Agricultural literacy is vital in today’s society. Each year more and more people lose touch with where their food, fiber, and fuel come from. More and more youth think their food comes from the store and have no idea their bread, meat, cheese, pastas, milk, eggs, juice, etc. were originally raw materials grown by farmers.

Agriculture touches each of our lives daily and is Nebraska’s number one industry — one in three jobs are related to agriculture. Ag literacy is one of the five signature outcome areas of Nebraska 4-H.

The Agricultural Awareness Festival in Lincoln teaches nearly 600 4th graders how their food is raised from farm to fork. Lancaster County 4-H started the festival in 2000 with the help of various commodity boards. The festival has grown from one day to two days and is held at the Lancaster Event Center.

Presenters teach the basics of agriculture and why these animals, crops and technology are so important to our day-to-day lives. Students rotate through various sessions including: beef, pork, poultry, dairy, crops, by-products, water and agricultural technology. Students have the opportunity to interact with animals and climb on farm equipment, which is a first for many who attend.

Annette Davidson, a 4th grade teacher at Eagle Elementary, said, “We enjoy bringing our students to this event because it provides a strong connection with our study of Nebraska and reinforces the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. Students always enjoy the various activities.”

**Lancaster County Super Fair**

For over 135 years, the Lancaster County Fair has celebrated agriculture, youth and community. Hosted by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, Lancaster County 4-H coordinates the 4-H & FFA youth events and exhibits, as well as many ag literacy experiences.

The Super Fair is a great opportunity for urban residents to learn about agriculture and where their food comes from. There are many crop and horticulture exhibits.

The public can see hundreds of farm animals up close, including cattle, pigs, chickens, sheep and goats. The fair has educational displays in the animal areas explaining breeds, colors and purposes of each species. Many 4-H/FFA animal exhibitors are eager to talk to fairgoers about their animals and let people pet their animals.

Since the 1980s, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County has coordinated a “Fair Fun Day” for child care groups with youth K–4. Teen volunteers (mostly 4-H youth) give the groups guided tours of the fair, with an emphasis on learning about the different animals, crops and where their food comes from. Last year, 17 teenagers gave tours for 10 child care groups with approximately 300 youth.

Bailee Gunnerson, a Fair Fun Day tour guide, said, “Out of all the things I love doing in 4-H, my favorite thing is talking with kids about my animals because I love the faces they make when I tell them interesting facts.”

In 2006, Lancaster County developed an Animal Exploration Guide for after-school and summer sites with youth K–4. This curriculum includes information, fun facts and activities about various animals at the Lancaster County Super Fair. A 4-H club staff member visits many of the summer sites to talk about the fair and animals.

**Go Go Goat Getters & Pick-a-Pig 4-H Clubs**

Two 4-H clubs target urban and non-urban youth who do not have the opportunity to raise a farm animal on their own. Pick-a-Pig was started in 2009 and Go Go Goat Getters started last year. These youth have the opportunity to help raise a pig or goat and then show it at the Super Fair.

With both clubs, the animals are housed at a local farm. Youth meet weekly at the farm to learn about and care for their animals. After the fair, the animals are marketed. The majority of these kids have had no hands-on experience with a farm animal. They learn these animals will eventually go into the food chain.

Thomas Cook, a member of the Pick-a-Pig club, said, “I learned pigs provide us pork chops, ham and bacon from the Pick-a-Pig club.”

4-H Ag Literacy Teaches Youth Where Their Food and Fiber Comes From

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
144 Cherry Creek Road, Suite A
Lincoln, NE 68528
402-441-7180
http://lancaster.unl.edu

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**4-H Also Teaches Youth How to Raise Animals and Plants**

For over 100 years, 4-H has taught agricultural education to youth who help raise their own animals and plants. Popular 4-H projects continue to include cattle, horses, poultry, swine, sheep, goats, rabbits, vegetables and fruit.

Youth in 4-H animal projects learn how to properly care for and train their animals, and other good animal husbandry practices. 4-H also offers in-depth animal knowledge such as judging, breed identification, facts and more.

Youth in 4-H plant projects learn how to grow plants from seed to harvest.
Food Safety Questions About Commercially-Canned Food

### Storage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD</th>
<th>STORAGE ON SHELF</th>
<th>STORAGE AFTER OPENING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-acid canned goods. Examples: canned meat and poultry, stews, soups (except tomato), spaghetti (noodle and pasta) products, potatoes, corn, carrots, spinach, beans, beets, peas and pumpkin.</td>
<td>2 to 5 years</td>
<td>3 to 4 days in the refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-acid canned goods. Examples: juices (tomato, orange, lemon, lime and grapefruit), tomatoes, grapefruit, pineapple, apples and apple products, mixed fruit, peaches, pears, plums, all berries, pickles, sauerkraut and foods treated with vinegar-based sauces or dressings like German potato salad and sauerbraten.</td>
<td>12 to 18 months</td>
<td>5 to 7 days in the refrigerator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commercially-canned foods are convenient as they require no refrigeration to keep their contents safe. Their nutritional value is comparable to other forms of food such as frozen and fresh. In some cases, it may be higher. However, there are answers to questions we commonly receive at the Extension office about canned foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety & Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS).

### Will Commercially Canned Foods Last Forever?

Commercial canning is done under tightly-controlled conditions—careful sanitation and the necessary time and temperature under pressure; there is still too long to lose its nutritional value. High temperatures (over 100°F) can cause spoilage and storage temperatures rise. In fact, canned goods designed for use in the tropics are specially manufactured. Store canned foods and other shelf stable products in a cool, dry place. Never put them above or beside the stove, under the sink, in a damp garage, building or box exposed to high or low temperature extremes. Temperatures below 85°F are best. Check your pantry every few weeks and use canned goods you have on hand for awhile. Don’t purchase bulging, rusted, leaking or dented cans.

### After Opening Canned Foods, is it Safe to Refrigerate the Unused Food in the Can?

Yes. Unused portions of canned food may be refrigerated, but be sure to keep optimum quality and flavor, place the unused portion in a glass or plastic storage container.

### Is it Safe to Use Rusted Canned Foods?

Discard heavily rusted cans. Cans heavily rusted can have tiny holes in them, allowing bacteria to enter. Surface rust you can remove by rubbing with your finger or a paper towel is not serious. You can keep these canned foods. If you open the cans and there is any rust inside, do not use the food. Heat (oxidized iron) is not safe to eat.

### Is it Safe to Use Food From Dented Cans?

If a can containing food has a small dent, but is otherwise in good shape, the food should be safe to eat. Discard deeply dented cans. A deep dent is one you can lay your finger into. Deep dents often have sharp points. A sharp dent on either the top or side seam can damage the seal and allow bacteria to enter the can. Discard any can with a deep dent on any seam.

### Is it Safe to Use Cans That Freeze Accidentally?

Cans of food that freeze accidentally, such as those left in a car or in sub-zero temperatures, can present health problems. Freezing can cause flavor and texture problems. Frozen cans could freeze and swell because the food inside expanded when frozen. However, cans can be swollen because of contamination by bacteria, botulinum, or spoilage-causing organisms. Do not use any swollen cans; discard them.

### 4-INGREDIENT GUACAMOLE

1 ripe avocado
1/2 teaspoon powdered cumin
Dash of cayenne pepper, optional (about 1/16 teaspoon)
1/2 to 1 ripe Roma tomato, diced; or use about 1/4 cup of grape or cherry tomatoes cut into smaller pieces
Salt (if desired)

Mash avocado with potato masher, pastry blender or fork. Mix in cumin and cayenne pepper. Stir in tomatoes. Taste; add more cumin and cayenne as needed. Add salt to taste, if desired.

NOTE: Guacamole prepared without lime or lemon juice may turn brown sooner, so it is best to eat this version right after preparation.
Children Act Fast, So Do Accidents

National Poison Prevention Week is March 15–21, 2015 and there is no better time to think about your laundry routine. It takes a habit to always store liquid laundry packets out of reach and sight of children to prevent injury and in their original package until you are ready to use them.

WARNING! Children are curious and whether you want them to or not, tend to put all sorts of different things in their mouths. Food, rattles, toys, teethingers — you name it. And even some things they shouldn’t. Serious harm including accidental ingestion and eye exposure can occur if children get their hands on liquid laundry packets. Each laundry packet contains highly concentrated detergent and can cause serious injury if they end up in the hands and mouths of children.

Parents know children act fast which is exactly why it is essential to get in the habit of always storing liquid laundry packets along with all other household cleaning products in a safe place out of reach and sight of children. And, always remember to keep laundry packets in their original package until they are ready to be used.

Liquid laundry packet accidents are more common than you think. In 2013, there were over 10,000 laundry packet exposures* in children five and younger. Protect your children. Here’s how:

• Do not let children handle laundry packets.
• Do not put or give pull packets apart.
• Store out of child’s sight and reach.

Packets quickly dissolve upon contact with water, wet hands, or saliva. Packets can rupture, releasing contents into eyes.

*Ras reported by the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

FREE Community Tax Preparation for Low- and Moderate-Income Individuals and Families

Lincoln's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides free tax preparation services to low- and moderate-income individuals and families living in Lancaster and Saunders Counties. The program includes both state and federal electronic filing.

The tax services are available at specific hours and dates through April 15 at the following sites in Lincoln:

• Community Action
• Nebraska East Union
• Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center
• Raymond Women's Club
• Southeast Community College
• Anderson Library
• Asian Community and Cultural Center
• Bennett Martin Library
• North Star High School Media Center
• Good Neighbor Center
• Indian Center

For the 2015 VITA site schedule and list of what to bring to have your taxes prepared, go to https://communityactionworkng. preasenca.net/program/community/services.html or call 402-471-4515.

Community Action leads VITA in partnership with the Lincoln Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Coalition and University of Nebraska–Lincoln. VITA's volunteer tax preparers are thoroughly trained on tax law and have vast knowledge of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and other credits designed to put a bigger refund into the hands of taxpayers. In the 2014 tax season, VITA volunteers prepared over 5,000 returns returning $6.2 million to taxpayers in our community.

AARP Driver Safety Program, March 13

An AARP Smart Driver™ Course will be presented in Lincoln as a 4-hour session on Friday, March 13, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road. A certified AARP instructor will teach the driver's refresher course. This is a new, research-based Smart Driver class for older adults, extensively revised from previous versions. Sign up for the class by calling 402-441-7180. Those attending are encouraged to arrive a few minutes early to complete check-in and registrations procedures. Cost is $15 for AARP members and $20 for non-members, payable at the door. Payment by check or cash is required (the exact amount is helpful) — credit/debit cards are not accepted. All participants must bring their driver’s license and AARP members are required to also bring their ID card and number.

In this class you will learn driving strategies which encourage confidence and safer driving, including:

• defensive driving techniques, new traffic laws and rules of the road
• how to deal with aggressive drivers
• techniques to safely handle driving situations, such as left turns, right-of-ways, blind spots and
• how to make the best use of safety features found in most automobiles.

There is no test. Course participants may be eligible to receive an insurance discount from nearby companies — consult your insurance agent for further details. For more information about the course, call 1-888-227-7669 or go to www.aarpdriversafety.org.

Home Hazards, Health and Human Relationships Seminar, March 5

A free seminar, “Home Hazards, Health and Human Relationships” is designed for child care professionals, parents, grandparents, community professionals and UNL students. It will be Thursday, March 5, 1–3 p.m. in the Great Plains Room of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln East Campus Union.

Various seminar features Dr. Joe Ponessa, professor emeritus, Rutgers University, and Dr. Susanna von Essen, professor, University of Nebraska Medical Center. Dr. Julia Torquati, professor, UNL College of Education and Human Sciences, will moderate the seminar.

The purpose of the seminar is to draw the connection between environment and individual and family functioning. Dr. Ponessa and Dr. Susanna von Essen will focus on health hazards found in homes, schools and work settings as well as the affect they have on children’s learning.

For additional information and to RSVP, go to: http://go.unl.edu/familyhealthhousing

The seminar is hosted by the Department of Child, Youth and Family Studies and the University of Nebraska Extension Program by the generous donation of Charles and Shirley (Whidden) Niemeyer through the University of Nebraska Foundation.

ASQ LORENE FAMILY LIVING TIPS

Lorene Bartos, Extension Educator

Question: Should I test my home for Radon?

Answer: If you have a home that does not have a Radon mitigation system it is suggested you test for it.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. It is a natural occurring, radioactive gas that can accumulate in your home. You can’t see, smell or taste radon.

Radon usually comes from surrounding soil and can enter through cracks and openings in the lower level of a home. Nebraska has a very high incidence of radon in homes; over half of radon tests in the state are above the action level of 4.0 pCi/L.

If a home or building has an annual average radon level of 4 pCi/L or higher, it should be mitigated (fixed) to lower the radon level.

There are short and long term test kits. Kits are available at hardware stores.

Short-term radon tests run typically 2 to 7 days. They are useful as an initial screen test because they are inexpensive and the results are received quicker than long-term tests. Long-term tests run from 3 months to a full year and often give a better annual average of your radon exposure, since they can take into account the seasonal variations of radon.

Some manufacturers offer special pricing for Nebraska residents when purchasing a radon test kit. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Radon Program provides this list as a service to the citizens of Nebraska, but does not endorse one manufacturer/locator over another. They have tried to ensure that all the information is accurate, however you should confirm the pricing prior to purchase.

• AccuStar — To order a discounted long-term test kit from AccuStar, call 800-523-4964 and mention “Nebraska.”

More information about AccuStar products can be found at http://www.accustarterlab.com

• Air Chek, Inc. — To order a discounted short- or long-term test kit from Air Chek, Inc., visit www.radon.com/nebraska

• Alpha Energy Laboratories — To order a discounted short- or long-term test kit from Alpha Energy, visit http://alphaenergy.com/nebraska

Radon test kits can often be found at local hardware stores or home centers, as well. For more information about radon, go to the DHHS website at http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/ranodon_index.aspx.

*Ask Lorene* by mail: Attn: Lorene Bartos, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528; email Bartos1@unl.edu; or phone 402-441-7180.

FREE COMMUNITY TAX PREPARATION FOR LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

The tax services are available at specific hours and dates through April 15 at the following sites in Lincoln:

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A Conference for Early Childhood Professionals

Saturday, March 21—8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Lancaster Extension Education Center
444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE

Cost is $20 (includes lunch from Brown Baggers/refreshments)

Pre-registration is due March 6.

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

In-service hours will be given for this conference. This conference is approved through the Nebraska Department of Education.
The Nebraska Nut Growers Association (NEGNA) & Heartland Nuts ‘N More cooperate to sponsor a free seminar.

“Growing a Nut Orchard for the Future,” on Thursday, Feb. 26, 7–9 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherry Creek Rd. There will be door prize drawings of several seedling nut tree varieties.

If you want to plant just a couple nut trees or an orchard, you will find this seminar informative. Growing nut trees can be a great family activity now and for the future. Everyone has different expectations and goals when planning an orchard. This seminar will cover the steps required to accomplish your goals and expectations. There will be professional growers on hand to answer your questions.

Topics include:
- planting — setting realistic goals, understanding an orchard environment and tasks needed to meet your goals,
- planting — planting considerations and seeding selections,
- caring — tasks required to bring a seeding to a produc- ing nut tree, and
- harvesting tasks — harvesting techniques, processing and marketing your nuts.

For more information, contact Craig Romary, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, at craig.romary@nebraska.gov.

Soil Temperature Trends for Planting

Table 1. Recommended minimum temperatures needed for germination of selected agricultural crops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agronomic Crop</th>
<th>Minimum Soil Temperature at Planting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring wheat</td>
<td>37°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring barley</td>
<td>40°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>41°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>43°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa</td>
<td>45°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar beet</td>
<td>50°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field corn</td>
<td>55°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean</td>
<td>59°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet</td>
<td>60°F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorghum</td>
<td>65°F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Crop Type | DriftWatch Growers | USDA/NDA Estimates for Nebraska | DriftWatch % of Estimate
--- | --- | --- | ---
Bee Hives | 47 | 204 | 23%
Fish Farm | 2 | 45 | 4%
Fruits/Orchard | 61 | 277 | 22%
Grapes | 120 | 210 | 57%
Nursery/Greenhouse/High Tunnel | 35 | 350 | 10%
Certified Organic | 61 | 196 | 31%
Vegetables | 62 | 266 | 23%

Soil Temperatures for March and April Based on 1987-2014 Data From Lincoln/IANR AWDN Weather Station

Figure 1. Daily average soil temperatures from the Lincoln/IANR AWDN weather station from 1987-2014 for March and April. Measurements are taken under bare soil at a depth of 10cm or 4 inches. Data from the High Plains Regional Climate Center website www.cropwatch.unl.edu

Soil temperatures for a station near you can be useful information for planning planting dates. The soil temperature for a station near you can be useful information for planning planting dates. The soil temperature for a station near you can be useful information for planning planting dates. The soil temperature for a station near you can be useful information for planning planting dates.

Website provides a seven-day forecast of soil temperature based on 1987-2014 data from the Lincoln/IANR AWDN Weather Station.

Website: www.cropwatch.unl.edu
There are few things more frustrating to people who feed birds than pest animals taking advantage of the buffet we’ve set out. These unwanted guests can damage your feeders, eat and waste seed and possibly even damage or invade your home. Last month, we gave some general recommendations on preventing nuisance wildlife at feeders. This article covers strategies to deter some of the pests commonly found at feeders in our area.

Nuisance Birds
European starlings, pigeons and house sparrows are considered pests at feeders. Grackles can also become pests, but they migrate so they won’t be a problem during winter. All of these birds can empty your feeders in a very short time. If you are having problems, use feeders that deter squirrels. These will also deter larger birds. You can also use feeders with small, unstable perchers or require feeders to cling or hang upside down.

House sparrows don’t like objects above their heads. The Magic Halo is a 30-inch wire hoop invented by UNL Professor, Dr. Ron Johnson, Emeritus. For more information on this device, see Extension publication, “Selective Bird Feeding: Deterting Nuisance Wildlife from Bird Feeders” (EC1783). If you’re having problems with nuisance birds, try changing your feed. Avoid mixes. Stick with hard-shelled seeds like sunflower and safflower. Never toss bird seed or suet on your property. Some officials and rescue groups to control feral cats.

Dogs: Dogs don’t usually prey on birds but they may chase them. Make sure you place any suet out of your dog’s reach.

Ground-feeders like Mice, Voles, Opossums and Skunks: Reduce the amount of seed reaching the ground by using trays suspended from feeders. Clean up waste seed on the ground. Make sure you are storing your bird seed and suet securely. I store my birdseed outdoors in a metal trash can with a very secure, tight-fitting lid. When filling your bird feeders, be careful not to spill the seed next to your home so you don’t attract rodents.

Yes, deer are attracted to many types of bird feed. If you are having problems with deer, make sure your feeders are at least 6 feet high. Deer may try to butt the feeder or pole to knock the seed out. You can use a rigid fence around the feeder pole that is at least 3 feet from the pole and 4 feet high or try removing the pole and 4 feet high or try removing the feeder at night.

Cats: Both domestic and feral cats will try to ambush birds at your feeders. Place your feeders away from shrubs and landscaping where they can hide. Feeders should be placed high off the ground. Keep cats indoors and work with wildlife officials and rescue groups to control feral cats.

Dogs: Dogs don’t usually prey on birds but they may chase them. Make sure you place any suet out of your dog’s reach.

For more information, Nebraska Extension publication “Selective Bird Feeding: Deterting Nuisance Wildlife from Bird Feeders” (EC1783) is available at the Extension office and online at http://Lincoln.unl.edu/past/birds.html.

It is important to provide water for birds
Like all animals, birds need water to survive. Most birds drink water every day. In winter, you may see them gathering near puddles created by snowmelt. Birds also need to use water for bathing, cleaning feathers and removing parasites. A bird bath will even bring birds to your yard that don’t eat seeds and wouldn’t visit your feeders.

Bird baths can be purchased or made. During winter, use a heater especially designed for bird baths to keep the water from freezing.

2015 Vegetable All America Selections
Cucumber
Parisian Gherkin
Parisian Gherkin cucumber is an excellent mini or gherkin pickling cucumber which can be picked either at the midget size or small pickle stage and processed. The crisp cucumbers have a sweet flavor and process into pickles well. The semi vining plants can be planted in the garden or staked patio containers. This cucumber is very easy to grow and is a disease resistant variety that is well adapted to container gardens or raised beds.

Tomato
Chef’s Choice Pink
Chef’s Choice Pink tomato plants have very large yields of 12–14 ounce pink beefsteak tomatoes. The prefect acid to sugar balance in this tomato make it a must for any home chef. Consider stewing or canning these beautiful tomatoes. The plants have indeterminate growth habit and good disease resistance.

Pepper
Sweet Sunset
Sweet Sunset is a compact banana pepper that is vigorous and sets a large amount of fruit. This high yielding variety produces attractive colorful tasty peppers that are great for fresh or canned. The compact upright plants do not require staking and can be grown in a container. This high-yielding plant produces early, often and late into the season.

Pepper
Hot Sunset
For banana or wax pepper lovers who desire a prolific and earlier harvest of delicious and spicy fruits, Hot Sunset is for you. Large, healthy, vigorous plants are disease-free and produce tasty and attractive fruits all season long. The AAS Trial judges noted what a great taste this thick-walled pepper has, not like other hot peppers where all you get is heat.

Outwitting Wildlife at Bird Feeders – Part II

Many wildlife will take advantage of bird feeders. Pictured is an opossum eating bird seed in a tray-like bird feeder.
4-H Jammie Workshop, March 28
1-4-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 29, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycrest Road. No cost to attend. Adults are encouraged to attend to help 4-H’ers. Bring your sewing machine, basic sewing notions (sewing pins, measuring tape, etc.), simple pull-on pajama bottom pattern, pre-washed flannel or 100% cotton fabric (no one-way design fabrics or plaids), elastic as recommended by pattern and matching thread. Sign up by March 26 by calling 402-441-7180.

Furniture Painting Workshop, April 18
4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to participate in a furniture painting workshop on Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycrest Road. Bring a small piece of unpainted furniture, such as a shelf, stool or chair. These items can be found around your house, at craft stores, garage sales and thrift stores. Learn how to prepare new and used wood furniture by sanding, sealing, painting and finishing. All paints and finishes are provided. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to attend to help youth. Register by April 15 by calling 402-441-7180.

Spring Rabbit Show
Saturday, March 21, 9 a.m.
Registration 7:30–8:30 a.m.
Lancaster Event Center – Exhibit Hall
84th & Havelock, Lincoln
Open to all youth 8–18

4-H Speech & PSA
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 guidelines and examples, go to http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/Contests/speech.shtml. If you have questions, contact Cole Meader at cmeader2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

PSA Contest, Due March 16
In the Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest, 4-H’ers submit a 60 second “radio commercial” promoting 4-H. PSA entries are CD to the extension office by Monday, March 16. 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 mailed out following the 4-H Speech Over Contest. The 2015 PSA theme is “4-H Grows...” Please use .wav or .mp3 audio formats when recording your PSA.

Speech Contest, March 22
The 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, March 22 at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. Registration 1–1:30 p.m., contest begins at 1:30 p.m. Register by March 16 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing cmeader2@unl.edu with your name, speech title, age division.

New Livestock Quality Assurance Requirements
New this year, Quality Assurance training is NOT required for the Lancaster County Super Fair. ONLY 4-H’ers will be participating. All 4-H’ers should be familiar with swine, meat and dairy goats, dairy cattle, poultry and rabbits at State Fair or the Ak-Sar-Ben Fair. This training will provide livestock managers with the information needed to complete the Quality Assurance training. Horse exhibitors and livestock exhibitors who are showing only breeding animals do not have to complete it. The Quality Assurance certification is online and must be done by June 15. This year, there is a $5 per youth charge. Instruction materials are online at http://4h.unl.edu/qualityassurance. If you have any questions, contact Cole at cmeader2@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.

Deadline to Join Pig Club is March 15
The Pick-A-Pig 4-H club is accepting new members for anyone who wants to learn about pork production and show a pig at the Super Fair. Open to all city and rural youth ages 8–18. For more information, contact Harry Multibach at 402-430-7304. Deadline to join is March 15.

Clover College Instructors Needed
4-H Clover College is four days of fun-filled, hands-on workshops for youth ages 6 and up. June 16–19 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 tandersson1@unl.edu.
Achievement Celebration

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County and 4-H Council presented the Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Celebration on Feb. 16. 4-Hers, 4-H clubs and 4-H leaders were recognized for their 2014 achievements. 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/

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 2 – AQUAMARINE: Steven Aden, Mindy Bartels, Toby Becker, John Boesen, Chloe Bohaty, Ellie Bunz, Kali Burnham, Thomas Cook, Sarah Cunningham, Celia Faith, Sydney Gubbels, Ross Jaros, Grant Johnson, Gregory Johnson, Sara Kreikeimier, Sarah Logan, Megan Neal, Riley Peterson, Sophie Polk, Isaac Rogers, Elinay Kay Schwinck, Jackson Standen, Jay Stander, Dake Van Seggern

LEVEL 3 – RUBY: Nathan Becker, Greta Nebel, Abibe Russman, Anna Sump, John Sump, David Swotek, John Swotek

LEVEL 4 – SAPPHIRE: Eliana Babcock, Kayla Humphrey, Jared Nielsens, Lucy Polk, Addison Wanser

LEVEL 5 – EMERALD: Abigail Babcock, Valerie Gabel, Brooke Kreikeimier, Emma Lainak, Caleb Nielsens, Alyssa Zimmer

4-H CLUBS OF EXCELLENCE

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

4-H Explorers, Denim n’ Dust, Explorers, Fantastic 4, Fusion 4-Hers, Go Go Goat Getters, Joe’s Clover Knights, Pick-A-Pig, Rabbits R Us, Rock Creek Ranchers, Rock n’ Riders, Shamastic Clovers, Super Shamrocks

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

LANCASTER COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL – $750: Ivy Deemort, Madeline Gabel, Victoria Garza, Anne Greff, Austin Hurt, Bailey Johnson, Kylee Plager, Jacob Pickrel, Paige Roach, Renae Sieck, Trevor Spath, Max Wanser

4-H TEEN COUNCIL – $250: Madeline Gabel, Jacob Pickrel, Kylee Plager, Renae Sieck, Max Wanser

LINCOLN CENTER KIWANIS – $1,000: Renae Sieck

This year, Lancaster County 4-H Council increased the number and amount of its college scholarships from six $500 to twelve $750 scholarships!

CAREER PORTFOLIOS

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

NOMINATED TO REPRESENT LANCASTER COUNTY AT DISTRICT COMPETITION

Kayla Humphrey: Consumer & Family Science
Abigail Babcock: Consumer & Family Science
Lucy Polk: Animal Science

ALSO COMPLETED CAREER PORTFOLIOS

Ellie Babcock, Sophie Polk

4-H MERITORIOUS SERVICE

Roger Bell (center) assists with livestock and horse judging teams competing at state and national contests. He started the Livestock Judging Contest at the Lancaster County Fair.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

(Formerly I Dare You Award) Awarded on behalf of the American Youth Foundation to youth ages 15-18 who strive to achieve their personal best and make a positive difference in their schools, youth groups, 4-H clubs and communities.

Austin Hurt, Sheridan Swotek

SOUTH PRAIRIE WRANGLERS 4-H Club of the Hickman area is winner of Category III (15 or more members). The club’s 73 members were enrolled in approximately 30 projects and entered more than 300 total exhibits at the fair. This is their seventh year as an outstanding club. Andy Dearmont is club leader and there are seven assistant or project leaders.

2014 Outstanding 4-H Club Awards

The Lincoln Center Kiwanis Club presents Outstanding 4-H Club Awards to the top 4-H clubs participating in the Lancaster County Super Fair. Clubs receive points based on all members’ total county fair exhibit and contest placements. The following clubs were also recognized at a recent Lincoln Center Kiwanis club meeting.

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.


February
21 4-H Pillow Party Sewing Workshop ......................................................... 9 a.m.
21 4-H Paws-On Dog Workshop, Greater Lincoln Obedience Club Building, 5740 Johanna Road ............................................................. 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
March
1 Preference Given to 4-H Council Camp Scholarship Applications 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 Gardner’s Agricultural Excellence Awards ($500)
3 4-H Council Meeting ............................................................................... 7 p.m.
5 “Home Hazards, Health and Human Relationships” Seminar, UNL East Campus Union – Great Plains Room ........................................... 1–3 p.m.
8 4-H Teen Council Meeting ..................................................................... 3 p.m.
10 4-H/Conservation/Consortium Training .............................................. 1:30–4:30 p.m.
12 Co-Parenting for Successful Kids Class ........................................... 12:30–4 p.m.
13 Extension Board Meeting ....................................................................... 8 a.m.
13 AAAA Safety Program .......................................................................... 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
14 4-H Horse Stampede, UNL East Campus - Animal Science Building ...
16 4-H Horse VIPS Committee Meeting ..................................................... 6:30 p.m.
16 4-H Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest CDs Due/Preregister for Speech Contest
19 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training .................. 9 a.m.
21 “A Window of Opportunity” Conference for Early Childhood Professionals ........................................................................ 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
21 4-H Spring Rabbit Show, Lancaster Event Center, Exhibit Hall ............ 9 a.m.
21 4-H Speech Contest ............................................................................. 1 p.m. registration/1:30 p.m. contest
28 4-H Jammie Jamboree Sewing Workshop ........................................... 9 a.m.

“My Town, Lancaster County” Rural Design Workshop, March 19–21

The small towns of Lancaster County will be participating in a three-day workshop, “My Town, Lancaster County,” on March 19–21. The project is led by the Lancaster County Planning Department, with the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners and Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County as partners.

The workshops will bring together the small towns of Lancaster County to share information and ideas, discuss visions of the future, plan for future projects and activities, and energize residents who are interested in bringing increased vitality to their communities. At this time the communities of Bennet, Denton, Firth, Hallam, Hickman, Malcolm, Panama, Roca, Sprague and Waverly have signed on to participate.

My Town, Lancaster County, is made possible through an award from the Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design (CIRD), a project of the National Endowment for the Arts, Project for Public Spaces, USDA and the Orton Family Foundation.

As a first step, residents of the small towns are being asked to share images of what they love about their town and what they would like to change. Submit photos to the “My Town, Lancaster County” website (http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/mytown), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/mytownlancaster) or email mytown@lancaster.ne.gov.

The images will be used by the workshop teams to develop preliminary goals to address during the workshop.

“My Town, Lancaster County” kicks off with a public presentation by Ed McMahon held Thursday, March 19 at 5:30 p.m. at the Jackie Gaughan Multicultural Center (attached to the Nebraska Union on UNL City Campus). McMahon, from the Urban Land Institutes, is a nationally known expert in the areas of community development and economic opportunity. A social hour with light refreshments, sponsored by the Nebraska Chapter of the American Planning Association, will follow the presentation to give attendees an opportunity to speak with McMahon.

Workshop teams representing Lancaster County’s small towns will spend March 20 and 21 attending panel discussions, working on goals specific to their communities and learning about what has been successful in other rural Nebraska towns.

CIRD workshops bring together local leaders, non-profits, community organizations and citizens; and a team of specialists in design, planning, community and economic development to address challenges identified by the host communities.

“My Town, Lancaster County,” will look at the specific opportunities and challenges faced by small communities in proximity to a larger city. The workshop will address how these towns can build on their assets and maintain their unique identities, while still taking advantage of the opportunities Lincoln provides.

The public is also invited to join a final presentation of what each town has developed throughout the workshop. This open house will be held Saturday, March 21, 1:30 p.m. at the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center, 11700 SW 100th St., 2-1/2 miles south of Denton.

For more information about the workshops, contact Sara Hartie at 402-441-6371 or shartie@lincoln.ne.gov.