

A Year of Change & Growth



2015 has been a year of change in the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County office. In February, I began my role as Unit Leader

and County Department Head. I quickly realized the depth of staff talent and dedication, and the impact they make in our community. We celebrated with retiring staff and said goodbye to a combined 90 years of Extension experience.

Growth occurred as Nebraska Extension administration identified areas of focus. These areas will enable staff to more quickly and effectively help Nebraskans use research-based information to make informed decisions:

- 4-H Youth Development
- Beef Systems
- Community Environment
- Community Vitality Initiative
- Cropping and Water Systems
- Food, Nutrition and Health
- The Learning Child

Extension administration also announced the formation of issue-based programming. This new structuring brings current and emerging issues to inter-disciplinary teams ready to ensure communities, businesses and people continue to thrive.

In March, our office collaborated with the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Department, Board of Commissioners and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design to host "My Town Lancaster County." As part of this three-day workshop, leaders from area towns spent a day at the Lancaster Extension Education Center for learning and sharing ideas. Extension Educators facilitated a session in which groups brainstormed improvement plans. The workshop culminated with a showcase of the towns' planned projects. What an amazing event!

We upgraded the audio-visual system and furnishings in our conference facilities which are used by Extension and nonprofit organizations. In 2015, approximately 4,700 hours of workshops and meetings were held.

We look forward to 2016 as we welcome new staff and continue to serve Nebraskans!

Karen Wobig

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UNL Extension Educator & Unit Leader



At the 2015 Lancaster County Super Fair, nearly 700 4-H/FFA exhibitors showcased nearly 5,100 exhibits (including static exhibits, animals, contest entries and Clover Kids exhibits). Due to the outbreak of avian influenza, live birds couldn't be shown. Alternative 4-H poultry contests were created, including posters, presentations, poultry parts identification and quiz bowl. The contests were such a success some will be incorporated into future fairs. Pictured is the largest dog junior showmanship class in recent years.



Last year, 37 after-school and summer-site programs included 4-H projects and activities in their program. Pictured is Extension Assistant Teri Hlava leading youth in a plant science activity at the Family Service Youth Development Program at Campbell.



Nebraska Extension's 4-H youth development program emphasizes science, ag literacy, healthy lifestyles, career development and citizenship/leadership. In the past year, Lancaster County 4-H involved nearly:

- 1,017 club members
- 248 independent members
- 2,205 youth in after-school/summer programs which incorporated 4-H activities, and
- 20,582 youth in 4-H school enrichment programs.



Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County coordinates distribution and application of biosolids* to agricultural cropland for the City of Lincoln. Since 1992, more than 725,000 tons of biosolids have been recycled, extending the life of the landfill an estimated five years. Pictured is Biosolids Coordinator Dave Smith.

* Biosolids are organic solids separated from wastewater and biologically processed to make them safe to use as a fertilizer.



4-H school enrichment programs include: Garbology (2nd grade), Embryology (3rd grade), Ag Awareness Festival (4th grade), Earth Wellness Festival (5th grade) and the Nutrition Education Program (K-8th grades in qualifying schools). These curricula meet Nebraska Curriculum Standards. In Embryology, youth watch eggs hatch in classrooms. Last year, 3,766 students in 38 Lincoln Public Schools and 17 other Lancaster County schools participated in Embryology. Pictured is Extension Assistant Cole Meador presenting the initial Embryology lesson to Norwood Park 3rd graders.



2015 was the first year for ExtensionCorps, Nebraska Extension's AmeriCorps program. In Lancaster County, Liz Kneiff (left) and Hannah Dittmar (right) helped the Nutrition Education Program educate youth on how to lead healthy lifestyles. Their outreach included schools, after school programs, summer programs, 4-H Clover College, the Lancaster County Super Fair, and other various health fairs and community events. Collectively, Liz and Hannah invested over 1,400 hours during their service.



Extension's Volunteers Worth Nearly Half Million Dollars!

In 2015, Extension benefited from an estimated 1,428 volunteers who helped extend the reach of Extension's programs, such as 4-H and Master Gardeners. The volunteers' estimated 24,126 total hours of service are worth nearly \$497,478 to our community!

* Based on Independent Sector's estimate of Nebraska's value of a volunteer hour in 2014 as \$20.62.

Benefit to People



"The Nutrition Education Program has had an impact on our students in great capacity. Even though they have heard about 'My Plate,' they are educated on other topics that relate to how college students can eat healthy and save money when buying groceries."

— **Nhi Thuy Dang**, Southeast Community College's "Learn to Dream Seminar" instructor



"Over the years, many Extension Educators have helped me with my farm operation. Tom Dorn helped with marketing and grain storage. Robert Klein's wind tunnel research in North Platte gave pesticide drift reduction tips. Lately, Extension has helped with cover crops, terraces and cleaning up streams."

— **Bill Landon**, farmer



"I count Lancaster County Extension as one of my valued and trusted resources. One of the best services Extension offers is the spring child care conference each year. I look forward to this training opportunity because I know these training hours meet my needs as a daycare provider and are not just useless hours of mandatory training."

— **Vickie Young**, owner of YoungKare, family childcare home



"4-H has impacted me in so many ways. Not only have I learned valuable life skills, but I've also gained experience in leadership and community service that I couldn't have found elsewhere."

— **Abby Babcock**, 4-H member



"Education and delivery of unbiased, fact-filled information is probably one of the greatest resources Extension has to offer. If we can take a young person, and motivate and inspire them to be a productive citizen, that's probably one of the best investments we can make. It costs over \$300 a day to house a youth at the Youth Services Center, and about \$30 per year per youth in 4-H. It's an easy choice for me as a county commissioner — pay now or pay later."

— **Larry Hudkins**, Lancaster County Commissioner and Vice-Chair of the Board of Commissioners



"Lincoln Animal Control has greatly appreciated the close working relationship with Extension we've maintained over the many years. I and other co-workers appreciate having access to resources at the local level to consult on issues that often require the expertise of other professionals."

— **Steve Beal**, Animal Control Division Manager, Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department