday afternoon! Even though it is very close to Thanksgiving and not very far from Christmas it is a quiet, relaxed afternoon. Something to appreciate as the holidays near!

On September 24, many of our FCE members gathered at the Lancaster Extension Education Center to celebrate our annual Achievement Night. Thanks to our special guest, Carolyn Dacey, of the International Quilt Study Center, for a very interesting presentation. Congratulations to all our award winners and thank you to the 2000 Achievement Day Committee—Helpful Homemakers, Busy Belles and the individual members for the great program and dessert! Many members also brought personal quilts for display and shared their quilt’s story—thanks to all of you. Members also shared their club’s accomplishments for the year and, again, we find our clubs continue to support very worthwhile projects.

As we move forward to 2001 about a day before our council meetings. We will continue the schedule of four council meetings, the Summer Sizzler and Achievement Night. We are also appreciative of any suggestions you may have for topics to be covered at our meetings. Please talk to your club members so your suggestions can be discussed at the January Council meeting.

The January Council meeting will be Monday, January 22, 12 noon. This meeting will be hosted by the council officers and will include lunch and a craft. The cost will be $7.50.

As you read this, I hope most of you will have completed the majority of your plans for the holiday. Whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, or Kwanza, I hope your holiday experience is all you want it to be. Enjoy the parties, the decorations and the gifts, but mostly enjoy your family, friends and colleagues. Have a very special holiday season!

FCE Leader Training Lessons

The January Family and Community Education (FCE) leader training lesson “Stretching Your Food Dollar in Quick and Easy Ways” is scheduled for Thursday, January 4 at 1 p.m. Alice Henneman, Extension Educator will present this lesson. This lesson will look at ways to spend your food budget wisely, using foods available in today’s supermarkets and grocery stores. You will examine ways to restructure time-proven methods to trim food costs while you focus on saving kitchen time, too. Ways to access additional resources so the consumer can get more information will be included in the lesson materials.

The February FCE leader training lesson “Safe Surfing.Com” is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23 at 1 p.m. Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator will present this lesson. References to the Internet are everywhere. You can see dot com on TV, in newspaper articles, magazine ads, on the back of semi-trucks, and packages you purchase at the store. Yet many families have concerns about the content. This lesson will help make your Internet connection a positive experience. You will learn how to take steps towards safety and security while finding good resources for your family. (LB)

Healthy Families Healthy Communities: Building Supportive Policies

Healthy Families Healthy Communities is a national satellite video conference scheduled for Thursday, February 1, 2001, 1 to 3 p.m. CST. This video conference highlights current research and outreach efforts that build supportive policies and engage communities around issues related to the well-being of children, youth, and families. It will share success stories that put research into practice and build policy. Program segments include: family strengths, quality child experiences, engaged parents, and reducing violence. It will share success stories that put research into practice and build policy. Program segments include: family strengths, quality child experiences, engaged parents, and reducing violence. Faculty from Cornell University, University of Minnesota, University of Nebraska, and the University of New Mexico will make presentations. Among those who will present are William Doherty from Minnesota and James Garbarino from Cornell. UNL faculty scheduled to participate include Jean Marzorite Kostelnik and Drs. John DeFrain and Pauline Zweeze. For more information contact LaDeane Rha, 441-7180. (LJ)

Before you leave for the holidays

Make sure:
Your telephone-answering machine is on.
Timers for lights and radios are activated.
The kitchen is clean, perishables are tossed, you’ve run your garbage disposal, and all garbage is taken out.
Your thermostat is lowered (or raised accordingly).
Appliances sensitive to power surges (computers, microwaves, TV sets) are unplugged.
Your doors and windows are securely locked.
A neighbor or friend will pick up your mail and papers, has your house key and knows your whereabouts.
You have your tickets, cash, credit cards, passports, and confirmations. (LJ)

More Happiness in 2001

Each new year brings ambitious attempts to kick bad habits, live a healthier life and accomplish more work. How about a new approach this year? Instead of trying to reach many different and difficult goals, resolve to achieve just one—putting more happiness in your life. Keep this resolution. Your life and immune system will improve, resulting in a healthier and more prosperous year.

• Change your attitude about your job and colleagues.
• If you are stuck in a job you hate, explore options for change. If you can’t change jobs, then change your attitude toward your job and the people with whom you work.
• Make time for activities you enjoy.
• Change the way you think about failure. Failure is a state of mind. People who learn from upsetting events and then move on are happier and healthier than those who don’t.
• Get fully in touch with your feelings.
• Keep a journal.
• Treat yourself as you would treat a beloved pet.
• Make a difference.
• Develop a childlike sense of humor. (LJ)

CHARACTER COUNTS! Corner

Responsibility

The new year is a great time to make life improvements. Taking responsibility for our words and actions can become a way of life. Most adults agree they want children to grow up making responsible decisions, so now is a good time to think about what kind of example we are setting.

Making improvements in responsible behavior can be as simple as watching what we eat and maintaining our fitness and health. Abstaining from alcohol and cigarette use or beginning a lasting fitness program are good places to modify behavior. Start out setting reasonable goals and gradually continue.

We need to be responsible for ourselves and our families. Now is a good time to evaluate areas of our personal lives with decision-making, accountability, self-restraint, and work ethic. Accepting responsibility, not blaming others, and keeping commitments are accountability issues. Responsibility is pursuing excellence which includes doing your best, being diligent, perseverance, and good work habits. Being responsible for your family includes feeding your family, budgeting for family expenses, keeping children adequately supervised, and meeting the emotional needs of the family.

A final suggestion for responsibility is continuous improvement. Always look for ways to make things better. Take one step at a time and strive for improvement. (SS)

The easiest clean-up after holiday entertaining for dishes and glasses is to wash them in the dishwasher following a few simple guidelines. Make sure the water is hot (at least 130 degrees) and use detergent that works best in hot water. If water coming from the tap is less than 140 degrees, turn up the thermostat on the water heater or use the high-temperature option on the dishwasher. Follow the dishwasher manual instructions for proper loading and, do not overload! Also follow manufacturer’s instructions for the proper amount of dishwashing detergent to use. You may need to use extra detergent if you have hard water or if you are washing heavily soiled, greasy dishes. Use a rinse agent to help minimize spotting and filming. It will speed up the drying process because it causes water to sheet off dishes and glassware. (LB)
Volunteer of the Month

Deb Arends was named City/County Volunteer of the Month. Each month the Lancaster County Retired and Seniors Volunteer Program, along with the Volunteer Services Division of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging recognizes individuals that have given many hours of volunteer services. Deb was recognized at a recent County Commissioner’s meeting. Deb has impacted the lives of many youth through the enhancements she has made in many of the 4-H related activities. Deb has volunteered with 4-H for nine years and is involved in many other community organizations. By sharing her time, talents, and enthusiasm she has made a difference in the community. Deb received a cash award, balloons, and her name will be engraved on a plaque that is displayed in the City/County Building. Congratulations Deb and thank you for your dedication to 4-H.

If You Dare, Come Into Our Jungle!

5th and 6th grade 4-H Lock-In

Lancaster Extension Education Center • 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln

January 12, 8 p.m. to January 13, 8 a.m.

Bring your toothbrush, toothpaste, sleeping bag, pillow, active wear, sleepwear (sweats) and a friend interested in 4-H!

Presented by Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council and sponsored by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

4-H Lock-In Registration Form

Name of participant(s): ________________________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip: ______________________________________________________________________
Phone: ______________________________________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian: _____________________________________________________________________
Special Needs/Other Information: _______________________________________________________
Age: _______

Registrations due by January 5th, 2001

$10 per child

Make checks payable to Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council

Return registration to:
Tracy Kulm
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A
Lincoln, NE 68528-1507
THE 4-H HORSE PROGRAM

The time of year is again upon us, to decide what our projects will be for the upcoming year and marking our calendars for all those important deadlines: district/ state shows, county fair, animal I.D.s, demonstrations . . . For those involved in, or thinking of becoming involved in the 4-H horse project, one of your first responsibilities will be to make yourself aware of those deadlines. You can easily do this by checking the Nebraska monthly calendar. But remember, your work will need to begin far earlier than the calendar deadline.

The primary aim of this project is to develop confident, competent, caring individuals who have good character, and are connected to their communities. Through the horse project, you will develop leadership, initiative, self-reliance, and sportsmanship. While working with your project animal, you will experience pride, responsibility, and the respect of your mount.

You also will develop a greater love for and a more humane attitude toward animals. Horse project members appreciate horseback riding as a beautiful and wholesome form of recreation. You will acquire skills in horsemanship, patience, and understanding in handling horses. You will develop safety precautions . . . finally; participation in the horse project will help prepare you for citizenship responsibilities as you work together in groups and support community horse projects and activities. (from the Nebraska 4-H Horse Project Member Manual)

I believe by participating in 4-H, taking care of, and training your project horse(s), the above project goals will be easily achieved. Ride often, pay attention to your horse, pay attention to your leader or ring practice instructor. Learn about horsemanship levels and study to achieve a higher level of horsemanship. Organize and do community service projects. Participate in speech contests and demonstrations.

Make yourself aware of the rules of the project. Get a 4-H Horse Show and Judging Guide and read the regulations for the classes that interest you.

And now . . . back to the deadlines! Remember, it is your responsibility to know and meet deadlines for different projects. If you are an independent club member, you are responsible to get the information you need to participate in 4-H events. Make sure you watch your Nebraska calendar. For those in organized clubs, remember your leader will try to remind you of upcoming deadlines and try to help you fill out paperwork, but ultimately, it is still your own responsibility. Check your Nebraska calendar monthly and ask your leader questions if there is something you don’t understand, or call the extension office.

Participation in the county fair, district/state shows, demonstrations, and contests can be a really fun and memorable experience for exhibitors. But in the end, the project will make a real difference in your youth. Parents and leaders: Let’s not forget the project.

2001 Horsin’ Around Horse Clinic

This year’s Horsin’ Around Horse clinic will be held at the Animal Science Complex at UNL’s East Campus on February 10 and 11. This two day event will have three featured speakers.

Scott McCutcheon of Whitesboro, Texas specializes in training and raising some of the most successful reining horses in the country. Scott knows how to train a horse to perform challenging maneuvers that require an enormous amount of physical energy while maintaining a horse’s natural quiet disposition. Scott will focus not only on reining horses but will share methods to train and refresh horses for all types of riding.

Dr. Del Wilmont who has served as the Deputy State Veterinarian for the Nebraska Department of Agriculture since 1988 will discuss “Why do we need a health certification tester and currently serves as the Vice President of the AFA. Phil shoes all horses, but will share methods to train and refresh horses for all types of riding.

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For information or a registration form, please call Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

4-H Volunteer Forum

The Nebraska State 4-H Volunteer Forum will be held February 2 and 3, 2001 in North Platte and March 30 and 31, 2001 in Columbus. This forum is a conference developed by a committee of 4-H volunteers from across the state. Network with other 4-H leaders, exchange successful 4-H programs among 4-H leaders, and be introduced to new areas and projects. There will be numerous workshops, hands-on learning experiences, and new ideas and programs designed to enhance your club.

Anyone interested in 4-H is welcome to attend. Scholarships are available through the 4-H Council. For more information, please contact Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

Help Families—Save Pop Tabs

Nebraska 4-H Youth Council is again collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in Omaha, which was opened in 1994. It provides a home to families whose children, 18 years and younger, are receiving medical care in the Omaha area. The families are asked to pay just $7.50 per night. This fee, however, does not pay for all of the operating costs of the house, therefore, the Ronald McDonald House recycles pop tabs and the proceeds are used to offset operating costs.

To be a part of this on-going community service project, bring your pop tabs to the Lancaster County Extension Office. (TK)

Roping Clinic

A Roping Clinic will be held on Saturday, January 13, 1 p.m., at the Brad and Susan Fink arena, 5505 NW 112th. Cliff Herman will be a presenter at the clinic. Also assisting will be the College Roping Team.

Everyone is welcome! If you have any questions, please call Ellen at 441-7180.

Interested in Chess?

Interest has been expressed in starting a 4-H Chess Club for youth 9 to 18. Playing chess helps develop critical thinking and organizational skills. If you are interested, please call Lorene at 441-7180. With enough interest, a project will be developed and a club organized. (LB)

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Join the 4-H Speech VIPS

We are looking for new speech VIPS members. If you would like to help organize and conduct the Lancaster County 4-H speech contest, call Deanna or Tracy at 441-7180. (DK/TK)
Free Speech—From the University of Nebraska

There may be no such thing as a free lunch, but the University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Speakers Bureau can offer you a Free Speech. Topics range from jazz to global warming, E- Business to nutrition, and motivation to cosmic rays. The Speakers Bureau is a free and important asset for the University to share campus expertise with our community. When your organization or group seeks an entertaining, informative, and intriguing topic presented, this becomes your opportunity. To secure a speaker, call 472-8396 or e-mail speakers2@unl.edu. The University Speakers Bureau will do their very best to accommodate your needs.

LaDeane Jha received the “Distinguished Educator” award at the Annual Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association’s annual conference held November 14-16 in Kearney.

Cooperative Extension Dean and Director, Elbert Dickey presented the award and a check for $500. He noted her 30th year with UNL Cooperative Extension, her continued work as a program innovator, a tireless advocate for equal opportunity, a respected community collaborator and a superb teacher and scholar. Since 1998, Extension Educator Jha has taken leadership for Character Counts! education in Lancaster County. Since then, she has received Character Counts! training. LaDeane provided positive educational and program leadership through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program from 1970-1993. She became a “community legend” during this tenure with recognized compassion and respect by clients and community professionals.

LaDeane is presently completing a PhD program at the University of Nebraska (GB)
**LEFTOVERS**

continued from page 6

gets sick.

Say farewell to your food and leave perishable leftovers at the restaurant if you can’t refrigerate or freeze them within two hours. Or eat defensively and divide larger entrees with your tablemates so there are no leftovers.

2) Cool Leftovers Quickly in Shallow Containers in Your Refrigerator.

Key points in cooling hot leftovers include:

- Use the refrigerator and cool leftovers in shallow containers; limit food depth to about 2 inches.

- Let the refrigerator cool your leftovers before you place them inside. Cover them loosely so the food cools faster; then, cover them tightly when they’re cool.

- Or, you can place them uncovered on the top shelf of the refrigerator in a location where you won’t have to reach over them for other foods and possibly spill other foods onto them; again, cover them when they’re cool.

- Cold leftovers such as salads, pies, etc. should be covered and refrigerated immediately.

- Store packages of raw meat, poultry, or seafood on the BOTTOM shelf of your refrigerator. Avoid placing cooked leftovers inbetween them as retained heat from the cooked foods can sustain harmful bacterial growth.

- Meat, poultry, or seafood on the BOTTOM shelf of your refrigerator temperature is 40 degrees F or less. Buy appliance refrigerators that maintain this temperature, regardless of how high and how long you heat a food.

If you refrigerate your foods, follow these guidelines based on the USDA/FSIS’s August 2000 publication, “Cooking Safety in the Microwave Oven” (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/fact/microwave.htm).

- Beware of microwaving leftovers in the original take-out containers. At high temperatures, certain containers, such as foam containers, may not be stable. It’s possible melting or warping may cause harmful chemicals to migrate into the food. USDA/FSIS recommends these guidelines for safe containers and wraps:
  - Only use cookware especially manufactured for use in the microwave. Glass, ceramic or stainless steel containers and all plastics should be labeled for microwave use.
  - Plastic storage containers such as margarine tubs, take-out containers, wrapped topping bowls and other one-time use containers should not be used in microwave ovens. These containers can warp or melt, possibly causing harmful chemicals to migrate into the food.
  - Microwave plastic wraps, wax paper, cooking bags, parchment paper, and white microwave-safe plastic gloves should be safe to use. Do not let plastic wrap touch foods during microwaving.
  - Never use thin plastic storage bags, brown paper or plastic grocery bags, newspapers, or aluminum foil in the microwave.

- Use a microwave-safe thermometer to check the food in several places to assure it has reached 165 degrees F.

5) When in Doubt, Toss Leftovers Out.

Suppose you:

- left your leftovers on the car seat overnight;
- let your leftovers sit overnight in the refrigerator;
- forgot your frozen leftovers on the kitchen counter all day.

Is there any way to know if they’re still safe to eat?

You can not SEE or SMELL most bacteria that might make you sick.

TASTING is risky and also won’t tell if a food is unsafe. For some bacteria, such as E. coli, even a tiny taste may be enough to make you sick.

Depending on the food-borne illness, it may take from 1 hour to 6 or more weeks to get sick from contaminated food. By the time you know for sure a food was probably safe, it would be too old to eat!

- That’s why the advice most frequently given is: WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

- If you get sick soon after a meal, remember it isn’t always the food that’s the culprit. Overindulging during the holidays can cause some of the same symptoms as a food-borne illness, such as an upset stomach or nauseous feeling.

“Ring out the old, ring in the new” is an oft-quoted phrase from Tennyson on the passing of the old year and the coming of the next. Apply that to old leftovers!

Here are some general guidelines for microwave reheating:

- Cover the container with microwavable lid or plastic wrap. Loosen or vent the lid or wrap to let steam escape. The wrap. Loosen or vent the lid or wrap. Loosen or vent the lid or wrap. Loosen or vent the lid or wrap.

- Stir and/or rotate food midway or as needed throughout the microwaving time to eliminate cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive and for even more cooking.

- Reheat until steaming hot (165 degrees F).

- Allow a few minutes standing time at the end to promote even heat distribution and complete the cooking. Using a clean food thermometer to check the food in several places helps assure it has reached 165 degrees F.

**EATING**

continued from page 6

in NEP and 4-H. After receiving the program, an Elliott student even made the “bites” for the school’s Heritage Feast.

It is very rewarding to see the students’ faces light up when they explain what they learned through the kit activities.

The Jeanne D’Arc living classroom at the school’s Heritage Feast.

She’s also been an LPN. She and her husband have nine children (the youngest is 12 grandchildren). Besides enjoying cooking, she has taught Sunday School and has directed a senior choir at her church. Before moving to Lincoln this May, she lived in Oklahoma her entire life. (MB)

**BIOTECHNOLOGY**

effectively should expect to receive a premium for adding value to the product. (TD)


Jazz is America’s classical music and considered by many to be America’s greatest overall contribution to the world. The impact of jazz on American society has been enormous, and its influence on world culture has been far reaching. In this presentation, White will explain what jazz is, how it has evolved, why it is important, and some of the key figures in its development. (GB)
Prepare for Your Future at the University of Nebraska

Is the University of Nebraska part of your future? Now is an excellent time to start preparing!

To seek information about the University of Nebraska, explore the Office of Admission’s website www.unl.edu/neighborhood/index.html or contact them at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1410 Q Street, P.O. Box 880417, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588-0417. (402-472-2023)

You’ll find lots of information:
NU Admissions
Applying for Admission
Academics
Student Life
Tuition, Scholarships, and Financial Aid
The University Campus and MORE! (GB)

Just the facts, ma'am, About the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

- **Founded**: 1869
- **Colors**: Scarlet and Cream
- **Nickname**: Cornhuskers
- **Campuses**: 2 campuses, City and East
- **Address**: 616 acres
- **Students**: 17,804 undergraduate students, 3,893 graduate students, 384 law students, 61 master of architecture students
- **Location**: Lincoln, Nebraska
- **Population**: 209,000
- **Programs of Study**: 147 undergraduate majors, 21 pre-professional programs, 116 graduate programs
- **Full-time Faculty**: 1,100
- **Housing**: 12 residence halls
- **Student/Faculty Ratio**: 16 to 1
- **Student Organizations**: 350 student organizations, 15 sororities/25 fraternities
- **Intercollegiate Sports**: 13 women’s sports/11 men’s sports