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## University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension Connect, February 2004

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2004

# Connect

February

## Storm water management to reduce erosion from new construction

A little dirt may not hurt. But washed into streams, lakes and rivers, it is a major pollutant.

New federal storm water management regulations for metropolitan cities are intended to prevent sediment pollution of surface waters, especially from new construction on one acre and larger.

Steve Tonn, a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator based in Omaha, coordinates and facilitates educational seminars for the development industry to better understand the year-old regulations, as well as how to reduce soil erosion and sediment pollution.

"Extension has served as a catalyst to draw different agencies together and help them unite their work with the building community," Tonn said. The formats allow staff from several agencies and professional organizations that are involved with various aspects of the regulations to better understand what each does, he added.

In Omaha, the need for management has become more obvious with new residences being built around the city's four major lakes, Tonn said.

Soil washing into lakes can cloud water, clog fish gills, cover aquatic habitat and reduce surface water volume, he said.

Washed into the street, soil can turn to mud and can be a potential driving hazard. From there it runs into storm sewers, where it empties untreated into nearby surface waters.

An extension Erosion and Sediment Control Seminar in March 2003 attracted 143 engineers, consultants, grading contractors, architects, agency personnel and others. They learned more about storm water management requirements and best management practices such as ground cover and erosion control dams, Tonn said. Ninety-five percent of those who responded to a survey said the seminar was useful, with 93 percent stating they would apply the information used, he added.

Geoffrey Goodwin, Omaha Public Works engineering technician and a seminar presenter, said the outreach is crucial for professionals involved with residential and commercial development. It helps them become more familiar with the regulations and best management practices.

"We provided them with useful information for their day-to-day duties," Goodwin said.

Dan Dolezal, a civil engineer with Ehrhart, Griffin and Associates, agreed the education is important because the regulations are so new. Dolezal said he appreciates that many professionals from



Rachel Wright

*Steve Tonn, Cooperative Extension educator based in Omaha, talks with Donna Luckner of the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, in west Omaha. Tonn coordinates educational seminars on storm water management and runoff pollution prevention of metropolitan lakes.*

related disciplines were in the same educational setting, and that his clients now better understand the added construction costs needed to reduce erosion and runoff.

Tonn said he expects the educational efforts to be ongoing for several years for homeowners as well as builders.

He noted homeowners can prevent erosion and surface water pollution in many ways. For example, using biodegradable, phosphate-free car soaps prevents algae growth or scum in water. He recommends residents pick up pollutants on concrete, such as pet wastes, grease, antifreeze, fertilizers, grass clippings and leaves to prevent them being washed into storm sewers.

— Cheryl Alberts

*Tonn can be contacted at (402) 444-4237.*

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## Dean's comments

I've spent many pleasurable moments recently perusing a handbook for extension. The inside cover mentions the "great need that both rural and urban people should get more of a complete understanding of the educational, social and economic significance of extension work ..."

This quote is from the USDA Extension Service Handbook of Agriculture and Home Economics, dated October 1926.

I sometimes reflect with wonder at much things have changed — and how they remain the same.

Take teaching, for example. This primary function of University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension has not changed in the last 80 years. Obviously, many methods in the way we teach have changed a great deal. But the primary teaching role for extension has been, and remains, to extend knowledge from the university to people throughout the state so they can make decisions that improve their lives.

Historically, our extension educators were called agents, and still are in some states. However, even the 1926 handbook acknowledges that the "extension agent is primarily a teacher — not a service agent."

Good teaching depends upon:

- a clear understanding of the teaching responsibilities
- a working knowledge of the principles of teaching and the factors that condition learning
- correct diagnosis of local situations
- well-planned applications of the principles of teaching that desired

changes may be brought about.

Would you agree this is accurate? Again, another segment from the 1926 handbook! We are an organization that historically is leading the way!

Today, Cooperative Extension has developed strong relationships to

further its resources to help Nebraska and Nebraskans. A few examples:

— Extension shares an intern with the College of Fine and Performing Arts. That intern takes theatrical expertise to our 4-H campers.

— Our collaboration with the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska integrates 4-H

curriculum with culturally appropriate youth development programs.

— With the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Office of Admissions and Office of University Communications at UNL, we share the position of extension recruitment coordinator, who works with extension educators to help potential students and their parents find information about the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

— We partner with the Neighborhood Center for Greater Omaha and the University of Nebraska at Omaha on an educational position to teach neighborhood leadership programs and grant-writing seminars.

In so many ways, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work — for you.

**Elbert Dickey**  
Dean and Director  
University of Nebraska  
Cooperative Extension



*Elbert Dickey*

## 2004 Connect

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# Latino Voices members becoming more involved with community

In Schuyler, where nearly half the population is Latino, members of that ethnic group had little community involvement – until a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension specialist stepped in.

Georgia Stevens, family and community specialist for diversity, worked with Excel Corp. in Schuyler in 2001 to offer a leadership training workshop in Spanish for Latino employees at the meat processing plant.

That initial workshop, attended by 15 employees, led to the formation of Latino Voices of Nebraska, a group of plant employees who meet monthly to talk about issues of interest and community involvement.

“It was exhilarating to see their interest,” Stevens said. “They were ready to take that next step of being part of leadership and being active members of the community.”

In 2003, the group supported a bond issue to build an addition to an elementary school. The bond issue failed, but the group convinced about 70 Latinos to register to vote.

“They got really engaged in the local election,” Stevens said. “What you had was people starting to feel more comfortable in the community.”

Miguel Ibarra, training coordinator at Excel and a Latino Voices leader, said Stevens helped give a voice to the underserved population, which according to the 2000 Census, makes up more than 45 percent of Schuyler’s 5,300 people.

“It was time for somebody to step up and do something,” Ibarra said, adding that previously Latino residents in Schuyler were uninvolved in community activities.

Ibarra and another Latino Voices member have since joined the Colfax County Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan Development Group, which seeks grant money for children’s and teen activities.

In addition, Latino Voices members wanted to visit the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as many were inter-

ested in sending their children to college. Stevens arranged for 18 members and their families to visit the NU State Museum, animal science complex, and food sciences and technology facility. Only one of the 18 had ever been on a college campus before, Stevens said.

As group facilitator and adviser, Stevens said using Spanish in the initial leadership workshop, which she believes to be a first in Nebraska, increased comprehension and helped form Latino Voices.

“I think it’s the tip of the iceberg,” Stevens said, explaining that she expects Latino leadership groups to form across Nebraska.



*Miguel Ibarra of Schuyler, a member of Latino Voices of Nebraska, works with Georgia Stevens, Cooperative Extension family and community specialist for diversity.*

“We need to reach out to audiences who haven’t been as aware,” she said. “We have a wide-open opportunity.”

— **Lori McGinnis**

*Stevens can be contacted at (402) 472-5518.*

## Nutrition, exercise classes offered in Spanish

Women with limited incomes can learn better health practices in both English and Spanish through University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension classes on nutrition and exercise.

ABCs for Good Health is taught in Spanish in Omaha and at few other locations, said Carrie Schneider-Miller, extension educator based in Omaha. Classes in English also are offered statewide. Classes in Omaha meet once a week for a month.

Schneider-Miller said the Spanish-speaking women are very interested in learning the information, much of which is new to them.

“They have tons of questions,” she said. “They’re very appreciative of what we teach.”

The Spanish-language classes in Omaha are taught by bilingual extension staff. While more classes are taught in English, Schneider-Miller said the Spanish-language classes have greater

attendance.

Participants are over age 40 and at higher risk for heart disease and diabetes. ABCs for Good Health classes teach ways to reduce these risks, Schneider-Miller said.

“A” is for Aim for Fitness, where women begin a walking program and set a goal to walk 10,000 steps – five miles – a day.

“B” is for Build a Base, which teaches the importance of following the food guide pyramid.

“C” is for Choose Sensibly, which teaches how to choose foods low in fat, salt and sugar, and rich in nutrients.

ABCs for Good Health participants report positive results, such as walking more, eating more vegetables and fewer tortillas, and lowering their blood pressures.

— **Lori McGinnis**

*Schneider-Miller can be contacted at (402) 444-7804.*



# Proper manure planning is key for environmental stewardship

**W**aste or resource?

Depending how it's managed, livestock manure can be either.

A team of 20 University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension specialists and educators co-led by Rick Koelsch, extension bioenvironmental engineer, teaches livestock managers to properly comply with federal environmental regulations in using manure as a crop fertilizer.

In 2003, revisions to the federal Clean Water Act required that managers of larger livestock operations, such as more than 1,000 head of cattle, apply for Waste Control Facility permits and implement Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs). Using manure as fertilizer is fundamental to environmental stewardship, Koelsch said.

Manure spread on the state's wide, open fields provides nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients to crops, and closely monitoring its nutrient value prevents those nutrients from entering lakes, streams, wetlands and groundwater, Koelsch said.

"In Nebraska we have an opportunity

to recycle manure nutrients and prevent them from becoming water quality problems," Koelsch said.

Extension's education, workbooks, spreadsheets, software and kits help producers apply for their permits, and develop and carry out their CNMPs. Producers figure the quantity of manure generated, how much to spread on fields and where, how to take samples and how to calibrate equipment.

Richard DeLoughery, CNMP project coordinator, figures the nitrogen and phosphorus produced annually in manure from 1,000 head of cattle and 1,000 head of hogs to be worth \$18,000 and \$6,500, respectively.

Of the 300 producers who studied manure management with extension between 2001 and 2003, DeLoughery said 75 managed more than 375,000 beef cattle, 2,000 dairy cows, 72,000 pigs, and 200,000 chickens and turkeys. Another 200 crop and livestock consultants and agency personnel also participated in the manure management education.

"We had people come because it was

required and people who came because they wanted to improve their operations," said Paul Hay, extension educator based in Beatrice and one of 18 educators teaching manure management. "In either case I think the vast majority have been very pleased with the training."

Five of 30 operators attending a field day voluntarily came for an additional day to learn how to fill out the spreadsheets because "they wanted to have more skills," Hay noted.

Jill Oldehoeft is environmental and safety manager for Mid-America Feed Yard, an Omaha, Neb., commercial feedlot with a 20,000-head capacity. Oldehoeft took extension's training in March 2003.

"It makes our planning very simple," Oldehoeft said, adding the greatest benefit was learning the proper amounts of liquid manure to apply through center pivots for crop use. Mid-America composts its solid manure and hopes someday to sell it, she said.

"I do appreciate all that the university and extension do," Oldehoeft said. "We appreciate all the help they have given."

Gary Buttermore, environmental engineer with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, said the educational opportunity is important. He added many producers are unfamiliar with the potential value of manure.

"It's a resource — if you treat it as a waste you end up having problems with it," Buttermore said.

Koelsch said most producers want to be good stewards, adding, "I'm getting calls now that I wouldn't have gotten five years ago. We're reaching those who want to do the right thing."

— Cheryl Alberts

DeLoughery can be contacted at (402) 370-4061. Or visit <http://cnmp.unl.edu>.



Rick Koelsch (left), Cooperative Extension bioenvironmental engineer, and Chris Henry, extension engineer, discuss ways to help livestock producers identify the nutrient value of manure as a crop fertilizer.

Cheryl Alberts





## Character Counts!

*Cooperative Extension Educator Connie Francis shows a part of the Character Counts! brick mural at the new North Platte High School. Extension's Character Counts! program emphasizes trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship, and is a part of the school curriculum. Francis, who coordinated the mural project, said it is a permanent reminder of the six pillars of good character. The mural, sponsored by area businesses and organizations, was dedicated in September. Said one community member: "The Character Counts! mural is wonderful. ... Thank you for having the vision and the fortitude to carry it through."*

Richard Francis

## Grasshopper control costs slashed, treatment 80-90 percent effective

Grasshopper infestations on rangeland can be controlled at much lower costs than usual through a system taught by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

Last year hundreds of thousands of acres in central and western Nebraska were hard hit by grasshoppers. Grasshoppers cause economic problems when they exceed 15 per square yard, said Troy Walz, extension educator based in Broken Bow; infestations in parts of Custer and Dawson counties were 40 per square yard.

With the Reduced Agent and Area Treatments (RAATs) system, insecticide treatment is aerially applied at lower rates and in 100-foot alternate swaths, rather than over all the affected area. This dramatically cuts the amount of insecticide, fuel and time needed to apply it, said Gary Hein, extension entomologist at Scottsbluff.

Consequently, landowners who used RAATs paid \$1.50 to \$2 per acre for

treatment in 2003, compared to \$5 to \$8 per acre in 2002, Hein said.

RAATs works because treatments are applied at the best time to control grasshoppers, insecticides provide longer residual effects in treated swaths, grasshoppers move from untreated into treated areas, and predators such as other insects and birds remain active, Hein added.

Treatment with RAATs resulted in 80 percent to 90 percent grasshopper control, said Walz, who worked with the USDA's Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service, Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) and landowners on a program in which the cost of treating 350,000 acres was shared.

Merlyn Carlson, NDA director, praised the partnership, saying it "demonstrated what teamwork can accomplish."

Carolyn Kappel of Miller coordinated the cost-share program in a 60,000-acre



Robert Pfadt

*Cooperative Extension recommendations for grasshopper control in 2003 resulted in economical and effective treatment for thousands of rangeland acres.*

block in parts of Dawson, Buffalo and Custer counties. She said the approximately 75 producers in that area who used the RAATs system "were extremely pleased with the grasshopper control."

"You didn't see very many grasshoppers left," Kappel said.

— **Lori McGinnis**

Walz can be contacted at (308) 872-6831; Hein at (308) 632-1369.

**Check out Cooperative Extension's  
Web site at: <http://extension.unl.edu>**



# Extension fuels ethanol effort in northeast Nebraska

An ethanol plant in Plainview is helping stimulate the economy in this northeast Nebraska region, thanks to collaborative efforts led by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

Dewey Teel, extension educator based in Norfolk, recognized potential area interest in an ethanol plant in 1999. He coordinated a meeting of 80 people from seven counties, including local economic development groups, community representatives, resource organizations and area corn growers. Extension provided many facts, figures and demographic data to provide statistical information on how the plant would affect the region. This led to a steering committee, grant applications, fund raising and ultimately, the construction of Husker Ag Processing. The plant began production last spring.

The fuel additive is important because corn is turned into a value-added product and lessens dependence on oil for energy, Teel said.

"It has provided another market for corn and has increased the value of corn in that area," Teel said, adding the plant is producing more ethanol than was projected.

The plant was expected to produce 20 million gallons of ethanol annually but is producing at about a 24-million gallon rate in its first year, said Jack Frahm of Plainview, a member of the board of directors.

The plant employs 31, daily processes 24,000 bushels of corn from northeast Nebraska farmers and pays at least nickel a bushel over the going rate, Frahm said. In addition, the corn byproduct is fed to area livestock.

"It has provided new jobs, improved the corn market for farmers and provides extra tax money," Frahm said.

—Lori McGinnis

Teel can be contacted at (402) 370-4000.



Cooperative Extension Educator Dewey Teel led a collaboration of northeast Nebraskans that resulted in Husker Ag Processing, an ethanol plant that began production last spring. The plant daily processes 24,000 bushels of corn from area farmers.

## Would you like to treat a friend?

Do you know someone who would like to receive *Cooperative Extension Connect* who isn't currently receiving a copy? Please send the name and address to: Editor, *Cooperative Extension Connect*, P.O. Box 830918, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68583-0918. We'll do the rest. Thanks.

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# Voluntary plan lessens water use 17 percent

Agricultural producers in western Nebraska's Lodgepole Valley are saving water and boosting groundwater levels, based on their own initiatives and University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension resources.

In 2002, producers in the Sidney Draw needed to rethink their water usage after four years of consecutive drought, dwindling groundwater levels, a forecast for continued dry weather and possible mandatory watering restrictions, said Karen DeBoer, extension educator based in Sidney.

Producers met with South Platte Natural Resources District Manager Rod Horn, city officials, local power company representatives and extension staff to seek ways to voluntarily lower water usage. Extension's science-based data helped them develop a plan that included

reducing irrigated acres and planting wheat and oats, which use less water than corn and alfalfa.

Under the plan, water use was 17 percent less than the year before, or a savings of more than 1 billion gallons, Horn said.

"Good decisions were made based on the expertise of university faculty," he said.

"Our information helped producers put their plan together," said DeBoer, noting producers were pleased with their voluntary efforts. Extension will continue offering assistance if other water-saving measures are introduced, she added.

— **Barbara Rixstine**

*DeBoer can be contacted at  
(308) 254-4455.*

# Camps teach children of potential dangers

Farm safety camps and other educational programs teach children to recognize potential dangers on the farm and in the country.

Sharry Nielsen, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator based in Minden, works with a variety of sponsors coordinating programs such as Farm Safety 4 Just Kids and the Progressive Farmer Farm Safety Day Camp for children and volunteers. The training benefits children visiting rural areas as well as those who live there, she said.

At camp, children can learn safety guidelines for more than 50 agricultural tasks or activities relating to animals, grain, tractors, equipment and chemicals. For example, small children learn they don't have the size to safely drive and brake all-terrain vehicles.

"Kids think of them as toys — like bigger bicycles, but they're not," Nielsen said.

Since 1969, when records were first kept, 252 Nebraska children 18 and under have been victims of fatalities on the

farm, said Dave Morgan, extension safety engineer.

Children often are eager to share their camp lessons. Within a week of one camp, a child pointed out the safety hazards of a grain auger his father was using, Nielsen said. She added children also have warned their friends to stay out of grain bins and away from unfamiliar dogs and cats, and they've moved rocks before mowing.

In 2003, Nebraska held 24 farm safety camps attended by more than 3,400 campers and 1,275 adult and teen volunteers, Nielsen said.

Nationally, child fatalities on farms have declined by two-thirds; Nielsen said she thinks education is one reason.

Buckle Up or Eat Glass, another Farm Safety 4 Just Kids program, provides knowledge on driving safely on rural roads.

— **Cheryl Alberts**

*Nielsen can be contacted at  
(308) 832-0645.*

# Students learn about debt woes

When Debra Schroeder teaches high school students about the use of credit cards, she is armed with a 3 1/2-inch stack of card offers sent to her home during a 2 1/2-month period.

It's a vivid visual of how eager credit card companies are for new business, she said.

"The students are surprised by the amount of opportunities available for credit, and that's just through the mail," said Schroeder, a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator based in West Point.

Schroeder co-developed Preventing Credit Card Blues at 22, which teaches high school seniors how to shop for a card, manage debt and protect their identification. The course was developed after southeast Nebraska teachers, students and parents identified credit card abuse as one of their greatest concerns.

Nellie Mae, an organization that provides federal and private education loans, reports that college students on average have four credit cards and a debt of \$3,000 to \$7,000.

Credit card offers are plentiful, Schroeder said, as companies pay student groups to solicit card applications and often provide gifts like free T-shirts to student applicants.

Credit Card Blues was taught in spring 2002 to 447 students in Burt, Dodge, Washington and Cuming counties, and was expanded in 2003 to reach 1,337 seniors in 19 counties.

The program has won two awards from national extension associations.

Steve McManigal, a teacher at Wisner-Pilger High School, said the course helps counter the advertising students see for credit cards and makes them more aware of the link between college costs and the use of credit.

"Now they'll hesitate before signing up for that free T-shirt," he said.

— **Lori McGinnis**

*Schroeder can be contacted at  
(402) 372-6006.*



# Collaboration links Seward-area community organizations

A grassroots coalition coordinated by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension strives to improve the lives of Seward County residents.

BRIDGES, Inc. works to join community members together to find solutions to local issues, said Gail Brand, extension educator based in Seward. Community members include Blue Valley Mental Health, the Seward and Milford police departments, Seward County Pre-Trial Diversion, three local school systems and other local organizations. BRIDGES focuses on families, education, medical and mental health, government and, more recently, bioterrorism.

"BRIDGES works, in part, because it's in cooperation with what we already do as part of Cooperative Extension," Brand said.

Since 1997, BRIDGES has planned and coordinated more than 40 community projects funded by \$350,000 in grants and \$175,000 of in-kind money, Brand said.

Projects include TeamMates, a child-adult mentoring program; 10 annual family nights, where free meals, children's activities and parenting classes are offered; and involvement in the KidsConnection state health insurance program.

Another BRIDGES program is juvenile diversion, which works with first-time youth offenders as an alternative to the criminal justice system. Offenders and their parents or guardians take an 8-week course that includes training on character, preventing drug and alcohol abuse, parenting and other classes; and a community service project.

Brand said the juvenile diversion program in Seward County, in its first two years, helped 170 offenders aged 8 to 18 better communicate with their parents, set new and appropriate goals and stay out of criminal court. Only about 4 percent are repeat offenders, she said.

Not only does extension's juvenile diversion program help young people become more responsible, it saves taxpayer money.

"The county pays an average of

\$2,500 each time a youth goes to court," Brand said. "Participants in the pre-trial diversion program cost the county an average of \$600. And, the more kids helped through prevention, the more kids stay out of the court system."

A recent visit from the Nebraska Crime Commission gave the juvenile diversion program "very high marks," Brand said.

BRIDGES won Gov. Mike Johanns' Points of Light award in April 2003, she added.

Seward County Judge Gerald Rouse, who helped develop BRIDGES, said "the court appreciates BRIDGES' good work."

"I can tell that we're successful,"



Barbara Rixstine

*Gail Brand, Cooperative Extension educator based in Seward, talks with Seward County Judge Gerald Rouse. Brand coordinates BRIDGES, Inc., which encompasses a local juvenile diversion program.*

Brand said of BRIDGES, "because people are asking us to put community members together to solve an issue."

— **Barbara Rixstine**

*Brand can be contacted at  
(402) 643-2981.*

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