National Agriculture Week is March 4–10
A Time to Celebrate and Reflect About Nebraska’s Leading Industry

When you think about it, just about everything we eat, wear, or use comes from agriculture.

Often agriculture is visualized as only farmers tilling the soil or ranchers tending their livestock. And, while farmers and ranchers represent a fundamental part of agriculture, they actually contribute to the production aspect of a very large agricultural industry fueling our state’s economy and creating millions of jobs nationwide.

In fact, one in three Nebraska jobs are tied to agriculture. This includes everything from supplying basic inputs to supporting manufacturing, retailing, and more. When you think about it, just about everything we eat, wear, or use comes from agriculture.

Agriculture is something to highly value. During our recent economic downturn, Nebraska agriculture mitigated our state’s financial losses. So, occasionally it is important to reflect on how agriculture contributes to our quality of life, and in many cases, livelihood. During National Ag Week (March 4–10, 2012), please take time to think about the contributions the agricultural industry makes for us all.

Ag Literacy

Often, the agriculture industry is not completely understood. Urbanization of our population has perhaps been responsible for this loss. Today the majority of our population is generations removed from living on a farm or ranch, and a basic knowledge about food production has also been lost. Occasionally, employees of agribusiness even fail to see a connection between agriculture and their very own employment.

To some people, this lack of understanding is a troubling concern — particularly in a leading agricultural state. Feeding a global population expected to exceed nine billion people by 2050 coupled with decades of urbanization has led many to conclude a strong need for better understanding of agriculture and their very own employment.

In earlier times, approximately 30% of Nebraskans were involved in agriculture. Today, this number is down, Nebraska agriculture mitigated our state’s economic downturn, exporting commodities worth nearly $7 billion in 2011. Nebraskans in agriculture contribute to our quality of life, and in many cases, livelihood. During National Ag Week (March 4–10, 2012), please take time to think about the contributions the agricultural industry makes for us all.

When you think about it, just about everything we eat, wear, or use comes from agriculture.

Nebraska’s Top Crop and Livestock Items

TOP CROP ITEMS (acres)
- Corn for grain (1 dot = 10,000 acres)
- Soybeans for beans (1 dot = 10,000 acres)
- Forage — land used for all hay & haysilage, grass silage, and greenchop (1 dot = 10,000 acres)
- Wheat for grain, all (1 dot = 10,000 acres)
- Sorghum for grain (1 dot = 2,000 acres)

TOP LIVESTOCK INVENTORY ITEMS (number)
- Layers (1 Dot = 60,000 Layers)
- Cattle and calves (1 dot = 10,000 cattle and calves)
- Hogs and pigs (1 dot = 20,000 Hogs and Pigs)
- Broilers and other meat-type chickens (1 dot = 1,000,000 broilers)
- Replacement hogs and pigs

Nebraska Ag Facts

1 NATIONAL RANKING
Commercial red meat (71 billion pounds in 2010)

2 NATIONAL RANKING
Great Northern bean production (180 million pounds in 2010)

3 NATIONAL RANKING
Irrigated land harvested (8.5 million acres in 2007)

4 NATIONAL RANKING
Protein (41 billion pounds in 2010)

5 NATIONAL RANKING
Irrigated land harvested (8.5 million acres in 2007)

AGW AWARENESS

Agriculture is something to highly value. During our recent economic downturn, Nebraska agriculture mitigated our state’s financial losses. So, occasionally it is important to reflect on how agriculture contributes to our quality of life, and in many cases, livelihood. During National Ag Week (March 4–10, 2012), please take time to think about the contributions the agricultural industry makes for us all.

Gary C. Bergman, UNL Extension Educator

EAT, WEAR, USE COMES FROM AGRICULTURE

March 2012
Managing Pastures and Haylands in Lancaster County Part I

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

This is the first of a three-part series.

Forage grasses fall into two general classes, cool-season and warm-season. Each class of grass has distinctive growth characteristics and when managed correctly, can provide high quality feed to grazing animals. Cool-season grasses alone or combined with warm-season grasses, can provide season-long forage production, if used in a rotational grazing system.

In eastern Nebraska, cool-season grass pastures are the most common. Cool-season grasses begin growth in early spring and often produce 70–80 percent of their total annual forage production by July 1. They are largely unproductive during the hot summer months unless irrigated. If moisture is available in the fall, they grow again until freezing temperatures bring on dormancy.

When planting a cool-season pasture, it is wise to plant a mixture of species as each has slightly different growth habits. This will extend the growing time and prolong the productivity of the pasture. Some legumes in the mix is also a good idea.

One recommended cool-season grass mix for this part of Nebraska is a combination of 3 lb orchard grass, 4 lb smooth bromegrass, 1 lb red clover, and 1 lb grazing-type alfalfa per acre. For horse hay or pasture, add 1–2 lb of Timothy per acre to the mix.

Warm-season grasses start growth about a month later in the spring than cool-season grasses and grow during the rapid-growth period (June and July). Cool temperatures exceed 65°F and air quality into the summer months. Foragestocked for later grazing during the rapid growth stage in the spring can then be utilized during the summer months.

Rotation times can be lengthened once September and provide no new forage production for fall grazing. No matter the species or forage type, (warm- or cool-season), forage quality is highly correlated to maturity, with immature growth stages providing highest nutritive quality.

Forage quality (both energy and protein) drop rapidly once seed heads emerge.

Cool-Season Pastures

If only cool-season grass pastures are to be used, extra management is required to ensure adequate forage for season-long forage production. Forage production and quality can be expected to increase as new tissue is prepared for paddocks, then grazing in a rotation allowing time for regrowth to occur between grazing periods.

If you don’t plan to supplement grass production by feeding hay or grain during the slow-growth period in the spring or early summer (the cold spell), the stocking rate must be matched to the season-long forage production of the pasture. If cool-season grass pasture with the number of animals it can carry through the entire five-month grazing season, forage production will exceed utilization by the animals during the rapid-growth period in the spring. Frequent rotation from paddock to paddock in the spring, will help keep the grasses in a growth stage preserving palatability and forage quality into the summer months.

Forage production can be leveled out and rotation simplified if some of the paddocks in a rotation are planted to warm-season grasses.

Switchgrass, Switchgrass is a warm-season grass and in a pure stand, can provide excellent forage production for beef animals. Before seedstalks develop, forage quality is high and palatability is good. After seedstalk development, forage quality is low and nutrient levels drop and Switchgrass becomes unacceptable pasture. You should begin grazing Switchgrass when it is ready to graze, regardless of how much time has passed since last grazing on the cool-season paddocks.

One option is to begin grazing when Switchgrass is 8–10 inches tall, graze to keep plant height between 8–16 inches for 6–8 weeks, then remove livestock for 30–45 days. Any regrowth can then be grazed to a stubble height no shorter than 8 inches. Usually it is best to stock Switchgrass too heavily and move the animals to other paddocks sooner, than to stock lightly which results in abundant seed head development. Switchgrass is often included in warm-season grass mixtures, especially for CRP acres, but it is less palatable than many other species and is generally under-utilized in a mixed warm-season pasture.

Switchgrass does not make good hay due to because of poor acceptance.

Warm-Season Pastures. If Switchgrass is included in a mixture of several warm-season grasses is recommended. A good, warm-season grass mixture for Lancaster and surrounding counties includes 3 lb bahiagrass, 1.5 lb fescue grass, 1.5 lb side oats grama, 0.5 lb blue grama, and 0.3 lb sand lovegrass per acre.

Warm-season grasses are slow to become established, often taking three to four years to become the dominate plant community on the site. See the Pasteure and Range section of the NE Extension Guide "Weed Management" (EC130) to see herbicide options for establishing new grass and providing forage for pastures established warm-season grasses.

Caution Urged When Using Anhydrous Ammonia

Anhydrous ammonia is so familiar, it’s easy for agricultural producers to take it for granted but anhydrous ammonia should always be handled with utmost caution.

Anhydrous means “without water.” Anhydrous ammonia NH₃ is a gas at normal atmosphere pressure. It is compressed and stored in liquid form for transport. Anhydrous ammonia has a tremendous affinity for water and will draw water out of any substance it comes in contact with. When depressurized, the anhydrous ammonia will explode as a gas (vapor). When gaseous anhydrous is injected into the soil, it immediately mixes with the water present in the injection zone and becomes ammonium NH₄, which can destroy living plants and positive electrical charge, is held on the negatively charged clay and organic matter particles in the soil.

It is the tremendous affinity for water that makes anhydrous dangerous to handle. Just as anhydrous ammonia draws water out of soil, it will also draw water out of human tissue. Skin and eyes exposed to anhydrous ammonia will appear to be burned due to the extreme drying effect resulting from anhydrous draining the water out of the skin. The skin will heal, anhydrous in the eyes can quickly cause blindness. Fumes breathed into the lungs can turn the tissue and result in suffocation. But, handled with caution, anhydrous ammonia is an effectively safe and inexpensive plant nutrient, which makes it the most popular nitrogen source used on Nebraska farms.

As expected, anhydrous safety involves careful handling and an awareness to take precautions to prevent unwanted escape of anhydrous vapors into the air. Handlers should always prevent accidental contact to skin and clothing by wearing protective clothing and equipment. Always wear rubber gloves, hoses, couplers, and applicator tubes. Don’t step in front of Fillers or valves. Wear insulated gloves made especially for protection against anhydrous. Protect your eyes with safety glasses and a respirator equipped with filters made specifically for protection against anhydrous ammonia. Fumes when handled properly can be effectively dissipate without a drying/ burning effect. People who work with very large amounts of anhydrous ammonia, such as people who fill nurse tanks at a central location, have large tanks, or work with very large amounts of anhydrous ammonia, should wear respirators.

• Never fill an anhydrous tank more than 85 percent full of liquid. Always leave a space for expansion should the tank warm up after filling. Overfilling can result in dangerous pressure build up, resulting in activation of the pressure relief valve and release of anhydrous into the atmosphere.

• Keep a lot of water available. All anhydrous tanks should have a gallon water reservoir in or on them. Fill or replace the water daily. Keep a squat bottle in each tank. By simply dosing tissues that come in contact with anhydrous with an external water source, you can greatly reduce anhydrous water/dusting effect. People who work with very large amounts of anhydrous ammonia, such as people who fill nurse tanks at a central location, have large tanks, or work with very large amounts of anhydrous ammonia, should wear respirators.

• Always use a safety chain when transporting a tank and make sure all hitch pins have keys.

• Don’t haul more than 20 miles per hour when moving anhydrous tanks.

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Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Cimes leucuratis, the common bed bug, was once thought to be practically eradicated in the United States. Since 2000, this insect has bounced back with a vengeance, creating millions of dollars in damage and causing a public health crisis. In Nebraska, it may not get cold enough during winter to keep bed bug populations down. Bed bug infestations are common in hotels, motels, and apartments. The advantage bed bugs have is that they are warm-blooded and can live in temperatures as high as 119°F (48.3°C). Bed bugs are pre-adapted to surviving well in cold temperatures.

Recent research at Virginia Tech found pesticide-resistant bed bugs — the ones most commonly encountered today — were gone so long. We reached at all the heat sensors, and, if the temperature was right, we’d knock them all out. But it was a lot of work. We need a system to kill all bed bugs. And, if you purchase a new mattress and box springs before treatment is complete, new bedding will likely become infested too.

A better option is to keep the mattress and box springs, if they are reasonably new and in good condition, and encase them to seal bed bugs inside. The best encasements cost $45–80 for each piece, but it is a lot less than buying new mattresses. If the mattress/box springs are old, ripped, and in poor condition, it does make sense to throw them away and buy new ones. Encasing the new mattress and box springs will protect them from infestation.

Myth #3: Bed bugs can live a year or more without a meal. In 1941, a research study done by a Japanese researcher named Omosi showed adult bed bugs lived longest — about 15 months — at lower temperatures (50°F). But, when held at higher temperatures, they did not live nearly as long. Why is this? Without a blood meal to replenish body fluids, bed bugs die faster at higher temperatures.

Cold temperatures aren’t practical for whole house treatments, although some cold treatments, like Cryonite (frozen carbon dioxide), limit adult bed bugs on mattresses and in wall voids.

Myth #6: I’ve heard heat will kill bed bugs. I can rent a space heater and save money by doing my own treatment.

Bed bugs are susceptible to heat, but they often hide in insulated locations, like under carpets and inside wall voids. To kill them successfully, the heat must be maintained evenly throughout the room and monitored with sensors to make sure it is hot enough. The temperature must also be sustained for a period of time to allow the heat to dissipate into all bed bug hiding places.

Stephen Kells reports bed bug adults die at 119°F (48.3°C). Eggs are more resistant, dying at 150°F (54.8°C). Companies doing heat treatments seal the rooms, the moves furniture away from walls, and leave the windows and doors closed to prevent heat escape. To promote even temperatures throughout the rooms, they move furniture away from walls, and leave the windows and doors closed to prevent heat escape. After a baseline temperature is reached at all the heat sensors, the heat is maintained for 3–5 hours or more.

Myth #7: I’ve heard DDT was the reason bed bugs became one of the pests we need to bring back. Yes, it’s true, the use of DDT is one of the reasons bed bugs disappeared for such a long time. But many people do not realize today’s bed bugs are resistant to DDT, as well as the pyrethroid class of insecticides. Both DDT and pyrethroid insecticides kill bed bugs the same way.

New research has shown that today’s bed bugs also have a thick cuticle which prevents insecticides from penetrating the body.

Most recently, Chunlu Wang, Rutgers University, sealed 3 lb of dry ice and 20 lb of clothing in a garage bag and found all the bugs were dead after 24 hours. This technique could possibly be used on pestiferous insects, like electronics.

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New research has shown that today’s bed bugs also have a thick cuticle which prevents insecticides from penetrating the body. They also have very high levels of enzymes in their body which convert the insecticide into less lethal and allow the bugs to survive the treatment. Myth #8: I found products at a store with bed bugs on the label, so they should solve my bed bug problem, right? Wrong. Manufacturers of many over-the-counter (OTC) products used inside the home have not tested these products to see how well they work. These products often have the words bed bugs prominently displayed on the label to try to get people to buy their product. If these are pyrethroid products, it is likely bed bugs are highly resistant to them. Look at the product label and see what insecticide is listed. Most pyrethroids can be identified by a characteristic suffix “-thrin.” For example, permethrin, cyfluthrin, bifenthrin, and deltamethrin are all pyrethroids in the pyrethroid family. Fluvinate and esfenvalerate are also pyrethroid derivatives.

There are also other OTC products which may claim to kill bed bugs. The EPA allows products containing active ingredients on their “25b list” to make pesticidal claims, provide a pesticidal efficacy, kill bed bugs, and be labeled as such. Without any efficacy or safety testing, the active ingredients in this list are considered “safe,” so the EPA has relaxed its normal requirements for pest efficacy testing and label language approvals. To see what active ingredients are on the 25b list, go to www.epa.gov/app/field/pesticides/rego/25b_list.htm.

The most effective products are being marketed by pest control professionals which is why we recommend hiring an experienced professional for the safest bed bug extermination.
It’s Easy to Make Half Your Grains Whole

Half of your servings of grains as whole grain. Foods from the grain group are the densest in the two categories: whole grains and refined grains.

While all foods from the grains group are good sources of complex carbohydrates and other vitamins and minerals, whole grain foods are more nutrient dense than refined grains because they contain all the naturally-occurring nutrients of the entire grain kernel. Refined grains are milled to create a finer texture and improve shelf life. During the milling process, parts of the grain kernel are removed, such as removing some B vitamins, iron and dietary fiber.

Whole grains are better sources of dietary fiber and other important nutrients than refined grains. Though iron and certain B vitamins (such as thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folic acid) are added back to most refined grains after processing, fiber is generally not added back.

Adding whole grains to your diet can be easy and does not have to be detrimental to your budget. Many whole grain foods are comparable in cost to refined grain foods.

Incorporate more whole grain foods gradually by simply replacing some refined grains you frequently consume with whole grains. Some examples of whole grain staples easily added to your diet include whole-grain breads, cereals, pastas, tortillas, brown rice, whole wheat flour, and whole wheat bagels.

Use the ingredient list below to help you choose foods that are whole grain.

Whole grain foods will list “whole grain” as the first ingredient.

Try this tasty recipe as a simple way to add more whole grains.

Source: Recipe from UNL Extension Nutrition Education Program 2010 Calendar

If you prefer your pizza cooked on a pan, spread 1 tablespoon of olive oil on a pizza pan. Place on a baking sheet and prepare as directed.

HOMEMADE PIZZA

Serves 6

1/4 cup vegetable oil

PIZZA:
1 cup tomato sauce
1 cup cooked ground meat (hamburger, sausage, chicken, etc.)
1 cup chopped vegetables (onion, mushrooms, green peppers, etc.)
8 ounces shredded cheese

Preheat oven to 425°F. Spray a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. In a large bowl, mix flour, salt, baking powder, and water until mixture is moistened. Place dough on lightly floured surface. Knead for about 2 minutes. Place dough on prepared baking sheet. With fingers, spread dough out to cover the bottom of a pizza pan. Spread vegetable oil over crust (the oil will keep the tomato sauce from soaking into the crust). Spread tomato sauce over crust. Top with your choice of meat and/or vegetables. Top with shredded cheese. Bake 20 minutes or until pizza is heated through and cheese is melted.

Source: Slide Presentation, "Make MyPlate work for YOU® to demonstrate the power of making small food choices in a way that fits into your lifestyle."

USDA’s MyPlate symbolizes a simple, personalized approach to remind consumers to eat more similar produce choices and to be active every day.

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Contact: Alice Henneman, MS, RD, Extension Education Specialist, 402-472-1353, ahhenneman@unl.edu

Think of MyPlate as a “calorie salary” guide that helps you get the most health and enjoyment from what you eat. Plan calories the same as major expenses — a car, house, vacati on, etc. By managing your “calorie budget” you can save thousands of dollars! The same can apply to calories — by saving a few calories daily, you can save thousands of dollars over several years!

Step 4 — Plan a Budget

Fine-tune what you’re already eating to meet MyPlate guidelines. As you “budget,” choose foods that taste good as well as are good for you. Spend your “calorie salary” wisely!

References:

1. Choose MyPlate: http://www.choosemyplate.gov
3. USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion: http://www.choosemyplate.gov
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/eatright/)
7. U.S. Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Department of Health and Human Services, May 16, 2011: http://www.hhs.gov/c prize/adults-decades-more-more-health-problem-for-country-everywhere
Strategies for Spring Cleaning Success

Did you ever think about how the spring-cleaning ritual developed? Before the advent of electricity, homes were heated with coal, oil and/or wood, and lit by gas or candlelight. Soot and grime were the natural companions of winter. Once spring arrived, the doors were thrown open, and everything was swept out, scoured out, and scrubbed out. Although today’s centrally heated homes don’t collect the intensity of dirt, somehow the winter dinges seem to creep inside. Some recommendations to get you started are...

Clear It Out
Start by getting rid of the things needlessly filling up your home. Recycle it. Even with the availability of reading online, some people still prefer the paper versions. Gather up any newspapers and magazines that you no longer need. Collect them in one spot, and then, once spring cleaning is done, decide how to dispose of them.

Donate it. Items in good condition but no longer fit your lifestyle can be donated to a charity or “free-cycled” away. Free-cycle is a grassroots, web-based, nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free in their own towns. Each local group is moderated by a volunteer, and membership is free. Visit www.free-cycle.org for more information.

Inventory Your Supplies
Before you start cleaning, make sure you have all the necessary supplies on-hand. The basics should include:

• all-purpose spray cleaner (for small, washable areas)
• all-purpose powder or liquid cleaner (for large washable surfaces—floors and walls)
• abrasive cleaner (to remove heavy amounts of soil in small areas)
• non-abrasive cleaner (for gentle cleaning on easily scratched surfaces, such as porcelain sinks and ceramic tile)
• chlorine bleach (an effective disinfectant, particularly where heavy amounts of soil in small areas)
• glass cleaner
• furniture-dusting product (such as a spray and a cloth, or a microfiber cloth, or a cloth)
• toilet bowl cleaner

There are many household items that, if done correctly, can be cleaned, it will be easier to tackle the rest of the space.

Establish a spring cleaning time frame. Plan your cleaning day so that you have the order. Generally, it’s best to work or get the most traffic first. That way, if your cleaning plans get derailed, you can still be proud of what you’ve accomplished.

Recruit help. It’s not necessary to do everything yourself. Enlist family members. Establish a spring cleaning day. Start early. Assign tasks according to age and ability. Have lunch preplanned — maybe even delivered — so your helpers don’t lose momentum. Make it fun. Hide some favorite treats in places needing to be cleaned. Playing lively music keeps everyone’s energy up.

Pair up with a friend. If you live alone or family members else can come in and wash the windows, the floors, shampoo the carpets, clean the upholstery, or even do the majority of the cleaning after you’ve removed the clutter.

Some people find it motivating to have a partner. If you have a partner, you can be held accountable to your time frame. Some people prefer an accountability partner. If you have a partner, you can be held accountable to your time frame.

Contact Tanya Bernadt as soon as possible at 402-472-2712 or tbernadt@unl.edu. April 2 will be the council meeting at 1 p.m. Note this is a change from when we normally meet. When you read this, I will be enjoying warm weather with one of my family living in Mesa, Ariz. Remember: Every day is a gift.

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• toilet bowl cleaner

Source: American Cleaning Institute

FCE News & Events
Upcoming FCE & Community Leader Training Lessons
These FCE and Community Leader Training Lessons give you the tools to present the topic, as a program. Each program provides a teaching outline for the facilitator and a handout for the participants.

All trainings will be presented at 1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Non-FCE members or groups should call Pam at 402-441-7180 to register for these lessons so materials can be prepared.

*Savings, Time, Money, and Energy with

FCE Council Meeting — Date Change to April 2
The March FCE Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 2, 1 p.m., at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. The date change is due to a conflict with earth wellness festival.

The program “Button History and Dressing” will be presented by LaVonne Uffelman. The business meeting will occur afterward. FCE members are invited to attend.

Homemade Master Mixes,* Wednesday, March 28 — presented by Extension Educator Alice Henneman. Learn how to prepare “master mixes” for future use, featuring common household ingredients. Homemakers can add their own special ingredients.

Disinfecting Dishcloths and Sponges
Odor in sponges and dishcloths is caused by germs and bacterial growth. To prevent odor, soak them in a disinfecting solution on a regular basis. Mix 1/4 cup of liquid household bleach with 1 gallon of water. Sponges and sponges for 5 minutes, then rinse and allow them to dry. Wash dishcloths regularly.

Climate Masters
New UNL Program, March 8–May 10
Climate Masters of Nebraska, a new program at University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s School of Natural Resources, will teach proven ways to act locally to save money, protect the environment, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In exchange, participants must commit to volunteering 30 hours of community education.

Cleaner Greener Lincoln, the mayor’s sustain-ability initiative, is a project partner.

The first 10-week Climate Masters course will run Thursdays, March 8–May 10, from 6–8:30 p.m. Class meets at Hardin Hall on UNL East Campus. Apply by March 1.

The program is open to anyone ages 19 and up. No cost. A second round of training will begin in January 2013. For more information or registration form, go to climate.masters.unl.edu or call 402-472-2712.

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**Starting Transplants Inside**

Mary Jane Frogge  
UNL Extension Associate

Starting flower and vegetable transplants at home can be fun. Growing quality transplants requires good seed, a sterile, well-drained growing medium, proper temperature, proper moisture requirements and adequate light. Since the home is usually not the best environment for growing transplants, problems occasionally develop.

Poor or erratic germination of seed may be caused by improper planting, for example, planting too deeply. Uneven moisture and cool temperatures can also cause problems. Medium to large seeds are sown at a depth of two times their minimum diameter. Fine seed is usually dusted on the surface of the seedbed. Cool potting mix temperatures below 70°F delay germination. Maintain the proper germination temperature and even moisture conditions for rapid, uniform germination.

Tall, spindly growth is a common problem when growing transplants indoors. Poor light, insufficient light, excessive watering, high temperatures, excessive fertilization, and crowded growing conditions are factors which contribute to spindly growth. It is best to place the seedlings under artificial light. It is not necessary to have an expensive plant stand. A standard fluorescent shop fixture with one cool and one warm fluorescent tube works fine. For best results, the lights should be approximately 1 inch above the seedlings. Raise the light as the seedlings grow. Leave the lights on 12–16 hours a day. When the first pair of “true leaves” appear, thin the seedlings so they are not crowded. Allow the soil media to become slightly dry between waterings. The best quality transplants are short, stocky, and dark green.

Green algea or brownish fungal growth may appear on the soil surface or sides of peat pots. While their appearance generally causes little harm, their presence usually indicates excessive moisture levels. Allow the potting mix to dry some-what before watering. A lack of essential nutrients produces characteristic deficiency symptoms. Phosphorus and nitrogen deficiency symptoms sometimes occur on vegetable and flower seedlings. Phosphorus deficient plants frequently have purplish leaves and growth is stunted. Yellow lower leaves may indicate a nitrogen deficiency. Other symptoms of a nutrient deficiency are stunted growth and small leaves. Apply a soluble fertilizer, such as 15–30–15, to the seedlings. Fertilize weekly with a one-quarter-strength solution.

While there are obstacles to growing transplants indoors, home gardeners can produce high quality transplants if they follow good cultural practices.

**2012 All-America Selection Winners**

**Vinca 'Jams 'N Jellies Blackberry**

Flower Award Winner

 Extremely unique, velvety, deep purple with white eye flower color will add excitement to summer gardens. Easy-to-grow plants have excellent tolerance to drought and heat. Mature plants will reach 10–14 inches tall making them a perfect garden flower for the center of your flower bed. The 2-inch flowers are complemented by deep green shiny leaves creating a rich background for the richly dark flowers.

**Ornamental Pepper ‘Black Olive’**

Flower Award Winner

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**Salvia ‘Summer Jewel Pink’**

Flower Award Winner

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**Watermelon ‘Faerie’**

Vegetable Award Winner

‘Faerie’ is a non-traditional watermelon in that it has a creamy yellow rind with thin stripes yet still yields sweet pink-red flesh with a high-sugar content and crisp texture. Home gardeners will like growing something unique in their garden, and the fact the vines are very-well-branched upright plant that required no staking, a very-well-branched upright plant that required no staking, a very-well-branched upright plant that required no staking, a very-well-branched upright plant that required no staking.
Phragmites became a statewide noxious weed in Nebraska on April 15, 2008. Since that time, Lancaster County has been witnessing a rapid expansion of phragmites in slow motion. In 2007, prior to phragmites being put on the State's Noxious Weed list, Lancaster County records show 32 sites were identified. In 2011, the total number of sites infested reached 344. Each year, we continue to find new infestations.

What is Phragmites?
Non-native phragmites (Arundo donax), also known as common reed, is a perennial, aggressive wetland grass. In its native habitat, it outcompetes native plants and displaces native animals.

What Does Phragmites Look Like?
Phragmites plants range from 6–15 feet in height, yet 80 percent of the plant is contained below ground in a dense mass of roots and rhizomes. The aboveground material dies back, creating a feathery look. Phragmites can also reduce native fish and wildlife populations, limiting recreational values for birdwalkers, walkers, naturalists, boaters, and hunters. Fire danger for nearby residents: Phragmites grows rapidly, and each fall, plant material dies back, creating large concentrations of tinder-dry vegetation that increase the potential for fast-spreading fires that can threaten residential and commercial developments on surrounding uplands.

Biological impacts: Phragmites outcompetes and blocks out native vegetation and provides little or no food or shelter for most dependent wildlife. Phragmites can also eliminate natural refuge and feeding grounds for invertebrates, fish, and waterfowl. Phragmites can create a dense jungle of vegetation that native birds, fur-bearing mammals, and even deer cannot penetrate.

Why is Phragmites a Problem?
This invasive variety of phragmites is becoming widespread throughout Lancaster County. Habitat loss, just as susceptible as rural areas for phragmites to establish. Even though the infested acres are quite small, infestations are scattered throughout the county and have enough seed production to potentially infest any areas having a saturated soil condition sometime during the year. The infestations have been found along streams, wetlands, ponds, lagoons, road ditches, and railroads. Often started in these areas, it quickly forms a colony that completely crowds out all other plants, including cuttages. If these scattered infestations are not controlled, solid stands of phragmites will completely cover wetlands and the riparian areas upland streams, including Salt Creek. The rapid expansion of this variety of phragmites will result in adverse ecological, economic, and social impacts on the natural resources of the people of Lancaster County and the entire Lower Platte River Basin.

How Does Phragmites Spread?
Phragmites can be spread by wind, water dispersal of seeds, or by intentional introduction by people. Seed viability tests performed by the State of Nebraska Seed Lab in 2011, showed 75 percent viable seed in nature heads collected in Lancaster County. Most commonly, however, phragmites spreads by above-ground stolons and underground rhizomes. (Stolons grow from an existing stem and are thin, horizontal structures that grow above-ground, sprouting new plants. Rhizomes are underground horizontal stems that also send out roots and shoots to start new plants.) Stolons can grow dozens of feet annually, and new plants can sprout from nodes located every few inches along the stolon. Rhizomes, which create thick, underground mats, can expand at the rate of 30 feet per year, with new plants sprouting all along the rhizome. In addition, rhizomes broken by natural actions, such as waves, water current in streams, or man-made actions, such as dredging or dosing, readily root down in new locations. Maintenance equipment used in a wetland with phragmites must be carefully cleaned to avoid transporting phragmites to new locations; it only takes a small piece of rhizome to start new plants.

What Should I Be Concerned About?
Recreational impacts: Walking even a few feet into a stand of non-native phragmites can be difficult because the growth can be exceptionally dense and tall, and the vegetation can cut your feet. Phragmites can also reduce native fish and wildlife populations, limiting recreational values for birdwalkers, walkers, naturalists, boaters, and hunters.

Join the Weed Watcher Team
Lancaster County Weed Control plans to begin a new “Weed Watcher” program in 2012. We are currently working to develop and implement our program. It will be modeled after The Nature Conservancy in Oregon’s “Weed Watcher” program and will be designed to train and support volunteers to find and report new occurrences of harmful invasive plants in the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Weed Watchers help protect natural areas from the spread of invasive plants by detecting new populations early before they get out of hand. A second and equally important goal of the Weed Watcher program is to build capacity for other organizations to initiate early detection programs by serving as a potential model and providing educational materials for use and adaptation. Invasive plant early-detection programs can be as simple as informally training your staff or volunteers on weeds to watch for, or recruiting and training new volunteers.

Outreach and education will be a key component in organizing a successful program.

Who Are the Weed Watchers?
Weed Watchers are people who care about the health of our lands and want to help prevent the ecological and economic damage associated with plant invasions by looking for and reporting new weeds.

Interested?
Weed Watchers can be private citizens who simply want to scan for new invaders while they like. Other Weed Watchers are people who already actively volunteering, such as University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension Master Gardeners.

What Does a Weed Watcher Do?
“Weed Watchers Trek to Protect.” Weed watching is as easy as one, two, three: 1) Learn the weeds. 2) Look for weeds. 3) Document and report weeds.

Interested?
We need everyone’s help, so if you would like to become part of the Weed Watcher program, or you believe you have phragmites on your property, please contact the Lancaster County Weed Control office at 402-441-7817.
Nebraska’s Noxious Weeds

It is the duty of each person who owns or controls land to effectively control noxious weeds on such land.

Noxious weed is a legal term used to denote a destructive or harmful weed for the purpose of regulation. The Director of Agriculture establishes which plants are noxious. These non-native plants compete aggressively with desirable plants and vegetation. Failure to control noxious weeds in this state is a serious problem which is detrimental to the production of crops and livestock, and to the welfare of residents of this state. Noxious weeds may also devalue land and reduce tax revenue.

Sericea Lespedeza Weed Risk Assessment

The Nebraska Invasive Species Advisory Council recently completed the assessment of the weed risk potential of sericea lespedeza, also known as Chinese bush-clover, (Lespedeza cuneata) in Nebraska. This assessment was prepared to improve our understanding of the risk of invasion by sericea lespedeza in Nebraska while still in the early invasion stages. The Weed Risk Assessment is designed to aid and support in identifying potential risk species for early detection and rapid response.

Sericea lespedeza was initially planted in the United States in 1896 at the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station. In the 1920s and 1930s, sericea lespedeza was grown and planted for erosion control and mine reclamation but was not widely utilized as a pasture species until the 1940s. Initial use as hay facilitated its spread throughout the eastern United States. In 1985, sericea lespedeza was planted with native grasses on crop land retired as part of the Conservation Reserve Program. In 2003, sericea lespedeza infested an estimated 8.6 million acres of the United States. About 15 percent of the tallgrass prairie region was infested, and a total of 5 million acres was considered at risk of invasion. As of 2005, it was estimated sericea lespedeza occupied 5.5 million acres of the mid- to southern Great Plains.

Sericea lespedeza is a long-lived perennial forb that grows well in grasslands, pastures, along roadsides, drainage areas, fencerows, and in other disturbed areas. It is present and considered invasive/weedy in 31 states, and is a noxious weed in both Kansas and Colorado.

The oldest Nebraska record is in 1974 in Richardson County. Sericea lespedeza is readily spread by livestock and several species of wildlife.

When compared with more than 200 other assessments, Lespedeza cuneata ranked among top high risk plants based upon its reported impact and ability to establish and spread.

Nebraska Invasive Species Project

For more information about invasive species in Nebraska, including sericea lespedeza, go to http://snr.unl.edu/invasives.
Knotweed Family is Nebraska’s Newest Noxious Weed

All potentially invasive members of the knotweed family were designated a Nebraska noxious weed in February 2011. These invasive weeds are considered to be some of the worst in the world. They now occupy site(s) every 10km of England. There has been a more rapid spread in the United States. They are now found in 42 states with only a few dozen sites detected in Nebraska. This early designation in Nebraska will allow us an opportunity to eradicate the small infestations detected and to stop the sale of plants on the ornamental market to prevent major infestations of riparian areas and streambeds across the state.

This designation includes Japanese knotweed and giant knotweed, including any cultivars and hybrids. There are several Japanese knotweed cultivars developed for the ornamental market included in this designation since they can contribute to the Japanese knotweed invasion by providing pollen necessary for Japanese knotweed to produce viable seed. Two cultivars recently sold in Nebraska are Pink Fleece Flower and Variegated Fleece Flower. In Lancaster County, Japanese Knotweed has been found in the wild and in landscaping. There are several more cultivars available across the country including Compacta, Crimson Beauty, Devon Cream, Milk Boy, and others. If you have any of these cultivars, they are included in the noxious weed designation and are required to be controlled.

Weed Risk Assessment
An assessment was made of Japanese knotweed and it was found to be very high risk to establish, spread, and cause harm in the state. It has the potential to invade all riparian areas in the state as well as establishing in 55 percent of the state’s upland areas receiving over 20-inches of rainfall.

Prevent New Infestations by Blocking Invasion Pathways
Small segments of the plant are able to regenerate into new plants. These plant segments are commonly transported by water and regenerate new plants on the banks of streams. These plant segments may be transported to new sites by foot traffic, equipment, mowing, and improper disposal of vegetation. Sexual reproduction is also possible in the United States as evidenced by viable seeds collected from two Japanese knotweed sites in Lincoln. The seeds move easily by water and wind.

Provide Follow-up
To prevent re-establishment, CONTINUE WITH FOLLOW-UP MAINTENANCE ANNUALLY. It is very important all planted and wild sites be controlled and kept controlled.

There are over 20-inches of rainfall. 55 percent of the state’s upland areas receiving over 20-inches of rainfall.

Japanese Knotweed
Fallopia japonica
Whole plant may be over 10’ tall. Stems are stout, cane-like, HOLLOW BETWEEN THE NODES. These plants are reddish-brown, and profusely branched. Leaves are SPADE SHAPED, about 6” long by 3–4” wide, attached ALTERNATELY to a ZIGZAG BRANCH. Stems die back in the fall and are reddish through the winter (a good time to spot it).

Giant Knotweed
Fallopia sachalinensis
8–12’ tall and branches sparingly, leaves are thin heart shaped, 6–12” long and two-thirds as wide.

Pink Fleece Flower
Fallopia japonica 'Reynoutria'
Vigorous ground cover, red-veined leaves, showy clusters of red buds open to pale pink flowers.

Variegated Fleece Flower
Fallopia japonica 'Variegata' 3’ tall with coral-pink flushed leaves have splashes of white variegation, red stems, and bottlebrush spikes of white flowers.

An Example of How Fast Knotweed Grows

Last year, Weed Control superintendent Brent Meyer was asked to give a presentation about knotweeds at the Nebraska Weed Control Conference in March. Hoping to have a sample plant to show at the conference, he tried growing one in his office. How fast it grew demonstrates why the Knotweed family is on Nebraska’s noxious weed list. This is by far one of the most aggressive plants in the world.

Eradicate Any Plants Found or Report to Weed Control
Timing is key to eradicating knotweed. Treat from July 1 to the first killing frost when carbohydrates produce the carbohydrates. Immediately apply a 25% solution of glyphosate (e.g., Roundup®, use Rodeo® if applying in or near wetland areas) and water to the cross-section of the stem.

For Larger Sites:
Some products may not be available in small quantities. 1. Cut the stems about two inches above ground level. Immediately apply a 25% solution of glyphosate (e.g., Roundup®, or use Rodeo® if applying in or near wetland areas) and water to the cross-section of the stem.

For Greater Sizes:
Some products may not be available in small quantities. 1. Apply two quarts per acre of Garlon 3A, use non-ionic surfactants or methylated seed oil (MSO) (consult label) or, 2. Apply two quarts per acre of Garlon 3A, use non-ionic surfactants (consult label) or, 3. Apply one quart per acre of glyphosate (e.g., Roundup®, or use Rodeo® if applying in or near wetland areas), use non-ionic surfactants (consult label).

READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS.
DO NOT COMPOST ANY GREEN PORTIONS OF THE PLANT. PUT IN PLASTIC BAGS FOR REGULAR GARBAGE PICKUP.

Giant knotweed leaves are reddish in winter. Bohemian knotweed is a hybrid of Japanese and giant knotweed. We Need Everyone’s Cooperation
Everyone’s cooperation is needed in preventing new infestations, spotting new infestations, taking actions needed to assure eradication with follow-up to prevent re-establishment. This early vigilance and action will prevent the potential harm and huge cost of controlling large, established stands of the knotweed family. Contact your local county weed control office for assistance and information.
use only herbicides labeled for aquatic sites. Always read and follow the label directions. For example, a label may say: "Do not apply to streams, ponds, or lakes." If a pesticide is labeled, it has been tested and approved for use on aquatic sites. This means that the chemical does not harm aquatic life or the environment. It is very important to use only the amount of herbicide needed to control weeds. Over-application can cause harm to the environment.

The LCWCA Office has enforced the Lancaster County Weed Ordinance, which requires landowners to control noxious weeds on their property. In 2011, our inspectors found 1,045 sites infested with noxious weeds, 340 of those were within Lincoln City Limits. Noxious weeds don’t care if it’s rural or urban or if we have tight budgets or not. They will continue to grow and spread without aggressive management.

Noxious Weeds

Musk Thistle
- Musk thistle continues to be a problem on poorly-managed pastures, wastelands, and roadsides. A total of 854 inspections were made on 473 sites. There were 379 sites found to be in violation, resulting in 1,252 acres infested. Weed Control office carried out 7 inspections on 3 sites.

Leafy Spurge
- Leafy spurge is a very difficult to control perennial plant and infests 527 acres across the county. Once an infestation is identified it should be controlled and monitored for many years. It has deep tome root system will allow it to continue to grow. There were 475 inspections made at 353 locations in 2011. Leafy spurge was present at 321 sites. We issued 14 legal notices, and 301 sites (94%) had control done by the owner. We found 93 known purple loosestrife infestations were selected for inspection in 2011. We found 5 ornamental sites in 2011, 2 were complaints from citizens, and 3 were a result of being observed by an inspector. A total of 51 inspections were made on the 25 sites. Inspectors found 20 violations on 29 acres. Landowner notifications included 4 legal notices and 18 reminder letters. Landowners controlled 16 sites.

Phragmites
- We made 402 inspections on 344 sites. In violation were 290 sites and 253 acres. It’s important to be aggressive on phragmites while the average site is still less than one acre in size.

Knotweed
- There were 19 new sites of knotweed found in 2011. 11 were pre-selected for inspection because of suspected or confirmed knotweed infestations. 8 were selected and are being controlled by the landowners. Starthistle was present at 100 sites. It required 478 inspections to make the total to 25. All but 2 of the sites were ornamental plantings. Owners have been notified of the violations with 1,128 legal notices, 926 reminder letters, and 15 personal contacts. Landowners cut 1,468 acres and forced cutting was contracted on 261 sites. We had 201 parcels remain unpaid and were filed as liens against the property totaling over $59,000 dollars.

Purple Loosestrife
- It is an invasive species that is quickly spreading and can cause significant environmental damage. We made 21 inspections on 21 sites. It is a problem in hard-to-treat sites and is more cost effective. We followed up on complaints and found 5 sites in 2011, 2 were complaints from citizens, and 3 were a result of being observed by an inspector. A total of 51 inspections were made on the 25 sites. Inspectors found 20 violations on 29 acres. Landowner notifications included 4 legal notices and 18 reminder letters. Landowners controlled 16 sites.

City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Program

The City of Lincoln Weed Abatement Ordinance requires owners of land within the city limits to maintain the height of weeds and worthless vegetation below six inches to the center of the street or alley that joins their property.

Three seasonal inspectors are used in administering this program. Most inspections are carried out as a result of complaints.
Pruning Fruit Trees — Part 3

This is the third of a three part series.

Years 3–5, and Beyond

By the third dormant season after planting a new fruit tree whip, the main trunk should have three or more side branches that you have chosen for their even placement up and down the trunk, and their good branch angles. These will be the tree’s lowest main scaffold branches throughout its life.

During each pruning session, in subsequent years, choose additional scaffold branches as the tree grows taller. If side shoots do not form in the locations needed for additional scaffold branches, then head back the central leader 12 inches above the last scaffold shoot. This will encourage the trunk to send out additional side shoots. Then a new central leader shoot should be chosen and allowed to continue growing.

Years 3–5

Maintenance pruning during years 3–5 should start with removing suckers and diseased, dead, or damaged branches as needed. Remove branches growing toward the center of the tree, and the weakest of crossing or closely parallel branches. Also remove those with poor trunk placement or those that form narrow angles with the trunk.

Finally, maintain the dominance of the central leader by heading back low, lower laterals. Likewise, do not let the upper branches overgrow and shade the lower portion of the tree. Maintain the tree’s pyramidal shape. Prune trees as little as possible during these years prior to fruit bearing, except for normal maintenance pruning. Excessive pruning will delay bearing, and result in fewer fruits in the first few years of production.

By the fifth year after planting, the tree’s structure should be well established with 6–8 scaffold branches. Allow the central leader to grow for 1–2 more years until the tree begins bearing, or until the desired height is reached, then head the leader shoot back to an outward growing shoot. This creates a new form, called the modified central leader, which allows the gardener to maintain the tree at a manageable height for easy harvesting.

Pruning Different Types of Fruits

Apple cultivars differ in their growth habit, being either open or upright. Open structure trees naturally produce shoots with wide branch angles, while upright cultivars create narrow branch angles. Use branch spreaders, when needed, to encourage narrow angle branches to create a stronger, wider angle with the trunk. Apples may be either spur or non spur trees. Spur-type trees produce short, long-lived branches called fruiting spurs. Each will produce flowers and fruits, so do not cut them off. Older cultivars may be non-spur types, and should be pruned using a modified central leader system.

Prune branches and nectarines should be pruned to create an open center, allowing more light penetration into the center of the tree’s canopy. They fruit on one-year old wood, so new growth should be stimulated by heavier pruning than is used on other tree types. Apricots should be pruned to a modified central leader system. However, keep in mind that peaches, apricots, and nectarines are not well-adapted to Nebraska’s climate and are not considered the best choice for a home orchard.

Using Branch Spreaders

Branches spread to a 45–50 degree angle or greater with the trunk will be less productive, placing less vegetative growth and more fruit. Spreading scaffold branches of young fruit trees can help bring about earlier fruit production and improve tree form. The technique involves bending upright growing branches down to a nearly horizontal position and holding them there. Vigorous growing lateral branches can usually be repositioned during their first growing season, while young branches can be held in place using clothes pins, while branches 2–3 years of age can be bent into an appropriate position and held there with properly cut lengths of wood or commercially purchased branch spreaders.

To position young branches with clothespins, place the head of the pin against the branch and push it down into

Agriculture continued from page 1

identify an interest, learn responsibility, and develop an understanding of the agricultural industry. Often, 4-H’ers share information about their projects with families attending the fair. These 4–11 projects and experiences have led many 4-H’ers in determining their future career area of interest.

• Fair Fun Day — During the Lancaster County Super Fair, up to 500 youth have the opportunity to experience Fair Fun Day. Lincoln’s child care groups proudly display their projects, including hands-on activities, demonstrations, displays, and animals. Divided into manageable groups, teen volunteers serve as tour guides to educational stops throughout the fair. When the tour ends, a session with friends ends with a lesson about the many sources of food.

• earth wellness festival — Local agencies partner to teach 3,000 fifth graders annually about the interdependence of water, land, air, and living resources through science-based curriculum and activities. At the festival, students have had opportunities to learn about agriculture-related topics such as: conservation practices such as the use of terraces, buffers, and windbreaks; development of energy resources using wind and ethanol; protection of groundwater; and wild rice. Other Nebraska organizations also promote ag literacy:

• Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom (402-448-8066; neagclassroom.org)
• Nebraska Agriculture magazine (402-448-8066; neagclassroom.org)
Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Ann Pickrell as the winner of March’s “Heart of 4-H” Award in recognition of placing an outstanding volunteer service.

Ann started volunteering for the 4-H program more than 11 years ago with the Yankton Wranglers club. She moved to the South Prairies Wranglers club when it started, which is now Lancaster County 4-H. Ann is currently president of the 4-H Council and has contributed to the Council’s fair booth at the Lancaster County Super Fair.

“I grew up in 4-H and realize the importance that 4-H gives kids and adults to have a hands-on experience for leadership and real life relationships needed in this day and age to succeed,” Ann says. “My favorite experience as a 4-H volunteer is working hand in hand with the kids, whether it is to complete a project Sunday at 2 p.m. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to help. Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc.), pull-on pajama bottom pattern (one simple pattern is Simplicity 3553), presanded flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaid), 1 yard ½-inch elastic, and matching thread. Also bring a sack lunch. Sign up by March 14 by calling 402-441-7180. 4-H families may enter jammie bottoms at the county fair and styled in Style Revue under Clothing Level 1.

Nominate your favorite 4-H volunteer by submitting the form available online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h or at the extension office. Nominations of co-volunteers welcome.

4-H Speech & PSA Contests

The Speech and Public Service Announcement (PSA) contests provide 4-H’ers the opportunity to learn to express themselves clearly, organize their ideas and have confidence. These contests are open to all 4-Hers ages 8–18 (by January 1 of the current year) — need not be enrolled in a specific project. You must choose to participate in either or both the Speech and PSA contests for resources, guidelines, and examples go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Contests/speech.shtml. If questions, contact Cole Meador at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

Speech/PSA Workshop, March 29

Learn more at a Speech/PSA workshop on Thursday, March 29, 6 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Out of ideas? We will help you get started. Already started? Bring your completed speech/PSAs to practice or get suggestions. This is also a good time to record your PSA. We will teach you Audacity basics so you can add sound effects and edit to make your final PSA perfect. There will be computers available to work with, or bring your own.

PSA Contest, Due April 13

In the Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest, 4-H’ers submit a 60 second “radio commercial” promoting 4-H. The PSA contest will be held via audio only (not in person). Students may choose to participate in either or both the Speech and PSA contests for resources, guidelines, and examples go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Contests/speech.shtml. If questions, contact Cole Meador at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

Speech Contest, April 22

The 2012 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, April 22, 1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Register by April 13 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing cmeador2@unl.edu with your name, speech title, and your age division.

4-H Horse Incentive Program

The 2012 Lancaster County 4-H Horse Incentive Program began Jan. 1 and runs through June 30. 4-H’ers can log hours they spend on horse-related activities and win awesome prizes. Forms are available online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/horsenews.shtml or they can be picked up at the extension office.

This year there are new ways to earn incentive points along with activity spent directly with the horses. Points can be earned by turning in horse course quizzes to Marty. Points can be earned by asking pre-set questions of vets and farriers.

Horse VIPS Dressage Schooling Show, April 28

The 2012 Horse VIPS Committee is hosting a Middle Cross Dressage Schooling Show on Saturday, April 28 at Middle Cross Stables (Lowell Boomer’s historic facility, 500 Sprague Road, Roca). The show is a fundraiser for the Horse VIPS Program presented by the 4-H Horse Program. We will be applying for NDA-recognized show status so you can count these scores toward the end-of-year championship. Open to all youth and adults (need not be in 4-H). Watch for more details.

Dog Skill-A-Thon, April 10

Want to test your dog knowledge? Come to the third annual 4-H Dog Skill-A-Thon Tuesday, April 10, 7-7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. Youth do not need to present the entire time. Just come at your convenience — it usually takes one to two hours. Open to all youth ages 8–18 (need not show a dog in 4-H). Non-4-H members are invited to participate in the contest. There will be a variety of topics including: parts, parasites, breeds, confirmation, and more. Preregister by March 30 by calling 402-441-7180.

Furniture Painting Workshop, May 12

Mark your calendars for the upcoming “Junque to Jewels” furniture painting workshop Saturday, May 12, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Open to all youth ages 8–18. Check upcoming Nelines for more information.

Clover College Instructors Needed

4-H Clover College is four days of fun-filled, hands-on workshops for youth ages 6 and up, June 12–15 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. If you have workshop ideas, or if you would like to teach a workshop or volunteer to help, please contact Tracy at 402-441-7180 or tanderson14@unl.edu. All help is very much appreciated!

Painting Barrels for Event Center, March 18

It has been ten years since Lancaster County 4-H’ers painted trash barrels for the Lancaster Event Center and county fair. All 4-H families are invited to participate in this group community service project on Sunday, March 18, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Event Center, Pavilion 4- Amy Countryman Arena. All paint and brushes will be supplied.

To help plan supplies, please let us know if you are planning to attend by calling 402-441-7180.

Updated 4-H Childcare Curriculum

The 4-H childcare curriculum has been updated. The project books “The Sitter,” “The Infant,” “The Toddler,” “The Preschooler,” and “The Middle Childhood” will no longer be used.

Created through a 4-H Military Partnership, the new babysitter curriculum “I Have What It Takes to be Your Babysitter” is comprised of a facilitator guide, a student guide, and a set of student workbooks. The curriculum is free online. Go to www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org and click “Curriculum Resources” on the left. Then scroll down and click on “Youth Babysitting.”

If you would like to see a hardcopy version, visit the extension office.

Win Awesome Prizes in 4-H Horse Tack Swap

Come and shop the 1st Annual “4-H Spring Tack Swap,” Saturday, March 31–April 1 at the Lancaster Event Center held in conjunction with the Shaggy Horse Dressage Schooling Show sponsored by the Hunter’s Pride 4-H club and Cornhusker Pony Club. The swap will include leather goods, riding attire, books, and everything horse-y you can think of! A portion of all proceeds will support Lancaster County Horse VIPS Committee fundraising efforts. Items will be accepted day of, so dust off unused items in your closets, garages, and barns for a good cause and some extra cash! Unsold items can be donated or picked up Sunday at 2 p.m. For more information about the tack swap, contact Jennifer Cusick-Rawlinson, 402-488-7879 (home); 402-560-3319 (cell). For more information about the show, contact Becky Robinett at 402-202-2363.
4-H Achievement Night

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County and 4-H Council presented Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Night on Feb. 2. 4-H'ers, 4-H clubs, and 4-H leaders were recognized for their 2011 achievements. City of Lincoln Mayor Chris Beutler signed a proclamation declaring Feb. 2 as “4-H Achievement Day.” Lancaster County 4-H congratulates all 4-H youth who commit themselves to excellence! We also thank all 4-H volunteers who donate their time and talents to youth! For a complete list of award, scholarship, and pin recipients (as well as additional photos) go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

Presented to 4-H’ers who have completed the most hours of community service. Award recipients receive a $30 Activity Certificate from Lancaster County 4-H Council redeemable towards 4-H activities and supplies.

AGE 14 AND OVER: Maddie Gabel, Victoria Garza, Holly Hillebran, Paige Roach, Emily Steinbach, Lexi Trumbley

AGE 13 AND UNDER: Cassie Brown, Nathan Gabel, Valerie Gabel, Elizabeth Garza, McKenzie Kapperman, Kylee Plager, Emma Lanik, Sheridan Swatek, Bethany Wachtler, Katie Wirthle

NEBRASKA DIAMOND CLOVER

The Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program is a statewide program which encourages 4-H members to engage in a variety of projects and activities. At the beginning of the 4-H year, youth choose goals from a provided list, and at the end of the 4-H year, complete a report which documents their accomplishments.

LEVEL 1 – AMETHYST: Cassie Brown, Ashley Clegg, Holly Cushman, Jennifer Daharsh, Annalise Ferguson, Nathaniel Gabel, Dylan Hafer, Anna Hamm, Brett Heinrich, Olivia Hinrichs, Megan Hoxing, Kayla Humphrey, Brasley Janes, Brianna Kroeger, Hanna Leigh Rohda, Kristen Louden, Alyia Whitehall

LEVEL 2 – AQUAMARINE: Elizabeth Garza, Dalton Hallwege, Sean Hummel, McKenzie Kapperman, Brooke Kreikemeier, Jared Nielsen, Madelaine Polk, Joshua Ronnau, Collin Schmidt, John Swatek, Bethany Wachtler, Jenna White, Alyssa Zimmer

LEVEL 3 – RUBY: Morgan Cuttlers, Victoria Garza, Jaclyn Heinrich, Holly Hillebran, Emma Lanik, Nicole McConnell, Caleb Nielsen, Lucy Polk, Paige Roach, Jacob Ronnau, Jacob Rushman, Brandon Sieck, Renae Sieck

LEVEL 4 – SAPPHIRE: Hannah Bellinghausen, Kylee Plager, Sheridan Swatek

LEVEL 5 – EMERALD: Ivy Dearmont, Hannah Ronnau

NEBRASKA 4-H CLUBS OF EXCELLENCE

These clubs have met criteria outlined by the State 4-H office.

Lancaster County 4-H Council — $500: Katlyn Kimmen, Maci Lienemann, Erica Peterson, Abbey Spencer, Emily Steinbach, Erika Warner

4-H Teen Council — $250: Abbey Spencer, Emily Steinbach, Lexi Trumbley

Lincoln Center Kiwanis — $200: Coryn Woodward

NATIONWIDE CLOVER AWARDS

These awards are given based on the number of clovers received.

LEVEL 5 – EMERALD: Cassie Brown, Elizabeth Garza, Alyia Whitehall


COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Lancaster County 4-H Council — $500: Katlyn Kimmen, Maci Lienemann, Erica Peterson, Abbey Spencer, Emily Steinbach, Erika Warner

Lincoln Center Kiwanis — $200: Coryn Woodward

Lincoln Center Kiwanis — $1,000: Emily Steinbach

I DARE YOU LEADERSHIP AWARD

Awarded on behalf of the American Youth Foundation to juniors or seniors who strive to achieve their personal best and make a positive difference in their community.

Sadie Hammond, Chandler Kramer

CAREER PORTFOLIOS

Career Portfolios are a record of an individual’s 4-H career.

COUNTY WINNER

McKenzie Kapperman: Leadership & Citizenship

NOMINATED TO REPRESENT LANCASTER COUNTY AT DISTRICT COMPETITION

Maddie Gabel: Consumer & Family Science, Healthy Lifestyles

Jacob Rushman: Communications & Expressive Arts; Science & Technology

Sheridan Swatek: Consumer & Family Science; Leadership & Citizenship

OUTSTANDING 4-H MEMBERS

Presented to individuals 14 years of age or older who have excelled in his/her involvement with the Lancaster County 4-H program. Selection is based on participation in a wide variety — and depth of — 4-H activities.

Erica Peterson, Cory Peters, Emily Steinbach
Fair. I had worked with my intermediate calf all spring and summer and was not expecting any problems with her at the fair. The day of the show, I was walking her around the fairgrounds trying to get her acclimated to the new surroundings. Just as I walked by one of the tractors on display, someone stuck their finger and she started running and jumping. She ran in my white show clothes which were not so white at the end of the ordeal. Running back to the barn crying, with no call, I felt like a failure. Dad was quickly on the hunt for the calf who had found a nice quiet spot under a tree enjoying some lush, green grass. Mom explained to me that these things happen and sometimes it doesn't matter how hard you work to train an animal, surprises happen. Father's advice was to be prepared for the worst but prepare for the worst!

Another lesson offered through showing dairy happened at one of the 4-H Livestock Judging contests. I was 12 at the time, in Junior High, and thought that I had the pattern figured out. I had selected my own cattle that year because dad didn't know what he was talking about (later I realized he is a very wise man). My selection was not based on positive physical characteristics but rather, which animals required the least training. I was wrong.

Having the opportunity to raise an animal from birth to market is something not everyone has the opportunity to do, but 4-H gives youth that opportunity.

2. It is a family project. It brings families together and makes them work together on projects.

3. 4-H brought me to my current career. If it wasn’t for 4-H I would not be an extension assistant myself. I got so much out of 4-H that this is what I want to do. I feel it is a way to give back to all of the 4-H agents who gave so much to me over the years. It is truly a great organization to be involved with.

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5. I had the opportunity to do something I might not have done otherwise. Not many kids probably think about picking up a frosting bag to see what they can do with it.

6. It’s a 4-H family project. It brings families together and makes them work together on projects.

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Jen Smith with her Holstein dairy cow, Hazel, at the 1987 Antelope County Fair.
4-H Stories

continued from preceding page

As the class was called to line up facing the ring steward, I was overwhelmed with the idea the judge hadn’t even looked in my direction once, so you can imagine my confusion when she pointed me out as the Champion of the Junior English Equitation class. This would mark my first-championship trophy at the highly-competitive Lancaster County Fair. Sailor, displeased that the trophy also meant taking extra time to take pictures in front of the sign that reads “Lancaster County Fair,” eventually let me embrace the moment. I don’t remember if I cried or not. I just let me become.

That eight-year-old is still living her dream. Now, however, she dreams of being ready to compete. People’s dreams come true and creating happy endings for everyone around her. And that’s the person 4-H has helped me become.

NACEB Scholarships

Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards (NACEB) annually offers two scholarships due March 15. Applications are online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Programs/award.shtml.

- One $1,000 scholarship at the UNL College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) or the College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) for an incoming student (freshmen or transfer)
- One $500 scholarship for a current student (sopho-more or higher) enrolled in CASNR or CEHS

Open House Events

JUNIOR WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays March 7, 14, 28 and April 4, 11, 18, 25 — a Husker Weekday visit specifically for juniors.

BIG RED OPEN HOUSE

March 12, April 6 or April 20 — an on campus experience for high school and transfer students to learn about the BIG things happening on the UNL campus.

HUSKER WEEKDAYS

This is Nebraska’s most versatile half-day campus visit option. You can schedule a visit for any weekday and select Saturdays throughout the year.

For more information or to register, see http://admissions.unl.edu/visit

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The Nebline

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http://lancaster.unl.edu
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Join us on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook http://lancaster.unl.edu/media

Lancaster Extension Education Center Conference Facilities
444 Cherry Creek Road, Lincoln
Discover, earn, and Grow at 4-H Summer Camps

2012 4-H Summer Camp brochures are now available online at http://4h.unl.edu/camp and at the extension office. Camps are open to all youth ages 5–18 (need not be in 4-H). With three unique Nebraska locations at Halsey, Gretna, and Alma, there are more than 40 camps ranging from half day to seven days/six nights! UNL Extension, through its 4-H Youth Development Program, has been operating 4-H Camps for over 40 years. The 4-H camps and centers all meet over 300 standards established by the American Camping Association. Brochures have complete information about all camps.

Applications Open for 4-H Camp Staff

The three 4-H Camps in Nebraska are currently accepting applications for summer staff. All positions provide endless opportunities for growth in a fun, fast-paced outdoor atmosphere. Need not be in 4-H to apply. You may apply for a variety of positions:

• **Camp Counselors** — Ages 15 and up who assist with cabin supervision and assist in leading camp programs. Mentors receive an honorarium for their service and are scheduled according to their availability. Mentor for a few days or for the entire summer — the choice is yours! Deadline is April 1.

• **Cabin Mentors** — Ages 17 and up who provide cabin supervision and assist in leading camp programs. Mentors receive an honorarium for their service and are scheduled according to their availability. Mentor for a few days or for the entire summer — the choice is yours! Deadline is April 1.

• **Camp Counselors** — Ages 15 and up who assist with cabin supervision and leading of camp programs. Join over 150 volunteer teens in providing valuable leadership to a group of campers by day and assist with cabin supervision at night. Camp counselors are scheduled according to their availability and counseling is a fantastic leadership experience for any young person. Minimum three days over the summer. Deadline is May 1.

More information and applications are online at http://4h.unl.edu/camp.

Explore Career Options at Big Red Academic Camps

The Big Red Summer Academic Camps are a chance for youth grades 10–12* to spend time investigating an interest or potential career, explore the UNL campus, meet people from across the state and have lots of fun. Students who graduate in May 2012 are welcome to attend!

Held in June, Big Red Summer Academic Camps features nine career exploration camps hosted by Nebraska 4-H and University of Nebraska–Lincoln faculty members. The camps are residence camps held on UNL campus. Housing and food are provided.

After spending several fun-filled days exploring a specific topic such as filmmaking or environment, youth showcase their work at a special “capstone event” which family members are invited to attend.

Brochures and registration forms are available at http://bigredcamps.unl.edu or at the extension office. Limited scholarships are available. For more information, call 402-472-2805.

Can You Guess It?

The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event, is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Saturday, April 14, 6–8 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 26th St., Lincoln. The Karnival features carnival type games for the kids, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun, and fellowship. Lincoln Center Kiwanis has sponsored this event for over 50 years — providing prizes and snacks. 4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity for clubs. If your 4-H club or family would like to have a booth or for more information, call Lorene at 402-441-7180. Come join the fun!

Kiwanis Karnival, April 14

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