



Western Horse Showmanship at Lancaster County Fair

## In This Issue

- Urban Agriculture . . . . 2
- Environmental Focus . . . 3
- Food & Fitness . . . . . 4
- Home & Family Living . . . 5
- Farm Views . . . . . 6
- Horticulture . . . . . 7
- 4-H & Youth . . . . . 8–9
- Community Focus . . . . 10
- Miscellaneous . . . . 11–12



## SIGN UP FOR 4-H CLOVER COLLEGE!

Four days of fun workshops for youth ages 6 & up, June 19–22!

— see pages 9 & 11

# Youth/Adult Partnership is Key to Success of 4-H Horse Program

Marty Cruickshank  
UNL Extension Associate

The Nebraska 4-H mission statement is, “To empower youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults.” This mission is strong within the ranks of the Lancaster County 4-H Horse Program, which is the largest county horse program in the state. Currently there are 337 Lancaster County youth enrolled in the 4-H horse project and 22 horse clubs. More than 55 dedicated adult volunteers work hard to make the horse program a meaningful, learning experience for youth.

### 4-H Horse Project

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension 4-H Youth Development program emphasizes learning by doing. Through hands-on projects, youth develop practical and life skills. The 4-H Horse Project follows curriculum provided by UNL which includes information on feeding, anatomy and training methods. As 4-H’ers work with their horse project, they develop responsibility, self-discipline and patience.

Within the curriculum are four built-in advancement levels which serve as guides for instruction and evaluation of each 4-H member’s progress. Levels include written tests, club demonstrations, papers on health care and feeding, and also skills tests.

4-H member Josie Ang (age 10) says, “4-H makes me set high goals for me through my horse and has taught me about sportsmanship.”

### Adult Volunteers

Lancaster County 4-H is lucky to have many knowledgeable, caring and supportive club leaders who provide the frontline leadership for the 4-H Horse Program. These adults are the ones who organize meetings and teach the horse curriculum to club members. Since horses are large animals and can be dangerous if not handled right, leaders need to know how to keep kids and horses safe.

At the core of the Lancaster County 4-H Horse Program is a very active VIPS (Volunteers in Program Service) Committee which meets monthly. Many club leaders are on the VIPS Committee. Horse VIPS sponsors clinics, organizes an incentive program, helps with skills level testing and provides vital support for the county fair horse show. They determine county fair classes and rules, help hire judges and raise money for trophies. Members act as superintendents for fair classes.

Keith Dey, president of Horse VIPS,



Skills Level Testing



English Showmanship at County Fair

and other tasks. Younger kids even need help getting on their horse. Owning a horse takes a significant financial and time commitment. Many families make sacrifices in other areas in order to be able to afford the horse project.

### Educational Opportunities

The 4-H Horse Program offers numerous educational clinics throughout the year. Local, district and state horse shows are learning opportunities while also allowing youth to exhibit their horsemanship

skills. The state Horse Stampede features academic horse contests such as judging, quiz bowl, art, speech and demonstration.

The Lancaster County Fair has the largest county fair 4-H horse show in Nebraska. It is a five-day show with nearly 100 classes (including dressage, jumping, English, ranch & roping, trail, western rail, games, miniature horse and judging). In 2006, there were 1,500 total horse entries at the fair.

“The dedication needed to successfully show an animal at this level provides an excellent outlet for youth,” says Kala Ball,

see 4-H HORSE on page 10



Incentive Program Participants

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit No. 537  
Lincoln, Nebraska

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Lancaster County 4-H Council  
University of Nebraska–Lincoln  
Extension in Lancaster County  
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1507