

June

Sandy Talbert



Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Sandy Talbert as winner of June's "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

Sandy grew up in 4-H and was a junior leader in Colorado. In Kansas, when her daughter was old enough to join 4-H, Sandy started a 4-H club and was leader for five years. After moving to Nebraska in 1991, her daughter joined a club led by Barb and Ron Suing (who are still active volunteers) and Sandy helped. Sandy has been one of the 4-H Food Superintendents at the Lancaster County Fair for 16 years. She has also volunteered for 4-H at the Kansas and Nebraska State Fairs.



"I like being a 4-H volunteer because I enjoy working with youth of all ages and help them to grow through learning things in areas of their interest," says Sandy. "I love to see when kids learn something new and the excitement of getting their projects done and the honors they win at the fair. I have even learned different ways to do things from the youth and other 4-H leaders."

Congratulations to Sandy. Volunteers like her are indeed the heart of 4-H!

Nominate your favorite 4-H volunteer by submitting the form available online at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h> or at the extension office. Nominations of co-volunteers welcome.

Nearly 400 Attended Kiwanis Karnival

Approximately 400 4-H families and Elliott School children and their families attended this year's Kiwanis Karnival held April 12 at Elliott Elementary School. Lincoln Center Kiwanis sponsors the free, family event by providing snacks and prizes. Twelve 4-H clubs created and ran carnival-type games for the kids.



Pet Pals 4-H Club's booth featured a fish toss game.

Dear 4-H Friends,
Thank you for the great evening of family fun at Elliott School. Children practiced their aim, throwing and catching with games and won prizes. They also were able to play catch with Nebraska football players — what a thrill. The group of loving and unique rabbits taught everyone something new. I'd never seen rabbits lay on their backs with their legs sticking straight up! I don't think the face painters ever got a break the entire evening! The children loved the art on their faces! Thank you so much for setting everything up and cleaning up. It was amazing how quickly it happened. Most of all — thank you for sharing yourselves with Elliott School children.

Sincerely,
Deann Currin, Principal and
Elliott School children



Members of Rabbit R Us 4-H Club brought rabbits for youth to pet and learn about.

Can You Guess It?



Photo by Alice Henneman, UNL Extension in Lancaster County

Did you guess it? Find out at <http://lancaster.unl.edu>

Did you guess it from the May NEBLINE?
The answer was a mole tunnel

Jisa Cheese

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He was a visionary and he encouraged me to always be thinking a step or two ahead of the crowd. When most small cheese plants were going out of business or being purchased by industry giants, I decided the time was right to buy the equipment I would need to build a cheese plant while it was at a price I could afford to pay. It's a good thing I got started when I did, because now, equipment for small scale cheese plants is nearly impossible to find.

Q. Did you hire an engineer to design your cheese plant?

A. No, I hired a former cheese plant manager with many years of experience to help me design the basic system. I also worked very closely with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA)—Dairies and Foods Division. I wanted to know what the equipment requirements were and what types of equipment they would approve before I went looking to buy. The people from the NDA, especially Dan Borer and his team, have been a great help through the whole process of designing my equipment. I also got help from the NDA with designing my boilers and scales so they would pass inspection.

Q. Considering how busy you are with farming, on the scale you do, and the long hours involved with running a



Blocks of Jisa's Farmstead Cheese are packaged and vacuum sealed.

300 cow dairy, why did you decide to build a cheese plant?

A. Farmland values and commodity prices swing up and down in cycles. Right now, land prices are at the highest levels they ever have been. I got help from my parents to get started farming. If I am going to be in a position to help my three kids when it is their turn, I figured adding value to the product we already produce was better than buying more land. Another reason I decided to build a cheese plant is rising fuel cost. The annual bill for hauling milk to the milk plant is staggering. Marketing milk production in the form of cheese reduces the tonnage of product we are hauling to market by 90%. Actually that is another advantage I have with our setup. The main waste product of the cheese-making process is the water left over after the solids are separated out. This water is recycled back through the farm

operation in our case. The waste from most cheese plants creates a burden on the municipal sewage treatment system.

Q. How did you learn to make cheese?

A. I got help from the Food Processing Center at UNL. They taught me how to make the various types of cheese we make in their pilot plant on East Campus. They came out to my cheese plant to help me get things working right and to help develop new products.

Q. I know you sell some cheese to consumers right here at the cheese plant, but most of it is sold in stores. How do you get stores to carry your products?

A. In the first place, I don't try to compete with industry giants. That is why I don't produce mozzarella, for example. I look for niches I can fill. We produce several flavored cheeses like Garlic-Parsley, Veggie, Jalapeno, etc. Secondly, if the store has a deli, I have found it works better to get the deli manager to try my cheese first. I let the deli manager talk to the manager of the dairy department. The market for our product is growing nicely.

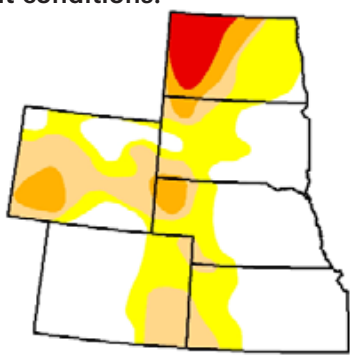
Q. What three pieces of advice would you give to other entrepreneurs wanting to break into the food market?

A. 1. Do your homework. 2. Find a niche you can fill. 3. Don't expect to turn a profit in the beginning.

U.S. Drought Monitor Map

As of May 13, Lancaster County was not in drought conditions.

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)				
	D0	D1	D2	D3	D4
Current	47.8	52.2	26.9	10.9	4.1
Last Week (5/5/08 map)	46.1	53.9	28.5	11.1	4.3
3 Months Ago (2/19/08 map)	40.2	59.8	28.9	14.6	0.6
Start of Calendar Year (1/1/08 map)	46.8	53.2	29.4	11.8	0.3
Start of Water Year (10/1/07 map)	55.8	44.2	23.3	10.8	1.0
One Year Ago (5/15/07 map)	69.2	40.8	27.1	11.2	1.7



Intensity:
■ D0 Abnormally Dry
■ D1 Drought - Moderate
■ D2 Drought - Severe
■ D3 Drought - Extreme
■ D4 Drought - Exceptional

For the most recent map, visit <http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm>

Source: National Drought Mitigation Center, University of Nebraska-Lincoln