NEBLINE, April 2015

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4-H Clubs of Excellence Award Recognizes Successful Clubs

The overall goal of 4-H is to develop capable, caring, confident, competent youth who contribute to the improvement of themselves, their family, their community and their world. Many 4-H volunteers help youth develop these skills in organized clubs. One way to help club members develop these skills is by using Nebraska 4-H Clubs of Excellence standards (see list at right).

Earning the Club of Excellence award is very achievable. At the beginning of the club’s 4-H year, 4-H leaders and members review the Club of Excellence requirements, set goals to meet the criteria, create a plan of action to achieve their goals and follow through with their plan. At the end of the year, a designated club volunteer or member completes the one-page Club of Excellence summary form and returns it to the Extension office.

In Lancaster County, Clubs of Excellence are recognized at 4-H Achievement Celebration held each February. Deadline for summary forms is Dec. 31. Lancaster County’s 2014 Clubs of Excellence were: 4-H Explorers, Denim N’ Dust, Explorers, Fantastic 4, Fusion 4-H’ers, Go Go Goat Getters, Joe’s Clover Knights, Pick-A-Pig, Rabbits R Us, Rock Creek Ranchers, Rock n’ Riders, Shamstastic Closers and Super Shamrocks.

From reviewing this year’s Club of Excellence summary forms, Lancaster County 4-H staff read some amazing outcomes of what 4-H’ers and volunteers learn through 4-H. For example, one 4-H club reported cleaning up a park, creating Valentine’s Day cards for veterans at the Veterans Administration and holding a coat drive for the People’s City Mission — and concluded, “Members learn to appreciate what they have and they love to help others.” One 4-H club adopted a family for Christmas through the Salvation Army — and noted, “It provided a chance for them to give back to someone in need. In addition, club members had to plan a budget, shop and stick to a budget.”

Of this year’s 13 Clubs of Excellence, all clubs met more than the required six club meetings and all clubs reported nearly 10 parents assist with 4-H Explorers activities, such as helping with zoo clean up last year.

Last year, Joe’s Clover Knights received a Governors Agricultural Excellence award to make 36 tied fleece blankets to donate to St. Gianna’s Women’s Homes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements for “Clubs of Excellence” Award</th>
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<td>• Recite the 4-H Pledge at meetings</td>
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Nearly 10 parents assist with 4-H Explorers activities, such as helping with zoo clean up last year.

Last year, the Rabbits R Us club made a club banner together, which earned “Top Banner” in 4-H static exhibits at the Lancaster County Super Fair.

The Go Go Goat Getters club gives youth the opportunity to help raise goats. Before the Super Fair, club members met frequently to practice handling their goats.

The Fantastic 4 had nine business meetings last year and started each meeting by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H pledge.

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To receive the designation as a Nebraska 4-H Club of Excellence, clubs must meet the following:

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• Give youth leadership roles
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• Are facilitated by a volunteer/organizational leader who has successfully completed the Volunteer Profile
• Have members who perform a presentation or public speaking at the club level or above
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14 Ways Consumers Can Reduce Food Waste

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN
Extension Educator

About 40 percent of the United States food supply (1506 calories/person/day) goes uneaten. Discarded food in homes and food-service accounts for about 31 percent of this total food loss and is mostly avoidable. The remaining portion is lost or wasted during food production.

This amount of food waste is among the highest globally. Preventing food waste saves money and resources. Resources used to produce uneaten food include: 30 percent of fertilizer, 31 percent of cropland, 25 percent of total fresh water consumption and 2 percent of total energy consumption.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates food wastes at almost 14 percent of the total municipal solid wastes in the United States in 2010, with less than 3 percent recovered and recycled. Food in landfills decomposes to produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Feeding the world will become more difficult in the future as 9 billion people are expected on the planet by 2050, compared to a world population of around 7 billion people in 2015. Developing habits to save resources associated with producing and buying food and aid in reducing the creation of greenhouse gas emissions.

Here are 14 ways consumers can help reduce the amount of food wasted.

Shop the refrigerator before going to the store. Use food at home before buying more. Designate one meal weekly as a “use-it-up” meal.

Move older food products to the front of the fridge/cupboard/freezer and just-purchased ones to the back. This makes it more likely foods will be consumed before they go bad.

Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or below to prolong the life of foods. Foods frozen at 0°F or lower will remain safe indefinitely but the quality will go down over time.

Freeze or can surplus fresh produce using safe, up-to-date food preservation methods. Visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation website (http://nchfp.usda.gov) for freezing and canning instructions.

Take restaurant leftovers home and refrigerate within two hours of being served. Eat within three to four days or freeze. Ask for a take home container at the beginning of the meal if portions look especially large. Remove take home food from your plate at the beginning of the meal so leftovers are as appetizing as the original meal…rather than the picked-over remains. Or, choose a smaller size and/or split a dish with a dining companion.

Compost food scraps for use in the garden.

Check product dates on foods. The United States Department of Agriculture/Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS) defines them as:

• A “Sell-By” date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the date expires.

• A “Best if Used By (or Before)” date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

• A “Use-By” date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The date has been determined by the manufacturer of the product. Do not buy or use baby formula after its “use-by” date.

Look for recipes on websites that can be seen FOOD WASTE on back page

HEALTHY EATING

ENJOY NEBRASKA FOODS!

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN, Extension Educator

CLEAN OUT THE FRIDGE POTATO SALAD

Have you ever looked inside your refrigerator and found a little bit of this and a little bit of that? Of course it is!

When that happens, make potato salad! (Note: Potatoes should be stored in a cool dry place in your house for best quality – not in the refrigerator.)

Follow these quick “1, 2, 3” steps!

1) Begin with cooked, diced potatoes (1-inch cube). Let them stand until cool enough to handle. Tip: You can leave the skins on young, tender potatoes and other varieties of potatoes with a thin, delicate skin. There are over 100 varieties of potatoes. If uncertain about the best way to boil potatoes — and potatoes are a food that gets wasted at home — check website potatoesgoodness.com, the website of the United States Potato Board, the nation’s potato marketing and research organization.

2) While the potatoes are cooking/cooling, clean and prepare potential still-edible foods that might soon go in the garbage. Also, look for jars and packages of other still-edible foods that have will put less strain on the resources associated with producing and buying food and aid in reducing the creation of greenhouse gas emissions.

3) The last step is combining the potatoes with vegetables and seasonings you might soon go in the garbage. Both your favorite homemade or purchased potato salad dressing. Then, chill your potato salad for about an hour before serving, to let flavors meld.

Some other foods you can add to potato salads include: hard-boiled eggs, celery, cheese, parsley, green pepper, grapes or cherry tomatoes (halved), capers, olives and chives.

Food waste also wastes money and resources used to produce uneaten food.

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Cultural Diversity and Awareness: Tips for Parents of Young Children

Dr. Tonia R. Durden
Nebraska Extension Early Childhood Specialist

“Dad! My skin matches your skin,” four-year-old Mitchell grabs his father’s hand as they wait in line for a chocolate chip bar at a local supermarket. “But look, dad!” Mitchell shouts, “His skin is like chocolate milk!”

If you are the parent of a preschooler, like the dad in the scenario above, you may have experienced your child’s natural observations and curiosities about cultural diversity. Although children’s observations and questions about the ways in which we are diverse may be embarrassing or uncomfortable for you as a parent, know that children’s curiosity is developmentally appropriate and should be welcomed with open conversations and opportunities to explore together their interest and society.

Children today live in communities that reflect the diverse composition of the U.S. society. They interact with other families and children who are from different cultures, speak different languages, or may have a special need. Children also see images of diversity each day in books, toys and cartoon characters. When you consider how diversity in gender, ability, language, culture and ethnicity is all around us, it is not unexpected that young children are very curious and excited about learning from the diverse world and people around them.

For this reason, parents have the opportunity to support children’s natural interests and curiosity by exploring with them their own unique culture as well as those represented in the local community.

The following are two tips parents can use to help children become citizens of our very diverse community and world:

Tip 1: Start First with your own cultural diversity within your family.
Create or share a family photo album with your child, discussing your heritage and places around the country or where members of your family are from or have traveled to.

Tip 2: Complete a visual scan of your home environment.
Does your home reflect the diversity of the community and country in which you live? Try a new recipe from another culture, listen to a different musical genre, or expose your child to books, toys and puzzles that are non-stereotypical and represent interesting and positive images of the cultural group.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Nebraska Extension’s Early Childhood Development website (http://go.unl.edu/mnmc) has a topic area about cultural diversity.

Cleaning on Your Schedule

The key to a clean house is finding a system that works for you and your schedule. What worked before you had kids may need some modifications. And empty nesters may have a busier schedule than before the days of carpools and kids sports.

Cluttered Kitchen? Just Say NO!
It’s tempting to let the dishes “soak” while you relax after dinner, but you have to ask yourself why. Wait. Put the dishes in the dishwasher, wash the pots and pans and wipe the counters and table after every meal. This keeps dishes from piling up and minimizes bugs.

Quick Pick Up Before Bed
Don’t let the clutter pile up. As you turn out the lights and head to bed grab the toys, magazines, remotes and put them in their place.

One Chore a Day
Make a list of the chores you need to complete and choose one to do each day. Here is a sample to get you started. There are lots of ready-made lists online, but success lies in modifying the list to your lifestyle and activities.

• Monday — laundry (change sheets regularly)
• Tuesday — laundry
• Wednesday — kitchen (floors, microwave, refrigerator)
• Thursday — vacuum & dust
• Friday — trash, bathrooms
• Saturday — meal planning (stick to the list when shopping!), yard work
• Sunday — rest
Which day or evening works best for your schedule? Families with children may do laundry every day. Trash is usually child to books, toys and puzzles that are non-stereotypical and represent interesting and positive images of the cultural group.

2015 Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events

These collections are for households only. Only residents of Lincoln and Lancaster County can bring items to collections.

SOME ITEMS YOU CAN BRING FOR DISPOSAL:
- Thermometers, thermostats containing mercury, bleach cleaners, glues, oil-based paint, paint thinner, furniture stripper, oil-based stains, paint thinner, oil-based stain, paint thinner, furniture stripper, oil-based stains, paint thinner, oil-based stain, paint thinner, furniture stripper, oil-based stains
- Cleaners, solvents, insect sprays, lighter fluid, etc.
- Repellents, insecticides, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals, insecticides, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals
- Skins, nails, paint, latex paint, paint thinner, furniture stripper, oil-based stains, paint thinner, oil-based stain, paint thinner, furniture stripper, oil-based stains
- Organic manures, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals, insecticides, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals
- Automotive fluids, adhesives, solvents, insecticides, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, pool chemicals

DO NOT BRING:
- Ammonia, hydrochloric, sulfuric, etc.
- Antifreeze or ammunition.
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Take Part in On-Farm Research

Tyler Williams
Extension Educator

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln produces a lot of research, but many farmers wonder if the research will work on their farm. The Nebraska On-Farm Research Network provides you the opportunity to conduct research on your farm. As we all know, farming operations vary drastically from one end of the state to the other. Farm management strategies, tillage practices, crop selection, climate, soil type, topography, etc., will vary depending on your location. This variation makes it difficult to test research results in one or two locations, and on-farm research can be that important link between the research and the application.

On-farm research involves using your land, your equipment, your practices and the products you apply to learn how a product or practice would directly affect your farming operation. The network is quite simply a collaboration of growers from across Nebraska working with Nebraska Extension faculty to conduct on-farm research and share results. Extension faculty will help with the project selection, design, statistics and final data analysis to assist you in the research process.

The first step in participating in on-farm research is to identify the right research question. For many questions, the answer may already be available and proven, so analyze your situation or visit with your local Extension educator about potential studies.

A few common examples are: corn and soybean planting population studies, cover crop studies, seed treatments, hybrid sensitivity, many others. When evaluating your question, ask yourself if you have field sites, equipment and resources to appropriately test the question.

The primary costs to the operator are the time it takes to implement the trial and gather data. The foundation of on-farm research is doing the research within your typical operation, so yield monitors and precision ag tools greatly improve the ease of conducting the research. Another cost may be when the product or practice tested does not enhance yield or profitability and you do not receive a return on your investment. This cost, however, would be greater if the product were used over your entire field or farming operation.

Site selection is another important component. The productivity of a field can vary significantly from one edge to the other due to soil type, slope, previous history, etc. A uniform treatment comparison site with the same moisture, soil and slope would be ideal; however, this is hard to find. This is where the power of replication, randomization and statistics come into play. The experiment layout is designed to address the field variability and give you confidence that yield differences are due to the product or practice in question. Once the research project is designed and the site is selected, it is time to conduct the research.

Data collection is a key element of on-farm research. It is important to think through what data you need to collect before you conduct your study. Planting and harvest dates, hybrid or variety, weather, soil characteristics, plant characteristics, tillage practices, crop selection, climate, soil type, topography, etc., are all data you would typically record. Additional data to collect may include photos, root, tillage and/or node counts, soil samples for nitrogen damage, weed/insect pressure or other data important to your research. Review the list throughout the season allow you to better interpret the data once the harvest is complete. Yield data collected during harvest is very important and should be done according to your research design. Harvest weights can be collected with a calibrated weigh wagon or yield monitor.

Once the data is collected, Extension will help analyze the results. Statistical analysis of the data will give you confidence in your data and research findings. Statistics will allow you to take into account the occurrence of a rare event and correct for the outcome of what would "normally" happen. Statistical analysis will also give you a probability of getting similar results in another year or field.

If you are interested in joining the On-Farm Research Network, contact Tyler at the Nebraska Extension office in Lancaster county at 402-441-7180.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Nebraska On-Farm Research Network "Growers Guide to On-Farm Research" interactive, online magazine is at http://cropwatch.unl.edu/nofrnzmag

In January, Tyler Williams joined Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County as extension educator. He also assists with Extension in Cass and Otoe Counties. Tyler’s focus is on enhancing cropping system resiliency to climate variability. He is the only extension educator in Nebraska with a focus in climate.

Tyler has been with extension for five years in Phelps and Gosper Counties, most recently as Unit Leader. He grew up on a ranch near Loomis, Neb. and continues to own cattle today. He attended University of Nebraska–Lincoln and received a bachelor’s degree in Meteorology/Climatology and Masters of Applied Science in Agronomy.

Tyler says, “In Nebraska, year to year climate variability is greater than any overall change that may be taking place. There is some concern of that variability increasing in the future.” He works with agricultural producers to provide education and resources about short-term weather impacts and long-term impacts of climate variability.

An example short-term weather impact is a pattern of cold and wet weather during planting season. Soil temperatures may warm-up early, but there is some risk involved in planting a seed too early.

An example concern with long-term weather variability is a greater incidence of drought. Warming earlier in the spring starts to deplete the soil moisture through evaporation or weed growth. This increased moisture loss may increase the chance of a drought early in the growing season if rains do not make up the difference. A couple of steps crop producers can take to help manage climate risks related to drought are:

• Diversification, since some crops tolerate drought better than others.
• Residue on the field surface will reduce crop stress because the residue will act as a mulch, reducing evaporative losses.

Tyler is part of Extension’s statewide Climate Resiliency team and Crops & Water teams. He regularly contributes to Extension’s CropWatch website (http://cropwatch.unl.edu), is on Twitter (https://twitter.com/tylerw_unl) and has a blog, “Ag Climate Nebraska” (http://agclimate.nebraska-edible.com/). Tyler is excited about working with ag producers in Lancaster, Cass and Otoe counties, so please stop in and say “Hello.”

Spring into Pond Management

Katie Pekarek
Extension Water Quality Educator

After a cold winter, it is exciting to see things “green up.” But it is discouraging to see a pond turn into green pea soup. Ponds are built for swimming, fishing, aesthetics, irrigation or even to capture storm water. After a year or growth, it is all but impossible to manage for all of these activities at once, the pond owner must decide what activity is the most important and make management decisions based on that goal.

Each pond and lake is completely unique. Two ponds sitting side by side may look exactly alike, but because of the different factors that affect pond and lake quality such as:

• water depth
• excess nutrients
• climate
• water movement
• water temperature
• watershed characteristics
• plant growth
• chemical composition

how ponds work
Most Nebraska ponds are man-made. Ponds need to have good water quality, favorable aquatic habitat and proper management in order to develop and maintain the goals for use. Given that a pond is properly constructed, good pond management includes:

• controlling aquatic weeds and algae
• controlling terrestrial weeds
• controlling nutrient inputs
• enhancing food availability for fish
• harvesting (controlled) to maintain the balance of predator and prey populations
• preventing situations that may cause fish kills

Poor pond management may result in algae problems, limiting the pond’s aesthetic value and its ability to support aquatic life.

Basic Fish Pond Management

Good fishing in farm ponds requires an understanding of and the ability to follow some basic rules. To properly manage farm ponds for fishing, you should be aware of some simple guidelines:

• proper pond construction and watershed management
• fish species selection and stocking
• removal of unwanted and overpopulated species of fish
• harvest and record keeping
• liming and/or fertilization
• evaluation of pond balance, and
• weed control.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Developed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Nebraska Pond Guide series provides an overview of information on managing existing ponds or construct new ones. Available online free at http://go.unl.edu/pond

Extension Educator Tyler Williams pictured next to an Automated Weather Data Network (AWDN) station on UNL East Campus which is operated by the High Plains Regional Climate Center.

Meet New Cropping Systems Educator, Tyler Williams

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• chemical composition

how ponds work
Most Nebraska ponds are man-made. Ponds need to have good water quality, favorable aquatic habitat and proper management in order to develop and maintain the goals for use. Given that a pond is properly constructed, good pond management includes:

• controlling aquatic weeds and algae
• controlling terrestrial weeds
• controlling nutrient inputs
• enhancing food availability for fish
• harvesting (controlled) to maintain the balance of predator and prey populations
• preventing situations that may cause fish kills

Poor pond management may result in algae problems, limiting the pond’s aesthetic value and its ability to support aquatic life.

Basic Fish Pond Management

Good fishing in farm ponds requires an understanding of and the ability to follow some basic rules. To properly manage farm ponds for fishing, you should be aware of some simple guidelines:

• proper pond construction and watershed management
• fish species selection and stocking
• removal of unwanted and overpopulated species of fish
• harvest and record keeping
• liming and/or fertilization
• evaluation of pond balance, and
• weed control.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Developed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Nebraska Pond Guide series provides an overview of information on managing existing ponds or construct new ones. Available online free at http://go.unl.edu/pond
Cutleaf and Common Teasel Designated “Noxious” in Lancaster County

BY BRENT MEYER  
Lancaster County Weed Superintendent

In an effort to protect Nebraska’s economy and the quality of its land, Greg Ibach, Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, approved the designation of Cutleaf teasel (Dipsacus laciniatus L.) and Common teasel (Dipsacus fullonum L.) as noxious weeds in Lancaster County. This designation requires each landowner in Lancaster County is responsible for controlling teasel growing on property they own or manage.

The Nebraska Noxious Weed Control Act allows individual counties to designate local invasive weed problems to their county’s noxious list, without being added to Nebraska’s statewide noxious list. This allows local authorities to attack potential invasives aggressively at the county level to prevent statewide spread.

After holding public hearings, gathering information and testimony, Lancaster County Weed Control proceeded to add both teasels to our noxious weed list. On July 1, 2014, Lancaster County became the first county in Nebraska to add cutleaf and common teasel as noxious weeds.

The Lancaster County Weed Control Authority gathered the following information to help make the determination to add common & cutleaf teasel:

- Early Detection and Identification:
  - Testimony from Robert Kaul, Curator and Director of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.
  - Nebraska Game & Parks reported common & cutleaf teasel as noxious in 2015.
  - Currently 14 counties in Nebraska are reporting common & cutleaf teasel. 
  - In an effort to protect Nebraska’s economy and the quality of its land, Greg Ibach, Director of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, approved the designation of Cutleaf teasel (Dipsacus laciniatus L.) and Common teasel (Dipsacus fullonum L.) as noxious weeds in Lancaster County.

- Distribution:
  - Nebraska Game & Parks reported working on controlling teasel for years without having much success at eradication.
  - Lancaster County currently has less than 100 acres with most of them being small and easy to control.
  - Testimony from Robert Kaul, Curator and Research Professor for the University of Nebraska-C.E. Bessey Herbarium, testified that teaest has the potential to be worse than musk thistle ever was.
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- Prevention and Management:
  - Do not plant teasel or move soil, including soil adhered to recreational vehicles or lawn/garden equipment, containing seed of this species.
  - Do not use seedheads in floral arrangements.
  - Infestation sites will need to be monitored and treated repeatedly until the seedbanks are depleted. Teasel seedbanks remain viable for a relatively short time, 2-3 years. With diligent control, eradication may be feasible within this timeframe.
  - Hand-pulling and digging are management options for small infestations, but the large, fleshy taproots and seedheads will need to be bagged and disposed.
  - This species also responds favorably to annual herbicide treatments. Nebraska Extension’s Guide for Weed Management (EC-130) recommends treatment at the rosette stage in the fall or early spring. The three different treatment options are: 1. 2,4-D 4% Amine at 32.0 ounces per acre 2. Garlon 3A at 3.0–4.0 pt. per acre 3. Overdive at 4.0–8.0 ounces per acre *Always read and follow the label directions
  - Biological control is not a management option at this time, but in the future.
  - Ineffective Practices
    - Mowing is ineffective because the root crown will re-sprout and flower after being cut. Even repeated mowing is ineffective. Repeated mowing will stop some plants from flowering, but others will produce short flowering stems short enough to be below the height of the mower. Plants knocked over by a mower and not cut off, will lie horizontally and produce short flowering stalks below the height of the mower.
    - Prescribed burning alone is ineffective. Prescribed burning may kill some of the isolated small seedings, but it is ineffective against dense seedings or large rosettes.

The best time to treat teasels and thistles is when they are in the rosette stage (cutleaf teasel on left, musk thistle on right).
Catch the Thief Green-Handed!

BY PAT DUGAN
Lancaster County Weed Chief Inspector

Deciding to farm and/or ranch is one of the most rewarding and challenging occupations you could possibly imagine. In most instances, your land is one of the largest investments you have and it or will become one of your greatest assets providing for you, your family’s lifestyle and generations to come.

As a landowner/tenant, you are charged every day to manage, preserve and enhance this investment. You have also committed yourself to become a business partner with every other owner in the community to protect and maintain property values.

Noxious and invasive plants in the United States have become established at unprecedented rates with over 4,200 species now on record. Across vast rangelands, wild lands and riparian areas, invasive plants have either become established or continue to be a threat.

These THIEVES are threatening your livelihood and they are not just weeds anymore. They continue to take land out of production. By being non-palatable, noxious and invasive plants reduce your animal unit per acre/pasture carrying capacity, they also reduce the marketability of your product, such as weed-free forage, lighter weaning weights, foreign matter in grain, lighter crop test weight, etc. Additional economic and environmental harm done by these invasive species

Noxious Weed-Free Gravel and Hay Products

BY PAT DUGAN
Lancaster County Weed Chief Inspector

Weed-free gravel and hay products are key to the prevention of noxious and invasive weed invasions.

Invasive plants can be introduced via non-certified hay, mulch, straw and raw feeds. These plants outcompete native plants, degrade wildlife habitat and reduce soil and water quality. They cause economic losses in natural areas and impact aesthetics and recreation opportunities. While weeds can be extremely difficult to remove once established in croplands, rangeland, yards and abandoned lots, they are especially hard to detect and then eradicate in wilderness areas.

You can prevent potential noxious weed infestations by insisting on Certified-Weed-Free forage.

As a buyer, you should be aware that noxious weed-infested forage products can cost you hundreds or even thousands of dollars down the road. Ask your forage supplier to have their hay certified prior to harvest. Certified weed-free hay and mulch provide assurance that the field was inspected based upon a reasonable and prudent visual inspection, and no noxious weeds were detected.

Working together to require Certified Weed-Free Gravel in Lancaster County. By using certified weed-free gravel, the chances of spreading noxious weeds along our roadways decreases.

Noxious and invasive plants in the Nebraska’s Noxious Weeds

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

Nebraska’s Noxious Weeds

WEED AWARENES

An acreage in rural Lancaster County with a severe leafy spurge infestation.

Noxious weeds

Go“ National Ad

Before leaving, remove mud and seeds.

Burn local or certified firewood.

Help Prevent The Spread
Of Invasive Plants And Animals.

THE BRUSH OFF.

GIVE INVASIVE SPECIES THE BRUSH OFF.

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These THIEVES are threatening your livelihood and they are not just weeds anymore. They continue to take land out of production. By being non-palatable, noxious and invasive plants reduce your animal unit per acre/pasture carrying capacity, they also reduce the marketability of your product, such as weed-free forage, lighter weaning weights, foreign matter in grain, lighter crop test weight, etc. Additional economic and environmental harm done by these invasive plants include reduced flow in waterways, altered fire regimes and abandoned natural areas once preserved for wildlife and recreation.

Clearly, invasive plants are increasingly impacting our ecosystems. Without the natural enemies from where they originated, these plants have an unfair advantage and aggressively out-compete our native plants. No doubt trying to eradicate noxious weeds is an expensive and time-consuming task. However don’t underestimate the necessity. Today’s invaders degrade property, cause a degree of reduced value and have the ability to reach an economic threshold rendering property useless. The estimated cost of controlling invasive plant species is more than $120 billion each year in the United States.

Stay educated and abreast of all the new invaders in your area. Look for things that seem out of place. Know the invaders and study the best control method. Improper control may unintentionally help the thief spread. Rely on the local weed authority department to be an extra set of eyes keeping you and other landowners informed of when there is an infestation problem. New invaders are much more difficult to control and are easily impossible to eradicate. By being pro-active, we have a better chance of protecting assets from environmental and economic disasters.

Hidden Word Find

Responsible landowners take pride in their management efforts to control weeds in order to protect our environment. Sometimes the greatest challenge is to understand how invaders spread, the groups involved in treating them and tools they use.

Find the words in the puzzle and send your completed form to Lancaster County Weed Control for your chance to win the “Weeds of the Great Plains” book published by Nebraska Department of Agriculture. All entries must be postmarked by April 18.

If your name is drawn, the book will be mailed to you. This information will not be used to contact you with any other offer.

Enter drawing to win:

Name
Address
City/State/Zip

Send completed Word Find to: Lancaster County Weed Control, Weed Book Drawing 444 Cherry Creek Rd., Bldg. B, Lincoln, NE 68528
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.

Lancaster County’s Noxious Weeds

Good neighbors control noxious weeds — If you have questions or concerns about noxious weeds, please contact your local county noxious weed control authority, Nebraska Weed Control Association (www.neweed.org), or Nebraska Department of Agriculture.
Lancaster County Weed Control Authority’s purpose is to educate the public concerning noxious weeds and the need for controlling noxious weeds, to provide information to the citizens of Lancaster County concerning the legal requirements and benefits of cutting and clearing overgrown weeds and worthless vegetation, to foster cooperation and control, prevent encroachment into land that is not infested, identify the pathways in which weeds are spreading, and develop new methods to control weeds, containing large-scale infestations using an integrated approach and often re-vegetate.

1. Prevent the development of weed infestations
   - Prevention is the least expensive and most effective way to halt the spread of noxious and invasive weeds. Integrated weed management includes providing information to cooperators, land managers and the public. As people become more aware of noxious weeds, the probability of detecting them is greatly increased, which allows for more effective and timely control.

2. Provide education and public awareness on noxious and invasive weed control
   - The public is generally not aware of the economic and environmental impacts of noxious weeds. There is a need to improve awareness of noxious weeds and to provide educational information to cooperators, land managers and the public.

3. Provide for ongoing management
   - Noxious Weeds in State of Nebraska

   Noxious weeds are defined as any plant that is not native, is introduced to the area, and impacts the environment. The control of noxious weeds must be applied and evaluated over an extended period of time to be successful.

Noxious Weed Program

The Lancaster County Weed Control Program offers a no-cost three-phase program to assist landowners in reducing the number of noxious weeds infested acres in the county.

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Clover Mites are Common Spring Invaders

Soní Cochran
Extension Associate

Each spring, we receive reports of clover mite infestations. In pure clover, tiny mites can easily crawl in around windows and doors, especially on sides of homes where the sun warms the house. Clover mites are relatives of ticks and spiders. They are slightly smaller than a pin head and appear reddish-brown. They appear as brick-red specks crawling around windows, drapes, curtains and furniture. Clover mites are harmless. They don’t bite or injure humans or pests. They can’t survive indoors. They come into our homes accidentally and once inside, will die. Outdoors, they feed on turfgrass and some plants, but rarely cause damage. Clover mites can be especially numerous on well-fertilized grass.

The best way to manage clover mites is to prevent their entry into buildings in the spring or fall. Seal gaps or cracks around windows and doors may help reduce the number of mites coming indoors, but the mites are so tiny, they can squeeze through very small openings. If clover mite invasions are a reoccurring problem for you, remove grasses and weeds in a three-foot strip around foundation. The clover mites may still cross mulch or pea gravel to enter homes, but this will help. Flowerbeds planted with zinnia, marigold, salvia, rose chrysanthemum and petunia or shrubs like barberry, juniper, spruce, arborvitae and yew make better barriers because these plants aren’t attractive to clover mites.

If you choose to treat around your foundation, treat an area 5–10 feet out from the base of the foundation and up a few feet on the walls of the house. Many products registered for clover mite control are short-lived and you will need to re-treat. Make sure you follow all label directions carefully. Treated when daytime temperatures will be at least 60°F because chemical effectiveness may be reduced with cooler temperatures. If clover mites have found their way into your home, the best control is your vacuum cleaner. Avoid crushing or smearing the mites because they will leave a red stain. Avoid “wiping” away the mites because they will smear and stain. You can dab them up with a damp paper towel.

The last Friday in April is National Arbor Day. Plant a tree or support an organization which plants trees.

Do not add organic matter to the soil when planting trees. It does not help the tree become established and it may create conditions that encourage the roots to stay inside the planting hole instead of spreading to surrounding soil. Do dig a large planting hole, but fill it with the original soil removed from it. Prune spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia and spirea after they have completed flowering.

Consider planting native perennials that are beneficial to native pollinators like saltry bees, bumblebees and butterflies. Native plants include coreopsis, coneflower, aster, liatris, goldenrod, pasque flower, butterfly milkweed, pitcher sage, bee balm and purple poppy mallow.

Remove sticks, rocks and other debris from your lawn to prevent damaging your lawn mower or injuring yourself when mowing. Check your lawn mower and other lawn-care equipment in preparation for the coming season.

Put a birdhouse in the garden to attract insect eating friends. Cut flower stalks back to the ground on daffodils, hyacinths and other spring flowering bulbs as the flowers fade. Do not cut the foliage until it dies naturally. The leaves are necessary to produce strong bulbs capable of reflowering next year.

Seed bare spots in your fescue or bluegrass lawn. Scatter annual poppy seeds in flower borders. The fine seeds need not be covered. The plants grow rapidly and provide colorful flowers in early summer.

In a sunny location with poor soil, plant nasturtiums for a colorful show. They require warm soil to sprout and start blooming in about 50 days. Too much water and fertilizer produces excess leaves and few flowers.

GARDEN GUIDE
THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

April 2015 • Page 5

2015 Composting Demonstrations
Learn how to be successful with composting by attending a composting demonstration or workshop sponsored by Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County and the City of Lincoln Recycling Office. Sessions are presented by Extension Master Gardeners. At each composting program, two lucky participants will win either a composting thermometer or a composting bin.

Composting Demonstrations are presented at the Pioneers Park Nature Center’s backyard composting demonstration area. You will see three types of composting bins and how to use them. Demonstrations will be held:

- Saturday, April 18, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (presenters will stay longer than usual to answer questions)
- Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m.
- Saturday, June 20, 10 a.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 19, 10 a.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 17, 10 a.m.

Composting Workshop:
- Tuesday, April 14, 6:30–7:30 p.m. — Bess Dodson Walt Library, 6701 S. 14th St.

Mulch to the drip line if possible.

4. Hole size and shape have become a very important factor. Do not skim on the width of the planting hole. Plant slightly above nursery level. Place the plant on solid ground, not fill dirt. Be careful of drainage.

5. Remove all containers from the root ball prior to planting, even peat pots should not be left intact. It is best if wire baskets can be removed completely.

6. Backfill with loosened soil. Research shows that soil amendments are not necessary.

7. No need to fertilize at planting time. Remove only damaged or rubbing branches. Food production by the leaves is vitally important. Cutting back restricts leaf area and therefore food production.

8. Water the plant thoroughly, then two to three times per week for the first season.

9. Mulch around the tree. This is important. Natural composted mulch or wood bark is best. Do not use grass clippings or lawn mowers. Remove staked areas only after the tree is established.

10. Stake only when necessary. If the tree is staked, allow for some movement but take care not to injure the bark. Staking is useful more for protection against people and lawn mowers. Remove stakes after the tree is established.

Source: Nebraska Forest Service Community Forestry Program

NEBLINE HORTICULTURE / PESTS & WILDLIFE April 2015 • Page 5

10 Rules for Planting Trees

These guidelines are the most current practices that are recommended for proper tree planting. It is tough being a tree in Nebraska, but following these procedures will provide a planted tree the best means of surviving and growing to maturity.

1. Selection is important — Select the right tree for the right place. Many serious problems can be avoided by proper selection decisions. Contact Duane’s Hotline before you dig your planting hole.

2. Pre-planting care — Keep planting stock in shaded location and well watered. Do not get rough with the planting ball or container. If you have to hold a plant up, make sure it is moist and shaded. Keep in mind that when trees are transplanted from the nursery, only 90 to 95 percent of the root system is left behind.

3. On site and prior to planting remove all wires, labels, cords and anything else that may be attached to the plant.

4. Plant slightly above nursery level. The root system expands with the fine dust will die in the soil. Take special precautions if you have light colored carpet because each time you walk over to look at the clover mites, you may be crushing their bodies into your carpet and staining it. I remember one mom who called to report her young boys had found the clover mites near a window in their bedroom and had “painted” the walls with them. The stains left by crushed clover mites are very durable and can be hard to remove.

Clover mites on a blade of grass (magnified).
Discover, Learn and Grow at 4-H Summer Camps

2015 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 locations at Gretna and Halsey, there are nearly 50 camps ranging from half day to seven days/six nights! The 4-H camps and centers all meet over 300 standards established by the American Camping Association. It is the mission of Nebraska 4-H Camps and Centers to provide unique educational opportunities that empower people of all ages to be active in the pursuit of self-improvement in a safe, structured, and fun environment.

Save 10% by registering before April 15!

4-H Member Online Enrollment
Nebraska 4-H has introduced a new online enrollment system, called “4-H Online.” Paper enrollment is no longer an option. Members and fair projects may be updated through June 15. The website to enroll is https://ne.4honline.com. The process is easy and takes a few minutes per member. The help instructions are nonstop.

NOTE: only parents/guardians may enroll 4-H members. Each 4-H household will need to set up a profile in which the 4-H youth for the household will be added.

A step-by-step instruction guide with pictures is online at http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/StepbystepEnroll.pdf. If you have questions about the process or need access to a computer, call Karen Evasco at 402-441-7180.

4-H Volunteers Enrollment Forms
For now, volunteers and leaders must still enroll using the form at http://lancaster.unl.edu/hr/club/shenrollformleader.pdf by June 15. Mail or bring to the Extension office.

Furniture Painting Workshop, April 18
4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to participate in a furniture painting workshop on Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Street Road. Bring a small piece of unpainted furniture, such as a shelf, stool or chair. These items can be found around your house, at craft stores and sales and thrift stores. Learn how to prepare new and used wood furniture by sanding, sealing, painting and finishing. All paints and finishes are provided. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to attend to help youth. Register by April 15 by calling 402-441-7180.

Youth Ag Conference Deadline April 15
Youth Ag Conference Nebraska Agriculture Youth Institute (NAYI) is a five day summer conference for high school seniors and juniors held July 6–10 at UNL East Campus. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture will provide the cost of meals, lodging and conference fees. Applications are due on April 15. Information and application form are available at www.nda.nebraska.gov/nayi and the Extension office.

4-H Clubs Needed to Help Provide Booths at Kiwanis Karnival, April 10
The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event, is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Friday, April 10, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 25th St., Lincoln (note change from a Saturday to Friday). 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 host a booth, please contact Karen Carlson at: 402-413-9876. Enjoy the fun!
At the 2015 Nebraska Cattlemen’s Classic Beef Judging Contest on Feb. 21 in Kearney, the Lancaster County 4-H senior livestock judging team earned 9th place high team. Team members included Renee Sieck, Sheridan Swetek and Ashtyn Cooper. Individual results included Renee Sieck placing 8th in placings, 2nd in feed lot cattle, 3rd in reasons and 3rd high individual. Junior division participants included Rachel Lange and Anastacia Faitz. Rachel was 4th in placings, 1st in questions and 2nd high individual. Anastacia was 5th in placings, 9th in questions and 4th high individual. Congratulations to all who competed!

New Livestock Quality Assurance Requirements

New this year, Quality Assurance training is NOT required for the Lancaster County Super Fair. ONLY 4-H/FFA members showing market beef, market sheep, market swine, meat and dairy goats, dairy cattle, poultry and rabbits at State Fair or the Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Stock Show must complete the Quality Assurance training. Livestock exhibitors showing only breeding animals and horse exhibitors do not have to complete it. The Quality Assurance certification is online and must be done by June 15. This year, there is a $5 per youth charge. Instructions are online at http://4h.unl.edu/qualityassurance. If you have any questions, contact Cole at cmadeo2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

4-H Interview Judging Regional Contest, May 21

4-H youth ages 11 and up are invited to participate in the Interview Judging Contest. This contest will give youth the opportunity to practice the real-life skill of applying for a job. Youth will use their 4-H and life experiences to write a resume and cover letter for one of three job descriptions and participate in a live interview. This regional contest will be held Thursday, May 21, 1–7 p.m. at UNL East Campus. Registrations are due to the Lancaster Extension office by May 1. The $5 registration fee will be paid by 4-H Council. Contact Tracy at 402-441-7180 or tracy.anderson@unl.edu to learn more about the contest. More details at http://4h.unl.edu/interviewjudgingcontest.

4-H & FFA Entry Pass Hangtags — New Policy

4-H/FFA exhibitors can get free 4-H/FFA entry pass hangtags for their immediate families at the extension office (available July 1–29). These entry passes allow one vehicle and its occupants to enter the fairgrounds each day Thursday, July 30–Monday, Aug. 3, 11 a.m. and park in designated areas. 4-H/FFA families are asked to enter Gate 3 (second Havelock driveway) where there will be an exhibitor lane when possible to speed entry — except when unloading/loading static exhibits, use 4th street entrance and temporarily unloading/load by the Lincoln Room and park in lot K if staying longer. Every 4-H/FFA vehicle needs an entry pass hangtag — NO EXCEPTIONS — so be sure to get a hangtag for every vehicle used during the fair (e.g., mom, dad, teen exhibitors that drive). General parking without the entry pass will be $5 daily except Monday–Wednesday will be free parking.

This year 4-H/FFA exhibitors will not need gate admission passes for occupants of vehicles with a 4-H/FFA entry pass hangtag Thursday, July 30–Monday, Aug. 3, 11 a.m. After the 4-H/FFA days of the fair, each 4-H/ FFA exhibitor and family member will need to bring a gate admission ticket picked up from a ticket sponsor or pay $2 per person to enter. These hangtag passes are for 4-H/FFA members and their immediate families only. Please do not abuse this privilege.

Shaving — New Procedure

Absolutely no outside shavings or straw is allowed. All exhibitors must use shavings provided by Event Center ($7 per bag with sales tax included). All exhibitors must pay for and pick up shavings at the shavings office (located on the east end of Pavilion 2) when it is open during peak check-in hours. Otherwise, shavings are available through the Quick Stop Café located between Pav. 1 and 4 anytime it is open. Cash, check or credit card accepted.

Pavilion 2 Shavings Office hours:
• Sunday, July 26, Noon–8 p.m.
• Monday, July 27–29, Noon–8 p.m.
• Thursday, July 30, 7 a.m.–7 Noon
Shavings available through the Quick Stop Café between Pav. 1 and 4:
• Monday, July 27–Sunday, Aug. 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

New 4-H Exhibits

See the Fair Book for detailed information about each of the following:
• Style Revue Contest and Clothing Exhibits: There are significant changes to many classes to reflect the new STEAM Clothing 1, 2, and Beyond the Needle curriculum. These manuals are available for purchase at the Extension office.
• Theme Exhibits: some exhibits used the Super Fair theme. The new theme is “Let the good times grow.”
• Presentations Contest: 4-H FilmFest (Digital Video) replaces Teaching Presentation.
• Photography: there is a career exhibit print Explore a career as an editorial photographer; Unit III - Career exhibit print - Explore a career as a commercial photographer.
• Geospatial (GPS): 4-H History Map
• Conservation & Wildlife: new rules for “Build a Fishing Rod.” New class, “Inventing Wildlife/Fish Harvesting Equipment, Aid or Accessory”
• Agronomy: several new classes.
• Meat Goat Show: “Performance Class” and ”Bottle Goat Class.”

Dog Show: Theme "Food Fun" for Creative Kennel Contest and Costume Contest.

Horse Show: Starts Sunday, July 26 before the fair and ends Sunday, Aug. 2. Show order has switched to Dressage, Jumping, English, Western. New special awards to be presented at 4-H Horse Awards Night: Nebraska Dressage Association High Score Dressage Rider, Lowell Boomer High Point Jumping Award and Bluestem All-Around Miniature Horse Award. Costume Contest added.
April
1   All 4-H/FFA Market Beef ID’s/DNA Due to Extension
3–4   Hunter’s Pride Shaggy Horse Dressage Show, Lancaster Event Center
7   4-H Council Meeting…………………………7 p.m.
9   Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training………………8:30 a.m.
10  Farmvention Board Meeting…………………………8 a.m.
10  Kiwanis Karnival, Elliott School, 225 S. 25 Street………………5:30-7:30 p.m.
12  4-H Teen Council Meeting……………………3 p.m.
14  Guardian/Conservator Training………………………………5:30–8:30 p.m.
14  4-H Horsemanship Level Testing, Lancaster Event Center-
Any Countryman Arena……………………………5:30 p.m.
14  Composting Workshop, Bess Dodson Walt Library, 6/01 S. 14th St.………………6:30-7:30 p.m.
15  Co-Parenting for Successful Kids Class…………………………9:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
18  4-H Furniture Painting Workshop…………………………9 a.m.
21–23   Ag Awareness Festival (for 4th Grade), Lancaster Event Center
24  4-H Horsemanship Level Testing, Lancaster Event Center-
Any Countryman Arena……………………………5:30 p.m.

April continued from page 1 of overall accomplishment as a club. When the members see how many of them participated in the various events, meetings, etc., it makes our small club feel pretty mighty. We may not have 100 members, but we do have almost 100 percent participation all the time. Second, there is the community service aspect. Our club is dedicated to helping our community. As the leader, I look for ways the club can be rewarded for taking the time to give others.

Joe’s Clover Knights is currently Lancaster County’s largest 4-H club with 65 members. Leader Anne Johnson says, “Our club loves working towards getting the Club of Excellence award because it shows your club goes above and beyond to reach higher goals. Many of the requirements to receive this designation help our club be more well rounded. Reviewing these goals at the beginning of the year, gives our club an annual outline to assist us in being the best club we can be. For many of the items listed to get the Club of Excellence award, it is very easy because it is part of every meeting such as reciting the pledge, having parental involvement, electing officers, etc.” Shamstahm Clowers has been a Club of Excellence since they organized two years ago. Leader Cathy Babcock says, “We don’t do it for the award. We do it because the requirements expose the goals we have for the kids in our club. We don’t want them to gain these life skills just for their own benefit. We want them to use what they have learned to become leaders and to serve their community. The conditions of the award give us the accountability to make sure we are striving for those goals each year. Last year, we asked each member to do a presentation on at least the club level. I think hearing about so many interests has really helped our members get to know each other a little better. This year they seem more comfortable working with each other. I’m excited to see how this plays out in the next few months, especially as we choose our next community service project.” Congratulations to Nebraska 4-H Clubs of Excellence and all 4-H clubs which strive for excellence in helping youth grow!

Food Waste continued from page 2 searched for by ingredients to use up food at home. USDA’s “What’s Cooking: USDA Mixing Bowl” website (www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov) offers several tools for searching for recipes with specific ingredients, nutrition themes and meal courses. To find more recipe websites, try using such search words as “recipe website that uses ingredients you have at home” (include these words in quotation marks).

Buy mismatched fruits and vegetables at farmer’s markets and elsewhere. They taste just as good and are just as nutritious as those with a “perfect” shape, but are more likely to get thrown away.

Rather than buy a food for use in only one recipe, check if there might be a suitable substitute already in the home. The Cook’s Thesaurus website (http://foodsub.com) gives thousands of ingredient substitutions.

Check the garbage can. If the same foods are constantly being tossed: Eat them sooner, buy less of them, incorporate them into more recipes or freeze them.

Donate safe, nutritious food to food banks, food pantries and food rescue programs. If you have several foods that might go to waste at the same time, try adding them to such adaptable recipes as salads, soups, pasta and casseroles.

References: