3-2000

The NEBLINE, March 2000

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Stormwater Management and Water Quality

Urban Nonpoint Source Pollution

Karen Hansen
Extension Educator

What is nonpoint source pollution? Water washing over the land from rain, snowmelt, and our everyday activities picks up a variety of pollutants including oil and sand from roadways, agricultural chemicals from farmland and by impervious surfaces (roads, parking lots, driveways, rooftops). This combination of people, pollutants and pavement produces runoff that can carry a greater pollutant load than municipal sewage. Sediment from construction sites, chemicals over-applied to lawns and golf courses, automobile wastes (petroleum products, heavy metals), road salt, pet wastes and industrial contaminants all end up in the nearest body of water. Nonpoint source pollution and its management are becoming better understood.

Current Issues for Municipal Officials

Urban nonpoint source pollution and its management are likely to affect you and your town in the near future. Concern over polluted runoff has resulted in an ever-increasing number of state and federal laws enacted over the last five years. The federal government is currently finalizing regulations for storm water management in smaller communities. The regulations are known as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Rule. The purpose of the NPDES Phase II Rule is to comply with the requirements of the 1972 Clean Water Act and to further protect our nation’s streams, rivers, wetlands and lakes. Proposed Phase II regulations follow the 1990 NPDES Phase I Rule. The Phase I Rule addresses storm water discharges from medium and large separate storm sewer systems (those serving communities with a population of at least 100,000), as well as discharges associated with industrial activity.

Two important changes are the NPDES Phase II Rule will affect small municipal separate storm sewer systems (serving populations of less than 100,000 and located in an urbanized area or designated by the permitting authority), and construction activities disturbing more than one and five acres. In addition to implementing these federal programs, many states have passed laws altering local land use (planning and zoning) processes and building codes to address the problem of polluted runoff.

What We Can Do

Preventing pollution by better land use planning is by far the least expensive and most effective way to protect our critically important water resources. Minimizing impacts to natural drainage ways and reducing stormwater infiltration, decreases flooding and pollutant loading during storm events, reduces erosion and maintain our land. These policies are usually decided at the municipal level, through the actions of local officials and commissions. While stormwater runoff problems are nothing new to our officials, historically, the focus of stormwater management was public safety, getting the most water off paved surfaces as quickly as possible. Little thought was given to the increased volume and velocity of runoff, increased erosion potential, increased frequency and severity of flooding, reduced groundwa- ter recharge or the receiving waters of stormwater runoff. Informed, community level decision-making is becoming more and more critical in the effort to preserve the quality of our neighborhoods and environment.

With urbanization comes more intensive land use. People and the pollutants that result from their lifestyles are concentrated in areas largely covered by impervious surfaces (roads, parking lots, driveways, rooftops). This runoff finds its way into our waterways, either directly or through storm drain collection systems. The term nonpoint is used to distinguish the type of pollution from point source pollution, which comes from specific sources such as sewage treatment plants or industrial facilities. Although huge strides have been made in cleaning up major point sources, our water resources are still threatened by the effects of polluted runoff. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that this type of pollution is now the single largest cause of the deterioration of our nation’s water quality.

If you are on a local commission or board, learn a little about polluted runoff and how you can combat it in your everyday decisions. Does your municipal master plan identify important natural resources? Does it address potential impacts of development on water quality sources? Do local ordinances address the problem of polluted runoff? Are your storm drains properly maintained? There are many good publications and programs that can help each citizen do simple, but important things to help reduce runoff pollution like conserving water, properly disposing of hazardous wastes, and gardening and maintaining lawns in an environmentally responsible manner. (KH)

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University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educational programs adhere to the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture. Reasonable accommodation will be made for people with disabilities. (KH)
Pruning Mature Deciduous Shrubs

Correct pruning is one of the most essential of all management practices for shrubs in the home landscape. Proper pruning will help keep shrubs vigorous, maintain them in proper shape and form for a desirable landscape effect and add years to their usefulness.

Prune deciduous shrubs to maintain a natural habit of growth. Also remember to remove dead, diseased or broken branches. With most shrubs, the ideal time to prune is during the dormant season before new growth begins. Spring flowering shrubs, such as forsythia and lilac, should be pruned shortly after flowering to avoid removing flower buds. Prune shrubs that bloom after the end of June in the winter or spring before new growth starts. These plants develop their flower buds during the spring growth period. Shrubs that bloom on current season’s growth include Rose-of-Sharon.

In general, most deciduous shrubs should be thinned out rather than sheared or cut back. Thinning out prevents excessive or unsightly branch formation. With most deciduous shrubs, the older wood over a three year period to maintain the overall shape of the plant. New shoots that develop can be cut back to various lengths by the thinning out method, which encourages the development of strong branches. Plants that become overgrown and benefit from rejuvenation include forsythia, honeysuckle, spirea, viburnum, weigela and other fast growing types. These plants, if extensively overgrown, severely weakened or otherwise unhealthy, can be cut back to the ground but may not bloom for one to two years. Prune shrubs while still green on the rate of regrowth. (MMJ)

Educate Yourself Before You Buy

It is probably safe to say that the majority of mail order plant companies are legitimate businesses that strive to supply quality products to their customers. They can be a reliable source for unique plants that otherwise can be hard to find.

Whenever you are buying plants by mail, it pays to be cautious. Ads that make fantastic claims for plants should make you wary. Often a plant that sounds too good to be true will not live up to the claims made for it.

To avoid disappointment, read the ads closely. Find out everything you can about the plant being sold. First, find out what the plant is. Plant ads that use common names and do not give the botanical names of the plants being sold make it difficult or impossible for you to learn more about the plant from other sources. The same common name may apply to several plants or a cute, catchy name may be made up for advertising purposes to attract potential buyers. Study the ad copy, what is missing may be more important than what is there.

Before you order plants, it is a good idea to comparison shop. Get catalogs from several companies and compare plant sizes, ages, hardiness zones, growing conditions, warranties, shipping or handling details and costs. Educate yourself before you purchase plants and then enjoy the quality plants you receive. (MMJ)

Horticulture

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All America Selection 2000 Winners

Cabbage “Savoy Express”
This is the earliest savoy (crinkled) cabbage with a sweet, non-bitter, flavor perfect for slaw or other cabbage salads. “Savoy Express” heads mature in about 55 days from transplanting. The compact plant can be grown at close spacing about a foot apart in the garden. The small heads are about 1 1/2 pounds. “Savoy Express” cabbage is recommended for planting as a spring or fall crop and it may be the earliest cabbage on the block.

Sweet corn “Indian Summer”
The first sweet corn with colorful kernels. “Indian Summer” ears are large, eight inches, and gardeners need to check the corn silk for maturity about 79 days from sowing seed. “Cosmos “Cosmic Orange”

C. “Cosmic Orange” is an improved Cosmos sulphureus which deserves a sunny site in your garden. “Cosmic Orange” reaches a height of about 12 inches in a full sun garden. The vigorous plants provide abundant, bright orange two inch blooms all summer. Basically pest and disease free, “Cosmic Orange” is adaptable and easy to grow. This annual will thrive on minimal care. Only water, sun and fertile soil are needed for planting as a spring or fall crop and it may be the earliest cabbage on the block.

Dianthus “Melody Pink”
Sprays of single pink blooms distinguish “Melody Pink” from other annual dianthus. Bred specifically for use as a cut flower, this dianthus produces one inch flowers with a serrated petal edge, giving it an old fashioned lacy look. The long stems are desirable for fresh bouquets. “Melody Pink” will mature to a height of 22 to 24 inches. “Melody Pink” is quite heat and cold tolerant offering gardeners many months of flowering.

Pea “Mr. Big”
Pea “Mr. Big” is a superior English or garden pea. There are several significant improvements including consistently large pea pods. The larger pods are easier to shell. The fresh sweet peas taste delicious. “Mr. Big” produces a high yield, because the plants are early, set two pods per node and is disease resistant. “Mr. Big” is an indeterminate vine reaching two to three feet in the garden. Plants will need a trellis for vertical support. Harvest mature pea pods in 58 to 62 days.

Pepper “Blushing Beauty”
The name “Blushing Beauty” describes the color changes of this productive sweet

See WINNERS on page 11

2000 March/April Garden Calendar

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Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MMJ)
Carpenter Ants are Frustrating!

More people bring carpenter ants to the extension office for identification than any other insect. Carpenter ant colonies can occur in the structural part of the house where it is warm. Sometimes carpenter ants are active and even swarm when temperatures are quite cold outside.

In Nebraska, there are two species of carpenter ants that can infest structural wood of homes. The black carpenter ant, Camponotus pennsylvanicus, is very large (3/8 to 5/8 inch) and has a reddish brown, thread-like thorax and a black abdomen. Carpenter ants differ from other types of ants because they have workers that vary in size, called “major” and “minor” workers. By the time homeowners are aware of a carpenter ant problem, the colony is several years old. The colony begins with a single, winged queen who has mated. After the mating flight, she searches for a suitable location, usually wood that is damp or wet. The queen lays eggs and cares for immatures of a carpenter ant colony that begin to forage and help care for eggs and additional immatures that the queen produces. The colony grows slowly; it takes at least 2 to 3 years for major workers to be produced. A colony can be 6 to 10 years old before swarvers are produced.

Spring Housecleaning? Take Advantage of the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days

Date
Saturday, April 8
Saturday, May 20
Location
Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD)
3140 “N” Street, south parking lot
State Fair Park, parking lot, northeast of Ag Hall
Latex Paint Exchange Day: Only good, usable latex paint is accepted. Containers must be at least half full.

Time
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Items that you can bring for disposal:
• Heavy metals: items containing mercury such as thermometers and thermostats. Fluorescent bulbs and many batteries contain heavy metals but can now be recycled locally.
• Solvents: mineral spirits, turpentine, paint strippers and thinners, oil-based paints, varnishes.
• Pesticides: weed killers, garden spray, wood preservatives, roach powder, rat poisons. You may also bring banned products, like DDT, chlorodane, 2,4,5-T, pentachlorophenol, silvex.
• Batteries or latex paint, except on May 20. For more specific information, call the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department at 441-8040. (BPO)

Environmental Focus

Get Ready for Babies!

Before you know it, songbirds will begin searching on the ground to build a nest. Are you ready? March is a perfect month to get ready for this exciting springtime event. And, we’ve got help for you at the extension office.

One of our popular in-house fact sheets, “Build a Nest Box to Attract Birds,” gives you tips on building a nest box for House Wrens, Chickadees, Nuthatch, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird, Common Flicker, Screech Owl, American Kestrel and Wood Duck. The fact sheet also covers information on nesting, protecting birds from predators and maintaining your nest box.

Cats—Keeping the Urban Predator in Check

Cats sit like statues on sunny window sills. They look peacefully on sidewalks on nice days. Americans love cats. There are an estimated 50 million plus cats in the United States.

Multiply 50 million cats by an occasional backyard bird kill and you can soon see that cats contribute to a significant loss of songbirds and other ground nesting birds. Already befeau- guered in numbers by habitat loss and environmental degrada- tion, native birds need all the help they can get.

How can cat owners prevent their cats from killing birds?
• Put a bell on your cat. It may not be a perfect solution, but it may help.

Bluebird Conference on April 8

Bluebirds Across Nebraska (BAN) will host its sixth annual conference on April 8 at Waverly High School, located one-half mile west of Waverly on Highway 6. This conference is open to the public and will run from 8 a.m. until about 4:30 p.m. The registration fee is $10. Lunch will be available at a cost of $5 before April 1 and $8 after April 1.

The Saturday conference will include presentations from experts from Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota and Montana on bluebird biology and adaptability to a variety of nest boxes, purple martin and wildlife research. For more information or to register, phone Leland Osten at 402-433-8678 or email LOS54101@navix.net. (BPO)
Stockmen Prepare for Drought

With much of Nebraska already in a severe drought situation this spring, is there anything farmers can do to prepare? Since they can’t make it rain. However, we can change farming practices and we can change crop that reduce water demand. Under normal conditions, about one inch of soil moisture is lost with each tillage pass (requiring 1.4 inches of 70 percent effective rainfall to replenish). In marginal years, conserving soil moisture with no-till farming has proven to be the difference between a crop failure and harvesting a crop in some cases. Conservation of which crop to grow can be the most important decision of the year. Corn will continue to grow physiologically until all available moisture is gone and then tissue death occurs. Once corn “fires,” it does not recover. In the 10 days following silking, corn is twice as sensitive to stress than during any other portion of the drought stress, corn may produce tassels, but silking may be delayed enough that most or all of the pollen is gone by the time silks emerge, if they emerge at all. Changing from corn to grain sorghum could be a wise decision in 2000. Milo uses less total water than corn (20 inches vs. 25 inches) and has some ability to go dormant during a dry spell and then recover and produce grain if rain is received in time. Soybeans also use less total water than corn (22 inches vs. 25 inches) and are generally considered to be a poor dry-weather crop, but they can stand more drought stress than corn. Somewhat like sorghum, soybeans will stop growth when under moisture stress. After drought stress, if rains are adequate in August and the season is long enough, soybeans can produce good seed crop. Water demand can be affected by plant population but as much as might be expected. Evapo-transpiration (ET) is the sum of evaporation from the soil surface and transpiration of the plant. Before the crop reaches full canopy cover, the soil is exposed and the ET is much higher than evapotranspiration readily. If the soil surface is protected by crop canopy or residue, ET can be reduced by only a small component is reduced.

Abundant supply. And how about your grazing management? The sooner you group livestock into a tank, the sooner you can get your extra hay. Grazing will be more uniform and complete with high stock density. Maybe you should even plan to feed your extra hay periodically in drylot as part of your rotation to allow pastures to accumulate more growth before grazing them again. This can help increase the total number of grazing days from your pastures.

Farming in a Drought

Could we water cattle from tanks be better than using ponds or creeks? Both amount and quality of water should be considered. Groundwater is drying up many tanks and creeks. If you rely on them for cattle water, some alternatives might be needed this year. If you decide to change your water supply system, consider identifying ways to put all water into tanks rather than allow cattle to wade into the tank. Water tank is better for cattle and they prefer it to ponds or creeks. If it is cooler and offers easier access. Plus, when cows walk into ponds and creeks, they stir mud and sediments into the water and often deposit urine and manure. No wonder calves consistently choose tank water over ponds when given a choice.

Water demand can be reduced by planting a crop that uses less water and is more efficient in use. Some crops use less water than others, allowing more water to be available for livestock use. Corn, for instance, uses 22 inches of effective rainfall per growing season, while sorghum requires only 15 inches. This means that if you plant sorghum, you will have more water available for your livestock. Another advantage of planting sorghum is that it is more drought-resistant than corn, which means that you will have more water available for your livestock in dry years.

...some cases.
Dry Conditions Expected Through Spring

Eastern Nebraska and western Iowa continue to be at the center of a severe drought, according to the National Drought Monitor. Precipitation shortfall across Nebraska has steadily increased since mid-September. Precipitation has averaged about 40 percent of normal which are averaging four inches below normal across central Nebraska to nearly eight inches below normal across the northeastern corner of the state.

In most landscapes there are plants that survive periods of drought. Placing these plants in the garden reduces the need to supply water during periods of inadequate rainfall. While cacti and succulents may have a place in some drought-tolerant gardens, they are not the only alternatives. There are other choices available and appropriate for dry areas.

Carefully select plants that are drought-tolerant and grow well in dry areas. As those needing heavy irrigation.

Select plants for the growing conditions you want to create when planning and designing the landscape. Each area should be irrigated separately, according to specific water needs. Incorporate leaf size, color, bloom period, size and shape of plants, to create visual interest.

Turfgrass requires more water than other plants in the landscape. By isolating turf from gardens, trees and shrubs, a gardener can separate irrigation zones or use less water. Limit turf to areas that are regular in shape and easily irrigated. Cultivar selection should be made to accommodate the climate, site, level of maintenance, intended use and reduced water consumption. Although, coarse in texture and appearance, tall fescue mixes offer good heat and water tolerance. Cut the grass at a height of 3 to 3 1/2 inches. Longer leaf blades help to shade and cool the ground, reducing heat absorption from the soil and lessening the need to irrigate.

Efficient irrigation may mean including an irrigation system. The least efficient system is the sprinkler. It delivers a large amount of water in a short period, but loses excessive amounts of moisture to evaporation. Sprinklers that apply water early in the morning only water one choice for dry areas. Low-volume trickle or drip irrigators and soaker hoses deliver moisture over a longer period, losing little water due to evaporation or runoff. Check all runoff rates. An improperly calibrated, clogged or leaking system can waste a great deal of water. Carefully probe the root zone to help determine the moisture in the soil. With some low-volume systems, the surface of the soil will not appear to be saturated, while the root zone will receive the proper amount of moisture.

Properly mulching an area lowers the soil temperature and decreases the loss of moisture due to evaporation. In addition to creating texture in the landscape, organic mulch adds nutrients to the soil. A monopod of the mulch is important: two to three inches for trees and shrubs and one to two inches for vegetables, annuals and perennials.

Carefully planned landscapes and sound cultural practices reduce water needs. Controlling weeds will lower moisture competition with other plants. Lessening competition will strengthen existing plants and reduce the loss of moisture to disease, insects and drought. By carefully preparing and meeting plant requirements, a gardener can develop a landscape full of color and texture, while reducing water requirement.

Irrigation Zones

Very Low Water Zone

These areas are typically the farthest from a source of water. Plants in this area must be chosen carefully, requiring little or no supplemental irrigation. Some of these plants may show problems in years of abundant rainfall.

Low Water Zone

Plants chosen for this area require more water than that which is available naturally. During severe drought, supplementing the water supply will become necessary.

Moderate Water Zone

This zone will use the greatest ratio of water in the landscape. Keeping this area small will help limit water needs. It is possible to grow drought-tolerant plants in this area.

Plants Selected for Low and Very Low Water Zones

Hardiness may be microclimatically dependent. This is a complete list, but rather a sample of drought-tolerant species.

Many species require well-drained soils and will not grow well in poorly drained, clay soils. Some plants can tolerate drought may perform more vigorously when grown in ideal conditions.

Pruning

In both cases, you select branches that form wide angles with the main trunk. V-shaped crotches are weak and prone to break under the weight of a heavy fruit crop or a load of ice accumulation. Mature, bearing trees are pruned each year during the dormant season, usually in late winter.

The first step is to remove dead, broken or diseased branches. Other branches are selected for a dry winter. If the tree was viewed from directly above, the lateral branches would look like spokes of a bicycle wheel.

**To Prune is to Care**

Fear of pruning shouldn’t stop you from planting fruit trees — unless it’s going to stop you from pruning them.

Young trees are pruned to develop a desirable shape; mature, bearing trees need pruning to maintain a productive fruit bearing tree. Pruning, in other words, is a basic part of fruit tree care and fruit production. If you keep in mind why you’re pruning and what you want to accomplish, taking a saw in hand does not have to be scary.

Young trees are pruned to encourage them to develop a strong, healthy framework of structure that will expose leaves and fruit to sunlight and pest control materials. The two methods ordinarily used are the open center and the central leader methods.

Peach and Japanese plum trees are usually shaped by the open center method. The central trunk frint is removed and branches are selected and directed to the mature tree in a sort of wide, flat vase shape. As the name suggests, the center of the tree is open.

Apples and other fruits are trained by the central leader method. The main upright stem is retained and two or three branches are selected each year for two to three years to form the basic structure of the tree. If the tree was viewed from directly above, the lateral branches would look like spokes of a bicycle wheel.

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On the Plate... Supplement Label Changes

In January of this year we not only celebrated a new millennium, but also had a change in the Dietary Supplement Act of 1994. Dietary supplement labels can now make what is known as “structure/function” claims which means that manufacturers can claim how their product can affect the structure or function of the body without prior approval from the Food and Drug Administration. Examples of structure/function claims are: “for muscle enhancement,” “maintains a healthy blood system,” “helps you relax,” or “for common symptoms of PMS.” However, they may not, without prior FDA review, bear a claim that the supplement can prevent, treat, cure or diagnose a disease. This is called a disease claim. Examples of disease claim are “prevents osteoporosis,” “prevents coronary heart disease,” or “can be used in the treatment of depression.”

The label on dietary supplements will look very similar to the nutrition facts label on foods. The new labels have to be implemented by September, 2000. An example of a supplement fact label is shown below. As you can see the label will contain the following information:

- Serving size
- List of ingredients
- % Daily Value for vitamins and minerals
- The label must also include a set of ingredients that may not be safe or effective with recommended daily amounts.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: 1 tablet
Servings Per Container: 45

Amount Per Serving % Daily Value
Vitamin C (as ascorbic acid) 200 mg 333%
Niacin (as niacinamide) 80 mg 400%
Bee Pollen Powder 25 mg *
Oriental Ginseng, powdered (root) 250 mg *

*Daily Value not established

Convenient, Safe and Nutritious Foods: It’s in a Can

March is National Nutrition Month (NNM), a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by The American Dietetic Association (ADA) and its Foundation. With the safe passage of Y2K, a timely topic for many might be: How nutritious are all those extra canned foods I bought “just in case.” Here’s some information from ADA on canned foods.

When it comes to eating right for a healthy lifestyle, you have more food options than ever before. These options are available in a number of packages—in bags, cartons, bottles and cans. For those seeking convenience, safety and a variety of nutritious foods, canned foods offer one smart choice. Busy cooks are returning to using canned foods to fit into their hectic and nutrition-conscious lifestyles.

How does the nutrition profile of canned foods compare with fresh and frozen?

Canned food is a convenient and versatile option for nutritious eating. Fresh, frozen and canned foods can help you prepare easy and nutritionally balanced meals for the whole family. Canned food is as nutritious as its fresh and frozen counterparts upon preparation. Because fruits and vegetables are processed a few hours after harvesting, canning locks in taste and nutrients. It can also offer a variety of essential vitamins, minerals and fiber that the body needs to stay fit and healthy.

What varieties will I find in the canned food aisle?

More than 1,500 varieties of canned foods are available, ranging from artichokes to zucchinis. Most brands offer canned food varieties in sodium-, energy-, and fat-free versions.

Nutrition Facts label for grams of fat per serving.
**Noxious Weed Control Authority**

**Russell Shultz, Superintendent**
**Barb Frazier, Chief Inspector**

**Year in Review**

The Weed Control Authority is responsible for administering the State Noxious Weed Control Act county-wide. The authority also administers the Weed Abatement Program in the City of Lincoln as a result of an interlocal agreement between the city and county.

Both the noxious weed and weed abatement seasons started early due to the mild spring temperatures and good soil moisture conditions that was ideal for germinating weed seeds. There was a 19 percent increase in weed abatement violations over 1998 requiring 800 additional inspections. The 5,333 acres of musk thistle infestations found were more than double than that found in 1998. There was an estimated 23 percent increase in the total acres of musk thistle in the county.

**Control recommendations for musk and plumeless thistle**

The fall was very dry which reduced the opportunity for fall noxious weed control. The dry weather decreased the amount of germination and reduced the effectiveness of herbicides. There were 339 problem sites inspected in the fall. Of these sites, 136 had only a trace infestation and no infestations were found at 100 sites. Of the 240 infested sites, 177 were deferred until spring for better conditions for control.

**Inspection activity**

A total of 9,442 inspections have been made on 4,387 sites on 34,743 acres this year. Inspection activity for the year:

- **Noxious Weeds**
  - The inspectors made 3,918 inspections of 2,002 sites. They found 1,588 violations on 6,768 acres on the 27,266 acres inspected.

- **Weed Abatement**
  - Almost 2000 violations were found as a result of inspecting 2,385 sites. After being notified of a violation, 94 percent of the owners cut and removed overgrown vegetation. Of this, 110 were force cut by contractors.

**Biological Control**

The musk thistle head weevil population has increased enough over the past 30 years that they are reducing the amount of viable seed production. They have been found in 70-80 percent of flowering musk thistle heads the past two years.

Three biological control sites have been established in the county. Two for leafy spurge and one for purple loosestrife. The hope is that these areas can be harvested to make additional releases resulting in beneficial populations in the future.

**Weed Abatement Program**

Three percent of the acres were controlled by inspectors or force controlled.

**Landowners responded very well even with the difficult control conditions. Legal notices were required on only 27 percent of the 1,214 control requests. Owners controlled almost 85 percent of the infested acres not deferred.**

**Control**

**DIRECTIONS.**

READ AND FOLLOW LABEL INSTRUCTIONS. BEFORE USING HERBICIDE, PUT ON PROPER CLOTHING. BEFORE USING HERBICIDE, PUT ON PROPER CLOTHING.

Early spring is a good time to control musk and plumeless thistles when they are in early, actively growing rosette stages. Scout and control the infested area on a weekly basis until you actively growing rosette stages. Scout and control the infested area on a weekly basis until you actively growing rosette stages.
North American weed conference

Nebaska has the honor of hosting The Eighth Annual North American Weed Management Association Conference and Trade Show. This conference is being held at the Arbor Day Farm in the Conference Center, Nebraska City, Nebraska August 8-10, 2000. Russ Shultz is serving as the program chairman.

The North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) is a network of professional weed managers who are involved in implementing any phase of a local, state, provincial, or federal weed law. The mission of NAWMA is to provide education, regulatory direction, professional improvement and environmental awareness to preserve and protect natural resources from degrading impacts of exotic, invasive noxious weeds.

The theme of this conference is “More invasives are coming! Are you ready?” Across the United States, the major thrust of the noxious weed control effort has been directed at noxious weeds that are already well established. In most cases, control efforts do not include aggressive control of newly found, highly invasive weeds. Preventing the establishment of these invasive weeds is the most efficient and effective approach at weed control. The conference will emphasize the establishment of a framework at the national, state and local level for early detection and rapid response to highly invasive weeds.

Presentations will include highlights of the newly developed National Invasive Species Management Plan and Australian experience in fighting newly found invading weeds. Other speakers will address plant data systems, early response efforts, GIS/GPS in weed management, the Nebraska program and other related topics. It is also an excellent opportunity for one-on-one interaction with other attendees about their experiences.

If you desire more information, call 441-7817. Conference information is available now and registration information will be available about June 1 at www.nawma.org. Room reservations should be made now to assure lodging at the conference site.

Noxious weed control

The weed control authority maintains contact with 30 different public land managers in a coordinated effort of noxious weed control. They represent the following agencies and departments:

- City of Lincoln
  - Airport Authority
  - County/City Property Management
  - Lincoln Electric System
  - Lincoln Public Schools
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Public Works & Utilities
- County Engineer
- State of Nebraska
  - Air National Guard
  - Army National Guard
  - Education Lands & Funds
  - UNI Landscape Services
  - Department of Roads
  - Department of Corrections
- Game & Parks Commission
- Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Other:
- Lower Platte South NRD
- NE Public Power District

Each of these land managers has a noxious weed control program. A meeting was held with all of these managers discussing noxious weed control and management. They have committed significant resources to planned on-going noxious weed control on property that they own or control. Names of contacts are kept current. Two-way communication is maintained throughout the year. When there is a need to request some follow-up control work of any of these land managers they provide immediate response. The efforts of these land managers are a key part of keeping noxious weeds under control in the county.

Adopt-A-Clean Road and noxious weed control

The Lancaster County engineer’s office introduced the Adopt-A-Clean-Road program in 1991. The program is designed to clean litter along county roadways. Volunteers “adopt” a roadway segment and agree to collect litter along their adopted miles for a minimum of two years. Last year 65 permits were active, covering approximately 148 miles of county roadways.

Packets are distributed to each volunteer group by the county engineer’s office. Included in each packet is information about noxious weeds in Lancaster County. By studying this information, the Adopt-A-Clean Road sponsor becomes aware of the noxious weeds within the county. They are asked to report any and all infestations found along their adopted county roadside to the Weed Control Authority office. The county engineer’s staff then provides the needed control of the weeds.

What are noxious weeds?

Noxious weed is a legal term used to denote a destructive or harmful weed for the purpose of regulation. These non-native plants aggressively compete with desirable plants and affect man, livestock and wildlife. This not only directly affects landowners, but erodes the tax base for all residents.

The business of noxious weed control is everyone’s concern and their control is to everyone’s benefit. Effective control needs to include controlling the existing infestations and preventing new infestations. The Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture establishes which plants are noxious and the control measures to be used in preventing their spread. The following non-native weeds have been officially designated as noxious in Nebraska:

- Canada Thistle
- Diffuse Knapweed
- Leafy Spurge
- Musk Thistle
- Plumleess Thistle

Following is a list of those noxious weeds commonly found in Lancaster County, along with a brief description and growth habit:

Canada Thistle (Cirsium arvense L.)

- Life span: perennial
- Stems: to 4 feet tall; hollow; erect; branched above; no leafy wings or spiny margins on upper stems below flowers.
- Leaves: moderate to coarsely lobed, usually wavy with spiny margins. Upper side light to dark green, shiny to hairless.
- Inflorescence: small 1/2 to 3/4 inch diameter rose purple, sometimes white color, male/female flower on separate plants.
- Roots: extensive vertical and horizontal root system.

Leafy Spurge (Euphorbia esula L.)

- Life span: perennial
- Stems: 1 to 3 feet tall; thickly clustered; erect; branched at the top; milky white sap.
- Leaves: long and narrow, 1/4 inches wide and 1 to 4 inches long.
- Inflorescence: flower very small, surrounded by showy yellow-green heart-shaped bracts.
- Roots: deep, spreading, brown with numerous pink buds which may produce new shoots or roots.

Musk Thistle (Carduus nutans L.)

- Life span: biennial or occasionally an annual.
- Rosette formed first year.
- Stems: up to 6 feet tall; main stem and major branches are hairless. The stem bearing flower head is covered with fine gray hair. The first few inches below the flower head has no leaves attached.
- Leaves: dark green, prominent light green midrib, usually smooth or hairless on both sides. Deeply lobed with spiny margins up to 20 inches in length.
- Inflorescence: large, solitary 1 to 2-1/2 inches in diameter, usually nodding slightly. Drop rose or purple color. Average plant produces 5,000 to 10,000 seeds; some up to 20,000 seeds.

Plumleess Thistle (Carduus acanthoides L.)

- Life span: biennial or occasionally an annual.
- Rosette formed first year.
- Stems: 1 to 4 feet tall, leafy to the base of flower heads.
- Leaves: dark green with light midrib. Leaf surface sparsely hairy on top and hairy beneath. Leaves deeply lobed, with narrow spiny margins.
- Inflorescence: solitary in cluster of two to five, blooms 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter, erect and usually not drooping.
- Roots: stout, fleshy, taproot.

Source: Weeds of Nebraska and the Great Plains, published by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture.
**Leafy spurge control recommendations**

It is extremely difficult to achieve long-term control of leafy spurge. The most cost-effective control method depends on the size and location of the infested area. Small patches of leafy spurge can be permanently eliminated with a persistent herbicide program. However, all areas will require continued control measures. This plant spreads by underground runners and there is always a fringe area of younger plants that do not bloom. There are also roots underground that extend beyond the younger plants. A 15-foot perimeter should be treated around leafy spurge patches to control seedlings and spreading roots. Treated patches should be watched carefully for at least eight years and any regrowth or seedlings should be aggressively retreated.

### Chemical control

The key to controlling leafy spurge is early detection and treatment of the initial invading plant. Because the weed is difficult to eradicate, a persistent management program is needed to control top growth and to gradually reduce the nutrient reserve in the root system. The most commonly used herbicides to control leafy spurge include Tordon 22K and 2,4-D. Plateau has been granted a special labeling for use on pastured and crop land as well as following related situations. These herbicides are selective for broadleaf weed control and generally do not harm grasses when applied at recommended rates. Plateau DG is available as water-soluble eco-packets used for weed control in native grass and wildflower establishment and other no-till crop areas. Glyphosate (Roundup) is a nonselective herbicide that controls both broadleaf and leafy spurge. BEFORE USING ANY HERBICIDE, ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS.

#### Timing herbicide applica-
tion

Herbicides should be applied to leafy spurge at the proper growth stage so optimum control can be achieved. Spring herbicide applications are most effective when applied about June 1 when the true flowers (not the yellow bracts) begin to appear on the leafy spurge plant. The optimum treatment time ends when the plants need to mature. Fall is also an excellent time to control leafy spurge. Fall regrowth will begin leaf spurge in late August or September. During this time, carbohydrates are being transported to the roots for winter survival; herbicide translocation to the roots should also result in improved control.

#### Small infestations

Plateau DG eco-packs are for the edge control of small infestations. One eco-pack will cover two acres at a rate of 4 oz/acre. Roundup Pro as a spot treatment is also effective. Plateau may be applied 12 oz/acre, fall only, or 8 oz/acre in the fall followed by 4 oz/acre in the spring.

#### Cropland

Plateau is quite effective for controlling leafy spurge. It may be applied as a post-emergence treatment in the fall at a rate of 12 oz/acre or a split application of 8 oz/acre in the fall, followed by a spring application of 4 oz/acre in the spring. At no time should you apply more than 12 ounces of Plateau in a single year. Tordon 22K is also effective for controlling leafy spurge. Treat with Tordon 22K at 1 qt/acre applied about June 1 or early September. However, this application rate may not be economically feasible if a large area is infested with leafy spurge. A more cost-effective option is a tank mix of Tordon 22K at 1 qt and 2,4-D at 1 qt of a 48 gal concentr-ate/acre applied about June 1 or early September. Annual applications at these rates will gradually reduce leafy spurge infestation. Herbicide spurge seedling can be achieved with 2.4-D lqf of a 48 gal concentrate/acre, but will not provide control of the roots. The most aggressive approach is to apply herbicides in both the spring and fall. When control measures you choose, a consistent and thorough control plan must be established.

#### Control among trees and in residential areas

Leafy spurge top growth in trees can be controlled with 2,4-D at the rate of 1 qt/acre of a 48 gal concentrate. Care must be taken to avoid contact with tree foliage with either the herbicide or spray drift to prevent tree injury. Roundup applied in the spring and fall will control top growth and reduce roots. Apply to only active growing plants, taking special care not to get any chemical on other desired plants.

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**Purple loosestrife, a noxious weed?**

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture held a public hearing December 15, 1999 on rules and a rate of 4 oz/acre would add purple loosestrife to the state’s noxious weed list beginning 2001. The director will be making a decision on this proposed addition. If the addition is made, an extensive awareness and education program is needed to inform the public.

### Threat

The Congressional Research Services report portrays purple loosestrife as one of the most harmful, non-native plants in its issue paper on invasive species. They quote a source saying this one plant currently contributes $45 million in damages annually. This damage will increase rapidly if aggressive control actions are not taken. Purple loosestrife is in the Nature Conservancy’s “America’s Least Wanted” list. Twenty-two states and two provinces in Canada have already designated it a noxious weed. These states include five of our neighbors.

#### Sterile seed issue

Purple loosestrife is naturally self-styled and may not cross with the same cultivar. Cross-pollination is possible with other cultivars of a different but closely related species, including honeybush, are very effective pollinators of purple loosestrife plants even a long distance apart. Research in Minnesota and Canada found that all cultivars, including cultivars sold as sterile, will cross-pollinate and produce viable seed. This was substantiated by seed collections made of horticultural plantings in Lincoln in 1995 and Omaha in 1996. Seeds collected from all plants were highly viable. These seeds may or may not germinate in the flower garden, but the millions of very small seeds are readily carried by water to wetter locations more desirable for germina-

### Situation in Lancaster County

Some wild purple loosestrife plants are found around some of the Salt Valley Lakes in the early 90’s. Some growth and reduce roots. Apply to only active growing plants, taking special care not to get any chemical on other desired plants.

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The truth about invasive plants

Weed Awareness

The terms “non-native,” “exotic,” “alien,” “pest plant,” “problem species” and “noxious weed” have been used for plants from other continents or distant parts of another country which disrupt native plant communities and upset their balance. Most non-native plants do not become problems, but too often plants out of their natural range crowd natives and create adverse economic impacts. You can help control known invasive plants by introducing new threats by understanding the problem:

How do plants move from their natural range to new, distant places? Accidentally and when well-intentioned people move them. Eurasian watermilfoil seeds and plant parts traveled from Europe to the eastern U.S. coast in ship ballast, then spread to the Midwest by waterbirds and boats. Exotic modes of travel: Shipballast/boat barge, boat propellers, bird ingestion, floodwaters, nursery sales, contaminated fill soil and with agricultural seed. How do problems arise? Exotic plant control costs millions of dollars each year. Herbicides, labor and research top the bill in the fight against plants which threaten to clog waterways, ruin fisheries, turn pasture to wasteland, compete with agricultural crops, shade out forest regeneration and overwintering wildlife. How to stop exotics: Get to know the common exotic threats. Inform friends and neighbors. If you see these offered for sale, explain the problems and urge buyers to look for non-native plants to buy. If you find any on your property, inform the Weed Control Authority. Support national, state and local efforts of early detection and rapid response to newly found invasive plants. Some invasive plants to watch out for:

- **Plumeless thistle, carduus acanthoides**
  - Canada thistle, cirsium arvense (L.) Scop.
- **Known invasive plants with increasing populations in the county**
  - Purple loosestrife, cyrtium salicaria
  - Sericea lespedeza, cymbopogon sericeus
  - Description: A warm season, perennial herb in the pea family, or Fabaceae. It has erect erect growth form, ranging from 3 to 5 1/2 feet in height and leaves that alternate at the stem. Each leaf is divided into three smaller leaflets, 1/2 to 1 inch long, which are narrowly obovate and pointed, with awl-shaped spines. Leaflets are covered with densely flattened hairs, giving a grayish-green or silvery appearance. Mature stems are somewhat woody and fibrous with sharp, stiff, flattened bristles. Violet to purple flowers emerge either singly or in clusters of 2 to 4, from the axils of the upper and median leaves. **Ecological threat: Sericea lespedeza is primarily a threat to open areas such as meadows, prairies, open woodlands, wetland borders and forest. Once it gains a foothold, it can crowd out native plants and develop an extensive seed bank in the soil, ensuring its long residence at a site. Established dense stands of sericea suppress native flora and its high tannin content makes it impenetrable to native wildlife as well as livestock.**

- **Johnsongrass, sorghum halepense (L.) Pers.
  - Description: Johnsongrass is a perennial species over most of its range. Leaves are grass-like, up to one inch wide, with a prominent whitish midline. The exotic Johnsongrass can be toxic to livestock, especially during adverse growing conditions or environmental extremes. Johnsongrass is extremely difficult to control and can become a major problem in pasture and cropping areas.**

- **Known invasive plants with few or no plants found in the county**
  - Spotted and Diffuse Knaweed, centaurea sp.
  - Description: The exotic Eurasian watermilfoil is sub-merged. It tolerates a wide range of water conditions and often forms large infestations. Eur- asian watermilfoil stems are reddish-brown to whitish pink. They are branched and commonly grow to lengths of six to nine feet. The leaves are deeply divided, soft and feather-like. Leaves are about two inches long. The leaves are arranged in whorls of three to six leaves about the stem. The flowers of Eurasian watermilfoil are reddish and very small. They are held above the water on an emersed flower spike that is several inches long. **Ecological threat: Eurasian watermilfoil can form large, floating mats of vegetation on the surface of lakes, rivers and other water bodies, preventing light penetration. Each aquatic plant and impeding water traffic. The plant thrives in areas that have decreased to various kinds of natural and manmade disturbance.**

- **Designated noxious weeds in Nebraska**
  - Grasses, like all sorghums. Johnsongrass can be toxic to livestock, especially during adverse growing conditions or environmental extremes. Johnsongrass is extremely difficult to control and can become a major problem in pasture and cropping areas.**

- **Known invasive plants with few or no plants found in the county**

Find us on the web

Accessing information about the City of Lincoln departments and Lancaster County agencies is easy using their combined web page. On the Internet simply go to http://interlinc.ci.lincoln.ne.us and you will find the InterLinc home page. You may choose any city available certified weed free forage are maintained and provided to potential customers. There is potential for increased value in your acreage. Please contact our office for assistance with the certification process or if you have questions about this program.

- **Roadside noxious weed dissemination control**
- **Invader species – tomorrow’s weed challenges**
- **Planting prairie grass & wildflowers**
- **Preventing noxious weeds**
- **Purple loosestrife and plumeless thistles**
- **Recommended noxious weed controls**
- **Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Program**
- **City of Lincoln Combined Weed Program**
- **2000 Annual Plan**
- **Lancaster County Noxious Weed Control Plan**
- **City of Lincoln Combined Weed Program**
- **Monthly report**
- **Recommended noxious weed controls**
- **Humus and plumeless thistles**
- **Leafy spurge**
- **Crown thistle**
- **Planning tips for noxious weed control in CRP contracts**
- **How to stop exotics: Get to know the common exotic threats. Inform friends and neighbors. If you see these offered for sale, explain the problems and urge buyers to look for non-native plants to buy. If you find any on your property, inform the Weed Control Authority. Support national, state and local efforts of early detection and rapid response to newly found invasive plants.**
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Clarice's Column

Clarence Steffen FCE Council Chair

It's a cold, snow-covered gray afternoon as I begin to think about an article for the March Nebl ine. Even though our winter has been quite mild, I appreciate knowing that by this time of year, spring cannot be too far off. At our house, you also know spring is just around the corner because the orders from the nurseries have already begun to arrive. Soon a corner of our basement will become a mini greenhouse as the seeds are started and home-grown tomato plants will begin their journey to our table for summer enjoy- ment. In January, our thoughts were still with snow and cold as a good number of you attended the council meeting. Many snowmen, each with his or her own personality, were created by our talented members. We also enjoyed a very good lunch and a day of interaction for all members. Thanks to all who attended. Our thoughts will definitely be on spring as we meet for the March 27, 1 p.m. meeting. Start looking for those long forgotten hats and gloves as we are invited to a Tea Party hosted by the Busy Bees, Emerald and Tuesday Tinkers Clubs! How fun it will be wearing a hat as we will have a few extra hands on for the meeting. Please join us for a cup of tea and a fun afternoon. The host clubs have also asked that if you bring any tea, that you also bring a favorite recipe for a cookie exchange. Spring also means that applications are due for the FCE Scholarship. This scholarship will be presented to a Lancaster County graduate. Applications should be received at the extension office by April 1. I hope to see many of you on March 23 at the earth wellness festival at Southeast Community College. You are invited to enjoy your day with many of Lancaster County’s fifth graders. See you at the Tea Party!

Clarice Steffen
FCE Council Chair

National Poison Prevention Week
March 19-25

The theme of National Poison Prevention Week 2000 is “Children Act Fast...So Do Poison Centers!” This means that parents must always be watchful when household chemicals or drugs are being used. Many incidents happen when adults are using a product but are dis- tracted for a few moments. Children act fast and adults must make sure that household chemicals and medicines are stored away from children at all times.

The kitchen, bathroom and the garage or storage area are the most common sites for accidental poisonings. Ask yourself the following questions and take steps to fix any situations that you may answer “no” to.

The Kitchen
1. Do all harmful products in the kitchen, bathroom, or garage have child-resistant caps?
2. Are all potentially harmful products in the garage or storage area that can be swallowed are terrible poisons? Lighter, paint thinner and remover, antifreeze and turpen- tine are lighter, paint thinner and remover, antifreeze and turpen- tine.
3. Are harmful products stored away from food?
4. Have all potentially harmful products been put up high and out of reach of children?
5. Are all medicines in the original containers with the original labels?
6. Are vitamin/mineral supplements recommended treatment for the ingestion of household products and medicines. They are familiar with toxicity (how poisonous it is) of most substances found in the home or know how to find this information. The number for our local Poison Control Center is 1-800-955-9119. (LJ)

Poison Prevention

The bathroom
1. Did you ever stop to think that medicines could poison if used improperly?
2. Are you disciplined? Do you do your best or give up easily? Are you reliable? Do you do your best or give up easily? Are you reliable? Do you do your best or give up easily? Are you reliable? Do you do your best or give up easily? Are you reliable?
3. Have you made sure that there are no poisons stored in drinking glasses or pop bottles?
4. Are all these harmful products locked up and out of sight and reach?
5. If you think someone has been poisoned, call your Poison Control Center immediately. The phone number can be found on the inside cover of the yellow or white pages of the telephone directory. Keep the number on your phone. Poison Control Centers maintain information for all potential poisons. Products like furniture polishes, drain cleaners and oven cleaners should have safety packaging to keep little children from accidently opening the package.

The garage or storage area
1. Did you know that many things in your garage or storage area that can be swallowed are terrible poisons?
2. Lighter, paint thinner and remover, antifreeze and turpen- tine are very hot water. Wipe it on, wait a couple minutes, then pull or scrape it off. (LJ)

Help Your Child Bike Safely

With the rapid approach of spring, children will soon have their bicycles out of storage and may be asking for new ones. A few facts to remember about bicycles will help keep kids safe.

A big bike “to grow into” is not easy to learn on or to ride safely. A child should be able to sit on the seat with knees straight and feet flat on the ground. Also make sure he can straddle the bike with one or two inches between the top bar and seat. Always insist on a bike helmet use. A brain injury cannot be cured! Bike helmet use can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent when worn correctly. Make it clear to your child they must wear a helmet every time they ride. (LJ)

Character Counts! Corner

For many, learning to take personal responsibility is a lifelong process. It is far too easy to blame someone else for every- thing that happens. We have all heard about the court cases where parents, police, neighbors or teachers are blamed for a wrong-doing. It seems hard for some to accept personal responsibility for actions and accept the natural consequences of those actions. The idea is someone else’s fault is far too prevalent. How do we teach responsibility? It’s important to let children volunteer or to assign them tasks to do. Then we need to let them do them. If they run into difficulty, encourage but don’t take over. Learning to persevere is an important aspect of responsibility. Caring for animals or plants, earning money for projects or trips and completing projects are all building blocks for responsibility. The best way to teach responsibility is to model it. Are you reliable? Do you do your best or give up easily? Are you disciplined? Do you blame others? Do you keep your word? Your kids will do just what you do. (LJ)
4-H Livestock: Spring Kick-off

This year’s PAK 10 Livestock Judging Contest will be April 8, 10 a.m. at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, in the Animal Science Complex. Registration begins at 10 a.m. with the contest starting at 10:30. The contest will be followed by lunch and breakout session about the skill-a-thon or the quiz bowl. At 1:30 p.m. there will be a tour of the animal science facilities along with the announcement of judging results. There will be a $5 registration fee that will cover the days activities. Please call Trinidad at 441-7180 to request a detailed brochure, contact Deanna at 441-7180. (DK)

Invitational Cat Show
Saturday, April 15, 2000
Cost: $5 per cat.
Exhibitor may enter one long hair and one short hair cat. 8:30-9:30 a.m.: Check-in and vet check. (Shot records will be checked.) 9:30 a.m.-noon: Judging of cats and showmanship. Noon-1 p.m.: Lunch on your own. 1 p.m.: Awards presentation. For more information, contact Julie Monroe at 421-3729. (ALH)

Camp Counselors Needed
If you are 14 years of age or older and enjoy working with youth and sharing your skills, this is a great opportunity for you. Camps are held at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center during June and July. Camp counselor applications are available at the extension office and due by April 12. A training will be held at the 4-H Center for all selected counselors. (LB)

Turkey Time
The time is approaching for all interested 4-H members to sign up for the 4-H Turkey project. The turkeys cost $4.33 each and you must order a minimum of 15 turkeys (total cost $64.96). Payment and application forms are due no later than March 24. Turkeys arrive April 26. If you are interested in participating, pick up the application at our office or call Ellen at 441-7180. (EK)

Want Your Name in History?
Each 4-H club has the opportunity to help support the upcoming Lancaster County Event Center by purchasing a brick for $100. The brick will contain your club’s name inscribed on it and will be placed in the main entrance area. For more information, contact Deanna or Lorene at 441-7180 or send your donation to the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, Inc., P.O. Box 29167, Lincoln, NE 68529. (DK)

Music Contest
Join the fun and enter the 4-H Music Contest! Your club can sing and/or dance at this exciting 4-H event. The 2000 Music Contest will be held Sunday, April 30, 2 p.m. at Dawes Middle School Auditorium. Stop by the office or call Tracy for a registration form and for more information. Rules can also be found in last year’s fair book. All registration forms are due to the office by Friday, April 21. (TK)

Music Contest

Come to the Record Book Workshop
Saturday, April 1, 9:30 a.m.
Do 4-H record books confuse you? Would you like to learn some record book "how to’s"? Did you know you can complete your record books on the computer? Attend this workshop and discover answers to your record book questions, tips to make your record books shine and how to successfully complete them. (TK)

Campus Encounters -Clothing Kind-
What: A college campus experience for 4-H members
When: June 14-16, 2000
Where: East Campus-College of Human Resources and Family Sciences
Age Level: 4-H members-ages 14-18
Why attended? Use the serger, make boxer shorts, learn a creative wardrobe planning challenge at Gateway Mall. Stay three days on a college campus, learn about careers, colors and much more.
Prerequisite: Must have completed Clothing Level 2 Cost: $100
To apply: Contact Tracy for an application form. Application deadline: May 1 (TK)

Invitational Cat Show
Saturday, April 15, 2000
Cost: $5 per cat.
Exhibitor may enter one long hair and one short hair cat. 8:30-9:30 a.m.: Check-in and vet check. (Shot records will be checked.) 9:30 a.m.-noon: Judging of cats and showmanship. Noon-1 p.m.: Lunch on your own. 1 p.m.: Awards presentation. For more information, contact Julie Monroe at 421-3729. (ALH)

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Feeding Horses: Reading the FeedTag

Horses need a balanced ration for proper growth, maintenance and reproduction. A new NebGuide (G00-1403A) has been issued explaining what necessary nutrients do and how to read the tag of a manufactured horse feed. By knowing what you are feeding and why, horse nutrition can be complicated but also accurate and can be customized at low cost in ways never before possible. Identifying the nutrients of major concern for your horse’s stage of production, age and activity allows you to purchase the most balanced diet that uses the most digestible ingredients and costs the least per unit of nutrient.

We rely on ready-mixed feeds to provide a balanced, quality ration for our horses, but remember, the tag only represents what is in the feed. Selection of a horse feed also depends on the animal’s age, use, activity level and what else it may be eating. Two additional resources are NebGuides Basics of Feeding Horses: What to Feed and Why (G98-350) and Basics of Feeding Horses: Feeding Management (G98-1344). These NebGuides are available at your local extension office. (EK)

4-H Project Leader Training

There will be a 4-H project leader training Wednesday, March 29, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Kathy Anderson, UNL Horse Specialist, will present information on basic horse health care and current horse nutrition. The clinic is free and all are welcome to attend.

Call the extension office to register. (EK)

Roping Clinic (date change)

The date of the roping clinic has been changed to Saturday, April 29, 1:30-4:30 p.m. at the arena of Brad and Susan Frink. Be sure to bring your 4-H parents! (TK)

Achievement Night Highlights

The 4-H Achievement Night and 4-H: What’s It All About? programs was held February 8. The night began with 4-H members giving demonstrations, speeches, modeling clothing items, performing musical selections and sharing information about other 4-H events and opportunities. 4-H youth and volunteers were also recognized for their achievements in 1999 and the time they have given to the program.

Receiving the Meritorious Service Award was Gerald and Janice Halling. This award recognizes the many years of dedicated service they gave to the 4-H program. Community service awards were presented to the following 4-Hers: Ashley Asche, Karen Clinch, Holly Kobel, Ian Beck-Johnson, Ashley Dryer, Jeri Valliott, Sam Beck-Johnson, Becky Fiala, Emily Veburg, Megan Bergman, Will Fox, Michaela White, Nick Blevens, Andrew Kabes and Sean White. This award is given to those 4-H’ers with the largest numbers of volunteer hours.

Each year 4-H members turn in record books to show their accomplishments in the 4-H program. This year’s county award winners were Rachel Rentzchler, Andres Kabes and Becky Fiala. County winners selected to represent Lancaster County at the district competition were Megan Bergman, Brenda Fiala, Andrew Kabes and Becky Fiala.

Receiving the Outstanding 4-H member award was Valerie Lemke. This award was presented to Brenda Fiala and Michaela White.

The 4-H Council gave eight scholarships. These awards were Brenda Fiala, Todd Filipi, Sarah Fry, Lindsey Johnson, Valerie Lemke, Sara Messick, Jesse Schrader and Michaela White. Sara Messick was presented the Jonathan Backes scholarship.

Outstanding 4-H members with the largest numbers of volunteer hours. (EK)

2000 Clover College

Do you want to learn some new and exciting things? Do you like making projects and meeting new people? Then plan on attending the 2000 Clover College Tuesday, June 13- Friday, June 16, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Some possible workshop topics include sewing, table setting, outdoor education, nutrition and many others. Most workshops will consist of one to four sessions with each session lasting two hours. A fee will be required for most of the workshops. You may sign up for as many or as few of the workshops as you like.

Look in next month’s NeBlie for more information and registration forms. Call Tracy if you have any questions or may be interested in presenting a workshop. (TK)
National Ag Week is March 19 thru 25, 2000

A “Salute” to Nebraska Agriculture—Sharing the Facts!

Nebraska’s Top National Rankings:
1st Commercial cattle slaughter, 1998, live weight - 9,052,420,000 lbs.
Great Northern beans production, 1998–1,855,000 cwt.
Alfalfa meal production, 1998–148,200 tons
All cattle and calves, January 1, 1999–6,650,000 head
Grain sorghum production, 1998–3,186,000 cwt.
Pinto beans production, 1998–1,050,000,000 bushels
Corn for grain production, 1998–1,239,750,000 bushels
Cash receipts from all livestock markets, 1997–$5,542,000,000
4th Land in farms and ranches, 1997–46,400,000 acres
On-farm storage capacity, 1998–3,050,000,000 bushels
Commercial grain storage capacity, 1998–628,610,000 bushels
Cash receipts from all farm markets, 1997–$10,092,232,000
3rd Grain sorghum production, 1998–656,000,000 bushels
5th Non-oil variety sunflower production, 1998–33,900,000 lbs.
All hay production, 1998–7,680,000 tons
Alfalfa hay production, 1998–5,250,000 tons

See AG WEEK on page 11

Ward “Gus” Shires to Retire March 31

Ward Shires and Richard Krueger discussing a wheat disease problem on Krueger’s rural Roca farm.

Ward “Gus” Shires, Extension Educator, will retire from University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County on March 31, 2000. He will complete 15 years of service to Lancaster County and 23 years with the UNL Cooperative Extension system. Prior to coming to Lincoln, in 1985, Shires worked in Nemaha County as the extension agent-agriculture.

Shires earned his Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education from the University of Nebraska and began work with UNL Cooperative Extension. While in Lancaster County, his primary program duties have focused on Agriculture and Natural Resources education. He also provided substantial leadership in establishing Lancaster County as one of Nebraska’s leading 4-H horse programs.

An early assignment for Shires was serving on Lincoln’s landfill site selection committee. One of his more notable accomplishments has been working with the City of Lincoln on solid waste management and land application of Biosolids on area farmland. This program has saved an estimated $3.25 million dollars in landfill tipping fees, a direct savings to taxpayers. Application of biosolids to farmland has also added a nutrient value of over $400,000 for Lancaster County farmers.

Shires is a native of Elliot, Iowa. In retirement, he plans to continue his involvement as a Lt. Colonel and the Vice Wing Commander of the Nebraska Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. The Civil Air Patrol is an auxiliary of the U. S. Air Force.

Nobuko Nyman to Retire March 23

Nobuko Nyman and Governor Johanns recognize EFNEP’s 50 year anniversary in 1999.

Nobuko Nyman, nutrition advisor with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program will retire March 23. She will be recognized by UNL for 15 years of service in April. Nobuko is very skilled at serving at-risk teens. Jasmine, a native of Japan, she speaks Japanese and English. Nobuko is very skilled at serving at-risk teens. Jasmine, a native of Japan, she speaks Japanese and English. Nobuko is very skilled at serving at-risk teens.

Open House Retirement for Warder “Gus” Shires, Extension Educator
Friday, March 31, 2000
3 to 5:30 p.m.
Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherrycreek Road

“Come and wish Ward the best in his retirement years.”

Five Cents Can Improve the World

Rural Nebraskans know what it’s like to drop what they’re doing to help out a neighbor in need. It’s not too often we reach out to help someone on the other side of the world. But you can do that for as little as 5 cents. We know it sounds too good to be true, but 5 cents can insure a baby is born with a healthy brain. 5 cents can insure a child does not develop physical or mental handicaps. 5 cents can improve Nebraska’s farm income, and thereby, help you and I. You see, 5 cents is all it takes to give a child a tiny dose of iodine that will change their lives forever. How is this possible? In the 1920’s, the Swedish people convinced some key people in America that eating iodized salt would eliminate goiter, an enlarged thyroid. Today, it is known that iodine also prevents brain and organ damage in fetuses, children and adults. Today, all Americans get some iodized salt.

In the 1980’s, the World Health Organization learned that 1,500,000,000 people in the world lived in countries that don’t have or eat iodized salt. In 1995, Kiwanis and UNICEF formed a partnership to teach the remaining people how to eliminate this costly disease. Today, there are still about 26,000,000 babies born each year to mothers who do not use iodized salt. About $26,000,000 is still needed to correct the problem. Studies have shown that if these babies were to grow up healthy, they would be more likely to afford Nebraska grain.

The ABC program 20/20 put together a special on this problem. It’s available to help show the story and Kiwanis speakers are also available to help tell the story. A walkathon is planned on the morning of May 6, 2000 at the Lincoln Saline Wetlands Nature Center in West Point.

See FIVE CENTS on page 11
bell peppers. On bushy, compact plants, peppers turn color from ivory to pink and red as they mature. The peppers are sweet at any color, "Blushing Beauty" peppers can be harvested in 72 to 75 days from transplanting. The compact plant reaches a mature height of about 18 inches and is attractive when grown in patio containers. The multiple disease tolerances lengthen plant life for a higher yield of ivory, pink or red sweet peppers.

**Sunflower** "Soraya" "Soraya" is the first sunflower in All America Selection (AAS) history to earn an AAS Award. One of the distinct qualities is the orange petals, most sunflowers have golden petals. "Soraya" sunflowers are eye catching because of the orange petals with a chocolate brown center. The plants are branching and vigorous producing 4 to 6 inches blooms on long stems perfect for cut flowers. "Soraya" will flower in 80 to 90 days from sowing seed. Plants are self supporting and may attain a height of five to six feet in the full sun garden. "Soraya" flowers can produce seed for birds, if left on the plants to mature.

**Vinca "Stardust Orchid"** This lovely plant has 1/2 inch blooms, which are placed above glossy, dark green foliage. "Stardust Orchid" is relatively pest resistant, heat and drought tolerant. When grown in full sunflower, "Stardust Del Sol" thrives in summer heat and humidity and will attain a mature height of two to three feet. The single, orange daisy flowers are two to three inches across. They are excellent cut flowers and may attract butterflies. Easy to grow from seed or plants. "Stardust Del Sol" is carefree in the garden. You will find the best performance for this plant in a full sun garden. (MIM)

**Tithonia "Fiesta Del Sol"** The first dwarf Mexican sunflower, "Fiesta Del Sol" thrives in summer heat and humidity and will attain a mature height of two to three feet. The single, orange daisy flowers are two to three inches across. They are excellent cut flowers and may attract butterflies. Easy to grow from seed or plants. "Fiesta Del Sol" is carefree in the garden. You will find the best performance for this plant in a full sun garden. (MIM)

**DICR continued from page 5**

**Burr Oak**

**Chesnut Oak**

**Sunmap**

**Locus**

**Perennials**

**Hedge Rose**

**Virginia Rose**

**Nannbery**

**Yarrow**

**Stonecrop**

**Hollyhock**

**Alyssum**

**Pansy**

**Wormwood, Mugwort**

**Butterfly Milkweed**

**False Indigo**

**Butterfly Milkweed**

**Wormwood, Mugwort**

**Alyssum**

**Stonecrop**

**Yarrow**

**Nannyberry**

**Virginia Rose**

**Locust**

**AG WEEK continued from page 10**

6th Winter wheat production, 1998–$8,200,000 bushels

Commercial hog slaughter, 1998–6,283,300 head

Oil variety sunflower production, 1997–97,120,000 lbs.

Cash receipts from all crops, 1997–$4,750,000

All sunflower production, 1998–81,020,000 lbs.

Harvested acres of principal crops, 1998–18,565,000 acres

7th Soybean production, 1998–165,000,000 bushels

More facts:

- Production agriculture contributes more than $9 billion to Nebraska’s economy each year.
- One of every four Nebraskans depends upon agriculture for employment.
- Every dollar in ag exports generates $1.59 in economic activities such as transportation, financing, warehousing and production. Nebraska’s $3.3 billion in ag exports translates into more than $5 billion in additional economic activity each year.
- Nebraska has 55,000 farms and ranches; the average operation consists of 844 acres; average net income per farm ranged from $30,000-$60,000 during the last four years.
- Over 40% of the feed grains grown in Nebraska are fed to livestock in this state.
- Nebraska’s livestock industry accounts for approximately 60% of the state’s total agricultural receipts each year.
- Three out of four Nebraska farms have livestock or poultry operations.
- One American farmer/rancher produces enough food for 129 people—95 in the U.S. and 34 abroad.
- Of every dollar spent on food the farm value is $2.1: $37 goes to labor used by manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers. The remaining $4.2 pays for marketing costs such as packaging, transportation and advertising.
- In 1998, Nebraska’s commercial banks loaned $5.4 million to finance ag production and real estate. Those loans involved 98.7% of Nebraska banks.
- Nebraska’s Natural Resource
  - Nebraska’s farms and ranches utilize 46.4 million acres—96% of the state’s total land area.
  - Nebraska is fortunate to have aquifers below it, making it possible to irrigate 8.1 million acres of cropland. If poured over the surface of the state, the water in those aquifers would have a depth of 37.9 feet.
  - Nearly 24,000 miles of rivers and streams add to Nebraska’s boundless natural resources.
  - There are nearly 23 million acres of rangeland and pastureland in Nebraska—half of which are in the Sandhills. (GB)

Source: Nebraska Agriculture

**FAC'TCARD** A cooperative effort of the Nebraska AgRelations Council, Nebraska Bankers Association, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, February, 1999.

**Applications:** Nebraska Pioneer Farm Family Award applications can be obtained by contacting:

- Leon Meyer, CFE, Lancaster County Ag Society, Inc.
- (402) 441-6545

Applications for this year’s recognition are due May 1, 2000. (GB)

**March 2000**

Page 11
their colony in search for food. Researchers are looking for baits that will control carpenter ants, but, because carpenter ants eat such a wide variety of foods, researchers have not had very good success controlling colonies with baits. Carpenter ant colonies can be outdoors in hollow trees, logs, posts, landscaping timbers or inside in the structural wood of houses. The most successful colonies are found in wood that is moist. To create their galleries, the ants chisel out the softer part of the wood with their mouthparts and produce a coarse sawdust-like material, and push it out of the colony. Small piles of sawdust are evidence of carpenter ants. In addition to sawdust, there may be other debris from ter ants. In addition to sawdust, there is often wood shavings and other organic material that will control carpenter ants, but, because carpenter ants eat such a wide variety of foods, researchers have not had very good success controlling colonies with baits. Carpenter ant colonies can be outdoors in hollow trees, logs, posts, landscaping timbers or inside in the structural wood of houses. The most successful colonies are found in wood that is moist. To create their galleries, the ants chisel out the softer part of the wood with their mouthparts and produce a coarse sawdust-like material, and push it out of the colony. Small piles of sawdust are evidence of carpenter ants. In addition to sawdust, there may be other debris from the nest, including bits of soil, dead ants and insect parts. Control

The secret to controlling carpenter ants is find the nest and treat it. Finding the colony can be difficult. Clues that may help you are finding small piles of sawdust or swarming ants. Following the movements of workers, usually in the early morning hours, can also help locate the colony. Spraying individual ants with insecticides will not be effective because the colony will continue to produce more workers. Once the colony is found, the carpenter ant problem can be solved. There is such a high affinity between carpenter ants and moisture, it is smart to fix a moisture problem before treating with an insecticide. In some cases, replacing wet wood and moisture problem before treating with an insecticide. In some cases, replacing wet wood and fixing the water problem will solve the problem without having to use any insecticides. In situations where there doesn’t seem to be a moisture problem, insecticides can be injected into wall voids. For more information about carpenter ants, call 441-7180 and ask for fact sheet 04-97, Carpenter Ants (BPO)