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EXTENSION

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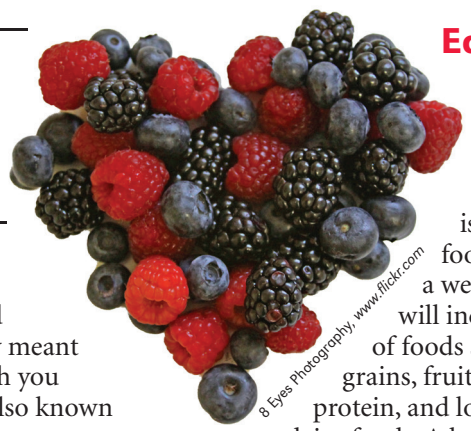
NEBRASKA EXTENSION IN LANCASTER COUNTY

February 2016

Tips to Keep Your Heart Healthy

February is Heart Health Month

Jessica Meuleners, RD, LMNT
Reviewed by Alice Henneman, MS, RD and Kristen Houska, MS



8 Eyes Photography, www.flickr.com

Valentine's Day is known for its roses, big red hearts and vibrant pink and purple colors. It is a holiday meant to show someone how much you care for them. February is also known as heart month and what better way to spread the love than with a healthy heart?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease is the leading cause of death in America. The good news is many of the risks associated with heart disease are preventable. Only a few risk factors such as age, gender and family history cannot be controlled. Healthy food choices and an active lifestyle are two things you can control and will have a huge impact on your heart's health. So, what are some things you can do to keep your heart healthy?

Eat a Variety of Foods

One of the keys to a healthy heart is making smart food choices. Eating a well-balanced diet will include a variety of foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and low fat or fat free dairy foods. A healthy variety of these foods will give your body the energy and nutrients it needs throughout the day.

Know Your Fats

Another key to a healthy heart is incorporating healthy fats into your diet. This means eating foods low in saturated and trans fats and eating foods high in unsaturated fats.

Saturated fats are usually solid at room temperature and found in animal proteins and dairy foods such as cheese, whole milk, butter and ice cream. Trans fats are commonly found in vegetable oils that go through an industrial process to make the oils more solid in form. Another name for trans fat is "partially hydrogenated oil" and sources include margarine, fried foods and baked goods. Research shows both saturated and trans fat can raise your LDL — or "bad" — cholesterol. A high LDL cholesterol level is associated with a higher risk of heart disease.

Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat are the two sources of unsaturated fats. They tend to be liquid at room temperature. You can find unsaturated fat most commonly in fish such as salmon, avocados, nuts and vegetable oils such as olive oil, peanut oil and safflower oil. Both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat have been shown to help improve cholesterol levels when they replace trans fat in the diet.

Research also has shown a particular type of polyunsaturated fat — omega-3 fatty acids — has positive benefits when it comes to heart health. They have been shown to reduce risk of heart disease by lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Seafood such as salmon and tuna is one of the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Walnuts, canola oil and soybean oils are other good food sources.

Get Label Savvy

Learning how to read the food label can help you make heart healthy choices, especially when it comes to fats. On the next page are some tips to help you get the most out of the Nutrition Facts Label.

Remember the information on the label is based on 2,000 calories per day. You may need to consume more or less than 2,000 calories per day depending on your age, gender and physical activity level.

Physical Activity Matters

Physical activity can play an important role in keeping your heart healthy. Regular, moderate physical activity (30–60 minutes, most days of the week) can help control blood pressure, manage weight, manage stress, help you sleep better and help you feel good by giving you more energy throughout the day. If you are not currently active, it is recommended you see your doctor before starting any type of physical activity.

For a quick, easy and heart healthy recipe, check out this Nebraska Nutrition Education Program's (NEP) mango tango salsa. It is an easy way to add fruits, vegetables and protein to your diet. To add an extra heart healthy punch, top your favorite white fish with the mango tango salsa. For more budget-friendly recipes, visit *http://food.unl.edu/nep*.

MANGO TANGO BLACK BEAN SALSA

(16 Servings)

1 mango
1/4 cup onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped
1 can (15 ounce) black beans, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons lime juice
1 can (7 ounce) whole kernel corn with peppers, drained
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

Craig Chandler, UNL University Communications

1. Wash and peel the mango, then cut in half length-wise. Throw away the seed. Cut into 3/4-inch cubes.
2. In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well.
3. Refrigerate until ready to use.
4. Serve with tortilla chips.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: Calories 30, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 250mg (11% DV), Total Carbohydrate 7g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (7% DV), Sugars 3g, Protein 1g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

Source: Nebraska Extension Nutrition Education Program, The Cook's Helper, 2nd Edition

Resistance Band Workouts

Resistance band workouts can be a fun and low-cost way to do strengthening and flexibility exercises. Pictured is a pec fly. To see examples of 10 more resistance band exercises, go to *http://lancaster.unl.edu/nep/resources.shtml* for a "Resistance Band Workout" handout and video (hosted on the UNL Extension YouTube channel) developed by Nebraska Extension and Nutrition Education Program staff. Complete all movements at a slow, steady pace. These resistance exercises are recommended to be done with 8–12 repetitions per exercise, for two sets, twice per week.

Karen Wedding, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County

Pec Fly with Resistance Band

- Bring your arms in front of you to shoulder height, palms facing in.
- Move your arms wide to the side then back in front of you.
- Squeeze your elbows together when they are in front of you.

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Get the Most Out of the Nutrition Facts Label

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container about 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250 — Calories from Fat 110

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Proteins 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat		Less than	20g
25g			
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g

For educational purposes only. This label does not meet the labeling requirements described in 21 CFR 101.9.

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

1 Serving Size
This section is the basis for determining number of calories, amount of each nutrient and %DVs of the food. Use it to compare a serving size to how much you actually eat. Serving sizes are given in familiar units, such as cups or pieces, followed by the metric amount, e.g., number of grams.

2 Amount of Calories
If you want to manage your weight (lose, gain or maintain), this section is especially helpful. The amount of calories is listed on the left side. The right side shows how many calories in one serving come from fat. In this example, there are 250 calories, 110 of which come from fat. The key is to balance how many calories you eat with how many calories your body uses. **Tip:** *Remember that a product that's fat-free isn't necessarily calorie-free.*

3 Limit these Nutrients
Eating too much total fat (including saturated fat and trans fat), cholesterol or sodium may increase your risk of certain chronic diseases, such as heart disease, some cancers or high blood pressure. The goal is to stay below 100%DV for each of these nutrients per day.

4 Get Enough of these Nutrients
Americans often don't get enough dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin, calcium and iron in their diets. Eating enough of these nutrients may improve your health and help reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions.

5 Percent (%) Daily Value
This section tells you whether the nutrients (total fat, sodium, dietary fiber, etc.) in one serving of food contribute a little or a lot to your total daily diet.

The %DVs are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Each listed nutrient is based on 100% of the recommended amounts for that nutrient. For example, 18% for total fat means that one serving furnishes 18% of the total amount of fat you could eat in a day and stay within public health recommendations. Use the Quick Guide to Percent DV (%DV): 5%DV or less is low and 20%DV or more is high.

6 Footnote with Daily Values (DVs)
The footnote provides information about the DVs for important nutrients, including fats, sodium and fiber. The DVs are listed for people who eat 2,000 or 2,500 calories each day.

The amounts for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium are maximum amounts. That means you should try to stay below the amounts listed.

See RED on Valentine's Day

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN
Extension Educator

See "red" on Valentine's Day and throughout the year. Red fruits and vegetables contain many health-promoting phytochemicals including lycopene and anthocyanins. This color group may help promote:

- A healthy heart
- A lower risk of some cancers
- Memory health
- Urinary tract health

Red fruits and vegetables include: tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, pizza sauce, tomato juice, red peppers, red onions, beets, red cabbage, kidney beans, apples, pink grapefruit, red grapes, strawberries, cherries, watermelon, raspberries, cranberries and pomegranates.

Some **"red"** ideas for Valentine's Day (or any day!) include:

♥ Heart-shaped pizza. Shape pizza dough into a heart. Or, use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to make individual hearts from pizza dough. Spread with your favorite tomato sauce. Add your choice of toppings.

Kelsey R., *www.flickr.com*

♥ Pasta with tomato sauce. For added fun, serve heart-shaped pasta — check with stores offering specialty pasta shapes or order some online. Check delivery time if you order online.

♥ Add a few of those tiny red hot cinnamon heart candies to a popcorn snack.

♥ Oatmeal topped with a heart shape, made with dried cranberries or dried cherries.

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Don't Supersize Me! Five Effective Ways to Support Infants and Children to Develop Healthy Eating Habits

Jaci Foged
Extension Educator


USDA SNAP-Ed Photo Gallery

I have fond memories of traveling to grandma's house and enjoying her extravagant meals which she prepared for us whenever we came to visit. I remember her suggesting I should have "more" and me responding to her that she didn't need to supersize her meals for me. I was full (most likely overly full). The point is, my grandma was supersizing me – over feeding me, encouraging me in fact to eat more than I needed and all in one sitting.

How do adults unknowingly overfeed children? Research has shown adults are concerned if the child is eating enough, and a straightforward approach to alleviate this concern is to pressure children to eat.

"Do you need a snack?"

"Can I get you another helping?"

"Take something for the road!"

Research has shown children up to five years of age can self-regulate their energy intake, or know when they are hungry and full. Why then, do we feel compelled to insist children eat everything on their plate? Why do we mandate children eat all of their green beans and drink all of their milk? By requiring children meet these conditions for eating (and more), adults are actually teaching children to follow our cues for being full rather than their own.

Parents can be a major force in shaping children's eating behaviors and preventing obesity, however; parents are concerned if the child is eating enough or eating healthy foods (like fruits or vegetables). Therefore, a straightforward approach for well-intentioned parents like us is to pressure children to eat more food or healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables. Have you said to your child, "If you eat all your veggies, you can have dessert?" Most of us have used food as a reward in an effort to get children to eat more fruits and vegetables. However, such controlling practices (such as pressuring children to eat or offering food as a reward) negatively impacts children's eating habits and is a risk factor for obesity.

So what should adult caregivers do to encourage children to develop healthy eating habits, without using pressure? Here are five effective ways to support infants and children to develop healthy eating habits.

Sit Down at a Table Together

Children are less likely to choke on a green bean (or anything for that matter) if they are sitting upright at a table. Children are also more likely to put food on their plate, which increases the chance they will actually try a new food when they see their friends, teachers or another adult with a particular food on their plate.

If you are a parent or child care professional you might not get another chance to sit down and relax, so don't miss out — this is your excuse to take a load off and enjoy a meal together!

Turn Off the Television

What is so important on the television that can't wait until after dinner? This is still the age of the DVR. If it is a children's show, it will play again tomorrow at the same time. If it is not a children's show, why are you watching it when your kids are in the room?

Television is jam packed with commercials that have my kids saying, "I want that!" "Mom, can we get those?" and "Seriously mom, I want THAT more than ANYTHING ELSE!" Plus, commercials about food make us hungry! It doesn't matter if we just ate — seeing commercials advertising food often leaves us feeling famished.

Simply Ask, "Would You or Are You...?"

Parents and professionals should focus on asking rather than telling when it comes to meal times. Rather than, "You need to try the asparagus" consider, "Would you like to try the asparagus?" Positive peer pressure occurs when a child tastes the food and then asks a friend to try it. "This asparagus is so fresh and crunchy, would you like to try it?"

As the meal time is winding down, you might say, "Boy my tummy is full, I don't think I could eat another bite." If children are still eating, you could say, "You ate all of your peaches. If you are hungry, you can have some more."

Research has shown when you use the terms hunger and fullness you are supporting children's internal cues. Just asking if they want more may override a child's internal signals. Since children can recognize their internal signals of hunger and fullness, it is important to support and cue them by asking if they are hungry when offering them more food.

Mealtimes are a good way to teach self-regulation of the food children are eating. Adults who force children to eat everything on their plates are contributing to childhood obesity.

Let Children Serve Themselves When Possible

Research shows children learn over time to take the right amount of food based on their internal cues for hunger and fullness. There are plenty of times for you to wait on your little ones hand and foot — the dinner table doesn't need to be one of those times.

A great way to practice with children serving themselves is to add kitchen items to the dramatic play area. This will give children an opportunity to balance trays of food and pour milk and tea.

For actual meal times, consider using or purchasing small serving bowls and a small pitcher for the milk. Items like measuring spoons and cups are also great to use to teach not only appropriate serving sizes but math at the same time!

It is perfectly OK to state children can have two chicken strips, or three brussel sprouts to start out with and more if they are still hungry. Sometimes children get overly excited about being able to take their own food, so I recommend stating a number before the bowl starts going around.

Serve milk last. It never fails no matter how careful kids are, milk inevitably spills — don't cry over it (or yell). Simply ask the little one to grab a towel or paper towels and clean up their mess. The littler ones may need some assistance at the end, but should still be given the opportunity to learn they need to clean-up their spills.

Child Care Professionals Should Communicate With Parents and Vice Versa

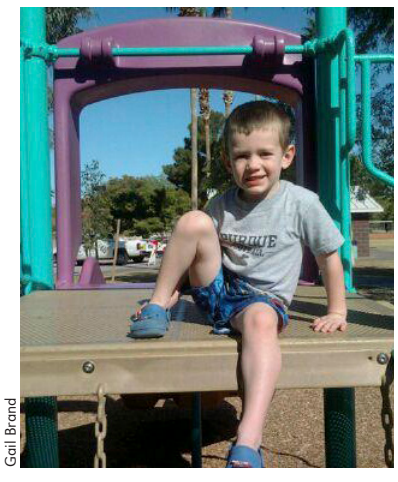
Over the years, I have found parents are amazed what their children eat when they are not at home. Most child care centers are set up for success with meal times — tiny chairs, child-sized cups, forks, spoons, pitchers, laminate or wood floor for spills — and expectations for clean-up from day one.

Parents and child care professionals should be in constant communication about meal times. Child care providers should mention if the child didn't eat anything and, in turn, parents should mention if it matters to them or not. Communication about food is a must.

Research has shown children will eat when they are hungry, so you do not need to pressure them to eat. I am not suggesting you withhold food. It should be made very clear to the child that lunch (or whatever meal you are currently eating) is all they get until snack which is served at a specific time. Communicate to family members and friends this is how you work meal times and ask for support before this comes about.

Activities to Increase Balance for Toddlers

Lisa Poppe
Extension Educator


Gail Brand

Does it seem like your toddler spends more time falling on the ground rather than walking? Kids can be experts at falling down. It doesn't matter if they are playing their favorite sport or just walking across the room, your kids learn about the wonders of gravity. Movement is a way children interact with their environment to discover and learn. Regardless of cultural or ability level, movement is essential for all children to engage in active play.

The development of motor skills is age-related not age-determined. Children of the same age likely will move differently from one another. Children's background, maturation, physical characteristics, ability to understand, cultural values, behaviors and special needs are factors that will influence their motor skill development. Motor skills do not just come as birthday presents. They must be nurtured, promoted and practiced. Teachers, caregivers and family members are key players to promote and nurture the development of motor skills in all young children.

These four fun exercises can help children improve their balance and learn to better master their bodies.

Stand on One Foot — Not every child will be able to master it immediately. If your child is having trouble with this, have them first stand on one foot while keeping the other on a stool. When the child improves, replace the stool with a ball. Be sure to do this with both legs. Always make a game out of it, see how long they can balance on each leg and then have them try it with their eyes closed.

Play Hopscotch — This is a classic activity. It's great for developing balance and kids love it.

Stand on a Balance Board — The boards can be difficult for anyone. You and your child can take turns trying to stay on the board for as long as you can.

Balance a Beanbag: On Your Head — Give your child a beanbag and have them keep the beanbag balanced while walking in different ways. Have your child walk around or dance to music with beanbags balanced.

The key to improving your child's balance or any other portion of their fitness, is to keep the exercises/games fun. The more they enjoy themselves, the more they'll want to do.

Try these two games to boost your child's physical development.

Leaping Lily Pads — You will need a wide open space with hula hoops. The children will become frogs looking for a home and the play space in front of them is a beautiful pond. Children will jump from the starting point to a lily pad of their choosing. Once they reach a lily pad, then they have to jump up and down on the lily pad five times to make it their home. Have them count out loud as they jump. Spread the hula hoops farther apart to increase the distance and amount of physical activity. Add flat pool noodles or other low obstacles for frogs to hop over. As their skills progress, have children crouch and jump like frogs. Join the play! Be a hungry bird that flies around the pond, trying to capture frogs. If you capture a frog simply say, "Gotcha!" and encourage them to return to play.

Bumble Bee Bop — You will need cones or flowers you can make out of construction paper or poster board. Children will fly (run, with arms stretched out) around the play space from flower to flower, saying, Buzzzzzzzzzzzz! Once they reach a flower, they have to stop, touch it and pretend to eat before flying off to find more flowers. Encourage the bees to fly at varying heights (low, medium, high), speeds (slow, fast) and pathways (straight, zigzag, curved). Join the play! Be a bug catcher — use a hula hoop to capture bees/butterflies. If you capture a bee/butterfly, simply say "Gotcha!" and encourage them to return to play.

Controlling Oystershell Scale in the Landscape

Sarah Browning
Extension Educator

Oystershell scale is a very tiny insect that usually goes unnoticed, but despite its size, this insect can cause significant damage in trees or shrubs.

Description

Scale insects are very unusual little critters, classified in the order Hemiptera, which also includes insects such as aphids, leafhoppers and cicadas. Insects in this group all have sucking mouthparts. There are over 8,000 species of scale insects, but oystershell scale is one of the most common in Nebraska landscapes. It's named for the look and shape of the female insect's hard, protective shell, which resembles a tiny, 1/16–1/8 inch, elongated oystershell.

Oystershell scale can be found on ash, maple, lilac, cotoneaster, dogwood, poplar, willow; fruits such as apple, pear, apricot, plum, raspberry, currant and grape; and many other hardwood trees and shrubs.

The insects are not obvious and can build up large numbers on trunks and twigs before being noticed. A heavy infestation will weaken the affected plant, causing it to drop leaves. Branch and plant death may result from large-scale infestations.

Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, *Bugwood.org*

A mature female oystershell scale flipped to show the eggs beneath (magnified).

Oystershell scale has one generation per year. A new group of insects hatch out in late May.

Newly hatched scale insects are called "crawlers" and they are mobile for only a short period. They are pale in color and smaller than a pinhead in size. Within a few hours after hatching crawlers find a suitable location, usually on a shaded area of the tree. They insert their mouthparts into the plant, begin to suck sap and soon molt, losing their legs. From this point on, most scales are immobile for the rest of their lives.

Within a week, they are covered with a waxy scale covering that provides protection from most insecticides. Insects overwinter as eggs under the mother's shell. Old scale shells will stay attached to the plant's branches for several years before falling off.

Control

To control these insects, prune out heavily infested stems during the dormant season. Pruning could be done anytime between now and late March.

Next, gently scrape away the dead parent scales from remaining branches by lightly rubbing them with a plastic dish pad. This will expose overwintering eggs, by removing their protective covering.

Spray twigs, branches and stems with horticultural oil in the spring before the buds expand, March to early April. Some plants may be sensitive to oil sprays, so make sure your plant is listed on the product label before spraying.

Spray plants again when insects are in the crawler stage, late May to early June. To determine when the crawler stage is emerging on your plants, place double-sided tape on several plant stems, and monitor for the presence of the tiny new insects stuck on the tape. Make a repeat application in 7–10 days.

Insecticides labeled for control include horticultural oil, insecticidal soap, acephate, bifenthrin or malathion. Read and follow all pesticide label directions.

Private Pesticide Applicator Certification

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 2016, 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, 2019 for those who certify this spring. You should receive your new license within three weeks.

Private pesticide applicators have four alternative methods to obtain initial certification and five alternative methods to recertify (Crop Production Clinics in January were a recertification option).

Traditional Training Sessions

Three private pesticide applicator training sessions have been scheduled in 2016 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road in Lincoln.

The dates and times are:

- Wednesday, Feb. 3, 9:30 a.m. –Noon
- Tuesday, March 8, 1–3:30 p.m.
- Thursday, March 10, 6:30–9 p.m.

Cost is $30 per person, collected at the training session.

Computer-Based Self-Study

Purchase a self-study disc (CD-ROM) for a new private license or to recertify an existing license following successful completion of the modules, quizzes and final test. Order a disc online at *http://marketplace.unl.edu/pested/private-pesticide-certification*. Cost is $60 per disc.

Self-Study Manual

A self-study manual and associated materials is also available. You are expected to read the chapters and complete a test 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 your test results and the correct answers to any questions you have answered incorrectly. Cost is $60 per manual.

Testing Option

Take a written (closed-book) examination given by the NDA to receive either a new license or recertify an existing license. Contact NDA, 402-471-2351, for testing dates. There is no training fee if you choose this option, but 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.

Successful Farmer Workshop Series

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County will be hosting a new educational workshop series for farmers, landowners and ag business professionals. The "Successful Farmer Series" will consist of workshops held every other Friday this winter. Each workshop will focus on multiple topics pertinent to the agricultural industry.

Schedule:

- Jan. 22 — Climate Outlook, Nitrogen Management, Soybean Disease Management
- Feb. 5 — Weed Identification/Management, Weed Resistance
- Feb. 19 — Climate Outlook, Nitrogen Application Timing, NRD Programs
- March 4 — Farm Economics, Rental Agreements, Farm Bill Programs
- March 18 — Climate Outlook, Attendee's Pick

The workshops will be 9–11:30 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. Participants have the option of registering for one workshop or registering for the entire series. Cost is $15 for the series or $5 per workshop.

Pre-registration is preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. List of presenters and registration form is online at *http://lancaster.unl.edu/ag/SuccessfulFarmerbrochure.pdf*. If questions or to reserve your spot by phone, call Tyler Williams or Karen Wedding at 402-441-7180.

Recordings of the workshops are being archived at *http://lancaster.unl.edu/ag*.

Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training

Commercial/noncommercial applicators are professionals who apply **restricted-use** pesticides for hire or compensation, on property that is not owned or rented by themselves or their employer. **Anyone** who applies pesticides to the property of another person, either **restricted- or general-use** products, for control of pests in lawns, landscapes, buildings or homes must also have a commercial pesticide applicators license. Public employees (those employed by a town, county, state) applying mosquito control pesticides whether restricted or general use, must also hold a commercial or noncommercial certification.

Initial and Recertification

To become licensed as a new commercial/noncommercial applicator, professionals must pass a written examination. All participants must be tested in the general standards category, then each chooses one or more additional categories for testing.

Once licensed in a category, professionals can maintain their commercial certification by attending a recertification training session or by passing a written examination.

Nebraska Extension offers training to prepare those seeking a pesticide applicators license for the first time, and recertification for those needing to keep their license active. The program cost for both initial and recertifying participants who register online is $60/person; for those registering by mail, fax or at the door, the cost is $70/person.

For statewide training locations, dates and categories, go to *http://pested.unl.edu.* For more information about the trainings in Lancaster County, call 402-441-7180.

Note: Due to time and space limitations, training will not be offered in all the categories on every day of training. Check the schedule listing when each category training will be offered.

Initial commercial certification training and testing sessions will be offered at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, on the following dates:

- Tuesday, Feb. 2
- Thursday, Feb. 25
- Thursday, April 14

General standards training begins at 8:30 a.m.

It is highly recommended you obtain and review the written study materials prior to attending. This will greatly improve your chances of passing the written examination. Study materials for all commercial categories must be purchased online at *http://pested.unl.edu* (click on "Classes & Study Materials").

Commercial recertification training sessions will be offered at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road on the following dates:

- Thursday, Feb. 4
- Tuesday, Feb. 23
- Thursday, March 24

The general standards session begins at 9 a.m.

NDA Licensing Procedures

Commercial applicators meeting the requirements for certification or re-certification will receive an invoice from the NDA for $90 for the license fee. When NDA receives the fee, the license will be issued.

For more information about pesticide licensing, go to *www.agr.ne.gov/pesticide.*

2016 Flower All America Selections

Geranium Brocade Cherry Night
Flower Award Winner

Striking foliage with large semi-double blooms of cherry pink make Geranium Brocade Cherry Night an AAS Winner this year. Gardeners looking for unique and distinct foliage to accent their containers and gardens will be delighted with Brocade Cherry Night. The bronze leaves with green margins are a remarkable and unusual addition to any design. Add the semi-double bright cherry blooms and this heat tolerant geranium is your winner for any planter, container or garden. Brocade Geraniums are relatively easy to care for and once established, have a low to medium moisture requirement. Plant in full to partial shade in well-drained soil. Water thoroughly at time of transplant. Maintain even moisture until roots are well established.

Geranium Brocade Fire
Flower Award Winner

Photos: All-America Selections

This 2016 AAS Winner, Geranium Brocade Fire, has unique bi-color foliage with a nonstop display of semi-double orange flowers that gives it an exceptional look in any garden. Geranium Brocade Fire is ideal for combination planters, landscapes and garden beds. This robust plant keeps its distinguishing foliage color and brilliant blooms throughout the hot summers then becomes a fantastic transitional flower going into fall. The orange flowers contrast with the striking foliage making this geranium a much appreciated new annual winner. Brocade Geraniums are relatively easy to care for and once established have a low to medium moisture requirement. Plant in full to partial shade in well-drained soil. Water thoroughly at time of transplant. Maintain even moisture until roots are well established.

Salvia Summer Jewel Lavender
Flower Award Winner

The unique flower color of Summer Jewel Lavender, dusty lavender purple, is a delight in the garden. It will be perfect for flower containers as well as a major attractor of pollinators including bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. An extra bonus is how much the goldfinch loves these flower seeds in the fall. The early blooming, stable, compact uniform growth, and continuous flowering of this plant are additional positives to this plant. This plant prefers full sun location. This plant is ideal for mass plantings and borders.

Source: All America Selection,
www.all-americaselections.org

GARDEN GUIDE
THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH
Mary Jane Frogge, 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 3 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.

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.

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 that 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.

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

Repair and paint window boxes, lawn furniture, tools and other items in preparation for outdoor gardening and recreational use.

February Critter Outlook

Soni Cochran
Extension Associate

Voles

Voles are mouse-like rodents found throughout Nebraska. These small, stocky rodents have small eyes and short tails. Voles don't have an easy life. Their life expectancy in the wild is usually not more than two months, with very few living longer than 16 months. It only takes 21 days for a vole to give birth and depending on vole species, have 5–10 litters a year with 3–5 young in a litter. Vole populations go through cycles and in North America, their populations' peak about every four years.

Voles can be found in towns, suburbs and rural areas. They are important prey for many wildlife including snakes, hawks, owls, coyotes, weasels, foxes, mink and badgers. Voles can cause problems by damaging lawns, gardens, tree plantings and other plants. Voles rarely come into buildings.

Do you have voles? This is the time of year when people start noticing trails in their lawns especially after snow melt. Voles do not hibernate. They create runways under the snow and these paths

Elizabeth Bush, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, *Bugwood.org*

Vole injury on juniper branches.

Stephen M. Vantassel, UNL Program Coordinator of Wildlife Damage Management

Vole trails in a lawn.

scar the lawn, but usually don't damage it. Voles do most of their damage in winter when there is a shortage of foods they prefer. They will eat the inner green layers of bark of trees and shrubs, feed on bulbs and roots, seeds and clip off new plants in spring.

Control: Voles don't always cause significant damage. Populations can increase quickly so monitoring is advised. Before you decide to take steps to control voles, consider the amount of damage in relationship to cost of damage and control.

Exclusion: Use woven-wire or 1/4 inch or smaller hardware cloth to protect flower beds, gardens, shrubs and trees from vole damage. Wire should be buried at least 2–3 inches. The fence only needs to be 12 inches high, but if you make your fence 18–24 inches high, you'll also keep out rabbits and ground squirrels! If you have pine voles, be sure to bury your fencing six inches deep.

Habitat Modification: High vole populations can't survive without food and protection from predators. Mow around trees and shrubs. Remove seed spilled from bird feeders. Habitat modification helps but won't prevent all damage from voles.

Traps: Trapping is an effective way to control voles. Set mouse snap-traps perpendicular to vole runways. You may not even need to use bait on your trap, but if you want, smear a little peanut butter with oatmeal on the trigger. Be sure to put a cover over the trap to keep other animals and birds from getting into the traps. Multiple catch mouse traps are also effective in catching voles. Check traps regularly.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Nebraska Extension NebGuide "Controlling Vole Damage" (G887) available at the Extension office and online at *http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest*

Feeding Birds

If you had to choose just one seed to attract the greatest number of bird species, choose black-oil sunflower seeds. These seeds are nutritious, high in fat and easy for even small birds to handle and crack. For less waste, buy seeds without the hulls (shells). These seeds are a little more expensive but you have the benefit not dealing with the shells. Avoid using any generic mixes of bird seed. These are less expensive, but the birds waste a lot of the seed considered filler so you really aren't saving very much money.

Suet Recipe: After Christmas, I recycled my live cut Christmas tree by placing it out into my garden to provide winter protection for birds. It was also a great place to hang suet-stuffed pinecones. Birds like woodpeckers, nuthatch, cardinals and chickadees will take advantage

Soni Cochran, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

Recycled Christmas tree in garden with suet-stuffed pinecones hung from branches.

of these homemade suet feeders. To make your own suet:

- 3 cups melted suet (available from your butcher shop or meat counter at the grocery)
- 3 cups yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup chunk style peanut butter

Melt the suet in a pan and add the cornmeal and peanut butter. Bird seeds, raisins, rolled oats, unsalted nutmeats, dehydrated egg and dried fruit, like raisins or apple bits, also can be added. Pour the suet mixture into cupcake papers in a muffin tin to harden. Remove the papers, and the cakes are ready for the birds. Put into suet feeders, stuff into openings in small logs or press into pinecones to hang from trees. Make up several batches of the suet muffins and put them in the freezer until you are ready to use. Make sure you hang your suet above the reach of your pets.

HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

Diane Usher

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Diane Usher as winner of February's "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

A 4-H horse program volunteer for at least 20 years, Diane is a project leader for Hunter's Pride 4-H club and helps the club superintend the 4-H Hunter and Hunter Hack Jumper shows at the Lancaster County Super Fair. She helps teach club members jumping, dressage and other English horse disciplines. Diane is also a member of the Horse Volunteers in Program Service (VIPS) committee and has helped with jumping clinics.

"I like being a 4-H volunteer because it's neat to watch the kids grow, learn and become good citizens," says Diane. "Seeing how much the horse program and county fair horse shows have grown is pretty amazing. When I was in 4-H, I showed at the State Fair Coliseum. It's interesting how much has progressed and improved through the years. The English side has really grown."

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

New Enrollment Information This Year!

4-H MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS MUST RE-ENROLL EVERY YEAR!

NOTE: Health information is optional. You DO NOT need to complete this portion of the online form.

Please enroll ASAP! Nebraska State 4-H has transitioned the 4HOnline database to the new 4-H year. Current 4-H members and volunteers who do not re-enroll on the 4-H enrollment website 4HOnline are no longer officially enrolled members. New 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 or volunteer. 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 and/or volunteers in the household will be added.

More details and step-by-step instruction guides with pictures are at ***http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/club***. If you have questions about the process or need access to a computer, call Karen Evasco at 402-441-7180.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS: 4-H members enrolling as independent need to select "Lancaster Independent" under "club."

PARENTS: If you serve in a leadership capacity in any way, please enroll as a volunteer and select "project volunteer."

VOLUNTEERS: Last year, volunteers could not register online, so Extension staff member Karen Evasco entered many organizational leaders on 4HOnline. These leaders' names will show up under their family profile — and will need to select "I forgot my password" to re-enroll as a "returning volunteer." If leader names do not show up on 4-H Online, then they will need to enroll as a "new volunteer." At this time, 4-H club organizational leaders are NOT able to view their 4-H club's roster online (Nebraska 4-H is working out the details).

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

4-H Achievement Celebration

Tuesday, Feb. 9 • 6:30 p.m.

Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln

Light snack provided!

Part of Nebraska 4-H Month!

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

"2015 4-H Year in Review" video!

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

4-H Crocheting Workshop, Feb. 6

4-H youth ages 10 and older are invited to learn how to crochet a washcloth utilizing the single crochet stitch at the "Basic Crocheting" workshop on Saturday, Feb. 6, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. No cost — all supplies will be provided. Adults are welcome to attend to help 4-H'ers. Must preregister by Feb. 3 by calling 402-441-7180. If you previously attended this workshop, you are welcome to attend again. 4-H'ers may enter washcloths at the Lancaster County Super Fair under 4-H Clothing — Level 1 Crochet.

4-H Jammie Workshop, March 12

4-H youth ages 8 and older are invited to practice their basic sewing skills and make jammie bottoms at the "Jammie Jamboree" sewing workshop on Saturday, March 12, 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 9 by calling 402-441-7180.

4-H Pillow Sewing Workshop, Feb. 20

4-H youth ages 8 and older are invited to learn beginning sewing skills and make a pillow at the "Pillow Party" sewing workshop on Saturday, Feb. 20, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to help. Sign up by Feb. 17 by calling 402-441-7180. 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.

Pick-A-Pig Club

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 Lancaster County Super Fair. The club is open to all city and rural youth ages 8–18. If you are interested, contact Harry Muhlbach at 402-430-7304 by March 1.

Rabbit Show

The 4-H Spring Rabbit Show will be held Saturday, March 19, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Event Center – Exhibit Hall. Open to all youth ages 8–18. Show flyer is at *http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/animalnews.shtml*. For more information, call Bob at 402-525-8263 or Marty at 402-441-7180.

HORSE BITS

State 4-H Horse Stampede Entries Due Feb. 12

The annual 4-H Horse Stampede will be held Saturday, March 12 at the UNL Animal Science Building on East Campus. Stampede includes the 4-H state horse-related competitions which do not require a horse: Horse Bowl, Public Speaking, Demonstration and Art Contest. Open to 4-H'ers ages 10–14 enrolled in the 4-H horse project (with the exception of the Art Contest).

Lancaster County 4-H Council will pay the contest entry fees for Lancaster County 4-H'ers. Entry forms are due to the Extension office no later than Feb. 12. Additional information on the individual competitions and entry forms are online at *http://animalscience.unl.edu/horse-4-h-and-youth#tab4*. Stampede T-shirts will be available to participants for $5 if pre-ordered. There will be no concession stand on-site. Box lunches may be pre-ordered at a cost of $8 per lunch. All box lunches much be pre-ordered. If you have questions, contact Marty Cruickshank at 402-441-7180.

Horsemanship Level Testing Dates

Now is a good time to start thinking about new 4-H horsemanship level goals! The 2016 group testings will be held at the Lancaster Event Center – Amy Countryman Arena on the following Tuesday evenings: April 12, April 26, May 10, June 7 and June 28.

4-H Horse Incentive Program Has Begun

Any Lancaster County 4-H'er can participate in the Lancaster County 4-H Horse Incentive Program and log hours/points by participating in various horse-related activities Dec. 29–June 30.

Again this year, a belt buckle will be included as a gold-level reward option. However, due to the high cost, a buckle can only be chosen as an incentive reward one time by seniors only.

Horse Incentive Program guidelines and forms are available at the Extension office and online at *http://lancaster.unl.edu/4-h-horse-project-resources*.

Five Local 4-H Clubs Completed Governor's Ag Excellence Projects

Members of the Star City Cornhuskers 4-H club and Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War at the dedication ceremony in October at the Roca Cemetery.

The purpose of the Nebraska 4-H Foundation's Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards, sponsored by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA,) is to recognize 4-H clubs for the work of the individuals in the club and the community service work of the entire club. Each year, 25 4-H clubs are awarded $500 to be used as described in the award application form completed by the club.

Here is a summary of five Lancaster County 4-H clubs' 2015 projects for their Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards.

Star City Cornhuskers

The Star City Cornhuskers 4-H club's project started as an effort to obtain a headstone for a Civil War veteran, Otto Arlt, who was buried in the Roca Cemetery in an unmarked grave. The club discovered 25 known Civil War veterans buried at Roca Cemetery, so each of the 23 club members were assigned a veteran to research. The club discovered a second Civil War veteran, John Krishbaum, was also buried in an unmarked grave.

Club leader Stephanie Polk was able to locate a distant relative of Krishbaum's who signed off on the paperwork needed to order a free headstone from the government. The club ran into endless roadblocks with Arlt's headstone because no living relatives could be located. Star City Cornhuskers used money from their Governor's Agriculture Excellence award to purchase Arlt's headstone.

The Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) set the two headstones and held a dedication ceremony on Oct. 18. At the dedication, the 4-H club members took turns at a microphone reading their veterans' biographies to the crowd. The biographies of these 23 veterans will be posted online soon at *http://bit.ly/1Rck2Uj*.

The Rabbits R Us club donated 10 elevated dog beds and 40 starter gift bags to the Capital Humane Society. Club members are pictured with Charleen Engberg (far right), director of volunteers & education at the Humane Society.

Since 2015 was the 150th anniversary of the Civil War's end, the club purchased and installed a memorial marker at the Roca Cemetery honoring all of the Civil War soldiers buried there — paid for with grant money from Norris Public Power District. This memorial marker was also dedicated on Oct. 18.

Rabbits R Us

During Rabbits R Us club meetings last spring, members decided they wanted to do a community service project helping the Capital Humane Society. After talking with staff at the Humane Society to find out where help was most needed, the club planned to build Kurunda-style elevated beds for dogs and starter gift bags for adopting families.

During the summer, club leaders and officers purchased some supplies and received some donated supplies. At their October members, older club members built 10 dog beds using PVC pipe, screws and fabric. Younger members filled 40 starter gift bags with collars, leashes, cat litter, cat food, dog food, treats, small animal feed and hay.

When the club dropped off their donations at the Humane Society, the 4-H'ers received a private tour of the facility.

The Pick-A-Pig 4-H club gives non-farm youth the opportunity to raise and show pigs at fair.

Pick-A-Pig

The Pick-A-Pig 4-H club gives non-farm youth the opportunity to experience the ownership and responsibility of a pig. The highlight of their 4-H year is the Lancaster County Super Fair, where members compete in the 4-H Swine Show and are completely responsible for feeding, watering, grooming, stall cleaning and herdsmanship of their pigs. Last year, 24 youth participated (most lived in Lincoln). Many club members and parents volunteered at the Super Fair, helping with the swine show and staffing a shift a 4-H Council's food booth.

see AG EXCELLENCE on next page

Governor's Ag Excellence Award Forms Due March 4

The Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards are sponsored by the Nebraska 4-H Foundation and Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA). Each year, 25 4-H clubs are awarded $500 to be used as described in the award application form completed by the club.

Clubs may use the award dollars for many different programs. A few examples are: conferences or workshops for others in the community, trips or tours for club members and community improvement projects. The intent is to increase 4-H'ers awareness of agricultural careers. Consider "agricultural" in the broadest terms for this program.

Forms are due by March 4. Applications are online at *www.ne4hfoundation.org*. If you have questions, contact Lori Oberembt at lori.oberembt@unl.edu or 402-472-1178.

4-H Companion Animal Challenge Entries Due Feb. 12

The second 4-H Companion Animal Challenge will be held on Saturday, March 12 at the Animal Science Complex on UNL's East Campus. (Same date as 4-H Horse Stampede.) It provides youth a chance to participate in a variety of contests that do not require animals, but allow youth to learn more about their dog, cat, rabbit or other companion animals. Contests include:

- Demonstrations (a presentation where youth demonstrate how to complete a task or related to the care of their companion animal)
- Photography and art contests (open to all companion animal projects)
- Dog quiz bowl
- Dog skill-a-thon

Lancaster County 4-H Council will pay the contest entry fees for Lancaster County 4-H'ers. Entry forms are due to the Extension office no later than Feb. 12. T-shirts may be pre-ordered for $5. Box lunches may be pre-ordered at a cost of $8 per lunch. All box lunches much be pre-ordered. More information is available at *http://go.unl.edu/4hcac*.

Watch Chicks Hatch Online with EGG Cam!

http://go.unl.edu/eggcam

Embryology resources include incubation, candling, and more!

Chicks are due to hatch Jan. 26 or 27, March 1 or 2, and May 3 or 3.

4-H Clubs Needed to Help Provide Booths at Kiwanis Karnival, April 8

The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event, is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Friday, April 8, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 25th St., Lincoln. The Karnival features carnival type games for the kids, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun and fellowship. Lincoln Center Kiwanis has sponsored this event for over 50 years — providing prizes and snacks. 4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity for clubs. If your 4-H club or family would like to have a booth or for more information, call Lorene at 402-423-7541 or 402-310-3481. Come join the fun!

4-H Speech & PSA

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 14

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 14. 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 2016 PSA theme is "4-H Grows Confidence..." Please use .wav or .mp3 audio formats when recording your PSA.

Speech Contest, March 20

The 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, March 20 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Check-in between 1–1:30 p.m., contest begins at 1:30 p.m. Register by March 14 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing cmeador2@unl.edu with your name, speech title and age division.

EXTENSION CALENDAR

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

January

22 Successful Farmer Workshop Series ..... 9–11:30 a.m.
26 4-H Dog Skill-A-Thon ..... 2:30–6 p.m.

February FEBRUARY IS NEBRASKA 4-H MONTH

2 Commercial/Noncommercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Certification Training and Testing ..... 8:30 a.m.
2 4-H Council Meeting ..... 6 p.m.
3 Private Pesticide Applicator Training ..... 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
4 Commercial/Noncommercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training ..... 8:30 a.m.
5 Successful Farmer Workshop Series ..... 9–11:30 a.m.
6 4-H Crocheting Workshop ..... 9 a.m.
9 4-H Achievement Celebration ..... 6:30 p.m.
11 Co-Parenting for Successful Kids Class ..... 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
12 Extension Board Meeting ..... 8 a.m.
12 Lancaster County 4-H Deadline for Horse Stampede and Companion Animal Challenge Entries
14 4-H Teen Council Meeting ..... 3 p.m.
19 Successful Farmer Workshop Series ..... 9–11:30 a.m.
20 4-H Pillow Party Sewing Workshop ..... 9 a.m.
23 Commercial/Noncommercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training ..... 8:30 a.m.
25 Commercial/Noncommercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Certification Training and Testing ..... 8:30 a.m.

AG EXCELLENCE PROJECTS

from preceding page

Go Go Goat Getters

The Go Go Goat Getters 4-H Club gives non-farm youth the opportunity to raise a dairy goat and show it at the Lancaster County Super Fair. Last year, 10 youth participated. Some club members brought goats to the Kiwanis Karnival and Clover College to teach other youth about goats.

The Go Go Getters 4-H club gives non-farm youth the opportunity to raise and show dairy goats at fair.

NBots Robotics

Lancaster County's NBots 4-H club currently consists of two robotics teams. The Rebels is a FIRST LEGO League (FLL) team for youth grades 4–8. RoboStorm is a FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) team for high school youth.

Last year, the Rebels created a "River Race Board Game" to teach youth how conservation has a direct link to saving animals (in this case, river otters). The team created a game board with different game tiles leading players through a year in a river otter's life. The Rebels won the "Best Project" award for their River Race Board Game at the Nebraska FLL qualifying tournament in Kearney.

RoboStorm works with a group of boy scouts to help them complete their Robotics merit badge. RoboStorm members teach the scouts about building and programming a robot.

The Rebels FIRST LEGO League team at last year's Qualifying Tournament in Kearney.

Local 4-Her's Skirt Part of Textile Exhibit at UNL

Ellie Babock's skirt sewn from fabric she wove on a loom was part of the "Celebration of Youth XXII: Work by 4-H Youth" held October and November at the Robert Hillestand Textile Gallery on University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus. Items were selected from thousands of 4-H exhibits at the 2015 Nebraska State Fair.

Ellie says, "The fabric for this skirt took me about a month to weave. After that, I modified a skirt pattern to fit me and to add a lining. When I started cutting into the fabric, it was scary, but I used interfacing to keep the fabric from unraveling. I was really excited my skirt was chosen for the 'Celebration of Youth.' At the event, I got to meet Dr. Hillestad. Students and faculty from UNL's Textiles, Merchandising and Fashion Design department had many fun activities for us. I enjoyed seeing and working in their new design lab."

Applications Open for 4-H Camp Staff

The two 4-H Camps in Nebraska are currently accepting applications for summer staff. The camps offer outstanding opportunities for young adults to learn leadership skills, gain valuable experience for future careers and make lasting memories. Need not be in 4-H to apply.

- **Summer Program Staff (ages 18 and above)** — Seasonal, paid, full time staff who live at camp mid-May to August who are responsible for daily programming and teaching groups of all ages. Must be available mid May through mid August. Application deadline is Feb. 15.
- **Junior/Senior Counselors (ages 15 and above)** — Cabin supervisors who volunteer and select which weeks they can work throughout the summer. Provide valuable leadership to a group of campers by day and assist with cabin supervision at night. Must complete Counselor Leadership Training at one of the sites. Application deadline is May 1.

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

EXTENSION NEWS

2016 Extension Board

Front row L–R: Sharlyn Sieck, Cathy Plager, Allen Blezek, Jim Pinkerton; back row L–R: Jenny DeBuhr (Extension Administrative Aide), L. Ronald Fleecs, Jim Bauman, Paula Peterson, Marty Minchow, Pat Heather and Karen Wobig (Extension Unit Leader). Not pictured: Jim Newman.

The Lancaster County Extension Board serves as an advocate for Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County. Members of the board are appointed by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. The Extension Board provides guidance to Extension staff in establishing and accomplishing Extension education program goals and objectives. Annually, it assists in developing an operating budget and local educational priorities. The board meets monthly (usually the second Friday at 8 a.m.).

The following members were recently appointed by the Lancaster County Board: Jim Bauman, re-appointed to serve a second 3-year term, Patricia Heather and Jim Pinkerton for their first 3-year terms.

Extension board members for 2016 are:

- Jim Bauman, *President*
- L. Ronald Fleecs, *Vice President*
- Sharlyn Sieck, *Secretary/Treasurer*
- Allen Blezek
- Patricia Heather
- Marty Minchow
- Jim Newman
- Paula Peterson
- Jim Pinkerton
- Cathy Plager, *4-H Council ex officio member*

Two 4-H Leaders Named Finalists for Statewide Award

(L–R) ServeNebraska Commission's Chair Nancy Faber, Harry Muhlbach, Karol Swotek, Governor Pete Ricketts and Rich Aerni.

Lancaster County 4-H volunteers Karol Swotek (leader of 4-H Explorers and Go Go Getters clubs and member of 4-H Council) and Harry Muhlbach (leader of Pick-A-Pig club) were recently named "Adult Volunteer" finalists for ServeNebraska's Step Forward Awards. The Step Forward Awards were created to honor every day volunteers who step forward, going the extra mile in their communities to better the quality of life for their fellow Nebraskans.

Red Letter Days at UNL

Red Letter Days are an opportunity for you to explore college life at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln during your senior or junior year of high school. Upcoming Red Letter Days are Feb. 12, Feb. 15, Feb. 26, March 4, March 18, April 1 and April 15. If you are interested in any health-related fields, check out our Pre-Health Red Letter Day on Feb. 5.

At this open house event, you'll get to:

- explore campus with a current UNL student as your guide,
- attend academic informational sessions,
- see what it's like to live in a residence hall,
- learn about ways to get involved on campus, and
- find out important admissions, scholarship and financial aid information.

Pre-registering at *http://admissions.unl.edu/visit* is strongly encouraged. Walk-in registration is open on a space available basis the day of the event. Program fee is $10 per person.