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The NEBLINE, February 2012

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4-H Diamond Clover Program Helps Youth Plan and Achieve Goals

The Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program is designed to encourage 4-H youth to engage in a variety of projects and activities that will enable members to acquire the life skills necessary to lead successful lives as competent, caring, and contributing citizens. The program’s overall goal is to provide 4-H members a rich and diverse learning experience.

The program consists of six levels that require a 4-H member to plan and report a broad range of age-appropriate accomplishments. The program is designed to enable every 4-H member willing to exert the effort an opportunity to be recognized, regardless of how they are involved in 4-H.

For each level, the Diamond Clover program provides a list of age-appropriate activities, increasing in number and difficulty for each level. At the beginning of the 4-H year, youth choose goals from a provided list for their level. At the end of the 4-H year, youth fill out a report of their accomplishments and what they learned.

The Diamond Clover program debuted in early 2008. Through 2010,* 133 Lancaster County youth completed Plans and Reports, and were recognized at annual Achievement Nights.

In 2010, Lancaster County 4-H had its first 4-H’er earn the Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program’s highest honor — the Diamond Award. Kyle Pedersen did a two-part service-learning project of transplanting plants to a children’s home, and helped start a 4-H club for children living at the home.

Here are some testimonials and examples from 2010 Lancaster County 4-H’ers in the Diamond Clover Program.

What Youth Say About Diamond Clover Program

- **Caleb Nielsen** — “The 4-H Diamond Clover Program helps you plan accomplishments that you want to achieve during the year.”
- **Emily Steinbach** — “By participating in the Diamond Clover Award, I have learned that succeeding in 4-H isn’t about how many projects you enter in the county fair. By earning the Sapphire and Emerald Clover Awards I have learned that growing as a leader, participating in events such as PASE/ Life Challenge, and working towards achieving my Diamond Clover Award has given me skills and become a well-rounded 4-H member.”

*This article does not include 2011 numbers or examples.



Reported accomplishment: learned the 4-H pledge, colors, and motto.

- **Spencer Peters** — “I learned that it is fun to try new projects. I have tried each year to enter in one new project area. It is great to learn new skills and I enjoy working with different people who help in our club. My favorite was encouraging a friend to join our club. We learned a lot about raising cows doing our bucket calf project together.”
- **Alyssa Zimmer** — “The Diamond Clover Program helped me reach my goals and full potential in 4-H. I learned how to set goals early in the year and worked toward achieving those goals as the year progressed. When you know what your goals are, they are easier to reach.”
- **McKenzie Kapperman** — “One of the goals I chose for the Amethyst program was to participate in a local 4-H contest, something I had never done before. I accomplished this goal by participating in the Junior Life Challenge contest at age 9. While I was nervous at first and one of the youngest participants there, the contest was actually fun and like all 4-H events, I even made some new friends that day. The Diamond Clover program is teaching me how important it is to set goals and not be afraid to try new things each year, because 4-H isn’t about being perfect, it’s about learning skills you might need in the future. For this I am grateful.”

see DIAMOND CLOVER on back page

	Gemstone Identifier	Anticipated for	Complete at least
Level 1	Amethyst	ages 8–9	3 accomplishments
Level 2	Aquamarine	ages 10–11	4 accomplishments
Level 3	Ruby	ages 12–13	5 accomplishments
Level 4	Sapphire	ages 14–15	6 accomplishments
Level 5	Emerald	ages 15–17	7 accomplishments
Level 6	Diamond	ages 16 & up	8 accomplishments and a service-learning project



Reported accomplishment: attended at least 60 percent of club meetings.



Reported accomplishment: completed at least one 4-H project. In this Attention Shoppers fair exhibit, “Clothing wardrobe inventory,” one jean mini skirt was mixed and matched to make five new outfits.



Reported accomplishment: completed a 4-H project. Walked her sheep every morning during the summer and learned more about how to manage the appropriate weight for each lamb.

Now is a Good Time to Choose Diamond Clover Goals

Near the beginning of the year, a 4-H member completes the “Plan” portion of the Plan & Report form, setting goals for the year. The plan is saved and at the end of the year, the “Report” portion of the form is completed. Both parts of the form are due to the extension office by Dec. 31. For forms and additional information, go to <http://4h.unl.edu/diamondclover> or call 402-441-7180.



Reported accomplishment: showed rabbits at fair. Learned about taking care of rabbits and multiple facts about rabbits. Also helped take down cages after the show.



Reported accomplishment: participated in a 4-H communications event. Gave a presentation, “Strawberry Smoothies” showing how to make a smoothie using nutritious foods for a healthy snack.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Lancaster County 4-H Council
University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A
Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507

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Watch Chicks Hatch Online with EGG Cam!

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Embryology>



To go to our home page on your smart phone, scan this code with a QR reader app.

Animal Welfare and Current Industry Issues Seminar for Livestock Producers, Feb. 7

As the world population continues to grow; safe and wholesome food production remains a top priority. It is essential livestock producers make themselves familiar with the perceptions and perspectives of animal welfare in relation to consumers, retailers, and advocacy groups. University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension is presenting four seminars across Nebraska, “Animal Welfare and Current Industry Issues for Livestock Producers” to address these issues. The seminars also will provide information on the most current industry issues. A seminar will be held in Lincoln on Tuesday, Feb. 7 at UNL East Campus Union, 33rd and Holdrege. Registration is at 9:30 am and the program is 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Speakers include: Dr. Candace Croney, Purdue University; Dr. Dan Tompson and Dr. Glynn Tonsor, both from Kansas State University; and Mr. Jim Robb from the Livestock Marketing Information Center. Early bird registration before Feb. 1 is \$50 per person and \$25 for each additional person from the same operation; registration at the door is \$60 per person, and \$30 for each additional person from the same operation. Price includes meal. For more information and registration form, go to <http://richardson.unl.edu> or contact Lindsay Chichester at 402-245-4324.



Free Pasture Management School, Feb. 8

UNL Extension in Lancaster County present a free “Pasture Management School” on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 6:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. Featured speaker will be UNL Extension Forages Specialist Dr. Bruce Anderson.

Topics will include:

- Plant mixtures for a new seeding
- Fertilizing pastures
- Weed control (proper grazing and herbicides)
- Rotational grazing/cross fencing
- Livestock water — location, quantity, and quality

The evening will conclude with a spokesman from the new Tri-County Prescribed Burn Association who will talk about their association.

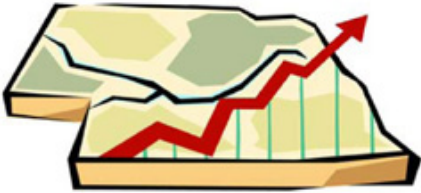
For more information, contact Tom Dorn or Karen Wedding at 402-441-7180.



Cornhusker Economics Conference, Feb. 28

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension and the UNL Department of Agricultural Economics are proud to present their 7th annual “Cornhusker Economics Management and Outlook Conference” series across Nebraska. Register and participate in one of this year’s conferences to hear UNL ag economists and educators team up with leading ag economists specialists from across the region to discuss the ag situation and outlook for 2012.

A conference will be held in Lincoln on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 4:30– 9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. Register by Feb. 21. For more information, contact Brad Lubben at 402-472-2235. The cost for each conference is \$25, which covers refreshments, meal, and all conference materials. Other locations include Columbus, Clay Center, North Platte, and Alliance. Brochures with registration forms are online at <http://agecon.unl.edu/cemoc>.



Mid-Winter to Spring Grain Storage Management

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

We had a good fall for harvesting and drying grain in 2011. Hopefully, you were able to get the grain dried to safe moisture content (15% for corn; 13% for soybeans) in October and November. I also hope you remembered to cool the grain as air temperature allowed. A rule of thumb is, at a given grain moisture content, the shelf life of corn is about twice as long for every 10°F lower temperature down to about 40°F. I do not recommend taking the grain temperature below freezing, however, because we want to leave open the possibility to do some additional aeration if we happen to get a few days of warmer temperatures in January or February.

Winter and Spring Aeration Management

If the forecast calls for a warm spell with low humidity, many producers who did not get their grain as dry as they wanted, will decide to take advantage of the good weather and turn the aeration fan on to do more drying. However, you might actually add moisture content to the grain initially depending on the grain temperature. For example: when air temperature is 50°F and the relative humidity is 50%, the dew point temperature is 32°F. Likewise, if the air temperature is 50°F and the relative humidity is 60%, the dew point temperature is 37°F. The point is, when the grain temperature is lower than the dew point temperature, the air will condense moisture onto the grain until the air stream warms the grain mass above the dew point temperature.

If the grain temperature is

below freezing, the condensation can be in the form of frost which will add moisture to the grain bin and the frost can impede airflow through the grain.

Check Your Stored Grain

Bins should be checked monthly through the winter months, especially if high winds might have carried blowing snow into the bin. The danger is, the snow will melt and create a wet spot in the grain which could set the stage for spoilage and insect activity when warmer temperatures return in the spring.

When you check grain in a bin, open the access hatch, then start the aeration fan. Climb up and lean into the access hatch as soon as possible after turning on the fan so you can feel and smell the air as it hits you in the face. You are looking for four things that could signal trouble:

- Do you smell a musty odor?
- Is the air exhausting from the bin warmer than expected?
- Can you feel moisture on your face as you lean into the access hatch?
- Is there condensation forming on the underside of the bin roof on a cold day?

If you detect any of these conditions, the fan(s) should run long enough to bring the entire grain mass to a uniformly cool temperature inside the bin. The best way to tell if the grain temperature is uniform is to use a grain thermometer pushed three or four feet into the grain. Probe a couple of feet away from the bin wall, taking the temperature every 15 to 20 feet around the perimeter of the bin and at least three spots in the central part of the bin. If there are two spots differing in temperature by more than about 8°F, turn on the aeration fan and push air through the bin until a see *GRAIN STORAGE* on page 11

Private Pesticide Applicator Certification Opportunities

Federal and state law states a private pesticide applicator must be certified and licensed to buy, use, or supervise the use of a Restricted-Use Pesticide (RUP) to produce an agricultural commodity on property they own or rent — or — on an employer’s property if the applicator is an employee of the farmer. No pesticide license is needed if the applicator will only be applying General Use Pesticides (GUPs) or if you hire a commercial applicator to apply RUPs to your property.

If you do not have a current private pesticide certification and you plan to buy or apply any RUP products, you will need to receive the same certification training as described below for people who need to be recertified. All training sessions meet the requirements

for both initial certification or recertification as private pesticide applicators.

If your private applicator certification expires in 2012, you will receive (or have already received) a notification letter from the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA). Be sure to keep the letter from NDA and bring it with you to the training session you choose or when you pick up home-study materials. The NDA letter contains a bar-code form which tells NDA what they need to know about you.

Regardless of the certification method chosen, all applicants will receive an invoice from the NDA for the \$25 license fee. Note: we cannot collect the license fee at the extension office. The certification and license is good for

three years, expiring on April 15, 2015 for those who certify this spring. You should receive your new license within three weeks.

Private pesticide applicators will have four alternative methods to obtain either recertification or initial certification.

Traditional Training Sessions, Jan. 28 & Feb. 16

Private pesticide applicator training sessions will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road in Lincoln:

- Saturday, Jan. 28, 8:30–11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 16, 6:30–9:30 p.m.

A \$30 extension training fee will be collected at the training

session (make checks out to Lancaster County Extension).

Self-Study Option

The second option is to pick up the self-study book and associated materials at the extension office. You are expected to read the chapters, then you must answer the written test questions in the back of the book. When you bring the book back to the office, the test will be graded by our staff while you wait (usually about five minutes). You will have an opportunity to see the test results and see the correct answers to any questions you have answered incorrectly.

The \$60 training fee for this method of obtaining certification will be collected when the home-study book is picked up.

Testing Option

The third option is to take a written (closed-book) examination given by the NDA. Please contact NDA at 402-471-2394 for dates of testing. There is no training fee if you choose this option. You will need to pay the \$25 license fee. You should receive your new license within two weeks after you receive a passing grade on your written test.

Certify at a Crop Production Clinic

Private applicators may receive initial certification or recertification by attending one of Extension’s Crop Production Clinics held in January. This year’s clinics will be over by the time this NEBLINE is published.

The Lowly Dermestid Lurks in the Bedroom and the Pantry

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Carpet beetles, hide beetles, skin beetles, and dermestids. All these names describe members of the insect family Dermestidae. The meaning of *Dermestidae* gives a pretty good idea of the habits of these insects. *Derma* means *skin*; *este*, means *to consume*; and *idae* refers to *members of the family*. We can surmise dermestids are members of a family of insects that consume skin. How gruesome indeed!

In the U.S., there are about 120 species of dermestid beetles.

Outdoors, the larvae of some dermestid species help clean up the environment. Being scavengers, they feed on animal protein: mummified skin and flesh, hair, fur, feathers and even dead insects. Very few organisms feed on hair or fur because keratin, the protein in hair and feathers, is very stable and indigestible. But, carpet beetles have enzymes in their digestive tract which digest keratin. This makes them very unusual in the animal world.

Sometimes dermestids can help with criminal investigations. Forensic entomologists will look for dermestid beetles at crime scenes when trying to determine the time of death. Dermestids generally show up late in the decomposition process, when the corpse begins to dry out.

Museum curators know dermestid beetles all too well. Because dermestids can devour museum specimens, precautions must be taken to prevent damage to museum collections. But, their habit of feeding on animal protein can also be useful, as colonies of dermestids are used to clean the flesh and hair from bones and skulls.

Identification. Adult beetles are small and oval, and have knobbed antennae. They range in size from 1/16 inch (varied carpet beetle) to 3/8 inches (larder and hide beetles). Some species have brightly-colored scales on their body.



Varied carpet beetle — adults (above) and larvae (below) (highly magnified)



Dermestid larvae usually have a wedge-shaped body covered with hairs, sometimes with longer tufts of hair (setae) on the back end. Size depends on each species, but they are usually less than 1/2-inch long.

Life Cycle

Adults typically overwinter in cracks and crevices and become active in springtime.



Larder beetle — adult (above) and larva (below) (highly magnified)



Females may enter homes or structures seeking food to lay eggs on. After hatching, larvae develop through 5–16 instars, depending on species. Cast skins from larval development are often found near the food source and may be the only signs of dermestids when damage to fabrics is noted. Pupation occurs in their last larval skin. Adults that emerge must feed on pollen,



Hide beetle — adult (above) larvae (below) (highly magnified)



so beetles trapped indoors are often found in window sills or attracted to lights, perhaps because they are trying to get outdoors.

Feeding Habits

A few dermestid larvae have expanded their food preference and feed on plant proteins. They are often found feeding on flour, grains, nuts, seeds, and spices.

Some even feed on silk and cotton.

Because they can digest wool and silk, dermestids can be a real nuisance in the home, where they may chew holes in sweaters and blankets. In Nebraska, dermestids damage woolens more often than clothes moths. In more humid states, clothes moths are a more common problem. Dermestids are often found in the bedroom, where hair accumulates in and around the bed or in the closet where woolen garments are stored. It is usually the larva or cast skins that are found. When people are checking bedrooms for bed bugs, dermestids are the most likely (non-bed bug) insects found.

Because dermestids feed on accumulated pet hair and feathers, they may be found in areas where pets sleep and be more of a problem when families have indoor pets.

Where Do They Come From?

Carpet beetles are exceptionally common indoors and some species are so small, they enter through window screen. Common reservoirs for dermestids are bird and rodent nests and old bee and wasp nests, where dermestid larvae feed on hair, feathers, and/or dead insects.

Management

The primary way to manage dermestids is to reduce their presence or potential food by regular sanitation practices. Regular, thorough vacuuming, and cleaning of bedrooms and closets where woolens are hanging, can be helpful. Damage to woolens usually occurs in the summertime, so removing woolens from closets in the spring, dry cleaning them, and storing them with moth crystals will be helpful until fall. In the pantry, throw away infested foods and clean shelves to remove particles of food. Keep flour and other food items, including spices, in sealed, glass containers.

The Odd Beetle

I sometimes joke that entomologists aren't very clever when they name insects. The names of many insects describe something obvious about the insect. But, what is so odd about the odd beetle? Yes, there is actually an insect with that common name.

The odd beetle (*Thylodrias contractus*) is a bizarre member of the dermestid family. The adults look completely different from other dermestid beetles, which makes them hard to identify. Another oddity is that males and females are sexually dimorphic and do not resemble each other.

Males are about 1/6-inch long and are elongated with long, slender, filiform antennae and legs. Males have elytra (wing covers), but the hind wings are

of variable size or completely lacking.

The wingless, larviform females are brownish in color, but differ from the males so much they don't even look like the same species. Female odd beetles resemble the larvae, but have antennae. Very odd, indeed.

The larvae *do* resemble dermestid larvae, but do not have any hairs on their posterior. These larvae have similar feeding habits as other dermestids and feed on dry animal protein (hair, dead insects, silk). It is rarely a serious pest problem.

It has been reported that odd beetle larvae can live three to four years without food. This unusual insect has not been studied very thoroughly; so much about its biology and behavior is unknown.



Odd beetle adult male (above), adult female (center), and larva (below) (highly magnified)



Wanted Dead or Alive: Head Lice

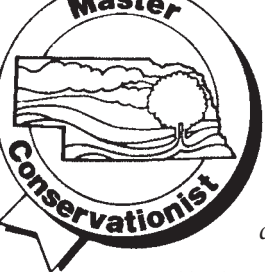
Extension has had a request for head lice specimens to enhance the teaching collection at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The first three people who bring lice specimens will receive a new LiceMeister comb.

Please place specimens in a sealed plastic bag and drop them off at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, during office hours (Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.).

Extension Educator Barb Ogg is also offering to help pick lice and nits out of hair during office hours until she has collected a sufficient quantity. If you want her help with this, please make an appointment by calling 402-441-7180.

Master Conservationist Entries Due Feb. 1

The Master Conservationist program was established in 1983 to recognize those who have excelled in soil and water conservation. The program has been expanded from production agriculture to residential, community, and youth categories. Anyone can submit nominations, including self nominations.



Deadline for nominations is Feb. 1. More information about the Master Conservationist Awards, along with submission forms, can be found at <http://owh.com/section/OWH0901>.

Sponsored by the Omaha World-Herald and the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

earth wellness festival needs volunteers

Volunteers are needed for the 2012 earth wellness festival on Monday, March 26 and Tuesday, March 27 at Southeast Community College in Lincoln. Approximately 3,000 fifth-graders participate in this annual event which involves students in creative and innovative environmental education activities.

Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in earth wellness festival activities as classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenters, and registration assistants. Volunteers are essential to the success of this event.

You may choose to volunteer one or both days. In return, you receive the opportunity to participate in a rewarding volunteer experience, a festival T-shirt, coffee, rolls, and lunch. For more information, contact Tonya Bernadt at tbernadt5@unl.edu or 402-472-2712.





Alice Henneman, MS, RD, UNL Extension Educator

This soup is so simple to make and will warm you up on a cold winter's day!

Turkey or Chicken Salsa Soup

- 16 oz. (2 cups) mild, chunky salsa
- 2 cups frozen whole kernel corn
- 2 (15 oz.) cans black soybeans, rinsed, drained
- 2 cups chopped, cooked turkey or chicken
- 1 quart (4 cups) low sodium chicken broth

Combine in a large saucepan or Dutch oven. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. If desired, top with grated cheddar cheese.



\$tretch Your Food Dollar with Skillet Meals



Helping limited-resource families learn to prepare nutritious and safe foods while stretching their food dollars.

Mardel Meinke
UNL Extension Associate

A skillet meal is a main dish combination, which implies it contains a protein as well as other food components. We often plan our meals around a meat or protein because it is often the most costly and takes the most time to prepare.

A skillet meal also includes a grain or starchy food which “stretches” the protein. This makes skillet meals economical as well as convenient because the same skillet or pan can be used to cook and serve the food.

They are time-saving because foods usually cook faster in the

skillet as compared to baking time in the oven. Skillet meals are also a family favorite, enjoyed by everyone.

There are many choices of protein including chicken, turkey, beef, pork, seafood, beans, lentils, or eggs. Popular choices for the grain or starchy portion might be bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, tortillas, beans, cornbread, barley, or oatmeal. Other flavors, sauces, toppings, and vegetables are added to make the skillet meal moist and flavorful. A recipe can easily be varied by just substituting a different protein or grain.

The 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 5–7 ounces of protein daily for adults. Choose MyPlate.gov, which is USDA's new icon for healthy Americans, suggests about one fourth of our plate should be protein foods.

The Skillet Lasagna recipe below is convenient, economical, and time-saving. It may become your families' favorite! Add a colorful fruit for a healthy and delicious meal.

Skillet Lasagna

(8 servings)

- 1 pound ground beef
- ½ onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 cups spaghetti or pasta sauce
- 1½ cups water
- 6 ounces wide noodles, uncooked
- 1 package (10 ounce) chopped spinach, thawed
- 1 can (6.5 ounce) sliced mushrooms, drained (optional)
- 1 container (12 ounce) low-fat cottage cheese
- 8 ounce package Mozzarella cheese, shredded

In a large skillet or electric frying pan, brown ground beef, onions and garlic. Drain fat. Add spaghetti sauce and water and bring to a boil. Layer noodles, cover with a lid and simmer for 5 minutes. Add spinach and mushrooms over noodles. Spoon cottage cheese over top. Sprinkle with Mozzarella cheese. Put lid on and heat for 5–10 minutes until noodles are tender. Serve immediately. After the meal, refrigerate leftovers promptly or freeze for a later meal.

Planning Healthy Meals for One or Two — a Checklist

Alice Henneman, MS, RD
UNL Extension Educator

Sometimes, it can be hard to get motivated when cooking a meal for just one or two people. Here is a checklist to help you get the most value for your time and money if you're cooking for two, or just you!



General Tips

- Maximize your nutrition!
 - Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
 - Make at least half your grains whole grains
 - Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
- Cook once, eat twice
 - Plan two meals from the same entree
 - Separate out extra food BEFORE serving
 - Eat extras in 3–4 days or freeze



Shopping Tips

- Should you buy in bulk?
 - May be half the cost but just as expensive if you toss half!
 - Smaller portions help avoid eating same food over and over
 - Repackage meat in freezer bags for smaller servings and freeze
- Consider individually packaged servings of items if you frequently have leftovers
 - String cheese, wrapped cheese slices
 - Single containers of tuna, soup, fruit
 - Individual cartons of yogurt
- Buy smaller number of servings from meat counter
 - Enjoy one pork chop
 - Purchase a single salmon filet
 - Explore a different cut of beef
- Buy fruit at varying stages of ripeness
 - Buy some fruit to eat immediately and some to ripen for later
 - Apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, pears, and plums continue to ripen after purchase
 - Refrigerate fruit after it has ripened for longer storage
- Buy frozen vegetables in bags
 - Pour what you need
 - Use in 8 months or per package guidelines
 - Toss into soups, casseroles, salads
 - Thaw corn, peas in strainer under cool running water for salads
 - Taste and nutrition
 - Comparable to fresh
 - Often lower in salt than canned veggies
- Can-do canned foods
 - Nutrition comparable to fresh/frozen
 - No refrigerator space needed
 - Helpful in emergency; have manual can opener handy
 - Remove from can when storing unused portions
 - Use by date recommended on can for best safety/quality; after can is opened, use within 3–4 days
 - Low sodium versions available
 - Canned Food Alliance offers recipes at www.mealtime.org



Tracie Masek, www.flickr.com/emotionaltoothpaste



Restaurant Tips

- Benefit from large restaurant portions
 - Two meals for price of one
 - Divide meal in half BEFORE eating!
 - Refrigerate perishables in shallow containers within 2 hours of service



Storage Tips

- Refrigerator storage tips
 - Refrigerate in a shallow pan — food should be no more than 2 inches deep
 - Eat perishable foods in 3–4 days; heat until steaming hot (165°F)
 - Thaw packages on a plate in refrigerator near bottom so they don't drip on other foods
- Freezer Storage Tips
 - Store it, don't ignore it — food is “safe” indefinitely at 0°F but “quality” lowers over time
 - Use freezer quality containers for freezer storage
 - Safest to thaw in fridge; it takes about 24 hours to thaw 5 pounds of food
 - Foods that don't freeze well include: watery foods such as cabbage, celery, lettuce, etc.; cream or custard fillings; milk sauces; sour cream; cheese or crumb toppings, mayonnaise; gelatin; and fried foods
 - Store bread in freezer; remove a slice at a time and toast as needed.

Reducing Recipe Size

- Recipes can frequently be successfully reduced by 1/2 to 1/3. Some helpful equivalents include:
 - 1 cup = 16 tablespoons
 - 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
 - 1 cup = 8 fluid ounces
 - 1 fluid ounce = 2 tablespoons
 - 1 pound = 16 ounces (weight)
 - 1 pint = 2 cups
 - 1 quart = 2 pints
- To change pan sizes:
 - 9 x 2 x 13-inch pan holds 14 to 15 cups; for half, use:
 - Square 8 x 2-inch
 - Round 9 x 2-inch
 - Reduce oven temperature by 25°F if substituting glass for metal pan



FAMILY & COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) CLUBS

President's View – Marian's Message

Marian Storm
FCE Council Chair

February is the month of holidays. We have Valentine's Day and Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays.

Just a little bit about myself. This will be my 49th



year as a member of the Helpful Homemakers FCE Club. This group is like family always ready to help each other.

I have two daughters, Gale and Kay, and a son, Dale; six grandchildren and two



great-granddaughters. I am thankful they all live close so I see them often. My hobbies are crafts, crocheting, and Swedish Weaving.

I look forward to being your Council chairman.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Whatever you are — be a good one."

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. Extension provides a teaching outline for the facilitator and a handout for 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.

"Social Networking Sites: What They Are and How to Navigate Them," Wednesday, Feb. 22

— presented by Extension Associate Soni Cochran and Extension Educator Lorene Bartos. The use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has dramatically increased in recent years. Today, over 50 percent of teens and 35 percent of adults are using at least one type of SNS. These sites can have many personal and professional benefits, however, can also pose many challenges and even risks to both adults and teen users alike. This lesson will provide basic information about some of the most common SNS

available and help audiences learn about appropriate and safe "netiquette" techniques in using these sites.

"Save Time, Money, and Energy with 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. Homemade master mixes can include basic baking mixes (pancakes, muffins, cookies, etc.), soup mixes, meat mixes, and more. You control the amount of sugar, salt, fat, and calories when you make your own mixes.



Lorene Bartos, UNL Extension Educator

February is Time Management Month

- Time management tips:
- set individual and family goals
 - make a weekly plan
 - prioritize the plan
 - delegate
 - find your prime time — get up earlier or stay up later
 - celebrate accomplishments

Parents Can be Positive Examples When Teaching Children Honesty

Honesty is an important character trait to teach children. Without honesty, children may find it difficult to build healthy relationships and have a successful future. It takes time, patience, and effort to teach children honesty.

Parents need to set a positive example by being honest themselves. Many of children's senses of manners and morals are learned through imitation of their parents. If parents model cheating and lying, children may learn these as acceptable behaviors (e.g., keeping someone else's belongings without their permission, keeping extra change from a cashier, or telling a lie).

Children sometimes start a dishonest tendency during the pre-school years. For instance, they may grab toys from a child or try to take candy in a store. Parents should correct this type of behavior immediately by teaching children to return what was taken, apologize for their behavior, or teach children a way to pay for what was taken.

Use age-appropriate

language to teach positive character development. Help young children understand honesty and why dishonesty is unacceptable by reading stories related to honesty. Ask children questions throughout the story. This process gives children time to share their thoughts, understanding, and questions.

Children often lie out of fear or to protect themselves. They worry about being punished or making parents mad. When parents react harshly to children's mistakes, it may result in more lies instead of taking responsibility for their behavior.

It is important for parents to talk to children about their behavior, what they could have done differently and what they can do to make things right. When children tell the truth, parents should praise them for being honest. Children should know their parents value and appreciate honesty.

Source: Nina Chen, Ph.D., CFLE Human Development Specialist University of Missouri Extension

Energy Saving Tips

Save energy in your home by following these simple tips.

Water

- If you have a water heater set at 140°F, turn the temperature down to 120°F (medium setting on a gas water heater dial), and you'll cut your water heating costs by 6–10 percent. For exceptionally soiled clothing, diapers, or when someone is ill, you may want to turn it back up when laundering their items.
- Turn the water heater down further if you are away for an extended time.
- Some water heaters use a timer control to manage the water temperature — much like automatic thermostats manage the heating or cooling temperature for your home.
- Insulate the hot and cold water pipes at the water heater for at least 6–10 feet. Insulate all exposed water pipes for even more efficiency to prevent heat loss and heat gain.
- Front loading washers are usually more energy efficient than top loaders. Look for the ENERGY STAR® logos when purchasing new.
- Install low-flow faucets and shower heads, and take shorter showers.
- Fix faucet leaks. One drip can waste up to 48 gallons of water a week and waste energy from hot water.

Range and Oven

- Use the microwave when possible. The microwave uses less energy and does not need to be preheated.
- Use the kitchen exhaust fan when cooking to reduce moisture problems and pollutants.
- Use lids on pans and using pans fitting a burner will reduce heat lost.

Refrigerator

- Refrigerators cost about \$5–\$8 or more per month to operate, and consume 3–5 percent of your total home energy use. Keep the refrigerator at 36–38°F and the freezer at 0°F.
- Check the gasket (soft, plastic piece sealing the door to the body of the refrigerator) for gaps and improper fit. The door should close firmly against the gasket. Check the tightness of the door by placing a dollar bill between the gasket and the door. You should feel a slight drag when you pull it out.
- Do not place an oven or heating appliance close to a refrigerator, as the refrigerator will have to work harder to keep items cool. Do not put refrigerators in unconditioned rooms such as garages or porches.

- Turn off, clean, and unplug seldom used refrigerators.
- Do not leave the door open any longer than necessary.
- Vacuum coils and keep drain trays clean.

Dishwasher

- Run the dishwasher only when it's full.
- Many dishwashers have energy-saving settings, such as a setting for partial loads (which use less hot water) or energy efficient drying cycles.

Washer and Dryer

- Use hot water only for very dirty clothes and diapers, and if there is an illness in the family or someone has a suppressed immune system. Refer to the washing instructions on the clothing labels and on the washing machine. Wash in cold water using cold-water detergents, whenever possible.
- Full loads of laundry in the washer save both energy and water. Adjust water levels for smaller loads.
- Clean the lint from the dryer's filter after every load.
- Operate the dryer like the washer: don't overload it. Overloading uses excess energy, because the items take longer to dry.
- Hang items to dry outside, if possible.



Color My World

A conference for those who provide child care.

In-service hours will be given for this conference.

Saturday, March 31

8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

**Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE**

Cost is \$15 (includes lunch from Brown Baggers/refreshments)

Pre-registration is due March 16

For more information, call 402-441-7180 or go to <http://lanaster.unl.edu/family>

2012 “Great Plants” Selections

The “Great Plants” program is a joint effort of the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. They select and promote exceptional plants reliably hardy, easy to care for, and ornamentally worthwhile for “Plants of the Year” and for “Great Plants” releases and introductions. Here are the 2012 GreatPlants® Plants of the Year.

Tree of the Year

Shantung maple or *Acer truncatum* has no serious insect or disease problems and is highly ornamental through the growing



Shantung maple (above: in summer) (below: fall color)



season. Emerging leaves and winged seeds are reddish purple in spring, turning to a very glossy green that withstands even mid-summer heat. Fall color ranges from yellow to orange with deep red accents. It prefers moist, fertile soil and sun but tolerates alkaline soils better than most maples and can be grown even in full shade. Mature height and spread is 25–30 feet.

Conifer of the Year

Rocky Mountain Douglas fir or *Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *glauca* is commonly known as a Christmas tree,



Rocky Mountain Douglas fir (above: in summer) (below: close up)



but this subspecies, native to the Rocky Mountains, makes a beautiful, hardy landscape tree. It prefers sun and moist soil, but is drought-tolerant once established. Seed is important to chickadees, finches, and many other birds and mammals. Grows 40–60 feet high with a spread of 15–20 feet.

Shrub of the Year

Deam’s arrowwood viburnum or *Viburnum dentatum* var. *deamiir*. This arrowwood viburnum is rare in the trade, but its foliage alone makes it a standout. Even heat and drought do not diminish the lacquer-like glossiness of the leaves. In early spring, flower buds are in a tight red cluster that resembles raspberries. Flowers are creamy white



Deam’s arrowwood viburnum (above: in spring) (below: in fall)



and flat-topped. In fall, glossy foliage turns orange to purple. Abundant, dark blue fruits are held above the foliage and persist through the winter. Grows to 8 feet by 8 feet.

Perennial of the Year

Pink turtlehead or *Chelone lyonii*, is a wonderful plant for fall color. Pink blossoms, in the shape of a turtle’s head, cover the deep green foliage from August into October. It prefers rich, moist soil and mulch and can tolerate sun or shade. In deep shade, it’s best cut back to avoid staking. No serious pests or diseases, and a wonderful plant for rain gardens, growing 2–3 feet high.



Pink turtlehead (above: in fall) (below: blossom close up)



Grass of the Year

Northwind switchgrass or *Panicum virgatum* ‘Northwind’ The most common response to this grass is simply, “Wow.” In trials, this narrow 4–5 feet grass remained upright through droughts, storms, and even hurricanes. Leaf blades are wide and steel-blue, turning yellow in fall. Very dramatic in the landscape, it works well as a specimen, in masses and as a strong vertical accent in borders.

Source: Nebraska Statewide Arboretum



Northwind switchgrass (above: in summer) (below: in fall)



2012 All-America Rose Selections

All-America Rose Selections (AARS) has selected its newest winner to add to its already impressive lineup. Living up to its name, Sunshine Daydream exemplifies the quality and beauty that is implicit in an AARS winner. The light yellow Grandiflora, the first garden rose to win under no spray conditions, was selected as the best of the best after participating in the rigorous two-year AARS testing cycle. This process has proven to be one of the most challenging horticultural testing programs in the world. The AARS award recognizes new varieties that are not only beautiful in appearance, but also roses that will be easy to grow and require minimal care by today’s busy homeowner.

Topping the charts with fantastic bloom production and great vigor, this rose is sure to brighten any garden. A Grandiflora, Sunshine Daydream embodies both great flower color and foliage - with light yellow flowers finishing cream yellow. Its cup-like petals offer the perfect backdrop to its dark green, glossy foliage. Featuring excellent disease resistance, Sunshine Daydream will appeal to all gardeners and rose enthusi-



Sunshine Daydream

asts. Round, bushy and blooming continuously from spring to early frost.

To be chosen as an AARS winner, Sunshine Daydream thrived during two years of comprehensive testing in 21 testing gardens nationwide. AARS-winning roses must flourish in 15 categories including the ability to resist disease, overall beauty and general ease of maintenance.

AARS is a nonprofit association of rose growers and introducers dedicated to bringing exceptional, easy-to-grow roses

to gardeners across the county. AARS operates the world’s most rigorous plant trial program via its national test garden network which represents all climate zones. This sophisticated evaluation process results in a new crop of AARS winning roses each year, guaranteeing only the best make it into your garden. AARS strives to identify roses that are easy to grow, and evaluates plants on more than 15 qualities, including disease resistance, vigor, and fragrance.

Source: All-America Rose Selections



Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March after the worst of the winter cold is passed but before spring growth begins.

Order gladiolus corms now for planting later in the spring after all danger of frost has passed. Locate in full sun in well-drained soil.

Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, quince, spirea, and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long, slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about three weeks.

Send off seed orders early this month to take advantage of seasonal discounts. Some companies offer bonus seeds of new varieties to early buyers.

Do not start your vegetable transplants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast-growth species such as tomatoes. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slower-growing types such as peppers.

Check stored bulbs, tubers, and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.

This year plan to grow at least one new vegetable you have never grown before; it may be better than what you are already growing. The new dwarf varieties on the market, which use less space while producing more food per square foot, may be just what you are looking for.

Check any vegetables you have in storage. Dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.

Late February is a good time to air-layer such house plants as dracaena, dieffenbachia, and rubber plant, especially if they have grown too tall and leggy.

Order perennial plants and bulbs now for cut flowers this summer. Particularly good choices are phlox, daisies, coreopsis, asters, and lilies.

Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture, and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Pruning Fruit Trees — Part 2

This is the second of a three part series.

Fruit Tree Training Systems

There are many training systems for fruit trees, and each system has its own advantages and disadvantages. For homeowners, the modified leader system is the most versatile and the easiest to learn. Any fruit tree, whether standard sized or dwarf, can be trained to the modified leader system.

In training fruit trees, remember these two basic concepts.

- Excessively heavy pruning delays fruiting and branch development.
- Branches spread at a 45–55 degree angle with the main trunk are stronger and produce more fruit than branches with narrower branch-trunk angles.

Working with Unbranched One-Year Trees or ‘Whips’

Unbranched, one-year old fruit trees are often called ‘whips,’ because they have a single straight trunk with no side branches and resemble a riding

whip. After planting a new whip, cut the top of the trunk back to encourage buds low on the trunk to sprout and develop. This results in a tree with branches low enough for easy harvesting.

Head the whip back to the following height:

- Standard trees, 44 inches
- Semi-dwarf trees, 36–40 inches
- Dwarf trees, 29–30 inches

Assuming the tree is planted in spring, after completing this initial pruning required at planting, the tree will not be pruned again until the following March when the selection of scaffold branches begins.

Selecting Scaffold Branches

The lowest scaffold branch should be 20–24 inches above the ground, so remove any lower branches or shoots from the trunk. Choose the most vigorous, upright-growing branch at the top of the tree to become the central leader.

Among the remaining branches, remove those that form narrow angles, less than 45 degrees, with the trunk. Select for permanent scaffold branches 2 or 3 well placed branches that

are spaced evenly around the trunk, like the spokes of a wheel, and are vertically spaced at least 6 inches apart. Remove all remaining shoots or branches.

If any remaining scaffold branches compete with the central leader in height, then head back or shorten them to about half their length by making a slanted cut just above an outward facing bud.

Apply branch spreaders to the scaffold shoots, if needed, to widen the trunk-branch angle. The central leader shoot should be two times as tall as the longest side shoot, so prune any long lateral branches back so they are a foot shorter than the tip of the central leader when held in an upright position.

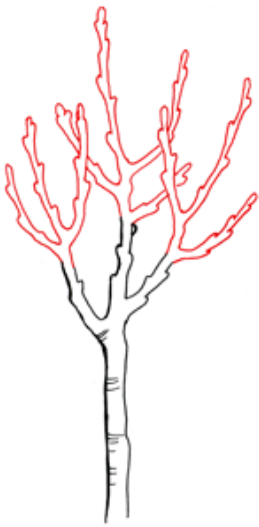
Second Year Pruning

During the second dormant season following planting, maintain the dominance of the central leader shoot by cutting any excessively-long lateral branches back below the height of the central leader. Choose two or three additional scaffold branches at the top of the tree.

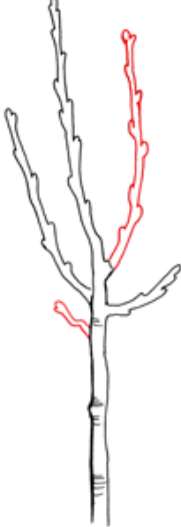
Secondary shoots may have started to develop on the main

Types of Pruning Cuts

Two basic types of pruning cuts are used when working with fruit trees, regardless of the tree’s age.



HEADING BACK CUTS are made to an outward facing bud or branch, with the goal of encouraging lateral growth or branching.



THINNING CUTS are made to remove entire shoots or branches. Branches with weak branch attachment, poor branch-trunk angles, or damaged branches would all be candidates for removal.

scaffold branches. Treat each of the main scaffold branches as a small tree, in regards to choosing secondary scaffold branches. Don’t allow the secondary shoots, or laterals, of the scaffold branches to compete with the leader of that branch; so head

back any extra long secondary lateral branches. Also, don’t prune out the short fruiting branches known as spurs.

Source: UNL Extension publication “Pruning Fruit Trees,” EC78-1233B



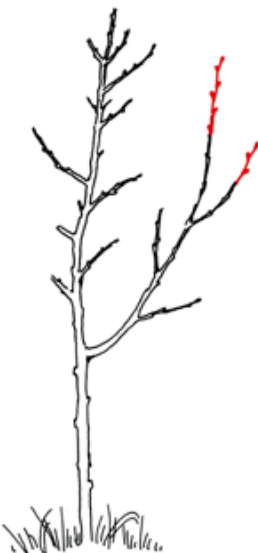
PRUNING YOUNG TREE WHIPS
Heading back cuts are made to young tree whips to encourage lower branching, which results in the development of scaffold branches lower to the ground that are easy to harvest.



PRUNING YOUNG TREES
Young branched trees should be pruned to remove branches with narrow trunk angles, poor trunk placement, or those that compete in height with the central leader shoot.



OVERHEAD TREE VIEW
Select permanent scaffold branches that are evenly spaced around the tree’s trunk, like the spokes of a wheel. Alternate branches around and up the tree’s trunk. Avoid having two or more major branches originating at the same height on the trunk.



SECOND YEAR PRUNING
Maintain dominance of the central leader shoot by either removing or heading back any excessively long lateral branches below the height of the central leader. Heading back cuts can also be used to encourage branching of long side shoots. Continue to remove shoots with narrow branch angles or poor placement.

Growing Nuts: Webinar Feb. 9, Seminar Feb. 23

Hundreds of farmers, both large and small grow nut crops in Nebraska. Black walnuts and pecans are favorites, but chestnut and hickory are specialty crops that can also bring income to landowners.

Webinar, Feb. 9

Heartland Nuts ’N More cooperative and the Nebraska Forest Service are presenting a webinar, “Grow More Nuts in Nebraska?” on Thursday, Feb. 9, 7–8 p.m. to introduce eastern Nebraska acreage owners to the possibilities of growing nuts as a crop. This Internet program requires no special computer equipment; the only requirements are an Internet connection (not dial-up).



Pecans in shuck split stage

The program will include interviews and discussion with Nebraska growers about their orchards. Learn the very basics of growing nuts. Register at <http://marketplace.unl.edu/extension>. There is a nominal \$1 registration fee. For more information about the webinar, contact Heartland Nuts ’N More.

Seminar, Feb. 23

NeNGA & Heartland Nuts ’N More are sponsoring an in-depth seminar, “Nut Orchard Planning, Planting, Care, and Harvesting” on Thursday, Feb. 23, 7–9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. You may register at <http://marketplace.unl.edu/extension>

(there is a nominal \$1 registration fee) or by calling 402-788-2717. No cost at the door.

If you want to plant just a couple nut trees or an orchard, you will find this seminar informative.

Everyone has different expectations and goals when planting nut tree seedlings. This seminar will introduce you to most aspects of what it takes to accomplish your goals and expectations. There will be professional growers on hand to answer your questions.

- Topics include:
- Planning phase will cover setting realistic goals, understanding an orchard environment, and the tasks to meet your goals so you will be successful.
 - Planting phase will cover planting consideration and seedling selections.
 - Caring phase will cover tasks required to bring a seedling to a productive, producing nut tree.

- Harvesting tasks will cover harvesting techniques, processing, and marketing your nuts.
 - A seedling cost-share program will also be introduced.
- For more information about the live seminar, contact NeNGA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

HEARTLAND NUTS ’N MORE
President, Larry Martin
206 West 2nd Street, Box 439
Valparaiso, NE 68065
www.heartlandnutsnmore.com
402-784-6887
email: lottanuts@windstream.net

NEBRASKA NUT GROWERS ASSOCIATION (NeNGA)
President, John Knorr
206 West 2nd Street, Box 439
Valparaiso, NE 68965
www.nebraskanutgrowers.org
402-788-2717
email: johnknorr@attglobal.net

January

Tammy Miner

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Tammy Miner as winner of January's "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Tammy Miner has served as a 4-H leader through afterschool programming for four years.

"I grew up with 4-H, 'learning by doing.' It has shaped who I am today," Tammy says. "I encourage youth to take on new challenges with enthusiasm. As a leader, I appreciated the support and friendship I received from the staff. They encouraged me to check out the project activity kits. The entomology kit was a favorite. They all served to greatly enhance the learning experience for the youth. Sharing my love of sewing and quilting has been one of my most rewarding experiences. Parents and teachers enjoyed seeing how excited and proud the youth were when they won ribbons at the fair for their projects."

Lancaster County 4-H thanks Tammy for donating her time and talents. Volunteers like her are indeed the heart of 4-H!



Meet the 2012 Lancaster County 4-H Council

Lancaster County 4-H Council represents the interests of youth, parents, and leaders. 4-H Council is responsible for determining long- and short-term goals and policy for Lancaster County 4-H. They also raise funds by operating a food booth at the Lancaster County Fair. These funds help support 4-H programs, activities, and scholarships. Here is this year's 4-H Council:

Officers: Ann Pickrel (President), Bailey Johnson (Vice-President), Lynnette Nelson (Treasurer), and Sadie Hammond (Secretary).

Members: Elizabeth Frobish, Kent Frobish, Austin Hurt, Mark Hurt, Jacob Pickrel, Cathy Plager, Kylee Plager, Kari Price, Abby Spencer, and Stephanie Wachter.



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.

February

Peggy & Kenny Steward



Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Peggy and Kenny Steward as co-winners of February's "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Peggy and Kenny have volunteered with the Star City Llama/Alpaca 4-H club for about ten years. Peggy is a co-leader of the club. They help with the Lancaster County adopt a llama/alpaca program, making llamas and alpacas available to youth who don't have a way to keep them. The Stewards also help club members take llamas and alpacas to schools, nursing homes, and churches to educate the public and as community service.

The Stewards are show sponsors of the 4-H Llama/Alpaca show at the Lancaster County Super Fair. They have built and acquired obstacles for the fair performance classes. They are also superintendents of the Open Class Llama show.

"We like being 4-H volunteers because we enjoy watching the kids learn about the llamas and alpacas," Peggy and Kenny say. "Watching the faces of the 4-H'ers when they accomplish a task and the pride they take when we have taught them about the animal and they are able to educate the public."

Lancaster County 4-H thanks Peggy and Kenny for donating their time and talents. Volunteers like them are indeed the heart of 4-H!

4-H Enrollment Forms Due!

Attention 4-H club leaders and independent members — your fall enrollment forms **MUST** be updated with member and volunteer information, and returned to the extension office in order to be enrolled for the 2012 year. Project information can be updated until June 15.



Pick-a-Pig Informational Meeting, Feb. 7

Youth wanting to participate in this years Pick-a-Pig program will need to attend an orientation meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 6:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. At this meeting we will discuss what is involved with the project and what is expected of the members.

The Pick-a-Pig project gives urban youth the opportunity to participate in a 4-H livestock project. There is a minimal cost to participate in the program and 4-H members will be required to attend weekly meetings and training sessions at a local farm.

For more information about this program, contact Cole Meador at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

4-H/FFA Market Beef Weigh-In, Feb. 9

4-H and FFA exhibitors showing market steers or heifers at the Lancaster County Super Fair, Nebraska State Fair, and/or Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Stock Show must identify and weigh in their projects on Thursday, Feb. 9, 6–8 p.m. at the Lancaster Event Center - Pavilion 2.

4-H'ers planning on exhibiting market beef at State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben must have DNA sampled. There is a \$6 per head charge. It is encouraged to have DNA pulled at the time of weigh-in. Exhibitors have until April 1 to identify, weigh, and pull DNA on any market beef that may go to State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben. Please note all other market livestock (swine, sheep, and market goats) possibly going to Nebraska State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben will need to be DNA sampled by June 15.

HORSE BITS

4-H Horse Scholarships Due March 1

One \$500 R.B. Warren 4-H Horse Educational scholarship and four \$1,000 Grand Island Saddle Club scholarships are available for 4-H'ers enrolled and active in the Nebraska 4-H Horse program. For complete directions and applications, go to <http://go.unl.edu/3o4>. Applications must be postmarked by March 1.

Horsemanship Level Testing Dates

Mark your calendars! The 2012 group testings will be held at the Lancaster Event Center on the following dates:

- Tuesday, April 17, 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 1, 5:30 p.m.
- Monday, June 18, 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 26, 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 3, 5:30 p.m.

Horse Stampede

The annual 4-H Horse Stampede will be held Saturday, Feb. 18 on UNL East Campus at the Animal Science Building. Stampede is a state 4-H Horse competition. These are contests which do not require a horse: Horse Bowl, Public Speaking, Demonstration, and Art.

Lancaster County has several horse 4-H'ers competing this year. Those are aren't familiar with Stampede are highly encouraged to stop in and see what it is all about. Support our county 4-H'ers and see if the contests might be something you would enjoy doing in the future.

No cost to attend. Free parking in the lot south of the Animal Science Building.

Schedule:

- 7:30 a.m. Check-in for Demonstration
- 8 a.m. Check-in Public Speaking
- 8 a.m. Demonstration contest begin
- 8–8:30 a.m. Check-in for Art entries
- 8:30 a.m. Public Speaking contest begin
- 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Art contest judging and display
- 2–2:30 p.m. Pick up art entries
- 10:30–11:45 a.m. Check-in for Horse Bowl teams
- 12 p.m. Horse Bowl orientation
- 12:30 p.m. Horse Bowl begins



Lancaster County 4-H and 4-H Council invite ALL 4-H'ers, 4-H families and volunteers to



4-H Achievement Night

Thursday, Feb. 2 • 6:30 p.m.

Lancaster Extension Education Center

444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln

Part of
Nebraska 4-H
Month!

Evening Starts With a Dessert Potluck

Please bring a finger food dessert to share

Congratulations to all 4-H youth who commit themselves to excellence!

4-H members, clubs and volunteers receiving awards, scholarships, or pins will be mailed detailed information.



"2011
4-H Year in
Review" video!

4-H Crocheting Workshop, Feb. 11

4-H youth ages 10 and up are invited to learn how to crochet a washcloth utilizing the single crochet stitch at the "Basic Crocheting" workshop on Saturday, Feb. 11, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. No cost — all supplies will be provided. Must preregister by Feb. 8 by calling 402-441-7180. 4-H'ers may enter washcloths at the Lancaster County Super Fair under 4-H Clothing — Level 1 Crochet.

Pillow Party, Feb. 25

All youth ages 8 and up (need not be enrolled in 4-H) are invited to learn beginning sewing skills and make a pillow at the "Pillow Party" sewing workshop on Saturday, Feb. 25, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to help.

Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape), etc. Also bring 1/3 yard and 2/3 yard contrasting fabrics, pre-washed, 100% cotton (no plaids, no knits) and matching thread. Pillow forms provided.

Sign up by Feb. 23 by calling 402-441-7180. 4-H'ers may enter pillows at the county fair under 4-H Clothing - Sewing for Fun.

Get Involved in 4-H Dog Program!

The 4-H dog project is open to all youth ages 8–18. Lancaster County Super Fair dog shows include: Obedience, Agility (obstacle course), and Showmanship. The Dog VIPS Committee is asking all dog exhibitors to come up with a theme for this year's Creative Kennel contest at the Lancaster County Super Fair. This year's Super Fair theme is "Super Fun!"

For more information about the 4-H dog program, Dog VIPS Committee, or to send Creative Kennel theme ideas, contact Cole Meador at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

Jammie Jamboree, March 17

Practice basic sewing skills as part of the 4-H Clothing Level 1 project and make jammie bottoms at the "Jammie Jamboree" sewing workshop on Saturday, March 17, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Open to all youth (need not be in 4-H). 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), prewashed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaids) 1 yard 1/2-inch elastic, and matching thread. Also bring a sack lunch.

Sign up by March 14 by calling 402-441-7180. 4-H'ers may enter jammie bottoms at the county fair and styled in Style Revue under Clothing Level 1.

Community Service Grants Due March 2

The Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards are sponsored by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA) in cooperation with the Nebraska 4-H Foundation. These awards recognize 25 4-H clubs each year for the work of the individuals in the club and the community service work of the entire club. Recognition is in the form of \$500 checks issued to the club's treasury to be used as described in the award application form completed by the club. Forms are due by March 2 (email to 4hfoundation@unlnotes.unl.edu) and the awards will be presented at UNL's East Campus on June 25. For more information, go to www.ne4hfoundation.org.

4-H Photography Nebraska Themes

Unit II Nebraska photography exhibit print — capture a photo of a newsworthy event in your Nebraska community.

Unit III Nebraska photography exhibit print — capture a photo of a Nebraska landscape using a creative composition.

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 (room to be announced). 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.

4-H Speech & PSA Contests

The Speech and Public Service Announcement (PSA) contests are open to all 4-H'ers ages 8–18 — need not be enrolled in a specific project. Youth may choose to participate in either or both the Speech and PSA contests.

The 4-H Speech Contest will be 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.

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). Submit a PSA via CD playable on any standard stereo equipment to extension by Friday, April 13. If you do not have the capabilities to record a PSA, contact Cole to set up a recording time. Results and comment sheets will be handed out at the 4-H Speech Contest on April 22.

For resources, guidelines, and examples go to <http://lanaster.unl.edu/4h/Contest/speech.shtml>. If questions, contact Cole Meador at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

4-H Council Camp Scholarships

Lancaster County 4-H Council is offering two full scholarships to attend a 4-H summer camp at any of the three Nebraska 4-H Camp locations: Gretna, Halsey, and Alma. Applicants must be age 9 or older and currently enrolled in Lancaster County 4-H. Application deadline is May 1 — preference given to applications submitted by March 1. Applications are available at the extension office and at <http://go.unl.edu/hqw>.

Spring Rabbit Show

Saturday, March 24, 9 a.m.
Registrations 7:30–8:30 a.m.

Lancaster Extension Education Center

**Open to all
youth 8–18**



Awards will be given!
CLASSES: Fancy Rabbits, Commercial Rabbits, Pet Class, and Pee Wee Class.

REGISTRATION FEES: \$2.50 per rabbit or cavy, \$1 fur class, \$1 Showmanship.

FREE CONTESTS:
Rabbit Quiz & Breed ID

All rabbits must be tattooed in the left ear (available at the show 7:30–8:30 a.m. — \$1 per rabbit). All rabbits must be brought in carriers with leak-proof bottoms.

For more information, call Bob at 402-477-6888 or Marty at 402-441-7180

Sponsored by Lancaster County 4-H Rabbit VIPS Committee and UNL Extension in Lancaster County

Opportunity to learn and practice your showmanship!

RAFFLE FOR MANY PRIZES!
Tickets 3 for \$1 or 20 for \$5. Please bring an item for raffle such as crafts, rabbit items, plants, Easter/Spring items, books, etc.

4-H Clubs Needed to Help Provide Booths at Kiwanis Carnival, April 14

The annual Kiwanis Carnival, 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 Carnival 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!

Free Community Tax Preparation Services

With tax season just around the corner it is never too early to begin thinking about where you are going to get your taxes filed. As the countdown to the filing season approaches, consider utilizing free community tax preparation services through Lincoln's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

VITA offers tax preparation to low-to moderate-income individuals and households in Lancaster and Saunders Counties at no cost. Tax preparation includes both state and federal electronic filing. VITA operates sites at several convenient locations throughout the City of Lincoln from January through April.

New this year, various sites will offer self-preparation tax "Beehive" kiosks. These kiosks offer individuals the opportunity to file their own taxes following a series of questions, and step by step instructions. Volunteers will also be available to guide individuals through this process, and answer questions.

You may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) — a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families.

The credit reduces the amount of federal tax owed and can result in a refund check. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to qualified taxpayers. Income and family size determine the amount of the EITC.

EITC may mean a larger refund for you if you meet the qualifying rules, and your earned income is less than:


- \$43,998 (\$49,078 married filing jointly) with three or more qualifying children
- \$40,964 (\$46,044 married filing jointly) with two qualifying children
- \$36,052 (\$41,132 married filing jointly) with one qualifying child
- \$13,660 (\$18,470 married filing jointly) with no qualifying children

For information regarding the dates, times, and locations of VITA sites across Lincoln, go to www.communityactionatwork.org and click on "Free Tax Prep," or call 402-471-4515 ext. 142.

For more information on EITC eligibility and other tax questions, go to the IRS website at www.irs.gov or call 800-829-1040.

VITA Sites and Hours


Lincoln's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites offer FREE tax preparation and filing of Federal and State of Nebraska returns Jan. 21–April 16 unless otherwise noted.


 indicates Beehive self-prep tax kiosks available at this site

ANDERSON LIBRARY
3635 Touzalin Avenue
• Tuesdays, 4:30–7 p.m.
• Wednesdays, 4:30–7 p.m.

ASIAN COMMUNITY & CULTURAL CENTER
2615 O Street, Suite A
By appointment only, call 402-477-3446

BENNETT MARTIN LIBRARY
14 & N Streets
• Tuesdays, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. (thru Feb. 28)
• Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. (thru Feb. 29)


COMMUNITY ACTION OF NEBRASKA 
210 O Street, Suite 100
By appointment only, call 402-471-3714 ext 222


COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP 
210 O Street
• Mondays, 4–8 p.m.
• Tuesdays, 4–8 p.m. (thru Feb. 28)
• Wednesdays, 4–8 p.m. (thru Feb. 29)
• Thursdays, 4–8 p.m.
• Fridays, 9–1 a.m.

EISELEY LIBRARY
1530 Superior Street
• Mondays, 1–7 p.m.
• Thursdays, 1–7 p.m.
• Sundays, 1–4:30 p.m.

GOOD NEIGHBOR CENTER
2617 Y Street
• Tuesdays, 6–8:30 p.m. (Jan. 31, Feb. 7, 14 only)
• Sundays, 1–4 p.m. (Jan. 29, Feb. 5, 12 only)

INDIAN CENTER
1100 Military Road
By appointment only, call 402-438-5231 ext. 105

NEBRASKA EAST UNION 
Enter on Holdrege & 35th — follow signs
• Mondays, 5–8 p.m. (thru Feb. 20)
• Tuesdays, 5–8 p.m. (thru Feb. 21)
• Wednesdays, 5–8 p.m. (thru Feb. 22)
• Saturdays, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. (Jan. 21, 28)
• Saturdays, 1–5 p.m. (Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25 only)
• Sundays, 1–5 p.m. (thru Feb. 26)

NEBRASKA UNION 
14th & R Street
• Mondays, 5–8 p.m. (March 5, 12)
• Tuesdays, 5–8 p.m. (March 6, 13)
• Wednesdays, 5–8 p.m. (March 7, 14)
• Saturdays, 1–5 p.m. (March 3, 10)
• Sundays, 1–5 p.m. (March 4, 11)

SOUTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE
285 S. 68th St. Place, Room 212
• Mondays, 2–4:30 p.m. (Jan. 30–April 16; closed March 19, 26)

WILLIAMS LIBRARY
at Arnold Elementary, NW 48th Street & West Cuming
• Tuesdays, 4:30–7 p.m. (Jan. 24–Feb. 28)
• Wednesdays, 4:30–7 p.m. (Jan. 25–Feb. 29)



Caleb Pickard and Cole Malmberg, seniors at UNL, preparing a tax return at the city union.

UNL Students Get Involved at Campus Tax Preparation Sites

Now in its sixth year, University of Nebraska–Lincoln students will provide free tax preparation services at UNL's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites:

- Nebraska East Union on east campus Jan. 21–Feb. 28
- Nebraska Union on city campus March 3–14.

Free parking and childcare is provided at the UNL sites. New this year, both UNL sites will offer self-preparation tax "Beehive" kiosks offering individuals the opportunity to file their own taxes.

Aside from gaining real-world experience with tax laws, student volunteers also interact with the community intimately.

Linda Moody, assistant director of service-learning and volunteer services says, "Within 20 minutes, you gain trust and respect because people are sharing

confidential information. Something about that process makes the program have a high impact on the volunteers. We ultimately want to have as many people possible participate in VITA. It's a wonderful opportunity for students to see the community and to work with a variety of people."

In its inaugural year, the UNL campus VITA site completed 128 returns. During the 2011 tax season, the site completed more than 800 returns.

Caleb Pickard, a senior economics major and the VITA program undergraduate assistant says, "We're getting better every year at what we do. With roughly the same number of preparers, we're able to increase the number of returns, which speaks to our competency and efficiency as a program."

What to Bring to Have Your Taxes Prepared at a VITA Site

- W-2's from your employer, 1099's for miscellaneous income, and W2-G's for gambling income
- 1099's for interest, dividends, unemployment, retirement, and other income
- Social Security cards or ITIN letters (for you, your spouse, your children, and other dependents)
- Copy of last year's tax return (very helpful)
- Child care information (provider's ID number and address and receipts for amount paid)
- Blank check or savings account information for direct deposit
- Statements of student loan interest, mortgage interest and property tax
- List of any other income and expenses

EXTENSION NEWS

New Nutrition Support Staff Member

Konnie Robertson joined UNL Extension in Lancaster County in December as a part time office assistant for the Nutrition Education Program (NEP). Her duties include providing clerical support to seven NEP staff and managing office responsibilities such as data entry, processing reports, and maintaining programming and office supplies.

Konnie says, "Allow me to introduce myself — I'm the new Virginia. Which is how I've been often introduced as being the newest team member of NEP. And that is OK, because if I can do half the job Virginia Piening did in the 45 years she held this position, I will feel pretty good about my accomplishments. Filling the shoes of someone that held a position for so long is a pretty



Konnie Robertson is the office assistant for the Lancaster County Nutrition Education Program.

daunting task, but I'd like to think that I am up for the challenge. And in a way, Virginia and I share a lot of similarities. She is part of a farm family and is an integral part of its operation. My husband, Russ, is a farmer and for the past 12 years, while I've been home

raising our son, Marcus, I've been slowly groomed to be the so called, 'farm wife.' Like Virginia, my job as a farm wife has included spending time out in pastures cutting and spraying thistles and locust trees. Doing bookwork and working with scale tickets. Occasionally running the big tractors and pulling the grain cart around the field during harvest. Running for parts. Being a single parent during planting season and harvest. All of these require flexibility, attention to detail, memorization, and the willingness to be 'the gopher' or do the 'grunt work,' if you will. And those are the kind of attributes required to be the NEP office assistant. So it's OK to be called 'the new Virginia,' — but hopefully with time you can just call me Konnie Robertson."

2012 Extension Board

Meet the Lancaster County Extension Board. Current extension board members are:

- Wesley Daberkow, President
- Denise Farley, Vice President
- Ryan Mohling, Secretary/Treasurer
- Linda K. Butcher
- Pablo Cervantes
- Debbora Day
- Clancy Dempsey
- Boshra Rida
- Patricia M. Schmidt
- Marian Storm, Family & Community Education Council representative
- Stephanie Wachter, 4-H Council representative

Lancaster County Extension board members assist extension staff in establishing and accomplishing extension program goals and objectives. They work in partnership with UNL extension on priority issues through educational programs in agriculture, horticulture, pest management, nutrition and food safety, family living, home environment, and 4-H youth development.



Outgoing extension board member John Chess (center) served six years. Pictured with Board President Wesley Daberkow (left) and Extension Educator Gary Bergman (right).

EXTENSION CALENDAR

All programs and events will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless otherwise noted.

January

- 25 **Family & Community Education (FCE) and Community Leader Training Lesson, "Lighting Your Way"** 1 p.m.
- 28 **Private Pesticide Applicator Training Session**.....8:30–11:30 a.m.
- 28 **4-H Counterchange Smocking Workshop** 9 a.m.

February (February is Nebraska 4-H Month)

- 2 **4-H Achievement Night** 6:30 p.m.
- 7 **Initial Pesticide Training** 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.
- 7 **Animal Welfare and Current Industry Issues Seminar for Livestock Producers, UNL East Campus Union** 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m.
- 7 **4-H Pick-a-Pig Informational Meeting** 6:30 p.m.
- 7 **4-H Council Meeting**..... 7 p.m.
- 8 **Pasture Management School** 6:30 p.m.
- 9 **Recertification Pesticide Training** 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
- 9 **4-H/FFA Beef Weigh In, Lancaster Event Center - Pav. 2** 6–8 p.m.
- 10 **Extension Board Meeting** 8 a.m.
- 11 **4-H Crocheting Workshop** 9 a.m.
- 12 **4-H Teen Council Meeting** 3 p.m.
- 16 **Co-Parenting for Successful Kids (formerly Parents Forever)** 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m. / 5:30–9 p.m.
- 16 **Private Pesticide Applicator Training Session**..... 6:30–9:30 p.m.
- 18 **4-H Horse Stampede, Animal Science Building, UNL East Campus**
- 21 **Guardian/Conservator Training**..... 1:30–4:30 p.m.
- 22 **Family & Community Education (FCE) and Community Leader Training Lesson, "Social Networking Sites"** 1 p.m.
- 23 **Nut Orchard Planning, Planting, Care, and Harvesting**..... 7–9 p.m.
- 25 **4-H Pillow Party Sewing Workshop** 9 a.m.
- 28 **Cornhusker Economics Management and Outlook Conference** 4:30–9 p.m.

Grain Storage

continued from page 2
uniform temperature is reached throughout the grain mass.

Will You Need to Finish Drying Grain in the Spring?

If you were unable to get the grain down to a safe storage moisture in the fall, and the grain was cooled to 30°F for safe keeping in winter, it will need to be warmed in stages to 40°F in late February or early March so you are set to take advantage of days with low humidity to finish drying the grain in the spring.

If you warmed the grain to do some additional drying but now the forecast is for unfavorable weather conditions, run the aeration fans at every opportunity when the air temperature is right to cool the grain again to reduce deterioration. Your goal should be to get the grain back down to 40°F.

You can keep dry corn held into April at 40°F. If dry corn is kept into May or June, warm the grain to 60°F by May 1.

First Lady's Service Awards

ServeNebraska is accepting nominations to honor individuals and organizations throughout Nebraska with the annual First Lady's Outstanding Community Service Awards. The nomination deadline for these awards is March 1.

The Community Service Awards honor adult, youth, and group nominees in a variety of categories, including volunteering. Details, including award categories and nomination form, are available online at www.serve.nebraska.gov or by contacting Kimberle Hall at 402-471-6228.

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 Staff** — Ages 18 and older who lead camp programs. Spend mid-May to early August working full time to provide day to day leadership of camp activities and teaching groups of all ages. Salaried position. Deadline is Feb. 15.
- **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>.



University of Nebraska State Museum's "Sunday with a Scientist" is a series of presentations highlighting the work of scientists. It educates kids and families on a variety of topics related to science and natural history. Presenters share science in a fun informal way through demonstrations, activities, or by conducting it on site.

Hours are 1:30–4:30 p.m. every third Sunday of the month. Location is Morrill Hall which is south of 14 and Vine street on UNL campus. There is a cost to enter the museum. For more information, go to www.museum.unl.edu or call 402-472-3779.

Feb. 19 – Snakes (Past and Present)
March 18 – Ashfall Fossil Beds
April 15 – Food Science
May 20 – Bees
June 17 – DNA
July 15 – TBA
Aug. 19 – Plants
Sept. 16 – Biofuel
Oct. 21 – Ogallala Aquifer
Nov. 18 – TBA
Dec. 16 – Platte River Time Lapse Project



At the Feb. 19 "Snakes (Past and Present)," Extension Educator and Professor of Herpetology Dennis Ferraro will have live snakes.

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

EXTENSION

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension
in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Rd., Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528-1507
402-441-7180

<http://lancaster.unl.edu>
Email: lancaster@unl.edu • Fax: 402-441-7148

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<http://lancaster.unl.edu/media>

Lancaster Extension Education Center Conference Facilities
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln



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University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act; for assistance contact UNL Extension in Lancaster County at 402-441-7180.

EXTENSION EDUCATOR & UNIT LEADER

Gary C. Bergman

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Lancaster County 4-H Horse Youth are National Champions!



Team Nebraska took the national High Overall State Award. The team included Lancaster and Douglas/Sarpy 4-H members. Lancaster County 4-H'ers were: Elli Dearmont, Megan Luedtke, Cory Peters, Ian Schuster, Erika Warner, and Kenzie Wolfe. Kendra Ronnau coached the Lancaster County youth.

In January, youth from 34 states and Canada traveled to Denver to take part in the 4-H/FFA Western National Roundup. Competitions in the Western National 4-H Horse Classic portion of the Roundup included horse bowl, hippology, public speaking, and individual and team demonstration. Each individual and team had to first win the state competition to qualify for nationals.

Team Nebraska which consisted of 4-H youth from Lancaster and Douglas/Sarpy Counties took the national title! The High Overall State Award is given to the state with the overall highest score based on placings in the five different competitions. Top five teams in the nation were, in order of placing: Nebraska, California, Mississippi, South Dakota, and Texas.

National Champions in Horse Bowl was the Lancaster team of Megan Luedtke, Cory Peters, Ian Schuster, and Erika Warner. The team won their first two rounds but then lost to Iowa in a close round. They then came back up through the losers bracket and again met Iowa in the championship round. Nebraska had to beat Iowa in two straight rounds for the national championship title. The top five teams ranked in placing order were: Nebraska, Iowa, Georgia, Kansas, and Texas.

Individual All-Arounds in Horse Bowl included Cory Peters tying for 1st, Megan Luedtke placing 3rd, and Erika placing 8th.

Coach Kendra Ronnau says, "With all of the hard work the team did — practicing as a group twice or more a week, and on their own every day — the kids made it not only so they could do well in quiz bowl, they made themselves into National Champions. More importantly, they created lifelong friendships and memories. All the Nebraska youth really did a superb job representing Nebraska! I couldn't be more proud of them."

Elli Dearmont took reserve national champion in public speaking with her speech entitled "Gut Feeling."

Kenzie Wolfe placed fifth in Individual Demonstration with her demonstration entitled "Million Dollar Mouth."

The Douglas/Sarpy Horse Judging team was reserve champion and the Douglas/Sarpy hippology team placed 3rd.

In the past, Nebraska youth have been champions in individual national events, however, UNL Extension Associate Marty Cruickshank believes this is the first time ever for Nebraska to win the Overall State national title in horse competitions!



Lancaster County Horse Bowl team of Megan Luedtke, Cory Peters, Ian Schuster, and Erika Warner earned national champions. Kendra Ronnau was coach.

4-H Diamond Clover

continued from page 1

- **Jacob Rushman** — "I learned how to plan what I wanted to achieve the beginning of the year, then the hard part was following through with my plan. The best part is receiving the award and recognition at achievement night."
- **Sam Schuster (Level 1 accomplishment: learning the pledge)** — "I learned that I'm not here for only me, that you need to get involved and that no matter how young you are, you can make a difference! I learned all this from the 4-H pledge."
- **Collin Schmidt (Level 1 accomplishment: hosted a meeting and provided refreshments)** — "I had a meeting at my house and had brownies."
- **Alyssa Zimmer (Level 1 accomplishment: attended 60 percent of club meetings)** — "I learned how to build a rocket and all the parts included in building a rocket. I learned about rabbits and what is needed to care for them. I learned how to tell several different breeds by looking at them."
- **McKenzie Kapperman (Level 1 accomplishment: 4-H community service)** — "During my first year of 4-H, my sister and I made birthday cards for the Meals on Wheels program each month. This past year, we decided it would be fun to actually deliver the meals. I have learned when you help people, they are so gracious."
- **Ashlynn Devall (Level 2 accomplishment: worked at the food booth)** — "I learned food safety at the county fair 4-H food booth."
- **Caleb Nielson (Level 2 accomplishment: attended at least two 4-H activities or events)** — "I attended the county fair and Clover College. I learned about bugs."
- **Jaclyn Heinrich (Level 2 accomplishment: 4-H club and community activities)** — "Our club held meetings each month. I attended all meetings and also went to all of our community projects such as highway cleanup. I also



Reported accomplishment: participated in three county 4-H activities. Learned how to show a horse, a dog, and rabbits.

- spent time fundraising for the livestock auction."
- **Jacob Rushman (Level 2 accomplishment: completed Woodworking I Unit)** — "I completed the entire Woodworking Unit I by learning how to use various handtools and safety rules. I am now ready to utilize power tools and have already used a router."
- **Valerie Gabel (Level 3 accomplishment: participated in the Table Setting contest and Fair Fun Day tours)** — "When doing my table setting, I learned how to set dishes and silverware the correct way on a table. When I helped do tours, I learned I had to keep the children focused or they would not listen."
- **Ivy Dearmont (Level 4 accomplishment: participated in a 4-H communications event)** — "I participated in a team demonstration about horse riders apparel. I learned how to talk in front of people and more about horse rider apparel."
- **Spencer Peters (Level 4 accomplishment: helped a younger member with their project)** — "I helped a member in my 4-H club with his poultry project. I worked with him on his poultry showmanship so he would know what to expect for the actual show. I learned it is fun to help someone and see them learn and be excited about a project."
- **Emily Steinbach (Level 5 accomplishment: served as a 4-H camp counselor)** — "I attended the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center training in the beginning of June. I then signed up to help with a camp. I learned how to deal with a variety of situations with campers. I also learned how to entertain campers."
- **Kyle Pedersen (Level 6 accomplishment: service-learning project)** — "My project



Reported accomplishment: competed in the Bicycle Contest. Learned how to ride safely and utilize hand signals.



Reported accomplishment: served as club president and member of 4-H Teen Council.



Level 6 requires a service-learning project. Kyle Pedersen transplanted plants to a children's home and started a 4-H club at the home.

involved creating a 4-H club at a children's home and moving plants from a donor's yard to the children's home. I learned that even something as simple as placing plants around a children's home can make a difference. It was satisfying to bring a new experience to a group of youth who haven't had that experience before."

Local 4-H'er Publishes Book, Daisy Goes to the County Fair

Lancaster County 4-H'er Erica Peterson has recently published a children's book aimed at youth grades Kindergarten to third grade, *Daisy Goes to the County Fair*. Erica has been a 4-H member for 10 years (exhibiting sheep, beef cattle, swine, photography, gardening, and many other projects), an FFA member for four years, and volunteered with Ag in the Classroom for five years. Erica feels it is important youth and adults understand what farming is about and what is involved with farming today. She plans to go to University of Nebraska-Lincoln to study agricultural journalism. She hopes to continue to be an advocate for agriculture. She already has ideas for more books! The book is available for sale at the Four Star Drug in Waverly and online from the publisher, Rose Dog Books (www.rosedogbookstore.com/dagotocofa.html), and Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble websites.

