12-1998

The NEBLINE, December 1998

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Celebration of Kwanza.

The kinara is the centerpiece for the celebration of Kwanza. An important part of the Hanukkah celebration is the menorah. This is a candle holder with eight candles and a shamash or servant candle. One candle is lit by the shamash for each of the nights of Hanukkah. After the lighting of the candles, people give gifts to one another. A popular food of Hanukkah is potato pancakes, or latkes, cooked in oil in honor of the miracle.

The dreidel is often played during Hanukkah. This is a top game played with nuts or gold-covered chocolate coins. There are four letters on the top standing for nun, gimel, hay and shin. They give the directions for what to give or take during the game. The letters also stand for “nesh gadol hayah sham” or “a great miracle happened there.” As a family you might make a dreidel and play the game.

Have any of you participated in Kwanzaa, the African American holiday created in 1966? It begins on December 26 and lasts through January 1. The name Kwanzaa comes from Swahili and means first fruits of the harvest.

To prepare for Kwanzaa, families decorate their homes with Kwanzaa symbols. They place a mkeka, a straw mat, on the table. Corn (one ear for each child in the family) and other foods are placed on the mkeka to remember the earth’s abundance.

Candles are placed in a kinara, a wooden candle holder. A black candle is placed in the center as a reminder of the richness of African-American skin. Three red candles represent struggles and three green candles represent a prosperous future. A candle is lit for each day of Kwanzaa. The black candle is lit first, then red and green candles are lit alternately.

There are seven principles of Kwanzaa, one for each day. They are Umoja or unity, Kuumba or self-determination, Ujima or collective work and responsibility, Ujamaa or cooperative economics, Nia or purpose, Kumbu or creativity, and Imani or faith.

Long before Christmas, people celebrated the winter solstice. The celebration made the Sun God happy and hurried the coming of spring. Celebrations are held on the eve of the shortest day of the year. A big log, the Yule Log, was burned in a great bonfire and everyone danced and sang around the fire. Families hung mistletoe from the doorways of their homes for good luck. Some people decorated their homes with evergreens.

As you can see, many of the winter solstice traditions were made part of Christmas as more and more people became Christians. The winter solstice is still celebrated by many cultures and is part of the Wiccan religion.

Depending on your country of origin, Christmas legends and traditions may vary considerably. The Christmas tree is probably the best known of our holiday plants and it is closely identified with the joy and goodwill of the season. According to legend, the Christmas tree originated in Germany with Martin Luther. While walking through a starlit, snow-covered forest he was deeply moved by the scene. In an attempt to duplicate it, he brought a small evergreen into his own home. Lit candles were attached to its boughs to simulate the reflection of the stars.

Many of us know that Feliz Navidad is the Spanish greeting for Merry Christmas in Mexico, but the Christmas celebration starts nine days before December 25 with Los Posadas. During this time people are chosen to dress as Mary and Joseph and wonder from house to house reenacting the search for lodgings in Bethlehem. People follow behind them carrying such...
**Horticulture**

**Gardening resolutions**

Before the successes and failures of the last year’s growing season fade from memory or get pushed aside by the anticipation of another growing season, why not take a moment to convert lessons learned and good intentions into resolutions for the coming year.

**I resolve to:**

- make a list of needed plants/seeds before I start browsing through seed catalogs.
- limit the size of vegetable and flower gardens to what I can care for properly.
- arrange your garden carefully and follow the plan closely so I can rotate crops properly and make good use of all available space.
- plant cool season crops early and again in mid to late summer for a fall harvest.
- harvest crops at their peak of quality and maturity. No more giant zucchini or tough beans.
- freeze or produce as soon as possible after harvest to maintain high quality.
- check plants regularly for insect problems and do a better job of controlling them.
- if available, try biological or cultural controls first, rather than chemicals to control pest problems.
- mulch earlier to control weeds.
- persist with decreased control efforts all summer to prevent weeds from going to seed and adding to next year’s problems.
- put tomato cages in place at planting time.
- plant annual flowers earlier this year.
- plant hardy trees, shrubs, perennials and other landscape plants according to a landscape plan, selecting less problem prone plants when ever possible to minimize the need for chemical sprays, pruning and other maintenance.
- place landscape prunings, grass clippings and other organic material in a compost pile.
- set up a priority system for lawn and garden resolutions so gardening and landscape maintenance continues to be a pleasant experience rather than an overwhelming list of chores. (MM)

December/January Garden Calendar

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>31</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>5 6 7</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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. (MM)

**Painting with plants**

Landscape design is an art; the art of arranging outdoor spaces to provide the maximum physical and aesthetic enjoyment. The key to good landscape art is simplicity. A well-designed garden is beautiful and functional, yet less costly in money and upkeep time.

**Pruning vines and groundcovers**

Problems with pruning can vary with the different uses of vines. Vines left unpruned for many years become unattractive. They harbor wasps, collect trash and lose their landscape effectiveness, prone them to prevent such hazards.

Vines usually cover an arbor or wall. Used in these ways, they are easily pruned to give a clean, well-kept appearance for displaying flowers or fruit. Some vines, such as honeysuckle and winter creepers, grow so fast and thick that considerable pruning may be necessary while other species need little pruning.

Prune most vines during the dormant season from February to April. Prune dead, diseased or damaged vines back to healthy wood. Cut interfering branches of woody vines, such as trumpet creepers, back below the point of intersection or at the junction with the main stem. Prune out the top one-third of overgrown or elongated stems. Prune old mature stems that are declining in vigor by one-third or more.

Pruning groundcover usually is necessary only to remove unhealthy plant parts or to promote spreading. Vigorous groundcovers include honeysuckle, winter creeper, Vinca minor, and English ivy. These groundcovers may be mowed with a rotary lawn mower or cut back to 4 to 6 inches in height every few years to keep them vigorous, neat, and well manicured. The best time to do this is in the early spring after danger of frost has passed, but before the new growth starts. (DJ)

**Keep trees fresh**

Many families will erect and decorate the traditional symbol of Christmas this season—the evergreen tree. But, what is the best way to keep the tree fresh and green throughout the holiday season?

Through the years, people have experimented with various “home recipes” to help keep the tree fresh and green. A few of the more novel recipes include the addition of sugar, 7UP, green food coloring and aspirin in the water stand. Yet, unless your tree has a headscape, there is no evidence that additives increase or prolong the freshness of a Christmas tree.

The best advice to keep a fresh tree free is to mount it in a stand that holds at least 1 1/2 times the diameter of the tree at the base. Pour lukewarm water and be careful to keep it off the foliage and crown, to keep the soil around the roots moist at all times. Water with heit should keep it blooming well into next year.

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**Cyclamen care**

Cool temperatures and bright light is the prescription for Cyclamen care. The parts of the day. (MJM)

or in a protected spot outdoors where it will be shaded during the day. (MJM)

New flowers cease to appear and the leaves turn brown, reduce the recommended strength every two weeks while it is flowering. When flowering is at its peak or elongated stems. Prune old groundcovers may be mowed with a rotary lawn mower or cut back to 4 to 6 inches in height every few years to keep them vigorous, neat, and well manicured. The best time to do this is in the early spring after danger of frost has passed, but before the new growth starts. (DJ)
A “must read” book

A Civil Action by Jonathan Harr

Last November, I was fortunate to listen to a commentary by Attorney Jan Schlitzmann about his experiences with the tragic absurdity of working with contenders of unequal power in a legal system that is geared to resolving cases that are neither seeking the truth nor justice.

A Civil Action, a true story, involves the struggles of a small group of citizens living in Woburn, Massachusetts vs. Riley Tan- ney, a division of Beatrice Foods Company. It concerns a cluster of childhood leukemia victims who lived in the neighborhood where the city water wells have been poisoned by industrial chemicals. Two of the nation’s largest corporations, each with a plant near the wells, stand accused of the absurdity of working with contenders of unequal power in a legal system.

The case turns into an epic struggle that takes nine years of combing—the non-toxic method that can eliminate head lice.

For persons concerned about the safety of insecticidal shampoos, head lice can be eliminated completely by using a special method that doesn’t seem to be working. Combing is the only method that eliminates the nits. Some products claim to dissolve the nits in the hair, but the nits are not removed by the shampoo. You will need to shampoo the hair with at least twice with regular shampoo to remove the oil.

In the end, he sacrifices everything—home, friends, and powerful and well-connected interests who would do anything to win. In the end, he sacrifices everything—home, friends, and powerful and well-connected interests who would do anything to win. In the end, he sacrifices everything—home, friends, and powerful and well-connected interests who would do anything to win.

Combing—a non-toxic method that can eliminate head lice

Last month we discussed head lice control, including inspec- tion of clothing and hair for nits and eggs. While insecticidal shampoos are safe when used as directed for use on sensitive indivi- duals may have minor allergy reactions to them.

1. Getting ready. First, purchase a special metal lice comb from a pharmacy or department store. The times of the day specially designed comb are narrower than the eggs. Do not use plastic combs provided with pesticidal shampoos; the flexibility of plastic can allow nits and lice to pass through. If you cannot find a metal lice comb, ask your pharmacist to order one. Other items that you will need are: a box of facial tissue, a large towel to place around the child’s shoulders, a large towel to place under the hair, a comb with a nail brush or an old toothbrush, a spray bottle of ammonia to two cups of hot water for 15 minutes. Metal combs can also be boiled in a hot, soapy water for 15 minutes. A comb cleaned either way can be re-used by many different children. Scrub the teeth of the comb with a nail brush or an old toothbrush to remove debris. Remember to inspect the comb with the teeth of the comb with dental floss or a small stiff brush. Beil the towels for 10 minutes or wash them in a washing machine in hot, soapy water and followed with a hot dryer.

2. Prepare the hair. Cover the child’s head with salad oil (any kind will do). Oil prevents nits from attaching themselves to the hair. As the oil smoothers some of the lice, but you cannot comb out to kill all the lice. After you finish combing, you will need to shampoo the hair at least twice with regular shampoo to remove the oil.

3. Combing. Seat the child so his/her head is just below eye level. Comb the hair with a regular large toothed comb to remove nits.

—Separate a mass of hair that is slightly wider than the width of your lice comb and about 1/2 to 3/4 inch in the other direction. It is important to separate the hair into small sections so you can more easily see lice and nits.

—Hold the mass of hair with one hand. With the other hand, hold the lice comb in a slanting position with the curved side of the teeth toward the head.

—Insert the comb into the hair as close to the scalp as possible since the eggs are first laid within 1/2 inch of the scalp. Pull the comb slowly through the hair several times.

—Comb one section at a time and check each section to make sure it is clean, then plug it out of the way, curling it flat against the head. Whenever you comb out nits or live lice, dunk the comb in the soapy water. Make sure the lice and nits are off the comb before you use it on the hair again. Frequently remove the hair and other debris from the comb with a tissue. When the tissue becomes soaked, place it in the bowl of soapy water. When the bowl is full, flush its contents down the toilet and refill the bowl with soapy water.

—When all the hair has been combed, shampoo the hair twice to remove the oil. Once the hair is completely dry, again check the entire head for stray nits and remove those hairs individually with a pair of small, pointed scissors.

4. Cleaning Up. Soak the lice comb in hot ammonia water, prepared by adding one teaspoon of ammonia to two cups of hot water for 15 minutes. Metal combs can also be boiled in plain water for 15 minutes. A comb cleaned either way can be re-used by many different children. Scrub the teeth of the comb with a nail brush or an old toothbrush to remove debris. Remember to inspect the comb with the teeth of the comb with dental floss or a small stiff brush. Beil the towels for 10 minutes or wash them in a washing machine in hot, soapy water and followed with a hot dryer.

Head lice control also includes washing bedding and drying it in a hot dryer to prevent re-infestation.

Source: For a fact sheet that includes this and last month’s article, call the Lancaster County Cooperative Extension Office and ask for fact sheet 018-98, “Controlling Head Lice Safely.” (BPO)

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A mouse in the house

• Mice are excellent climbers and can run up almost any rough- ened wall without breaking stride.
• Mice, although preferring not to swim, can do so. More than 100 species can swim, although preferring not to swim.
• Mice can jump a vertical distance of 12 inches from the floor onto an elevated flat surface.
• Mice are capable of squeezing through an opening slightly larger than 1/4 inch in diameter (about the size of a dime).
• Mice can run horizontally along pipes, wires and ropes.
• In six months, one pair of mice can eat about 4 pounds of food and in that same period produce 18,000 fecal droppings.
• Mice feeding on colored crayons will produce droppings based on the color of the crayon they feed on.
• Mice chew on electrical wires and thereby are capable of starting fires.
• Mice are not blind, but have poor vision and cannot clearly see beyond 6 inches. At 45 feet, they respond to outlines, not details.

Source: Handbook of Pest Control, Mallis, 7th Edition (SC)

Use care of home humidifiers

Humidifiers are commonly used in homes to relieve the physical discomforts of dry nose, throat, lips and skin. The moisture they add to dry air also helps alleviate new common susceptances brought on by winter heating, such as static electricity, peeling wallpaper and cracks in paint and furniture.

Some federal studies have shown that ultrasonic and impeller (or “cool mist”) humidifiers can disperse materials, such as micro-

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After Christmas, we take all the decorations and tinsel off our Christmas tree. We take the tree outside and tie it to the trunk of a big tree outside our home. The big tree has all our bird feeders in it so lots of birds hang out there. We use a rope to tie the Christmas tree to the big tree. We hang some seeds and suet in the tree.

The Christmas tree helps keep the little birds safe from the hawks. It also keeps the wind and snow off the birds. The birds hide in the tree to get away from the mangy, black cat that hides under mom’s car.

In springtime, we take the Christmas tree to grandpa’s farm. Grandpa puts the tree in a pile in the woods with other branches and old Christmas trees. The birds hide in the pile and build their nests there. Rabbits like to live in the pile.

The lesson is: You’ve finished enjoying your Christmas tree, there are lots of other good uses for it. (SC)
Crop Protection Clinic

The 1999 Crop Protection Clinic will be held Tuesday, January 5, so be sure to mark your calendar. This annual clinic is designed to provide the latest information on plant diseases, weeds and insects that pose specific problems for agricultural producers in this region of Nebraska. Integrated Pest Management is the approach taken by all presenters to selecting the current issues in crop production. Registration opens at 8 a.m. and presentations conclude at 4 p.m. Commercial applicators who need recertification in the agricultural plants will complete the required 10 hours of recertification credit.

The registration fee of $20 includes the cost of the program supplies, refreshments and the noon meal. Advanced registration is not mandatory but helps determine a meal count. Detailed proceedings, refreshments and the noon meal. Advanced registration is not mandatory but helps determine a meal count. Detailed proceedings, refreshments and the noon meal. Advanced registration is not mandatory but helps determine a meal count.

The Power of a PTO

Do you know someone who has been hurt by a power takeoff? Just about every farmer does. Like many farm machines, a power takeoff, or “PTO,” can be a useful tool—or a lethal one. Used in the right way, a PTO can safely power your augers, mowers, choppers, and even implements. Used in the wrong way, a PTO can rip off your arm, crush your skull, or sever your spine. In Nebraska, PTO’s on farm tractors have killed several people and maimed hundreds of others over the years. Don’t endanger yourself or your loved ones by underestimating the power of a PTO. The PTO can spin around 1,000 times per minute. That’s 16 times per second! Toss a six-foot rope over a spinning PTO, it’ll wrap around the shaft in less than a second. Now, imagine that rope is your shoe lace—or your sleeve. How fast could you pull free? You’d need nearly a full second just to realize you’ve been caught.

Electrical wires are insulated. Manure pits are covered. It’s just common sense to cover up something that’s a farm hazard. It’s also state law that any new or used tractor sold by a dealer must have a PTO master shield. The master shield covers the front U-joint and connector, a frequent site of entanglement. On newer PTO’s, a drive line shield covers and spins independently of the drive line shaft. Other PTO shields that attach directly to the implement are available. Most of them cost less than $200 (and even the most expensive shock shield costs less than a day in the hospital). Sometimes shields are offered free, check with your equipment dealer.


Landlords need to reduce cash crop rental rates for ’99

With crop commodity prices at 20-year lows and having little chance of improvement with the fall’s bumper crop, agricultural landlords need to consider lowering cash rental rates for 1999. Tenants who are cash renting at competitive rates this year are re-thinking what they can pay in 1999. Projected earnings may not justify those same rates next year. Landlords who are uninform ed may not be planning to decrease

Deadline near for requesting free inspection in compliance with Livestock Waste Management Act

What is LB1209 and does it affect you? The Nebraska legislature has had legislation in place for a number of years which authorizes the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, under Title 130, to administer the state’s livestock waste control regulations. The Livestock Waste Control Management Act (LB1209), passed by the 1998 legislative session and signed into law on April 15 by Governor Nelson, affects various aspects of the way DEQ administrators and enforces provisions of Title 130. Under LB1209, “livestock operations” are defined. All operations meeting the criteria to be classed as a livestock operation (see definition below) must request an inspection by the DEQ. The purpose of the inspection is to determine the potential for waste control problems from that operation to pollute surface water or groundwater. Those found to have potential to cause pollution must request to be obtained a livestock waste control facility permit. Many of the state’s livestock feeding operations are already operating under a livestock waste control permit. The legislation clarifies which operations need a permit, sets deadlines and specifies fines for those found in violation. (Violation of any requirement of LB1209, including failure to request an inspection by January 1, 2000, as subject to a fine of up to $10,000 per day of violation.)

Who needs to request a DEQ inspection? Under LB1209, any “livestock operation,” regardless of size, needs to request an inspection from the DEQ to determine if a livestock waste facility is required. Facilities are excluded. If the answer is “no,” you don’t need to request a DEQ inspection. If the answer is “yes” you need to answer the next question.

Under LB1209, any “livestock operation,” regardless of size, needs to request an inspection from the DEQ to determine if a livestock waste facility is required.

What defines a “livestock operation” under LB1209? “Livestock operations” is defined as the feeding or holding of beef cattle, dairy cattle, horses, swine, sheep, poultry or other livestock in buildings, lots or pens which normally are not used for the growing of crops or pasture. To qualify as a livestock operation, you need to answer the following two questions to determine whether you need to request an inspection. First, are the livestock located in buildings, lots, or pens? (Calving facilities are excluded). If the answer is “no,” you don’t need to request a DEQ inspection. If the answer is “yes” you need to answer the next question.

Under LB1209, any “livestock operation,” regardless of size, needs to request an inspection from the DEQ to determine if a livestock waste facility is required.

What does it cost to have an inspection done? If the request for an inspection is made before January 1, 1999 there is no fee for an inspection. After January 1, 1999, an inspection fee will be charged. The fee will be based on the size of the operation, $50 for small operations and $500 for large operations. Call the DEQ (402-471-2186) to ask about the fee schedule.

If the inspection determines that a waste control facility permit is required, what additional steps need to be taken? Permit application must be sent to the DEQ, along with a permit fee which varies with the size of the operation. The permit process too will take a few months to cover completely in this article, but a few major items include: NRD’s will be notified, and if the inspection is relevant to DEQ’s evaluation of the permit. There are “bad actor” provisions which can be used to deny or alter the permit to individuals with poor records in complying with environmental regulations in Nebraska or other states. County government will be notified and given the opportunity to comment on the application. Public notice will also be given on large (Class I and Class IV) operations presumably so they can make their concerns known to appropriate authorities. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality will be notified of any violations. An application for a livestock waste control facility permit must be submitted to the DEQ to determine if a livestock waste facility is required. (TD)

BEEF HOME STUDY COURSE BEGINS FIFTH YEAR

Due to the success of the NU Beef Basics home study courses, they will again be offered across Nebraska. They are designed to assist beef producers in making management decisions for improving profitability. Most basic production, veterinary and agribusiness people find it difficult to be away from their busy schedules to attend university courses. These courses allow the participants to sharpen their beef cattle management knowledge without making a large time commitment away from their family and business.

Courses were developed and sponsored by the University of Nebraska Coopera tive Extension Service, the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. There are four beef basics courses that each specialize in a particular area of beef cattle production. For that reason, participants may enroll in any or all of the following courses:

Beef Basics I. Provides lessons on cow nutrition, ration formulations, and forage analysis.

Beef Basics II. A lesson on beef production and alfalfa production leads to information on grazing strategies and management. A lesson on feed ration economics will also be included.

Beef Basics III. Focuses on the preparation of carcasses for market, preservation, and specifications, implant programs and health programs for the growing calf. Other lessons will cover health management, health management, and the herd to fit producer resources requirements.

Beef Basics IV. Entitled, “Beef as a Business,” this course
Developing your marketing plan

State-of-the-art marketing today means being sensitive and responsive to customer needs and providing the products and services customers want, not just presenting what you have, and hoping they will buy. The traditional viewpoint in agriculture has been, "I am a wheat farmer. How can I get people to eat more of my wheat?" This tendency to focus on our product as the reason we exist is fatal in today's marketplace. We must recognize that we are in business to serve our customers' needs, and let the customers dictate the type and form of our products.

The kind of marketing that will make your small-scale farming operation profitable is niche marketing. Finding a unique aspect or type of buyer in the market, and focusing your efforts on reaching that niche. Simply stated, this means you will want to differentiate your product, or set it apart from those of your competitors and target it to a select group of customers with unique needs.

Market Research

The first thing you need is information, professionals call it market research. You need to know who your customers are, where they live, what they buy, how they buy, when they buy, and who influences their purchases. Additionally, a market-oriented producer wants to know about customer needs that are not being satisfied.

Another form of practical market research that any individual can do inexpensively is simply to ask your customers what they want. This can be done in the form of a personal interview, a survey, a telephone call, or a simple questionnaire. If you own a roadside stand, ask those people who purchase from you or shop at your stand, why they stopped, what are they looking for, and what else can you do to satisfy and meet their needs.

Planning

Knowing your customers' needs and having a written program to consistently satisfy those needs, is vital. Developing a marketing plan can be a simple project that can yield tremendous, long-term benefits. Having a usable marketing plan allows one to react to changes more effectively when they occur, but most importantly, the purpose of planning for an agricultural marketer is to maximize limited resources.

Finding your niche in the market means finding customers who have needs that you can satisfy better than anyone else. It means differentiating your product to a specific segment of customers. Developing a lasting relationship with those customers so they perceive you to be specially qualified or equipped to satisfy their unique demands. If there has been one significant development that has characterized the "cutting edge" of marketing today, "niche" marketing is it.

Product Strategy

The single most important strategy for a successful small farm marketing program today is to produce the highest quality agricultural products that there is nothing that can be done about their inability to control their fate.

By knowing your costs of production and allowing yourself a fair percentage return on your investment, you should be the one to determine the price for your product that allows you to stay in business. If the customer will not buy at your calculated price brought to market, then future marketing considerations will need to be considered.

Place

Out of financial necessity, the battle cry of the innovative producer today is, GET CLOSE TO YOUR FINAL CONSUMER! If you are a small farmer, this can be approached through roadside stands, farmer's markets or developing relationships with local markets and restaurants.

Promotion

The last major category of marketing strategy is that of promotion or communication. It's the activity that a marketer does to communicate to the marketplace or customers that he or she has the features and benefits to satisfy the needs of potential customers. The activities available to one in this area include advertising, personal selling, public relations and publicity, along with special promotional incentives.

When making decisions on how and if to advertise, it is important to ask yourself a simple question. What specific media does my target market utilize? How do they listen to? Precisely reaching the largest number of people in your target market for your dollar is very important, and the method of mass communications you select should be governed by this principle. Because of this, direct mail offers an effective way of communicating your message.

Advertising has its place, but don't be mesmerized into neglecting the oldest, and by far the most effective, form of marketing communications, the personal sales call. People make buying decisions, and nothing beats the power of a person-to-person relationship between buyer and seller. (D3)

Chain saw operation

The safest and least tiring way of sawing is to cut with the backward-running, or lower part of the saw bar close to the bumper. Sawing with the forward-running or upper part makes it difficult to control the saw and increases the risk of kickback. Do not try to overreach while using a chain saw. It can cause a loss of grip on the chain saw. Never cut over your head or cut with the nose of the saw. Avoid forcing the saw when cutting. Be alert for wire and nails in the wood.

Carry the saw at your side with one hand, holding the cutting bar to the rear and the muffler side away from your body. Stop the engine to carry the saw in a rough, bumpy area or if the distance between cuts is more than 30 feet. Chain saw kickback can cause serious injuries. When cutting, the chain is traveling about 65 feet per second. If kickback occurs, it will be over within 2 to 3 seconds. This does not give the operator time to react.

Kickback often occurs when cutting with the nose of the saw. During this process, only one or two cutters engage in the wood at a given time and the chain will jam. This will cause the saw to kickback rapidly, backward and upward.

Prevent kickback injuries by:

• holding the saw firmly with both hands;
• keeping the thumb around the top handle;
• holding the saw firmly with both hands;
• keeping the thumb around the top handle;

Commercial handling of fresh culinary herbs

All the post-harvest principles that apply to leafy green tissues apply also to the handling of fresh herbs. Temperature is the single most important factor in maintaining freshness of harvested herbs. Optimum post-harvest tempera-
1998 Nutrition Education Program—adult program impact in Lancaster County

The Lancaster County NEP staff taught 4,656 nutrition education lessons to 1,481 adults who care for 5,724 family members. This is a 28% increase from the number of families enrolled in 1997.

**IMPACT**

NEP graduates have changed targeted behaviors as measured by the National EFNEP Evaluation Reporting System. The following behavioral changes of program graduates indicate impact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral Changes</th>
<th>1998 NEP Lancaster County (% of graduates)</th>
<th>National Data as reported by USDA EFNEP, July ’98</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Resource Management: Plan meals, use grocery lists, do not run out of food or cut children’s meals because of not enough money.</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Practices: Make healthy food choices, prepare food without adding salt, read nutrition labels for fat and sodium, feed children breakfast</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety: Thawing and storing food properly</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most important, are the positive comments which participants provide.

**How can you tell when food is “done”?**

**Classic Beef Rib Eye Roast**

```
Makes 8 to 12 servings
Total preparation and cooking time: 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 hours

6 to 8 pounds well-trimmed beef rib eye roast
Seasoning:
6 large cloves garlic, crushed
1-1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
1 teaspoon cracked black pepper

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Combine seasoning ingredients. Press evenly into surface of beef roast. Prepare roast as described above. Roast approximately 2-1/4 to 2-1/2 hours for medium rare; 2-3/4 to 3 hours for medium.
```

According to a survey published in USA Today, “knowing when a dish is done” is one of the top cooking concerns. Around 36% of the population have trouble with this aspect of cooking. Here are some tips to help assure that food is done, but not overcooked. In many cases, “doneness” helps ensure safety as well as quality. For greatest safety, use a thermometer to test temperatures.

**Cakes**

Cakes are baked until they are browned. Help assure uniform doneness by baking cookies of similar shape and size on the cookie sheet. Cakes may dent slightly and still be done. For very rich cakes and chocolate cakes may dent slightly and still be done. In general, cookies are baked until they are lightly browned. Help assure uniform doneness by baking cookies of similar shape and size on the cookie sheet.

**Eggs**

Eggs. Cook eggs thoroughly so both yolks and whites are firm, not runny. Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator and freezer to be sure they stay at the recommended temperatures. You can buy a thermometer at a discount, hardware or grocery store.

**Diabetes Study Course**

Call Alice Henneman (441-7180) for more information.
Jean's Journal

Jean Wheelock
FCE Council Chair

Where does time go? It speeds by so quickly that it’s hard to believe that the holiday season is nearly here. Our achievement night was a BIG success. A huge “thank you” to Clarice Steffens and her club, the Salt Creek Circle, and her committee who did a super job with the program, decorations and desserts. Each club mentioned what their club is doing as a community project. We may be a small group, but the variety of ideas presented was tremendous. We can make a difference!! Some projects included money/items for the center for abused women; Lincoln Regional Center; Friendship Home; Cedars Home; food bank; Headstart; Project Linus; Lancaster Manor; items such as crayons and books for LAP; and lap robes. Our community is made better by having people such as our FCE members. With the holiday season fast approaching, let’s all remember that many of us have plenty of things rather than buying surplus “things”, give to those who truly need. I hope everyone can be blessed with health, happiness and good friends throughout the new year. Happy Holidays!

Jean Wheelock
FCE Council Chair

The best toys are versatile

LaDeane Jha
Extension Educator

In general, the best toys are the most versatile. “Open-ended” toys, including blocks, dolls, playhouses, even cartons, pots and pans, are valuable in that they can be used over and over, in numerous ways, by children of various ages. Often toys that become classics fit the above description. Classic toys are enduring, they encourage your child’s involvement, are “child-powered” and, of course, fun. Do you remember playing with some of these favorites as a child—jacks and balls, jump rope, paper dolls, kites and marbles. Imagine the times you’ve played with a Yo-Yo, Etch-A-Sketch or Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head. These are among many of the great toys that have become classics and never go out of style. What are some of the toys you consider classics? Are they open ended? Do they allow for imagination and creativity?

The January FCE and community leader training lesson, Decision Making, How To Get Involved, is scheduled for Thursday, January 7, 1 or 7 p.m. LaDeane Jha, extension educator will present the lesson. This lesson will help participants learn how to actively become involved in the decisions being made within their neighborhood, civic organizations or community(ies).

Anyone interested may attend. Non-FCE members should call 441-7180, so packets can be prepared. (LB/LJ)

Kids and holiday stress

If the holidays are such a time of joy for kids, why is your older one sulking and the younger one sobbing? It could be a case of overload. There is so much expectation and stimulation, that kids become confused and uncertain of how to react. Here’s how to make sure this time of “peace on earth” remains that for your kids.

• Pick your battles. Stand firm on the important stuff and let the rest slide.
• Schedule quiet time. Usually kids act up because they are over-stimulated. Make sure they get breaks from noise and confusion.
• Set your priorities and don’t get lost in the trivia. Keep family rituals even if it means sacrificing another party.
• Don’t spend too much. Set an example for children.
• Give kids a role in preparations.
• Invite kids to think of others and plan special things to do for them.
• Stick to a schedule as much as you can.
• Go with the flow when your routine falls apart.
• Lower your standards. If your kids eat too much candy, or miss two hours’ sleep one night, it doesn’t ultimately matter.
• Hang onto small rituals. When the kids do go to bed late take time for the rituals that make them feel secure. It’s OK to skip the bath—but don’t skip the bedtime story and the hugs and kisses.

Remember holidays are supposed to be a joyous time—for the kids as well as adults. Sometimes in our rushing around, we forget that this holiday is for them to be involved and to enjoy. (LJ)

Enroll for Money 2000+

Looking for a way to increase your financial bottom line by the end of the year 2000? Money 2000+ may be your answer.

What is Money 2000+?

It is an educational program sponsored by University of Nebraska Extension to help you increase your savings—and reduce your debt—all by the year 2000.

What happens in Money 2000+?

As a Money 2000+ enrollee, you decide how much you want to increase savings (and investments), and how much you want to decrease your debt. You receive a bi-monthly newsletter to help you keep on track with special “bonuses” in many issues. You will have discounts towards educational programs and materials related to finances and family life. It may be possible for us to form a group to support one another in reaching our goals.

Will I have to share personal financial information?

No one must share their personal finances in Money 2000+, but if you choose to do so, that’s your decision.

What makes Money 2000+ different?

The state coordinator for Money 2000+ will contact you every other month to check on your progress. If you choose to do so, that’s your decision.

FCE Council Chair

Jean Wheelock
Speech VIPS wanted
It is time to start organizing the 1999 Lancaster County Speech Workshop and Contest. We are looking for people to serve as committee members to bring new and exciting ideas. This is a short-term commitment. If you would like to become a part of the fun, please call Deanna at 441-7180 and sign up today. (DK)

Upcoming livestock progress shows
The time will be arriving that many show fliers will be coming in the mail. This year, I have decided to post them on the Lancaster County web site, the address is http://ianrwww.unl.edu/ian/lanc/4h/news.htm. For those of you who do not have internet access, I will also post them in my office. For more detailed information on the shows, please call Deanna at 441-7180. (DK)

4-H Volunteer Forum
Mark your calendar for February 5 and 6 and plan to attend the Nebraska State 4-H Volunteer Forum in Grand Island. This forum is a conference developed by a committee of 4-H volunteers from across the state. Network with other 4-H leaders, exchange successful 4-H programs among 4-H leaders and be introduced to new areas and projects. There will be numerous workshops 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, please contact Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

Got jars?
Gallon size, wide-mouthed glass jars will be needed for several upcoming 4-H projects. If you have any that you would like to donate or recycle, please bring them to the Lancaster County extension office at 444 Cherrycreek Road. (DK)

Become a National 4-H intern
National 4-H Council is looking for college age students to serve as program assistants. It’s an excellent opportunity for youth to learn more about the nation’s capital. Program assistants will conduct field trips and workshops, facilitate, implement and assist groups and group coordinators during programs offered at the center. Program assistants receive compensation and free room and board at the National 4-H Center. Applications are due January 15 for summer (mid-May to mid-August). To request an application or information, call the National 4-H Center at (301) 961-2801. (DK)

1999 Kansas City
4-H Youth Conference
The 1999 Kansas City 4-H Youth Conference—“Reach Out From the Heartland: Globally and Culturally” is being held March 12-15, 1999 at the Adams Mark Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri. Conference highlights include an ethnic enrichment evening, a wide variety of workshop choices, choice of tours to global and high-tech corporations, choice of service-learning opportunities, evening recreation/dances and more.

Registration is due January 8, 1999, and is $240 for the weekend. This includes bus transportation from Lincoln to Kansas City, conference fees, meals and lodging. For more information, contact Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)
Some Christmas gift ideas (for the horse lover)

As I become more familiar with the horse industry, I am frequently astounded by the number of supplies I didn’t even know existed. So how could I possibly come up with a Christmas wish for you horse lovers? Here’s a list of equine supplies, at various prices. I hope at least one of these suggestions can help someone out. So, start dropping some hints...it’s almost Christmas!

**The horse cap** $6.99  
Soak in water (or water-based fly spray) to keep your horse comfortable in hot weather.

**Horse head hitching post** $14.95  
Crafted of heavy duty cast iron to last generations.

**Horse statue U.S. mailbox** $69.95  
Tell's you which way the wind is blowing while proclaiming your love of horses.

**Soapie ponies** $2.95  
Scent free glycerin soap with a horse toy inside.

**Measuring cane** $18.95  
Combination walking stick and measuring standard that folds into the hardwood cane.

**Guineas**  
A great opportunity for training in the national character education program, Character Counts!, will be Tuesday, January 19, 1999, 9 a.m.-Noon. This training will prepare you to use the Character Counts! curriculm in your own educational settings. Learn about trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, citizenship and decision-making. If you have questions or are interested in attending please contact LaDeane Jha or Karen Whitson at 441-7180. Registration Fee: $5.00. (KW)

**Horse Bits**  
A great opportunity for training in the national character education program, Character Counts!, will be Tuesday, January 19, 1999, 9 a.m.-Noon. This training will prepare you to use the Character Counts! curriculm in your own educational settings. Learn about trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, citizenship and decision-making. If you have questions or are interested in attending please contact LaDeane Jha or Karen Whitson at 441-7180. Registration Fee: $5.00. (KW)

**1999 4-H Teen Council officers**  
President: ................................................ Valerie Lemke  
Vice President: ............................... Megan Bergman  
Secretary: ............................... Jessie Schrader  
Treasurer: ............................... J.R. Schepers  
Historians: ............................... Brenda Faila and Connie Lemke  
Leader: .............................................. Marilyn Schepers

**Guinea pigs are great pets**  
Another name for the guinea pig is cavy. The cavy is really a small rodent native to South America where Indians used these little creatures for pets and sometimes, for food. The name guinea pig may have come from the fact that they were commonly sold in England for the price of one guinea. A cavy is shaped like an eggplant with feet. It has no tail. Guinea pigs are gentle. They live a long time, as long as seven years or more. They are odorless, but their cage may become smelly if you forget to change the litter. Caves are inexpensive to feed, resistant to disease and pleasant to handle. A cavy may be described as a clean, cuddly hairy lump that whistles. Care must be taken against falls. A guinea pig can be severely injured if dropped. Guinea pigs come in many colors and patterns. There are English, Peruvian and Abyssinian.

**Character Counts!**

**Free chops**

In January, we will begin the Lancaster County Embryology unit with the schools and we will have baby chops available to the public for free!

Chicks will be hatching on or about January 26, March 2, April 13 and May 18. If you are interested in receiving any of these chicks, please call Ellen at 441-7180. (EK)

**Holiday gift ideas**

If you need great gift ideas, here they are! The Lancaster County Citizen Washington Focus group will be selling prepaid phone cards and Village Inn pie certificates during the holiday season. The phone cards cost only $10 and are good for 30 minutes. The pie certificates will sell for $10. Also, if you would like to purchase either of these two items, please call Deanna at 441-7180. All proceeds will be used to offset costs of the youth’s trip to Washington D.C. this coming June. (DK)

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Guinea pigs come in many colors and patterns. There are English, Peruvian and Abyssinian.

Guinea pigs are not very fussy about where they live. They do need to be dry, out of a draft and not too cold. You will probably keep your guinea pig indoors in a cage or glass-sided house. Your pet will need at least two square feet of space. Since guinea pigs are not climbers, a secure wire screen top is necessary only for safety from other animals. You can use wood shavings, coarse sawdust, shredded newspaper or hay for litter on the bottom of your pet’s pen. Change it as often as necessary.

Guinea pigs are unappry and uncomfortable at temperatures below 40 degrees or over 90 degrees. Be sure your pet has plenty of cool water. Your pet will appreciate a snug little house made by cutting an opening in one end of a shoe box turned upside down without the lid. It will not last long because guinea pigs like to chew up anything they can get their teeth into—even the wood of their cage. This chewing is necessary for the proper wearing down of their teeth.

Cavies are vegetarians. That means they eat only plants and fresh produce. Any vegetables, fruits and green forage plants may be offered. Be sure they are washed clean and crisp. A guinea pig will refuse to eat certain vegetables like onion, peppers and potatoe. They may enjoy occasional feedings of whole grains such as corn, oats, wheat or milo.

And...you will want to play with your pet regularly and gently, feeding it from your hand and stroking its fur. It will be far happier if you do. (ALH)
**Lancaster County “Volunteer of the Month” is Alice Doane**

Alice Doane has been a strong positive supporter of Cooperative Extension for many years. Alice has been active in both the adult and youth programs. She and her husband, Ted, served as volunteer 4-H leaders for approximately 20 years and continue to support the 4-H program. Alice served as the Family and Community Education (FCE) Club Council vice president and president for two years each. She has given many hours to help build the extension program through developing leadership skills in youth and adults.

Alice is also active in many other community organizations (Waverly, Grange, Methodist Church, senior center and Make It With Wool Contest state coordinator). Hosting international visitors and school tours to their farm is a highlight for the Doanes. Alice is a super volunteer and goes beyond the call of duty to help and recognize others and is always there with a helping hand. (GB)

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### Aging in America

One of the profound trends underway in America today is the aging of our population. About 35 million people, one in every eight, is 65 years of age or older. The older population in this category has more than doubled since 1960. It will double again by the turn of the century. The aging of America will have an important impact on all aspects of American life. Some responses will come in the private sector. Health care, housing and leisure activities are some of the areas that seem sure to receive attention.

Other needs will best be responded to in the public sector. As it turns out, health care and housing also top the agenda here, simply because not all citizens will be able to provide for themselves through the private sector. All levels of government will be affected both by the need to provide service to seniors and the ability to generate taxes and fees from this group of citizens. It’s not necessarily going to be an easy fix.

A 1996 U.S. Census report, 65+ in the United States, notes that a relatively brief “window of opportunity” exists currently for state and local policymakers to plan to address the challenges and opportunities of the “age wave.” But it will vanish soon if planning is not coordinated among the array of state/local organizations that have responsibility for various programs.

A first step is to attain the best projections possible on number of seniors to be served and their age ranges. The needs of 65 year olds typically are much different than 85 year olds. The latter group is growing rapidly in many communities, but the federal level, Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security, the major entitlement programs for seniors, are among the fastest growing and costliest categories of federal spending. In 1997, the federal government spent nearly $500 billion on these programs. States also made significant contributions, especially for Medicare.

Many people assume that the long-term care needs of the elderly are covered by Medicare.

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### Lincoln Public Schools is ready to recycle!

Each year LPS has been able to provide a model for waste management and recycling in public schools and administrative offices that can be easily replicated throughout the LPS system. Pilot schools have been selected and information will be gathered via waste assessments to develop a waste minimization program.

This information will create a database to better understand waste generation and management and will help establish best practices that have an even greater impact and effectiveness of the program.

The recycling program will also include an educational component. LPS will integrate an economical and environmentally sound waste minimization program into the LPS environmental education curriculum.

Within the two-year grant period, the program will be refined and implemented throughout the district. (GB)
Holiday legends, traditions and fun
continued from page front page

things as candles and decorated shepherds’ crooks. On the final night a portion of the place to stay and a party begins with guitar music, dancing and food. It ends with a pinata. Luminarias are a Mexican tradition that many of us have adopted in recent years and Santos or creches are an important part of a Mexican Christmas. The figures are used to recreate the nativity scene at the town’s church. At midnight, on Christma

The use and care of home humidifiers
continued from page 3

organisms and minerals, from their water tanks into indoor air. A high warming of ultrasonic and impeller humidifi-

cers are important to reduce potential exposures to microorgan-

organisms, such as bacteria and molds. Microorganisms often grow on humidifiers spraying water into tanks containing standing water. Breathing mist containing these organisms can be partially implicated as causing a certain type of inflammation of the lungs.

The federal government has not concluded that the dispersal of minerals by home humidifiers poses a serious health risk. However, researchers have documented that these humidifiers are very effective at dispersing minerals in tap water into the air. In addition, some consumers are bothered by a white “dust” that may appear on surfaces during the use of these devices. Most importantly, minerals in tap water may increase the development of crusty deposits, or scale, in humidifiers. Scale can be a breeding ground for microorganisms.

Commercial handling of fresh culinary herbs
continued from page 5

Herbs can be packaged in bags and the stems may be partially ventilated to prevent water loss. When herbs are packaged this way, it is particularly important to maintain constant temperatures to reduce growth of microorganisms.

Ethylene gas is another factor which limits the shelf life of leafy tissues. Ethylene causes yellowing of leaves and an increase in the rate of deterioration. It is possible to routinely find

Holiday visitors

The holidays often bring visits from family and friends who live far away. This causes stress as visitors are important to reduce conden-
sation and to clean it. The young, the elderly, and people with lung diseases or respiratory allergies may be particularly susceptible to certain types of airborne pollutants.

Following these recommendations reduces the potential for dispersal of microorganisms and minerals from your humidifier.

Source: Shirley Niemeyer, home environment specialist, UNL, (BPO)

Beef home study course begins fifth year
continued from page 4

discusses goal setting, personnel and family issues, financial and money management, as well as business plans and record keeping systems. This 10-lesson course was developed by a team of ranchers, bankers and cooperative extension faculty.

Producers are encouraged to answer questions on the weekly quizzes. After returning the quizzes to the county extension office, the quiz will be graded and returned to the class member. The enrollment fee includes all educational materials plus a 3-ring binder to help organize lesson material. Each person completing the lessons and quizzes will receive a certification of completion from the University of Nebraska. Contact the Lancaster Cooperative Extension Office for more information and the registration form. (WS)

Landlords need to reduce cash crop rental rates for ’99
continued from page 4

June 17 payment instead even raise the payments as has been the trend for the last five years. But most landlords want to do what is fair and right and are willing to renegotiate. Landlords and tenants have good working relationships and rental rates have been kept current in the past, it stands to reason that now is the time to think downward. Lessening rents can contribute to long run prosperity and can be a win-win situations.

Most of the negotiating with 1999 rental rates are still under-

How can you tell when food is “done”? continued from page 6

medium, and 170 degrees F are well done.

When you cut into thoroughly cooked meat, there should be no trace of pink in the juices. Large cuts of red meat, like roasts and steaks, can stay slightly pink in the center if they have reached at least 145 degrees F. DO NOT serve any large cut at this lower temperature if it has been scored (cut or poked with a fork) or tenderized before cooking since any juices will run into the center. Cook scored and tenderized meats to 160 degrees F.

Poultry. Cook pasta until it’s “al dente”, tender yet still firm. To test for doneness, cut into town near the top near the bone; maintaining adequate sap quality while testing or completing a cut. Chain breakage can cause serious accidents and are nearly always the result of a poorly maintained saw. Because of the saw’s high speed, the flying cutters can embed themselves in the body. There is little risk of breakage in a chain that is properly sharpened, well lubricated and correctly adjusted for tension. (DJ)

Chain saw operation continued from page 5

• using a saw equipped with a chain brake or kickback guard; watching for twigs that can snap; not pinching the bar; sawing with the lower part of the bar, not on the top near the

The best toys are versatile continued from page 7

Do they pose a challenge? Are they funny?

By preparing children and adults to match toys to the child’s needs, parents can help them to avoid frustration and to imagine, create and explore. Toys often allow the child’s first attempts to do a task. Toys are often considered as an indi-

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Miscellaneous

Enroll now for Money 2000+ continued from page 1

six months to find out how much progress you have made toward the goals you set when you first enrolled. Just knowing someone will check on you can help you stick to your Money 2000+ goals.

How do I enroll?

Call the Lancaster County Extension Office and ask for a Money 2000+ enrollment packet. Return the enrollment form and the $15 enrollment fee. You will then be sent the first edition of Money 2000+ News and will be kept up-to-date on all future programs in support of Money 2000+. If you have further questions about the program, contact LaDeane Jha at 441-7180. (LJ)

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continued from page 4

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Y2K FAQs continued from page 10

and their interactions with each other make it time-consuming to implement. That makes the Y2K problem primarily a question for management: In the short time left, how can we best marshal the resources to deal with it?

8. What is the Federal Government doing about the Y2K problem?

Federal agencies have been working on this for several years, some as early as 1989. Internally, they are working to ensure that their own mission-critical systems are compliant. Externally, they are making inventories of all their data exchanges with outside business partners, such as State and local Governments with whom the Federal sector works to operate Federal programs, to minimize disruptions. For high-risk areas, agencies are developing contingency plans to ensure that they will be able to conduct business even if their systems or the outside services on which they depend are not available. Most recently, through the Federal Government’s President’s Council on Year 2000 Conversion, agencies are reaching out to domestic and international organizations that are part of the economic sectors in which the agencies operate in order to increase awareness of the problem and to offer support.

9. What can you do?

The most important thing is to start asking the right questions about their own distinctive situations and begin gathering the facts. Leaders should find out if there is a problem internally, and if so, the extent of the problem. Individual principals and firms should know what their own business are going to do to address the problem and what the organizations they depend upon—suppliers, service providers, financial institutions, etc.—are doing as well. In addition, contingency plans that address major risks to company operations should be developed.

10. Where can people get more information on the year 2000 problem?

Some of the best Y2K information is available on the Web. The President’s Council on Year 2000 Conversion recommends the Year 2000 pages of the Federal Government’s Chief Information Officers Council Committee on Year 2000 (http://www.itPolicy.gao.gov/mkt/ yr2000/ycrhome.htm). This site is building Y2K information linked to sectors of the U.S. economy. The President’s Council also recommends the Small Business Administration (http://www.sba.gov/yr2k) site. Industry trade associations are another source of Y2K information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) home page (http://www.usda.gov/) provides frequent updates (select the “Y2K” button) on Y2K activities as well as a variety of Y2K information sources, including:

• USDA Year 2000 Program Office, USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer (http://www.ocio.usda.gov/yr2k/index.html).

• President’s Council on Year 2000 Food Supply Working Group (http://www.apthx.usda.gov/oco/yr2k).

• USDA National Information Technology Center (http://www.ocio.usda.gov/mitc/2k/index.html).


• USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. (http://www.neusda.gov/yr2k). (GB)