1-1996

The NEBLINE, January 1996

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What is hazardous?
A product can be hazardous if it has one or more hazard properties. Hazard properties include:

- **Toxic**—can cause injury or death if swallowed, absorbed, or breathed in.
- **Flammable**—can easily catch on fire and can burn rapidly.
- **Corrosive**—can wear away the surface of a material.
- **Explosive**—can violently burst when it is under pressure or near heat. (ALH)

It's everywhere!
Each year, Americans use lots of hazardous household products. This makes about 2 million tons of household hazardous waste. This weight as much as 250,000 African elephants.

Household hazardous waste is the used or leftover household products that have hazardous ingredients. It is important that we take care of household hazardous waste the right way.

Each year, Americans use lots of hazardous household products. This weighs as much as

A product can be hazardous and needs related to their economic, social and environmental well-being.

The mission of the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County is to help people address issues and needs related to their economic, social, and environmental well-being through educational programs based on scientific knowledge.

Look in this box each month to spot articles addressing Extension priority initiatives. Specific program areas are highlighted with a corresponding icon.

**Recycle Christmas trees**
Nebraskans bought several thousand Christmas trees this holiday season. After the holidays, there are several ways to dispose of or recycle your tree. Some suggestions are:
- Place the tree in the yard or garden for use by birds and other wildlife. The branches provide shelter from strong winds and cold.
- Food can be supplied by hanging fruit slices, seed cakes or suet bags on its branches. You can also smear peanut butter and seeds in pine tree and prolong its usefulness. (DJ)
- Prune off the branches and place the boughs over perennials as a winter mulch.
- Chip the tree and use as a mulch around trees, shrubs, or in flower beds.

Is your environment making you sick?

Barb Ogg
Extension Educator

**Multiple chemical sensitivities.**
Total allergic syndrome. Chemical hypersensitivity syndrome. Sick building syndrome.

These relatively new terms have been coined to describe possible illnesses affecting persons who increasingly blame their health problems on environmental substances. Because other people are often unaffected, there is a natural skepticism in the medical profession as to the validity of many of these ailments. In addition, there are thousands of possible chemicals in our environment making it extremely difficult to pinpoint the cause. Without backing by a medical doctor, an environmental illness (EI) is discounted (and not covered) by health insurance companies.

What is an environmental illness? According to the journal "Clinical Ecology," an environmental illness is a chronic disorder that has variable symptoms caused by a sensitivity to an environmental substance—including industrial and domestic chemicals, cigarette smoke, diesel fumes and alchoholic beverages.

One environmental illness, multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS), has been widely documented in the medical literature and is generally accepted by medical personnel. In some cases of MCS, patients can identify an "acute chemical exposure" which triggered their hypersensitivity. Yet, other persons having MCS symptoms cannot identify an exposure that triggered their chemical intolerance.

Many patients diagnosed with MCS describe gradual onset of symptoms over a period of months or years. They often report chronic nausea, acquired food intolerance (skin rashes, diarrhea, bloating), respiratory problem and increased incidences of ordinary allergies. When these MCS cases have been thoroughly studied, the patients have been shown to have a long-term, low-dose exposure to toxic compounds, whether through their job, hobby, location or through their drinking water. Compounds that have been implicated include pesticides, solvents, perfumes, dyes, synthetic fabrics and natural gas. Formaldehyde is the most common environmental chemical that has been implicated in MCS. The most logical treatment is to eliminate exposure to any chemicals that trigger MCS—a tough prescription to follow when you consider the thousands of chemicals in our environment (refer to list on back page).

Where can you go for help?
If you suspect that you suffer from an environmentally induced illness, including MCS, where do you go for help? In Lincoln, a first contact can be the Lincoln's Lancaster Health Department. Mike Holmquist, environmental health specialist, will review your health history and, if you haven’t already been to one, will send you to a medical doctor, possibly even an allergy specialist to see if your problem can be identified by a medical doctor. Sometimes an unexpected allergy or underlying health problem can be identified and the case can be solved by a medical doctor.

If an obvious health problem cannot be identified, the next step is to try to identify the suspected substance/chemical. Because a person can be exposed wherever he/she spends time, both the work and home environments must be examined. The simple truth is, it is easy to identify a chemical if you already know what it is. However, most of the time the culprit will not be known or even suspected. This "needle in the haystack" approach can be

Please turn to Sick; back page
January garden hints

The herb garden

Basil—sweet (green) and purple
To grow this tender annual from seed, sow in flats about 6 weeks before last frost. Sow seeds and cover with the growing medium to about twice the depth of the seed. Keep soil at moist. Basil seedlings are very sensitive and most losses occur due to low moisture and low temperature. If they are not crowded in the seed flat, do not thin, but let them grow to 3 to 4 inches before transplanting. Basil likes the warm, full sun to grow best. Lift transplant carefully from the leaves instead of the stem. Set outdoors only after soil and air temperatures are warm. One chilly night can set plants back. They can be directed sown in the garden after the soil has warmed and the nights are not too cool. Be sure to sow to a depth twice the size of the seed or heavy rains may wash the seeds away. Pull basil is more susceptible to late blight, so harvest early. Sweet green basil can be dried, frozen in ice cubes or used fresh. Blended with pine nuts, oil and cheese, this basil is the prime ingredient in pesto. It is also good for a garnish, a flavorful ingredient for salad dressing or suffused in oil for flavored vinegar. Purple basil is best used fresh in salads and for making flavored vinegar. In the garden, purple basil provides colorful contrast to annual flowers and its color is used in cut arrangements. (DJ)

Garden Gossip Hotline

441-7179

 Shallots in the garden

Shallots are onion-like plants grown for their small pointed bulbs. Unlike onions, the flavor is very mild, but it is enough to add onion-like flavor to a variety of food dishes. Shallots are planted early in the spring and the culture is quite similar to onions. Shallots are smaller than onions, and the bulbs, which are not large, are planted shallowly and set 4 inches apart, in rows 1 foot apart. Shallots do best in very well drained soil, and they should be watered during the winter. At maturity, shallots will have turned a dark red, and the bulbs will resemble small versions or cloves of garlic. They are ready to be harvested when the bulb is large enough to pull from the soil. The cloves should be thoroughly cured before storage and should be kept away from the winter. The young leaves of shallots can also be used for flavor—like the leaves of bunching onions. Try shallots in your garden this year.
Commercial pesticide applicator training: initial and recertification programs begin in February

Initial Commercial pesticide applicator training (PXT) sessions will be held via satellite February 20, 22 and 27 in Lincoln beginning at 9 a.m. Persons must attend a general session in the morning and an appropriate-specific category in the afternoon.

February 20 - 9:00 a.m. - Noon • General Session 1:00 - 2:50 p.m. • Agr Plant (01) 3:10 - 5:00 p.m. • Ornamental/Turf (04)
February 22 - 9:00 a.m. - Noon • General Session 1:00 - 2:50 p.m. • Right-of-Way (07) 3:10 - 5:00 p.m. • Structural (08) • Urban Turf Pest (04) • Wood Preservative and Treatment (10)
February 27 - 9:00 a.m. - Noon • General Session 1:00 - 2:50 p.m. • Agr Plant (01) • Forest Pest Control (03) • Public Health Pest Control (04) 3:10 - 5:00 p.m. • Ornamental/Turf Pest (04) • Ag. Animal (02) • Seed Treatment (06)

Testing
February 28, 9:00 a.m.
March 14 and 28, 9:00 a.m. April 4, 11 and 23, 9:00 a.m. May 9 and 23, 9:00 a.m. June 6, 11 and 20, 9:00 a.m.

Recertification
Recertification for several categories will be held February 6, 9:00 a.m. at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, 33rd and Holdrege Streets. You must attend a general standards session in the morning and at least one appropriate-specific category in the afternoon. Recertification categories include: Ornamental and Turf (04), Ag. Animal (02), Food and Grain Fumigation (11, old EPA 12A), Right-of-Way (07), and Wood Preservative and Treatment (10, old EPA 12b). For more information, call 1-800-755-7765. (BFO)

4-State Beef Conference Jan 11

The 4-State Beef Conferences are designed to give beef cattle interests in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and each a regular update on current cow-calf and stocker topics. The conferences provide a forum of specialists from four of the USA’s leading beef cattle land-grant universities.

The 1996 conferences will reflect a year of agricultural changes as speakers focus on the following:
• Prices
• Our Competitors
• Custom Feeders
• Cost Control—Risks
• Nebraska beef producers may attend this conference on January 11, 1996, in Tecumseh. The program will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Baptist Church located at 3rd and Jackson Street in Tecumseh.
• Producers wishing to attend this conference should call the Lancaster County Extension office by Friday, January 5, 1996, to make their reservation. Registration fee is $15 per person or $25 per couple. The fee includes a noon meal and proceedings. (WS)

February 29, 9:00 a.m. - Noon • General Session 1:00 - 2:50 p.m. • Agr Plant (01) 3:10 - 5:00 p.m. • Ornamental/Turf (04)
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Springtails can jump

Barb Ogg
Extension Educator

Springtails are minute, wingless insects that get their name from the fact that they have an unusual locomotor organ. The main locomotor organ is a forked, tail-like appendage (called a furcula) which is folded under the abdomen when the insect is at rest. The furcula is held in place by a small, bony-like structure, called a telsonum. When the telsonum is released, the furcula thrusts downward and pools of water under plants by eliminating water tension in the humidity that they are found. Outside, they cause no problem and are an important component of the ecosystem. If there is an infestation in a greenhouse area, avoid standing pools of water under plants by draining the saucers. In addition, over-watering may be causing growth of fungi or decaying organic matter; plants should dry out well before re-watering. Repotting plants may help reduce a springtail population; after repotting, use sterile potting soil. Insecticide treatments are not necessary although an aerosol insecticide sprayed on the surface of the potting soil might be useful. With a garden store regarding a spray that will not harm plants. Don’t forget to read and follow label directions when using any insecticides. Occasionally, springtails can be found feeding on sewer drains or stagnant water. If possible, drain the water. If not possible, a small amount of dishwashing liquid squirted in the water should break the water tension and drown the insects. Insecticides should never be dumped down the drain.

As houses are made more air-tight for energy efficiency, indoor pollutants increase because fresh, outside air cannot get in. Indoor pollution is caused by fumes such as formaldehyde which are given off by common building materials. Expensive mechanical systems, such as air tested and re-established riparian areas contribute to air heat exchangers, can be effective in purifying the air of a 180 square foot energy-efficient house. However, many of the water content of the house is air tight homes will benefit from the addition of house plants, as formaldehyde fumes are present in levels, but at lower levels than if the house is air-tight. (MM)

Drain openers tough on septic tanks

Several manufacturers claim that adding household cleaners and disinfectants to the septic system will destroy bacteria and cause the septic tank to function improperly. However, research conducted over the past several years has concluded that with normal use, household disinfectants do not adversely affect septic tank operation. Normal use of household disinfectants should be considered to be the amount recommended by the manufacturer.

A study from the University of Arkansas showed that it is possible to reduce the bacterial population in a domestic septic tank by disposing of a excessive amount of cleaners or disinfectants in a slug loading (all at once). The study also showed that, with normal septic tank usage, bacterial populations recovered to their original concentration within hours. This was not true of drain openers. Even small amounts of drain openers can kill off the bacterial population in a septic system. Therefore, only small amounts of drain openers should be used. Recommended maximum doses for a 1,000 gallon septic tank are:

- JPEG: 1.3 gallons
- Cesspools: 2.5 gallons
- Drain openers: 0.65 ounces

If you are concerned about the effect of the cleaning products on your septic system there are more environmentally sound alternatives. For example, white vinegar can be used as a cleaner, deodorizer or grease out. Lemon can be used also as a cleaner, deodorizer or stain remover. A mixture of one fourth cup baking soda, one half cup vinegar, and one gallon boiling water can be used as a household drain blockages. Source: Small Flows (BPO)
Insects are found in Nebraska have evolved some mechanism to cope with our cold temperatures. A lot of insects find a sheltered location and then hibernate until temperatures warm up again. As temperatures get colder, these insects actually produce glycerol (antifreeze) to prevent ice crystals from forming in their blood. It is truly amazing that insects evolved to produce glycerol—no other natural chemical equals glycerol as an antifreeze.

Other insects may migrate to warmer climates (bees and butterflies, for example) or move into a part of the environment that is not frost free during the winter. Other insects merely die—using weather patterns the next year to repopulate northern states. Black cutworms and potato leafhoppers are examples of insects that cannot overwinter successfully in Nebraska. These insects pest fly from Gulf Coast states with the aid of strong southerly winds in the spring of the year.

Bees are different from most other insects. They remain active in their hives, keeping it a constant temperature—a behavior that is essential for their survival. How do they do this?

As temperatures get colder, colonies of honeybees form a dense cluster and generate heat. As the bees on the outside of the cluster become too cold to move, the warmer bees on the inside of the cluster leave the cold area and push the cold bees into the cluster where they will warm up. If the bees did not take place, the bees would freeze to death—and that would be the death of the entire hive. Honey, that the bees collected during the previous summer, is the energy source to maintain insect body temperature and movement inside the hive. In the northern states, a normal colony of bees will consume 60 to 80 pounds of honey in the winter and early spring. If a beekeeper is too greedy and doesn’t leave enough honey for the wintering bees, he/she may lose the colony.

If you have always wanted to keep bees, learn about beekeeping in two three-hour workshops and one Saturday hands-on lab session. Cooperative Extension Apiarist Marion Ellis and Extension Educator Barb Og will teach Beginner’s Beekeeping Workshop, March 4 and 5 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. The practical, hands-on lab session will be March 16, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Bee Lab—Agricultural Research Center, Ihthaca, Nebraska.

The basic workshop fee is $10. If you are a beginner, you may need supplies and equipment to get started. Hive supplies ($55) and protective gear ($67) will be ordered ahead of time. Call 441-7180 for a registration form or list of equipment that will be included. Please register by February 16, 1996. (BFO)

**How do insects survive freezing temperatures?**

Plants do a lot for people. They clean the atmosphere, modify climate, reduce noise, inhibit erosion, and add beauty. In addition, many are lovely to the eye and good to eat. Plants clean and purify existing air, as well as modify and cool it. Each person requires 36 to 60 pounds of clean air each day to breathe each day. Ornamental plants provide clean air in four ways:

- First, their "manufactured" air, not the clean air produced by photosynthesis directly polluted air and acts as a filter for some pollutants. A single, mature apple tree gives off 300 gallons of water per day.
- Second, moisture that plants give off modifies air created through photostoxsynthesis dilitates polluted air and increases the ratio of "clean to dirty" air.
- Third, leaves and stems of ornamental plants filter particulate and poll lutants and hold them until they are washed to the ground by rain. In one large city, the dust collected on the town-side of a heavily planted area measured 75 percent lower than the dewy, no-pollution side on the wind-side.
- Fourth, trees can slow the air movement sufficiently for heavy dust particles and pollutants to settle. Plus, fumes and odors can be masked by plants with particularly fragrant blooms or foliage.

By modifying the intensity of sunlight and by wind and humidity control, plants can have a significant impact on the temperature around the home. The shady area under trees is cooler because of an increase in moisture and decrease in direct solar radiation.

Trees not only give off moisture, but the leaf canopy tends to prevent fog-laden air from moving away. Thus, the moist air is more difficult to heat than dry air and helps reduce the temperature near the ground.

Trees are also effective at shielding something from the sun’s radiation. Leaves, twigs and branches absorb part of the radiation, transmit a smaller portion, and reflect the rest of it. There are several more ways plants can modify the climate. One important way is to use trees that are deciduous (those which lose their leaves in the winter) in landscaping, to reduce both cooling and heating bills. Trees planted so that they reflect the sun away from the house and shade it during the summer help keep the house cool. In the winter, when they have lost their leaves, the sun is able to reach the house and warm it.

Noise can be reduced with properly placed ornamental plantings. Trees, shrubs, vines and turf absorb sounds. Plant parts break up sound waves, changing their direction and reducing their intensity. Dense growing plants are best for sound control but the width of the planting is critical. To effectively screen high or noisy sounds, plantings would have to be 25 to 35 feet thick. Sound sources, such as rustling leaves, help on exterior or disruptive off-site stops.

Glimmer from car headlights or streetlights can be reduced in the neighborhood by placing buffer plantings between the light source and the house. Place them close to the house to be more effective.

A secondary source of glare, such as sunlight reflected from pavements, can be reduced by plants too. Plants, even in tubs or containers, can be used to visually "break up" or soften a reflective surface. The light is reflected to the plant, which softens it by diffraction before it reaches the viewers’ eyes.

Finnally, erosion control is an important role for plants. Trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers and grasses help prevent serious erosion by breaking the impact of raindrops and by holding the soil in place with their roots. (MIM)

**Environmental Focus**

**Label detectives!**

- Although birds are warm-blooded like humans, all of their life processes are speeded up. The normal temperature for humans is 98.6 degrees F, ducks 109.1 degrees F, hares 105.8 degrees F, sparrows 107 degrees F. Human hearts beat at 72 times a minute, while hummingbirds’ beat at 615 times a minute.
- There are three different types of pigment cells are found in the skin of a frog. This allows it to change-basically-coloring instantaneously and blend into any landscape when it wants to disappear. Dragonfly wings flap 28 times a second and carry the insect as fast as 60 miles an hour.
- If a man could jump as well as a flea, in proportion to his size, he would be able to jump the length of a football field.
- Bats are the only flying mammals. These wings are supported by their extended forearms and fingers.
- Spiders locate their prey by phucking each strand of their webs to feel where there is the most resistance.

**Some household products can be dangerous to our safety, health and environment. We must be very careful with these products. Read this label for important information.**

- What is the signal word on this product label?
- How can this product hurt you?
- What should an adult do with the empty container?

**Answers**

1. Danger.
2. It can burn eyes, skin and mucous membranes on contact.
3. Adults should throw the container in the garbage after rinsing it and replacing the cap. (ALH)

**Animal factoids**

- The whirligig beetles have long front legs for holding their body and short and second and third pairs of legs for swimming. Their eyes are divided so that the upper pair can watch for food and enemies above water and the lower pair can watch below the surface.
- The largest beetle in the Americas is the Hercules beetle, some of which reach a length of four to six inches.
- A bee’s wings vibrate about 435 times a second. (MIM)

**Bugged by winter flies?**

If your house has been invaded by flies on bright, sunny winter days, you are not alone. Your attic or upper floors near windows are the most common locations for these flies to congregate. They may look like house flies, but they probably are either cluster flies (the fluffy ones) or face flies (the not-so-fluffy ones). In the fall, these outdoor flies hide in protected places and may find refuge in small cracks around window and door frames. When they “come alive” on sunny days, they seem to be invading the house. Neither of these flies breed inside your home. Best management practices include caulking cracks around windows and door frames to prevent entry in the first place. The vigorous use of a fly swatter is the best control for a few flies. Insecticide "bombs" can be useful in killing large numbers of flies that are exposed and active—especially in attic areas where exposure to family members and pets is not likely. Be sure to read and follow label directions when using any pesticide. (BPO)

**PUBLIC INVITATION**

**Lancaster County Extension Board Meeting**

Held at the Lancaster Extension Conference Center the second Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

Monthly agenda available for review
See Extension Office receptionist 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. M-F
Positive parental pressure

Adolescence can be a trying time for parents. They may feel as though they are being told what not to do. As children move through adolescence, they need to be allowed to make choices and freedoms. But too much freedom too soon may mean undesirable influence from peer pressure in a teen's life.

Affirmative "parent pressure" can help balance out negative influence and adolescent feelings. Parents should be present when their children are facing problems. They should offer guidance, advice and encouragement.

Pressure by "stated values"

Tell your teens what you believe. Stand up for things you think are important, no matter how old-fashioned they may sound to a young person.

Be sure to let your teen know your beliefs about using alcohol and drugs and sexual conduct.

Pressure by "communication"

Talk to your teens. This means saying more than "Hi, how are you?" when they walk in the door. Find out how your son or daughter feels about important events in his or her life.

Developing the habit of talking—and listening—may prevent a crisis point later on.

Pressure by "supervision"

Set age-appropriate limits for your teens. Be involved in their activities. Know where they are going, who their friends are, what they watch on television and what music they like. Let them know you are interested and that you care about what happens to them.

Pressure by "participation"

Let your teen get involved in your life. Talk with him or her about your job and your interests.

Family activities such as hiking, card games or sculpting a snow family help give adolescents a sense of belonging.

Building friendships with adults, including their parents, can ease a teen's self-confidence builder for teens.

Pressure by "role modeling"

The adage, "Do as I say, not as I do" does not work. Young people learn from observation. They are aware of the lives that adults lead. They observe your habits and will model their behavior. The environment that is that the pattern you wanted them to follow or not.

Pressure by "not giving in"

Anyone who has teens knows that they can be very difficult. It may take an unpopular decision and not change your mind in order to make things happen.

If the decision is based on your values and previously agreed upon limits, stand firm during episodes of adolescent terrorism, no matter what.

Pressure does not need to be a negative factor in a parent—teen relationship. It can help to build a strong bond when accompanied with affirmation and respect.

Remember that it also takes pressure to transform a lump of coal into a diamond.

Credit: Connie Francis, Extension Educator, High Plains EPU, Lincoln County. (LJ)

Tips for preparing low-cost meals

• Plan meals ahead and make shopping lists.
• Use coupons and pay attention to store specials.
• Try generic or store brand foods. They usually are similar in quality to name brand foods.
• Convenience foods are usually more expensive than those made from scratch. For example, the price of a pound of potato chips is $10 or more the price of a pound of potatoes.
• Use non-fat dry milk in recipes.
• Fresh fruits and vegetables are cheaper in season. Compare prices between fresh, canned and frozen.
• Frozen dinners and vegetables tend to be more expensive.
• Hearty soups call for small amounts of meat and vegetables. Leftovers to create a good sized pot of soup.
• Use smaller (2-3 oz.) servings of meats and fish, and fill in calories with potatoes, rice, macaroni and breads. (MB)

Catering as a Business workshop

A "Catering as a Business" workshop will be held Tuesday, January 22. For information, contact the Lancaster County Extension Conference Center. The 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. workshop will include information on catering business basics; pricing for profit; menu planning perspectives; catering safety issues; marketing your catering business; and insurance for your business. Time for individual consultation will also be available. A $35 fee for the workshop will cover the cost of a notebook, lunch and breaks.

The "Catering as a Business" workshop is sponsored by UNL, Cooperative Extension and UNL Department of Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics in cooperation with the Lancaster County Extension Office. To obtain more information or to obtain a registration form, call 441-7180. Registration and payment must be returned by Friday, January 5.

Be a safe sledder

• Check equipment. Make sure sleds are in good shape, that they have secure handholds and are free of sharp or jagged edges.
• Check the hill. Slopes should be free of ice, snow, stumps, posts, debris, snow-covered rocks and younger siblings. See that the run-out area is far away from traffic.
• Never pull a sled behind a motorized vehicle.
• Encourage using energy-absorbing pads on sled seats.
• Slid sitting up. Lying flat increases the chances of head and abdominal injuries.
• Never pull a sled behind a motorized vehicle.
• Dress for the cold and set time limits on outdoor play. Hot chocolate breaks can warm kids (and adults) and prevent frostbite.
• Don't take children outside when it is colder than 40 degrees. They lose body heat quickly.
• Remember, "The majority of injuries are preventable," no hot dogs allowed. (LJ)

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Children on their own need know kitchen safety

Alice Henneman
Extension Educator & Family Living Grant Coordinator, County Health Dept.

January 1996

It’s estimated that roughly 7 million American children are “on their own” or are “cared for by a sibling” for short periods of time after school. Often the kitchen is the first place children go when they get home. What are the most important food and safety facts that children should know? Here are some clues to kitchen safety that you will want to remember.

1. Hands carry lots of germs. The first step in food safety is to wash your hands before making or eating a snack. All you need is a little soap and water. Make sure the water is warm, soap lather up. Scrub the back and front of your hands, between the fingers and don’t forget your fingernails. Wash for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse under running water and dry with a clean towel.

This may sound nice but not necessary. Proper handwashing, however, could save you from becoming ill.

2. Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating — use just clear, clean, cool water — no soap.

3. When using a knife to cut your food, always cut away from your body.

4. Microwave cooking is fast but can cause serious burns. Check with a grownup for general tips for safe microwaving include:
   - Never turn on an empty oven. This can cause the oven to break.
   - Read package directions carefully. Make sure you know how to set the microwave oven controls (for example, 10 seconds, rather than 10 minutes)
   - Use only microwave-safe cookware.
   - Food coming out of the microwave can be very hot. Never put any food right from the microwave into your mouth. Allow the food to cool for several minutes before eating. This includes letting microwave popcorn pop a few times, then open the bag so the opening is pointing away from you. Steam from the bag can cause serious burns.
   - Food gets hot in the microwave. Have potholders handy to move hot dishes.

5. Hot liquids, not fire, are a common cause of burns to children. If you get burned working in the kitchen:
   - a) Go to the sink and hold the burned area under cool, running water.
   - b) If the burn begins to blister... cover it loosely with a sterile gauze, or a clean cloth.
   - c) Tell a grownup whenever you are burned. If the burn is severe and hurts badly, get help from a grownup immediately.

6. Germs grow quickly in foods that are not stored properly (i.e. milk, lunch meat, hard-cooked eggs, yogurt or foods left out on the counter at room temperature). Put these foods back in the refrigerator as soon as you’ve fixed your snack.

7. Discard foods like bread, cheese, jelly, fruits, vegetables or other foods that have mold spots or that look bad. Fruits and vegetables that are shriveled or have soft spots should be thrown away.

8. If you spill something, take the time to clean it up properly.

9. To use a toaster safely:
   - Never use any food right from the toaster. Plug it directly into the outlet. Avoid using adapters with many appliances plugged into one outlet. Unplug toasters and other kitchen appliances when not using them.

   A toaster that gets stuck, unplug the toaster. Do not use any object to remove the toast from the toaster. Toasters can catch on fire. If you see flames from any kitchen appliance, call a grownup immediately. If a grownup is not home, call 911.

10. Use a stove only if you have been trained to use it by an adult. Keep things that will burn away from the stove. Tovels, potholders, plastics and paper towels can all catch fire quickly when near direct heat or flames. Keep an eye on the stove when cooking food. A pan handles away from the front so someone can’t knock them off while walking by. Always turn off the stove when you’re done cooking.

11. If something on your stove catches on fire:
   - 1) Smother the fire with a lid
   - 2) Turn off the burner.
   - 3) Once the fire is out, tell a grown-up there was a fire.
   - 4) Leave the house and call 911 if the fire has leaping flames.

   DO NOT THROW BAKING SODA, SALT, WATER OR FLOUR ON A FIRE. DON’T CARRY A BURNING OBJECT TO ANOTHER ROOM. (AH)

“Nutrition: Making a Difference in Schools” satellite videoconference

12. Nutrition educators and health professionals, teachers, school food service personnel, school nurses, principal, including coordinators, school board members and other interested individuals are invited to participate in a satellite videoconference in enhancing effective school nutrition education programs. “Nutrition: Making a Difference in Schools”, a national program developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will be offered Thursday, January 25, 12:00 to 3:50 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Conference Center, 444 Cherryview Rd., Lincoln, Nebraska. The Nebraska Department of Health and UNL Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County are the local sponsors of this program.

Participants will learn more about how to identify the key elements of effective school nutrition education programs, school policies, curriculum, and linkages between classrooms, food service, and physical activity departments. The session will help participants develop simple evaluation instruments to assess the acceptability of nutrition education programs by students and school staff and to assess the effectiveness of the nutrition education program in changing targeted behaviors. The program will feature nationally recognized leaders in school-based health promotion programs.

There is no charge for this program, however, preregistration is recommended. Call 441-7180 by Wednesday, January 17. Participants are welcome to bring brown bag lunches. Continuing education credits will be offered to participants by the American Dietetic Association, American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences and Certified Health Education Specialists. For more information about the program and continuing education credits, call Alice Henneman, 441-7180, or Kathy Goddard, 471-2781. (AH)
Kansas City here we come!

The 1996 Kansas City 4-H Youth Conference is scheduled for March 14-17, at the Park Place Hotel. The theme for the conference is "4-H Reaching Out From the Heartland: Globally and Culturally." This is a midwest regional conference for youth, over the age of 14. The conference includes hands-on sessions that involve youth in solving issues central to their lives, families and communities in a global society, thus broadening their horizons and insights into the world in which they live. The schedule looks like this:

Day 1 — Keynote and banquet
Day 2 — Career education through in-depth tours of Kansas City area businesses, ethnic enclaves—foods, culture and FUN!
Day 3 — Workshops and seminars on leadership, education, careers and global issues, State Night Dinner and Dance
Day 4 — Capstone and brunch—HOMEWARD BOUND!

The cost for registration is approximately $175 per person. Registration is due by Monday, January 9. Transportation will be by bus with the entire Nebraska delegation. This conference is an excellent way to broaden your horizons and learn more about your community, country and world. Please contact Ann Marie if you have any questions.

4-H Cloverbuds—it’s for you!

Families exploring together—that’s what Lancaster County 4-H Cloverbuds is all about. This exciting program for 5–7-year-old children and their families is in its second year—and growing. In 4-H Cloverbuds, families have many wonderful opportunities to search out new activities, discover new things and share them with one another.

4-H Cloverbuds help children build self-esteem and talents in fun, educational group settings. Clubs provide experiences that lead to success. These non-competitive activities nurture self-esteem with positive reinforcement and recognition for participation.

It’s easy to start a 4-H Cloverbuds club in your own neighborhood. Cloverbuds clubs are "family friendly" and flexible! Just call the Extension office at 441-7180 and then ... GET READY FOR A FAMILY ADVENTURE.

4-H State Leaders Forum to be in Lincoln

The Ramada Inn in Lincoln will be the site of the Nebraska State 4-H Leaders Forum February 2 and 3, 1996. Registration is due January 17 and is $55 for the whole forum. Part-time registrations are also available. 4-H Council sponsors several registration scholarships. If you would like to request a scholarship, contact the Extension office for a form. All applications for funds must be turned into the office by January 7, 1996.

Over 32 workshops are available on Saturday and everyone will be able to attend five. The forum starts on Friday afternoon with several tours offered of the Lincoln area and a Friday evening meal will kick off the event. Applications are available at the Extension office.

HORSE BITS

Horse Owners’ New Year’s Resolution

You may have made a New Year’s resolution to lose weight or to exercise more. But, if you’re a horse owner, here are a few resolutions your horse would like you to make for 1996.

1. Feed me a balanced ration of high-quality feeds, including good, green hay.
2. Provide me, if possible, with a high-quality pasture forage. Remember to be sure it has been properly fertilized and limed.
3. Keep me in proper body condition throughout the year. I shouldn’t be too thin or too obese.
4. I need my teeth checked at least once a year and twice a year when I’m older.
5. I also require a good scheduled parasite control program.
6. My hooves should be kept trimmed and shod on a regular basis.
7. I really enjoy being groomed and talked to — on a daily basis while I am inside and I would appreciate being exercised; either riding or just for a brisk walk as you tell me what you did all day.
8. When it’s cold outside, please remember that I need a shelter to get out of the wind and wet weather and that there is adequate water for me to drink.
9. If I am stabled — please check on me at least twice daily.

If the above resolutions are followed — just think what a healthier horse can do for you and what feeling good inside and out can do for me! Here’s a toast to you! (CB)
Lancaster County 4-H clubs made their first appearance in the Star City Parade December 2, 1995. Following a banner proclaiming “4-H...More Than You Ever Imagined,” came a huge 4-H clover surrounded by dancing table settings, a giant spool of thread, a pygmy goat, cookies, decorated llamas, a walking camera and numerous other representations of the various projects, Deb Arends, Pam Stearley and Gwen Thorpe, with help from Gene Veburg and the Lancaster County Agriculture Society, were responsible for this very successful venture.- (LJ)

Is an aviation career in your future?

Have you considered a career in aviation? If so, The Aviation Career Education (ACE) Academy is your opportunity. The ACE Academy is a week-long opportunity for students ages 12-17 who will be given a chance to explore a wide variety of careers in aviation and experience firsthand the thrill of piloting a single engine airplane with a Federal Aviation Administration certified pilot. The camp will be held during the summer of 1996 at the Nebraska National Guard Camp located along the Platte River near Ashland. Several exciting tours will be part of the week including visits to the Strategic Air Command Museum and Offutt AFB’s Aviation Physiology Laboratory. If you would like more information on the ACE Academy, contact the Extension office for a brochure. (LJ)

Move with the music!

It’s time to make a change with the Lancaster County 4-H Music Contest, so move with us to the music! Sunday, April 21, 4:00 p.m. at the Nebraska City Campus Union Ballroom! Registration is due on Friday, April 12.

There are four classes for the music contest, drill or dance group, song group, song group with recorded accompaniment or combo/band group. Here are a few of the rules, they are further explained in the fair book (you may refer to the 1995 fair book).

1. Groups must have at least three participants and they all must be 4-H members.
2. Clubs may combine members to participate in the contest.
3. Any number of songs may be used within the 6-minute time limit.
4. Recorded music may be used with either song or dance group, although a piano will be available for your use.
5. Accompaniment must be a 4-H member, leader or parent. No more than one organ may accompany a group.

We are very excited about moving the contest to this date and hope you are open to change as well. Please contact Ann Marie if you have any questions. Good Luck...Moving to the Music! (AMM)

WANTED

22 Outstanding Educators

To spend mid-May to mid-August helping children and youth (ages 8-18) have the best summer of their lives while camping at the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center—Gretna, NE; State 4-H Camp—Halsey, NE or South Central 4-H Center—Republic- can City, NE.

During pre-camp training, you will learn how to conduct sessions in photography, nature, crafts, ropes/confi-dence course, cooking, crafts, water camping, games and recreation.

As a staff member, you earn a competitive salary, are provided room, board and laundry facilities. In addition, you will be given an excellent opportunity to gain valuable experience working with youth. Internships may be arranged in order to gain college credit for your summer experience. If you want to help kids become the best they can be, make a positive impact on improving our environment and realize your full potential, then this is the summer job for you.

The Nebraska 4-H Camps are Equal Opportunity Employers and you do not need to be in 4-H to apply. Applications must be in by February 1, 1996 and an interview will be scheduled for February 9-10, 1996.

For more information or an application, see your employment office or call or write:

Jim Bell
215 West Highway 31
Gretna, NE 68028
(402) 302-4496

Bernie Lorkovic
"Box 87"
Halsey, NE 69142
(308) 533-2224 (LJ)

Attention! 4-H club leaders

During January, all 4-H club leaders will receive club update materials. It is absolutely vital that the information be returned by the date listed in the letter. If clubs are not updated, your club will be dropped from the data base and you will not receive timely materials from the office. (LJ)

Is it a dream to have a flying career and make it a professional success? ACE Academy is the opportunity. The camp is a week-long opportunity for students ages 12-17 who will be given a chance to explore a wide variety of careers in aviation and experience firsthand the thrill of piloting a single engine airplane with a Federal Aviation Administration certified pilot. The camp will be held during the summer of 1996 at the Nebraska National Guard Camp located along the Platte River near Ashland. Several exciting tours will be part of the week including visits to the Strategic Air Command Museum and Offutt AFB’s Aviation Physiology Laboratory. If you would like more information on the ACE Academy, contact the Extension office for a brochure. (LJ)

Successful animal 4-H project meetings

As a 4-H leader, you are critical to the success of your particular 4-H project area. The project meeting provides an exciting experience of opportunities for every youth. Youth need to acquire subject matter knowledge, physical skills, decision making abilities and positive attitudes toward themselves and others. How successful you are depends on your ability to relate to each individual member and adult volunteer. Remember, your role is to serve as helper and/or coach rather than directive teacher. The animal 4-H project area is often a "learn-by-doing" skill which develops life skills through 4-H project work.

In addition to the "learn-by-doing" skill, all 4-H members are encouraged to keep current records of their animal project. The animal science project booklet is divided into three parts: the action, the result and the timetable. It is very important to be able to control the outcome of your goals.

Another addition to project records is "judging contests." Judging is a very popular activity with all 4-H members. Judging helps to develop decision making, organizing and orally defending decision skills. By participating in judging contests, members and adult volunteers should be able to accomplish: selecting a placable class, determine the cuts or margins of difference, judge several classes, present oral reasons and score their own placings.

In addition to the judging contests, conducting a "project bowl" can help you, as the project leader; but also assist the club members and adult volun-teers in demonstrating their project knowledge and to recognize what they know and don’t know.

Another avenue to aid all leaders is attendance at the monthly animal VIPS meetings. The VIP's meetings are used to communicate ideas regarding clinics, judging contests, fair information and planning celebrations to show individual and group achievements. The dates for all animal VIPS meetings are printed in the Nebraska newspaper on a monthly basis along with dates of any clinics and/or workshops being held in each animal area. As a leader, if you are unable to attend each month, ask for volunteers—adult and youth—to attend. Your input is always welcome and encouraged. (CB)

Volunteer leaders wanted

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County is seeking cheerful, energetic and reliable individuals, or teams, to help organize and lead activities for youth. Ability to have fun and learn at the same time is a must. Call 441-7180 for further information on how you can help "shape the future!" (LJ)
Lancaster County Agriculture Society elects new members

At the December 9, 1995, annual meeting of the Lancaster County Agriculture Society, six new officers of the organization for the next year were elected. They are:

President—Rod Holloway
Vice President—Tommy Steer
Secretary—Jerrie Hughes
Treasurer—Elaine Pruett

New three-year directors include:

Roger Powell
Don Madden
Ron Osborne

Special thanks were given to Irene Rezac for her long and outstanding service to the Agriculture Society. The Fairboard (Lancaster County Agriculture Society) meets on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Conference Center. The public is invited and welcome. (LJ)

New 4-H Council ready to assume leadership

New members of the Lancaster County 4-H Council were welcomed at a working meeting and get-acquainted social last month. New as well as recently serving members of the council had an opportunity to get to know one another and begin the process of learning to work together for the good of 4-H in the county during the meeting.

Newly elected council members are:

Northwest Youth: Scott Christensen
Northeast Youth: Brent Burgess
Southwest Youth: Kent Rosenboom
Southwest Adult: Brent Sieck
Lincoln Adult: Galen Madson & Janet Anderson
Lincoln Youth: Robin Stearly & JoHanna Madsen

The new members of the council are joined by Emily Mitchell who was appointed by 4-H Council President Pam Stearly, to fill the rest of Eric Mitchell's term. (LJ)

Community & Leadership Development

Ten ways towards boosting morale

Many people believe they can pick up nonverbal clues to a person's true personality. But researchers say on getting your message across to Congress

At the present time Congress is debating several bills which will have substantial effects on the ways in which our country has traditionally done business. It is important as part of the democratic process that we all take a part in those decisions and let those who represent us know what we are thinking. Representative Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) urged people to be outspoken and interact with their members in Congress. Know how to contact your representatives and senators and let them know what you are thinking.

Sherry Kaiman and Sara Davis, congressional staff members offer these suggestions:

Make presence known.

Constituent mail, phone calls, faxes and e-mail are "highly scrutinized" staffers said. Constituent opinions do help sway a legislator's vote on an issue.

Have facts on-hand. When they do hear from you, lawmakers need more than an opinion. Build a case for support of your program. Present the facts—"this is what is happening in our community, here is how this program has helped our neighbors.

Use your business contacts. Ask businesses that favor your group to express support for the program both to your representatives and to theirs if they have a home office in another location.

Let them see you in action. Invite members of Congress to visit your site. Overwhelm them with requests to visit if they don't agree right away. Contact district offices as well as Washington offices. Keep inviting them back once they come.

Be inclusive. Don't contact only those who will favor your cause. "Whether they are conservative or liberal, everyone likes to be invited to the party. Whether or not they support your program is up to them—and it is your choice whether or not to support them." (LJ)

COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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Effective use of winter pasture

Feeding hay or silage to beef cows and young stock during winter is expensive and a lot of work. Let’s consider ways to make winter pasture a cheap and effective feed source.

For starters, you will need less hay and silage for winter feed. Every day you graze winter pasture rather than feed hay or silage, you will save 25 to 50 cents per cow. Another benefit of winter grazing is the cleaning off of old growth so cattle have mostly fresh, green pasture next spring. Cattle will even eat some plants—like yucca and ragweed—during winter that they will rarely touch during summer.

Grazing during winter—rather than in summer—is one of the best methods to improve the health of your grasslands. If you have some run-down, poor condition, low producing pasture, plan ahead to winter graze them by stockpiling rather than grazing summer growth. Grazing winter pasture, just like corn stalks. But, cattle do a pretty good job of picking high quality plant parts to eat while winter grazing.

Winter grazing is an opportunity to reduce winter feed costs and improve pasture conditions. Try it with your cattle. (WS)

CRP options: planning for the future

The pending expiration of many Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts on October 1, 1996, has many landowners and agriculturists wondering what they should do with these acres. Some plan to return them to cropland or other uses, some plan to keep them in grass and use them for haymaking or grazing purposes; and some would like to re-enroll the acres in the CRP. Whatever they plan to do, most of them have questions about how to accomplish their goal.

A workshop is planned for February 24, 1996, at the Agricultural Research and Development Center near Ames in Saunders County to answer some of their questions. Speakers will address topics such as managing CRP for forage production, considerations for returning CRP to crop production and economic considerations. However, plenty of time will be allowed for answering specific questions producers might have. Watch for more information in the next issue of Nebraska or contact the Lancaster County Extension office at 441-7180. (CB)

Test winter forages at certified labs

If you are not yet testing your feed, get started now. This year’s weather—the wet spring, hot summer, local droughts and early freeze—has caused much hay and silage to contain unusual nutrient concentrations.

In fact, some of the changes might be so large that your usual feeding program could be totally wrong for your livestock this winter. While many forages have normal or better protein levels, many feeds appear to be low in energy. Improper feeding could then cause calves to be weak at birth, cows to rebreed slowly next spring, low milk production and even abortions. And, if your forage is short, it will guide your efforts to stretch the supply. So, test now for protein, energy, poisonous nitrates and any other nutrients important in your feeding program.

And, when you send in samples for testing, only send them to a laboratory that is certified by the National Forage Testing Association. Besides the NIF Test Lab at the University, five labs participate in this certification program in Nebraska. They are the University of Nebraska Ward Labs in Kearney, Midwest Labs in Omaha, Olsen’s Ag Lab in McCook, Servi-Tech in Hastings and Specialty Services in West Point. These labs have proven their ability to accurately test forage in a national check sample program. So, go ahead, forage test. You will be dollars ahead! (WS)

International Agricultural Exchange Association

International Agricultural Exchange Association (I.A.E.A.) is an exchange program for those with a background in farming and a desire to work abroad. Trainees live with a host family and work with them on their agricultural or horticultural enterprise. The choices for this year’s program include the countries of Australia, New Zealand and Japan, and also the continent of Europe. (GCB)

Family mealtime

Mealtime is family time and a good time to teach nutrition by example. The “eating habits that children learn from their parents develop into lifelong patterns,” according to Linda Boeckner, Extension Nutrition Specialist. “When eating practices are formed at an early age, they are much easier to maintain when children go off to elementary school and beyond.” Boeckner offers several suggestions for creating positive family mealtime experiences:

• Children need mealtime experiences to pick up appropriate eating habits and socially acceptable eating behavior. One startling aspect of our fast-paced society is the number of households that do not schedule a family meal together.

• Children can be involved in more than just eating the meal. They learn from shopping for foods and helping in food preparation. Even very young children can be involved in getting a meal ready. For example, a two or three year old can help open food boxes, set the table, wash fruits and vegetables, stir batters, and put food away after shopping. Under supervision, children can learn to push buttons for mixers or microwave ovens.

• When children are older, they can learn the proper use of a knife and eating board to cut vegetables for stew or a salad. Children love to mix juice and other drinks.

• Once in a while ask your children to plan the family meal for an evening. They will love it and you will be surprised at their creativity.

• Food values and traditions are based on our family experiences. Dietitian and a weight control

Nutrition for Alzheimer’s

Sometimes people with Alzheimer’s disease may not eat as well as they used to. Here are some practices used by the Food and Nutrition Department at the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale, New York. Satisfying meals may be useful in caring for someone with Alzheimer’s. As reported in Tufts University Diet & Nutrition Letters, this facility has developed an award-winning “Finger Foods Menu Program.” Here are some suggestions they offer:

• Offer bite-sized portions of foods such as fruits, vegetables, cheeses and sandwiches. Persons who have forgotten how to use knives and forks can easily eat such finger foods. You may wish to go as far as making easy-to-hold strips of meatloaf and small one-ounce fish croquettes.

• Puree soups and serve them in a mug rather than a bowl.

• Allow plenty of time for eating. Offer foods at times when the person is hungry, even if this isn’t a “normal” mealtime. (AH)
Sick

extremely time-consuming and is often inconclusive. The following case studies provide a good example of what environmental health specialists and medical personnel might be faced with:

Situation: In the past year or so, Mr. and Mrs. H., retired smokers, moved into their new home. Before they moved in, all the interior walls were painted and floors were recarpeted. In the process of fixing up the basement, a water repellent product was applied to the basement block walls. The water repellent product was sprayed with propoxur, diazinon, and other solvents.

The water repellent product was applied to the basement block walls seems to have been the cause. After examining earlier x-rays, Mrs. H.'s doctor believes that she had some respiratory problems before she moved into the new house, maybe from her age or some respiratory problems that were recarpeted. In the process of fixing up the basement, a water repellent product was applied to the block walls before the walls were painted. The water repellent product was applied to the basement block walls seems to have been the cause.