

12-1999

## The NEBLINE, December 1999

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# The NEBLINE

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension  
Lancaster County

December 1999  
Vol. XII, No. 12

"Helping Nebraskans enhance their lives through research-based education."

## Hello neighbor

Don Janssen  
Extension Educator

In days gone by, the city was the city and country was country. When you got to the city limits of many communities you would see fields of crops or pasture used by a farmer to support his or her family and others throughout the world. When in the country, you would find one, but no more than two farmsteads, per section of ground. In some areas of the country you could travel several miles without seeing a farmstead.

Well, not so today. More and more people are selling their urban homes and moving to the country. Of the 9,526 residential parcels of land in Lancaster County outside of Lincoln, 29 percent are acreages. In fact, there are more

challenges, which seem to have arrived with their new neighbors. The different expectations and lifestyles of new move-ins and longtime residents can sometimes prompt complaints and lead to conflicts.

Some common complaints of farmers include increased amounts of trash and litter in fields and pastures, unleashed dogs disrupting or even killing livestock, trespassing and the liability that can be incurred and the amount of increased vandalism to buildings, fences and equipment.

For the non-farm neighbor, most of the complaints concern

problems that can arise between neighbors. There are certainly many others. The good news is



that many of these conflicts can be worked through and some can be avoided all together. Farmers, non-farm residents and the community at large all have a role to play in maintaining good relationships. Everyone can enjoy the benefits of rural life if the stakeholders are willing to come together to deal with common problems.

Everyone can use a number of strategies to head off potential conflict and build strong ties with their neighbors. Everyday farmers and researchers learn more about controlling odors, dust, insects, weeds and noises. Farmers should take advantage

of these technological advances if at all possible. If non-farm residents have a problem with something a farmer is doing, they should go directly to the farmer. It is important to bear in mind that the way a farmer is approached can determine how he or she might respond. The community wishing to minimize conflict should rely less on lawsuits, right-to-farm laws and zoning ordinances and work more informally with farmers and other local residents to mitigate or mediate conflict.

For communities, farmers and non-farmers, working through conflict involves finding common ground and shared interests. In the case of rural/urban conflict, one of the shared interests is the desire of farmers and non-farmers, new residents and long-time residents, to all enjoy life in the country. As urbanites and suburbanites continue to move to rural areas and farmers and other long-time residents continue to have more new neighbors, cultivating relationships and building bridges will be vital to working through the rural/urban conflict. (DJ)



acreage than farm residential sites.

A 1997 *Time Magazine* cover article documented the reasons people are moving to the country; escape from the city, the rural character, cheaper housing and opportunity to work at home. It also explained the conflicts and challenges they are working through.

Many new residents are finding life in the country, with all its benefits, also brings some new challenges. Long-time rural residents, including farmers, are also facing new

the day-to-day operations of farming. Typically, rural residents complain about noisy equipment such as tractors, grain dryers and trucks. Other common complaints are about the dusty conditions that occur during planting and harvest periods, odors associated with livestock operations, farm chemicals and the fear of personal harm from them and the inevitable wide, slow-moving farm equipment that moves up and down the roads and highways.

These types of conflicts are just a few of the potential



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Please let us know, call 402-441-7180, fax 402-441-7148 or email: [Lanco@unl.edu](mailto:Lanco@unl.edu)

Thank you!

### In this issue...

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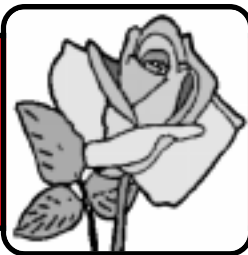
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Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County  
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# Horticulture

## Holiday safety

The holiday season is here. If you are like me, you are excited about the holidays and have already started or maybe finished decorating the house and yard.

Many of you put your Christmas tree up right after Thanksgiving. This year you may have decided to have a real tree. Be sure to select a fresh tree if you do. If you cut the tree yourself, you know the tree is fresh. But if you do not cut your own tree, be sure to ask when the tree was cut and check it closely for drying needles. Dry greenery and Christmas trees can be a real fire hazard this time of year in your home.

The stump of your Christmas tree should be cut fresh before placing the tree in the tree stand. Keep an adequate supply of fresh water covering this fresh cut at all times. Check the water level daily and refill when needed. The cooler you can keep the room where you have the Christmas tree, the longer it will stay in a fresh green condition. Do not place the tree near a heat duct, wood stove or fireplace.

At the first sign of needle drop and drying you should dispose of the Christmas tree. A single spark can ignite a very dry tree. Use some of the discarded

*continued on page 11*

## Cyclamen care

Cool temperatures and bright light is the prescription for success with cyclamen. Place this flowering plant in an east window. A daytime temperature of 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit and a nighttime minimum temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit should keep it blooming well into next year.

The white, red or pink flowers grow tall with nodding stems above the rosette of heart-shaped, blue-green to dark green leaves. The foliage is marked with white veins and light green splotches.

Water the cyclamen whenever the soil begins to feel dry and try to keep the soil around the roots moist at all times. Water with lukewarm water and be careful to keep it off the foliage and crown as the plant is very susceptible to crown rot.

Fertilize the plant with a houseplant fertilizer using one-



half the recommended strength every two weeks while it is flowering. When new flowers cease to appear and the leaves turn brown, reduce the frequency and amount of watering and place the pot in a cool spot.

After flowering, let it rest until warm spring weather arrives. Repot in a mixture of equal parts houseplant potting soil and peat moss, with half the crown above the soil. Place in a sunny window or in a protected spot outdoors where it will be shaded during the brightest part of the day. (MJM)

## Houseplant problems

Living plants of various kinds are a popular addition to the decor of many homes, restaurants and other business places. Green and flowering plants serve as accents and also help soften hard architectural lines and wall surfaces. They improve quality of living.

Although less harsh in many respects, the average indoor environment presents some unique problems for normal plant growth. Light intensities in homes tend to be low, especially during fall and winter. Low light results in small leaves, pale color, long spindly stems, and flower failure. Lowered atmosphere humidity from the heating of homes causes rapid loss of moisture from plant surfaces, the soil surface and the outside surface of porous clay pots.

There are a number of other stress inducing factors that may cause problems. Most people over water their houseplants by maintaining the soil constantly wet. This can cause root rots that impair ability to replace moisture loss. A plant may outgrow the pot so that its top is out of balance with the amount of soil in which the plant is growing. Such plants quickly exhaust the supply of water present in the soil and must be watered more frequently. Constant watering sometimes compacts the soil and reduces air space, which deprives the roots of adequate oxygen. This can reduce root development and plant growth. The soil may become "channeled" so that water drains too rapidly and fails to thoroughly wet all of the soil in the container.

Determining the cause of

some house plant problems may be difficult and require skilled laboratory diagnostic procedures. Other problems are relatively simple to diagnose. Described below are some of the more common disorders and diseases, their possible causes and suggested corrective measures.

Leaf spots are quite variable in appearance, depending upon the cause. Spots caused by injury from direct sunlight on shade requiring plants usually are large with regular margins. Each spot may involve the entire portion of the exposed leaf. The injured area appears bleached, gradually turning tan to brown and eventually collapsing. Leaf spots resulting from chemical injury or exposure to temperature change due to droplets of cold water usually are smaller. They generally are yellowish at first with regular margins conforming with the shape and size of the drops of chemical solution or water that caused the injury. A number of leaf spot diseases are caused by fungi and bacteria. Symptoms usually are small, water soaked spots, gradually enlarging and turning brown. There also may be considerable yellowing around the margins of the spots. These diseases rarely develop under the dry atmospheric conditions prevalent in most houses. They are most common on plants recently brought into the state from southern propagating areas.

Leaf spots occasionally develop in the vicinity of feeding injury caused by sap sucking insects, such as aphids, scale and mealybug. Plant surfaces in the vicinity of these insects often are covered by a



glistening, sticky honeydew. To control leaf spot you can: remove and destroy affected leaves, avoid sprinkling water on the foliage, provide adequate air circulation. If insects are involved, correctly identify the pest causing the problem. Control sap-sucking insects by washing leaves, petioles and stems with a damp cloth or treating with a commercially prepared pyrethrin spray for house plants. Rubbing alcohol also may be applied to insects, such as mealybugs, with cotton swabs. Systemic insecticides will also control sucking insects.

Yellowing leaves is often caused by nutrient deficiency, especially nitrogen, but also may occur as a result of a sudden reduction of light intensity. Dieffenbachia, dracena and rubber plant are especially susceptible, as are larger pot-bound specimens of other plants.

Applications of nitrogen fertilizer may reverse the development of this condition when yellowing has just started. Be cautious about fertilizing plants during the winter months. Plants growing under low light intensities easily are injured by

*continued on page 11*

## 1999 December/January Garden Calendar

| Sunday | Monday                                    | Tuesday                                   | Wednesday   | Thursday                       | Friday                       | Saturday |
|--------|---|---|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
|        |   |   | 1   | 2                              | 3 Check bird feeders         | 4        |
| 5      | 6   | 7   | 8 Check stored fruits and vegetables for signs of rot | 9 Update garden journal        | 10                           | 11       |
| 12     | 13 Order seed catalogs                    | 14  | 15 Check landscape plants for snow or wildlife damage | 16                             | 17                           | 18       |
| 19     | 20  | 21  | 22 Make list of garden supplies needed for next year  | 23                             | 24                           | 25       |
| 26     | 27  | 28 Have Christmas tree recycled for mulch | 29  | 30                             | 31                           | 1        |
| 2      | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6 Avoid walking on frozen lawn | 7                            | 8        |
| 9      | 10 Review last years garden journal       | 11  | 12 Check stored vegetables for signs of rot           | 13 Make garden plan            | 14 Make list of seeds needed | 15       |
| 16     | 17 Check landscape plants for snow damage | 18  | 19 Check bird feeders                                 | 20                             | 21 Check amaryllis bulb      | 22       |
| 23     | 24  | 25 Check houseplants for insects          | 26 check plants for rodent, rabbit or deer damage     | 27                             | 28 Order seeds               | 29       |
| 30     | 30  |   |   |                                |                              |          |

Many of us need reminders. That is the purpose of this calendar. Check the calendar each month and follow the recommendations if they are necessary in your landscape situation. (MJM)

### Horticulture information center

NUFACTS  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
1-800-832-5441; or  
441-7188 in the Lincoln area



To listen to a NUFACTS information center message, call the number above on a touch-tone phone, then enter a three-digit number listed below. Call 441-7180 to receive a brochure with all the NUFACTS message topics. (MJM)

- 110 Good City Trees
- 117 Tree Snow Damage
- 124 Wood for Fireplace
- 137 Deicing Salt Injury
- 139 Rabbit Damage to Plants
- 210 Amaryllis
- 212 Swedish Ivy
- 213 Prayer Plant
- 214 Houseplant Insects
- 215 Cyclamens
- 217 Boston Fern
- 218 African Violet Care
- 222 Winter Houseplant

# Dealing with woodpecker damage to houses

Barb Ogg, *Extension Educator*  
&  
Soni Cochran, *Extension Associate*

Woodpeckers are among the most recognized birds and are interesting to watch. They are beneficial to our natural environment, but they become a nuisance when they damage houses. Woodpeckers have a strong pointed bill, used for chipping and digging into tree trunks for wood-boring insects. They nest in cavities that they chisel deep into a large branch or tree. Several species of woodpeckers are found in Nebraska, including hairy woodpecker, downy woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker and the northern flicker. The yellow-bellied sapsucker overwinters in southeastern Nebraska, but is relatively uncommon.

Damage results when woodpeckers "hammer" on houses, peck holes in search of insect food or excavate a roosting or breeding cavity. In forested areas, these activities are on trees. A high percentage of homes that are damaged by woodpeckers have natural cedar siding. To a woodpecker, the natural cedar siding and the size of the house make these houses seem like a "super tree," a huge tree that has no bark.

**Drumming.** During courtship activities in the spring, male woodpeckers advertise their territory by "drumming," repeatedly hammering on the side of an object, like a dead tree or limb. Unfortunately, woodpeckers sometimes choose man-made objects that amplify the sound, such as wood siding, rain gutters and downspouts.

**Feeding.** Wood from trees is one of the major sources of insects that woodpeckers use for food. Wood in utility poles, fence posts and wood siding is

also recognized by woodpeckers as a source of insects, especially if insects hide in cracks in the wood.

**Nesting/Roosting.** Woodpeckers that use a building for feeding and drumming may also drill a hole in an attempt to excavate a winter roost or nesting cavity. Woodpeckers will hammer completely through the



*Hairy woodpeckers are interesting birds to watch but cause problems for homeowners when they damage houses.*

siding and may attempt another nesting hole until the birds find a suitable location. We have heard of reports of this activity from late summer and early fall into the spring.

**Control:** The key to successful woodpecker control is to take action as soon as you notice the bird damaging the house to stop the behavior before it becomes a habit.

If the woodpecker seems to be searching for insects, you can take actions to control the insects. Caulk tunnels and other openings in the siding. Insecticides or wood preservatives may help in some situations, although getting an insecticide into the siding where it will kill insects may be difficult. If the woodpecker is drumming, eliminate ledges or the cracks the bird uses

for a foot-hold.

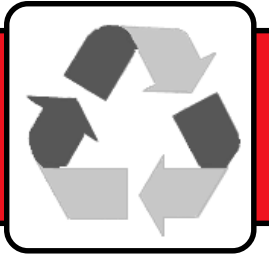
Attach visual scare devices such as strips of aluminum foil, scare eye balloons or pin-wheels, to the area of the house where the bird most often hammers. A shaving mirror with the large-image side toward the woodpecker has been effective, apparently because the mirror reflects the image of a larger woodpecker. Plastic owls and snakes may also work to scare woodpeckers. You may have to move visual scare devices regularly to keep the woodpeckers from getting used to them.

If the bird works on only one or a few locations on the house, either deaden those spots to muffle the noise as much as possible, or cover them with a piece of sheet metal, hardware cloth, or hang plastic bird netting four or five inches from the house to keep the bird away. If it seems to be trying to excavate a cavity, try putting a suitable nest box high on the house and maybe another high in a nearby tree. To make your own nest box, refer to fact sheet 024-99, Build a Nest Box to Attract Birds, available at the Lancaster County Extension Office.

If your house has natural cedar siding, use a water sealer to seal the small holes; the wood can then be painted. Some homeowners report painting their house helps reduce woodpecker damage.

Woodpeckers are migratory, non-game birds protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. This means that killing protected birds or destroying eggs is against federal and/or state laws. Killing birds can only be done with a permit obtained by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. To find out how to obtain a control permit, contact the Game and Parks Commission at 402-471-0641.

## Environmental Focus



# Backyard habitat

Habitat restoration is important for birds and other wildlife due to our commercial and residential invasion on their natural areas. Humans are very good at building places to live and work, but we tend to not give much thought into creating habitat places where we can live in harmony with other living creatures.

You can restore and create natural areas for birds and wildlife to thrive. Creating your own backyard habitat is easy. All you need to do is make sure you have the four basic elements.

**Food:** Plant shrubs and trees that produce seeds, fruits and nuts. You can provide nectar for hummingbirds when they migrate through the area. Plant flowers that attract butterflies and other insects. Use supplemental feeders that offer seed or suet.

**Water:** Water is important in your backyard habitat. You can offer several different sources of water. Use a birdbath, or place a shallow water dish at ground level. Backyard ponds are increasingly popular and offer aquatic habitat for frogs and other small animals. In winter, purchase a small heater especially designed to keep your birdbath from freezing during cold Nebraska days.

**Shelter:** Make your backyard a place that critters will want to stay instead of just visit.



Plant evergreen trees and shrubs to protect wildlife and birds from weather and predators. Deciduous trees provide roosting and nesting sites. Use rocks, logs and mulch to provide cover for small animals like shrews, 13-lined ground squirrels, toads and insects. Leave a dead or decaying tree stump in your yard. Stumps provide both food and shelter for many creatures.

Places to raise young: As land in Lancaster County is cleared for development, we drastically reduce the number of nesting sites for cavity dwelling birds and animals. Bluebirds, purple martins, woodpeckers, owls and even squirrels compete for nest sites and cavity shelters. Plant evergreens, deciduous trees and shrubs. Provide nest boxes for birds and wildlife to raise their young.

This winter would be a terrific time to put together some nest boxes in preparation for the coming spring. The extension office has many publications on providing backyard habitat, building nest boxes and tips on successful bird feeding. (SC)

# Recycling is for the birds

Soni Cochran  
*Extension Associate*

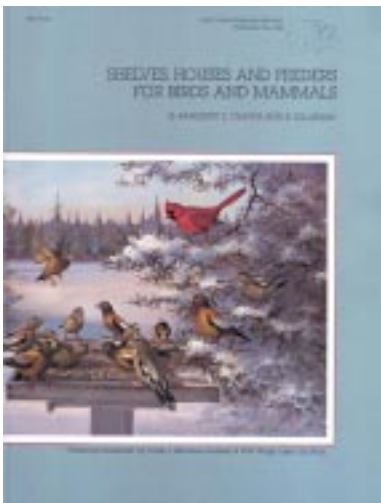
"Chick-a-dee-dee-dee"...the song of the Black-capped Chickadee. Who hasn't heard its cheery voice in the cold of winter?

These feathered acrobats are among the friendliest birds in the neighborhood. Our winter landscape is brightened by cardinals, American goldfinch, blue jays, juncos, nuthatches and, of course, chickadees who are frequent visitors of backyard feeding stations.

Feeding stations can be simple and inexpensive to make. Scrap lumber, tin cans, plastic soda bottles, milk jugs and cartons and plastic buckets are easy to find. All it takes is a little creativity and knowledge about the birds you're trying to attract.

Many birds we enjoy at our feeders have specific seed preferences or prefer suet.

Location of feeders and number of feeders is also very important.



The feeders should be protected from strong winds, preferably near shrubbery or conifers. Recycle your Christmas tree by propping it up by the feeder to give the birds added shelter. With several feeders in your backyard, more birds will have

an opportunity to feed at the same time.

Once you've started feeding birds, don't stop until spring. Birds develop feeding patterns and interruptions in the food supply may cause them to abandon feeders.

There are many excellent books on bird feeders and feeding. Stop at a bookstore or library and checkout the wonderful field guides and other resources on birds, what a great gift idea for bird and wildlife lovers!

The University of Nebraska also offers the following exceptional publication:

- Shelves, Houses and Feeders for Birds and Mammals (RP338, \$4.00). This popular book is a must for backyard enthusiasts. You'll get plans and information on constructing bird and mammal houses, shelves, a

*continued on page 11*

# Are you feeding birds?

Find a bird feeder that is ideal for the kinds of birds you want to see in your backyard. Then select the types of food that these birds like best. Here are some suggestions for several backyard birds and their favorite foods.

American goldfinch—Niger thistle seeds, broken sunflower hearts and oil-type sunflower seeds.

northern cardinals—Sunflower seeds of all types, safflower, cracked corn, millet, other seeds, unsalted nut meats and raisins.

black-capped chickadees—Oil-type sunflower seeds, cracked unsalted nut meats, safflower and suet.

dark-eyed juncos—Red or white proso millet, finely cracked corn, oil-type sunflower seed and unsalted nut meats.

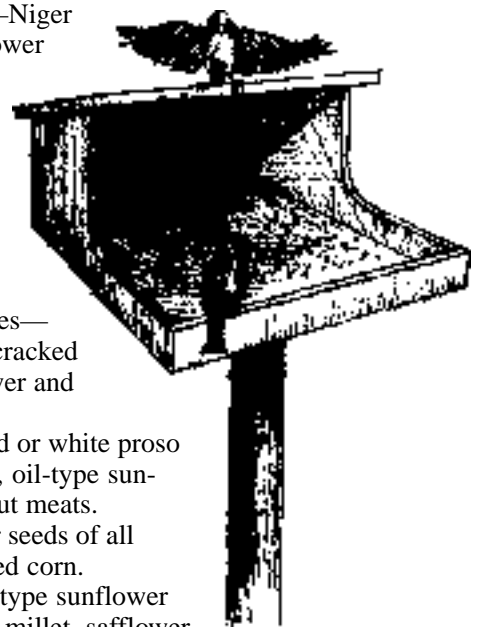
grosbeaks—Sunflower seeds of all types, safflower and cracked corn.

mourning doves—Oil-type sunflower seeds, white and red proso millet, safflower, cracked corn, wheat, milo and other seeds.

native sparrows—Red or white proso millet, oil-type sunflower seeds, cracked corn and some safflower.

woodpeckers—Suet, unsalted nut meats, sunflower seeds and cracked corn.

Most of these foods can be purchased at a local nursery and/or a specific bird supplies store. Be sure that the seeds are of high quality and are fresh. Old seeds will be avoided or just scattered on the ground. Lastly, remember to provide a water area for your fine feathered friends. Happy Birding! (ALH)





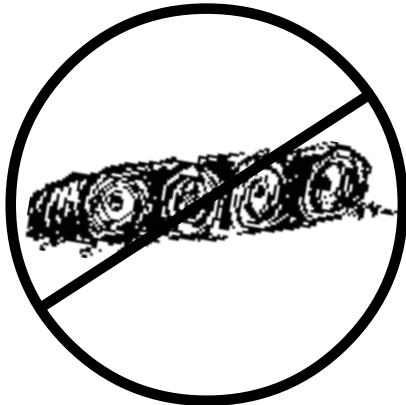
## Farm Views

### Storage methods to reduce hay losses

As you bring in your round bales for winter storage and feeding, store them to minimize weather losses. Hay stored outside will be damaged by rain, snow, wind and ice this fall and winter. The average round bale loses about one fourth of its original nutrients during storage, but these losses can be reduced to only 10 or 15 percent. Now, I'm sure all of you are better than average, but just in case, let's look at some ways to reduce spoilage by storing hay a little differently this year.

For instance, do you usually line up bales so the twine sides touch each other? Or stack your bales? If so, extra spoilage will occur where these bales touch, because rain, snow and ice will gather in these spots instead of running off. Round bales butted end-to-end, cigar-like, usually have less spoilage.

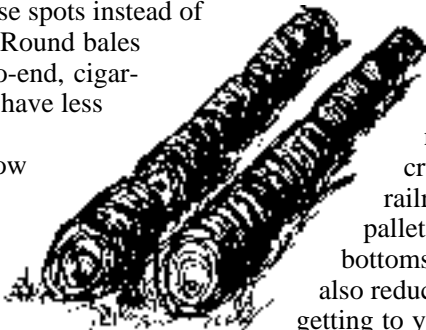
Does snow drift around your bales? Round bales in east-west rows often have drifts on the south side. Hay next to fence lines or trees can get extra snow. And as snow melts, it soaks into the bales or makes the ground muddy. Plus, the north side



never gets any sun so it's slow to dry. This year, line bales up north-and-south to get fewer drifts and to dry more quickly because the sun and our prevailing winds will hit both sides of the row.

Most important is the bottom of your bales. Always put bales on high, well-drained ground so water drains from them. If necessary, use crushed rock, railroad ties, or even pallets to keep the bottoms dry. This will also reduce problems getting to your hay or getting it moved due to snow drifts or mud. Just a little pre-planning can save hay and frustrations.

Source: Dr. Bruce Anderson, Forage Specialist, UNL (TD)



### Biosolids cuts production costs and improves yields

Now that harvest activities are over, are you thinking about ways to improve production and cut production costs? You can reduce your out-of-pocket fertilizer costs, improve poor soil and probably see a yield increase next year by using municipal biosolids.

This material is high in organic matter and has all nutrients that are needed by crops to grow. And, the city of Lincoln is paying up to \$.65 per cubic yard for application. If you don't have spreading equipment, you can rent a spreader from the city for a reasonable cost.

Cooperators must have a loader and be able to apply the materials in a timely way. New and continuing biosolids cooperators must return signed paperwork to the extension office for biosolids delivery in 2000, by January 15. Contact Barb Ogg or Dave Smith at the Lancaster County Extension Office for more information about this program. Call 441-7180. (BPO)



### Renting facilities

From time to time, people will inquire about establishing a fair rental price for a livestock facility. While the extension office is not in a position to set rental rates or judge what is fair to both parties, there are some guidelines that have been presented by farm management specialists at the university that can be used as a guideline.

For both the owner and tenant, determining a fair rental price for livestock facilities, such as hog barns or feedlots, should include consideration of alternatives available. For example, the owner should consider whether the facility will be in use or sit idle, if not rented. If the owner had planned to use the facility for his or her own operation, annual rent

equal to 18 percent of the current asset value is considered a good rule of thumb. This amount should cover depreciation, interest, normal repairs, taxes and insurance. On the other hand, if the facility will remain idle if not rented, annual rent equal to 10 percent of value may be satisfactory. This generally will cover cash expenses such as repairs, taxes and insurance and the loss of value due to use or depreciation. For example, by using these guidelines, a hog barn valued at \$25,000 would have the rent set between \$2,500 to \$4,500 per year.

The prospective tenant, meanwhile, should consider other alternatives for renting or building facilities. For example,

would the building cost (amortized over the useful life of the facility), plus ownership costs (repairs, taxes and insurance) of building a similar facility be more or less expensive than the rental price? The answers to such questions will help determine if the asking price is reasonable.

Probably the hardest thing to do when using this method is setting a fair market value on the facility in question. Normally, one would expect the value of partially or fully depreciated facilities to be somewhat less than the replacement value. One good approach is to estimate how much the facility would add to the value of the property if the property was sold. (TD)

### Changes to waste management regulations announced. Inspection deadline nears.



Regulations on manure management are listed in Title 130 by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). Changes were mandated by LB1209 and LB870 in the last two sessions of the Nebraska Legislature.

The Nebraska Environmental Quality Council met in September 1999 and approved

changes in Title 130 proposed by NDEQ in response to the legislative requirements. One of the important changes is to exempt existing livestock operations with a capacity of 300 animal units or less from the requirement that a DEQ inspection must be requested by January 1, 2000. One animal unit is equivalent to one feedlot steer or heifer and to 2.5 swine weighing 55 pounds or more.

However, any livestock operation with less than 300 animal units is not exempt from inspection and the permitting process, if there has been a confirmed discharge of livestock wastes into waters of the state or the NDEQ has determined that because of conditions at the operation, there is a high potential for discharge into waters of the state, in which case the owner would be notified by certified mail that the operation

is subject to the regulations in the Livestock Waste Management Act.

Any person who has not requested an inspection for a livestock operation after January 1, 2000, except an exempt livestock operation, shall be assessed, except for good cause shown, a late request fee of \$50 for Class I and Class II facilities (up to 500 animal units) and \$500 for Class III and IV facilities (more than 5000 animal units). Each month a violation continues will be a separate offense.

(See articles in previous Neblin newsletters about the Livestock Waste Management Act. "What is LB1209 and does it affect you?" and "Deadline near for requesting free inspection in compliance with the Livestock Waste Management Act" in August and December, 1998 respectively.) (TD)

### Crop Protection Clinics

Each year the University of Nebraska Crop Protection Clinics feature practical, economical and environmentally sound management strategies for insect, plant, disease and weed problems in crops. Information presented at individual meetings will vary by location. Clinics scheduled for southeast Nebraska are to be held at these locations on the following dates: Lincoln, January 4; Auburn, January 5; Fremont, January 6 and York, January 11.

The list of topics to be presented at the January 4 Lincoln Crop Protection Clinic includes:

- Low/reduced cost weed management strategies
- Biology and management of Soybean Cyst Nematode
- Seed treatments
- Herbicide resistant crops, "Benefits and Risks"
- Corn disease outlook
- GMO acceptance/issues
- Rootworm resistance
- New products and the 2000 Weed Management Guide
- Weed management decisions
- Fungicide options for crop health management
- Weed management decisions
- Bt corn/GMO
- Label jeopardy
- Recertification wrap-up

For all meetings, registration begins at 8 a.m., with sessions continuing from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The \$20 registration fee includes proceedings, publications, refreshments and the noon meal. Advanced registration is not required; however, saves standing in line. (WS)

#### A REMINDER FOR INTERNET USERS:

Lancaster County Extension Office has a new, shorter home page address: [www.lanco.unl.edu](http://www.lanco.unl.edu)  
 Some shortcuts:  
[www.lanco.unl.edu/food](http://www.lanco.unl.edu/food)  
[www.lanco.unl.edu/ag](http://www.lanco.unl.edu/ag)  
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[www.lanco.unl.edu/family](http://www.lanco.unl.edu/family)  
[www.lanco.unl.edu/4h](http://www.lanco.unl.edu/4h)  
[www.lanco.unl.edu/contact](http://www.lanco.unl.edu/contact)

## Water pipes

Frozen water pipes aren't life threatening; however, frozen or broken water pipes do cause damage to homes each winter. If pipes in the walls aren't properly insulated, they can freeze and rupture. (A 1/8 inch crack in a pipe can release up to 250 gallons of water a day, soaking floors, rugs and furniture.) To prevent the mess and aggravation frozen pipes cause, protect your home or apartment by following the simple steps below.

Before cold weather:

- Locate and insulate pipes most susceptible to freezing—typically those near outer walls, in crawl spaces or in the attic. Insulation made especially for this purpose is available.

- Wrap pipes with heat tape (UL approved).

- Seal any leaks that allow cold air inside where pipes are located.

- Disconnect garden hoses and shut off and drain water from pipes leading to outside faucets. This reduces the chance of freezing in the short span of pipe just inside the house.

When it's cold:

- Let hot and cold water trickle at night from a faucet on an outside wall.

- Open cabinet doors to allow more heat to get to uninsulated pipes under a sink or appliance near an outer wall.

- Make sure heat is left on and set no lower than 55 degrees.

- If you plan to be away: Have someone check your house daily to make sure the heat is still on to prevent freezing or drain and shut off the water system (except indoor sprinkler systems).

If pipes freeze:

- Make sure you and your family know how to shut off the water, in case pipes burst. Stopping the flow of water can minimize the damage to your home. Call a plumber and contact your insurance agent.

- Never try to thaw a pipe with an open flame or torch.

- Always be careful of the potential for electric shock in and around standing water. (DJ)

## Planting designs with wildlife in mind

Windbreaks are planted to protect farmsteads, livestock, roads or crops. The additional goal of providing wildlife benefits can be added without compromising the primary purpose. In developing a plan, select a design, plant materials and location that meet your specific windbreak needs, but include factors that benefit wildlife.

Below are some designs with tips on improving them for wildlife.

Overall guidelines:

- Choose trees and shrubs that have wildlife benefits, but that are adapted to the local climate; generally, native species are the best bet because they are adapted and familiar to wildlife. (See NebGuide G84-671 or EC91-1771.)

- Include a variety of trees and shrubs in the windbreak planting. This gives a more



natural landscape appearance, improves wildlife values for more species and reduces the chances of disease or insect pest problems.

- Where appropriate, select a site that connects to a larger habitat block such as a river corridor, wood lot, wetland, woody draw or similar area.

- Consider planting a wildlife food plot or leaving grain fields unplowed. The cover reduces soil erosion and, on the leeward side of windbreaks, wildlife have a food source in a sheltered spot.

- Consider planting or leaving herbaceous vegetation such as a mixture of grasses and legumes, grain or stubble as a border, 20-50 feet wide, along the edges of windbreaks, but avoid competition with new plants by keeping a clear area next to the trees. This provides

nesting, loafing and foraging cover for pheasants, quail, meadowlarks and others. On the windward side, such cover also improves wind protection and shields newly planted trees from desiccation and abrasion caused by blowing soil. Mowing, if needed, should be late in the season to avoid nesting wildlife (e.g. August) and limited to every three to four years to maintain standing cover for early nesters.

- Consider adding a row of shrubs to the windward side to trap snow before it gets to the main windbreak and to improve wind protection near the ground.

Field windbreaks.

These windbreaks are often planted across productive cropland to reduce wind erosion, distribute snow, conserve soil moisture and increase net crop yields. They can provide benefits as travel lanes and as feeding, loafing and/or nesting sites for birds such as pheasants, quail, mourning doves and songbirds. To enhance the value of field windbreaks for wildlife:

- Choose a variety of trees adapted to the site that have wildlife benefits and plant them so there is a mix of tree types within and among rows.

- Alternate trees and shrubs within the row or consider adding a shrub row immediately next to the tree row on the leeward side. Stagger the tree and shrub rows to better fill gaps. Shrubs will provide critical ground cover and add foraging and nesting sites near the ground.

- Where possible, add a row of shrubs around the field edges to connect the windbreak rows. These provide safe travel lanes plus additional foraging and nesting sites.

Farmstead and livestock windbreaks.

Windbreaks with four or five rows are commonly used to protect farmsteads or livestock. Greater width may be necessary for wildlife protection in winter in northern climates. For example, eight-row windbreaks have been recommended for



wildlife protection in Minnesota and more than eight rows may be needed to provide ample winter protection in Manitoba and North Dakota.

In contrast, one to three-row windbreaks are commonly used farther south in areas such as the Texas panhandle. In general, greater width provides better winter protection. An ample ground cover layer, availability of food resources and connections with larger blocks of protective cover are also critical factors in winter survival for pheasants, quail and other wildlife. If an established windbreak fills with snow or otherwise does not offer adequate winter habitat, consider adding the needed plants to improve it. Below are some design tips for a five-row windbreak.

- On the windward side, often the north or west side, use two rows of evergreen trees such as eastern redcedar, Rocky Mountain juniper or other native conifer species. Spruce and fir are recommended for more northern sites. Stagger the trees in the two rows so that all spaces are better occupied.

- For the middle row (or middle two rows), use tall deciduous trees such as those listed in NebGuide G84-671 or EC91-1771. A variety of deciduous trees mixed through these rows provides more benefits to more wildlife species.

- Add a row of tall shrubs and a row of short shrubs on the leeward side. Planting a variety of shrub species with high wildlife values is the best approach. (DJ)



## Acreage Insights



## Tractor safety tips (part 12)

Tractors are one of the most important pieces of equipment on a farm, yet they are also among the most dangerous. More deaths are caused by tractors than by any other type of farm accident. It is, therefore, imperative that tractor owners routinely check their tractors and keep in mind the following safety guidelines:



Always shut off the tractor and engage the parking brake or put the transmission in park before getting off. Doing this eliminates the chance of being run over or entangled in running machinery (i.e., PTO shafts and towed powered machinery). If there are other people around, keep them at a safe distance and in sight. Remove the key.

Never allow an extra rider on equipment. If there is only one seat on the tractor, then the only person that should be on the tractor is the operator. Many children and adults are killed by being run over by tractors or equipment. The extra rider can be knocked off, forced off or fall off.

Tractors and other equipment that are not designed to travel at more than 25 miles per hour, must display a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) sign. This sign must be placed not less than two feet nor more than six feet above the ground with the point directed upward and placed at the rear of the tractor or equipment. If the SMV is faded, replace it. Many accidents occur every year when motorists run into the rear of slow moving equipment. An additional method to protect the operator and motorist is to turn on flashing four-way amber lights. This gives motorists an indication that the equipment is traveling 25 MPH or less. (DJ)

## Conferences of interest

- Nebraska Turfgrass Conference, January 10-12, Holiday Inn, 72<sup>nd</sup> & Grover, Omaha. Contact: Don Ellerbee, Nebraska Turfgrass Foundation, 402-463-5418, <http://turfgrass.org/>

- Nebraska Nurseryman's Conference, January in Omaha, contact: Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association, 1210 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph, MO 64506, phone: 816-233-1481, FAX: (816) 233-4774, e-mail: [western@ponyexpress.net](mailto:western@ponyexpress.net) – Sarah Woody Bibens, Executive Secretary

- Mid-America Fruit Growers Conference, January 5-6 at the Ramada Inn, St. Joseph, MO. Contact: Ken Krause, 7049 East 149<sup>th</sup>, Overbrook, KS 66524. Phone number: 785-665-7643.

- Great Plains Regional Vegetable Conference, January 7-8 at the Ramada Inn, St. Joseph, MO. Contact: Horticulture Department, UNL, 377 Plant Sciences, Lincoln, NE 68583-0724. Phone: 402-472-8616.

- Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society Annual Meeting, February 26 at the Leadership Center in Aurora. Contact: NSAS, P.O. Box 736 Hartington, NE 68739. Phone: 402-254-2289 or in Lincoln at 402-471-0817. (DJ)

## Learn at your convenience

—24 hours a day, 7 days a week—

### NUFACTS (audio) Information Center

NUFACTS audio message center offers fast, convenient information. In the Lincoln area call 441-7188; for the rest of Nebraska call 1-800-832-5441. When directed, enter the 3-digit number of the message you wish to hear.

### Acreage & Small Farm Insights Web Site

Visit our Internet web site at: <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/ianr/dodge/acreage/index.htm> to learn about Extension programs, publications and links to other acreage and small farm information.

### "Part-time Farming" video

"Part-time Farming" will help develop your country environment and improve your quality of life. Just one hour of "Part-time Farming" provides tips that will save you costly mistakes and precious time. Call 402-441-7180 to order your copy.



## Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

### Savor the season...with beef!

Preparing a prime rib for your holiday dinner sounds like a big job, but it couldn't be easier. Follow these steps to making a savory prime rib from Ann Marie Bosshamer, Nebraska Beef Council (NBC).

- 1) Select your prime rib. Ask your meat department manager to help you find the perfect roast. A prime rib is named on the meat label as a "Rib Eye Roast."
- 2) All you need is a shallow roasting pan, a roasting rack and a meat thermometer.
- 3) Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Place roast, fat side up, on the roasting rack in the shallow pan. Insert meat thermometer into the thickest part, not touching bone or fat.
- 4) Season beef as desired and place in the oven. Do not add water.
- 5) Remove roast when thermometer reaches 5 to 10 degrees below final desired doneness, 135 to 140 degrees F for medium-rare or 150 to 155 degrees for medium. (Final temperature after standing 15 minutes following removal from oven should be 145 degrees F for medium rare and 160 degrees F for medium.)
- 6) Tent roast loosely with aluminum foil and let stand for 15 minutes. The roast temperature will continue to rise and you can carve across the grain. Enjoy!

The NBC has a "Savor the Season...with Beef" holiday recipe brochure. For your free copy, call NBC at 1-800-421-5326. While supplies last, each caller will also receive a FREE meat thermometer. Here's a recipe from Ann Marie that you might enjoy.

#### Classic Beef Rib Eye Roast

Makes 8 to 12 servings.  
Total preparation and cooking time: 2 3/4 to 3 1/2 hours

- 6 to 8 pounds well-trimmed beef rib eye roast  
Seasoning:  
6 large cloves garlic, crushed  
1 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves  
1 teaspoon cracked black pepper

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Combine seasoning ingredients. Press evenly into surface of beef roast. Prepare roast as described above. Roast approximately 2 1/4 to 2 1/2 hours for medium rare; 2 3/4 to 3 hours for medium. (Follow temperature guidelines given earlier.) (AH)

## Focus on Food



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

### Q: What's the best way to freeze cookies?

**A:** Prepare cookies and bake as usual. (NOTE: Meringue-based cookies and cookies containing beaten egg whites, such as macarons, don't freeze well. Also, fragile cookies don't freeze well.) Cool thoroughly. Place cookies on a wire cooling rack to allow air to circulate around them to promote faster cooling. Pack in a rigid freezer container to help keep them from breaking. Place moisture-vapor-resistant freezer wrapping between layers.  
Rigid freezer containers include plastic, glass and ceramic containers labeled suitable for freezing. Milk and cottage cheese cartons aren't moisture-vapor-resistant enough for freezing. When using glass and ceramic containers, use only those designed for freezing. Other types of glass and ceramics may break in the freezer.  
Too much air in a container can lower the quality of a food. If you don't have enough cookies to fill the container, you might place the separated layers of cookies inside a large plastic freezer bag or surround them with freezer wrapping within the container. Thaw in wrapping at room temperature.

continued on page 12

## It's not the potato's fault

Many people think potatoes are fattening. Actually, potatoes are low in fat and are an excellent source of vitamin C and a good source of potassium, phosphorus and iron. The potato skin is a good source of dietary fiber.

A medium to large (8-ounce) baked potato contains:  
Calories: 247  
Fat: 0.2 grams  
Vitamin C: 26 milligrams  
Sodium: 18 milligrams  
Carbohydrate: 57 grams  
Dietary fiber: 5 grams  
Potassium: 948 milligrams

Compare figures for a baked potato with other potato dishes below. It's not the potato's fault that we often add a lot of fat to them when we fix them.

|                         | Amount   | Calories | Total fat, grams | Sodium, milligrams |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|------------------|--------------------|
| Baked potato            | 4 ounces | 124      | trace fat        | 9                  |
| French fries            | 10       | 157      | 8                | 108                |
| Mashed potato           | 1/2 cup  | 112      | 4                | 310                |
| Potato chips (15 chips) | 1 ounce  | 152      | 10               | 168                |

#### Meal-in-one Baked Potato

1. Scrub and prick a large baking potato such as a Russet Burbank.
2. Microwave or bake the potato until done.
3. Choose two or three toppings from the list below.
  - Yogurt or low-fat sour cream
  - Cooked, chopped broccoli or cauliflower and shredded cheese
  - Chili (from a can) and yogurt
  - Refried beans and salsa
  - Cooked chicken topped with mushroom soup (thinned slightly with milk)
  - Crumbled, cooked ground beef pattie and green peas topped with mushroom or other soup
  - Canned vegetable soup (undiluted) with slice of cheese

Source: HELP recipes, Healthy Eating for Life Program, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University, Manhattan.

## Gift ideas defend against bacteria

At a loss about what to buy for a stocking stuffer for a holiday gift?

Kitchen gadgets are popular gift items that can also help protect your family's health, which is important year-round.

"With all the talk about food safety, it's important to remember that Americans enjoy the safest food supply in the world," says Jim Larson of the

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, "but food safety officials can't do the job alone. Consumers should remember that their kitchens will always be the last line of defense against harmful bacteria that can make you sick."

Here are food safety gift item ideas from Jim, all of which can help you make sure your family's food is safe:

● **Meat thermometers.** "Every kitchen should have one," Larson says. He recommends you purchase an instant-read thin probe thermometer with either a dial or digital face. The advantages of these thermometers are they can be used in a variety of foods—roasts, casseroles, as well as thin meats like burgers and chops. Cost: \$5

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## Life's little luxuries for 100 calories or less

**"Pleasure Revenge:** Consumers, tired of all the rules and regulations, want to cut loose and have secret bacchanals with a bevy of forbidden fruits.

**Small Indulgences:** Stressed-out from ever-increasing expenses, consumers are finding ways to reward themselves with affordable luxuries."  
Source: Faith Popcorn and Lys Marigold, *CLICKING*—16

*Trends to Future Fit Your Life, Your Work and Your Business* (HarperCollins, 1996)

Diet soft drinks AND fried foods. Plain pasta AND extra virgin olive oil. Faith Popcorn, chairman of BrainReserve and internationally known writer and speaker on future trends, might define these eating patterns as "pleasure revenge" and "small indulgences."

Looking at the Food Guide Pyramid, many of the foods that fit these trends probably are at the tip in the "Fats, Oils & Sweets" category. Does the "Use sparingly" recommendation that accompanies this category warn of danger if one climbs too high on the Pyramid?

**The "star" on the tree?**

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- 329 Freezer Power Outage
- 371 Substituting Oil for a Solid Shortening
- 374 Don't Use Rusty Pans

and many more...



#### Cook It Quick!

Tips and recipes for cooking healthy foods in a hurry:  
[www.lanco.unl.edu/food](http://www.lanco.unl.edu/food)

**FREE monthly Food Relections e-mail newsletter.**

To be added to the mailing list, e-mail Alice Henneman at [AHENNEMAN1@UNL.EDU](mailto:AHENNEMAN1@UNL.EDU)

#### Diabetes Study Course

Call Alice Henneman (441-7180) for more information.

# Jean's Journal

Jean Wheelock  
FCE Council Chair



Happy Holidays! 'Tis the season to be sharing. So many of us have been blessed with

much and during this season, people are very generous to others. As rich as our country is, there are many who won't have a warm meal or a place to sleep that is warm and safe. We have several organizations that help

those who need it, so as we begin to think of what we can do for our own families, let us not forget our neighbors.

My two year term as FCE chair has been completed and I'm very proud of the clubs who have helped make a difference in our community. Congratulations to our new officers, Clairice Steffans, chair; Lynn Bush, vice-chair; Marcene Polivka, secre-

tary and Joy Kruse, treasurer, as they carry our ideals and programs into the new century. Please join us for an exciting council meeting January 24, 2000 at 1 p.m.

It has been a pleasure to serve and may we have much goodness and kindness in our world.

Happy New Year & Century



Jeanette Priess, Bonnie Damm, LaVonne Millwood, Helpful Homemakers, 40 years



Stella May Ehlers, Individual Member, 60 years



Eleanor Cyr, Phyllis Speidel, Winona Ketelhut, Junerose Kayser, Busy Belles Club, 50 years



Joyce Champoux, Helpful Homemakers, 30 years



Ann Meier, 49 years, 45 years. Presenting award Jean Wheelock, FCE president and 10 year member.

## What children want during the holidays

Chances are your children have a long list of gifts they'd like to receive during the holidays. Are you frustrated because they don't seem to understand the spirit of the season? Maybe they just need some coaching.

According to Jo Robinson and Jean Coppock Staeheli in their book *Unplug the Christmas Machine*, children really want four things during the holiday season.

1. Relaxed and loving time with the family. During the holiday season, lives become crowded with program practices, shopping trips, and parties. Even when parents are at home, they are often busy with holiday chores, plans, and money worries. Lots of gifts and attention when the holiday arrives won't make up for your absence now. "Children," say the authors, "want love in a steady, constant way."

They advise setting firm

priorities so you can give your children the attention they need. Consider turning down some social invitations to spend more time with your family.

2. Realistic expectations about gifts. Children who think only about gifts at this time of year can feel terribly let down when the holidays are over. Their new toys can't possibly be all they thought they would be after they've waited for them for weeks. Robinson and Staeheli suggest making other parts of the holiday as exciting as opening presents.

"Children," say the authors, "want and need their parents to define the celebration for them." Talk with your children about gifts and your own sense of values. Then plan family activities in which gifts play only one part. Shift the focus from receiving to giving by making special treats or crafts for neighbors and friends, a

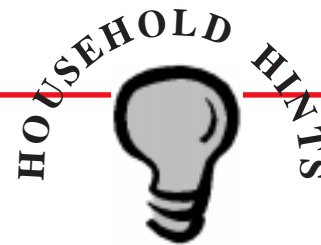
homeless shelter, or a crisis nursery.

Also, plan exciting family activities to look forward to before and after you open gifts. "That way," say Robinson and Staeheli, "gifts start taking their rightful place in the activities." They also suggest teaching your children the difference between commercials and regular television programs. Robinson and Staeheli believe that as powerful as commercials are, a parent's influence can be more powerful. They suggest watching an hour of television with your children and having them yell "Commercial!" each time a new one appears on the screen. Then talk about what you have seen. Help your children learn that the purpose of advertising is to sell products.

3. An evenly paced holiday season. Because stores start

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## Family Living



by Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

### Holiday stain removal

**Beverages (wine, alcohol and soft drinks):** Sponge with cool water. Soak for 15 minutes in 1 quart of lukewarm water, 1/2 teaspoon liquid dish detergent and 1 tablespoon of white vinegar. Launder. If stain remains, soak in an enzyme presoak for 30 minutes.

**Candle wax:** To remove candle wax from washable fabrics, first remove any wax buildup using a dull knife. Place the stained area between clean paper towels and press with a warm iron; or spray or sponge with dry-cleaning solvent, then rub with heavy-duty liquid detergent before washing. Pressing the wax of colored candles between paper towels may set the candle dye more permanently by making it harder for the solvent to penetrate the wax. Once the buildup is removed, treat any remaining spots with a pretreat laundry product. Then, launder in the hottest water safe for the fabric, using a bleach that is safe for the fabric.

**Nail Polish:** Apply nail polish remover, amyl acetate or acetone to back of stain over absorbent material. Do not use if fabric is acetate, triacetate or modacrylic. Rinse and launder. (LB)

## - FCE News -

### January FCE leader training

The January Family and Community Education (FCE) leader training lesson, Herbal Remedies is scheduled for Thursday, January 6, 1 p.m. Alice Henneman, extension educator will present the lesson. This lesson will focus on the use of herbs and herbal remedies as an alternative approach in health care. The topics that will be addressed in this lesson include a description of herbs and herbal therapy, general guidelines for consumers to use when making decisions about the use of herbs for health purposes and information about the regulation of the herbal market. (LB)

## Character Counts! Corner

### What parents can do

As parents, most of us are painfully aware of all the things we don't control—like the content of television, movies and music; the values of peer groups; and the impact of highly publicized bad examples. It's easy to feel powerless. But it's a mistake and an abdication of responsibility to underestimate the impact we have and how much more we can do. Michael Josephson, relates that a study of National Merit Finalists revealed that an unusually high proportion of these high achievers had two major characteristics in their home: first, there were lots of books and a great emphasis on reading, and second, there was a family tradition of eating dinner together regularly. It makes sense. Filling our house with books not only emphasizes the importance of reading, it is also a way to surround children with opportunities and examples that build their minds and character. Eating dinner together is about being involved, spending real, serious time in a family setting, guiding the way our children think and behave. These things don't happen by accident. We have to adjust our schedules to our family duties and consciously create an environment that nurtures and supports our highest values. Sure there are exceptions, but generally our children will value what we value. And since none of us is perfect, we have to be self-conscious about emphasizing our best not our weakest characteristics. What we say to and in front of our kids is terribly important. And so is what we do. Everything sends a message. What we read or watch on TV. How we handle our relationships. How we deal with anger and frustration. What attitudes we convey about drinking, drugs and sex. All of these send a strong message to children—is it one we want them to receive and replicate?

Adapted from a Michael Josephson Radio Broadcast from September, 1999. (LJ)







## 4-H & Youth

# 4-H Bulletin Board

- Sunday, January 9—Teen Council meeting 3-5 p.m. All teens interested in joining 4-H Teen Council are invited to attend or call Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)
- 4-H Ambassadors, 2 p.m.
- January 18—Speech VIPS, 7 p.m.
- February 8—Achievement Night, 7 p.m.
- February 12—4-H officer training workshop, 9:30-11 a.m.
- February 13—Speech Workshop, 6-7:30 p.m.

## Character Counts! training

Become trained to use the Character Counts! curriculum or just come to find out more about this exciting program on January 18, 2000 from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. All educators, interested adults or teens are invited to attend. Cost is \$5 per person. To register, call 441-7180—registration is limited to 40, so call early. Payment may be made the day of the workshop. If you have questions, call LaDeane. (LJ)



## Join the 4-H Speech VIPS

We are looking for new speech VIPS members. If you would like to help organize and conduct the Lancaster County 4-H speaking contest, call Deanna or Tracy at 441-7180. (DK/TK)

## All aboard!

Tickets are still available to board the 2002 CWF bus! If you are a teenager and would like to learn about government, travel the east coast and meet new friends, the Lancaster County Citizenship Washington Focus program is for you.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 11 at 7 p.m. For more detailed information about the CWF program, contact Deanna at 441-7180. (DK)

## 2000 4-H Teen Council officers

President—Valerie Lemke  
 Vice President—Megan Bergman  
 Secretary—Vickie Green  
 Treasurer—Lindsey Johnson  
 Historians—Laura Conroy and Sarah Hoebelheinrich  
 If you would like to become a member of 4-H Teen Council, call Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)

## Judges needed

If you would like to help judge district award books February 15, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., contact Deanna or Tracy at 441-7180. (DK/TK)

## Lancaster County Born and Raised beef

As you pick out those special market animals, keep in mind the Lancaster County Born and Raised contest that is held each year at the county fair to help promote Lancaster County beef.

The Lancaster County Born and Raised contest is open to all market beef born and raised in Lancaster County. This calf can be one from your own herd or one you bought from someone else in the county.

If the calf is purchased from a cattle breeder, all you have to do is have a copy of the bill of sale showing the origin of the calf. If the calf was home raised, a written statement that the calf was born and raised in Lancaster County needs to be turned in, signed by a parent or guardian.

Entries for this contest are taken at check in at county fair. If you have any questions, call the extension office. (DK)

## Chapelle's are named volunteers of the month

Gordon and Ellen Chapelle were named City/County Volunteers of the month. Each month the Lancaster County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program along with the Volunteer Services Division of the Lincoln Area Agency on Aging recognize individuals that have given many hours of volunteer service.

The Chapelle's were recognized at this month's County Commissioners meeting. They were thanked for volunteering with the 4-H program for over 30 years. They received a cash award, a balloon bouquet and will have their names engraved on a plaque that will be on display at the City/County building.

If you see the Chapelle's, congratulate them on their award and thank them for all their dedicated years of service to the Lancaster County 4-H program! (DK)



## Lancaster County Meats for Consumer Team

Members of the Lancaster County 4-H Meat Judging Team had the opportunity to work with local grocery store meat departments. During the day, the team had a chance to learn about safe handling techniques for meat. They also were taught how to identify fresh meat by color and texture. The team also attended two workshops that helped them to identify meat cuts. If you need help picking out some good steaks or chops, give a member of the team a call!

The program will be offered again this year. If you would like to become a member of the meats learning program, contact Deanna at 441-7180. (DK)



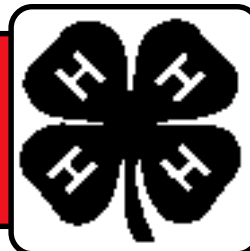
Left to right: Rachael Carson, Mitchell Vaughn & Emily Veburg identifying cuts of beef.

Team members include:  
 Back Row, left to right: Kristen Burson, Derek Asche, Rachael Carlson & Emily Veburg.  
 Front Row, left to right: Zach Morton, Tyler Asche, Mitchell Vaughn & Emily Johnson.



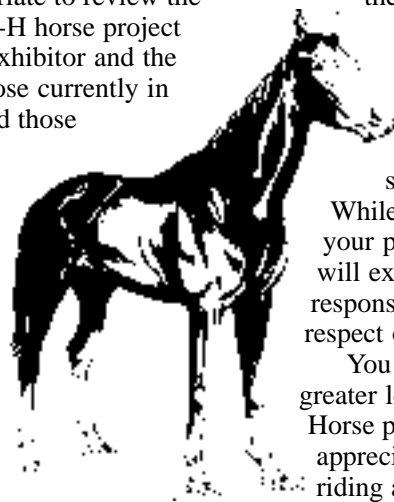
# HORSE BITS

## 4-H & Youth



As we welcome the New Year, it seems appropriate to review the goals of the 4-H horse project for both the exhibitor and the parent; for those currently in the project and those considering joining.

The primary aim of this project is to develop confident, competent, caring individuals of good



character who are connected to their communities.

Through the horse project, you will develop leadership, initiative, self-reliance and sportsmanship.

While working with your project animal, you will experience pride, responsibility and the respect of your mount.

You will also develop a greater love for animals. Horse project members appreciate horseback riding as a beautiful and

wholesome form of recreation. You will acquire skills in horsemanship, patience and understanding in handling horses and/or ponies. You will develop safety precautions to prevent injuries to yourself, your mount and others. Participation in the horse project will help prepare you for citizenship responsibilities as you work together in groups and support community horse projects and activities.

To become a good horseman or horsewoman, you will need to train both your horse and yourself. There are no short cuts. Becoming a true "horseman"

means learning all you can about horses and then using what you know every time you ride. If you work and continue learning, your reward will be a well-trained horse. Riding a finely trained horse is something you will never forget.

Work with your club members and your leader. Being a good horseman is an honor you can enjoy, but you will not achieve this goal without hard work and patience. Don't get discouraged. You are developing into a better person and helping make your club stronger with each new

experience and achievement.

### FYI

• The new Nebraska 4-H Horse Project Member Manual is available at the extension office.

• New 4-H Horse Show and Judging Guides will be out sometime around the first of the year and will replace the current guides.

• Horsin' Around Horse Clinic is scheduled for February 12 and 13, 2000. Information and flyers will be available around the first of the year. Call Ellen if interested. (EK)



## 4-H Goes *Under the Sea* with youth!

### 5th and 6th grade 4-H Lock-In

\$10 per child



January 14, 8 p.m. -  
January 15, 8 a.m.

call Tracy at 441-7180 if you have questions



Bring your toothbrush, toothpaste, sleeping bag, pillow, active wear, sleepwear (sweats) and a friend interested in 4-H!



Lancaster Extension Education Center • 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln

Presented by Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council and sponsored by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County

### 4-H Lock-In Registration Form

Name of participant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs/Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council

Return registration to:  
Tracy Kulm  
University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County  
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A  
Lincoln, NE 68528-1507

Registrations due by January 7, 2000

## 4-H volunteer forum

The Nebraska State 4-H Volunteer Forum will be held February 4 and 5 in Lincoln and March 3 and 4 in North Platte. This forum is a conference developed by a committee of 4-H volunteers from across the state. Network with other 4-H leaders, exchange successful 4-H programs among 4-H leaders and be introduced to new area and projects. There will be numerous workshops offering hands-on learning experiences and new ideas and programs designed to enhance your club. Anyone interested in 4-H is welcome to attend. Scholarships are available through the 4-H Council. For more information, contact Tracy at 441-7180. (TK)



## Free baby chickens!

Beginning in February, baby chickens hatched in the School Enrichment Embryology project will be available to anyone living on an acreage or farm, or to youth involved in the 4-H poultry project. Chicks will be available on or around February 18, March 24 and again May 19.

If you're interested in receiving some of the free chicks, call 441-7180 and ask for Ellen. (EK)



## Community Focus

# ruralroutes.unl.edu Paths through agriculture's hard times

## Rural Routes

Rural Routes is a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension web site designed to help farmers and ranchers maneuver through today's changing agricultural economy. Topics range from marketing or storing this year's grain crop to reducing input costs, planning financial and tax strategies, developing family strengths and exploring alternative paths to income or education. It provides objective, research-based information for today's producers, their families and rural communities. New material is being continu-

ally added to this site. Check it out for the latest information, news stories, publications and related links on:

- Crops
- Financial Management
- Stress and Change
- Marketing
- Policy
- Livestock
- Families and Communities
- Education and Outreach

Note: If you don't have access to the web, check with your local Cooperative Extension Office or library. (GB)

# Magazine telephone scams

Attorney General Don Stenberg warned consumers to be cautious about purchasing magazines over the telephone, especially when the offer is made to sound like a "bargain" or includes "free" gifts.

"Thousands of consumers buy magazine subscriptions over the telephone from legitimate salespeople every year. However, some consumers are fooled by unscrupulous telemarketers into paying hundreds of dollars for long-term subscriptions that they really did not want and could not afford," Stenberg said.

Stenberg suggested that consumers listen carefully to telephone sales presentations and ask questions if the terms of the sale are unclear.

"Fraudulent sellers make presentations so slick that consumers may be unaware they have agreed to purchase magazines until they receive the bill in the mail. Consumers who give

bank account or credit card numbers may find that money



has been drawn from their checking account or a charge has been placed on their credit card," he said.

Several Nebraskans have recently notified the Attorney General's office that they have received postcards in the email with an urgent sounding message asking the recipient to call an 800 number immediately about their "sweepstakes win".

The caller will find he has not won a sweepstakes, but if he

agrees to buy a quantity of magazines, he may be entered into a sweepstakes.

Watch out for these questionable tactics deceptive telemarketers may use.

- The caller may imply that he represents a major credit card company or magazine publisher but may be reluctant to give the name of the business he is representing.

- The caller may avoid or refuse to give the total cost for subscriptions, and may emphasize that the purchase will cost only a few dollars a week.

- The caller may say the business is "approved" or "regulated" by the federal or state government when in fact, no governmental body actually approves magazine selling operations.

Here are some tips to follow

*continued on page 11*



## Tips for buying toys



1. Choose toys with care. Keep in mind the child's age, interests and skill level.
2. Look for quality design and construction in all toys for all ages.
3. Make sure that all directions or instructions are clear—to you, and when appropriate, to the child. Plastic wrappings on toys should be discarded at once before they become deadly playthings.
4. Be a label reader. Look for and heed age recommendations, such as "Not recommended for children under three."

Look for other safety labels including: "Flame retardant/Flame resistant" on fabric products and "Washable/hygienic materials" on stuffed toys and dolls.  
Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (LJ)

## Distinguished Service Award



Mary Jane McReynolds, Lancaster County Horticulture Extension Associate, attended the 1999 National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for the Nebraska Cooperative Extension Association 4-H Section. This distinction is awarded to individuals who have provided outstanding professional accomplishment in extension youth programming. (GB)

## Learning about our world: celebrating Kwanzaa

December brings holidays for many people in our country. A relatively new celebration is Kwanzaa, an African-American holiday beginning on December 26 and lasting seven days. In 1966, Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor at California State University at Long Beach, planned a celebration to help African Americans be proud of their past and build stronger families. He felt many African Americans needed to know more about their history.

In planning this holiday, Dr. Karenga studied many groups of Africans. He found that in every group there was a harvestor "first fruits" celebration.

(Kwanza is a Swahili word meaning "the first." Dr. Karenga added the last "a" because there were seven children who each wanted to hold a letter during the celebration.) During the African celebrations, people came together, thanked God for food and life, remembered their elders who had died, judged how they had lived the past year, made plans for the new year, danced, sang and ate food together. Dr. Karenga also found that most African groups were

guided by seven principles, called Nguzo (principles) Saba (seven). He incorporated these principles into the holiday.

Families begin the celebration of Kwanzaa by placing a candle holder (kinara) with seven candles (mishumaa saba) on a straw mat (mkeka) on a table. The center candle is black for the color of the African-American people; three red candles symbolize their struggles; and three green candles symbolize their hopes. Also on the table the family places a basket of fruit and vegetables, an ear of corn for each child, a cup and gifts to be opened on December 31.

Each day a Kwanzaa candle is lit, and one of the seven principles (Nguzo Saba) is the theme for the gathering.

December 26 is Umoja - being joined together.

December 27 is Kujichagulia - being yourself.

December 28 is Ujima - helping one another.

December 29 is Ujamaa - sharing.

December 30 is Nia - having a purpose or goal.

December 31 is Kuumba -



creating.

January 1 is Imani - believing.

During the celebration, there is a feast in which people eat collard greens for prosperity and black-eyed peas for good luck, along with cornbread, fried chicken, baked catfish, sweet potato pie, peach cobbler, rice pudding, and carrot cake. The cup is filled with water or juice and passed around in memory of ancestors. "Harambee!" which means "Let's pull together!" is said many times throughout the celebration.

Dr. Karenga celebrated the first Kwanzaa with a few friends. Now millions of African Americans look forward to the

*continued on page 12*

## Holiday safety check

Holiday tree lights offer a bright, colorful array to a room. But those little bulbs can be a danger to a child. The time of the year is almost upon us when we need to use extra precautions in ensuring the safety of our homes.

Young children are unaware of dangers surrounding them. It is the responsibility of the parent to protect little ones. Iowa State University Extension offers several tips on home safety.

Babies are curious about everything. They explore by

climbing, touching and pulling things down that they are not tall enough to see. Help prevent those little people from getting hurt by keeping holiday tree lights, lamps that can tip over, uncovered electrical outlets and matches out of their reach.

A parent should watch out for hazards all around the home. Parents have learned from experience where dangers are. Young children have not had this experience. Hazards in the home

*continued on page 12*

# Strong families have members who give of themselves

During the holiday season, people often believe that the only gift they can give is something expensive or store bought. It is not necessary to spend money to give someone a meaningful gift. A handmade gift or a promise to babysit once a month can be more meaningful than a gift you buy. Remember, the best gifts come from the

heart.

Here are some holiday gifts to make:

- \* Use your hobby skills, such as painting or woodworking, to make unique holiday gifts.
- \* Give a package of coupons redeemable for chores you'll do during the year: wash the car, clean the garage, cut the grass,

vacuum the house, iron the clothes. There are many chores to choose from!

\* Write a letter to each family member. Include things you appreciate about that person, fun memories shared together, and shared jokes. Type the letters, make covers for them, and wrap them as gifts. They'll still be treasured when

store-bought gifts are long forgotten.

\* Put together a photograph album with pictures of family activities from year to year. This is an ideal gift for a grandparent or a grown child who has left home.

Suggested family activities:

1. Address and mail holiday greeting cards.

2. Work together on gift ideas.

3. Visit a friend or a relative who lives alone or in a nursing home.

4. Adopt a family through your church or other local organization. As a family, shop, wrap and deliver gifts for them. (LJ)



## Magazine telephone scams

*continued from page 10*

when you receive a telephone sales presentation regarding magazines.

- Ask callers for their name, and the name, address and phone number of the company they represent.
- Ask what the total cost of the subscription package will be. Then determine if this is a "bargain" price.
- Ask that a written copy of the sales terms and cancellation

provisions be mailed to you before you agree to buy anything.

- Don't give your bank account or credit card number over the phone for "verification" or "computer purposes". You may later find you have been charged for magazine subscriptions you did not agree to purchase.

If you receive a bill for magazines you did not order, or

if your bank account has been debited or your credit card charged for magazines you did not agree to purchase, contact:

The Office of Attorney General Don Stenberg  
Consumer Protection Division  
2115 State Capitol Building  
Lincoln, NE 68509  
(402) 441-2682  
Consumer Protection Line  
1-800-727-6432 (GB)



## Life's little luxuries for 100 calories or less

*continued from page 6*

Or, might we adopt the viewpoint of the person who described the "Fats, Oils & Sweets" grouping as "the star on the top of the holiday tree."

Let's think about the star on the holiday tree. It's selected with care. It complements the other decorations. It's often the most costly ornament and the quantity is limited.

View your foods from the tip of the Pyramid like that star. Select them wisely and fit them into your overall dietary plan. Then enjoy them as you enjoy the twinkle of the star from the top of your tree.

### Little luxuries

Here are nine sample pleasure-filled indulgences found in a tour of local stores—all at 100 calories or less. Have fun coming up with your own list of little luxuries!

1. Tangerine-flavored olive oil, 3/4 tablespoon = 90 calories,

10.5 grams fat

2. Blackberry salad dressing, 2 tablespoons = 100 calories, 7 grams fat

3. Spiced cranberry raspberry gourmet preserves, 1 tablespoon = 50 calories, 0 grams fat

4. Hazelnut spread, 1 tablespoon = 80 calories, 4.5 grams fat

5. Amaretto truffle Swiss milk chocolate bar, 2 blocks = 100 calories, 7.6 grams fat

6. Premium hot chocolate mix, 3 tablespoons = 90 calories, 1.5 grams fat

7. Apple cinnamon gourmet syrup, 2 tablespoons = 90 calories, 0 grams fat

8. Smokey mozzarella bread spread, 1 tablespoon = 100 calories, 11 grams fat

9. Double chocolate crisps cookies, 1 cookie = 90 calories, 5 grams fat

### Picking your pleasures



## Gift ideas defend against bacteria

*continued from page 6*

and up.

- **Cutting boards.** For the safety-minded chef, buy two or more cutting boards—one for raw meats, poultry and seafood; another for ready-to-eat foods and raw fruits and veggies.

"Raw meat foods can contaminate other ready-to-eat or raw foods when you use the same cutting board for both," Larson says. "To avoid this, use separate cutting boards. Some specialty shops now offer different color cutting boards in a variety of sizes. We recommend you use plastic, rather than wood, cutting boards and that you sanitize them after use with a solution of one teaspoon bleach mixed with one quart water." Cost: \$2 and up.

- **Paper towels and holder.** Using soiled cloth kitchen towels can spread harmful bacteria to otherwise clean cooking surfaces and utensils. To avoid this, use paper towels once and throw away. "Paper towels and holders are a good choice for gifts," Larson says. Cost: \$2 for plastic towel holders to \$30 or more for carved wooden holders. Paper towels cost about \$1 per roll.

- **Hand soap and holder.** Washing your hands frequently before and during food preparation is the best and easiest way to prevent foodborne illness. "To remind home chefs to wash their hands, buy a decorative liquid soap container or bar soap holder and fill with your choice

of soaps." Cost: \$2 each and up for plastic containers; \$5 and up for ceramic holders; \$1 and up for soap.

- **Other thermometers.** It's a good idea to check temps in the refrigerator and freezer periodically. Refrigerator temps should be 40 degrees or less and freezer temps should be zero degrees or less. You can buy these specialty thermometers at hardware and kitchen furnishings shops. Cost \$3 and up.

Adapted with permission from "Top 10 Gift Ideas Defend Against Bacteria," The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, The Division of Food Safety, Madison, WI. (AH)

cranking up for the holiday season sometime around Halloween, children wait and wait for the holidays to arrive. Then, when the last gift is unwrapped, suddenly it's all over. Robinson and Staeheli suggest postponing important family traditions until a week or so before the holiday. They also suggest saving a few for the week after the main event. For example, consider hosting a potluck dinner for family and friends a week after the holiday.

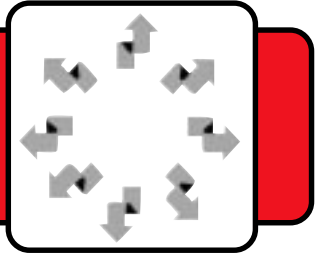
4. Strong family traditions. Traditions are important to children because they give them comfort and security. They help children understand how the season will unfold, and they bring back happy memories of

past holidays together. Robinson and Staeheli say that most families have more traditions than they realize and that even simple traditions will do. They advise asking your children which activities mean the most to them. Then, be sure to do them every year.

Give your children these four gifts and you'll give yourself a lovely present as well. You'll spend more time doing the things that really matter and less frenzied time at the mall and the toy store.

Adapted from the National Network for Child Care—NNCC. Part of CYFERNET, the National Extension Service Children Youth and Family Educational Research Network. (LJ)

## Miscellaneous



## Houseplant problems

*continued from page 2*

over fertilization. Older leaves are slower to respond, as are leaves in which yellowing is advanced. Leaves and succulent shoots become limp or wilted, usually recovering when water is supplied. This may be evidence of water shortage or over abundance of water followed by the development of root rot. Over fertilization also can cause wilting.

To control wilting: check drainage, look for root rot, check for conditions promoting unusually rapid loss of water, alter watering schedule.

Proper care of your houseplants will insure that you will be able to enjoy your plants for years to come. (MJM)

## Holiday safety

*continued from page 2*

tree material as a coarse mulch over dormant perennials or as a haven for wildlife in a nature area. Holiday greenery used for decoration should also be watched very carefully for signs of drying. Evergreen boughs and wreaths can dry in just a few days. A cigarette ash or match could start a fire very easily in one of these center pieces. Blow out candles in these center pieces

after the meal is over and never leave an unattended candle burning.

When decorating landscape trees and the exterior of the house, be careful. Make sure you have a sturdy ladder and someone to help hold the ladder when you are stringing lights in high places. Please have a safe holiday season. (MJM)

## Recycling is for the birds

*continued from page 3*

variety of feeders and a special section on building feeders and houses from recycled materials.

In addition, the extension office has available many of the University of Nebraska NebGuides and in-house fact sheets on enhancing wildlife that you can pick up for free (up to ten different guides). These same free materials are available via the internet by using our Environment and Natural Resources website at <http://www.lanco.unl.edu/enviro>



## What children want during the holidays

*continued from page 7*

# The NEBLINE

Nebraska Cooperative Extension  
Newsletter  
Lancaster County

THE NEBLINE is published monthly by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Rd., Lincoln, Nebraska, 68528-1507. Contact the extension office, (402) 441-7180 for more information.



Gary C. Bergman, Extension Educator—Unit Leader

NOTICE: All programs and events listed in this newsletter will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center unless noted otherwise. Use of commercial and trade names does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County.

- Mary Abbott, Extension Assistant
- Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator
- Corey Brubaker, Extension Educator
- Maureen Burson, Extension Educator
- Linda Detsauer, Nutrition Advisor
- Tom Dorn, Extension Educator
- Soni Cochran, Extension Associate
- Arlene Hanna, Extension Associate
- Alice Henneman, Extension Educator
- Don Janssen, Extension Educator
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- Warder Shires, Extension Educator
- David Smith, Extension Technologist
- Marilyn Waldron, Nutrition Advisor
- Jim Wies, Extension Assistant
- Karen Wobig, Extension Assistant



### Phone numbers & addresses:

- Office (leave message after hours) ..... 441-7180
- After hours ..... 441-7170
- FAX ..... 441-7148
- COMPOSTING HOTLINE ..... 441-7139
- NUFACTS INFORMATION CENTER ..... 441-7188
- EXTENSION OFFICE E-MAIL.....LanCo@unl.edu
- WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESS.....www.lanco.unl.edu

OFFICE HOURS: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday



## Nebline Feedback

In order to best serve our subscribers, this form will appear in every issue of THE NEBLINE. You can use this form to:

1. Change your address or order a subscription (please print)
2. Submit general comments and/or story ideas

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

- Order subscription (free—however, there is an annual \$5 mailing and handling fee for zip codes other than 683—, 684—, 685—, 68003, 68017, and 68065)
- Change of Address

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Story Idea(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to:**  
University of Nebraska  
Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County  
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507

# Extension Calendar

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

**December 24**  
Office Closed

**December 31**  
Office Closed

**January 5**  
4-H Council Meeting ..... 7 p.m.

**January 9**  
4-H Ambassador Meeting ..... 2 p.m.  
4-H Teen Council ..... 3-5 p.m.

**January 11**  
CWF Meeting ..... 7 p.m.

**January 13**  
Extension Board Meeting ..... 10 a.m.

## Alternatives to eating alone

Do you live by yourself and get tired of eating alone? Yet, do you feel uncomfortable always calling up friends to go out to eat? Here are some creative ways to have companions for dinner from Kansas State University Cooperative Extension Service:

- Have a progressive dinner party. Call two or three friends. Ask each one to prepare one menu item and you prepare one also. Then go to each home to eat the item they prepared. If you like, come up with a theme for your progressive dinner party complete with decorations.

- Check the newspaper for brown-bag seminars. Many organizations have lunch-and-learn programs on a regular basis. If you find one that you

like, check if they will be offering more in the future.

- Join a service organization that meets weekly for a meal and a meeting. Many organizations will let you attend a few meetings to learn more about them before you commit to joining.

- Start a dinner club. Ask several acquaintances or friends to share dinner on a weekly, bimonthly, monthly or whatever time you wish. Rotate the place from home to home. Maybe even have a menu planning party to get started with ideas and plan the first two or three dinners. Also, bring recipes to share.

- Here's an idea that I'd like to add. If you and your friends enjoy reading, you might start a book club. Meet monthly

in your favorite restaurant (or rotate to several restaurants). Dine and discuss your favorite book at the same time. You can read a book a month. Or break a longer book into several sections and discuss over several months.

- If you prefer to be with people when eating and everyone is busy, ask yourself these questions or try these ideas:

- Is there a church social today that I forgot about?
- Is there a senior center where I can drop in?
- Is there a restaurant I feel comfortable going to by myself?
- Make a sack lunch and eat sitting on a park bench watching the children play.
- Go to a mall and eat in the food court. (AH)



## Learning about our world: celebrating Kwanzaa

continued from page 10

last week of December as a time for learning, feeling proud, sharing, fun and joy. In one of his books Dr. Karenga says, "May the year's end meet us laughing and stronger."

If you would like to share more information on Kwanzaa with your children and their families, look for \*KWANZAA\* by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate or \*KWANZAA\* by

Dorothy Rhodes Freeman and Dianne M. MacMillan in your children's library. Perhaps there is an African-American art show, a puppet show, or play about this celebration in your area. Prepare one of the foods for a snack. Any of these activities will help our children learn about and understand the many people in our world. (LJ)



## Holiday safety check

continued from page 10

could be breakable glass, marbles and other tiny toys, plastic bags, plastic toys that break with sharp edges and scissors and other sewing items.

Is your house and family safe? Here are some helpful tips to find if the family is safe:

- Are electrical sockets covered and furniture placed so that little fingers cannot reach them?

- Does the family buckle up during every car ride?

- Do kids under 10 cross streets with an adult?

- Are kids always supervised in or near water, including the bathtub?

- Is the home's smoke detector working and are the batteries checked monthly?

- Is the water heater set lower than 120 degrees to prevent scalding burns?

- If guns are in the home, are they kept unloaded and locked away?

## Focus on food

continued from page 6

**Suggested freezer storage time: 3 to 6 months.**

For a free 8-page fact sheet giving tips for freezing pies, cookies and other holiday baked goods, send a self-addressed, stamped, business-size envelope to: Freezing Holiday Foods; c/o Alice Henneman; NU Lancaster County Cooperative Extension; 444 Cherrycreek Road; Lincoln, NE 68528-1507. (AH)

- Are kids protected against falls from windows, stairs, furniture and playground equipment?

- Are household cleaners, medicines and vitamins stored out of the reach of young kids?

- Does the home have emergency numbers near the telephone and first aid supplies?

The holiday season is a time of fun and memories; do not let it be destroyed by unsafe practices. (LJ)