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NEBLINE

NEBRASKA EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY

4-H Ag Literacy Teaches Youth Where Their Food and Fiber Comes From

Cole Meador
Extension Assistant

Agricultural literacy is vital in today's society. Each year more and more people lose touch with where their food, fiber and fuel come from. More and more youth think their food comes from the store and have no idea their bread, meat, cheese, pastas, milk, eggs, juice, etc. were originally raw materials grown by farmers.

Agriculture touches each of our lives daily and is Nebraska's number one industry — one in three jobs are related to agriculture. Ag literacy is one of the five signature outcome areas of Nebraska 4-H.

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County has been teaching ag literacy as part of the Lancaster County 4-H program in a variety of ways for many years.

Ag Awareness Festival

The Agricultural Awareness Festival in Lincoln teaches nearly 600 4th graders how their food is raised from farm to fork. Lancaster County 4-H started the festival in 2000 with the help of various commodity boards. The festival has grown from one day to two days and is held at the Lancaster Event Center.

Presenters teach the basics of agriculture and why these animals, crops and technology are so important to our day-to-day lives. Students rotate through various sessions including: beef, pork, poultry, dairy, crops, by-products, water and agricultural technology. Students have the opportunity to interact with animals and climb on farm equipment, which is a first for many who attend.

Annetta Davidson, a 4th grade teacher at Eagle Elementary, said, "We enjoy bringing our students to this event because it provides a strong connection with our study of Nebraska and reinforces the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. Students always enjoy the various activities."



Extension Assistant Cole Meador, who organizes the Ag Awareness Festival, shows 4th graders an automatic milking machine's claw with shells and inflations.

Lancaster County Super Fair

For over 135 years, the Lancaster County Fair has celebrated agriculture, youth and community. Hosted by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, Lancaster County 4-H coordinates the 4-H & FFA youth events and exhibits, as well as many ag literacy experiences.

The Super Fair is a great opportunity for urban residents to learn about agriculture and where their food comes from. There are many crop and horticulture exhibits.

The public can see hundreds of farm animals up close, including cattle, pigs, chickens, sheep and goats. The fair has educational displays in the animal areas explaining breeds, colors and purposes of each species. Many 4-H/FFA animal exhibitors are eager to talk to fairgoers about their animals and let people pet their animals.

Since the 1980s, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County has coordinated a "Fair Fun Day" for child care groups with youth K-4. Teen volunteers (mostly 4-H youth) give the groups guided tours of the fair, with an emphasis on learning about the different animals, crops and where their food comes from. Last year, 17 teenagers gave tours for 10 child care groups with approximately 300 youth.

Bailee Gunnerson, a Fair Fun Day tour guide, said, "Out of all the things I love doing in 4-H,

my favorite thing is talking with kids about my animals because I love the faces they make when I tell them interesting facts."

In 2006, Lancaster County developed an Animal Exploration Guide for after-school and summer sites with youth K-4. This curriculum includes information, fun facts and activities about various animals at the Lancaster County Super Fair. A 4-H staff member visits many of the summer sites to talk about the fair and animals.

Go Go Goat Getters & Pick-a-Pig 4-H Clubs

Two 4-H clubs target urban and non-urban youth who do not have the opportunity to raise a farm animal on their own.

Pick-a-Pig was started in 2009 and Go Go Goat Getters started last year. These youth have the opportunity to help raise a pig or goat and then show it at the Super Fair.

With both clubs, the animals are housed at a local farm. Youth meet weekly at the farm to learn about and care for their animals. After the fair, the animals are marketed. The majority of these kids have had no hands-on experience with a farm animal. They learn these animals will eventually go into the food chain.

Thomas Cook, a member of the Pick-a-Pig club, said, "I learned pigs provide us pork chops, ham and bacon from the Pick-A-Pig club."



During the Lancaster County Super Fair, many 4-H & FFA animal exhibitors share their animals with fairgoers, including child care groups who are given tours of the fair as part of Fair Fun Day.

Llama/Alpaca Club

The Star City Llama and Alpaca 4-H club allows youth to raise a llama or alpaca and show it at the Super Fair. Many of the club members do not have the opportunity to house a large animal. Through the club, youth can borrow or lease a llama/alpaca. Members learn the fiber that llamas produce is used in many products such as warm clothing and yarn.

Embryology

Since the 1970s, the 4-H Embryology school enrichment program has been a favorite classroom activity in Lancaster County. It is part of Lincoln Public Schools' 3rd grade core science curriculum. About 4,000 Lancaster County 3rd graders in 55 schools participate.

In Embryology, students learn about the life cycle by hatching chicks in their class-

rooms. Students also learn ag information about eggs such as grading, parts of, and different colors. The chicks used in Embryology are "layers" and students learn these chickens are raised to provide eggs for people to eat.

Lancaster County 4-H also features an "EGG Cam" (online at <http://go.unl.edu/eggcam>) which livestreams chicks hatching and has many educational resources.

Clover College

The annual 4-H Clover College offers a variety of workshops which teach about ag literacy. Recent workshops have included sheep, cattle, chickens, rabbits and pizza farm.

Group Presentations

Throughout the year, various groups ask 4-H staff to give ag literacy presentations and/or provide educational materials.

4-H Also Teaches Youth How to Raise Animals and Plants

For over 100 years, 4-H has taught agricultural education to youth who help raise their own animals and plants. Popular 4-H projects continue to include cattle, horses, poultry, swine, sheep, goats, rabbits, vegetables and fruit.

Youth in 4-H animal projects learn how to properly care for and train their animals, and other good animal husbandry practices. 4-H also offers in-depth animal knowledge such as judging, breed identification, facts and more.

Youth in 4-H plant projects learn how to grow plants from seed to harvest.

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IN THIS ISSUE

Food & Health	2
Family Living	3
Farm & Acreage	4
Horticulture	5
Pests & Wildlife	5
4-H & Youth	6-7

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Food Safety Questions About Commercially-Canned Food

USDA/FSIS provides this chart on storing canned foods

FOOD	STORAGE ON SHELF	STORAGE AFTER OPENING
Low-acid canned goods. Examples: canned meat and poultry, stews, soups (except tomato), spaghetti (noodle and pasta) products, potatoes, corn, carrots, spinach, beans, beets, peas and pumpkin.	2 to 5 years	3 to 4 days in the refrigerator
High-acid canned goods. Examples: juices (tomato, orange, lemon, lime and grapefruit), tomatoes, grapefruit, pineapple, apples and apple products, mixed fruit, peaches, pears, plums, all berries, pickles, sauerkraut and foods treated with vinegar-based sauces or dressings like German potato salad and sauerbraten.	12 to 18 months	5 to 7 days in the refrigerator

Commercially-canned foods are convenient as they require no refrigeration to keep their contents safe. Their nutritional value is comparable to other forms of food such as frozen and fresh. In some cases, it may be higher. Following are answers to questions we commonly receive at the Extension office about canned foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety & Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS).

Will Commercially Canned Foods Last Forever?

Commercial canning is done under tightly-controlled conditions — careful sanitation and the necessary time and temperature under pressure, but there are still limits to how long it will preserve food. There are several factors that limit the shelf life of canned foods. First, cans can rust over time. Shipping accidents, where cans fall and dent or are crushed, also cause container problems.

Then there's can corrosion. In all foods, but especially in high-acid foods like canned tomatoes, natural chemicals in the food continually react with the container. Over several years, this can cause taste and texture changes, and eventually lower the nutritional value of the food.

High temperatures (over 100°F) are harmful to canned goods too. The risk of spoilage jumps sharply as storage temperatures rise. In fact, canned goods designed for use in the tropics are specially manufactured.

Store canned foods and other shelf stable products in a cool, dry place. Never put them above or beside the stove, under the sink, in a damp garage or basement, or any place exposed to high or low temperature extremes. Temperatures below 85°F are best. Check your pantry every few weeks and use canned goods you have had on hand for awhile. Don't purchase bulging, rusted, leaking or deeply dented cans.

After Opening Canned Foods, is it Safe to Refrigerate the Unused Food in the Can?

Yes. Unused portions of canned food may be refrigerated in the can, but to preserve optimum quality and flavor, place the unused portion in a glass or plastic storage container.

Is it Safe to Use Rusted Canned Foods?

Discard heavily rusted cans. Cans heavily rusted can have

tiny holes in them, allowing bacteria to enter. Surface rust you can remove by rubbing with your finger or a paper towel is not serious. You can keep these canned foods. If you open the cans and there is any rust inside, do not eat the food. Rust (oxidized iron) is not safe to eat.

Is it Safe to Use Food From Dented Cans?

If a can containing food has a small dent, but is otherwise in good shape, the food should be safe to eat. Discard deeply dented cans. A deep dent is one you can lay your finger into. Deep dents often have sharp points. A sharp dent on either the top or side seam can damage the seam and allow bacteria to enter the can. Discard any can with a deep dent on any seam.

Is it Safe to Use Cans That Freeze Accidentally?

Cans of food that freeze accidentally, such as those left in a car or basement in sub-zero temperatures, can present health problems. Frozen cans could swell because the food inside expanded when frozen. However, cans can be swollen because of contamination with *Clostridium botulinum* or spoilage-causing organisms. Do not use any swollen cans; discard them.

Also, discard frozen cans that are not swollen but have been allowed to thaw at 40°F or higher. Cans that have thawed and refrozen are not safe.

A frozen can that has not thawed can be safely defrosted in the refrigerator and used. If the canned food is still frozen, let the intact can thaw in the refrigerator before opening. If the product **does not** look and/or smell normal, throw it out. Do not taste it!

If the product **does** look and/or smell normal, thoroughly cook the contents right away by boiling for 10 to 20 minutes. At altitudes below 1,000 feet, boil foods for 10 minutes. Add an additional minute of boiling time for each additional 1,000 feet elevation (for example, at 3,000 feet, boil for 12 minutes). Spinach and corn should be boiled for 20 minutes at all altitudes. This is due to the high density of these vegetables. Products can then be refrigerated or frozen for later use

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety & Inspection Service, "Shelf-Stable Food Safety," retrieved 2/2/2015 from <http://1.usa.gov/1K3ZdUW>



HEALTHY EATING

ENJOY NEBRASKA FOODS!

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN, Extension Educator

Though avocados are high in fat, most of the fat is heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, avocados are loaded with nutrients such as dietary fiber, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium, magnesium and folate. They're also cholesterol and sodium free.

4-INGREDIENT GUACAMOLE

1 ripe avocado

1/8 teaspoon powdered cumin

Dash of cayenne pepper, optional (about 1/16 teaspoon)

1/2 to 1 ripe Roma tomato, diced; or use about 1/4 cup of grape or cherry tomatoes cut into smaller pieces

Salt (if desired)

Mash avocado with potato masher, pastry blender or fork. Mix in cumin and cayenne pepper. Stir in tomatoes. Taste; add more cumin and cayenne as needed. Add salt to taste, if desired.

NOTE: Guacamole prepared without lime or lemon juice may turn brown sooner, so it is best to eat this version right after preparation.

Children Act Fast, So Do Accidents

National Poison Prevention Week is March 15–21, 2015 and there is no better time to think about your laundry routine! Make it a habit to always store liquid laundry packets out of reach and sight of children to prevent injury and in their original package until you are ready to use them.

WARNING! Children are curious and whether you want them to or not, tend to put all sorts of different things in their mouths. Food, rattles, toys, teethingers — you name it. And even some things they shouldn't.

Serious harm including accidental ingestion and eye

exposure can occur if children get their hands on liquid laundry packets. Each laundry packet contains highly concentrated detergent and can cause serious injury if they end up in the hands and mouths of children.

Parents know children act fast which is exactly why it is essential to get in the habit of always storing liquid laundry packets along with all other household cleaning products in a safe place out of reach and sight of children. And, always remember to keep laundry packets in their original package until they are ready to be used.

Liquid laundry packet

accidents are more common than you think. In 2013, there were over 10,000 laundry packet exposures* in children five and younger. Protect your children. Here's how:

- Do not let children handle laundry packets.
- Do not puncture or pull packets apart.
- Store out of child's sight and reach.

Packets quickly dissolve upon contact with water, wet hands, or saliva. Packets can rupture, releasing contents into eyes.

**As reported by the American Association of Poison Control Centers.*

FREE Community Tax Preparation for Low- and Moderate-Income Individuals and Families

Lincoln's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides free tax preparation services to low- and moderate-income individuals and families living in Lancaster and Saunders Counties. Tax preparation includes both state and federal electronic filing.

The tax services are available at specific hours and dates through April 15 at the following sites in Lincoln:

- Community Action
- Nebraska East Union
- Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center

- Raymond Women's Club
- Southeast Community College
- Anderson Library
- Asian Community and Cultural Center
- Bennett Martin Library
- North Star High School Media Center
- Good Neighbor Center
- Indian Center

For the 2015 VITA site schedule and list of what to bring to have your taxes prepared, go to <https://communityactionatwork.org.presencehost.net/programs/community/services.html> or call

402-471-4515.

Community Action leads VITA in partnership with the Lincoln Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition and University of Nebraska–Lincoln. VITA's volunteer tax preparers are thoroughly trained on tax law and have vast knowledge of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other credits designed to put a bigger refund into the hands of taxpayers. In the 2014 tax season, VITA volunteers prepared over 5,000 returns returning \$6.2 million to taxpayers in our community.

AARP Driver Safety Program, March 13

An AARP Smart Driver™ Course will be presented in Lincoln as a 4-hour session on Friday, March 13, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. A certified AARP instructor will teach the driving refresher course. This is a new, research-based Smart Driver class for older adults, extensively revised from previous versions. Sign up for the class by calling 402-441-7180.

Those attending are encouraged to arrive a few minutes early to complete check-in and registrations procedures. Cost is

\$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members, payable at the door. Payment by check or cash is required (the exact amount is helpful) — credit/debit cards are not accepted. All participants must bring their driver's license and AARP members are required to also bring their ID card and number.

In this class you will learn driving strategies which encourage confidence and safer driving, including:

- defensive driving techniques, new traffic laws and rules of the road,
- how to deal with aggressive

drivers,

- techniques to safely handle driving situations, such as left turns, right-of-ways, blind spots and
- how to make the best use of safety features found in most automobiles.

There is no test. Course participants may be eligible to receive an insurance discount from some companies — consult your insurance agent for further details. For more information about the course, call 1-888-227-7669 or go to www.aarpdriversafety.org.



ASK LORENE

FAMILY LIVING TIPS

Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Question: Should I test my home for Radon?

Answer: If you have a home that does not have a Radon mitigation system it is suggested you test for it.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. It is a natural occurring, radioactive gas that can accumulate in your home. You can't see, smell or taste radon. Radon usually comes from surrounding soil and can enter through cracks and openings in the lower level of a home.

Nebraska has a very high incidence of radon in homes; over half of radon tests in the state are above the action level of 4.0 pCi/L. If a home or building has an annual average radon level of 4 pCi/L or higher, it should be mitigated (fixed) to lower the radon level.

There are short and long term test kits. Kits are available at hardware stores.

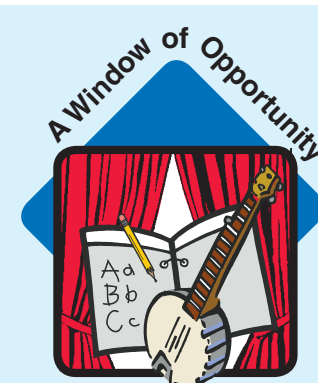
Short-term radon tests run typically 2 to 7 days. They are useful as an initial screen test because they are inexpensive and the results are received quicker than long-term tests. Long-term tests run from 3 months to a full year and often give a better annual average of your radon exposure, since they can take into account the seasonal variations of radon.

Some manufacturers offer special pricing for Nebraska residents when purchasing a radon test kit. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Radon Program provides this list as a service to the citizens of Nebraska, but does not endorse one manufacturer/laboratory over another. They have tried to ensure all the information is accurate, however you should confirm the pricing prior to purchase.

- AccuStar — To order a discounted **long-term** test kit from AccuStar, call 800-523-4964 and mention "Nebraska." More information about AccuStar products can be found at <http://www.accustarlabs.com>
- Air Chek, Inc. — To order a discounted **short- or long-term** test kit from Air Chek, Inc., visit www.radon.com/nebraska
- Alpha Energy Laboratories — To order a discounted **short- or long-term** test kit from Alpha Energy, visit <http://drhomeair.com/nebraska>

Radon test kits can often be found at local hardware stores or home centers, as well. For more information about radon, go to the DHHS website at http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/radon_index.aspx.

"Ask Lorene" by mail: Attn. Lorene Bartos, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528; email lbartos1@unl.edu; or phone 402-441-7180.



Time to Reclaim Childhood

A Conference for Early Childhood Professionals

Saturday, March 21

8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

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

Cost is \$20
(includes lunch from Brown Baggers/refreshments)

Pre-registration is due March 6

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

In-service hours will be given for this conference.

This conference is approved through the Nebraska Department of Education.

Home Hazards, Health and Human Relationships Seminar, March 5

A free seminar, "Home Hazards, Health and Human Relationships" is designed for child care professionals, parents, grandparents, community professionals and UNL students. It will be Thursday, March 5, 1–3 p.m. in the Great Plains Room, University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus Union.

The seminar features Dr. Joe Ponessa, professor emeritus, Rutgers University, and Dr. Susanna von Essen, professor, University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Julia Torquati, professor, UNL College of Education and Human Sciences, will moderate the seminar.



The purpose of the seminar is to draw the connection between environment and individual and family functioning. Dr. Ponessa and Dr. Susanna von Essen will focus on health hazards found in homes, schools and work settings as well as

the affect they have on children's learning.

For additional information and to RSVP, go to <http://go.unl.edu/healthyhousing>.

The seminar is hosted by the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies and Nebraska Extension. It is made possible by the generous donation of Charles and Shirley (Whidden) Niemeyer through the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Growing Nuts Seminar, Feb. 26

The Nebraska Nut Growers Association (NeNGA) & Heartland Nuts 'N More cooperative are sponsoring a free seminar, "Growing a Nut Orchard for the Future," on Thursday, Feb. 26, 7–9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Rd. There will be door prize drawings of several seedling nut tree varieties.

If you want to plant just a couple nut trees or an orchard, you will find this seminar informative. Growing nut trees can be a great family activity now and for the future. Everyone has different expectations and goals when planting an orchard. This seminar will cover the steps required to accomplish your goals and expectations. There will be professional growers on hand to answer your questions.

Topics include:

- planning — setting realistic goals, understanding an orchard environment and



- tasks needed to meet your goals,
- planting — planting considerations and seedling selections,
 - caring — tasks required to bring a seedling to a productive producing nut tree, and
 - harvesting tasks — harvesting techniques, processing and marketing your nuts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

HEARTLAND NUTS 'N MORE
President, Larry Martin
402-784-6887
www.heartlandnutsnmore.com
email lottanuts@windstream.net

NEBRASKA NUT GROWERS ASSOCIATION (NeNGA)
Director, John Knorr
402-788-2717
www.nebraskanutgrowers.org
email joknorr@attglobal.net

DriftWatch Specialty Crop Site Registry

Nebraska DriftWatch™ is a free online registry and map for commercial specialty and pesticide-sensitive crops, which is being promoted to pesticide applicators to reduce incidents of drift.

Are you among the commercial growers currently registered in DriftWatch? (A commercial grower is one who sells a crop in some way; not growing it solely for personal use). If not, please take a minute to check out DriftWatch online at www.fieldwatch.com.

Applicators registered in DriftWatch, and who are also a member of FieldWatch, can now select specific counties from multiple states for notices when new information is added to the map. Membership also allows access to real-time map data. See www.fieldwatch.com for more information. Applicators who are registered should watch for email notices directly from FieldWatch.

DriftWatch is growing, both in the number of growers and applicators using the site (there



are now 12 states and 1 Canadian province participating), but also in increased functionality. New features have recently been added for commercial beekeepers.

Beehives are now placed on the map with the click of the mouse or tap on the screen of a mobile device. When the user clicks where a hive is located, a half-acre circle appears on the map. No longer does the beekeeper draw a shape or an arbitrary outline of the hive area. In addition, beekeepers can now choose whether or not their beehives appear on the public map or if they are visible only to applicators registered in DriftWatch. Applicators who register receive email notices

when new crops are added to the map.

Please take a look at DriftWatch, and consider putting your commercial crops on the map. Renewal notices to already-registered growers are being sent by email now, so growers are encouraged to review and renew your information for 2015. Logging in and renewing is required annually, but quick and easy to do. Did you renew in 2014? Please double check: a few growers were removed because this wasn't done last year. If so, please contact Craig Romary, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, at craig.romary@nebraska.gov.

Crop Type	DriftWatch Growers	USDA/NDA Estimates for Nebraska	DriftWatch % of Estimate
Bee Hives	47	204	23%
Fish Farm	2	45	4%
Fruits/Orchard	61	277	22%
Grapes	120	210	57%
Nursery/Greenhouse/High Tunnel	35	350	10%
Certified Organic	61	196	31%
Vegetables	62	266	23%

Soil Temperature Trends for Planting

Tyler Williams
Extension Educator

Planting in Nebraska is a difficult task, not only for the work and preparation involved, but also because of the variable weather patterns that encompass the region during the spring. Crops must be planted in fields dry enough, wet enough and warm enough for the seeds to get

a good start. For a seed to germinate it must have good contact with the soil and be placed in a favorable soil environment.

One of the key factors to consider for a good soil environment is soil temperature. Planting before optimum soil temperatures are reached increases the risk of productivity loss due to seed death, poor germination and limited initial growth. The optimum soil temperature for germination ranges widely for different crops and varieties (Table 1.)

When soil temperatures have remained above the recommended minimum temperature for five to seven consecutive days, crops will germinate more quickly and have a more uniform stand. The temperature of the soil will vary depending on your soil type, moisture content, residue cover and management practices. Trying to predict when the optimum soil temperature will be reached is difficult and it is even more difficult to predict if that soil temperature will be sustained.

The minimum soil temperature for planting a given crop is reached on different dates from year to year. Averaging soil temperatures over a number of years provides insight for better management decisions. To better understand the soil temperatures here in Eastern Nebraska, I looked at soil temperature

Table 1. Recommended minimum temperatures needed for germination of selected agricultural crops.

Agronomic Crop	Minimum Soil Temperature at Planting
Spring wheat	37°F
Spring barley	40°F
Rye	41°F
Oats	43°F
Alfalfa	45°F
Spring canola	50°F
Sugarbeet	50°F
Field corn	55°F
Soybean	59°F
Millet	60°F
Sorghum	65°F

Chart from Extension NebGuide "Soil Temperature: A Guide for Planting Agronomic and Horticulture Crops in Nebraska" (G2122)

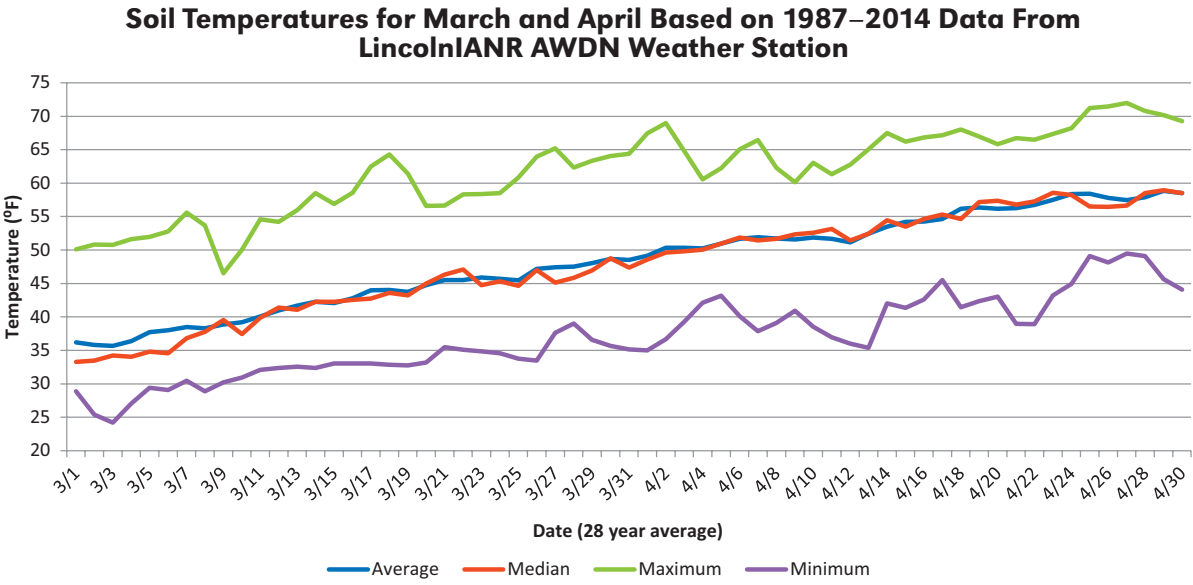


Figure 1. Daily average soil temperatures from the LincolnIANR AWDN weather station from 1987–2014 for March and April. Measurements are taken under bare soil at a depth of 10cm or 4 inches. Data from the High Plains Regional Climate Center website www.hprcc.unl.edu

data from the LincolnIANR Automated Weather Data Network (AWDN) station in Lincoln during the months of March and April from 1987 to 2014 (Figure 1).

Soil temperatures are strongly correlated to air temperature, so wide temperature swings can create soil temperatures that mimic a roller coaster ride; however, this graph can help analyze the probability of having adequate soil temperatures at the planned planting date.

For example, the target soil temperature for corn germina-

tion is 55°F and the average soil temperature at this site reaches this target around the 18th of April. Consequently, the minimum soil temperature for this time of the month is around 40°F, so that illustrates the risk of planting by the calendar instead of planting by the conditions.

Monitoring soil temperature on the farm or at the nearest weather station will provide useful information for planning planting dates. The soil temperature for a station near you can be found at the CropWatch website at <http://cropwatch.unl.edu/cropwatchsoiltemperature>. This

website provides a seven-day running average soil temperature, normal temperature, departure from normal and high/low soil temperatures.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nebraska Extension NebGuide "Soil Temperature: A Guide for Planting Agronomic and Horticulture Crops in Nebraska," (G2122) available at the Extension office and online at www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g2122.pdf

2015 Vegetable All America Selections



Photos: All-America Selections

Cucumber Parisian Gherkin

Parisian Gherkin cucumber is an excellent mini or gherkin pickling cucumber which can be picked either at the midget size or small pickle stage and processed. The crisp cucumbers have a sweet flavor and process into pickles well. The semi vining plants can be planted in the garden or staked patio containers. This cucumber is very easy to grow and is a disease resistant variety that is well adapted to container gardens or raised beds.

Tomato Chef's Choice Pink

Chef's Choice Pink tomato plants have very large yields of 12–14 ounce pink beefsteak tomatoes. The prefect acid to



sugar balance in this tomato make it a must for any home chef. Consider stewing or canning these beautiful tomatoes. The plants have indeterminate growth habit and good disease resistance.



Pepper Hot Sunset

For banana or wax pepper lovers who desire a prolific and earlier harvest of delicious and spicy fruits, Hot Sunset is for

you. Large, healthy, vigorous plants are disease-free and produce tasty and attractive fruits all season long. The AAS Trial judges noted what a great taste this thick-walled pepper has, not like other hot peppers where all you get is heat.



Pepper Sweet Sunset

Sweet Sunset is a compact banana pepper that is vigorous and sets a large amount of fruit. This high yielding variety produces attractive colorful tasty peppers that are great fresh or canned. The compact upright plants do not require staking and can be grown in a container. This high-yielding plant produces early, often and late into the season.

Source: All America Selections
www.all-americaselections.org



GARDEN GUIDE

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate

Buy a notebook and use it to keep all your gardening information. List what you plant in the garden. Include the name of seed companies, plant name, variety, planting date, and harvest date. During the growing season keep notes on how well the plant does. If the variety is susceptible to disease, record what was used to treat any problems. All this information will be helpful in planning future gardens.

Complete the pruning of shrubs, ornamental trees before growth starts, except for spring flowering shrubs. Prune those which bloom in spring as soon as they finish flowering.

If you have not done it already, check stored tools and outdoor furniture for signs of rust. Remove any surface rust with steel wool and paint with rust preventing paint.

Start transplants indoors of tomatoes, peppers and eggplant.

Turn the compost pile.

Do not plow your garden when the soil is wet. It will form clods which are difficult to break up and interfere with cultivation during the summer.

Pick a permanent spot for herbs in the garden.

Place birdhouses built this winter outdoors this month. Birds will begin looking for nesting sites soon.

Rake the lawn to remove leaves and twigs.

Some annuals, such as verbenas, snapdragons and petunias, take 70–90 days to bloom. They should be started indoors in early spring.

Buy some new perennials for your flower border. Spring is a good time to renew and add variety to your landscape.

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

Outwitting Wildlife at Bird Feeders – Part II

Soni Cochran

Extension Associate

There are few things more frustrating to people who feed birds than pest animals taking advantage of the buffet we've set out. These unwanted guests can damage your feeders, eat and waste seed and could possibly even damage or invade your home. Last month, we gave some general recommendations on preventing nuisance wildlife at feeders. This article covers strategies to deter some of the pests commonly found at feeders in our area.

Nuisance Birds

European starlings, pigeons and house sparrows are considered pests at feeders. Grackles can also become pests, but they migrate so they won't be a problem during winter. All of these birds can empty your feeders in a very short time.

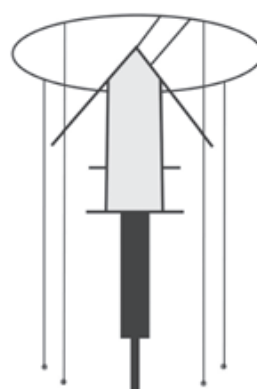
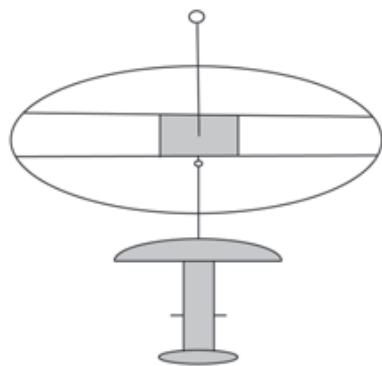
If you are having problems, use feeders that deter squirrels. These will also deter larger birds. You can also use feeders with small, unstable perches or require birds to cling or hang upside down.

House sparrows don't like objects above their heads. The Magic Halo is a 30-inch wire hoop invented by UNL Professor, Dr. Ron Johnson, Emeritus. For more information on this device, see Extension publication, "Selective Bird Feeding: Detering Nuisance Wildlife from Bird Feeders" (EC1783).

If you're having problems with nuisance birds, try changing your feed. Avoid mixes. Stick with hard-shelled seeds like sunflower and safflower. Never toss bread, cereal, pastry, popped corn or any other food scraps out for wildlife. These foods are magnets for starlings and can attract large flocks.

Other Animals

Pick up pet food! Many types of wildlife enjoy a meal of pet food left



Illustrations by Stephen M. Vantassel

Photo by Soni Cochran

The Magic Halo, a 30-inch wire hoop (at left), will deter up to 86 percent of house sparrows from approaching a bird feeder. With monofilament lines or then wires draped from the wire hoop (at right), the rate increases to 99 percent reduction.

outside. I can't tell you how many times people call the Extension office surprised to see raccoons, skunks and opossums enjoying food left out for the family dog or cat. Give your pet 10–30 minutes to eat and then pick up the dish of food. Be sure to pick up any food before sunset to deter nocturnal mammals. By deterring these wildlife visitors, you'll also be protecting your pest from exposure to parasites and diseases carried by some wildlife.

Squirrels: These nimble animals will try all sorts of ways to get to feeders you've placed out of their reach. Their antics are fun to watch until they cause damage to feeders, your seed budget and even your property if given a chance. Strategic placement of feeders, using squirrel baffles and squirrel-resistant feeders will help.

Raccoons: One of the simplest ways to stop raccoon raiding is to break their feeding cycle by removing seed for a week or so. You could start by removing seed before sunset in case the masked marauders only come at night, then put the feeders back in the day time. Otherwise, you can try to use a baffle on your feeders or hang your feeder from a thin wire. Raccoons have also been known to shake food out from feeders.

Ground-feeders like Mice, Voles, Opossums and Skunks:

Reduce the amount of seed reaching the ground by using trays suspended from feeders. Clean up waste seed on the ground. Make sure you are storing your bird seed and suet securely. I store my birdseed outdoors in a metal trash can with a very secure, tight-fitting lid. When filling your bird feeders, be careful not to spill the seed next to your home so you don't attract rodents.

Deer: Yes, deer are attracted to many types of bird feed. If you are having problems with deer, make sure your feeders are at least 6 feet high. Deer may try to butt the feeder or pole to knock the seed out. You can use a rigid fence around the feeder pole that is at least 3 feet from the pole and 4 feet high or try removing



Many wildlife will take advantage of bird feeders. Pictured is an opossum eating bird seed in a tray-like bird feeder.

the feeder at night.

Cats: Both domestic and feral cats will try to ambush birds at your feeders. Place your feeders away from shrubs and landscaping where they can hide. Feeders should be placed high off the ground. Keep cats indoors and work with wildlife officials and rescue groups to control feral cats.

Dogs: Dogs don't usually prey on birds but they may chase them. Make sure you place any suet out of your dog's reach.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nebraska Extension publication "Selective Bird Feeding: Detering Nuisance Wildlife from Bird Feeders" (EC1783) available at the Extension office and online at <http://lanaster.unl.edu/pest/birds.shtml>

It is Important to Provide Water for Birds

Like all animals, birds need water to survive. Most birds drink water every day. In winter, you may see them gathering near puddles created by snowmelt. Birds also need to use water for bathing, cleaning feathers and removing parasites. A bird bath

will even bring birds to your yard that don't eat seeds and wouldn't visit your feeders.

Bird baths can be purchased or made. During winter, use a heater especially designed for bird baths to keep the water from freezing.



HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

Jill White

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Jill White as winner of March's "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

A 4-H volunteer for six years, Jill is one of four superintendents in the 4-H Clothing areas at the Lancaster County Super Fair and helps teach at 4-H sewing workshops. She also helps the Super Shamrocks 4-H club with their sewing projects, their club booth at Kiwanis Karnival, and staffing a shift at the 4-H food booth during the Super Fair.

"I enjoy working with youth, helping them learn new skills and seeing their achievements at the county fair," says Jill. "These are life skills our youth gain in 4-H that benefit them for their future. I get a sense of pride in seeing youth gain sewing skills, their creativeness and how they progress over the years. All the experiences, skills and friendships gained from 4-H are lifetime treasures. I highly recommend 4-H. It's never too late to join!"

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



4-H/FFA Fair Books Will Be Mailed March 9

The Lancaster County 4-H & FFA Fair Book contains entry information for 4-H & FFA members exhibiting in 4-H/FFA. Fair Books are scheduled to be mailed on March 9 to all 4-H & FFA families who have enrolled through "4-H Online." The Fair Book will also be available at the Extension office and online at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Fair>.

The Lancaster County Super Fair will be Thursday, July 30–Saturday, Aug. 8 (4-H/FFA Exhibits & Events July 30–Aug. 2; 4-H Horse Show July 26–Aug. 2).

Spring Rabbit Show

Saturday, March 21, 9 a.m.

Registrations 7:30–8:30 a.m.

**Lancaster Event Center – Exhibit Hall
84th & Havelock, Lincoln**

**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

**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.

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 in carriers with leak-proof bottoms.

**For more information, call Bob at
402-525-8263 or Marty at 402-441-7180**

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

4-H Member Online Enrollment

Nebraska 4-H has introduced a new online enrollment system, called "4-H Online." Paper enrollment is no longer an option. Members and fair projects may be updated through June 15. The website to enroll is <https://ne.4honline.com>. The process is easy and only takes a few minutes per member. **The health information is optional!**

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

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

4-H Volunteers Enrollment Forms

For now, volunteers and leaders must still enroll using the form at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/club/4henrollformleader.pdf> by June 15. Mail or bring to the Extension office.

4-H Jammie Workshop, March 28

4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to practice their basic sewing skills and make jammie bottoms at the "Jammie Jamboree" sewing workshop on Saturday, March 28, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. No cost to attend. Adults are encouraged to attend to help 4-H'ers. Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc.), simple pull-on pajama bottom pattern, pre-washed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaids), elastic as recommended by pattern and matching thread. Sign up by March 26 by calling 402-441-7180.

Furniture Painting Workshop, April 18

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

New Livestock Quality Assurance Requirements

New this year, Quality Assurance training is NOT required for the Lancaster County Super Fair. ONLY 4-H/FFA members showing market beef, market sheep, market swine, meat and dairy goats, dairy cattle, poultry and rabbits at State Fair or the Ak-Sar-Ben 4-H Stock Show must complete the Quality Assurance training. Horse exhibitors and livestock exhibitors showing only breeding animals do not have to complete it. The Quality Assurance certification is online and must be done by June 15. This year, there is a \$5 per youth charge. Instructions are online at <http://4h.unl.edu/qualityassurance>. If you have any questions, contact Cole at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

4-H Clubs Needed to Help Provide Booths at Kiwanis Karnival, April 10

The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event, is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Friday, April 10, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 25th St., Lincoln (**note change from a Saturday to Friday**). The Karnival features carnival type games for the kids, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun and fellowship. Lincoln Center Kiwanis has sponsored this event for over 50 years — providing prizes and snacks. 4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity for clubs. If your 4-H club or family would like to have a booth or for more information, call Lorene at 402-441-7180. Come join the fun!

Shooting Sports Club Accepting Members

Lincoln Shooting Stars 4-H Club is open to youth ages 8–18. Regular club meetings are held Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Game & Parks Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44th St., Lincoln. The club offers BB-gun, air rifle and pistol, small bore rifle and pistol, shotgun, muzzleloader, hunting and archery. For more information, go to <https://lincolnishootingstars.wordpress.com> or call Rachel Carlson at: 402-413-9876.

4-H Speech & PSA

4-H Speech & PSA Contests are open to all 4-H'ers — need not be enrolled in a specific project. Youth may choose to participate in either or both the Speech and PSA contests. For guidelines, and examples, go to <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Contest/speech.shtml>. If you have questions, contact Cole Meador at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

PSA Contest, Due March 16

In the Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest, 4-H'ers submit a 60 second "radio commercial" promoting 4-H. Submit a PSA via CD to the extension office by Monday, March 16. 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. The 2015 PSA theme is "4-H Grows..." Please use .wav or .mp3 audio formats when recording your PSA.

Speech Contest, March 22

The 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, March 22 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Registration 1–1:30 p.m., contest begins at 1:30 p.m. Register by March 16 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing cmeador2@unl.edu with your name, speech title, age division.

Deadline to Join Pig Club is March 15

The Pick-A-Pig 4-H club is accepting new members for anyone who wants to learn about pork production and show a pig at the Super Fair. Open to all city and rural youth ages 8–18. For more information, contact Harry Muhlbach at 402-430-7304. Deadline to join is March 15.

Clover College Instructors Needed

4-H Clover College is four days of fun-filled, hands-on workshops for youth ages 6 and up, June 16–19 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. If you have workshop ideas, or would like to teach a workshop or volunteer to help, please contact Tracy at 402-441-7180 or tanderson14@unl.edu.



Achievement Celebration

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County and 4-H Council presented the Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Celebration on Feb. 10. 4-H'ers, 4-H clubs and 4-H leaders were recognized for their 2014 achievements. Lancaster County 4-H congratulates all 4-H youth who commit themselves to excellence! We also thank all 4-H volunteers who donate their time and talents to youth! For a complete list of award, scholarship and pin recipients (as well as additional photos) go to <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h>.

NEBRASKA DIAMOND CLOVER

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

LEVEL 1 – AMETHYST: Samuel Babcock, Clare Bauman, Jonathan Cook, Aleyna Cuttlers, Monica Hanus, Alyson Gubbels, Grace Gordon, Ella Hendricksen, Cecilia Howell, Kylie Hansen, Lillian Johnson, Abigail Kreifels, Madelyn Kreifels, Delaney Meyer, Luke Nebel, Connor Nielsen, Claire Polk, Emily Rogers, John Rogers, Lauren Shafer, Claire Sobansky, Paul Sobansky, Claire Wackel

LEVEL 2 – AQUAMARINE: Steven Aden, Mindy Bartels, Toby Becker, John Boesen, Chloe Bohaty, Ellie Bunz, Kali Burnham, Thomas Cook, Sarah Cunningham, Celia Faith, Sydney Gubbels, Rose Jaros, Grant Johnson, Gregory Johnson, Sara Kreikemeier, Sarah Logan, Megan Neal, Riley Peterson, Sophie Polk, Isaac Rogers, Eliese Kay Schwinck, Jackson Stander, Jay Stander, Drake Von Seggern

LEVEL 3 – RUBY: Nathan Becker, Greta Nebel, Abbie Russman, Anna Sump, John Sump, David Swotek, John Swotek

LEVEL 4 – SAPPHIRE: Eliana Babcock, Kayla Humphrey, Jared Nielsen, Lucy Polk, Addison Wanser

LEVEL 5 – EMERALD: Abigail Babcock, Valerie Gabel, Brooke Kreikemeier, Emma Lanik, Caleb Nielsen, Alyssa Zimmer

4-H CLUBS OF EXCELLENCE

Nebraska 4-H Clubs of Excellence have met criteria outlined by the State 4-H office.

4-H Explorers, Denim n' Dust, Explorers, Fantastic 4, Fusion 4-H'ers, Go Go Goat Getters, Joe's Clover Knights, Pick-A-Pig, Rabbits R Us, Rock Creek Ranchers, Rock n' Riders, Shamtastic Clovers, Super Shamrocks

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

LANCASTER COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL — \$750: Ivy Dearthmont, Madeline Gabel, Victoria Garza, Anne Greff, Austin Hurt, Bailey Johnson, Kylee Plager, Jacob Pickrel, Paige Roach, Renae Sieck, Trevor Spath, Max Wanser

4-H TEEN COUNCIL – \$250: Madeline Gabel, Jacob Pickrel, Kylee Plager, Renae Sieck, Max Wanser

LINCOLN CENTER KIWANIS – \$1,000: Renae Sieck



This year, Lancaster County 4-H Council increased the number and amount of its college scholarships from six \$500 to twelve \$750 scholarships!

CAREER PORTFOLIOS

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

NOMINATED TO REPRESENT LANCASTER COUNTY AT DISTRICT COMPETITION

Kayla Humphrey: Consumer & Family Science

Abigail Babcock: Consumer & Family Science

Lucy Polk: Animal Science

ALSO COMPLETED CAREER PORTFOLIOS

Ellie Babcock, Sophie Polk



4-H MERITORIOUS SERVICE



Roger Bell (center) assists with livestock and horse judging teams competing at state and national contests. He started the Livestock Judging Contest at the Lancaster County Super Fair.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

(Formerly I Dare You Award) Awarded on behalf of the American Youth Foundation to youth ages 15–18 who strive to achieve their personal best and make a positive difference in their schools, youth groups, 4-H clubs and communities.

Austin Hurt, Sheridan Swotek

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

Presented to 4-H'ers who have completed the most hours of community service.

AGE 14 AND OVER: Morgan Bodfield, Valerie Gabel, Victoria Garza, Sophie Gengenbach, Bailee Gunnerson, Austin Hurt, Brooke Kreikemeier, Emma Lanik, Kylee Plager, Paige Roach, Sheridan Swotek, Addison Wanser, Max Wanser

AGE 8–13: Sophia Bonifant, Thomas Cook, Nathan Gabel, Elizabeth Garza, Kyle Hurt, John Swotek, Bethany Wachter, Kamryn Wanser, Alyssa Zimmer



Age 14 and over



Age 8–13

OUTSTANDING 4-H MEMBERS

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



Paige Roach, Max Wanser, Kylee Plager

2014 Outstanding 4-H Club Awards

The Lincoln Center Kiwanis Club presents Outstanding 4-H Club Awards to the top 4-H clubs participating in the Lancaster County Super Fair. Clubs receive points based on all members' total county fair exhibit and contest placings. The following clubs were also recognized at a recent Lincoln Center Kiwanis club meeting.



THE FUSION 4-HERS 4-H Club of Lincoln is winner of Category I (5–10 members) — and winner of the Wayne C. Farmer trophy as overall Outstanding 4-H Club for the year. The club's seven members were enrolled in approximately 13 project areas and entered 134 total exhibits at the fair. This is the club's second year as an outstanding club and first year as overall. Marsha Prior is club leader and Analisa Peterson is assistant leader.



HAPPY GO LUCKY 4-H Club of rural Lincoln is winner of Category II (11–14 members). The club's 11 members were enrolled in approximately 10 projects and entered 66 total exhibits at the fair. Over the years, the club has been an outstanding club in Category III multiple times. This is their first year winning Category II. Scott Heinrich is the club leader and there are 12 assistant or project leaders.



SOUTH PRAIRIE WRANGLERS 4-H Club of the Hickman area is winner of Category III (15 or more members). The club's 73 members were enrolled in over 30 projects and entered more than 300 total exhibits at the fair. This is their seventh year as an outstanding club. Andy Dearthmont is club leader and there are seven assistant or project leaders.



EXTENSION CALENDAR

All events will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center,
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, unless otherwise noted.

February FEBRUARY IS NEBRASKA 4-H MONTH

- 21 4-H Pillow Party Sewing Workshop 9 a.m.
21 4-H Paws-On Dog Workshop, Greater Lincoln Obedience Club Building,
5740 Johanna Road 9 a.m.–3 p.m.

March

- 1 Preference Given to 4-H Council Camp Scholarship Applications
Submitted to Extension by this Date
1 R.B. Warren 4-H Horse Educational (\$500) and Grand Island Saddle Club
Scholarships (\$1,000) Entries Due
1 Deadline for Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards (\$500)
3 4-H Council Meeting 7 p.m.
5 "Home Hazards, Health and Human Relationships" Seminar,
UNL East Campus Union – Great Plains Room 1–3 p.m.
8 4-H Teen Council Meeting 3 p.m.
10 Guardian/Conservator Training 1:30–4:30 p.m.
12 Co-Parenting for Successful Kids Class 12:30–4 p.m.
13 Extension Board Meeting 8 a.m.
13 AARP Driver Safety Program 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
14 4-H Horse Stampede, UNL East Campus - Animal Science Building
16 4-H Horse VIPS Committee Meeting 6:30 p.m.
16 4-H Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest CDs Due/Preregister for
Speech Contest
19 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training 9 a.m.
21 "A Window of Opportunity" Conference for Early Childhood
Professionals 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
21 4-H Spring Rabbit Show, Lancaster Event Center, Exhibit Hall 9 a.m.
22 4-H Speech Contest 1 p.m. registration/1:30 p.m. contest
28 4-H Jammie Jamboree Sewing Workshop 9 a.m.

"My Town, Lancaster County" Rural Design Workshop, March 19–21

The small towns of Lancaster County will be participating in a three-day workshop, "My Town, Lancaster County," on March 19–21. The project is led by the Lancaster County Planning Department, with the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners and Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County as partners.

The workshops will bring together the small towns of Lancaster County to share information and ideas, discuss visions of the future, plan for future projects and activities, and energize residents who are interested in bringing increased vitality to their communities. At this time the communities of Bennet, Denton, Firth, Hallam, Hickman, Malcolm, Panama, Roca, Sprague and Waverly have signed on to participate.

My Town, Lancaster County, is made possible through an award from the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design (CIRD), a project of the National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, USDA and the Orton Family Foundation.

As a first step, residents of the small towns are being asked to share images of what they love about their town and what they would like to change. Submit photos to the "My Town, Lancaster County" website (<http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mytown>), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/mytownlanaster) or email



mytown@lanaster.ne.gov. The images will be used by the workshop teams to develop preliminary goals to address during the workshop.

"My Town, Lancaster County" kicks off with a public presentation by Ed McMahon held Thursday, March 19 at 5:30 p.m. at the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center (attached to the Nebraska Union on UNL City Campus). McMahon, from the Urban Land Institutes, is a nationally known expert in the areas of community development and economic opportunity. A social hour with light refreshments, sponsored by the Nebraska Chapter of the American Planning Association, will follow the presentation to give attendees an opportunity to speak with McMahon.

Workshop teams representing Lancaster County's small towns will spend March 20 and 21 attending panel discussions, working on goals specific to their communities and learning about what has been successful in other rural Nebraska towns.

CIRD workshops bring together local leaders, non-profits, community organizations and citizens; and a team of specialists in design, planning, community and economic development to address challenges identified by the host communities.

"My Town, Lancaster County," will look at the specific opportunities and challenges faced by small communities in proximity to a larger city. The workshop will address how these towns can build on their assets and maintain their unique identities, while still taking advantage of the opportunities Lincoln provides.

The public is also invited to join a final presentation of what each town has developed throughout the workshop. This open house will be held Saturday, March 21, 1:30 p.m. at the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, 11700 SW 100th St., 2-1/2 miles south of Denton.

For more information about the workshops, contact Sara Hartzell at 402-441-6371 or shartzell@lincoln.ne.gov.

EXTENSION NEWS

Two AmeriCorps Members Help Nutrition Education Program



AmeriCorps is a civil society program supported by the United States federal government, foundations, corporations and other donors engaging adults in intensive community service work with the goal of "helping others and meeting critical needs in the community." ExtensionCorps, an AmeriCorps program, is a partnership between University of Nebraska–Lincoln's Southeast Research & Extension Center, ServeNebraska and AmeriCorps. Two AmeriCorps members, Hannah Dittmar (pictured left) and Liz Kneifl (right), were recently placed at Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County to work part-time with the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) for several months.

Liz, from Hartington, Neb., graduated from UNL in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in psychology and worked for a year before deciding to change career paths. She is currently a student in the University's Didactic Program in Dietetics and plans to become a registered dietitian. Liz has been a part of the NEP staff since October. She assists with nutrition programming at elementary schools and coordinates the middle school enrichment program. She says, "Becoming an AmeriCorps worker for the Nutrition Education Program in Lancaster County has given me invaluable experiences."

Hannah, from Gretna, Neb., is a senior at UNL majoring in Nutrition, Health and Exercise Science with a minor in Psychology. Hannah joined the NEP staff in January and she will be working in both Lincoln and Fremont. In Fremont, she will assist Extension Assistant Kathy Kneifl with planning and implementing the 5-4-3-2-1Go! and KidQuest programs for youth. In the summer, she will be helping with community gardens. When not in Fremont, she will work in Lincoln assisting with youth nutrition programs and Clover College.



Watch Chicks Hatch Online with EGG Cam!

<http://go.unl.edu/eggcam>

Embryology resources include incubation, candling and more!

Chicks are due to hatch Feb. 24/25 and April 28/29.



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