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Horticulture ■ Rural Sense ■ Family Living ■ 4-H and Youth ■ Environmental Focus ■ Community and Leadership Development

I Care For My Animals

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Have you ever wondered about activities you see in the animal barns during the fair? Are you anxious to know why some sheep are being sheared and others left with full coats. What about all the activities at the washing stations? Have you noticed the big fans and the numbers of youth who stay close to their animals at all times? This year at the fair, take time to learn the meaning of ethical treatment and get some answers to your questions and concerns about proper animal care. Ask any of the 4-H exhibitors—they will be happy to talk with you about their animals.

The *I Care* program was instituted in Lancaster County to raise awareness of the importance of the proper care of animals, and to educate youth on handling their animals responsibly. Appropriate care of animals is core to the 4-H program and 4-H exhibitors are encouraged to inform others about the proper way to treat animals. They are expected to demonstrate for visitors at the fair how they properly handle their animals. They can also explain what their animals eat in their rations and

how to keep them healthy. They may even talk about the ins and outs of showing their animals and what steps are necessary to prepare animals for the show ring. 4-H exhibitors are very proud of their animals and will usually share information about their breeding and importance to agriculture.

Many of the animals you see at the fair are very valuable and safety is always a major concern both for the visitor and animals. Please take time to let 4-H members explain why it is important to approach animals with caution and only with the help or permission of the owner. Many times owners are happy to show you the proper way to pet or touch their animal.

Another aspect of the *I Care* program is teaching 4-H members to communicate positively in response to criticism or questions about agriculture and animals. Youth are encouraged to avoid confrontations with animal protestors. They are told to leave disruptions and demonstrations to be handled by fair officials. Youth are taught the difference between animal welfare and animal rights, and are generally eager to share this information with others.

The horse program in Lancaster



PRIORITY PROGRAM INDEX

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

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



Agricultural Competitiveness and Profitability

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"Cicada killers are common now"—page 4



Youth and Family Initiative

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"Good nutrition takes no vacation for school children"—page 6



Strengthening Neighborhoods and Communities

"Housing availability becoming big problem for many small communities"—page 14

County was the first project area to adopt the *I Care* program and this year other animals species are piloting the program before making it a mandatory requirement for showing animals at the fair. The Large Animal Committee of the 4-H Council has been instrumental in encouraging the adoption of the program. When youth commit to the *I Care*

program, they sign a pledge that they have read and understand the *I Care* Statement of Principle about their animal and that they follow the guidelines outlined.

Youth in 4-H animals programs work hard and should be recognized for the care and concern they have for their animals. Stop and visit with them and ask them about *I Care*.

Lancaster County Fair Special Edition

Look for pull-out section inside
for your guide to the 1996 Fair!
This year it's more than
ever before!

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