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Strong families—strong futures

LaDeane Jha
Extension Educator

Have you ever wondered what qualities successful, strong families share? What is it that makes some families strong and others fragile? Why do some families stay together and others fall apart? Researchers, John DeFrain and Nick Stinnett from the University of Nebraska, have found some answers to those questions through interviewing over 3,000 families. Strong families share six major qualities: commitment, appreciation, communication, time, spiritual wellness and coping ability.

Commitment

Commitment is a foundation characteristic. It means that the family comes first. These families live in the same world as everyone else, they have difficulties, hard times, quarrels and troubles. However, bad times do not destroy them. They take an “until death do us part” attitude. Sometimes commitment means sacrificing personal desires, cutting out activities, civic involvements or work demands in order to enhance family life.

Appreciation

Strong families let each member know, on a daily basis, that they are appreciated. Dr. Don Clifton, head of the Gallup Organization says that he believes it takes about ten days for a person to recognize their positive one. Appreciation helps children believe it takes about ten days for a person to recognize their positive one. Appreciation helps children damage done by one negative emotion.

Communication

In the book, The Friendship Factor A.L. McGinnis says that the average couple spends seventeen minutes per week in conversation. This is in contrast to the strong families in the DeFrain, Stinnett studies. Strong families spend lots of time in conversation. They talk about the small, trivial matters as well as the complex, serious issues. They spend time together and both listen and talk.

Time Together

What makes a family happy? Take a few minutes right now and close your eyes and think back to some of your best childhood memories. In groups where this exercise is shared, there is usually a common factor in all these memories—doing things together. Strong families spend lots of time together. Strong families agree that their relationships are important. They know that quality, and quality go together. Strong families:

- Flat meals together on a routine basis.
- Work together as a team to get chores done.
- They play catch, go camping, picnicking, bicycling, take a walk and enjoy other outdoor activities.
- Some families fall apart when faced with terminal illness, death or other crisis situations. Others pull together and draw strength from each other when challenges come along.

Spiritual Wellness

Strong families believe in a greater power that can transform lives, can give strength to survive the difficult times and provide hope and comfort. Having spiritual beliefs is one of the secrets to the success of strong families. Spiritual- ity adds family life in the following ways:

- Gives life purpose.
- Promotes a positive outlook.
- Provides guidelines for living.
- Gives freedom from negative emotions.
- Encourages friendship and support of like-minded people.
- Supports tradition.
- Integrates religious heritage.
- Involves prayer.
- Coping Ability

Strong families use when they face crises. Most do not use all six during a given situation. But, strong families often use at least one of the six strategies.

1) Maintain a positive perspective—being able to see something good in a crisis or bad situation gives hope.
2) Pull together—each person contributes, no one feels totally responsible for the problem, no one carries the load alone.
3) Go get help—strong families have a strong social support system, they seek help from church, friends, neighbors, professionals and other associates.
4) Use spiritual resources—spiritual beliefs provide a philosophy of life and give hope and comfort.
5) Keep communication open—open communication allows individuals to express their feelings.
6) Are flexible—strong families adapt to change, are willing to change jobs, learn a new role or skill, further their education, move or do whatever is necessary to overcome the crisis.

COPING Ability

November is Celebrate Families Month!

In this issue...

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Vol. XII, No. 11

“Helping Nebraskans enhance their lives through research-based education.”

Strong families agree that their relationships are important. They know that quantity and quality go together. Strong families:

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- Some families fall apart when faced with terminal illness, death or other crisis situations. Others pull together and draw strength from each other when challenges come along. Stinnett and DeFrain identified six strategies that
Winterizing roses

Hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras and climbing roses need protection from low temperatures and rapid temperature changes to prevent winter injury or possible death. Bush type roses are protected by hilling or mounding soil around the base of the plants. Begin by removing fallen leaves and other debris from around each plant. Mound soil 8 to 10 inches around the canes. Place straw or shredded leaves over the soil mound for additional protection.

If you have house plants, at some time you will have a problem with insects. The most common house plant insects are aphids, white flies, mealy bugs, thrips, scale and spider mites. Some of these insects are so small it is difficult to see them, but most can be seen without the use of a hand lens. Fortunately most of the insects are easily controlled with insecticides. Instructions for using these insecticides will be on the label. Following these instructions carefully is important to avoid damaging your plants. (MJM)

If styrofoam rose cones are used, prune the bushes to allow the cones to be placed over the plants. Mound 6 to 10 inches of soil around the base of the plants. Then place the cone over the rose, securing it with bricks or other heavy objects. If not provided, small holes or slits should be placed in the top of the cones to provide ventilation. Providing winter protection for climbing roses is a little more difficult. The canes must be removed from the trellis and carefully bent to the ground.

House plant insect problems

Here are a few simple tips to put into action now, to secure the health of your houseplants in case there is a temporary power outage or water shortage. Reduce fertilizer use. During the winter, house plants will grow more slowly and need less fertilizer. Do not over water. Over watering can lead to root problems. Most house plants need to be watered only once a week. Check your house plants monthly for insect pests. Take care of the problem immediately. Do not allow the insect population to increase and weaken your plants. Prevent problems. Most house plants are healthy so they will flourish and be able to handle any potential stress that may occur. (MJM)

Y2K houseplants?

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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. (MJM)
Wildlife success story: return of wild turkeys

The wild turkey, Meleagris gallopavo, is closely linked to our history and Thanksgiving. Contrary to what most of us were taught in elementary school, turkey may not have been the main course at the pilgrims’ first Thanksgiving dinner in 1621. Venison and lobster were the prime dishes in colonial Massachusetts, but no one can argue that turkeys were abundant and a mainstay of the early colonists’ diet.

When the first settlers arrived there were about 10 million wild turkeys in North America. Wild turkeys became a major food of settlers as they moved westward across the forested eastern U.S. As the nation grew, the “American wild turkey’s” wild turkey numbers dwindled. The birds were harvested without restraint. In addition, their forest habitat was cleared for agricultural and wood products. By 1920, wild turkey’s had disappeared from 18 of the 20 states of their ancestral range.

In 1804, Lewis and Clark reported seeing wild turkeys along the Missouri River in present Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa and South Dakota. The eastern wild turkey is one of six recognized turkey subspecies and is native to the United States. Wild turkeys disappeared from Nebraska around 1915. Early attempts to restore wild turkeys were not successful because game managers tried to artificially propagate wild turkeys and the pen-raised turkeys did not have the experience and survival skills necessary to live and reproduce in the wild. Restoration through trapping wild turkeys and releasing them was the best solution, but this technique was difficult because turkeys are wary and not easily captured.

In 1959, 28 Merriam’s turkeys trapped in South Dakota and Wyoming were released in Nebraska in the Pine Ridge area. This release was successful and the Pine Ridge population grew to about 3,000 birds in only four nesting seasons. The Merriam’s turkeys were not native to Nebraska, but the habitat of the pine ridge area resembled that of this subspecies’ native range. Other trapping and transplanting efforts occurred until the mid-1980’s. Establishment of a new population required the elimination of some unexpected matings between some wild Merriam’s turkeys and game farm stock. This resulted in a successful establishment of hybrid birds that were successful in the hardwood forest and cropland habitat of the lower Niobrara River and its drainages.

Now Nebraska’s wild turkey range includes most major river drainages and the Pine Ridge. Highest population densities occur in the Pine Ridge and the Niobrara River valley and in parts of the Republican River drainage. Turkeys have also adapted to many small, isolated woodlands, shelterbelts and thinly wooded streams.

Similar capture release programs have occurred in other states and the total U.S. wild turkey population may be approaching four million. According to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the future of Nebraska’s wild turkeys appears stable, although habitat destruction and changing land-use patterns could again reduce turkey populations. But, thanks to the recapture and release efforts of the last 40 years along with habitat and hunting management, there are now wild turkeys to hunt and eat, just like the earliest settlers did. Source: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. For more information check out their website: http://www.ngpc.state.ne.us/wildlife/wildlife1.html (BPO)

Wild turkey facts:

- A turkey’s nest is little more than a slight depression in pine needle drift or forest litter and clutch size averages 11 cream-colored, lightly speckled eggs. Clutches as large as 22 eggs have been observed in Nebraska. Incubation lasts about 28 days and hatching peaks the first week in June.

- Young turkeys feed on insects that are high in protein, but eat more and more plant food as they grow older. Two to three-week-old pouls can eat an average of 3,600 food items every day. During this time, pouls will grow at a rate of a pound every two weeks.

- Turkeys prefer to walk but fly into trees when threatened by predators and roost at night. Turkeys molt continually to replace damaged feathers but they never lose their ability to fly. Young turkeys are usually able to fly to nearby trees within two weeks of hatching.

- Turkeys have keen senses, day-time vision, hearing and detect color and movement from a half mile away. They are very attuned to their surrounding and see movement easily. Most common non-human enemies are bobcats, coyotes and golden eagles. Eagles and young turkeys are prey for owls, opposums, raccoons, foxes, skunks, badgers, snakes, feral dogs and cats. Predators are not usually a problem if habitat is good.

- Turkeys are susceptible to poultry diseases.

- Populations can be threatened by feeding and over-population by humans because this encourages an artificially high concentration of birds. Humans can best help turkey populations survive by establishing natural food areas, escape cover and by protecting existing habitat.

- When weather turns cold, mixed flocks of juvenile birds and hens move to traditional winter roosts and are joined by gobblers. Winter flocks may be as large as 300 birds. (BPO)

We have heard from folks finding lady bird beetles congregating and coming into homes this fall. Most folks say that these lady bugs look a little “different” than what they’re used to.

The species folks are likely complaining about is the multi-colored Asian lady beetle, Harmonia axyridis. Its home range includes Japan, Korea and other parts of Asia. “Multi-colored” refers to the tremendous color variations in this species, ranging from black with two red spots, to red with 19 black spots, with many combinations in between. The most common color seems to be deep orange. There is a black marking on a white background in the shape of the letter “W” on the thorax.

This species was introduced by USDA researchers in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s as a biological control agent. It was released throughout the United States and has spread rapidly. This species has also been reared and sold to gardeners by garden supply companies as a non-toxic way to control pest insects in the garden.

Most lady beetles adults spend the winter months in clumps, protected from the weather. In their native home, Harmonia axyridis overwinters in cliffs, but it seems that in the United States it prefers houses. These ladybird beetles are attracted to vertical surfaces and often appear on light-colored walls with a south or southwest exposure. These 1/4” long insects enter wall voids through cracks and settle down for the winter. During periods of warm weather in the winter, these beetles will become active inside which can be frustrating to human residents. Lady beetles are beneficial insects and should be protected, if possible. Locating entry points and sealing up cracks and crevices will help prevent entry. Window screens and doors should be tight-fitting. Conceal initial efforts on the south and west sides of structures. Vacumming the clusters from walls are just as effective as insecticides and safer, too. (BPO)

Environmental Focus

American Recycles Day has thousands of events across the United States designed to promote the social, environmental and economic benefits of recycling. This day reminds people that taking materials to the recycling site nearest your home, is only the first step. Individuals also should buy products made from recycled materials.

In Lincoln, 54 percent of the aluminum cans recycled are made into new cans, 100 percent of the cereal boxes and 33 percent of the cardboard recycled are made into recycled products, 28 percent of the recycled steel cans and 27 percent of the glass are reused in products and finally, the Lincoln Journal Star is printed on 25-40 percent recycled paper.

In celebration of American Recycles Day, you are invited to pledge to recycle, to buy recycled and/or support a recycling event on November 15. All pledges will be entered into a random national drawing for the “American Green Dream House”—a new three-bedroom, 2-1/2 bath home built primarily with recycled content and energy-efficient products. No purchase is necessary. For more information check out their website.

On November 15, wild turkey facts:

- Multi-colored Asian lady bugs vary from black with two red spots to red with 19 black spots and all combinations in between.

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Winter pastures and supplements

Feeding hay or silage to beef cows and young stock during the winter is expensive and requires a lot of work. Maybe you need to consider some of the ways to make winter pastures a cheaper, yet effective, feed source.

For years, producers have used high-grass or corn stalks as supplements for stock cows. That’s an outstanding program, so don’t stop. But sometimes, corn stalks are not available. Then you might be able to use winter grass that remains in some pastures due to extra growth last summer. Grazing these pastures during winter has its advantages. For starters, you need less hay and silage for winter feed. Every day you graze winter pasture rather than feed silage, you will save at least 25 to 50 cents, and maybe as much as a dollar per cow. Another benefit of winter grazing is that extra growth of old growth so cattle have mostly fresh, green pasture next spring. Plus, cattle eat some weed plants such as ragweed during the winter that they would not touch during the summer and winter grazing puts very little stress on dormant pastures.

Do not forget, however, because of the lower quality of the winter grasses, your cattle will need some protein supplements while grazing winter pasture or corn stalks. But not too much since cattle do a pretty good job of picking high-quality plant parts to eat while winter grazing. On corn stalks, we usually need to start feeding an extra one-half to one pound of protein per day whenever corn stops appearing in cattle manure. Warm-season range may need protein from early November onwards, but you can often wait until late December or January to feed protein supplements on winter pastures or meadows. Winter grazing is an opportunity to reduce winter feed costs and improve pasture condition. Try it with your cattle.

Source: Dr. Bruce Anderson, UNL Forage Specialist (WS)

Cross fencing to improve pasture productivity

Most electric fences around stalk fields have been pulled up and put away for the summer. (In a moment we’ll find a use for these fences in a different part of the plant.) Electric fence can be the easiest and cheapest way to increase production from your pastures. This could prove to be very valuable if we stay dry. Sub-dividing pastures with electric fences will help you control when and where your cattle graze. Cross fencing can help you manage grazing areas they normally avoid.

It can encourage cattle to graze pastures more uniformly and completely. And, it can help you improve the health and vigor of your cattle by giving it time to rest and regrow after each grazing. As a result, your production and pasture carrying capacity will increase.

I’m sure you’ve seen many ads promoting high-powered, high-tensile, imported electric fencing systems. I encourage using these systems in many situations—use them myself sometimes. But, cross fences do not need to be permanent, nor do they need to be expensive. This is especially true if you already have electric fencing your animals respect. Using cross fencing you already have gives you an inexpensive opportunity to experiment where you might eventually place a more permanent cross fence.

The electric fence that keeps your cows on stalks during the winter, can give you this inexpensive opportunity to try some cross fencing on summer pastures. You have little to lose and so much to gain by cross fencing this way to begin with.

So, use your winter electric fence to experiment with extra cross fencing of your pastures this summer. Better grass, better gains and better profits might be the result. (WS)

The Walter Scott, Jr. Scholarships for prospective students of the Peter Kiewit Institute of Information Science, Technology and Engineering

The Walter Scott, Jr. Scholarships are awarded annually to particularly outstanding Nebraska and Western Iowa high school graduates pursuing degrees from either the new College of Information Science and Technology or the College of Engineering and Technology. The colleges, in partnership with Nebraska business and industry, form the Peter Kiewit Institute.

The Scott Scholarships carry an annual stipend ranging from $3,000 to $7,500 and are renewable for four years upon review of satisfactory academic progress. Qualifying students also will record state-of-the-art personal computer systems as a part of this prestigious scholarship award. Scott Scholars are eligible to apply for and receive other scholarships offered through the University of Nebraska and other entities.

To Apply:
- Use the scholarship application form contained in the back of the Undergraduate Application for Admission booklet provided by the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Simply duplicate and complete the form then forward to the address listed below.
- Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications by January 15 in order to be considered during the first round of the selection process for fall candidates. Applications will be accepted after the January date and reviewed in subsequent rounds by the selection panel.
- The University will announce the selection process for spring candidates. All applications will be given to ACT/SAT scores, GPA standings, class rank and participation in school and/or community activities.
- The University of Nebraska will notify qualified applicants of their status no later than May 1.

Application for Scott Scholarships should be mailed to:
University of Nebraska Foundation
7811 Dodge Road, Suite 402
Omaha, NE 68114-3344

Attention: Winnie L. Callahan

For more information, please call: 402-595-2302 (GB)

Pricing silage in the feed bunk

Arriving at fair and equitable prices for silage requires judgment, experience and some skill to detail. The amount of grain and moisture content in silage have major influences on its feed value and can be used to increase the accuracy of silage pricing.

The first judgmental factor is the quality of the crop as it was taken from the field. The price paid for corn silage must take into account the value of the corn grain in a ton of silage, the dry matter content of the silage and extra costs of harvesting and hauling the silage. A buyer and seller must agree on establishing a value for corn based on the price at a local elevator during a specific time period and multiply that price times the amount of grain to determine the price per ton of the silage.

Arriving at the price to charge for silage, as fed, involves at least two additional costs:
- The cost of feeding and removal from the silo; and,
- 2. storage costs, including allowance for cost of the storage structure and silo losses.

Note that filling and removal costs will vary with the type of storage. Additional costs may also occur with final delivery.

Weather damaged silage such as we find this year are those that have growth stopped at a very immature stage and the yield of grain is usually less than half of normal. These silages may have 80 percent or less of the feed value of high grain corn silage. Forage sorghums, when they do have competitive high grain yield, usually have only 80 to 90 percent the value of corn silage per unit of dry matter. Sudan and sudan-sorghum crosses or sorghum varieties with low grain yields, may have only 65 to 80 percent the feed value of corn silage.

Additional information and guidelines are contained in NebGuide G74-99, “Estimating Corn and Sorghum Silage Value,” available at the extension office. (WS)

Grain storage information on the web

Low export demand, transporta-

tion problems and tight commer-
cial storage space combined with a better than normal yield for many dryland crops has resulted in grain stocks that exceed the available storage space in some areas. Even where on-farm storage is available, grain may need to be held longer than usual until grain can be pushed through the "pipeline" and on to domestic and foreign markets. This grain must be kept in good condition, free of molds, insect damage, etc.

The University of Nebraska has a large number of NebGuides and extension circulars on grain storage, aeration, drying and insect management. In addition, extension specialists responded to the emergency nature of the situation a year ago by developing a number of information sheets on grain storage dealing with converting existing structures to hold grain, grain storage as a last resort, engineering aeration systems, calculating bushels in non-standard grain storage situations, etc.

I have created a web page containing all of the available grain storage information from the University of Nebraska, as well as selected publications from other mid-western universities. It can be found at the Lancaster County Extension Nebraska Production Agriculture web page under crops. Most of this information can be downloaded by clicking on the references indicated. The direct URL for the Lancaster County Extension Nebraska Production Agriculture web page under crops. Most of this information can be downloaded by clicking on the information sheets is: http://www.lanc.unl.edu/clanc/agp/crops/storage.htm. (TD)
Low temperature injury

Protecting plants from low temperature injury should be uppermost in the minds of fruit growers after Thanksgiving. Before fertilizing and pruning fruit plants, allow the hardening process to occur. As the weather turns colder, growth will slow and then stop and sugars and starches will accumulate in the plants. While these processes are occurring, the plants will become progressively less susceptible to low temperature damage. Above all, make sure dormancy sets in before fertilizing and pruning. Winter preparedness should go beyond preparing trees for pruning. Pruning fruit plants from rabbit and mice damage with aluminum foil or wire screens. Some growers prefer to use a commercial repellent sprayed or brushed on the lower portion of plants. Most of these repellents contain sulfur.

Another good fall practice is to remove weeds and tall grasses from around tree trunks and brush canes to discourage nesting by mice.

Strawberry growers also face some pre-winter chores. One of these is to mulch plants with straw. After Thanksgiving, when temperatures characteristically drop below 20 degrees F., cover the strawberry plants with two inches of the mulch. This type of mulching also holds moisture and keeps the plants and fruit clean as they mature next year. (DJ)

Proper mulching

Proper mulching protects trees against mechanical damage by lawnmowers, conserves soil moisture and protects roots against winter injury and frost heaving. Improper mulching—applying to much mulch or piling it up around the trunk—can lead to problems of their own.

A good fall mulch is two to four inches of wood chips. Apply more to cover eight inches or more—can smother and kill plant roots. Apply it evenly over the plants, do not let it take or push the mulch back away from the trunk. Mulch that laps up against the wood can provide a hiding place for mice, which can severely damage or girdle the trunk of a young tree.

A common consequence of mulching landscape plants with organic materials is that such bark, is nitrogen deficiency. As soil microorganisms decompose the bark, straw, ground corncobs, or other organic materials, they remove significant quantities of nitrogen from the soil. When the process of decomposition is finished, the nitrogen is released again, but in the meantime, it’s unavailable for plant growth.

Signs of nitrogen deficiency include yellowing foliage and poor growth.

The solution is to apply small amounts of nitrogen fertilizer in the spring before additional mulch is applied and again, as needed, through the growing season. A rate of two pounds of a complete fertilizer material, such as 5-10-5 or 12-12-12 per 100 square feet in the spring may be all that’s needed to keep plants green and vigorous. (DJ)

Fall insect pest - Fleas

Various species of fleas are the most common insects on pets. They spread throughout homes, animal quarters and yards. They attack six to eight fleas attach permanently in less hairy areas, as around the eyes or on the ears.

Description and life cycle: fleas are about 1/8 inch long with a compressed body (narrowed laterally). They have no wings. Most are brown with legs well developed for jumping. The head is compressed (usually longer than high), rounded in front and appears to be divided in two parts.

Fleas have four stages in their development: egg, larva, pupa and adult. A generation may be completed in a month.

Fleas deposit small white eggs on the animal, which usually fall off into the bedding area. The larvae are white, worm-like and legless. Larvae feed on organic matter such as hair and on flea excreta which contains partially digested blood. The pupal form usually is enclosed in a silk cocoon, encrusted with sand and organic material. Newly emerged adults soon seek a host and spend most of their life on the host.

Important: Fleas suck blood and heavy populations can cause anemia, particularly in young, old, or sick animals. Fleas may be irritating to animals and an allergic skin reaction (skin eruptions) may occur. Fleas infested animals scratch at the site of flea bites because of the allergic reaction that occurs. Fleas may transmit bacteria, viral and protozoan diseases and tapeworms.

Humans may be infested with fleas because of close association with infested animals. However, humans are most often infested with fleas following a period when neither pets nor humans are in a home. The picture of a person walking on a floor triggers adult fleas to leave the cocoon in search of a blood meal.

Humans usually are infested around the ankles and lower part of the legs. Some fleas have an anticoagulant in their saliva and are difficult to control. Control: For successful control, both the animal and the premises need to be treated. If only the animal is treated, other animals from the premises may become newly emerged adults starting a new infestation. For specific insecticide recommendations, refer to EC 89-1551, Nebraska Management Guide for Control of Arthropod Pests.

Animals can be treated by using insecticide sprays, dusts, shampoos, collar and pills. Insecticides, in any formulation, are poisonous and label instructions should be followed with care. Do not use an insecticide on a part-time Farming video" will help develop your country environment and improve your quality of life. Just one hour of "Part-time Farming" provides tips that will save you costly mistakes and precious time. Call 402-441-7180 to order your copy.

 acreage

Portable generators

Portable generators are designed to be connected directly to a building’s wiring system. Before starting your generator, carefully read and follow all of the manufacturer’s instructions.

Be sure that the total electric load on your generator will not exceed the manufacturer’s rating. Always locate your generator where its exhaust will vent safely. Provide for your extension cords. Use the lowest wattage light bulbs that provide a safe level of light, reserving power for additional lighting elsewhere or a small appliance. Remember that the greater the load on your generator, the more fuel it will use.

Keep cords out of the way so they don’t present a tripping hazard—especially in dimly lit doorways or halls. Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.

Extension cords must be properly sized to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires or damage to equipment. (DJ)

Marketing your produce

Want ideas on how to increase your customer base and increase sales? One of the best references you can have is the book, Sell What You Sour! by Eric Gibson. It has ideas gleaned from successful marketers throughout the U.S. presented in a very practical way. Everything is directly applicable to making a living selling fresh produce. Numerous methods are described with their advantages and limitations. It is an excellent chapter on promotion and another on the business aspects. If you are considering selling wholesale, read this chapter first, before calling on any buyers or produce managers. Copies of Sell What you sour! are available through the Nebraska Fruit and Vegetable Association. Contact Bob Johnson at 402-652-3769 for more information. (DJ)

Learn at your convenience—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—NUFACTS (audio) Information Center NUFACCTS audio message center offers fast, convenient information. 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.

Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web Site Visit our Internet web site at: http://www.landl.rel.unl.edu/lndrg/acrage/index.htm to learn about Extension programs, publications and links to other acreage and small farm information.
Food & Fitness

Food safety and storage in emergency situations

As winter approaches, you may wish to have some foods on hand in case you can’t make it to the store or the power goes out. Here are some suggestions from Cindy Brison, Douglas County Cooperative Extension, that should help you inventory during a winter storm and should you have any Y2K-related problems.

The types of foods Cindy suggests will keep well and can be safely eaten later in the spring after the time for possible winter storms has passed:

- Have enough nonperishable food items on hand for 2 to 3 days.
- Select a variety of canned meats, soups, vegetables and fruits that are ready to eat with very little preparation. A non-electric can-opener may be useful. Canned goods are safe indefinitely if there are no leaks, spots of rust or bulges. For quality reasons, it is recommended that they be used within two years.
- Canned or dry milk, granola bars, cereal, raisins and peanuts butter crackers also may be part of the food stock.
- MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), used by campers and outdoor adventurers, are another alternative but are more expensive. They have an indefinite shelf life if the packaging is kept intact, but the quality of these

Color is key to eating healthy

Several fruits and vegetables currently enjoy “star” status. But... there may be others waiting in the wings to be “discovered” as sources of important nutrients! Your body needs a variety of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other beneficial substances found in fruits and veggies. Here are some suggestions offered by Messer in “Communicating Food for Health” newsletter:

- Red - Tomatoes, watermelon, strawberries, red grapes, raspberries.
- Orange - Apricots, cantaloupe, carrots, papaya, peaches.
- Green - Kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, collard greens.
- White - Onions, shallots, cauliflower, garlic, leeks.
- Purple/Blue - Blueberries, blackberries, red cabbage, cranberries.

A high fruit and vegetable intake has been associated with a reduction of life style diseases, particularly cancer, according to Linda Boeckner, Ph.D., NU Extension Nutrition Specialist. Although the exact dietary components are unknown, it’s felt antioxidants may play a key role.

A recent study assessed the antioxidant capacity of blood after people ate fruits and vegetables. The results indicate that increasing fruit and vegetable intake up to 10 servings a day can raise the blood’s antioxidant power by 13-25 percent.

The study suggests that antioxidant activity may be a combination of a variety of components found in fruits and vegetables, found in some of the more well known vitamin antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables to get all of the various antioxidants seems to be more important than focusing on just selected antioxidants.

The Food Guide Pyramid suggests eating a total of at least 5 more fruits and vegetables daily. So, enjoy 5-maybe even 10 servings a day! And choose from a variety of colors! (AH)

Weight of food may affect your weight

Do you ever stuff yourself with rice cakes and still feel hungry. Is there anything you can eat to feel “full” without consuming lots of calories?

There’s some new research that suggests that body fat may be a certain weight of food to feel full. As rice cakes are fairly light-weight, they may be limited in their effectiveness to satisfy food cravings.

Here’s what researchers discovered in a study at New Zealand’s University of Auckland as reported in “Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter.” One group of study subjects ate a low fat diet; the other ate a high fat diet. Both groups could eat as much as they wanted. The result: The low fat group ate less calories and lost weight whereas the other group ate the same weight of food as the other group! Other studies have also suggested people tend to eat the same weight of food daily regardless of fat or calorie intake.

So, how does this apply to your food choices? The article suggests you try eating heavy-light meals.

Cook It Quick!

Tips and recipes for cooking healthy foods in a hurry:

To be added to the mailing list, e-mail Alice Henneman, Extension Educator at AHENNEMAN1@UNL.EDU

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

Focus on Food

Q: What’s the difference between a “frozen” and “refrigerated” turkey?

A: Choose the type of turkey that best meets your individual needs. There is no quality difference between a “frozen” or “refrigerated” turkey. Frozen turkeys are flash frozen immediately after packaging. Once defrosted, the meat is virtually as fresh as the day it was processed. They can be purchased in advance whenever it is convenient or when they are on sale.

Refrigerated turkeys are deep-chilled to 24-26 degrees F. after being processed. They can be purchased in advance whenever it is convenient or when they are on sale. Refrigerated turkeys are flash frozen immediately after packaging. Once defrosted, the meat is virtually as fresh as the day it was processed. They can be purchased in advance whenever it is convenient or when they are on sale.

Alice Henneman, RD, LDN, Extension Educator

Q: How long does it take to thaw a frozen turkey in the refrigerator?

A: Allow about 24 hours per 5 pounds of whole turkey to thaw a turkey in your refrigerator (40 degrees F). For example, allow the following times for these weights:

- 8 to 12 lbs. - 1 to 2 days
- 12 to 16 lbs. - 2 to 3 days
- 16 to 20 lbs. - 3 to 4 days
- 20 to 24 lbs. - 4 to 5 days (AH)
Jean's Journal

Jean Wheelock
FCE Council Chair

November and fall is in full swing. Fall is my favorite time of year with all the beautiful colors, nature so graciously provides. The fields are harvested and decorations of corn, stalks, pumpkins, corn and apples appear in many yards. At our recent achievement day event, we were treated to a wonderful apple dessert created by Bonnie Krueger from the Salt Creek Circle. It would be great for our thanksgiving table and Bonnie shares the recipe for you.

Apple Dessert Crust
1 yellow or butter pecan cake mix
1 stick margarine, melted
1 cup coconut
1 cup chopped pecans
Mix together and spread into a 9 x 12 inch greased pan. Bake in pre-heated 350 degree oven, 12 minutes or until golden brown.

Filling
4 to 6 cups apples, sliced
Cook in microwave until tender with 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Thicken with 1 tablespoon cornstarch. Pour on top of baked crust. Sprinkle cinnamon over apples. Spread cool whip over apples. Drizzle caramel ice cream topping on this. Serve 12 to 15. Enjoy.

Many of our clubs have service projects where they help others. Some of their accomplishments this past year include quilts for the Linus Project, supplies for the Cedars Home and lap robes for nursing homes. What better time than this month when we celebrate Thanksgiving to share our bounty with others. I wish all much happiness and many blessings. Happy Thanksgiving.

Character Counts! Corner—Doing the right thing even though the cost is high

In one of Michael Josephson's radio commentaries he relates a story of when he was a law professor. A student reported that Josephson had made a scoring error on his exam—in his favor. Josephson says that he was pleased with the student's integrity and told him so as he began to change his records. The student's beaming face turned to shock.

"You're going to lower my grade?" the student sputtered. "I never would have come in if . . . " Josephson said, he didn't finish the sentence. He didn't have to. He blew his cover. His display of integrity was counterfeited. He expected praise and the unearned grade as a reward for being honest.

Several of Josephson's colleagues told him that he was being unrealistic by his accomplishments. He was accomplished by changing the grade was to reinforce the cynicism that honesty was unsatisfactory. They felt that the student should have been rewarded for his courage and that he should have been encouraged to be honest in the future.

Josephson reacted by saying “What’s going on here? Why isn’t praise and respect enough for a reward for honesty.” Is the lesson we want to teach that we must do the right thing even if no one is watching? We must do the right thing even though our efforts may remain unacknowledged.

Children and disaster

Whether we are preparing for possible inconveniences as a result of Y2K, whether we are preparing for a natural disaster, we must consider the possible effects on children and take into consideration their needs. Pre-planned preparation of activities, knowledge of emotional and behavioral effects of disaster on children and confidence in your own ability to cope will contribute greatly to your success in recovering from whatever disruptions life may bring.

Studies of natural disasters have shown that children may experience emotional and behavioral effects for months, one year or even two years following a disaster. Try to keep these points in mind when caring for children when a disaster occurs.

1) Heed suggestions or public warnings for the care and safety of your children.
2) Remember that children mirror their parent’s anxiety. Your agitation or calmness is reflected in their fear or coping.
3) Tell children simply and matter-of-factly about the problem and how it is handled.

This helps avoid the fear of the unknown often sensed by children in unusual situations.
4) Talk in a simple way. A child feels more secure. Involves children in sharing action taken, no matter how small. They need to know and understand their important roles. This helps them feel part of the family and helps prepare them to meet later situations we celebrate.
5) Children are sometimes punished for not behaving normally. Most children are not capable of understanding the magnitude and severity of the situation. They need more understanding and patience at this time.
6) Your child’s behavior appears unusual, he may have lost something, maybe a pet or his favorite toy. Ask him, regardless of his age, what he misses. Discuss his feelings and, if possible, try to replace the lost belonging.
7) Sometimes it is necessary to leave children with a relative or friend for a time. These suggestions help them adjust to your absence.
8) Try not to let your children know you will be away until you are sure about where both you and they are going to be staying. This will prevent them from worrying or brooding over the absence.
9) Let them know how long you will be away.
10) Let them know how often you will be in touch with them.
11) Keep in touch with your children frequently and as regularly as you promised. This will lessen the upset of your being away.
12) Finally, keep track of your children to be sure they are provided for. You know their needs more than anyone else.

All families should prepare a family emergency plan. Knowing what to do in the event of an emergency of any kind will reduce your anxiety and, in turn, the anxiety level in children. When disaster strikes in other regions, help others. Send food, clothes, toys, and encouraging letters. This helps children understand and develop a caring attitude towards others. When disaster strikes closer to home they will understand better. Most importantly, don’t forget you have one another and often weathering an emergency together makes families stronger and more resilient.

The Year 2000 and your money

According to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), the money in FDIC insured banks and savings institutions is safe and those businesses will be functioning normally when January 2000 arrives. In many cases, the banking and financial businesses are taking every step possible to make sure that business will continue as usual early 2000. If you are still a little nervous, however, there are some suggestions being offered that are sound money management practices that should be followed at any time. The Year 2000 may be the best year you need to act on those good intentions of getting your financial matters in order. Keep copies of your financial records. Make sure you have proof of payment of key bills that will cause a hardship for you or your family, if proof is not readily available. Organize key financial records so information can be retrieved quickly, if needed.

Pay attention to your finances. Balance your checkbook monthly and check bank transaction receipts, immediately. Keep transaction slips until you have received a monthly statement with all transactions listed. Get a copy of your credit report and review it for accuracy. Call one of the major credit reporting agencies to get a copy of your report. The small fee for a report ($8) may be your best purchase of the year.

Resolve any discrepancies in your financial matters now. Be on the lookout for Y2K scams. Do not give personal information including bank account, credit card and social security numbers to anyone who contacts you.

Keep a small amount of cash on-hand in small bills. The amount of cash you might have for a weekend vacation trip is a general guideline.

Check the deposit insurance on your bank, savings or credit union accounts. If you have more than $100,000 in any location, you will want to make sure you understand the insur- ance rules.

AARP offers 55 Alive—Mature Driver Course

If your driver’s license expires in 2000 and you are 50 years of age or older, you are urged to enroll in the 55 plus Alive—Mature Driver Course. In this course, you will Alive—Mature Driver Course. In this course, you will

FCE Council Chair

Laundry detergents and their effective uses

Liquid laundry detergents are especially effective on food, greasy and oily soils. Since they are liquids, they are good for pre-treatments and stains.

Powder laundry detergents are especially effective for lifting out clay and ground-in dirt, thus they are ideal for children’s play clothes. They can also be used to pretreat, by making a paste of detergent and water. (LB)
4-H volunteer forum

The Nebraska State 4-H Volunteer Forum will be held February 4 and 5 in Lincoln and March 3 and 4 in North Platte. This forum is a conference developed by a committee of 4-H volunteers from across the state. Network with other 4-H leaders, exchange successful 4-H programs among 4-H leaders and be introduced to new area and projects. There will be numerous workshops offering hands-on learning experiences and new ideas and programs designed to enhance your club. Anyone interested in 4-H is welcome to attend. Scholarships are available through the 4-H Council. For more information, contact Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

5th and 6th grade lock-in

The year 2000 5th and 6th grade 4-H Lock-In is just around the corner! This fun, overnight event is presented by the Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council and will be Friday, January 14 from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. on Saturday, January 15. Look in the next NEBLINE for more information about this exciting 4-H event! (TK)

$500 scholarship opportunity

The Nebraska Association of Fair Managers will be offering two $500 scholarships to a 4-H boy and girl. The scholarships will be awarded to graduating seniors who are planning to continue their post-high school education. If you would like to receive more detailed information about this scholarship, call Deanna Karmazin at 441-7180. (DK)

4-H questions?

Do you have questions about 4-H projects or subject matter? Do you need some help with demonstrations, judging and other 4-H events and activities? The 4-H Teen Council and 4-H Ambassadors would like to help you. These teenage youth have been involved in 4-H for a number of years and through their 4-H experiences, have gained valuable knowledge that they would like to share with others. If you would like to have a Teen Council member or ambassador come to your 4-H meeting, call the extension office and we will help you make arrangements. (TK)

Holiday Gifts

Holiday gifts needed. There is always a need for helping the less fortunate, especially around the holiday season. Lincoln Public School Headstart Program is in need of over 300 gifts for 3 and 4 year old children. New, handmade or purchased items such as books, stuffed toys, dolls, cars, trucks, markers, puzzles, etc., are needed. If gifts are wrapped, please indicate what the item is, the cost ($3-$4 recommended) and if the gift is for a boy or girl. Bring gifts to the extension office by December 1. For more information, contact Lorene at 441-7180. This is an excellent community service program for 4-H, FCE and other community clubs. Individuals may also participate. (LB)

Steve Landon, 14, of Greenwood is shown with his Reserve Grand Champion Female Stocker Feeder. Steve, the son of Cheryl and Dan Landon of Greenwood, was also one of the top five finalists in the showmanship competition and excelled in the male stocker feeder division. (DK)

Jeremy Holthus, 19, of Roca exhibited the reserve champion Hereford breeding heifer. The son of Diane and Calvin Holthus took runner-up honors with his home-raised February-born heifer. (DK)

Melanie Nisley, 16, of Hickman exhibited the Champion Shorthorn heifer. She is the daughter of Greg and Jodene Nisley. This is Melanie’s second year to receive this honor. (DK)

Vinnie Soucie is shown here with his Champion Holstein cow. He is the son of Kim Soucie and Clement Soucie both of Denton. (DK)
Good nutrition is of utmost importance in achieving a winning horse. Horses need water, a commercial feed mix that guarantees levels of protein, energy, fiber, vitamins and minerals, and high-quality roughage. Determining the amounts of each can be tricky. Feeding horses according to body weight is ideal; however, most horsemen should use a horse’s condition (or degree of fat cover) as a feeding guide. Research has shown that the amount of body fat, which is actually stored energy, influences many physiological functions. Fertility in broodmares is very predictably influenced by degree of body fat, as is performance in riding horses.

Condition scoring is a procedure where horsemen first visually observe and/or feel the fat cover at six body sites (back ribs at midbarrel, neck, behind the shoulders at the forerib, withers and tailhead). These estimates of fat are then compared to the descriptions on a condition scorecard and a condition score is determined for the horse. When condition-scoring horses, don’t be fooled by long hair or confuse muscle bulk and tone for fat. Horsemen should make feed adjustments according to condition scores so they can feed their horses to their optimal condition and subsequently achieve maximum reproductive and performance efficiency.

For information on condition scoring, call 441-7180 and ask for Ellen. Feeding Hints Feed same amounts on a regular schedule. Feed according to a pony or horse’s size, condition and the work that it does. Change feeds gradually. Keep trace-mineralized salt available at all times. Have clean, fresh water available at all times.

**Holiday Recipes for Your Horse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 c. sweet feed</td>
<td>2-12 oz. Jars dark molasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 c. water</td>
<td>2 1/2 c. flour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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1. Mix the first three ingredients, then stir in the flour.
2. Coat muffin tin with vegetable oil.
3. Press dough down into muffin tin.
4. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until dark brown.

Allow to cool. Cover the bottom of the foil pie plate with a thin layer of hay. Place one or two treats on top of hay and feed to your horse or give these healthy horse treats to a friend’s or neighbor’s horse.

**Horse Salad**

Slice 4 apples; pour 1/2 cup corn syrup over the apple slices. Serve on a bed of hay, garnished with a carrot on the side. (EK)

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**Junior Pole Bending—reserve champion**

Chelsea Leatherwood, 14, of Walton, NE, was reserve champion in junior pole bending at the 72nd Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Horse Show September 22 in Omaha. The daughter of Janet Rollins rode Sandhills Cowboy, a 21-year-old Quarter Horse gelding for the winning time of 22.06 seconds. Despite the horse’s age, Chelsea said he’s faster than a lot of younger horses she’s ridden.

Photo courtesy of Ak-Sar-Ben. (EK)

**2-Year-Old Snaffle Bit—champion**

Sara Messick, 16, of Ceresco, NE, earned the championship in the 2-year-old snaffle bit class at the 72nd Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Horse Show September 21 in Omaha. The daughter of Brenda and Tom Messick rode Royal Good Asset, a Quarter Horse gelding, for the win. This is a family-raised horse.

Photo courtesy of Ak-Sar-Ben. (EK)

**Junior Barrel Racing—reserve champion**

Ashley Schoneweis, 13, of Lincoln, was reserve champion in junior barrel racing at the 72nd Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Horse Show September 22 in Omaha. The daughter of Rod and Connie Schoneweis rode Chargetonight, a 6-year-old Quarter Horse mare for the winning time of 16.19 seconds.

Photo courtesy of Ak-Sar-Ben. (EK)

(Note: for full Ak-Sar-Ben ribbon results, check the World Wide Web at http://4h.unl.edu.)

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**Ideas wanted**

Have you ever wanted to learn about photography, animal diseases or maybe nutrition? We are now taking requests from 4-H clubs. Let us know what kind of workshops you would like to see in the county this year. Contact Deanna at 441-7180 with all your ideas. (DK)

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**Shooting Sports certification**

A 4-H Shooting Sports BB gun, pellet rifle and smallbore leader certification is scheduled for Saturday, December 4, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cost is $20, which includes training materials and lunch. Call Lorene at 441-7180 by December 2, 1999, to register. (LB)

**Shooting Sports meeting**

The Lancaster County 4-H Shooting Sports Club will meet Monday, December 13, 7 p.m. Election of officers will be held. All discipline members and their parents are encouraged to attend. (LB)
**Storing an emergency drinking water supply**

**Why have an emergency water supply?**

Generally, our abundant domestic water supply is taken for granted. However, some situations can reduce the availability of safe drinking water, such as earthquakes, tornadoes, floods and blizzards. Short-term interruptions may last only a few hours or up to several days. In these situations, an emergency water supply can be desirable. One option is to purchase bottled drinking or distilled water at the time of need or for storage and future use. Another option is to follow these directions to safely prepare water from your daily drinking and cooking supply.

**How much water should I store?**

In general, store at least one gallon of water per person, per day of required need—2 quarts for drinking and 2-quarts for cooking.

**What containers should I use?**

You can store water in food-grade glass or plastic containers with tight-fitting screw-on caps. NOTE: Use plastic milk jugs are not recommended for water storage because it is difficult to clean them well enough to ensure safety. Recommended food-grade containers include 2-liter soda bottles and other water, juice or punch containers that can be easily cleaned by washing the container and lids thoroughly with hot tap water and dish detergent followed by rinsing thoroughly with hot tap water.

**What water should I use?**

In blizzard conditions, stay with your vehicle. It will provide shelter and warmth. Blanket/sleeping bag and let the water stand another 30 minutes. For shelf storage of water, store at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. If refrigeration is not available, store opened containers in a refrigerator or at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Refrigeration reduces microorganisms, or reduce exposure to bacteria. To reduce the chance of water contamination, you may use water in opened containers you will use immediately. It is illegal to sell or distribute unrefrigerated water supply that has been tested for bacterial safety within the past year or a vended water supply. (safety is regulated by FDA).

**How should I treat the water?**

To treat water for storage, use liquid household chlorine bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use bleach with scents or added. Add the bleach according to the following table, using a clean, uncontaminated medicine dropper.

**Y2K and disaster information web page developed**

Lancaster County Extension has added a Y2K and Disaster Information website to its site. The purpose of this web site is to provide access to unbiased information about the potential risks resulting from the Y2K issue and the public can do to prepare for and improve the probability of interruptions resulting from any number of causes.

The site can be accessed from the Ag/Acreage web page at: http://www.lanc.unl.edu/ and clicking on Lancaster Co. Ex. Y2K & Disaster Information Web Sites under the heading: OTHER UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA WEB SITES or it can be accessed directly by pointing your web browser to: http://www.iain.unl.edu/ian/lanc/gis/ (TD)

**Will the rollover to the year 2000 (Y2K) cause computer problems resulting in service interruptions in services? Nobody really knows. Most experts believe US government and industries probably over 95% ready for Y2K and any problems or interruptions that may occur will be short-lived. Some believe the Y2K problem, of course, is not universal with differences between companies and industries. If an estimate is made likely world-wide with developing countries and those hard hit financially (such as Russia) perhaps at most risk than we are in the U.S.**

In keeping with the motto: “Hope for the best but prepare for the worst” Lancaster County Extension has scheduled two informational workshops on what is being done by the public sector and industry to prepare for Y2K and what individuals can do to prepare for Y2K. The presentation will include an overview of the scope of the year 2000 problem, various industry responses, and potential risks, regardless of the cause. On November 22, we will be conducting a workshop called “Y2K Challenge: Community Emergency Preparedness.” At this workshop, we will hear about how public service providers, utility companies, medical and emergency care providers and the banking system has prepared to meet the Y2K challenge. On November 29, a second workshop will be held to discuss and demonstrate what people can do to prepare for Y2K in the workplace. Whether there will be problems resulting from Y2K or not, we know that blizzards, floods and other natural disasters can and do occur. Those who have a survival plan will be better prepared to alternate sources of heat and light and adequate supplies of food on-hand will always be better prepared compared to the unprepared. Both workshops will begin at 7 p.m. and last approximately 2 1/2 hours. Come and let your family do what can be done for “Hope for the best but prepare for the worst.” (TD)
Many trees damaged by severe storms can have large branches broken in the middle by the sheer weight of snow or ice. Repairing trees damaged like this is often difficult and more time consuming than the simpler job of “topping” the trees. Topping is a very destructive approach to pruning trees and is NOT recommended. Here are some things to consider if a tree is damaged:

When doing topping:
- Topping is the indiscriminate cutting of large branches back to long stubs. Topping cuts are made without regard to the locations of side branches.
- If topping is recommended to you:
  - The most appropriate response to a tree worker who recommends topping is to decline their services and look for another tree service. Topping is never recommended by anyone with a good understanding of trees.
- What topping does:
  - Topping removes a major portion of a tree’s foliage, which are needed to produce food. This damaging practice can begin an irreversible decline in the tree.
  - Topping makes a tree more susceptible to insect pests and diseases by reducing the ability of the tree to produce chemical defences.
  - Branches left after topping become decayed and create a hazardous situation that may cause serious injury or property damage if the branch breaks.
  - Cuts made by topping stimulate the development of many epimorphic shoots (water-sprouts) just below the cut, which are weakly attached and are easily broken off in storms.
  - Topping destroys the normal form of a tree and wastes money. (DI)

Miscellaneous

Weight of food may affect your weight continued from page 6
- weight foods with few calories to your total weight. Examples include:
  - cooked spinach, strawberries, cooked beef, cantaloupe, pink or red grapefruit, carrots and navel oranges. The high water and fiber content of fruits and vegetables add weight but help keep calorie level low.
  - At the same time, go easy on light-weight foods that contain a lot of calories. For example: hot fudge sauce, marshmallows, cheese puffs, buttered popcorn and potato chips. As a comparison, a 4.5 ounce container of your 13 calories per ounce compared to 150 calories per ounce for a 1-oz. bag of chips.

The article warns this concept has limits to its effectiveness. Water has zero calories for its weight, but you couldn’t live on water alone. It’s still important to eat a balanced diet containing a variety of foods. But, comparing the weight-to-calorie ratio of foods may give you your weight control diet the extra boost it needs for success! (AI)

Migratory birds love shady coffee

Most people don’t know how important coffee is for migratory birds. Many migratory birds spent winter in the forest-like environment of traditionally managed coffee plantations. Scientists report that these coffee plantations support hundreds of species of birds.

But, coffee farming in Latin America is changing and coffee is beginning to be grown under full sun. With this conversion from traditional shade-grown coffee, comes a corresponding decrease in migratory bird species. Over 90 percent fewer bird species are found on sun-grown coffee farms.

Well-known North American birds that use shade-coffee plantations during the winter are the Baltimore oriole and ruby-throated hummingbird. A few other birds are cerulean warbler, Kentucky warbler, golden-winged warbler, painted bunting, wood thrush and Audubon’s oriole.

The National Audubon Society suggests that environmentally minded consumers use their buying power and drink shade grown coffee to protect the habitat of traditional coffee plantations. Source: Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center website: http://www.si.edu/natzoo/zooview/smbc/Fxsht1a.htm (BPO)
Keep your family calm during the holidays

During the holiday preparation season, many parents seem more strained, because they are suffering from overload. No doubt this pressure comes from wanting to give their families the best holiday ever. Isn’t it ironic that what families most need is relaxation to enjoy the festivities together.

If tension is mounting at your house, you still can change the pattern to ease the pressure. Here are some helpful tips.

* Slow down and reconnect. Give your kids 10 minutes of your uninterrupted attention. When you get together at the end of the day, put everything on hold. Sit down with them and just listen to whatever they have to say. If you promised to look at a child’s assignment, do it now. When kids know you’re really with them and not thinking of other things, they’ll enjoy a measure of comfort and satisfaction. Give kids a role. Think how you can include the children in the ongoing holiday preparations. If they feel they’re really participating, they won’t need to act up or whine for your attention. Perhaps they can help with gift wrapping, decorating, baking or addressing cards. You are training your children in a new skill that will contribute to their sense of competence. You’ll also see your kids grow a foot in pride as they admire their accomplishments.

* Involve them to think of special gifts for the people on your list. Even little ones can be thoughtful and right-on-target with some of their suggestions. Get them into the kitchen. Find a way to include your kids in cooking, especially when you need is relaxation to enjoy the meaningful rites festivities together.

* Invite your kids look forward to all the meaningful rites, even if it means missing the neighbors’ caroling party or a dinner with out-of-town friends. Take the time you need to enjoy the meaningful rites your kids look forward to all year. (LJ)

Woolly bear

The woolly bear is a common and well-known caterpillar. Though most people have one kind of woolly bear in mind, there are eight or more species in the U.S. that could legitimately be called woolly bears because of the dense, bristly hair that covers their bodies. Woolly bears are the caterpillar stage of medium sized moths known as tiger moths.

The best-known woolly bear is called the banded woolly bear. It is black at both ends and reddish-brown in the middle. The adult is called the isabella moth. The banded woolly bear is found throughout the U.S., Mexico and southern Canada, but not the rest of the world. There are two generations of caterpillars each year (May and August). The second generation is the one noticed in late fall when the woolly bears are crossing the roads, usually in great haste, as if they have someplace special to go. In fact, they are only scurrying to find a sheltered location under dead plant debris, etc. where they will spend the winter as a larva. In the spring, they will feed briefly before changing into a cocoon and, eventually, a moth. Eggs laid by the female moths start the cycle over again.

The adult moth of the banded woolly bear has white wings with scattered black spots. Wingspan is about two inches. The banded woolly bear is the species mentioned in winter prediction folklore that claims the longer the black at the ends of the body, the more severe will be the coming winter. As you might expect, science has debunked this legend by showing the amount of black varies with the age of the caterpillar and the moisture levels in the area where it developed.

This doesn’t stop the good folks of Vermilion, Ohio (east of Cleveland) from holding an annual “Woolly Bear Festival”—claimed to be the largest one-day festival in Ohio. Festivities include a parade, woolly bear races and an “official” analysis of the woolly bears and forecast for the coming winter. Source: Don Lewis, Iowa State University (SC)