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The NEBLINE, March 2013

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Dryland Farming in a Drought

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

Question: With much of Nebraska still in a severe drought situation this spring, is there anything farmers can do to prepare?

Answer: Unfortunately, we can't make it rain, but we can change farming practices and we can select crops that reduce water demand or are more drought tolerant.

Of course we don't know what the weather will bring in 2013. We can only assess the actual situation as we get closer to planting time and then make the decisions that seem most likely to strike a reasonable balance between cost and potential return.

Corn

The number of rows of kernels (ear girth) is determined during the 6- to 8-leaf stage. The potential number of kernels per row (ear length) is determined during the 10- to 12-leaf stage. If potential ear size is reduced due to moisture stress during these periods, ear size cannot be increased by relieving moisture stress later in the season.

Drought and temperature stress during the early reproductive stages (tasseling, silking, and pollination) have the greatest impact on yield.



Sample dryland corn ears grown in Lancaster County in 2012

The *National Corn Handbook* (NCH) states, "This is the most critical stage in corn development for any type of stress to occur. Combined moisture-temperature stress during the reproductive period can substantially reduce final grain yield.

"Although separating the effects of these two stresses is difficult, most temperature stress conditions occur on high



8-leaf stage corn

atmospheric-moisture-demand days — i.e., days when the daily mean temperature is above 77°F and the daily maximum is above 95°F, regardless of soil moisture conditions. However, the greatest potential yield reduction probably occurs from moisture stress during the silking process. Such stress delays silking and increases the time required for pollination. The result is that sometimes all the pollen may be shed before the silks emerge.

"Either nutrient, pest, or disease stress at the corn reproductive stages can also affect yield drastically. For instance, when moisture stress is combined with plant nutrient and temperature stress, final grain yield can be cut by up to 13 percent per day."

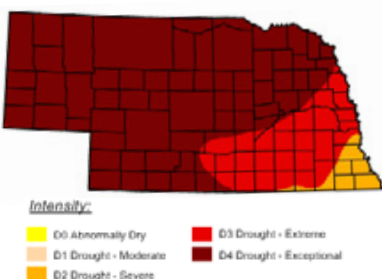
If we have not received significant rainfall by planting time, you might want to consider spreading your risks by planting



10- to 12-leaf stage corn

U.S. Drought Monitor — Nebraska

As of February 12, 2013



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04+
Current	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.26	77.47
Last Week (2/05/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.26	77.47
3 Months Ago (11/13/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	99.69	96.16	77.45
Start of Calendar Year (2/1/2013 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	96.20	77.46
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	97.94	73.26
One Year Ago (2/07/2012 map)	80.98	19.02	3.06	0.02	0.00	0.00

The U.S. Drought Monitor is produced in partnership between the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

a more drought-tolerant crop. One option dryland farmers might want to consider this year is the new drought tolerant corn varieties coming on the market.

Soybeans

Soybeans use less total water per season than corn (22 inches vs. 25–27 inches) and generally are not considered to be a drought-tolerant crop, but they can stand more drought stress than corn and don't have short periods of time in the life cycle of the crop where drought can severely reduce yield potential like corn. They may abort flowers when in severe stress, but then, if we catch some rains in July and August, the plant may be able to produce additional flowers that will produce pods and beans. Provided we have enough growing season remaining when it rains, soybeans can produce a fair to good yield as many growers experienced in 2012 when we received some rain late in the growing season.



Soybeans may abort flowers in severe stress, but with some rain, may produce additional flowers.

Should You Adjust Planting Rates?

Water demand can be affected by plant population but not as much as might be expected. The Water Optimizer computer model, developed by UNL Extension and based on field research across Nebraska, has found plant populations should not be reduced significantly under drought conditions. If the severity of drought moderates, you will want to have a plant population that has potential for a good yield.

What Changes Should Farmers Make in a Dry Year?

The obvious change is to conserve moisture as much as possible. Each tillage pass results in the loss of at least an inch of moisture from the upper soil profile. Reducing or eliminating tillage can make a huge yield difference when moisture is lacking.

Another benefit to reduced tillage is the mulching effect of crop residues that remain on the soil surface. Weeds compete with crops for moisture. Obtain weed control early using shallow tillage or burn-down herbicides and keep crops

as weed-free as possible.

With below-normal soil moisture prevalent in much of Nebraska, producers may consider changing how they use fertilizer this spring. Dry soil influences how fertilizer can be applied and what happens to it after application.

Fertilizer Application Rates

Producers should carefully consider application rates this spring, particularly for nitrogen, which is usually based on expected yield. With low subsoil moisture in much of the state, the yield potential for dryland crops will be reduced compared to recent years. Farmers should be realistic when setting

yield expectations and consider fertilizing for lower yields than last year on dryland fields.

Anhydrous Ammonia

The primary concern with anhydrous ammonia application into dry soil is retention of the fertilizer. Silt loam and heavier textured soils in Nebraska generally contain adequate moisture to react with and retain ammonia, even when seemingly very dry, as long as the injection depth is 5–6 inches below the soil surface and application rates are not excessive.

Of greater concern is the ability to seal the injection slot. If the soil is very dry and cloddy, the farmer may

observe white "smoke" behind the applicator. This "smoke" is actually water vapor condensed from the air by escaping ammonia. Although it takes a lot of "smoke" to add up to significant fertilizer loss, it's still best to try to minimize fertilizer loss. If vapor loss cannot be minimized by 1) going to a deeper injection depth, 2) slowing down, or 3) reducing the application rate, it may be advisable to wait for better soil conditions or switch to a different form of nitrogen fertilizer.

Ammonia applied last fall may have partially nitrified and could be leached; however, dry soil conditions have generally minimized any nitrate leaching from

see FERTILIZER RATES on next page

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Nebraska 4-H'ers
Earn Back-to-
Back National
Champions at
Horse Nationals!
—see page 12



Using Summer Annual Forage Grasses to Stretch Pastures in a Dry Year

Summer annual grasses are used for summer pasture, green chop, hay, silage, and winter pasture. Annual grasses most often used for forage in Nebraska are sudangrass, hybrid sudangrass, sorghum-sudangrass hybrids, and forage sorghums. Foxtail millet and pearl millet are used occasionally. Each of these grasses has unique growth characteristics that require proper management for optimum production.

Some of the desirable characteristics of summer annuals are rapid growth (especially in mid-season), excellent drought resistance, and good response to fertilizer and water. Alkali soils can reduce yields considerably, but plants will tolerate a moderate amount of salinity.

They are well adapted to most areas of the state and grow rapidly following planting in late May or June. They provide good growth from mid-July through August, and then moderate growth until stopped by fall frost.

Sorghum-sudangrass hybrids produce about the same amount of feed as sudangrass when used for pasture. When used for green chopped forage, yields of sorghum-sudangrass hybrids usually exceed sudangrass or forage sorghum. Forage sorghums are usually best for silage. Making sorghum-sudangrass into hay can be difficult because drying is slow.

Sudangrass, sorghum-sudangrass hybrids, and forage sorghum pastures are

not recommended for horses because kidney ailments may develop.

Sudangrass

True sudangrasses have fine stems, tiller extensively when conditions permit, and can regrow rapidly. Thus, they are more suited to pasturing than other types of sorghum.

Piper and Wheeler are the most popular varieties in Nebraska. Piper has low prussic acid content and is generally regarded as safe to graze. Wheeler has a slightly higher level of prussic acid, but it presents little danger to grazing livestock.

Hybrid Sudangrass

Hybrid sudangrasses are crosses among true sudangrass strains that are available primarily as commercial varieties. They are similar to true sudangrass varieties, but yield slightly more in a three-cut green chop or hay system. Their prussic acid content is generally between that of Piper sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass hybrids.

Sorghum-Sudangrass Hybrids

Sorghum-sudangrass hybrids are the most numerous of the various types of summer annual grasses. Most of these are available as commercial hybrids. They are high producing forage grasses, but more than 50 percent of their yield usually comes from their stems. Their



Forage sorghum

rate of regrowth after repeated clippings or grazing is lower than that of sudangrass. Thus, sorghum-sudangrass hybrids are best suited for green chop.

Cattle consuming some sorghum-sudangrass hybrids sometimes gain or milk less than those consuming other summer annuals, apparently due to a lower energy content. When these hybrids are cut at immature stages, quality is higher but yields are much lower.

Forage Sorghum

Forage sorghums are usually tall growing and mature late in the growing season. Often called “cane,” “sweet sorghum,” or “sorgo,” forage sorghums often have sweet and juicy stems, and

many have relatively small grain heads.

Forage sorghums usually yield more silage dry matter per acre than dryland corn, and will yield similarly to corn under irrigation. However, yields of Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) per acre are usually lower from forage sorghums than from corn.

Grazing of forage sorghums is not recommended. They usually contain much higher levels of prussic acid than other summer annual grasses and can be dangerous to graze even when plants are completely headed, especially when young shoots are present. Forage sorghums can be cut for hay, although their stems dry very slowly after cutting.

Foxtail Millet

Foxtail millet has relatively coarse stems and is used primarily as an emergency hay or silage crop, especially in dry years. It is more dependable than other summer annuals on light, sandy soils, and will usually produce higher hay yields than other summer annuals following a late planting in the western two-thirds of Nebraska.

Foxtail millet does not root securely into the soil during early growth and is slow to regrow following grazing. Thus, it is not recommended for grazing except in an emergency.

Pearl Millet

Pearl millet has become increasingly popular for grazing in recent years due to the development of commercial varieties adapted to Nebraska. It is very leafy, regrows well after grazing, yields about the same as sudangrass, and does not cause prussic acid poisoning.

Source: Bruce Anderson, UNL Extension Forage Specialist

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UNL Extension NebGuide “Summer Annual Forage Grasses” (G2183) available at the extension office or online at www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g2183.pdf.

Fertilizer Rates

continued from page 1
fall-applied ammonia. Continued dry conditions will insure that fall-applied nitrogen will be in the root zone when the crop needs it this spring.

Broadcast Fertilizers

Both dry and liquid fertilizers broadcast on the soil surface will be influenced by large amounts of residue, which may not have decomposed significantly due to the dry winter. Urea and nitrogen solutions can lose nitrogen to the atmosphere through ammonia volatilization when surface-applied to high-residue soils. If incorporated with residue, the nitrogen in broadcast fertilizers can be immobilized in decomposing residue, resulting in delayed availability to the crop.

Starter Fertilizers

Producers should be cautious about applying starter fertilizer with the seed this spring. Starter fertilizers which contain nitrogen and potassium are particularly hygroscopic — they will draw moisture away from the seed, resulting in germination damage and loss of stand. This effect will be accentuated with dry soils. Placing starter fertilizer in a band a couple of inches away from the seed will minimize the potential for germination damage.

Source: Richard B. Ferguson, Extension Soils Specialist, South Central Research Extension Center

Storage Methods to Reduce Hay Losses



Round bales with sides touching will have extra spoilage where rain, snow, and ice gather in the “valleys.”



Round bales in north-south rows will cause fewer snow drifts to form next to the bales and the hay will dry more quickly.

Tom Dorn
UNL Extension Educator

Hay is selling at a premium due to the drought last year which has not shown much sign of ending anytime soon. It is, therefore, even more important to minimize losses from spoilage and to maintain nutrient quality. Hay stored outside will be damaged by rain, snow, wind, and ice. If possible, store hay inside or cover it with a canvas or plastic tarp. The average round bale stored out in the weather loses about one fourth of its original nutrients

during storage.

For instance, do you usually line up round 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 because there are no “valleys” to collect moisture.

It may seem remote when you are putting up hay in the heat of summer, but think about where snow tends to drift before deciding where to store bales in the field.

Prevailing winter winds are from the north or northwest in eastern Nebraska. Placing hay next to fence lines or trees can result in the bales being engulfed in snow drifts later on.

Even when placed on open ground, round bales in east-west rows often have drifts on the south side. 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. Bales oriented north-and-south will cause fewer drifts to form next to the bales and the hay will dry more quickly because the sun and

prevailing winds will hit both sides of the row.

Most important is the bottom of your bales. Always put bales on higher, well-drained ground so water drains away from them. Besides placing them on higher ground, if possible, place the bales on a bed of crushed rock, on railroad ties, or on pallets to keep the bottoms dry. This will also reduce problems getting your hay moved due to snow drifts or mud.

Just a little pre-planning can save valuable hay and frustrations next winter.

Fire Prevention on the Acreage, Farm, and Ranch

According to the Nebraska Forest Service, 2012 was a bad year for wildland fires. Over 501,950 acres of land in Nebraska burned as a result of 1,503 fires statewide. More acres of land were affected in 2012, than all the acreage affected by fires from 2001–2011 combined. In and around Lancaster County alone, 158 fires occurred.

Georgia Forestry Commission Archive, Georgia Forestry Commission, Bugwood.org



A fire in a rural area is far more serious than a fire in a town or city where the fire department and fire-fighting resources are readily available. The most effective fire prevention device yet invented is YOUR attitude. With a positive fire prevention attitude, and by following the prevention measures suggested here, you can enjoy your country home with confidence.

Around the Home

- Each year fire damages or destroys many homes that could have been saved if simple precautions had been taken before the fire struck. It's the little things that count.
- Treat wood roofing material with a fire-retardant material.
- Remove tree limbs that hang over your roof.
- Remove all leaves and clutter from house gutters.
- Mow your yard regularly to reduce flammable vegetation, and remove all debris piles.
- Stack firewood at least 30 feet away from your home and other structures.
- Install a spark arrester on your chimney. Inspect chimneys each year and keep them in good repair.
- If burn barrels are allowed, place the barrel in an area cleared of flammable materials at least 10 feet around the barrel.
- Cover your burn barrel with a top screen made of 1/4" wire mesh.
- Fuel storage tanks (LP Gas, welding gas, oxygen cylinders, gasoline, diesel, etc.) should be located at least 30 feet from buildings and at least 10 feet from any combustibles. They should be securely fastened to firm, non-combustible supports and resting on a solid foundation.
- Check lightning protection and grounding.
- Check TV antenna stability and grounding.
- Have electrical wiring and fuse boxes inspected. Replace worn or damaged wiring and use only fuses approved for the wiring.
- Make certain stoves and heaters are installed in accordance with local and state fire codes.

Machinery Fires

- Checking for and fixing fire hazards before starting work each day will reduce the chance of costly equipment fires. Look for:
- any build up of plant residue around the engine, exhaust system, belts and chains;
 - damaged exhaust system components;
 - worn or badly frayed drive belts;
 - broken or exposed electrical wiring;

- the odor of burning electrical wiring;
- worn or misaligned moving parts, which can indicate the lack of lubricant; and
- signs of leaking fluids, oil, and fuel.

Flammable Liquids

Flammable liquids, such as gasoline, diesel, oils, and solvents, are frequently used on farms and acreages. Most liquids of this type are stored in garage, shop, or maintenance areas, which also contain many sources of ignition. Extreme caution must be taken with these products.

- Flammable liquids should be stored in a designated area away from all sources of heat, such as welders, grinders, heaters, electric motors, and hot engines.
- Flammable liquids should be stored in Underwriter Laboratories (UL) approved containers. Plastic milk jugs, pop bottles, glass jars, and coffee cans are not approved containers.
- Use flammable liquids in well-ventilated areas. Vapors from these liquids can travel great distances to an ignition source.

Safe Fueling

Always use caution when fueling equipment. The few seconds saved are insignificant when compared to the loss of expensive machinery, or the weeks, even months, spent in a hospital due to carelessness.

- Never refuel equipment with the engine running.
- Allow hot engines to cool for 15 minutes before refueling.
- Extinguish all open flames and smoking materials before refueling.
- If fuel spills on an engine, wipe away any excess and allow the fumes to dissipate.

Open Burning

History shows that as long as man has been farming, he has used fire as a tool to clear fields. Unfortunately, each year thousands of acres and millions of dollars are lost to careless burning practices.

- Check local, county, and state laws on open burning. Always obtain a permit to burn from the local fire department. Be sure to notify the fire department when you start burning.
- Be aware of the weather conditions and be flexible. If weather conditions are unfavorable or forecast to be unfavorable, postpone burning to a later date.
- Be aware of your surroundings and other combustibles. Protect buildings and fences.
- Build a fire break to contain a fire in the area to be burned.
- Keep firefighting tools, such as

rakes, shovels, and garden hoses, close at hand, for small fires. Discs, plows, and large sprayers are needed for large fires. Have plenty of help.

- Remember, fires can grow extremely fast. A small fire can rapidly become a raging wildfire with a gust of wind. If a fire appears to be getting away, call your fire department

911 immediately. Never leave a fire unattended.

Livestock and Fire

While livestock are not normally considered a fire hazard, the environment in which they are placed can contain many fire hazards in the form of tools and equipment.

- Secure heat lamps to a solid object that will not fall into bedding materials if bumped.
- Use non-combustible bedding, such as dry sand instead of straw, when using heat lamps.
- If it is necessary to use extension cords for heat lamps or portable heaters, make sure the wire size is sufficient for the electrical load.
- Keep all electrical wiring out of areas that can be accessed by livestock. Prevent damage to wiring insulation by using conduit to protect the wire from livestock chewing or rubbing.
- Install electric fences properly, with sufficient clearance from combustibles.

Remember

- Look for fire hazards every day. When you find a fire hazard, repair it or get rid of it.
- Good housekeeping is good fire prevention. A clean, orderly work place and well-kept equipment and tools are less likely to produce fire.
- Fire extinguishers should be placed in areas where they are readily accessible. Check fire extinguishers monthly, making certain they are properly charged.
- Don't sacrifice your or your family's safety and livelihood by being careless with fire.

In Case of Fire

When a fire is discovered, call the fire department (911) at once. DO NOT attempt to fight the fire yourself. Remember, any delay in the arrival of the fire department can be disastrous.

Keep the fire department's telephone number posted prominently near the telephone. Keep directions to your farm or acreage near the phone to aid visitors or individuals who are not familiar with your area.

Source: Nebraska Forest Service

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Nebraska Forest Service website at <http://nfs.unl.edu> or review these publications:

- "Living with Fire: A Homeowner's Guide," <http://go.unl.edu/045>
- "Building a Top Screen for a Burn Barrel," <http://go.unl.edu/q8z>
- "County Living at It's Best," <http://go.unl.edu/r83>

Gardening at Lunch Webinars



Learn about various aspects of gardening from UNL Extension experts. Join us for an exciting "Gardening at Lunch" webinar series, right from your desk at work or home. During each program you can listen and interact with the speakers. You will need a computer with Internet access and sound to participate.

Cost is \$10 per program. Must pre-register at <http://marketplace.unl.edu/extension>.

Webinars are held Wednesdays, 12:05–12:55 p.m. For more information, contact Natalia Bjorklund at nbjorklund3@unl.edu or 402-727-2775.

- March 6: Get Ready for Spring Vegetable Gardening** — Learn ideal planting time of vegetables. Also get tips on growing strong, healthy transplants at home.
- April 3: Plant Diseases** — Learn how to identify plant diseases, and how to treat them.
- May 1: Outdoor Insects** — Learn how to identify the good insects from the bad!

Acidified Foods Workshop for Small Food Processors

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Food Processing Center will present a three-day workshop "Better Process Control School for Acidified Foods" April 8–10 at the Downtown Holiday Inn, 141 N. 9th St. This school is suitable for anyone requiring certification; however, it has been designed specifically for individuals with little or no food science or food safety background, small processors, and those selling products at farmers' markets and other local events. The school includes hands-on basic training as well as testing and certification.

The Food and Drug Administration defines acidified foods as products with a high acidity level, or a pH level below 4.6, and a high level of moisture, or a water activity above 0.85. These foods include beans, cucumbers, cabbage, artichokes, cauliflower, peppers, salsas, some sauces and fish, singly or in any combination. Exempted from FDA regulations are acid foods, repacked acidified foods, fermented foods, carbonated beverages, jams, jellies, preserves, and refrigerated foods.

By law, each processor of these types of foods must operate with a trained supervisor on hand at all times. The Food Processing Center is certified by the FDA to teach this school. This school does not satisfy retort processing requirements.

Upon successful completion of the school, participants become certified and their names are submitted to the FDA. The school is taught by faculty and staff experts from the Food Processing Center and is offered two times per year. Space is limited — early registration is encouraged. Registration deadline is March 31. For more information or to register, go to <http://fpc.unl.edu> or contact Jill Gifford at 402-472-2819.

Nuts for Nutrition

Alice Henneman, MS, RD
UNL Extension Educator

Can a handful of nuts a day help keep you healthy? And how much, exactly, is a handful?

Nuts and Your Health

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend: “Choose a variety of protein foods, which include seafood, lean meat, poultry, eggs, beans and peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.”

The Dietary Guidelines also recommend fat intake should emphasize heart healthy mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as those found in seafood, nuts, seeds, and oils.

Choose MyPlate (a recommended food pattern to help people implement the dietary guidelines) states, “In general, 1 ounce of meat, poultry, fish, 1/4 cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, or 1/2 ounce of nuts or seeds can be considered as “**1-ounce equivalent**” from the Protein Foods Group.”

Nuts, with their healthy fats, are higher in calories than some other sources of protein and MyPlate recommends: “Choose unsalted nuts as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes. Use nuts to replace meat or poultry, not in addition to these items.” At the 2,000 calorie level, MyPlate recommends approximately 5-1/2 “**1-ounce equivalents**” from the Protein Group

A Handful of Nuts

How many nuts are in a handful of nuts? A handful equals about 1-ounce. This



serving size corresponds to the serving size listed on the “Nutrition Facts” panel on food labels. The International Tree Nut Council Nutrition Research & Education Foundation gives these examples of the average number of nuts per 1-ounce portion.

- Almonds (20–24)
- Brazil Nuts (6–8)
- Cashews (16–18)
- Hazelnuts (18–20)
- Macadamias (10–12)
- Pecans (18–20)
- Pine Nuts (150–157)
- Pistachios (47–49)
- Walnuts (8–14)

Feel Like a Nut?

It’s easy to nibble on nuts. Here are two quick ideas. Store shelled or unshelled nuts in an airtight container in your refrigerator for up to 6 months or for a year in your freezer for best quality.

It’s in the Bag

You don’t have to fire up the stove or get out your cookbook to enjoy nuts. Your handful of nuts may be enjoyed — simply — out of hand.

Divide a container of nuts into small snack bags for easy snacking at home, office, or on the road. Simply count, weigh 1 ounces of nuts on a kitchen scale, or grab a handful and store in each snack bag. Keep in the refrigerator until you’re ready to enjoy! A handful of nuts may help you resist the gooey sweet roll in the breakroom at work.

Just a Sprinkle

Sprinkle nuts into these foods:

- Salads
- Yogurt
- Cereal
- Pasta
- Cooked vegetables
- Muffins and pancakes (toss a handful or two into your batter)

For added flavor, try toasting nuts. View directions for toasting nuts at right.

Toasting Nuts and Seeds Using Microwave, Oven, or Stove-Top

Alice Henneman, MS, RD
UNL Extension Educator

Enjoy the health benefits of a daily handful of nuts or a couple of tablespoons of seeds by sprinkling them on cereal, yogurt, salads, soups, pasta, and vegetables. Toast them for added flavor. You can toast them using your microwave, oven, or stove-top.

Store any extra toasted nuts or seeds in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 1–2 weeks or freeze them in an airtight freezer container for 1–3 months.

Microwave Toasting

Here’s a quick and cool way (with minimal clean-up) to toast nuts and seeds, based on information I received from Linda Gossett, MPA, CFCS, Extension Educator - EFNEP, University of Idaho. This has become my favorite method for toasting smaller amounts of nuts and seeds!

This method works well for amounts ranging from a tablespoon to 1/2 cup. With larger amounts, some are likely to turn dark quicker than others. The time will vary depending on the size, type, and temperature of the nuts/seeds and also may be influenced by the type of microwave.

1. Spread from a tablespoon to 1/2 cup nuts or seeds evenly in a single layer in a flat, microwave-safe dish, such as a 9-inch microwave-safe pie plate.
2. Add a small amount of soft butter or margarine or add a small amount of oil to the nuts/seeds. Use about 1/2 teaspoon fat per 1/2 cup of nuts/seeds; use proportionally less for smaller



Microwave toasting is easy for toasting smaller amounts of nuts and seeds.

amounts of nuts/seeds. Stir the nuts/seeds to thinly coat with the fat. This small amount of fat helps with browning and speeds up the toasting process.

3. Microwave on high for 1 minute.
4. Stir and microwave for another minute.
5. Check to see how the toasting is proceeding. Add more microwave cooking time one minute at a time because nuts and seeds can burn quickly. Stir after each addition of time. Small amounts of thin nuts/seeds (sliced almonds or sesame seeds) could be finished at 2 minutes. Larger amounts of nuts, such as slivered or whole almonds, walnuts, pecans, and sunflower seeds will take an additional minute or two to become lightly browned and smell fragrant.

Oven Toasting

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Toast nuts BEFORE chopping them into smaller pieces.
3. Place nuts or seeds in a single layer in an ungreased shallow pan or RIMMED baking sheet such as a cookie sheet or jelly roll pan. (DO NOT use a baking sheet without sides.

You may have nuts or seeds all over the oven if you accidentally tip the sheet when removing it from the oven.)

4. Bake 5–10 minutes or until they are **GOLDEN** brown. A toasted nut or seed may look more **GOLDEN** than **BROWN**. They will

continue to brown slightly after they’re removed from the oven. Stir once or twice or shake the pan during toasting to aid in even browning.

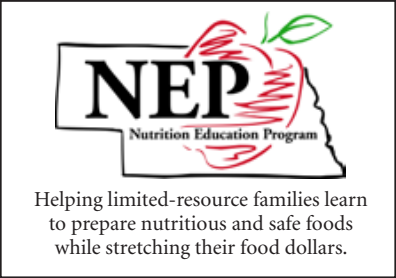
5. Remove from pan to cool.
- NOTE: The first time you try toasting nuts or seeds, it’s better to err on the side of under-toasting than over-toasting. As they toast, you’ll notice a change in their fragrance as well as their color.

Stove-top Toasting

Stove-top toasting works well for small batches of nuts or seeds. With this method, the parts of the nuts or seeds touching the skillet may become darkest, unlike the oven method where they become more of an overall golden color.

1. Toast nuts BEFORE chopping them into smaller pieces.
2. Heat nuts or seeds in a dry, heavy skillet over medium heat for 1–2 minutes or until they’re golden brown and they give off a rich, toasty fragrance. Watch them closely when using this method as it’s easy to burn them.
3. Stir or toss nuts or seeds frequently for even toasting.
4. Remove from pan to cool.

\$tretch Your Food Dollar By Freezing Foods



Kristen Houska
UNL Extension Assistant
Vanessa Wielenga
UNL Dietetic Intern

Time and money are two things most everyone could use more of. Use your freezer to make the most of your time and money without eating the same thing every day.

Think of some ingredients you often use in the kitchen: ground meats, cooked onions, celery, or

carrots. Stock up on these items when they go on sale at the grocery store. When you need one pound of ground beef, buy two. Cook it all and freeze one pound of the cooked ground beef for easy use the next time. Create your own frozen veggie mixes by sautéing and storing them in freezer bags. Now you can instantly add flavor and healthy vitamins and minerals to your next dish in a cinch.

Another great way to save time with freezing is to freeze your foods in single serving amounts. For example, if you make a casserole for supper but don’t want to eat it all week long, you can cut it into single servings and individually freeze each serving in a microwaveable or oven safe container. You now have a quick to-go lunch, or an easy re-heat dinner for busy nights.

There are some food safety and quality tips to follow when preparing meals and freezing extras.

- Use your prepared frozen meals within two months for best quality.
- Cool food immediately after its initial cooking before freezing it.
- Always label containers with the food item’s name and date it was prepared.
- Reheat the food to an internal temperature of 165°F before consuming it.
- Once the dish is thawed, eat it within three days.

Here is a recipe that would be a great freezer meal. To freeze the Veggie Chili, make a double batch and freeze half, or make the regular amount and freeze the leftovers in one cup single serving sizes. Enjoy!

Veggie Chili (6 servings)

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1-1/2 cups zucchini (or vegetable of your choice)**
- 1 cup red or green bell pepper, chopped**
- 4 cups tomatoes, chopped (these can also be canned tomatoes)**
- 1 tablespoon chili powder**
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper**
- 1-1/2 cups vegetable broth**
- 2 cups black beans (cooked)**
- 2 cups kidney beans (cooked)**
- 1 jalapeño pepper, minced**

In a large saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic. Cook 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add zucchini and bell pepper. Cook 5 minutes, stirring often. Add remaining ingredients, stir well to combine. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve hot.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY EDUCATION (FCE) CLUBS

President’s View – Marian’s Message

Marian Storm
FCE Council Chair

Can you believe spring is just around the corner, March 20?

On a cold winter day think spring and start planning your flower and vegetable gardens.

March 10 starts Daylight Savings. I will be glad to have



more daylight.

March 17 is St. Patrick’s Day. This is the day a lot of people like to have corn beef and cabbage. Remember to wear green.

March 31 is Easter. It is really early and could be very cool for the new spring dresses. The bunny may have a hard time finding places to hide the eggs.



The FCE and Community Leader Training Lesson “Option A or Option B: The Steps to Making Good Decision” will be given on March 20 at 1:30 p.m. (note date and time change). Our next FCE Council meeting will be April 1 at 1 p.m. “Compliment three people every day.”

FCE News & Events

Upcoming Leader Training Lessons

These FCE and Community Leader Training Lessons give you the tools to present the topic as a program. Extension provides a teaching outline for the facilitator and a handout for participants.

All trainings will be presented Wednesdays at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. Non-FCE groups and club members should call Pam at 402-441-7180 to register for these lessons so materials can be prepared.

Feb. 27, 1 p.m. — “Quick and Healthy One Dish Meals” presented by Extension Educator Alice Henneman. Tips and recipes for making quick, delicious, and nutritious one dish meals will be

shared. One dish meals offer several advantages:

- your entire meal often can easily be made in advance,
- once it is assembled, you have only one cooking process to monitor,
- clean-up can be simpler, and
- they are a delicious way to use leftovers and “planned” -overs.

March 20, 1:30 p.m. (note date and time change) — “Option A or Option B: The Steps to Making Good Decisions” presented by Extension Educator Lorene Bartos. All of us make numerous decisions everyday. Knowing how to make good decisions takes time and practice. In this community lesson you will learn about the decision-making process and how to effectively use the decision-making process in your life.

FCE Council Meeting, April 1

The next FCE Council meeting will be Monday, April 1, 1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Our guest speaker will be Tonya Bernadt, project coordinator with Climate Masters of Nebraska.

Climate Masters of Nebraska is a unique educational program that strategically trains community volunteers about climate change science and corresponding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with the idea they become motivated to train others within their personal and professional networks — in turn achieving a significant multiplier effect. Tonya will discuss the program and some of the ways in which Climate Masters volunteers have achieved these goals.

The business meeting will follow the program. Home Service FCE Club will be hosting our meeting.



Lorene Bartos, UNL Extension Educator

Invisible Stains

To avoid invisible stains make sure items are clean before they are put away for the season. When a clear substance, such as clear soda or white grape juice, is spilled on a garment, it seemingly disappears when it dries. So if you used the “it looks clean, so it is clean” system of evaluating the status of garments for storage, the stains you couldn’t see oxidized over the winter and turned brown. Try treating the stain with a prewash stain remover, then laundering, using both the type of bleach and the hottest water temperature safe for the fabric. Unfortunately, this type of discoloration is usually permanent.



Child Care Through All Kinds of Weather

A Conference for Child Care Professionals

Saturday, April 6

8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE

Cost is \$15 (includes lunch from Brown Baggers/refreshments)

Pre-registration is due March 22

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

In-service hours will be given for this conference.

National Poison Prevention Week is March 17–23

The goal of this week is to create national awareness about the risk of injury or death due to poisoning. The Environmental Protection Agency reports in the past year, America’s 57 poison control centers fielded 4 million calls, treating 2.4 million human poison exposures and handling 1.6 million information calls. Parents and caregivers are urged to be vigilant and take steps now to prevent unnecessary exposures and poisonings throughout the year.

Did You Know?

- Calling 1-800-222-1222 will connect you to a poison center that serves your area.
- U.S. Poison Centers answer more than 4 million calls each year, one call every eight seconds.
- Poison centers are open to take your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, in 161 languages, as well as from the hearing impaired.
- Poisoning affects everyone, children, teens, adults, and seniors.
- Children age five and under make up more than half (51%) of all poison exposures.
- Teens (age 13–19) show a higher rate of intentional poison exposures than other age groups. Almost half (49%) of teen poison exposures are intentional.
- Adults make up 90% of poisoning deaths. The highest rate of poisoning deaths is in adults age 40–59.

- People call poison centers most often about analgesics (pain medicine). This includes: acetaminophen, ibuprofen, methadone, and oxycodone.

Precaution Steps

Families are encouraged to take precautions and safeguard against poisoning. Some steps to take are:

- Post the Poison Control Centers’ national helpline number, 1-800-222-1222, near your phone. Program the number into your phone’s “address book” or redial feature.
- Read the product label first and follow the directions to the letter.
- Use the safest possible cleaning products. Look for the Design for the Environment (DfE) label on products.
- Never leave products unattended when you are using them.
- Re-close products if interrupted during application (e.g., phone call, doorbell, etc.).
- Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container tightly after use.

Prevention is the best way to decrease poisoning in all ages. Medicine and cleaning supply look-a-likes have caused many problem with poisoning. Never store medicine or cleaning supplies in recycled food containers. Medicine should not be referred to as candy to children. Take the right steps to help decrease poisonings.

Common Look-A-Likes

Remember, young children can’t read labels, and many products around the home look like candy or something tasty to drink. Take a look for yourself. Can you see a difference?



Chew Candy and Medicine



Sports Drink and Cleaner



Chocolate and Laxatives



All-America Selections for 2013

Canna ‘South Pacific Scarlet’ 2013 AAS Flower Award Winner



This variety is grown from seed, not tuber. Compact in habit and well suited for both landscape and container use. Plants are 2-feet tall. Canna ‘South Pacific Scarlet’ prefers warm and humid conditions over 77°F. This variety has a beautiful red flower with a yellow throat. Seeds should be sown indoors in February in a growing medium. Lightly cover the seeds and water. Maintain a temperature of 68–77°F. When seedlings are large enough to handle, transplant them into individual pots. Plant outdoors after the danger of frost is past.

Echinacea ‘Cheyenne Spirit’ 2013 AAS Flower Award Winner



This stunning first-year flowering echinacea captures the spirit of the North American plains by producing a delightful mix of flower colors from rich purple, pink, red, and orange tones to lighter yellows, creams, and white. This wide range of flower colors on well-branched, durable plants are sure to please the color preferences of any gardener. As an added bonus, ‘Cheyenne Spirit’ does not require a lot of water and offers a wide range of uses from the perennial border, in a mass landscape planting, in a butterfly garden, or as a cut flower. The plant is 2 feet tall and grows in full sun.

Geranium ‘Pinto Premium White to Rose’ 2013 AAS Bedding Plant Award Winner



Flower petals start out white then deepen to rose-pink as flowers mature, giving an attractive bicolor effect. Dense, well-branched plants have deep green leaves with darker areas that contrast beautifully with the light-colored flowers. ‘Pinto Premium White to Rose’ has numerous 5-inch blooms that are long-lasting in the garden. It is a great choice for carefree, colorful summer garden beds or patio containers.

Melon ‘Melemon’ 2013 AAS Vegetable Award Winner



The earliness, high yield on healthy, strong plants and superior taste all contributed to this melon becoming an AAS Winner. Judges related the taste of this melon to honeydew, but with a surprising and delicious tanginess. A uniform fruit shape makes it perfect for market growers as well as home gardeners. Each personal-sized fruit has refreshing, crisp flesh and a unique sweet-tart taste.

Tomato ‘Jasper’ 2013 AAS Vegetable Award Winner

Excellent taste, a long harvest window, and outstanding performance in the trials contributes to this cherry tomato’s success. Judges liked the texture and sweetness of the tomato as well as the



uniformity of the fruits that grow on vigorous, healthy plants. ‘Jasper’ is a high-yielding variety with fruits that stay on the vine and then hold well after ripening both on the vine and post-harvest. Vigorous vines require little or no fertilization. An added bonus is fusarium resistance and the ability to overcome weather-related stresses.

Watermelon ‘Harvest Moon’ 2013 AAS Vegetable Award Winner



The first ever hybrid, triploid seedless watermelon to win a coveted AAS Award. Similar to the popular heirloom variety, ‘Moon and Stars,’ ‘Harvest Moon’ is an improvement in that it features healthy, shorter vines that produce medium-sized fruits and sweet, crisp pinkish-red flesh. ‘Harvest Moon’ retains the familiar dark green rind with yellow dots, but is seedless, earlier to ripen, higher yielding, and better tasting.

Source: All-America Selections

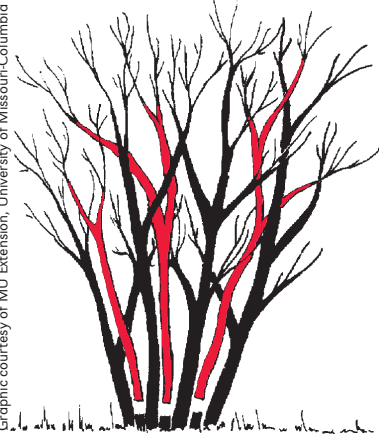
Pruning Overgrown Shrubs

Shrubs are valuable assets to a home landscape. Shrubs are often planted for their ornamental characteristics, such as flowers, colorful fall foliage, or attractive fruit. They so can provide privacy, block views, and attract wildlife. For shrubs to perform well in the landscape, home gardeners must prune them properly. Proper pruning helps to maintain plant health, control, or shape plant growth, and stimulate flower production.

Many deciduous shrubs (those that lose their leaves in the fall) can be kept healthy and vigorous by removing a few of the largest, oldest stems every 2–3 years. Unfortunately, many individuals fail to prune their shrubs because of a lack of time, knowledge, or courage. As a result of this neglect, shrubs often become leggy and unattractive. Flowering shrubs not pruned properly, may not bloom well.

Proper pruning can renew or rejuvenate overgrown, deciduous shrubs. One method is to prune them back over a 3-year period. Begin by removing one-third of the large, old stems at ground level in late winter/early spring (March or early April). The following year (again in March or early April), prune out one-half of the remaining old stems. Also, thin out some of the new growth. Retain several

Graphic courtesy of MU Extension, University of Missouri-Columbia



One pruning method for shrubs is to prune them back over a 3-year period. The first year, remove one-third of the large, old stems at ground level.

well-spaced, vigorous shoots and remove all of the others. Finally, remove all of the remaining old wood in late winter/early spring of the third year. Additional thinning of new shoots should be done.

A second way to prune overgrown, deciduous shrubs is to cut them back to within 4–6 inches of the ground in March or early April. This severe pruning will induce a large number of shoots to develop during the growing season. In late winter of the following year, select and retain several strong, healthy shoots and remove all others at ground level. Head (cut) back the retained shoots to encourage branching. Large, overgrown


lilacs, honeysuckles, dogwoods, spireas, and forsythias may be pruned in this manner. Lilacs rejuvenated by this method will not bloom for 3–5 years.

Deciduous, formal hedges (those pruned to a definite size and shape), such as privets, that become open and leggy, can be rejuvenated by pruning them back to within 4–6 inches of the ground in late winter/early spring. To obtain a full, thick hedge, prune (shear) the shoots often as they grow back in spring and summer. Make sure the base of the hedge is slightly wider than the top to encourage growth close to the ground.

Large, overgrown evergreen shrubs, such as junipers, are a more difficult problem. Junipers possess bare or dead zones in their centers. They can not be pruned back severely because they are incapable of initiating new growth from bare branches. Large, overgrown junipers that have become too large or unattractive will need to be removed and new shrubs planted.

Although many overgrown, deciduous shrubs can be renewed or rejuvenated, it’s much easier to prune them on a regular basis. Regular pruning will keep the shrubs full, healthy, and attractive.

Source: Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture, Iowa State



Garden Guide

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, UNL Extension Associate

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

Plan your vegetable garden on a sheet of paper to utilize the space most efficiently. Remember to rotate the vegetables in the garden to reduce insect and disease problems.

Turn the compost pile.

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

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

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

Start transplants indoors of tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant.

Pick a permanent spot for herbs in the garden.

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

Rake the lawn to remove leaves and twigs.

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

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

How are your houseplants doing? Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture, and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Finish repairing and painting of window boxes, lawn furniture, tools, and other items in preparation for outdoor gardening and recreational use.

Ants in the Wintertime?

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Yes, it happens. Here's why... Cold temperatures in Nebraska's winter usually means relief from summertime pests — those insects living outdoors invading our homes when it's warm outside. But at the Extension office, we get phone calls about ants found indoors every month of the year. Even when it's very, very cold outdoors. There are usually two possible reasons for indoor ant activity in the winter.

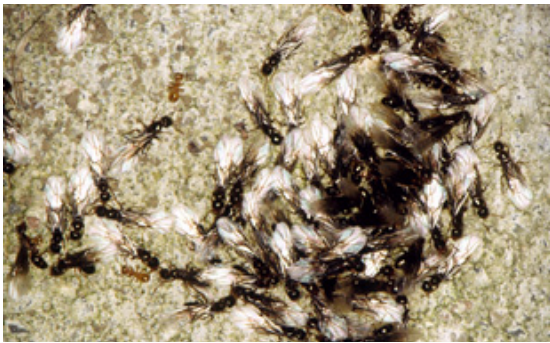
1. The ant colony is living under a concrete slab of your house. In Nebraska, most ant species live in the soil and many prefer to live under objects on the soil surface. A good example of this is pavement ant, named for its nesting site. (These are often the ants we see building ant hills between sidewalk squares.) Another species, the larger yellow ant (also called citronella ants because they smell like lemons) are also found underneath slabs, even as deep as under the basement.

Slab-constructed houses with no basement, often have ant colonies living under the slab. Because we keep our houses and basements warm in the winter, the soil under the concrete slab stays warm. Radiant heat, with heat ducts, coils, or pipes in the floor, greatly encourages ant activity in the winter.

If these are nuisance ants, like pavement ants, worker



Pavement ants prefer to live under objects on the soil surface, such as slab-constructed houses.



Larger yellow ants (also called citronella ants) produce winged swarmers in December or January.

ants will forage for food, even when it's very cold outdoors. To completely eliminate this problem, you must eliminate the colony which is under the slab. This is very difficult to do and may be very expensive, especially if you hire a pest control company to inject chemicals through the floor into the soil. Ant baits may or may not work, but they are worth a try. You will have to be very persistent and refrain from using any insecticidal sprays which may kill ants or repel them away from the bait. Bait in bait stations will only work if the ants are able to feed on it. Many times, the ants walk around the bait stations. Ants are more likely to feed on liquid ant bait placed on cardboard squares. If ants don't feed on the bait, it doesn't matter how much you put out, because this approach won't work.

Citronella ants do not forage for food inside the home, but healthy colonies often produce winged swarmers in December or January when colonies live under a slab. These swarmers die within a couple days.

(Swarms don't feed, so don't try to bait them.) No treatment is necessary; a vacuum cleaner may be helpful getting rid of these ants.

2. The second situation producing active ants in the winter is when an ant colony is living inside an exterior wall. If you are seeing ants — either winged swarmers or non-winged workers — emerging from an exterior wall, you probably have an ant colony living there. All ant colonies need moisture to survive, so ants living inside the wall usually means there is a moisture source which contributes to the colony being there. The moisture source could be from leaky plumbing behind a tub or shower or in the walls, windows which aren't sealed well and leak, porous siding, a poor vapor barrier producing condensation, or a leaky roof.

The non-chemical way to get rid of an ant colony inside the wall is to eliminate the moisture problem. Without moisture, the ant colony will disappear on its own. Pest control companies may be able

to help with this. Many of them have moisture meters, which can detect moisture inside the wall.

Insecticides can be used to eliminate colonies, but, it may be necessary to target the colony, which is inside the wall. I recommend homeowners work with a pest control professional who has products and equipment to do this type of work.

There is one other treatment that might be helpful. In the spring and summer, when ants are active, a perimeter treatment of Termidor™ may eliminate the ant colony. It only works if the ants travel through the treated area. Termidor™ is a professional-use-only product and is not available in hardware stores. According to label directions, this product can only be used twice a year, and it cannot be used inside the home.

However, if the moisture problem isn't addressed, these areas continue to be attractive to insects which may re-colonize the area. In addition, mold and other damage from moisture may continue.

EPA Bans D-Con Rodent Control Products

Barb Ogg
UNL Extension Educator

Homeowners who purchase rodenticides for use inside structures may not find their favorite products on the shelf of their local hardware store much longer. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has moved to ban the sale of 12 D-Con mouse and rat poison products produced by Reckitt Benckiser Inc. because these products do not comply with current EPA safety standards. The current standards were designed to protect rodenticide exposure to children, pets, and wildlife for rodent baits used in and around the home. The EPA expected companies manufacturing and selling rodenticides to adopt these standards by June 2011.

During the last few years, a number of companies have made changes in their product line to meet these new standards. These companies include Bell Laboratories' Tomcat products, PM Resources' Assault brand products and Chemsico's products. According to the EPA, Reckitt Benckiser Inc., maker of D-Con brand products, is the only rodenticide producer refusing to adopt EPA's new safety standards for its consumer-use products.

The new standards — the EPA compliant consumer-use rodenticide products must be contained in protective tamper-resistant bait stations. The new standards prohibit the sale of pellets and other bait forms that cannot be secured in bait stations. In addition, the EPA prohibits the sale to residential consumers products containing single-lethal-dose anticoagulant active ingredients: brodifacoum, bromadiolone, difethialone, and difenacoum.

After June 2011 when the new standards went into effect, EPA received no reports of children being exposed to rodenticide baits contained in bait stations. EPA expects to see a substantial reduction in exposures to children when the 12 banned D-Con products are removed from the consumer market as millions of households use these products each year.

Not all D-Con products have been banned, only those not in compliance with the new standards. For a complete list of the homeowner-use rat and mouse products that meet the EPA's safety standards, visit www.epa.gov/pesticides/mice-and-rats/rodent-bait-station.html.

Source: EPA

Cats Are in the News Again

Soni Cochran
UNL Extension Associate

On Jan. 29, 2013 "The Impact of Free-ranging Domestic Cats on Wildlife of the United States," research study was published in the journal *Nature Communications*. The study is available on-line and it made the news. After the study was published, headlines like "That Cuddly Kitty is Deadlier Than You Think — the New York Times" or "Cats Kill Billions of Animals a Year — CBS News," are hard to ignore.

The study was authored by scientists from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is reported to be the most comprehensive analysis of information on the issue of outdoor cat predation. Researchers found cats kill far more native wildlife than previously documented. Each year, cats kill between 1.4 billion and 3.7 billion birds and between 6.9 billion and 20.7 billion small mammals which included mostly native species, such as

meadow voles and chipmunks.

The cats who killed most of the wildlife were feral cats and free-range cats allowed to roam extensively outside. Barn cats are an example of free-range cats and they can be tame or wild. Feral cats are domestic cats that have gone wild. The study also found pet cats were responsible for about a third of the songbird and native wildlife kills.

Once published, these studies have always created passionate reactions. This time is no different. Feral cat advocates dismissed the research as another attempt to demonize cats by using sketchy results. While others say the study shows efforts to control feral cat populations with sterilization aren't solving the feral cat problem.

I like cats, so I get it. I'm not anti-cat. I have owned cats and grew up with cats. I never allowed my cats outside because I cared about them. Keeping them inside means they live longer, healthier lives. I also know cats are indiscriminate hunters. While growing up, our well-fed farm

cats brought "gifts" to the front porch which included parts of songbirds (usually a few feathers and tiny bird legs and feet), shrews, baby bunnies, small snakes, and even weasels.

Here are some facts about feral cats we can't ignore:

- Domesticated cats are not native to the United States. Feral cats are not pets. They are no different than any other invasive species.
- Each year, cats are responsible for significant losses to populations of native songbirds, gamebirds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.
- Predation of cats on birds has an economic impact of more than \$17 billion dollars each year in the United States (based on economic activity of bird watchers, hunters, and bird rearers).
- The majority of feral cats are not vaccinated. Unvaccinated feral cats can transmit several diseases to humans and other pets including rabies, toxoplasmosis, cat scratch fever, plague, ringworm and salmonellosis. Feral cats are also hosts to fleas and ticks that can transmit disease to

humans.

We can all help reduce the feral cat problem by promoting responsible pet ownership. Make sure every cat you own is vaccinated, neutered/spayed. Encourage others to do the same. Keep cats inside. Your cats will live longer, be healthier, and they can't harm wildlife.

If you don't want a cat or kittens, don't think you are doing the cat a favor by dumping it off in another neighborhood or on a country road. Take unwanted animals to your local animal shelter.

If you are having a problem with feral cats, read UNL Extension publication "Feral Cats and Their Management" (EC1781) online at <http://go.unl.edu/mp0>. This practical, research-based publication reviews options legally available to control problem cats. It also covers responsible pet ownership. We know not everyone will agree with some of the control options, but it is our responsibility to provide you with the information you need to make informed choices.



4-H Speech & PSA

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

Speech/PSA Workshop, March 28

Learn more at a Speech/PSA workshop on Thursday, March 28, 6 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Out of ideas? We will help you get started. Already started? Bring your completed speech/PSA's to practice or get suggestions. We will teach you Audacity basics so you can add sound effects and edit to make your final PSA perfect. There will be computers available to work with, or bring your own. Cole will record PSA's for 4-H'ers ready to do so — come in anytime after 4 p.m.

PSA Contest, Due April 12

In the Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest, 4-H'ers submit a 60 second "radio commercial" promoting 4-H. Submit a PSA via CD playable on any standard stereo equipment to extension by Friday, April 12. If you do not have the capabilities to record a PSA, contact Cole to set up a recording time. Results and comment sheets will be handed out at the 4-H Speech Contest on April 21. **The 2013 PSA theme is "Taking the Lead."**

Speech Contest, April 21

The 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, April 21, 1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Register by April 12 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing cmeador2@unl.edu with your name, speech title, age division, and if it is "Speech for YouTube." Note new age divisions this year. New this year: **Speech For YouTube** for ages 13–18 (may enter a regular speech and/or this county-only class).

4-H Jammie Sewing Workshop, March 9

4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to practice their basic sewing skills and make jammie bottoms at the "Jammie Jamboree" sewing workshop on Saturday, March 9, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. No cost to attend. Adults are encouraged to attend to help 4-H'ers.

Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc.), pull-on pajama bottom pattern (one simple pattern is Simplicity 3553), prewashed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaids) 1 yard 1/2-inch elastic, and matching thread. Also bring a sack lunch. Sign up by March 6 by calling 402-441-7180.

4-H'ers may enter jammie bottoms at the county fair and styled in Style Revue under Clothing Level 1.

4-H Paws-On Dog Workshop, March 9

UNL Extension will present its annual statewide 4-H Paws-On Dog Workshop on Saturday March 9 from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. at the Greater Lincoln Obedience Club Building, 5740 Johanna Road, Lincoln. This workshop aims to help 4-H members learn more about dog care and improve their 4-H dog training and showing skills. Topics include obedience, agility, showmanship, and grooming. Bring a crate and show leads to work with. More information and registration for the workshop can be found at <http://animalscience.unl.edu/web/anisci/ansextensioncompanionanimals> at the bottom of the page. Fee is \$15 per person, which includes a lunch. Registration forms must be postmarked by March 1. Space is limited, so register early!

4-H Dog Skill-A-Thon, March 26

Want to test your dog knowledge? Come to the 4th annual 4-H Dog Skill-A-Thon Tuesday, March 26 from 2:30–7 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Youth do not need to be present the entire time — just come at your convenience, it usually takes 1–2 hours. There will be a variety of topics that will test your knowledge including: parts, parasites, breeds, conformation, nutrition, and more. Open to all youth ages 8–18 — you do not have to be enrolled in 4-H and do not need a dog to participate. Must preregister by March 19 by contacting Cole Meador at cmeador2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180 (there is no entry form). Resource materials for Skill-a-thon are available at the extension office.

4-H Furniture Painting Workshop, April 20

Mark your calendars for the upcoming "Junque to Jewels" furniture painting workshop on Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Open to 4-H youth ages 8–18. Check the April Neblin for more information.

Pick-A-Pig 4-H Club Celebration/New Member Night

The Pick-A-Pig 4-H Club wishes to invite 2012 members and youth interested in the 2013 Pick-A-Pig Club to join us for a celebration of our accomplishments over the past year. We will meet March 2, 5:30 p.m. at the Raymond Fire Hall, 4210 West Raymond Road. We will review our achievements of 2012, have a brief informational meeting and eat pizza! The pizza will be provided and members may bring cookies for dessert. March 30 is the deadline to join in all the fun of showing pigs at the 2013 Lancaster County Super Fair, so don't delay! For more details, call Harry Muhlback at 402-430-7304.

Clover College Instructors Needed

4-H Clover College is four days of fun-filled, hands-on workshops for youth ages 6 and up, June 18–21 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. If you have workshop ideas, or would like to teach a workshop or volunteer to help, please contact Tracy at 402-441-7180 or tanderson14@unl.edu. All help is very much appreciated!

March

Rod Hollman

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

Rod Hollman is a longtime supporter of 4-H through a variety of roles, including:

- leader of the Lone Star 4-H livestock club 1974–89,
- President of Lancaster County 4-H Council in the '80s and ex officio member on the Extension Board (he was involved when the current building at 444 Cherrycreek Road was built),
- member of the Lancaster County Ag Society for more than 20 years — 8 years as president (he was involved when the Lancaster Building at the old State Fairgrounds was built and when the Lancaster Event Center was built),
- member of the Nebraska State Fair Board for nearly seven years in the '90s,
- has served as superintendent for 4-H and open class beef shows, and overall livestock superintendent at the Lancaster County Fair,
- has served as superintendent for open class beef show and overall livestock superintendent at the Nebraska State Fair,
- still sponsors trophies/awards for the 4-H beef shows at Lancaster County Super Fair and Saline County Fair.

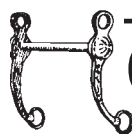
He says, "I like being a 4-H volunteer because I always liked helping youth. I like the enthusiasm they have for their projects. My favorite experience as a 4-H volunteer is watching how the youth develop. I continually see past members of my club who are now successful livestock producers and business owners, and I believe their experience in 4-H played a part in their success."

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



Kiwanis Karnival, April 13

The annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event, is sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. This year, it will be held Saturday, April 13, 6–8 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 26th St., Lincoln. The Karnival features carnival type games for the kids, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun, and fellowship. Lincoln Center Kiwanis has sponsored this event for over 50 years — providing prizes and snacks. 4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity for clubs. If your 4-H club or family would like to have a booth or for more information, call Lorene at 402-441-7180. Come join the fun!



HORSE BITS

4-H Horse Incentive Program Begins

The 2013 Lancaster County 4-H Horse Incentive Program began Jan. 1 and runs through June 30. 4-H'ers can earn points or log hours for spending time on horse-related activities and win fun prizes! Forms are available online at <http://lanaster.unl.edu/4h/horsenews.shtml> or can be picked up at the extension office. This year there are new ways to earn incentive points along with activities spent directly with the horse. Among other ways, points can be earned by writing a fictional horse story or creating a book cover. Hours and points earned must be logged on either the official calendar log sheet, the official log sheet, or a combination of the two. It's not too late to get started. If you have any questions, call Marty at 402-441-7180.

Save the Dates!

Middle Cross Dressage Schooling Show on May 4 & 5 at Middle Cross Stables, 500 Sprague Road, Roca. Open to all youth and adults. A schooling show will be held on Saturday, May 4. On Sunday, May 5, judge Joyce Hardesty Coleman has offered to give private lessons. The Lancaster Horse VIPS Committee is sponsoring this as a fund raiser/clinic. More details will be coming soon!

Pre-Districts Show/Clinic/Fundraiser on Saturday, June 1, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster County Event Center, Pavilion 3. The Lancaster County Horse VIPS Committee is hosting the show to help 4-H'ers prepare for districts and state horse shows. The show will follow the district format and all age groups can participate.



4-H Achievement Night

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension in Lancaster County and 4-H Council presented Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Night on Feb. 12. 4-H'ers, 4-H clubs, and 4-H leaders were recognized for their 2012 achievements. The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners signed a proclamation declaring February 12 as "4-H Achievement Day." Lancaster County 4-H congratulates all 4-H youth who commit themselves to excellence! We also thank all 4-H volunteers who donate their time and talents to youth! For a complete list of award, scholarship, and pin recipients (as well as additional photos) go to <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h>.

**Lancaster
County 4-H 2012
Year in Review Video**
<http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h>



Lancaster County Commissioner Jane Raybould presented the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners' proclamation declaring Feb. 12 as "4-H Achievement Day."

NEBRASKA DIAMOND CLOVER

The Nebraska 4-H Diamond Clover Program is a statewide program which encourages 4-H members to engage in a variety of projects and activities.

At the beginning of the 4-H year, youth choose goals from a provided list, and at the end of the 4-H year, complete a report which documents their accomplishments.

LEVEL 1 – AMETHYST: Kieran Burkey, Catherine Hytrek, Joshua Hytrek, Megan Lange, Sophie Polk, Anna Sump, David Swotek, Addison Wanser

LEVEL 2 – AQUAMARINE: Ellie Babcock, Nathan Becker, Cassie Brown, Nathan Gabel, Valerie Griess, Kayla Humphrey, Rachael Lange

LEVEL 3 – RUBY: Abby Babcock, Elizabeth Garza, James Griess, Brooke Kreikemeier, Jared Nielsen, Madelaine Polk, Jenna White, Alyssa Zimmer

Level 4 – Sapphire: Morgan Cuttlers, Valerie Gabel, Victoria Garza, Holly Hillebran, Emma Lanik, Caleb Nielsen, Paige Roach

LEVEL 5 – EMERALD: Madeline Gabel, Kylee Plager, Sheridan Swotek



Level 1 – Amethyst



Level 2 – Aquamarine



Level 3 – Ruby



Level 4 – Sapphire



Level 5 – Emerald

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

Presented to 4-H'ers who have completed the most hours of community service. Award recipients receive a \$30 Activity Certificate from Lancaster County 4-H Council redeemable towards 4-H activities and supplies.

AGE 14 AND OVER: Victoria Garza, Holly Hillebran, Austin Hurt, Kylee Plager, Paige Roach, Sheridan Swotek

AGE 8–13: Valerie Gabel, Elizabeth Garza, Kyle Hurt, McKenzie Kapperman, Brooke Kreikemeier, Emma Lanik, Addison Wanser, Alyssa Zimmer



Age 8–13



Age 14 and over

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

LANCASTER COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL — \$500: Elli Dearthmont, Kaiya Green, Jonathan Hollman, Chandler Kramer, Megan Luedtke, Caitlyn Schmidt

4-H TEEN COUNCIL – \$250:
Christian Brandt, Caitlyn Schmidt

LINCOLN CENTER KIWANIS – \$1,000: Kaiya Green



4-H Council Scholarships

OUTSTANDING 4-H MEMBERS

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

Elli Dearthmont, Kaiya Green



NEBRASKA 4-H CLUBS OF EXCELLENCE

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

4-H Explorers, All American Kids, Fantastic 4, Joe's Clover Knights, Pick-A-Pig, Rabbits R Us, Rock Creek Ranchers, Rock'n Riders, Star City Cornhuskers, Super Shamrocks

CAREER PORTFOLIOS

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

COUNTY WINNERS

Cassie Meyer: Animal Science

Sheridan Swotek: Healthy Lifestyles Education

NOMINATED TO REPRESENT LANCASTER COUNTY AT DISTRICT COMPETITION

Cassie Meyer: Animal Science

Sheridan Swotek: Healthy Lifestyles Education; Leadership and Citizenship

Madeline Gabel: Consumer & Family Science; Healthy Living

I DARE YOU LEADERSHIP AWARD

Awarded on behalf of the American Youth Foundation to juniors or seniors who strive to achieve their personal best and make a positive difference in their community.

Rachel Johnson, Caitlyn Schmidt

4-H MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Lorene Bartos started her Extension career in 1973. She has served many roles in her 40 years of service, including the 4-H development program. In 1976, Lorene helped start the 4-H Embryology program in local schools. She helped with the development of Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center (camp) and currently is a board member. Lorene has dedicated countless hours to the Lancaster County Fair. She organizes "Fair Fun Day" for child care groups and last year organized the 4-H historical displays. An instructor at 4-H Clover College, she teaches a variety of workshops. As a member of Lincoln Center Kiwanis, she organizes the annual Kiwanis Karnival and coordinates the Outstanding 4-H Clubs and college scholarship sponsored by Kiwanis.



Extension Educator Lorene Bartos pictured with Extension Unit Leader Gary Bergman.

Tips for Coping With Drought-Related Stress

Farm/Ranch Stress and Disaster Stress

Peer reviewed by Dr. Deanna Vansickel, UNL Extension Educator; Ann Fenton, Amy Timmerman, Ruth Vonderohe, LaDonna Werth, Extension Educator. Tonia R. Durden, Early Childhood Extension Specialist.

Disasters create stress in our lives. For farmers/ranchers and people in agricultural industries, drought adds to other stresses already experienced by farm/ranch families.

Stressors Identified by Farm/Ranch Families

- Farm/ranch-specific worries include:
- Rising expenses & low prices
 - Concerns about farm/ranch finances
 - Machinery breakdown
 - Prolonged bad weather or natural disaster
 - Weather-related crop loss
 - Delay in planting/harvest
 - Time pressures & long work hours
 - Farm viability

- Worries shared with most families
- Death in family
 - Divorce or separation
 - Major illness or disability
 - Aging parents who need care
 - Worries about owing money
 - Few vacations
 - Changing economic conditions

Studies show stress may be even greater for young farmers/ranchers, farmers/ranchers holding a second off-farm/ranch job and women in farm/ranch families.

Drought stress may be different than stress in other disasters because a drought is an extended event and does not have a single moment of impact. The anxiety builds over time and becomes chronic, making it less noticeable to ourselves and those around us. The drought may not be viewed as seriously as a tornado because the damage is not as visible and its impact is worst for already stressed farm/ranch families and communities.



Signs of Stress

Some common signs of distress are:

- Irritability and anger
- Feelings of anxiety and worry
- Headaches or gastrointestinal complaints
- Increased risk-taking behavior
- Changes in eating and sleep habits

- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Forgetfulness
- Fatigue
- Sense of helplessness
- Lack of concentration
- Avoidance or denial
- Sadness

Farmers/ranchers and their families should remind themselves these are common stress reactions. Once recognized, realize stress is a natural by-product of both internal and external circumstances. It is important to recognize these are normal 'stress' responses to an unusual situation.

What Can We Do About Stress?

Stress unrecognized is often referred to as the silent killer. It is the number one variable that affects our, emotional, mental, and physical health. Experiencing the effects of stress and taking ownership over our feelings associated with stress will empower us to find peace in the midst of the stressful situation rather than the stressful situation slowly taking pieces of you, i.e., your happiness, appetite, or the many other facets of your mental, physical, and emotional health.

When we are proactive at facing the challenges each day, the stronger we will be in the face of other difficult circumstances life will inevitably throw our way. Focusing on our own strengths and

partnering with our community supports, we can take steps to grow ourselves and our families by:

- Acknowledging feelings and talking them out. We have feelings for a reason, they serve as our barometer, measuring our internal pressure. Family, friends, and neighbors can be helpful listeners, and may share some of the same worries. Participating in church or spiritual renewal activities can be sources of comfort and assistance in difficult times.
- Paying attention to health, nutritious diet, and adequate sleep is important. Engaging in recreation or a favorite hobby, getting away for a few hours with close friends, reading a good book, volunteering to help others, and finding time to laugh can give your mind and body respite from the constant relationship we have developed with stress and worry.
- Nurturing personal relationships should be a priority. Couples should make time to be alone, to talk, and to have fun. Families should re-establish important rituals such as mealtimes and holiday celebrations. Listening to and reassuring children who may need additional support is significant in dealing with the stressful situation and critical for continued healthy development.

The good news is, with time, we will bounce back and return to what is normal for us and our families. Keep in mind, it may be a 'new normal', but it will be a normal that serves our well-being.

When Should We Seek Help?

If stress, anxiety, depression, or physical problems continue for more than a few weeks or if someone is having feelings of extreme hopelessness or extreme anger, talking about suicide or is violent, it is important to seek help immediately. Contact a physician or community mental health center as soon as possible.

What Help is Available?

Information about community mental health services in Nebraska can be found at:

- COMHT Program 1-800-464-0258 — the Nebraska Counseling, Outreach and Mental Health Therapy offers no-cost vouchers for confidential mental health services for persons affected by the rural crisis
- http://dhhs.ne.gov/behavioral_health — official Nebraska Government Website with a listing of licensed mental health counselors throughout the State of Nebraska

- Other resources for stress management for farm/ranch families:
- <http://droughtresources.unl.edu> — an index of articles provided by the University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension that address drought issues that affect farmers and ranchers
 - Nebraska Farm Hotline 1-800-464-0258
 - Farm Mediation Clinics 1-800-464-0258
 - Farm Mediation 1-800-446-4071
 - www.legallaidofnebraska.com — Nebraska Legal Aid
 - <https://nrrs.ne.gov> — the NRRS is a statewide database created with input from Nebraska families, service providers, and organizations. The NRRS provides 1-800 numbers as well as websites and email contacts to help you connect faster to the services you are seeking.
 - www.ndvsac.org — the Nebraska Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault Coalition
 - www.canhelp.org — Community Action of Nebraska
 - www.ACCESSNebraska.ne.gov — Department Health and Humans Services- food stamps, Medicaid, Kid Connection etc.
 - <http://extension.missouri.edu/main/family/index.shtml> — an index of articles provided by the University of Missouri Cooperative Extension system that address strong families and programs to help families cope
 - www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/issues/stress-safety/index.html — this site for the University of Wisconsin Extension offices provides an index of resources for recognizing, responding to and relieving stress targeted for farm families
 - www.extension.umn.edu/extreme-weather/drought-fire — University of Minnesota Extension Service sponsors drought and fire information
 - www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/familf2/mf1062.pdf — a guide for helping farm families in distress developed by the Cooperative Extension Service of Kansas State University. The four page brochure includes listening skills and a referral guide for people who need more assistance

¹ Walker and Walker, 1987 and 2003 USDA Small Farm Digest. Missouri Department of Mental Health

EXTENSION NEWS

Ron Suing Receives Statewide Volunteer Award

At the Nebraska Association of County Extension Boards' (NACEB) annual meeting in February, Ron Suing received the organization's statewide Volunteer Award. He was nominated by Denise Farley, outgoing member of the Lancaster County Extension Board.

Ron has been an outstanding 4-H volunteer for nearly 30 years in a variety of roles, including:

- superintendent of the 4-H Science, Engineering, and Technology areas at the Lancaster County Fair for 26 years,
- Clover College Rocketry instructor for 17 years,
- leader of the Hills Heroes 4-H club for 6 years,
- teaching rocketry workshops throughout the state, and
- sponsoring eight plaques at county fair with his wife Barb.

Congratulations to Ron Suing! UNL Extension in Lancaster County thanks Ron for donating his time and talents to the 4-H Youth Development Program.



Lancaster County 4-H volunteer Ron Suing received the Nebraska Association of County Extension Board's statewide Volunteer Award. Pictured with NACEB member Connie Larrington.



N | OPEN HOUSE EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER: ADMISSIONS.UNL.EDU/VISIT

JUNIOR WEDNESDAYS

Wednesdays February 27 through May 1* — a Husker Weekday visit specifically for juniors.
*EXCLUDES MARCH 20

HUSKER WEEKDAYS

This is Nebraska's most versatile half-day campus visit option. You can schedule a visit for any weekday and select Saturdays throughout the year.

EXTENSION CALENDAR

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

February

- 26 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training - Recertification..... 9 a.m.
- 27 FCE & Community Leader Training Lesson, "Quick and Healthy One Dish Meals" 1 p.m.
- 28 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training - Initial..... 8:30 a.m.

March

- 1 Preference Given to 4-H Council Camp Scholarship Entries Submitted to Extension by this Date
- 1 R.B. Warren 4-H Horse Educational (\$500) and Grand Island Saddle Club Scholarships (\$1,000) Entries Due
- 1 Deadline for Governor's Agricultural Excellence Awards (\$500)
- 5 4-H Council Meeting..... 7 p.m.
- 6 Gardening at Lunch Webinar, "Get Ready for Spring Vegetable Gardening," online only 12:05–12:55 p.m.
- 8 Extension Board Meeting..... 8 a.m.
- 9 4-H Jammie Jamboree Sewing Workshop 9 a.m.
- 9 4-H Paws-On Dog Workshop, Greater Lincoln Obedience Club Building, 5740 Johanna Road 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
- 10 4-H Teen Council Meeting 3 p.m.
- 14 Co-Parenting for Successful Kids 9 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- 14 Tree Care Workshop..... 9–3 p.m.
- 16 4-H Spring Rabbit Show 9 a.m.
- 16 4-H Horse Stampede, UNL East Campus - Animal Science Building
- 19 Guardian/Conservator Training 1:30–4:30 p.m.
- 20 FCE & Community Leader Training Lesson, "Option A or Option B: The Steps to Making Good Decisions" 1 p.m.
- 21 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training - Recertification..... 9 a.m.
- 23 4-H Counterchange Smocking Workshop 9 a.m.
- 26 4-H Dog Skill-A-Thon 2:30–7 p.m.
- 28 4-H Speech & Public Service Announcement Workshop 6 p.m.

AARP Driver Safety Program, April 3

This course will be presented in Lincoln as a one 4-hour session on Wednesday, April 3, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. A certified AARP instructor will teach the course. Cost is \$12 for AARP members and \$14 for non-members payable at the door. To register for the class, call 402-441-7180. AARP members must bring their membership card with their ID number as well as their driver's license. Payment by check is required — charge/credit cards are not accepted, nor is cash.

Good Neighbor Award Nominations Due March 15

The Ak-Sar-Ben Good Neighbor Award began in 1943 and is co-sponsored by the Omaha World-Herald. This award pays special recognition to individuals who perform unselfish, neighborly deeds during the past year. The good deeds these individuals do range in size and scope but impact those served. Individuals are nominated by others in their community, most often by the recipient of the good deed. The recipients are recognized by the Omaha World-Herald and are also awarded a commemorative certificate and pin.

In Lancaster County, these Good Neighbors are awarded at the Lancaster County Super Fair Foundation and Awards Dinner in July. For an application, go to www.aksarben.org/programs/good-neighbor or call the Lancaster Event Center at 402-441-6545. Deadline is March 15.

Spring Rabbit Show

Saturday, March 16, 9 a.m. Registrations 7:30–8:30 a.m. Lancaster Extension Education Center

Open to all youth 8–18



Awards will be given! CLASSES: Fancy Rabbits, Commercial Rabbits, Pet Class, and Pee Wee Class.

REGISTRATION FEES: \$2.50 per rabbit or cavy, \$1 fur class, \$1 Showmanship.

FREE CONTESTS: Rabbit Quiz & Breed ID

All rabbits must be tattooed in the left ear (available at the show 7:30–8:30 a.m. — \$1 per rabbit). All rabbits must be in carriers with leak-proof bottoms.

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

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

Opportunity to learn and practice your showmanship!

RAFFLE FOR MANY PRIZES! Tickets 3 for \$1 or 20 for \$5. Please bring an item for raffle such as crafts, rabbit items, plants, Easter/Spring items, books, etc.

Pioneer Farm Award Nominations Due May 1

The Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Foundation's "Pioneer Farm Family Award" honors farm families in Nebraska whose land has been owned by the same family for 100 years or more. Each honoree receives an engraved plaque and gatepost marker as permanent recognition of this milestone. Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation is the sponsor and is supported by the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers. In Lancaster County, the Pioneer Farm Families are honored at the Lancaster County Super Fair Foundation and Awards Dinner in July. For an application, go to www.aksarben.org/programs/pioneer-farm or call the Lancaster Event Center at 402-441-6545. Deadline is May 1.

Lancaster County Ag Society Hall of Fame Nominations Due May 1

At the 2010 Super Fair, the Lancaster County Agricultural Society unveiled a new Ag Society Hall of Fame located at the Lancaster Event Center in the Business Center. This wall formally recognizes those individuals who have dedicated time and effort to the Lancaster County Agricultural Society beyond the normal volunteer hours and have made significant contributions to the establishment, development, advancement, or improvement of the Lancaster County Fair. Nomination forms and more information can be requested by calling the Lancaster Event Center at 402-441-6545.



UNL Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528
402-441-7180
<http://lancaster.unl.edu>
Email: lancaster@unl.edu • Fax: 402-441-7148

Join us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and Pinterest at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/media>

Lancaster Extension Education Center Conference Facilities
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln



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We assure reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act; for assistance contact UNL Extension in Lancaster County at 402-441-7180.

EXTENSION EDUCATOR & UNIT LEADER

Gary C. Bergman

ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE

Jenny DeBuhr

EXTENSION EDUCATORS

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THE NEBLINE

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444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A • Lincoln, NE 68528

Nebraska 4-H'ers Earn Back-to-Back National Champions at Horse Nationals!



Team Nebraska took the national High Overall State Award. The team included Lancaster and Douglas/Sarpy 4-H members. Lancaster County 4-H'ers were: Elli Dearmont, Ivy Dearmont, Ashley Holm, Megan Luedtke, Kate Rawlinson, Hannah Ronnau, Sierra Nelson, Bailee Sobotka, and Lexi Wolfe. Kendra Ronnau and Roger Bell coached the Lancaster County youth.

In January, more than 900 youth from 30 states, along with Alberta, Canada, traveled to Denver, Colo. to take part in the 4-H/FFA Western National Roundup. 15 Nebraska 4-H youth from Lancaster and Douglas/Sarpy Counties attended the 2012 4-H Horse Classic portion of the Roundup. Competitions in the Western National 4-H Horse Classic included hippology, horse bowl, public speaking, and individual and team demonstration. Each team and individual had to first win the state competition to qualify for nationals.

Team Nebraska (consisting of Lancaster and Douglas/Sarpy 4-H'ers) earned High Overall State Award 1st place — National Champions! This is the second year in a row 4-H youth from Lancaster and Douglas/Sarpy Counties earned High Overall State Award 1st place! The High Overall State Award is given to the state with the overall highest score based on placings in the five different competitions. Top five teams in the nation were, in order of placing: Nebraska, Mississippi, Colorado, Arizona, and Texas.

The Hippology team of Elli Dearmont, Megan Luedtke, Kate Rawlinson, and Hannah Ronnau (coached by Kendra Ronnau) earned Overall High Team —

National Champions! Hippology means the study of horses. The competition included four phases: examination (written test and slide identification), stations, judging, and team problems. Hippology Overall Individuals included Megan Luedtke placing 1st, Hannah Ronnau placing 2nd, and Elli Dearmont and Kate Rawlinson tying for 4th place.

The Horse Team Demonstration of Ivy Dearmont and Lexi Wolfe (coached by Kendra Ronnau) earned High Team — National Champions with their demonstration "Tips for your Trailer Hood."

The Horse Judging Team of Ashley Holm, Sierra Nelson, and Bailee Sobotka (coached by Roger Bell) earned 4th High Team Overall. (Vanessa Butterfield, also on the team, was unexpectedly unable to attend nationals.) Horse Judging High Overall Individuals included Bailee Sobotka placing 2nd.

The Douglas/Sarpy Horse Bowl team of Courtney Everhart, Megan Klug, Cheyenne Overman, and Heidi Wesely (coached by Shari Parys) placed 6th; and Taylor Barnes earned High Individual in the Horse Public Speaking Contest.



The Lancaster County Hippology and Demonstration teams earned national champions in their competitions.

Teen Council 4-H'ers Practice Leadership at Lock-In



Teen Council members begin with introductions and setting up basic rules for the night.

In January, 25 4-H Teen Council members organized and led the overnight 4-H Lock-In for 65 4th and 5th graders. This year, teens chose the theme, "Super Heroes" and divided into four groups: games, education, crafts, and snacks. At the Lock-In attendees rotated through each of the four groups, made friends, slept a little, and had lots of fun.

Teens reported on evaluations that by participating in the Lock-In:

- 91% improved their leadership skills
 - 83% learned at least one new leadership skill (examples given include being patient, talking in front of everyone, explaining directions well, listening, and how to "take charge")
 - 87% feel more comfortable being in a leadership role
- Asked what benefits do they receive by being a Teen Council member at the Lock-In, teens said:
- leadership growth
 - having more confidence and being self around strangers
 - how to problem solve a situation when there's still time left but the activities have run dry
 - learning how to be a better leader in life
 - respect
 - learned how to work as part of a team and how to work with younger children
 - since I'd like to be a teacher, it gave me an idea of different ways to lead kids
 - having fun
 - to make real friends

Teen Council Leader Marilyn Schepers says, "Super Heroes was the theme for the lock-in and the teens proved to be my Super Heroes. The skills they learned for organizing, execution, and accountability for the Lock-In activities were outstanding. I thoroughly enjoy observing these young people develop into responsible adults. They are wonderful role models for the younger participants."



Teens in the education group led youth in educational games and a discussion about real and fake super heroes.



Crafts included making masks, shields, and other super hero related items.



Teens led youth in various active games.



In the snacks group, youth frosted and decorated sugar cookies and made play dough.



www.agday.org

AMERICAN AGRICULTURE:
Generations Nourishing Generations

NATIONAL AG DAY: MARCH 19, 2013

Cash receipts from farm marketings contributed more than \$17 billion to Nebraska's economy in 2010.

Nebraska's Top 10 leading commodities:

- 1) cattle and calves
- 2) corn
- 3) soybeans
- 4) hogs
- 5) wheat
- 6) dairy products
- 7) chicken eggs
- 8) hay
- 9) dry beans
- 10) potatoes

Every dollar in agricultural exports generates \$1.31 in economic activities, such as transportation, financing, warehousing, and production. Nebraska's \$5.3 billion in agricultural exports translate into \$7.0 billion in additional economic activity.

Source: "Nebraska Agriculture Fact Card," USDA, NASS, Nebraska Field Office