New Year Resolutions

LDeane Jha
Loene Bartos
Extension Educators

This year I resolve—to visit nursing homes, pick up trash in a park, lead a 4-H club, maybe even take part in community government or my neighborhood association. Good for you. Please do all of them. While all of these are vital and important roles, how about taking those resolutions a step further. Resolve to care for all youth in the community by being a role model and mentor. Being a parent is not a criteria. Grandparents, uncles, aunts, next-door neighbors, teachers, youth group leaders, retirees, single college students—in other words—everyone can make a difference. Think back to your favorite memories of people, places, events, traditions and moments of caring. They probably don’t include time spent in front of a computer or TV. The best memories invariably include interactions with people you loved, admired or looked to for support.

In his book, *7 Things Kids Never Forget*, Don Rose offers some hints on how we might reach out to youth in significant ways during the coming year. Here is his list of seven things kids never forget.

1. **Kids never forget people who care.** Do you remember the special times when a parent or teacher helped you with a science project, when a favorite aunt took you to a concert, when you built a dog house with your adopted “grandfather” from next door, or perhaps when you worked with others on a community service project. These are all instances of people reaching out and caring.

2. **Kids never forget the stories they hear.** An aunt’s or uncle’s tale of growing up, or even a story told around a camp fire with a 4-H or Boy Scout leader can bring back good memories and chuckles. Stories read to children in daycare centers or at school can be extra special because of the person doing the reading. Encourage kids to tell you their favorite story.

3. **Kids never forget failure.** Every broken promise, every “I told-you-so,” and even personal failure has an upside down pain. Helping children learn how to fail and to learn from failure is best accomplished with few words and without questions. Instead of criticism, use your heart, ears and eyes and even a hug. Plan a “we messed up” celebration where everybody shares one “messed-up” memory. Serve a “messed up” cake.

4. **Kids never forget crisis time.** Kids need parents and other caring adults to coach them through crisis situations. They do not need to be rescued. Listen while they discuss possible solutions and encourage them as they make good decisions and take action.

5. **Kids never forget rules.** Kids may stretch, bend or twist the rules while learning about growing up, but the most valuable time as a caring adult is spent doing three things: teaching them the rules, enforcing them and modeling expected behavior.

6. **Kids never forget the milestones of growing up.** With each milestone, kids get closer to adulthood and life gets more complex. Celebrate those milestones along the way. Celebrate the first day of school, the first overnight away from home, the first lost tooth, birthdays, special religious traditions, etc. Make your own “good news” headlines to celebrate accomplishments. Keep snapshots, make scrapbooks, write notes and keep journals as a way of remembering important events, then share them with kids.

7. **Kids never forget the traditions of home.** Celebrating special times like birthdays, holidays, and vacations all have symbolic content. If children you know don’t typically have special opportunities, invite their families to join yours, ask other children to share vacations with you. Recognize things in each family that are special and unique for their family. To create traditions are the glue that holds families together from generation to generation and extended family can help keep those traditions alive in families experiencing distress.

Remind all kids that you appreciate them, praise them when they do things well, recognize the good things they do. Have you ever written a note to youth featured in a newspaper article congratulating them on a job well done? Volunteer to read to children in school, at daycares, in after-school programs. Become a mentor for Teammates or a leader for a 4-H club or other youth organization, learn about Character Counts! and help at camps and other activities. Support kids by attending their plays, dance recitals, concerts, sports events. Talk to them, listen to them, be their friend. Always behave as if you are loved, admired or looked to for support. You are. At the end of a lengthy discussion on how adolescents best help youth avoid risky behaviors, Dr. Carol Cassell, director of the Teen Pregnancy Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said that her best answer to that question was easily summed up in one word, “love.” Show kids, all kids, that you love them and value them.

This year I resolve—to be a great role model, to be involved in my community, to mentor a child in my neighborhood, to remember actions speak louder than words. When you remember others, you will be remembered and your community will be enriched.

Happy New Year!
Ten steps to good gardening

A good garden just does not happen, it has to be planned. The following suggestions should help establish attractive and productive garden. An understanding of crop needs and cultural practices will also help assure gardening success this coming season.

1. Garden site. Choose a sunny location with good air and water drainage. At least 8 hours of sunlight will produce the best vegetables. Leaf and cole crops may get by with slightly less sun in partial shaded areas. Good air circulation will keep the foliage dry and help reduce chances of disease. Water drainage is essential for strong root growth. Avoid windy locations that can damage and dry plants. Never plant a garden near a black walnut tree, it produces naturally occurring chemicals to inhibit growth of nearby plants.

2. Crop rotation. Try to rotate crops around the garden plot. Some soil borne diseases and insects are most serious when the same or related crops are grown in the same area or row each year.

3. Soil fertility and pH. Fertilize the soil according to soil test results. A soil pH between 6.2 and 6.8 will support most vegetable crops. Over fertilization can be as harmful as under treatment. Too much nitrogen will reduce leaf and stem growth at the expense of flower production. Weak or stressed plants are more susceptible to insect and disease attack.

4. Resistant varieties. Use resistant varieties when available and when they suit specific gardening needs. Information on resistance is often printed on the seed packet.

5. Good quality seed and transplants. Buy seed from a reputable seed company. Transplants are used make certain plants are grown from disease free seed. Also check transplants for disease and pests.

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. (MIM)

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Winter care of houseplants

Winter weather adversely affects growing conditions for houseplants. Proper care during the winter months can help insure the health of houseplants. Most houseplants grow well with daytime temperatures of 65 to 75° F and nighttime temperatures of 60 to 65°F. Temperatures below 50°F or rapid temperature fluctuations can cause damage to houseplants.

Keep houseplants away from cold 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%. Unfortunately, the relative humidity found in many homes during the winter months may be only 10 to 20%, 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 also increase the relative humidity around houseplants. Group plants together. The nitro- gen evaporation from the potting 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 above the water level. Misting houseplants is not an effective method to raise relative humidity. Misting 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 water-
Dispersal of blackbirds, crows and starlings from urban roosts

Ron Johnson
Extension Wildlife Specialist
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Large bird roosts can cause:
• Odor, noise, filth
• Droppings damage equipment
• Damage to trees
• Health concerns—Histoplasmosis: The soil in older roosts may harbor fungal spores from this human respiratory disease. Exposure is most likely when dry roost debris is disturbed.

Prevention and Control:

Vegetation management:
• Large bird roosts can cause: disturbance with heavy equipment. The habitat has also been success-
tively dispersed through the roost to remove saplings in Nebraska. In dense cedar woodlots in Nebraska, bird bombs—spray devices with expanded triggers, work better than a single barrel. möns. Beating on tin sheets or sprinklers mounted in the roost stimuli. Spraying birds with water from a hose or from sprinklers mounted in the roost helps in some situa-
tions. Beating on tin sheets or barrels also scares birds. A combination of several scare techniques used together works better than a single technique. Vary the location, intensity and type of scare device to increase effectiveness.
• Prior to dispersal efforts, consider alerting public officials and neighbors as appropriate to the problem and about the purpose of the dispersal. Consider also where dispersing birds might go.

AMERICAN CROW Dispersal:
• American consumers and industry throw away enough aluminum to rebuild our entire commercial airfleet every three months.
• Every year, 500,000 trees are used to produce the two-thirds of newspapers that aren't recycled.

We throw away enough glass bottles and jars to fill the 1,350-foot twin towers of New York's World Trade Center every two weeks.
• Americans go through 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour, only a small percentage of which are re-cycled.
• Every year we dispose of 24 million tons of leaves and grass clippings, which could be composted to conserve landfill space.
• We throw away enough iron and steel to completely supply all the nation's automakers.
• We throw away enough office and writing paper annually to build a wall twenty feet high stretching from Los Angeles to New York City.

Source: House of Pest Control, Malis, 7th Edition

Treatures in the trash

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Oil and the Oil Spill

Using an utter plop as the central character, Oliver and the Oil Spill is a touching story about a major oil spill. We become endeared to Oliver as he leads a happy life of learning from his mother about dining for food and keeping his fur clean. But tragedy strikes as the animals notice the water feels strange one day, and they see other birds and animals dying all around them. The Wildlife Rescue Center steps in to help Oliver, but it is too late for his mother.

This sensitive and beautiful book is made even more special by the fact that Aruna Chandrasekhar was only nine years old when she wrote and illustrated it. She has done a superb job of helping children understand the terrible effect of oil through the eyes of a baby animal. Her report on the Exxon Valdez spill at the conclusion of the book helps answer many questions for children who want to know if the story is true.

The Moonlight Hide & Seek Club

The Moonlight Hide & Seek Club sends a strong message about pollution and what to do about it. A group of children notice that the moon is sick because of what people are doing to the Earth. Using non-toxic materials, they work as hard as they can to clean it up. When the moon rises only part way into the sky, the children devise ways to help clean up Earth so that Moon can become stronger. They think of things such as riding bicycles, cleaning up their rooms, writing letters against polluting factories and not using dangerous cleaners.

Elwin and Paula have created a book with the tone of a native legend which, enhanced by Henkes’s beautiful illustrations, gives readers a story for retelling and some ideas for action. All of the suggestions can be acted upon by children of any age. (ALH)
**Attention land owners and renters**

Lancaster County Extension will be hosting two workshops on January 13 especially designed for people involved in farm land rental arrangements. People may face unprecedented pressures and may not have enough time and resources to reflect on how to move forward. This new technology in farming has occurred at a dizzying rate in recent years. Nebraskans have welcomed advanced genetics and reduced tillage methods have shifted the way farmers plant and have traditionally been shared by landlords and tenants. On the positive side, crop advisors continue to trend upward and the long-term productivity of the land is being preserved by utilizing better conservation methods.

**Lancaster County Extension will be hosting two workshops on January 13 especially designed for people involved in farm land rental arrangements.**

The trend, in recent years, has been to move away from cash share rental arrangements and into fixed cash rental arrangements. This shift has been partly because it has been difficult for landowners to keep up with changing technology. When bills come in for herbicides, fertilizers, etc., that are unfamiliar, some landowners are naturally concerned about the legitimacy of the expense or whether more economical methods could have been used to achieve the same result. In other cases, the original landowner may no longer be involved with managing the property and others, who are less familiar with farming, have to live up to these duties. In many cases, it has become easier for landlords and tenants alike to give up any leaking fault. Cash rent has created a shift in the risk exposure by the two parties involved in the lease arrangement. With cash rent, the tenant bears all of the production and commodity price risk. Depressed commodity prices can result in a cash shortage for many tenants. Lenders are requiring a change from cash to share rental arrangements to reduce risk exposure.

This workshop is geared for the landlord who is currently involved in (or considering) crop share rental arrangements. This session, taught by extension crop production specialists, will be presented at a very basic level to help landowners understand crop production expenses. Principles of soil fertility, herbicides, genetics, and tillage methods will be discussed. Guidelines will be presented showing what to expect per acre as a normal or usual expense. Each participant will receive reference materials and recommendations and estimated costs of herbicides, seed and the importance of good fertility, according to university recommendations. (TD)

**Learn about soil fertility/ crop nutrient needs in your spare time**

Farmers in Lancaster County now have an opportunity to study soils and soil fertility at home. The University of Nebraska Extension is offering a Soils Home Study Course to cover soil and fertilizer basics. Producers who helped pilot the first draft praised the course for providing useful information to help them make informed fertilizer decisions.

**Grain stubble rental rates**

Considering the cost to the land owner, the most obvious cost is associated with the loss of plant residues. Plant residues contain nutrients which other- wise would have been recycled by microorganisms in the soil and utilized by future crops. These nutrients therefore might not be available to the next crop. A “fair” rental rate, it would seem, is a rate that more than covers the land owner’s costs (and therefore contributes to his income stream from the crop) without exceed- ing the value of the benefits to the animal owner.

**Farm tractor, combine fires cost millions annually**

Pay close attention to the machine and get organized and follow all instructions and schedules for lubrication and routine maintenance. Repair or replace any leaking fuel or oil lines, fittings, hoses, fittings or metal lines. Combine and tractor fires can be prevented by taking some simple steps. The most common source is exhaust system surfaces that contact any flammable material. Make sure your exhaust system including the manifold, muffler and turbo charger are in good condition.
Controlling eastern redcedar

Many methods have been explored or used to control eastern redcedar. These include prescribed burn, herbicide application and cutting. All methods have drawbacks when used alone.

Prescribed burn is inexpensive and effective on most smaller trees. However, its effectiveness declines as tree size increases. Adequate fire fuel (usuall last year’s dead grass) is necessary to ensure satisfactory results. Safety also is a concern since many property owners lack experience with fire and the equipment required to conduct burns. Foliar sprays and broadcast soil applications of herbicides have been ineffective against eastern redcedar. The preferred treatment method is an application of undiluted Tordon 22K liquid to the soil under individual trees. Rates of three or four milliliters per three feet of tree height. This method minimizes the amount of herbicide used and reduces exposure to non-target species. However, it is still time consuming and expensive when used on dense infestations or large tracts. Effectiveness also varies on larger trees and label directions recommend against use on trees more than 15 feet tall. Cutting is even more time consuming than herbicide application. It is effective because eastern redcedar is a non-sprouter. Trees cut below the lowest foliage will not regrow. Larger trees require a chain saw or tractor-mounted teeth less than three feet tall can be quickly cut with hand shears. (DJ)

Q. What is the best way to remove snow from a long driveway?

Suggestion A: Don’t get a four-wheel drive pickup with a snowplow. The snowplow on the front of the truck does nothing but move a bit of snow, sag the front springs, require large outlays of cash for the hydraulics, tire chains, funky lights and finally requires you to get the kit for another truck in five years when you trade in the old model.

Suggestion B: An alternative is to acquire a small tractor (20 - 30 HP) with a PTO and 3 pt. hitch, and attach a 3pth snowblower. The blower lets you snow (and avoid building banks that cause drifting). A 2000 tractor with a 5.5 foot snowblower to clear your driveway may be the answer. Plowing is only useful if you can avoid building banks that will drift in the next time the snow blows.

Suggestion C: A 3-point grader blade behind a tractor works pretty well, as long as the blade can be angled enough. With too much snowfall, you can run out of space to plow the snow (to due to the previously plowed snow), at which time you would either need a snowblower or a loader to move the excess plowed snow further off the road. (DJ)

Rural living clinics scheduled

Lancaster County Extension will be hosting a Rural Living Clinic for people who are considering a move to the country or have recently moved and are still learning about independent living. The clinic is scheduled for Saturday, January 30 at the Extension Conference Center from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Some of the topics covered in this Clinic will: (1) Learning what motivates people to want to move to the country, what you need to know about the location (flood plain, access rights, building codes, security issues, etc.), waste management, water supply, costs of independent living (living with reduced public services) and freedoms and restrictions of rural living compared to living within a municipality. There will be a demonstration over the lunch hour showing how to access information at the Extension office including; print publications, and electronic information via web pages and the Nufacts audio information retrieval system.

Registration is limited. A registration fee of $15 per person is required to reserve a place in the meeting. Call the extension office (402) 441-7180, to request a registration form. Registration fee covers handout materials, refreshments and noon lunch.

A second clinic is planned for March 13, which will address the unique needs of people currently living in the country. Watch for agenda details in next month’s newsletter. (TD)

Use information at hand for better marketing, more profit

Producers who can efficiently use market intelligence and strategically update the total farm or ranch marketing plan have a better chance of weathering low commodity prices. Some producers have large amounts of data but lack the ability to use it strategically to make marketing decisions. Others have little data but seem to use it in their favor to turn large losses into profits.

What’s right for one individual might not work for another, but knowing the numbers and distribution of finished livestock weights, can be used to assist in scheduling actual marketings and to monitor significant changes in breeding herd performance. In most situations, the producer will try to reduce variations among marketed livestock by weekly selection in order to increase returns. The quality and quantity of data will increase in the future as new techniques, technologies and means of inexpensive animal identification evolve. As farm/ranch planning and computing increases, so will the need for a total farm or ranch marketing management plan.

Management for marketing and for production may be independent, but should be considered jointly. The plans and methods for one could effect changes of another, such as rations and timing of marketing.

Most operations are some-what inflexible with respect to changing schedules and the terminal marketing stage. However, in some situations, different genetics, changing rations, or shipping time, facility design or re-design will change the marketing pattern. Information on the effect of such changes can be very valuable in estimating the profit foregone by not making the changes.

A marketing management plan tailored for the individual producer or operation, along with improved production and management standards and better record keeping, can potentially lower costs and improve profit- ability.

Source: Allen Wellman, Ph.D., agricultural economist, NUI/NAR (WS)
Meal time—family time

Let ALL family members help!

Who will go shopping? What should we serve?
Who does the dishes? What groceries do we need?
Who sets the table? Who cleans off the table?

Quick Meal Ideas
• Cook and toss pasta with vegetables or leftover meat and canned spaghetti sauce.
• Bake potatoes and top with broccoli, cheese, chili or cottage cheese.
• Use leftover vegetables and meats in stir-frys, salad, omelets and sandwiches.
• Serve tortillas filled with canned black beans, salsa and cheese.
• Stuff a pita pocket with tuna and vegetable salad.
• Cook oatmeal according to directions and stir in 1/2 cup applesauce.
• On top of warm cooked pancakes, thinly spread peanut butter and jelly and roll up.
• Make English muffin pizzas with cooked hamburger, veggies, sauce and cheese.

Source: Kansas State University Cooperative Extension, Family Nutrition Program. (MB)

Your information center... around the clock

NUFACtS NUFACtS offers information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the Lincoln area call 441- 7188; for the rest of Nebraska call 1-800-832-5441. When directed, enter the 3-digit number of the message you wish to hear.

307 Reducing Sodium In Your Diet 356 The Vegetable Group 357 Using the “Nutrition Facts” Section on Food Labels and many more...

Nutrition and Food Safety Web Site
Visit our internet web site at: http://www.ianr.unl.edu/ianr/lanco/family/safety.htm

FREE monthly FoodTalk e-mail newsletter
To be added to the mailing list, e-mail Alice Henneman at AHENNEMAN1@UNL.EDU

Diabetes Study Course
Call Alice Henneman (441- 7180) for more information.

Meet that 5 A Day resolution with these ideas for the new year...

A recent nationwide survey asked Americans what keeps them from eating more fruits and vegetables in the winter. Responses showed:
#1 A tendency to fill up on other types of food that are around the house during the holidays was the most frequent response (48 percent).
#2 Limited selection of fresh fruits and vegetables in the winter months (36 percent).
#3 Crying fruits and veg- etables less during the winter (28 percent).
Here are some 5 A Day tips from the National Cancer Institute for easy, hearty winter dining:
For Every Day Meals:

• Roast 3 cups of your favorite winter vegetables with some minced garlic, one tea- spoon of olive oil and a sprinkle of salt and pepper at 400 degrees F until tender. Serve hot, or serve cool with a shot of bal- samic vinegar. This is an easy way to use winter root veg- etables such as carrots, parsnips, potatoes and rutabaga.

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Food & Fitness

Focus on Food
Alice Henneman, RD, LMTN, Extension Educator

Q: Do you need to store honey in the refrigerator? A: No. Store honey at room temperature. For best quality, plan to use in about a year.

Q: What can I do if my honey turns cloudy? A: If honey turns cloudy or crystallizes, the National Honey Board recommends that you place the jar in warm water and stir until the crystals dissolve.

Q: Is there any easy way to clean measuring cups when cooking with honey? A: For easy removal, the NHB recommends coating the measuring cup with vegetable oil or non-stick cooking spray before measuring. (Ah)

Programs for your group
The following programs are available from our office for presenta- tion to your group. Call Alice Henneman at 441-7180 for more information. (Ah)

Cook It Quick! Do you enjoy delicious home-cooked meals? But, by day’s end, do you have little time and energy left for cooking? Learn about cooking techniques, kitchen equipment and time-saving strategies and recipe ideas that will help you enjoy tasty and nutritious home-cooking as well as being able to “cook it quick!”

Limitations: Minimum class size of 8, no maximum class size
Length: 45-60 minutes as desired by group
Cost: No charge; request that site provide small prize(s)

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.

Limitations: Can be used with any number. Call to schedule a time to check- out the Clean Hands Kit and receive your materials. Kit must be checked out and returned within the same week. Available on a first come, first served, basis.
Length: This activity takes about 20 or minutes, depending on the size and age of your group.
Cost: No charge.

Don’t Get “Bugged” by a Foodborne Illness Was it the fillet or a foodborne illness? Many of the symp- toms are the same, prevent “sick” days by playing a game that teaches about potentially harmful foods and food handling practices (you may be surprised!). “Don’t Get Bugged” by a Foodborne Illness is being used for food safety educa- tion in all 50 states, Canada and Australia and was recent winner of a national award from the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. A version for health fairs is also available.

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The January FCE Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 25, 1999, 1 p.m. at Old Chicago Restaurant, 826 P Street, in the Haymarket.

We will have lunch (dutch treat, order from the menu) followed by the business meeting. This will give members a chance to hear about the Haymarket area and shop in the specialty stores.

All FCE members are invited to attend. Make reservations by calling the extension office, 441-7180, by Friday, January 22. (LB)

Sign up for Money 2000+

The first edition of Money 2000+ News is out and will be sent to all who enroll in the Money 2000+ program. To enroll contact the Lancaster County Extension Office to get an enrollment packet. Return the enrollment form and the $15 annual enrollment fee. For more information contact LaDeane at 441-7180. (LJ)

When income drops and expenses keep coming

- Inventory what you have on hand for food and household supplies. Besides what you have on hand, you need to plan for emergency needs.
- Add any emergency needs such as clothing and personal supplies to your list—for example winter coat or shoes for a growing child. (Continued on page 11)

Parents forever

Three 2-hour workshops for divorced, separating and divorcing parents will be held March 11, 18 and 25. The purpose of the workshop is to support children experiencing conflict and divorce. Content includes:

- understanding how children experience grief and loss.
- understanding how loyalty conflicts hurt children.
- learning how to avoid putting your children in adult roles.
- establishing a business-like relationship with the other parent to care for your children.
- improving communication.
- understanding how to maintain a consistent environment between two homes.

This is a collaborative project of Lancaster County Extension, Lancaster/Lancaster Mediation Center and St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center. Cost is $30 per person (includes manual). Call LaDeane at 441-7180 for information. (LJ)

Now's the time to organize

Winter can bring on blizzards of snow and of paper! When incoming drops and expenses keep coming other potential risk factors, participants will be able to plan ways to build bone health. (LB)

The new year has rung in and I wish health, peace and happiness for all. Our January council meeting will be January 25. See article in this Nebline. We will meet for lunch, have our business meeting and browse through some of the lovely shops in the Haymarket. I do hope to see you there.

A reminder that our FCE clubs are collecting embroidery floss that we will send to India where the women will use the floss in creating beautiful stitchery they can sell to help support themselves and their family. Contributions will be accepted either through your local FCE club or you can drop it off at the extension office. It's time for our members to plan on submitting entries in our Cultural Arts Contest. The themes this year are photography, quilting and original heritage skills, which is an article made using early day skills not found in other categories such as quilting, scrimshaw, leather craft, tin punch, wheat weaving, basketry, dyeing, lace-making or other. Items need to be submitted by March 22. Let's make our goal for this year to increase our membership, get involved with our organization, make new friends and help our community. I know we can. Happy New Year's! (JW)

FCE News

The February FCE club and community leader training lesson is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 1, or 7 p.m. “Boning Up for Health: Reducing the Risk of Osteoporosis” will be presented by Alice Henneman, Extension Educator.

This session will identify factors that affect bone health throughout the life span. By identifying food sources of calcium and assessing other potential risk factors, participants will be able to plan ways to build bone health.

Anyone interested is invited to attend. Non-FCE members or groups should call Pam at 441-7180 to preregister so lesson packets can be prepared. (LB)

Laundry Tips

For the best cleaning action, clothes need room to move freely. Plus, there must be enough free water to carry away the soil easily. Fill the tub loosely, not completely. Cold rinse water saves energy, makes ironing easier and helps prevent permanent gross fabrics from wrinkling.

To save energy, always wash a full load or match the water level setting to the amount of clothes being washed. When washing small loads, use a lower water setting. (LB)

CARACTER COUNTS! Workshop

January 19, 1999
9:00 a.m.-12:00 Noon
Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherrycreek Road

This workshop will qualify participants to use the Character Counts! curriculum, a program designed to emphasize the need for character and to teach respect, responsibility, fairness, citizenship, caring and trustworthiness. Open to any interested adult or teen.
4-H & Youth

4-H Bulletin Board

- Lancaster County Cat Club Meeting—Thursday, January 14, 7 p.m. (ALH)
- Friday, January 15, 4-H Teen Council 4th and 5th grade Lock-In, 8 p.m.-8 a.m. (TK)
- Pet Pals Household Pets Club Meeting—Monday, January 25, 1999, 7 p.m. (ALH)
- Sunday, February 14, 4-H Teen Council Meeting, 3-5 p.m. All interested teens are invited. (TK)

4-H Achievement/Activities—what’s it all about?
4-H members will be recognized for their achievements Wednesday, February 2 at 7 p.m. County awards, Outstanding 4-H Members, 1 Date You and Meritorious Service awards will be presented.
There will also be presentations and displays of activities that have taken place throughout the year. Come see a demonstration, dance and song groups, judging, speeches and more!
This is an opportunity for all clubs, new or established, to see what opportunities 4-H has to offer and how members, leaders and parents can participate.
Come join the 4-H Council in recognizing 4-H members for a job well done. (TK)

4-H leader training
Monday, January 18 • 9:30 a.m. or 7 p.m.
New and reorganizing leaders are invited to attend this 4-H leader training to assist you in 4-H club management, activities and projects. Please bring your questions, concerns, success stories, frustrations and 4-H parents. (TK)

4-H club officer training
All 4-H members are encouraged to attend officer training. Everyone will discover how to conduct a meeting and use parliamentary leader training to assist you in 4-H club management, activities and projects. Please bring your questions, concerns, success stories, frustrations and 4-H parents. (TK)

Wanted! 4-H clubs
How is your 4-H club unique? The 4-H Ambassadors want to hear why your club is special, what sets your club apart from others and what makes 4-H a great experience. We will select a club to be featured each month in the Nebraska 4-H Bulletin Board.

Attention beef exhibitors
Deanna will need help setting up panels for the beef weigh-in on Friday, February 5. Help is also needed to nose print, tag and weigh on the 6th. If you are able to volunteer on either of these days, please call Deanna to set up a time. Your help will be greatly appreciated! (DK)

1999 4-H Calendar—
(all events located at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless otherwise noted)

January
5 4-H Council Meeting, ................................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
10 4-H Ambassador Meeting, ........................................................................................................ 7 p.m.
10 4-H Teen Council Meeting, .................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
11 CWF Meeting, ............................................................................................................................ 7 p.m.
11 Extension Board Meeting, ......................................................................................................... 7:30 p.m.
11 Shooting Sports Club Meeting, .................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
11 Speech VIPS Meeting, ................................................................................................................ 7 p.m.
13 Horse VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
14 Rabbit VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
14 Car Club Meeting, ...................................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
15-16 4-H Lock-in, .......................................................................................................................... 8 p.m.-8 a.m.
18 New 4-H Leader Training ............................................................................................................
19 Adult Character Counts’ Training, ......................................................................................... 9 a.m.-noon
19 Star City Rabbit Raisers Club Meeting, .................................................................................. 7 p.m.
21 Fair Board Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7:30 p.m.
25 Pet Pals 4-H Club Meeting, ..................................................................................................... 7 p.m.

February
2 4-H Achievement/Activities—What’s It All About? ................................................................
6 4-H Cattle Weigh Day, .............................................................................................................. 8-10 a.m.
8 4-H Council Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
8 Extension Board Meeting, ......................................................................................................... 7:30 p.m.
10 Horse VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
11 Cat Club Meeting, ..................................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
11 Rabbit VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
13 4-H Officer Training Workshop, ............................................................................................... 9:30-11 a.m.
13 Ambassadors Meeting, ............................................................................................................. 1:45 p.m.
14 Teen Council Meeting, .............................................................................................................. 3-5 p.m.
15 16 Star City Rabbit Raisers Club Meeting, ............................................................................... 7 p.m.
17 Fair Board Meeting, ................................................................................................................... 7:30 p.m.
20 PAK 10 Rabbit Judging/Clinic—Douglas County Extension Office, Omaha ..................... 6-7:30 p.m.
21 Speech Workshop, .................................................................................................................... 6-7:30 p.m.
22 New Leader Training, ................................................................................................................ 9:30 a.m. or 7 p.m.

March
2 4-H Council Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
5 Small Animal VIPS Meeting, ..................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
7 Rabbit Clinic .................................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
7 Rabbit Show, .................................................................................................................................. 7-9 p.m.
8 Extension Board Meeting, ......................................................................................................... 7:30 p.m.
10 Horse VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
11 Cat Club Meeting, ..................................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
11 Rabbit VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
12 Speech Contest Entries Due ......................................................................................................
13-14 Horser’ Around Clinic—Lincoln ............................................................................................
14 4-H Ambassador Meeting, ........................................................................................................... 1:45 p.m.
15 4-H Teen Council Meeting, ...................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
15 Leader Training, ........................................................................................................................ 9:30 a.m. or 7 p.m.
16 Star City Rabbit Raisers Club Meeting, .................................................................................... 7 p.m.
18-21 Kansas City Conference—Kansas City, MO ........................................................................
18 Fair Board Meeting, ................................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
20 4-H Record/Awards Books Workshop, ..................................................................................... 9:30 a.m.
21 Character Counts Training for Teens, ....................................................................................... 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
21 State 4-H BB/Air Tournament, ................................................................................................ 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
21 4-H Speech Contest—State Capital .......................................................................................... 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
25 earth wellness festival—Southeast Community College, Lincoln, NE, .............................. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
30 Be a Better Gardener Pre-registration Deadline ....................................................................
30 Turkey Order Deadline .............................................................................................................

April
1 4-H Action Team Applications Due ............................................................................................
2 Market Beef LD’s for State Fair, Ak-Sar-Ben & American Royal Due ................................. 7 p.m.
2 4-H Teen Council Meeting, ........................................................................................................ 7 p.m.
4 Rabbit VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
4 Character Contest Workshop 9-12 year olds .......................................................................... 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
11 4-H Ambassador Meeting, ........................................................................................................ 1:45 p.m.
11 Teen Council Meeting, ............................................................................................................. 3-5 p.m.
11 Character Counts Training for Teens, ....................................................................................... 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
11 State 4-H BB/Air Tournament, ................................................................................................ 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
11 4-H Speech Contest—State Capital .......................................................................................... 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
17 Swine Weigh-in, ........................................................................................................................ 9-11 a.m.
17 Kiwanis Carnival—State Fair Park ............................................................................................ 7 p.m.
17 PAK 10 Dairy Judging Contest—ARDC, Mead, NE .............................................................. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
17-18 Lancaster Event Center Benefit Horse Show ..................................................................... 7 p.m.
19 4-H Leader Workshop ................................................................................................................
24 Invitational Cat Workshop, ...................................................................................................... 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
25 4-H Music Contest—Dawes School, ....................................................................................... 2 p.m.
30 Turkey Day Deadline ................................................................................................................

May
1 Bio Career Workshop Applications Due .....................................................................................
1-2 Hunter Pride Shaggy Horse Show ............................................................................................
4 4-H Council Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
10 Livestock Booster Club Meeting, ............................................................................................. 7 p.m.
10 Extension Board Meeting, ......................................................................................................... 7:30 p.m.
10 How to Exhibit Leader Training, ............................................................................................. 9:30 a.m. or 7 p.m.
12 Horse VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
13 Cat Club Meeting, ..................................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
13 Rabbit VIPS Meeting, .................................................................................................................. 7 p.m.
14 Cat Club Meeting, ..................................................................................................................... 7 p.m.
15 Fair Board Meeting, ................................................................................................................... 7:30 p.m.
21 District & State Horse LD’s & Entries Due to Office Performance Lamb Tagging Day, ...... 8 a.m.-noon
29 Market Broiler Deadline .............................................................................................................
Mice

I think mice are nice. Their tails are long. Their teeth are white. They run about the house all night. Their nobby things they shouldn’t touch. And no one seems to like them much. But I think mice are nice.

The history of the mouse can be traced back to 4000 B.C. They are rodents, very hardy and fertile, and easy to raise. Wild mice are pests because they’ve domesticated or “tamed” mice are extremely valuable to humans in all kinds of research.

Mice should be kept in a good-sized wire cage because they will gnaw through a wooden one. Furnish the cage with branches, swings, perches and an exercise wheel. Line the bottom of the cage with sawdust, shredded newspaper or commercial cat litter and clean and disinfect the cage every other day. For a nest box, use an empty cottage cheese carton.

Mice will eat dry dog food, seeds, bread, breakfast cereals, rice, leafy foods and raw potatoes. Because mice are gnawing animals, you should provide a piece of wood to help keep their teeth in good condition. Supply fresh water in a gravity flow bottle.

To handle your mouse, place the animal carefully in one hand and stroke its head and back gently with the other hand. Never hold it too tightly. Once accustomed to you, a mouse will come to the front of the cage, climb on your hand or even explore your pocket.

Mice are great pocket pets. If they are kept under sanitary conditions, they will keep themselves spotlessly clean and well-groomed. They are friendly and sometimes you can teach them to do tricks. Think about getting a new pet! Mice are easy to care for and fun to have around.

(ALH)
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension presents

Learning to Lead

Scheduled in two sessions, the 1999 Family Community Leadership Institute will be conducted January 21-23 and February 25-27. At the institute, important leadership skills developed.

Cost of the six-day institute is $395. This includes four nights lodging, break snacks and four meals. The institute will be held at the Kearney, Nebraska Ramada Inn. Further information and registration forms are available by contacting this office. (GB)

Overview of Americans' finances

Three times each decade, the Federal Reserve System (in cooperation with the Department of Treasury) conducts a nation-wide survey of Americans’ personal finances. The 1995 survey is drawing to a close this month. Results will be published late this year or early in 2000.

You might be interested, however, in some key indicators from the previous survey taken in 1995. The 1995 data will be the primary basis for comparison when 1998 results start trickling in.

A. Households headed by someone 19 to 29 years old—$21,900 dollars. Keep in mind that even with fairly modest inflation in recent years, 1995 looks about six percent more dollars in 1998 to have the same purchasing power as in 1995.

B. In 1995, U.S. family income—under the definition here, we’re really talking about households because single people are not included—averaged $44,300 before taxes. However, because of very high incomes at the top of the scale, the median income was much lower, only $30,800. (At the median, half have higher incomes and half have lower incomes.) In general, incomes, whether measured relative to the average or the median, tend to rise through age 54. After that, income slowly drops as workers retire. Households headed by a person over 75 years of age have less income than those headed by someone under 35.

C. Education is strongly linked to income. In 1995, average incomes ranged from $21,900 in households headed by a person without a high school diploma to $70,400 where the household head holds a college degree.

D. Nearly twice as many people own their homes as rent. In 1995, average incomes ranged from $21,900 in households headed by a person without a high school diploma to $70,400 where the household head holds a college degree.

E. Like incomes, net worth varies widely among Americans. Moreover, the difference between average and median is even more than, or for that matter, income. In 1995, the average net worth was $205,900; the median, $56,400.

F. Over one-quarter (25.8 percent) of all households had a net worth of $10,000 or less in 1995. However, at the other end of the scale, 14.4 percent had a net worth of $250,000 or more. Only 36 percent of those in the lowest net-worth category were savers. This compared to 78 percent in the top category.

Lancaster extension staff recognized

Fittro to be honored at retirement party

Lenora Fittro, nutrition advisor with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program will be honored, Wednesday, January 20. The celebration is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., followed by a formal presentation at 11:30 a.m. Dr. Beth Birnstihl, Associate Dean of UN Cooperative Education will honor Lenora for her EFNEP career and 25 years of service to the University. Lenora has served her family career as a nutrition advisor, served two years as a program volunteer. As a family, the Fittros gathered supplies and gave them to the EFNEP staff to distribute to their families.

Salvation Army are some of the sites which Lenora has served through the years. Agency directors and co-workers have appreciated her dependability and quality programs. She has worked with some sites since beginning in Lancaster County.

Lenora lives in Weston with her husband Frank. They have four boys and five grandchil-

“Who on Earth Cares” video available

To increase the awareness and understanding of today’s dynamic Nebraska agricultural industry, the Nebraska Agriculture Relations Council (NAC), with the support of the University of Nebraska Foundation; and in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and the UNL Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, has sponsored production of a 16-1/2 minute video.

Produced by Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NETV), the video is designed for both rural and urban audiences. It takes viewers on a sweeping tour of Nebraska’s diverse agricultu continued on page 12

Fittro has been stopped in the grocery store many times by former clients who tell her they are still using the information she provided them years ago. Through the years, EFNEP has taught families how to access services such as Food Stamps, WIC, TANF, Commodity Foods, Head Start, food pantries, etc. During those years, EFNEP was one of the few educational agencies delivering programs in homes.

Carol Youkum Family Resource Center, Malone Center, Willard Center, People’s City Mission, St. Monica’s, and the Salvation Army are some of the sites which Lenora has served through the years. Agency directors and co-workers have appreciated her dependability and quality programs. She has worked with some sites since beginning in Lancaster County.

Lenora lives in Weston with her husband Frank. They have four boys and five grandchild-

Lenora teaches Carol Youkum Center families how to save money by cutting and repackaging a whole uncooked turkey for future meals.
Ten steps to good gardening
continued from page 2

7. Mulch. Consider using black plastic to control moisture loss and weeds for warm season crops like tomatoes, peppers and vine crops. All porous mulches like straw, leaves or compost will give the same mulching results as black plastic, except they will lower the soil temperature or at least prevent it from increasing as the days warm up in the spring. Such materials can be left on for warm season crops later in the season. They present no problem to the next season's crops after the seedlings emerge.

8. Compost. Work compost into the soil as soon as possible after the final harvest. This will promote decomposition of the organic matter. If the plant material is diseased, it is better to dig and compost and not add it to the compost pile. This reduces the chance of disease carryover to the next season's crops, especially with soil borne diseases.

Composting plant material will produce a usable product for the next year's gardening season. Elevated temperatures in the compost pile will kill many weed seeds and leaf blights.

9. Control weeds. Perennial weeds near garden often harbor insects, viruses and disease in the spring. Dense weeds in the garden also rob crops of moisture, light and nutrients. Eliminate young weeds with shallow cultivation. Never allow weeds to grow to flower and set seed, because this will only keep the cycle of weed reproduction going. Avoid using herbicides for weed control in the home garden.

10. Control disease and insects. There are many fungi- cides and insecticides available to control pests in the garden. The products may be purchased separately or combined as a general purpose mixture. It is very important to first accurately identify the problem and then select the correct pesticide to control that problem. Most materials are specific for what you are trying to control and timing of the application in relation to the problem is also critical. (MMM)

Grain stubble rental rates
continued from page 4

additional expense and manage- ment to control. The only advantage of the value of the plant nutrients that are removed by grazing? If the land is being grazed, the balance of the nitrogen, nitrogen and other minerals contained in the leaves and stubble will be utilized for animal growth and maintenance and therefore are lost from the plant/soil system. An advantage to grazing over machine harvest- ing forage is that much of the nutrient content in the stover is returned to the field in the manure.

It is this author’s opinion that when the value of the nutrients lost by grazing stubble is present in the field, in general, the value of the nutrients lost is generally offset by the benefit of reducing animal feed costs. However, the value of the nutrients lost by grazing stubble is therefore not a big factor when setting a fair rental rate. The major consideration is the value of the stover as a marketable product to be sold and not the amount of the income from the crop. The “fair” rental rate therefore basing the rental rates whatever the market will bear.

A final consideration must be made to consider the value of the stover that can be quite variable in terms of pounds of stover per acre and in terms of the amount of grain left in the field. There can also be much variability on how much wildlife utilize the residues that are present in the fields due to weather factors. In addition, the condition of the fence and the availability of livestock can vary greatly from field to field, making some fields more desirable than others from the renters point of view.

Given the variability between fields and weather conditions, probably the fairest way to rent stover fields is to pay on a head-per-day basis. That way, the amount the renter receives is directly related to the amount of feed that is available and on the openness of the weather. Surveys have been conducted by university farm management specialists to determine the prevalent rental rates for stubble grazing. The recent survey was done five years ago. In the 1993 survey, the average rate for six southeast Nebraska counties was $0.27 per head per day. At $0.37 per head per day, the monthly rate would be $8.10 per full grown cow or the equivalent. This rate is quite favorable, with summer pasture rental rates of $21.70 per animal unit month (1000 lb cow with calf at side) making stubble grazing probably the least expensive feed source all year for the animal owner. (TD)

Meet that A 5 Day resolution with these ideas...
continued from page 6

• Add a can of drained chickpeas or other beans to a great salad. Simple, done, even if you’re short on time.
• Check out the ever- expanding frozen vegetable section of the supermarket for dinner ideas. Try baby peas or baby carrots, or carrots with peas.
• Add canned, drained fruit to flavored gelatin. It’s a classic.
• Make an edible appetizer. Top on top of pasta, brown rice, or couscous, and add a sprinkle of Parmesan or low-fat feta cheese.
• Make an easy fruit sauce for meat by simmering fresh or canned fruit with lemon juice and sugar.
• Freeze grapefruit or orange slices (sprinkled with lemon juice to prevent browning), and serve in individual bowls.
• Make a quick, guilt-free 5 A Day snack.
For Snacks and Drinks:
- Try some low-sodium vegetable juice with a shot of hot sauce, a sprig of celery and a sprinkle of pepper for a non-alcoholic party alternative.
- Try a bowl of red and green apple slices (sprinkled with lemon juice to prevent browning), served alongside low-fat cottage cheese topped with cinnamon, for dipping. It might help you keep away from high-fat holiday leftovers.
- Freeze grapefruit or pineapple juice in an ice-cube tray, and use these tangy cubes to add zip to a pitcher of orange juice. Or make cranberry cubes for a pitcher of apple juice.
For Dessert:
- Cook up on a dark, winter evening by drinking warm apple cider with mulling spices. (Mulling spices are available in the spice section of your grocery store; otherwise, simply add cinnamon and nutmeg.)
- Make a simple fruit compote 5 A Day Pecan Melba. In the blender, puree a package of frozen raspberries with 2 teaspoons vanilla extract, strain seeds, if desired. Place canned peach halves in a bowl, warm in the microwave for 30 seconds, and serve in individual bowls with low-fat vanilla yogurt and the cold raspberry sauce.
- Alternate drained canned fruit and low-fat yogurt in a tall, iced glass for a low-fat parfait.

When income drops and expenses keep coming
continued from page 7

- Develop a list of resources such as the food bank or clothing closet. Investigate eligibility requirements for public and private assistance and any reduced school lunches and heating assistance. Be sure to add recycling and resale stores as potential places to help meet emergency needs.

- Arrange for ways to earn more income. Do you have assets to rent or sell? Do you have a skill you could sell? Do sell or rent something. consider community bulletin boards, radio call-in shows, want ads in the “Help Wanted” sections of newspapers.
- Arrange to continue health insurance coverage. In times of stress, health insurance is even more important.
- Negotiate to lower the cost of vehicle insurance. Drop unnec- essary coverage. Arrange smaller but more frequent payments. Send the credit cards away. Try not to use them unless necessary. If you can’t make the minimum payment on a credit card, call the company and arrange for reduced payments. Send a reduced payment (as long as it’s something) keeps you off the delinquent list of some credit card companies.

Bobby Grisso, Ph.D., biological systems engineering

Winter care of houseplants
continued from page 2

needing frequent watering and feeding. Fertilizers are available in a wide variety of materials, including powdered, granulated, liquid and slow-release formulas. There are many fungi- cides and insecticides available to control pests in the garden. The products may be purchased separately or combined as a general purpose mixture. It is very important to first accurately identify the problem and then select the correct pesticide to control that problem. Most materials are specific for what you are trying to control and timing of the application in relation to the problem is also critical. (MMM)

Farm tractor, combine fires cost millions annually
continued from page 7

- If you can’t make the minimum payment on a credit card, call the company and arrange for reduced payments. Sending a reduced payment (as long as it’s something) keeps you off the delinquent list of some credit card companies.

- Local Cooperative Extension office has additional information on cutting family living costs. Ask for the NEbFact series on “Cutting Family Living Expenses.” (LJ)

- Avoid using herbicides for weed control in the home garden.
- Avoid using herbi- 

- Dust and grease often accumulate on the leaves of houseplants. The best way to protect your property is a fully charged 10-pound ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher. Keep one mounted in the cab, and one where it can be reached from the ground. Check your extinguishers periodically, paying special attention to the pressure gauge.

- Approach any fire with extreme caution. Even a small fire can flare up dramatically as doores, hatches or other areas are opened. These types of fires are extremely dangerous when liquid fuels are involved. If possible, use the extinguisher’s flexible hose to shout the chemical from a safe distance at the base of any flames seen.

- Source: Bobby Grisso, Ph.D., biological systems engineering specialist, NU/IANR (WS)

- Source: Bobby Grisso, Ph.D., biological systems engineering specialist, NU/IANR (WS)