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## 1984 Report of Accomplishments

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# **Southeast Research and Extension Center & the Southeast Extension District**

**1984 Report  
of Accomplishments**



## **Serving Southeast Nebraska Through**

- **Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service**
- **Nebraska Agricultural Research Division**
- **Nebraska Forest Service**



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA—LINCOLN

Dear Friends,

The year 1984 has been a difficult year for the residents of southeast Nebraska. I am very proud of the faculty of Southeast Research and Extension Center stationed in our Lincoln office on the east campus of the University of Nebraska and the 23 county cooperative extension service offices in the Southeast Extension District, who have been sensitive to the needs of the people in planning their program in extension, research and forestry programs.

The University of Nebraska through the Cooperative Extension Service has played an important role in helping the residents of southeast Nebraska. It has been a year with farm and urban families needing to learn skills to cope with the poor economic conditions and to recover from disastrous flooding.

The faculty of the University of Nebraska have assisted by helping families identify alternatives for evaluating their farm income, by providing information for families and business when returning to their homes following the June floods, and by helping families reduce personal stress through improved communication with their spouse, children, or friends.

This report is a summary of some programs completed by the fifty-nine agents and fifteen specialists who work in the twenty-three counties of the district. Many other programs were presented. We have chosen to summarize but a few.

If you wish details about any of the programs listed in this report or wish details about additional programs I would welcome your questions. We also welcome and encourage your participation and input in the program and want you to become better acquainted and involved with your University of Nebraska.

Yours truly,



Loyd L. Young  
District Director

## CONSERVATION TILLAGE

Observations during 1984 confirmed that farmers of the southeast district are implementing conservation tillage practices. Reports show that 2,020,766 acres of land had conservation tillage practices applied during 1982. Indications are that acres under conservation tillage continues to increase.

Four target areas for increased programming in conservation tillage under the Nebraska Energy project were established because of major erosion problems in those counties. Five counties of the district are in the target areas.

Conservation tillage subject matter was incorporated into county and multi-county meetings, tours, field days in which over 1750 farmers participated. Evaluations of the five conservation tillage meetings held in the district in 1984 indicated that 75% of the 510 farmers attending claimed that they would implement conservation tillage practices on their land.

An example of impact reported by a county is:

- that an average soil savings of 12.2 tons per acre or 52% reduction in potential soil erosion was seen. This is a total savings of 148,237 tons of soil in the past year. The 148,000 figure is a 48% increase over the 70,979 tons figure of soil saved in 1983.

## FARM MANAGEMENT

Production agriculture has been experiencing financial distress for the past two years. The shrinking equity in farm operators' net worth is causing considerable credit problems. It is estimated that up to one-fourth of agricultural producers may be forced to partially or completely liquidate in the several years ahead. Circumstances leading to difficulty have been over extension of credit, drought, recent large capital purchases, inefficient production, high interest rates, or a combination of these.

To provide the farmers with information to better assess their alternatives the following methods were used during the year by staff of the southeast district:

- personal consultations on financial management and stress were provided to farm families.
- 109 farmers and their wives enrolled in the Marketing, Managing, and Financing workshops. Farmers attending indicated that they would be able to use the information to improve their systems, and obtain better analysis of their financial situation.
- Managing for Tomorrow began during 1984. Funded by grants from the state and federal governments, this program offers farmers a unique financial management tool. In the southeast district, sixty-two farm management teams have signed up to participate in the program composed of workshops and on-site visits. The objective of the program will be to help participants determine feasible alternatives for their present operating plan.

### IMPROVED UTILIZATIONS OF PASTURELAND

Farmers in the southeast district responded when programs with the objective of improving the production of pastureland were presented.

Workshops, demonstrations, tours, and mass media were used to reach farmers in five counties.

Knowledge gained by farmers on importance of high-quality pastureland was the thrust during 1984. During future years the staff will work in helping farmers: 1) improve cool season pastures, 2) use the chemicals to improve quality of pastureland, and 3) add warm season grasses to their pasture management.

### USING FERTILIZERS MORE EFFECTIVELY

As a result of this program suppliers and users were more able to make sound soil fertilizer decisions regarding their needs, proper application and economic choices.

Fertilizer management schools were held at two sites in the district. Thirteen farmers responded to a survey after one of the two meetings. The farmers represented 10,460 acres. When asked the question, "Do you plan to make any changes in the management of your soil fertility program on your farm?", the following responses were given: 1) more soil testing and sampling for nitrates, less use of nitrogen, and elimination of the use of potash fertilizer.

Crop Focus '84 featured fertilizer update and were held at four sites in the district with an attendance of 189.

### BEEF SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Profit for beef producers has been minimal for a period of time. Their economic return can be increased by reducing costs. The plight of the beef producers was complicated this past year by severe weather in December.

The objective of the beef system management program for the past year has been to provide producers with information on proven management practices that will minimize cost of production of the weanling and growing calf.

Seven cow-calf clinics were taught and provided approximately 500 producers in the southeast district with information on management skills involving nutrition, breeding programs, and calving time management procedures.

As a follow-up to the cow-calf clinics, staff in one county completed a random survey of participants who indicated that the workshop information helped them through an extremely rough calving season. Producers were able to keep their cows in better condition, which helped save both calves and cows.

The Nebraska Cattleman's Expo was held at Columbus with over 2000 attending. A committee of producers from the Columbus area planned the program which included emphasis on cow-calf and beef feedlots.

A new program thrust in support of animal agriculture is the intergrated reproductive management (IRM) program. The IRM program is designed as a five year demonstration project with the resulting data and training to extend over the next 10-15 years. The goal of the program is to improve or incorporate management techniques in the running of the cattle operation that will optimize the reproductive rate to increase profitability.

Funded by grants from Norden Laboratories, Lincoln, and a special needs grant from Extension Service, USDA; nine demonstration herds were selected for the state-wide project. Two are located in the southeast district. One herd is at Odell and the other at Stromsburg.

### FLOODS BRING QUICK ACTION

1984 will be remembered as the year of the FLOOD. Saturated soils coupled with continued rains brought flooding to southeast Nebraska during June, 1984. Engulfed were millions of acres of land and thousands of homes and businesses.

Within twenty-four hours of the flooding the Cooperative Extension staff in the counties were providing information to families, farmers, and business owners on how to begin clean-up.

Meeting with persons housed at evacuation sites, presenting radio programs, distributing information sheets door-to-door on clean-up, answering thousands of questions, distributing water sample bottles, and estimating losses for disaster declaration applications were all ways that the Cooperative Extension Service staff assisted.

One staff member made the following comments, "We certainly added to our clientele group and we were so glad to be Cooperative Extension Service agents with the resources to help at such a time of need, but I'd rather it were under different circumstances."

### COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION IN THE SCHOOLS

Incidents of crime against communities, businesses, home owners and individuals continue to increase.

Two counties in the district have piloted the 4-H vandalism school enrichment program with the support of their local law enforcement officers.

In one of the pilot counties the school officials reported that after two weeks there had been a dramatic decrease in littering around the school grounds and that students helped to repaint hallways that had been defaced.

This youth program will be used statewide in 1985.

### COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION FOR BUSINESSES

To reduce the incidents of crime against retail businesses was a thrust of Cooperative Extension Service staff during 1984. Programs presented by staff reached business owners and managers. Business owners were encouraged to adopt methods of operation that would reduce shoplifting, to improve security, to reduce theft loss and to manage finances to improve cash flow.

Results from one series of meetings that reached 863 persons indicated that those participating increased their knowledge by 88%.

A thirty-minute video tape on shoplifting prevention was prepared by the Extension Service Specialist in southeast Nebraska. The thirty-two persons participating in the video tape production represented education, business, and law enforcement agencies in the Lincoln area. Thousands of persons will be reached with the tape during fourteen cable television air dates (Omaha and Lincoln) during 1984. The purpose of the tape is to illustrate what happens to persons who are caught shoplifting.

## FAMILY WELL-BEING

Daily we read or hear about the stress placed on families. Work schedules of parents, financial pressures, numerous social and community activities are all given as reasons for families being pulled further apart.

As a way to provide families with skills to better communicate with their family members the twenty-three counties of the district emphasized family well being during 1984.

The Building Family Strengths conferences held in the district reached families who wanted to know more about improving communication skills. Feedback immediately following the conference in one county indicated that participants had initiated communication with family members about family problems and in some cases had resolved problems as a direct result of what they had learned at the conference.

The Enriching Family Relationships newsletter is distributed via mailing lists to clientele while churches in some communities distributed the newsletter to thousands of members of their congregations. It is estimated that over 5000 families are reached monthly with information on how to communicate with their children and/or spouses.

Parent-Child Interaction (PCI) is taught to parents to aid in 1) increasing skill competencies in their preschoolers and 2) to encourage parents to spend quality time interacting with their young children. One county survey completed by 18 of the 24 participating families reported that 39% (7 families) were making a concerted effort to spend more quality time with each child than they had in the past.

The 8000 members of the Home Extension Club program in the district were also involved in the family well being thrust through their participation in district and county wide meetings.

## EXTENDING THE FAMILY'S RESOURCES

To use the resources (financial and non-financial) of the family to the best advantage is the goal of all families. During the past year the Cooperative Extension Service staff have presented programs to help families extend their resources. Programs in the subject matter areas reported over 4100 persons learned a skill, experienced an attitude change, or gained knowledge that aided in the management of resources.

An example of impact reported by a county is:

-a survey returned by 69 persons in one county indicated that clothing construction skills learned at Extension workshops aided in the construction of 612 garments and 366 garments for children. Through skills learned the income of the 69 reporting families were extended by \$13,350 or \$193 for each of the 69 families responding.

A newsletter, Especially for the Home Manager, is mailed monthly to the home or distributed through businesses as a way to provide consumer information to persons, who's schedules do not allow participation in meetings. Fourteen counties distribute the newsletter to an estimated 5000-6000 persons monthly.



### EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

To assist low income families learn proper nutrition and proper methods of food preparation so that they can use their limited food dollars resourcefully has long been the goal of the expanded food and nutrition education program (EFNEP). During 1984 the program assisted 1182 families in five counties in the southeast district.

EFNEP aides assisted families on a one-to-one basis, in group meetings, at head start and community center group activities, by being available at commodity food distribution centers for consultations, and working with 2100 youth at EFNEP day camps.

Testing of the homemaker's knowledge at the beginning of work with the EFNEP aide and at regular intervals determines the knowledge and skill progress being made by the homemaker. EFNEP homemakers are usually involved in the program six to twelve months.

### NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Persons in southeast Nebraska are concerned about how they can improve their nutritional eating patterns and maintain healthy bodies. During the past year Cooperative Extension staff emphasized "saving our shapes" (SOS) as a means of losing weight and learning nutritional eating patterns that will be beneficial all their lives.

Four counties reported that twelve "save our shapes" groups, headed by 15 volunteer leaders presented the series of lessons to 136 persons. Three of the counties reported that the participants had lost a total of 543 pounds, while the fourth county reported that 92% of the 50 participants in the program had lost weight.

Health related programs were reported in the majority of the southeast district counties during 1984. Cooperation with other community agencies, such as the Red Cross or Cancer society were numerous. One district wide event, the Helen Becker Conference on Family Health reached approximately 300 persons. Evaluations of the activity indicated that the most important idea learned at the conference was the value of physical exercise.

### HOME EXTENSION CLUB PROGRAM

The 8000 members of the home extension club program received information through four leader training lessons in 1984. "When is a Bargain Really a Bargain", was one of the four lessons presented on a district wide basis. This lesson encouraged club members and their families to make wise use of their financial resources, and to examine how they buy and why they buy what they do.

#### 4-H ENROLLMENT UP IN SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA

In southeast Nebraska the 4-H participation was up 9.5% for 1984. 1984 figures show that 32,580 youth took part in the 4-H program. This figure is up from the 30,720 youth in 1983.

The number of 4-H volunteers also continue to grow as the total number of volunteers shows 5,470 in 1984. This figure is also up 9.5% over 1983.

#### EASTERN NEBRASKA 4-H CENTER

Camping has long been a method of providing recreation and leadership skills training for youth.

The Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center, located between Omaha and Lincoln, is new in the organized camping arena. The center is a year-round educational facility providing outdoor experiences for church and school groups as well as 4-H youth.

Jim Bell was hired in 1984 as the first on-site camp director. Under his leadership the number of persons using the facility has grown. The use by non 4-H related groups grew by 22% in 1984.

#### LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES FOR TEENS

Providing leadership training and leadership opportunities for teens continues as an emphasis of Cooperative Extension Service staff. More than a dozen different types of youth activities were made available during 1984 as methods of helping teens gain the necessary leadership skills.

Approximately 750 teens from southeast Nebraska took advantage of leadership opportunities ranging from assistance in the local club to participation in national activities. Nine youth from the district earned trips to Club Congress in Chicago for their expertise learned in different topic areas of 4-H. One 4-H'er from southeast Nebraska represented Nebraska at the national 4-H Conference in Washington D.C.

#### SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

Eighteen of the twenty-three counties in the district provided opportunities for students in public and parochial school systems to learn about 4-H and the educational opportunities available through 4-H. Two projects used extensively in the school systems were "Embroidery" and "Grow Your Own Bacteria". Reached thru this method were 19,796 students in school systems in southeast Nebraska.

#### 4-H PROJECTS PROVIDE LIFETIME SKILLS

The objective of the 4-H program is to provide youth with learning thru doing. Learning that encompasses 4-H project learning, learning to work with others, and leadership skills.

During the past year, the 30,580 4-H'ers were involved in over 100 4-H projects and activities as ways of learning.

Curriculum for 4-H projects is developed based upon the motor and mental developmental levels for ages 9-19. 4-H'ers interested in particular subject matter areas complete projects that provide skills usable throughout their lives.