



## Be Groundwater Aware in Your Day-to-Day Life!

*By Becky Schuerman,  
Domestic Water/Wastewater  
Extension Associate*

National Groundwater Awareness Week is March 9–15, making it the perfect time to talk about groundwater in Nebraska! What exactly is groundwater? It is the water below the earth's surface that fills the interconnected voids and cracks in and around soil particles, sand, gravel and rock — all of this is what we call an aquifer. Groundwater is the most abundant supply of freshwater in the world and is the water source that private drinking water, irrigation, livestock and many public water-supply wells draw from.

Approximately 85% of Nebraskans rely on groundwater for their drinking water. There are currently 594 community water supply systems in Nebraska that serve over 1.64 million residents; this accounts for approximately 80% of Nebraska's population. To protect public health, these public water systems have to test for over 80 different contaminants in accordance with the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act.

Throughout rural Nebraska, approximately 360,000 residents (about 20% of Nebraskans) rely on private groundwater wells as their drinking water source, but there are no mandatory testing requirements for private wells. In addition to consumption,

groundwater is used in manufacturing and mining, power generation, irrigation, and heating and cooling of homes and businesses. Irrigation accounts for the largest use of groundwater in Nebraska and the United States.

Protection and conservation practices are critical for all of us to engage in so our groundwater resources are available and safe to consume for future generations.

### Ways to Protect and Conserve Groundwater

- Water wisely by operating your lawn irrigation system manually, instead of using a preset schedule. Check soil moisture levels with a screwdriver by pushing it into the top 8–10 inches. When soil becomes dry, it will be more difficult to push the screwdriver into the soil. Only water when soil moisture levels indicate a need. Deep, infrequent irrigation, preferably between the 6 a.m.–10 a.m. timeframe is recommended to conserve soil moisture and increase turf health.
- Go native by using native or well-adapted plants and turf throughout your landscape. They are drought tolerant and require less watering and require less watering than poorly adapted introduced species. Their deep root systems help prevent soil erosion, become part of

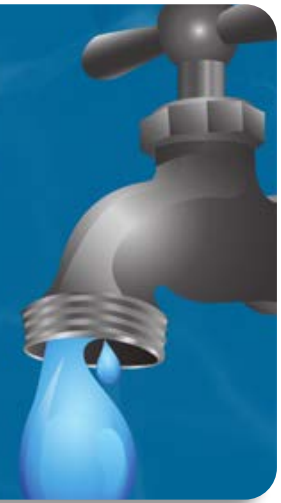
the earth's natural filtration system and increase soil's water storage capacity. They require little to no fertilization or pest control, thus decreasing contamination runoff.

- Check for, fix or replace any leaky indoor or outdoor water fixtures such as faucets/hydrants, shower heads or continuously running toilets. When replacing, consider new low-water usage fixtures and appliances.
- Take quicker showers, 5 minutes or less. Lessen wasted water going down the drain by turning off the water while brushing teeth, washing hands/face, shaving or washing dishes.
- Combine smaller loads of laundry and dishes into one larger, full load.
- Avoid using synthetic chemical cleaners that can contaminate groundwater if used or disposed of improperly. Instead, use natural cleaning products such as baking soda, vinegar and lemon juice.
- To minimize groundwater contamination, store and dispose of unused chemicals and medicines safely and properly. Lincoln/Lancaster County residents can drop off approved items for free at Lincoln's Hazardous Waste Center. For more information, go to <http://haztogo.com>. Visit <http://nebraskameds.org> for information on the disposal of unused prescrip-



**NATIONAL  
GROUNDWATER  
AWARENESS WEEK**  
March 9-15, 2025

**Groundwater is an  
essential part of our  
planet. It is our job to  
protect this vital resource.**



tion and over-the-counter medications.

- Learn how to properly maintain your private well and residential onsite wastewater systems to help minimize groundwater contamination.
- Properly decommission abandoned wells so they are not conduits for aquifer contamination.

### Your Actions Make a Difference; Always Be Willing to Learn and Implement!

Putting these actions into practice not only helps protect our groundwater resources but can also equate to a significant

impact in water usage. Water conservation can potentially reduce your water bill if you are connected to a public water system or your power bill if you have a private well.

By continuing to learn and implementing more effective practices, we can all become better groundwater stewards, helping to ensure future generations have healthy groundwater resources for years to come.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The UNL Water website has resources on residential water use at <https://water.unl.edu/residential-water-use>.

# National Nutrition Month: Food Connects Us

By Alyssa Havlovic, MS, RDN,  
ACSM EP-C, Extension Educator in  
Lancaster County

March is National Nutrition Month, an annual campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, focusing attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing healthful eating and physical activity habits. This year's theme is "Food Connects Us."

Food has a unique way of bringing people together, acting as a universal language that transcends cultural and geographic boundaries. Sharing a meal allows us to connect with others, whether it's gathering around a family table, bonding with friends over a favorite dish or participating in a community celebration. Through food, we exchange stories, traditions and memories, creating a sense of belonging and warmth. The simple act of cooking or enjoying a meal together fosters relationships and strengthens our ties to one another, showing that no matter where we come from, we all share the fundamental need to nourish and be nourished.

Connecting with food goes beyond simply eating — it's about developing a deeper relationship with what we consume, how we prepare it and how it makes us feel. Here are a few ways to foster a better connection with food.

**Practice Mindful Eating** — Take the time to truly savor your meals. Slow down and focus on the flavors, textures and aromas of each bite. This allows you to become more aware of your body's hunger cues and helps cultivate a healthier relationship with food.

**Prepare Your Own Meals** — Cooking your own meals not only makes it easier to control the ingredients and their amounts, but you also get the opportunity to connect with the ingredients and the process. It's a creative and rewarding activity that can help you appreciate the food you're preparing.

**Embrace Seasonal Ingredients** — Enjoying fresh, local fruits and vegetables that are in season often leads to more flavorful produce

and tends to cost less. Visiting farmers' markets or growing your own herbs can deepen your connection to the food cycle and foster a sense of community.

**Explore the Connection Between Food and Culture** — Learn about the origins of the dishes you enjoy and explore cuisines from different cultures. Food is a reflection of history, tradition and identity, and embracing this can help you connect to the broader world and expand your palate.

**Share Meals With Loved Ones** — Food is a powerful connector, and sharing meals with friends or family can strengthen relationships. Whether it's a casual dinner or a special celebration, the act of eating together creates bonds and fosters a sense of belonging.

**Reflect on Food's Role in Your Life** — Take a moment to consider how food makes you feel. Do certain meals spark memories or bring you comfort? Do you notice how your body responds to different foods? By reflecting on these connections, you can build a deeper understanding of how food impacts your emotions, health and well-being.

Connecting with food in these ways fosters appreciation, mindfulness and balance in your eating habits. It becomes less about just satisfying hunger and more about nurturing yourself and your relationships with others. Health, traditions, seasons and access can all impact our relationship with food. While these factors influence the foods we eat, it's important to remember the foods we eat also affect our health. For most individuals, choosing food instead of supplements is the best way to fulfill your nutritional needs. A balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein foods and low-fat or fat-free dairy will ensure you get the healthful nutrients your body requires.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Looking for reliable, science-backed nutrition and health advice? Visit trusted resources like <https://www.eatright.org/national-nutrition-month> or <https://food.unl.edu> to learn more.

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

By Alyssa Havlovic, MS, RDN, ACSM EP-C, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

Celebrate National Nutrition Month with this flavorful, nutrient-dense, Wild Vegetable Salad, featuring a variety of colorful vegetables, fruit, whole grains and lean protein.

### WILD VEGETABLE SALAD

(Yield: 6 servings)

#### FOR THE WILD RICE:

- 1 cup wild rice
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 6 sprigs of fresh thyme, gently rubbed under running water, or 1-1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

#### FOR THE SALAD:

- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 Tablespoon fresh thyme, gently rubbed under running water, OR 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 Tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 8 cups kale, gently rubbed under running water, deveined and chopped into small pieces
- 1 cup canned low-sodium white beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, gently rubbed under running water, halved
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Rinse rice in a fine mesh strainer until the water drains clear.
3. In a large pot, combine rice, vegetable broth and thyme and bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer covered for 30 minutes.
5. Remove from heat, and let rest for 30 minutes. Drain.
6. While the rice is cooking, make the dressing. In a medium bowl (or food processor), combine garlic, thyme, lemon zest, lemon juice, olive oil, mustard, honey, black pepper and salt (optional).
7. In a large bowl, add chopped kale. Add the dressing and with your fingers, massage the dressing into the kale for a few minutes. Then add the white beans, tomatoes and dried cranberries. Stir to combine.
8. Add rice and mix to combine.
9. Store leftovers in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to four days. This is a great salad to make ahead of time because the kale absorbs the flavors over time.

Nutrition Information: Serving Size (1/8 of recipe): Calories 300, Total Fat 11g, Saturated Fat 1.5g, Sodium 105mg, Total Carbohydrates 46g, Fiber 6g, Protein 9g, Vitamin D 6%, Calcium 10%

Nutrition Software Used: ESHA Food Processor



Photo by Mercedes Jones, Nutrition Education Program

# Prepare Your Landscape's Spring Game Plan

By Sarah Browning, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

After waiting all winter for a new growing season to start, when spring finally does arrive, it seems to hit us hard and fast. Then before we know it, spring is gone and we're in the middle of summer.

There are many tasks to accomplish in the spring landscape. To help you develop a plan and not get behind or miss your "window of opportunity," here's a quick rundown of common landscape projects listed in order of attack.

## Shade and Fruit Tree

**Pruning** — Complete pruning before flower buds open, ideally by late March. Wounds close fastest when pruning is done right before new growth begins and disease spread is limited. Do not use wound dressings.

☼ See "Pruning Fruit Trees" at <https://go.unl.edu/fruitpruning>

**Lawn Aeration** — It is the best way to alleviate soil compaction, improve soil texture, reduce thatch and prepare for overseeding. Aeration can begin once the lawn is actively growing, often as early as late March through late May for Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue lawns.

☼ See "Getting Your Lawn Ready for Summer – Aeration" at <https://go.unl.edu/aeration>

**Lawn Seeding** — How does your lawn look this spring? If it's thin after last fall's drought, some overseeding may be needed. Seeding can begin in mid- to late-April, through May 15. Provide good seed-soil contact through aerification. If seeding can't be done before May 15, then wait until fall to overseed.

Careful selection of a preemergent herbicide is necessary for your seeding to be successful. Mesotrione is the active ingredient in Scott's Turf Builder Triple Action Built for Seeding and is one of the most common homeowner products in stores for new seedings.

☼ See "Establishing Lawns From Seed" at <https://go.unl.edu/lawnseeding>

**Planting Vegetables and Ornamentals** — Many gardeners are excited to start planting their vegetable gardens, but planting too early is not a good idea. Base planting decisions on soil temperatures. To view current soil temperatures, visit Crop Watch at <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/soiltemperature>. Review the publication below for ideal soil temperatures for germination of each vegetable type.

☼ See "Vegetable Seed Storage and Germination Requirements" at <https://go.unl.edu/germination>

## Preemergent Weed Control

— The recommended time to apply preemergent herbicides for crabgrass and other annual weed control in eastern Nebraska is April 20 to May 5.

Lawn care companies with many properties to maintain often begin applications earlier using products with a very long residual. Homeowners who have the flexibility to apply preemergent at a specific time should wait to make their application and get the longest residual control from their product.

## Pruning Spring Flowering

**Shrubs** — Early flowering shrubs — such as forsythia, lilac, mockorange and weigelia — should be pruned right after they finish blooming. Spring-blooming shrubs flower on the previous year's wood. Pruning during winter or early spring removes blooming wood and will reduce or prevent blooming this season.

**White Grub Control** — "When should I apply control for white grubs?" Mid- to late-June.

Hopefully these tips will help you develop a manageable spring to-do list easier and get your landscape off to a good start this year. Happy spring!

*Reference to commercial products is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Nebraska Extension is implied. Mention does not imply approval or constitute endorsement by Nebraska Extension. Nor does it imply discrimination against other similar products.*

## GARDEN GUIDE THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, Extension Associate in Lancaster County

Buy a notebook and use it to keep all your gardening information and records. List what you plant in the garden. Include the name of seed companies, plant names, varieties, planting date and harvest date. During the growing season, keep notes on how well the plant does. If the variety is susceptible to disease, record what was used to treat any problems. All this information will be helpful in planning future gardens.

How are your houseplants doing? Check all five growing factors if your house plants are not growing well. Light, temperature, nutrients, moisture and humidity must be favorable to provide good growth.

Do not till your garden when the soil is wet. It will form clods which are difficult to break up and interfere with cultivation and planting during the growing season.

Consider planting native perennials that are beneficial to native pollinators like solitary bees, bumblebees and butterflies. Native plants include coreopsis, coneflower, aster, goldenrod, butterfly milkweed, ironweed, blazing star, beardtongue, pitcher sage, bee balm and purple poppy mallow.

Cut flower stalks back to the ground on daffodils, hyacinths and other spring-flowering bulbs as the flowers fade. Do not cut the foliage until it dies naturally. The leaves are necessary to produce strong bulbs capable of reflowering next year.

Do not add organic matter to the soil when planting trees. It does not help the plant become established and it may create conditions that encourage the roots to stay inside the planting hole instead of spreading to surrounding soil. It is important to dig a large planting hole, but fill it with the original soil removed from it.

Remove sticks, rocks and other debris from your lawn to prevent damaging your lawnmower or injuring yourself when mowing. Check your lawnmower and other lawn-care equipment in preparation for the coming season.

Scatter annual poppy seeds in flower borders. The tiny seeds do not need to be covered. The plants grow rapidly and provide colorful flowers in early summer.

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## 2025 GROBigRed

Wednesdays  
12 p.m.

Join the experts from Nebraska Extension to learn and ask questions about:

3/12 — Rain Gardens: Where to Use Them/What to Plant in Them • Kelly Feehan

4/9 — Trees to Plant & Trees to Avoid • Elizabeth Exstrom

5/14 — Consider These Natives • Scott Evans

6/11 — Garden Friends • Kait Chapman

7/9 — All About Roses • Nicole Stoner & David Lott

8/13 — Fall Turf Activities • John Fech

9/10 — Growing Herbs • Mary Jane Frogge

10/8 — Unusual Small Fruits • Ian Peterson

Register at <https://hles.unl.edu/grobigred>

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EXTENSION

# Embracing the Puddle: The Joy of Rainy Day Outdoor Play

By Hayley Jackson Perez, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

There are immense benefits to outdoor play for young children. But what about when the skies open up and the rain starts to fall? Many are tempted to retreat indoors, but rainy weather offers unique opportunities for learning and development. Embracing the elements can be a joyful and enriching experience for children.

## Sensory Experiences

Rainy days provide sensory experiences unlike any other. The sound of raindrops, the smell of wet earth and the feel of cool water on their skin stimulate children's senses and foster a connection with nature. Puddles become fascinating worlds to explore, encouraging problem-solving as chil-



Photo by Nellis, stock.adobe.com

dren experiment with floating objects, creating dams or simply splashing and jumping. Rain gear transforms children into intrepid explorers, fostering independence and self-confidence as they navigate the “challenging” terrain.

Outdoor play in the rain also supports physical development. Navigating slippery surfaces strengthens gross motor skills and balance. Running

and jumping in puddles provides a vigorous workout, contributing to overall fitness. Fine motor skills are also engaged as children manipulate natural materials like wet leaves and mud.

## Creativity & Imagination

Beyond the physical benefits, rainy day play promotes creativity and imagination. A simple stick becomes a magic wand in the rain, transforming the backyard into a mystical forest. Children engage in imaginative role-play, creating stories and scenarios inspired by the weather. The open-ended nature of outdoor play allows children to take the lead, fostering their problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities.

So, how can adults support children's play in the rain? First, dress children appropriately in waterproof gear, including raincoats, boots and even

waterproof pants. This ensures they stay warm and dry, allowing them to fully enjoy the experience. Next, create a safe environment by checking the play area for potential hazards, like slippery surfaces or fallen branches.

Most importantly, resist the urge to direct children's play. Instead, observe and listen, offering encouragement and support when needed. Ask open-ended questions like, “What do you notice about the rain?” or “What happens when you mix dirt and water?” Follow their lead and allow them to explore their interests. Adults can also model enthusiasm for rainy day play, showing children that it can be a fun and exciting experience. By embracing the puddle and venturing out into the rain, we provide children with invaluable learning opportunities and create lasting memories.

# Agronomic Practices to Reduce Nitrate Losses to Groundwater

By John Nelson, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

Groundwater nitrate has been a problem in Nebraska and throughout the Midwest for many decades and is growing in its scope and severity across our state. As crop producers, we have proven production practices to help reduce the movement of nitrate into the groundwater. One of the simplest solutions is to reduce our nitrogen (N) rates on corn. Nebraska On-Farm Research has produced many studies demonstrating that lower nitrogen rates on corn can have minimal impact on yield while also resulting in greater profitability — see [https://go.unl.edu/ofr\\_results](https://go.unl.edu/ofr_results). On-Farm Research was conducted in the Waverly area during the 2024 season to examine the possibility of using less nitrogen in corn

	Moisture (%)	Yield (bu/ac)†	Marginal Net Return‡ (\$/ac)
115 lb N/ac	11.1 A*	172 A*	\$689 A*
150 lb N/ac (Check)**	11.1 A*	174 A*	\$680 A*
P-Value:	0.99	0.92	0.89

\*Values with the same letter are not significantly different at a 90% confidence level.

\*\*Untreated ground.

†Bushels per acre corrected to 15.5% moisture.

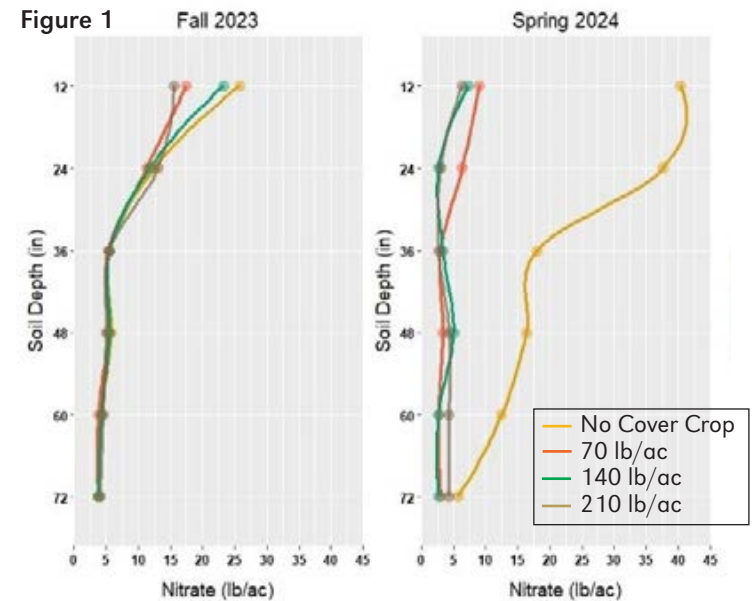
‡Marginal net return based on \$4.35/bu corn, \$57.50/ac 115 lb N/ac, \$75/ac 150 lb N/ac.

production. Two treatments were evaluated: the farmer's rate of 150 lb N/ac and the reduced rate of 115 lb N/ac. The UNL nitrogen recommendation for this field, with a 185 bu/ac yield goal, was 77 lb N/ac. The table shows that the reduced N rate had no statistically significant effect on corn yield or subsequent net return.

Another method to reduce nitrate leaching through the soil profile is to implement cover crops. An ongoing On-Farm

Research study in Lancaster County is examining inter-seeding cover crops in standing corn as a part of the Highboy Cover Crop Interseeding Project — see <https://go.unl.edu/highboycovercrop>. The study examines the effect of cover crops on nitrate movement through the soil profile in the fall and following spring.

Figure 1 shows, by spring 2024, the cover crops had taken up a significant amount of nitrate compared to the areas



with no cover crops. This nitrate is preserved in the cover crop biomass, rather than being leached out of the root zone toward the groundwater.

These are only two of the many strategies farmers can

implement to reduce nitrate losses to the groundwater. These practices offer the additional benefits of improving productivity, soil health and profitability.

## Ethan & Morgan Gabel Attend National 4-H Congress



Ethan and Morgan Gabel at 2024 National Congress.

Lancaster County 4-H members **Ethan and Morgan Gabel** were part of an 11-member Nebraska delegation attending the National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, Ga. on Nov. 29–Dec. 3. National 4-H Congress is the premier leadership event for 4-H'ers 15–19 years old. Nebraska delegates are selected for National 4-H Congress by submitting an Achievement Application for state competition.

In Atlanta, participants attended numerous educational workshops, cultural

events and completed service-learning projects. Ethan helped at the Benteen Elementary school with cleanup and organization of storage rooms while Morgan helped out at Oakland Historic Cemetery with landscaping.

Morgan said, "I got to make friends, spend time with all the Nebraska delegates and be with so many people from all around the country who encourage leadership, service, having fun, learning and all the important 4-H qualities."

## 4-H Horse Teams at Nationals

This January, several Lancaster County 4-H youth represented Nebraska at the 4-H & FFA Western National Roundup in Denver, Colo. in the Horse Classic Contests. Each team qualified by winning the Nebraska 4-H statewide competitions.

### Horse Judging

Lancaster County Horse Judging team of **Cayle Callahan, Shea Frink, Kayla Isaacs** and **Taeva Taylor** (coached by Roger Bell) earned 4th in reasons, 3rd in performance, 5th in halter and 3rd high team overall. Cayle Callahan received 9th individual in halter. Kayla Isaacs received 6th individual in performance, 9th individual in reasons and 9th high individual overall. Taeva Taylor received 5th individual in performance and 7th high individual overall.

### Hippology

Lancaster County 4-H'ers **Amelia Proffitt** and



Horse Judging team (L–R): Shea Frink, Taeva Taylor, Kayla Isaacs and Cayle Callahan



Hippology Team (L–R): Coach Ann Gillentine, Amelia Proffitt, Max Roberts and Ada Bordovsky

**Max Roberts** were on the Lancaster/Saunders County Hippology Team which earned 3rd place in judging phase! Max Roberts received champion

individual in horse judging phase. Ameila Proffitt received 6th individual in horse judging phase.

## Teen Council 4-H'ers Team Up to Lead Overnight Lock-In

In January, 27 4-H Teen Council members organized and led the overnight 4-H Lock-In for 33 4th and 5th graders. This year, teens chose the theme, "Under the Sea," and divided into three committees: games, crafts and food. At the Lock-In, attendees rotated through each of the three groups, made friends, slept a little and had a lot of fun! More photos are at [www.flickr.com/photos/unlexatlanco/albums](http://www.flickr.com/photos/unlexatlanco/albums).

Here's what two of the teens said about this year's 4-H Lock-In.

### Tons of Fun

"The 2025 4-H Lock-In was a success! Teen Council chose an 'Under the Sea' theme and enjoyed decorating with sea-themed pictures, lights and even a scuba suit! We dressed up in

ocean colors to fit the theme. The kids had tons of fun playing games, making jellyfish and other crafts, and eating snacks like octopus-shaped hot dogs. It was an exciting opportunity to teach and learn while also having fun with the kids and teens! The 'Under the Sea' Lock-In definitely made a huge splash!"

—**Emma Thomson, Teen Council Secretary**

### Great Learning Experiences

"4-H Teen Council held the 2025 4th and 5th grade Lock-In called 'Under



Teen Council members introduced themselves to kick-off the beginning of the Lock-In.

the Sea.' It was a fun night not only for the 4th and 5th graders, but for the teens who helped plan, organize and lead the event. Youth played games, completed crafts and prepared food during the night's activities. The Lock-In was a fun-filled evening that provided great learning experiences for youth and

leadership opportunities for teens — enhancing communication skills and promoting 4-H. I am happy I was able to participate in this event and look forward to another successful Lock-In next year."

—**Parker Hansen, Teen Council Historian**



## HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

**Sarah Dilley** of Lincoln is receiving the Lancaster County 4-H March “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. She started volunteering four years ago, soon after she aged out as a 4-H member. At the Lancaster County Super Fair, she is the superintendent of the 4-H Meat Goat Show and helps with the 4-H & FFA Livestock Judging Contest. She coaches the Lancaster County livestock judging teams who compete in the statewide Premiere Animal Science Event. She says, “Serving as a 4-H volunteer has been an incredibly rewarding experience. My favorite moments have come from being the livestock judging coach. The opportunity to help youth develop their evaluating and oral reasoning skills, and build the confidence and passion to compete in judging contests is second to none.”



**Christian Stephenson** of Lincoln is receiving the Lancaster County 4-H April “Heart of 4-H Award” in recognition of outstanding volunteer service. A Professor of Agronomy & Horticulture at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, he has taught plant science to 4-H youth for two years. Christian has led short-term 4-H STEM clubs which met at UNL East Campus, and taught “Green Thumb Science” workshops at 4-H Clover College. He says, “It’s very rewarding introducing young people to new ideas and to show them the world of possibilities they can explore. My favorite experience is when young people experience something new and it ignites a new interest for them. Having them come back after months or years to show me how they have grown in a topic is an amazing thing.”



## 4-H Announcements FOR ENROLLED 4-H'ERS OR 4-H VOLUNTEERS

For complete details about the following opportunities, go to <https://go.unl.edu/lan4hnews>



### PREPARED SPEECH & RADIO PSA CONTEST, MARCH 24 DEADLINE —

4-H Speech & PSA Contests are open to all 4-H'ers ages 5–18. In the Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest, 4-H'ers submit a 60-second “radio commercial” promoting 4-H. Submit PSAs by Monday, March 24. The 4-H Speech Contest will be held Sunday, March 30 at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms. Contest begins at 1:30 p.m. Register by Monday, March 24 at <https://go.unl.edu/lan-speech-psy-reg>. For rules, helpful resources, examples and link to upload PSAs, go to <https://lanaster.unl.edu/4h/fair/contests/speech-psy>.

### MARKET BEEF WEIGH-IN, MARCH 3 —

4-H & FFA exhibitors showing market steers or heifers at the Lancaster County Super Fair who want to participate in the Rate of Gain contest must weigh in their projects at the 4-H & FFA Market Beef Weigh-In on Monday, March 3, 6–7 p.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center – EquineMarket Pavilion. For more information or to RSVP, contact Madelaine Polk at 402-441-7180 or [mpolk2@unl.edu](mailto:mpolk2@unl.edu).

### HOME DECOR & FURNITURE PAINTING WORKSHOP, APRIL 5 —

4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to participate on Saturday, April 5, 9 a.m. until about noon at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms. No cost to attend. Adults are welcome to attend to help youth. Must register by Monday, March 31 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing Kristin at [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu). Bring an unpainted home decor item or small piece of furniture, such as a frame, shelf, stool or chair. Learn how to prepare new and used wood items by sanding, sealing, painting and finishing. All paints, brushes and finishes are provided. Wear old clothes appropriate for painting.

### KIWANIS KARNIVAL IS A FUN COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITY —

Families of 4-H members and Elliott Elementary School students are invited to attend the annual Kiwanis Karnival, a FREE family event sponsored by the Lincoln Center Kiwanis. 4-H clubs are needed to provide carnival-type booths. This is a great community service and leadership activity! The Karnival will be Friday, April 11, 5:30–7:30 p.m. at Elliott Elementary School, 225 S. 25th St., Lincoln. The event features carnival-type games for youth, bingo for adults, prizes, snacks, fun and fellowship. For more information, call Lorene Bartos at 402-423-7541 or 402-310-3481, or email [lbartos1@unl.edu](mailto:lbartos1@unl.edu).

### 4-H HORSEMANSHIP LEVEL TESTING DATES —

This year’s 4-H horsemanship advancement level group testings will be held at the Sandhills Global Event Center on the following Tuesday evenings: April 15, April 29, May 13, May 27, June 17 and June 24. Register at least one week in advance of the test date by contacting Kate Pulec at 402-441-7180 or [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu). All other horsemanship level requirements and paperwork must be completed and handed in to Kate at the Extension office before the riding portion can be done.

### PRESENTATION & VIDEO COMMUNICATION CONTEST, APRIL 26 —

This year’s Lancaster County 4-H Illustrated Presentation & Video Communication Contest will be Saturday, April 26, starting at 8:30 a.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms. Open to all 4-H'ers ages 8–18. Register by Tuesday, April 22 by emailing Kristin at [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu) or calling 402-441-7180 and providing youth name(s), age(s) by Jan. 1 of current year, presentation and/or video title(s)

and email address. Specify if it is a team presentation. Time slots will be assigned in advance; however, 4-H staff will do their best to accommodate a time preference. A “how-to” handout will be available at <https://lanaster.unl.edu/4h/fair/contests/#presentation>. All participants are strongly encouraged to read the handout.

### SPRING LEADER/VOLUNTEER UPDATE TRAINING, APRIL 30 —

New leaders, experienced leaders, volunteers and parents are invited to attend a 4-H Spring Leader/Volunteer Update Training on Wednesday, April 30, 9 a.m. via Zoom or in-person at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, which will focus on your value for 4-H'ers, static exhibits, opportunities for 4-H'ers and more. Registration required by Wednesday, April 16 by calling 402-441-7180 or emailing [kristin.geisert@unl.edu](mailto:kristin.geisert@unl.edu). Please indicate if you will be attending in-person or via Zoom.

### 4-H SPECIAL GARDEN & AGRONOMY SEEDS —

4-H families have the opportunity to participate in the Special Garden and/or Special Agronomy Projects this year. The Special Garden Project is the Goldie Husk Cherry. The Special Agronomy Project is sunflowers. Seed packets are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the Extension office at 402-441-7180 to sign up for these special projects. The seed packages are sponsored by Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County. One seed packet per project, per family. Seeds will be mailed after April 30.

### DOG VIRTUAL TRIVIA CONTEST, MAY 7–14 —

The Lancaster County 4-H Dog Virtual Trivia Contest will be available Wednesday, May 7, noon–Wednesday, May 14, 11:59 p.m. Contest is open to 4-H'ers ages 8–18. This year’s contest will focus on Hound dog breeds. A study guide is now online at <https://lanaster.unl.edu/4h/fair/contests/#dog>. Contest links for each division will be posted at this same website on May 7 at noon.

# 4-H Achievement Celebration

Lancaster County 4-H and 4-H Council presented the Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Celebration on Thursday, Feb. 13. The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners proclaimed Feb. 13 as "4-H Achievement Day." The proclamation was read at Achievement Celebration by Lancaster County Commissioner Chelsea Johnson. For a complete list of award recipients and link to photos on Flickr, go to <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/achievement>.



## NEBRASKA 4-H ACHIEVEMENT APPLICATION RECOGNITION

*These are a record of a 4-H'ers 4-H experiences, leadership experiences, community involvement/service-learning and career spark.*

**Completed a Junior application:** (Below L-R) Silas Pracheil, Ian Bettenhausen, Andrea Bettenhausen, Cora Pracheil, Parker Hansen, Alexa Smith, Amorita Payne; (not pictured) Emily Crawford, Adam Gabel, Molly Gabel



**Completed a Senior application:** Emily Bauman, Khloe Cuttlers, Ethan Gabel, Morgan Gabel, Natalie Plautz

## NEBRASKA 4-H DIAMOND CLOVER AWARD

*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. Youth may progress from Levels 1-6.*

**Level 1 – Amethyst:** Owen Ageton, Lundy Dell, Shelby Huenink, Anna Kennedy, Rachel Kennedy, Mackenzie Mackling, Jesse May, Drew Moscrip, Natalie Pape, Anthony Pflanz, Sandrafaye Schulz, Ruby Thomas, Bella Wynn

**Level 2 – Aquamarine:** David Bauman, Piper Bauman, Ian Bettenhausen, Lexus Cooper, Sarah Kennedy, MacKenzie McCoy, Gracie Mittan-DeBuhr, Abigail Page, Jordyn Schmeekle, Delaney Steinmentz

**Level 3 – Ruby:** Monica Bauman, Molly Boysen, Hannah Chevalier, Emily Crawford, Mia Crawford, Sophie Huenink, Isaac May, Lucy Pflanz, Josephine Polk, Grace Tetzlaff

**Level 4 – Sapphire:** Brayden Belew, Payzleigh Belew, Andrea Bettenhausen, Helayna DeBuhr, Reese Dell, Evelyn May, Evan Mittan-DeBuhr, Maria Polk

**Level 5 – Emerald:** Emily Bauman, Tenley Bauman, Amorita Payne, Alexa Smith

**Level 6 – Diamond:** Emma Thomson

## LANCASTER COUNTY 4-H COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

*Presented to 4-H'ers who have completed significant hours of community service.*

**Age 13 and under:** Monica Bauman, Piper Bauman, Tenley Bauman, Andrea Bettenhausen, Ian Bettenhausen, Molly Boysen, Emily Crawford, Reese Dell, Parker Hansen, Evelyn May, Natalie Pape, Amorita Payne, Sandrafaye Schulz, Alexa Smith

**Age 14 and over:** Emily Bauman, Mia Crawford, Khloe Cuttlers, Nettie Lunquist, Kamryn Wanser

## NEBRASKA 4-H CLUBS OF EXCELLENCE

*Have met criteria outlined by Nebraska 4-H such as: choose/elect youth officers and complete one community service project.*

Clever Clovers, Fantastic 4 4-H Club, Fusion 4-H'ers, Horticulture 4-H Club, JP2 Crew, Lancaster Leaders, Little Green Giants, Prairie Explorers, Rabbits R Us, Southern Lancaster Kids, Villa Marie Eagles

## LINCOLN CENTER KIWANIS OUTSTANDING 4-H CLUB AWARDS

*Lincoln Center Kiwanis Club awards traveling trophies to the top 4-H clubs participating in the Lancaster County Super Fair.*

**Category I (5-10 members):** Everything Equine (Leaders: Chelsea Sackett and Kim Funk)

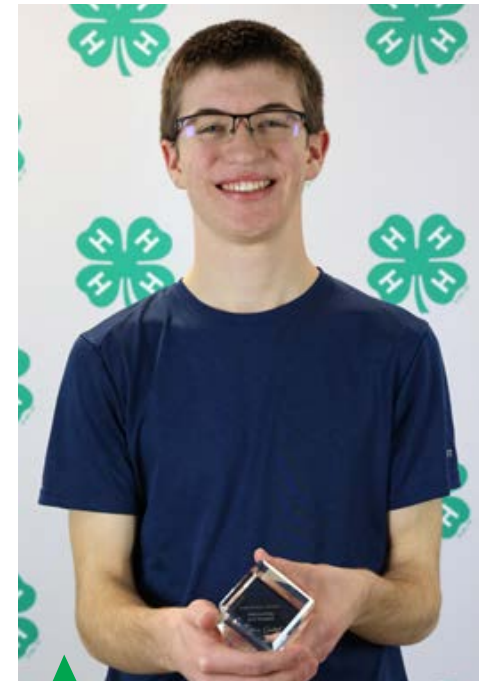
**Category II (11-20 members) & Wayne C. Farmer Memorial Cup overall winner:** Fantastic 4 (Leader: Jen Smith)

**Category III (21 or more members):** Southern Lancaster Kids (Leader: Hope Bauman)

## LANCASTER COUNTY 4-H COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AWARDS

*This award recognizes youth in grades 10-12 who show outstanding qualities in servant leadership.*

(Below L-R) Emily Bauman, Morgan Gabel, Nettie Lunquist, Catherine Polk; (not pictured) Khloe Cutters, Ruby Dean, Emma Thomson



## LANCASTER COUNTY OUTSTANDING 4-H MEMBER AWARD

*Presented to individuals 14 years of age or older who have excelled in their involvement with the 4-H program.*

Ethan Gabel

## LANCASTER COUNTY MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO 4-H AWARD

*Presented to individuals or organizations who have exhibited consistent and strong support of the Lancaster County 4-H program.*

(Below left) Jen Smith (with Extension Associate Kristin Geisert)



**Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County**  
**444 Cherrycreek Road, Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528**  
**402-441-7180 • lancaster.unl.edu**

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

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# EXTENSION CALENDAR

All events held at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln, unless otherwise noted.

## March

- 1 4-H Play with Crochet Workshop . . . . . 1–3 p.m.
- 3 4-H EGG Cam Chicks Hatching, <http://go.unl.edu/eggcam>
- 3 4-H/FFA Market Beef Weigh-In, Sandhills Global Event Center – EquineMarket Pavilion 6–7 p.m.
- 4 4-H Council Meeting . . . . . 6 p.m.
- 6 Private Pesticide Applicator Training . . . . . 1–4 p.m. & 6–9 p.m.
- 6 4-H Horse VIPS Meeting, Virtual . . . . . 6 p.m.
- 9 4-H Teen Council Meeting . . . . . 3 p.m.
- 11 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training . . . . . 8:30 a.m.
- 12 GRO Big Red Virtual Learning Series: Rain Gardens – Where to Use Them/What to Plant in Them, <http://hles.unl.edu/grobigred> . . . . . 12 p.m.
- 13 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training . . . . . 8:30 a.m.
- 14 Extension Board Meeting . . . . . 8 a.m.
- 15 4-H Spring Rabbit Show, Sandhills Global Event Center – South Hall . . . . . 9 a.m.
- 22 Lincoln Early Childhood Conference . . . . . 8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
- 22 UNL Chick Days, UNL East Campus – Dept. of Animal Science . . . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 24 4-H Radio Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest Entries Due/Registration Deadline for Speech Contest
- 27 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 29–30 Nebraska 4-H Horse Stampede, UNL East Campus – Animal Science Complex
- 30 4-H Prepared Speech Contest . . . . . 1:30 p.m.

## April

- 1 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5 p.m.
- 1 4-H Council Meeting . . . . . 6 p.m.
- 5 4-H Home Decor & Furniture Painting Workshop . . . . . 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
- 7 4-H EGG Cam Chicks Hatching, <http://go.unl.edu/eggcam>
- 8 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5 p.m.
- 9 Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training . . . . . 8:30 a.m.
- 9 GRO Big Red Virtual Learning Series: Trees to Plant and Trees to Avoid, <http://hles.unl.edu/grobigred> . . . . . 12 p.m.
- 11 Extension Board Meeting . . . . . 8 a.m.
- 11 Kiwanis Carnival, Elliott School, 225 S. 25 Street . . . . . 5:30–7:30 p.m.
- 13 4-H Teen Council Meeting . . . . . 3 p.m.
- 15 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5 p.m.
- 15 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Level Testing, Sandhills Global Event Center
- 17 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 22 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5 p.m.
- 24 Pesticide Applicator Neb. Dept. of Ag “Walk-In” Testing Session . . . 9 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 26 4-H Illustrated Presentation & Video Communications Contest . . 8:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
- 29 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Level Testing, Sandhills Global Event Center
- 29 4-H Golf Lessons, Pine Lake Golf & Tennis . . . . . 4–5 p.m.
- 30 4-H Leader/Volunteer Training . . . . . 9 a.m.

## EXTENSION NEWS

### 2025 Extension Board



Front row (L–R): Nicole Miller, Zainab Rida, Teresa Erdkamp;  
 Back row (L–R): Karen Wobig (Extension Unit Leader), Phil Tegeler, Kim Klein, Regina Sullivan, Meghan Sittler, Jenny DeBuhr (Extension Administrative Services Officer); Not pictured: Jim Ballard, Philippe Bruce and Phil Wharton

The Lancaster County Extension Board serves as an advocate for Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County. Members of the board are appointed by the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners. The Extension Board provides guidance to Extension staff in establishing and accomplishing Extension education program goals and objectives. The board typically meets monthly (usually the second Friday at 8 a.m.).

Kim Klein and Phil Tegeler were recently appointed for their first terms. Nicole Miller was re-appointed to serve her second term.

Extension Board members for 2025 are: Nicole Miller (President), Zainab Rida (Vice President), Teresa Erdkamp (Secretary/Treasurer), Jim Ballard, Philippe Bruce, Kim Klein, Meghan Sittler, Regina Sullivan, Phil Tegeler and Phil Wharton (4-H Council ex-officio member).

### 4-H Rabbit Show, March 15

The 4-H Spring Rabbit Show will be held on Saturday, March 15, 9 a.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center – South Hall. Open to all youth ages 8–18, with a Clover Kids class for youth ages 5–7. This is a great opportunity for youth to talk to other 4-H’ers about where to purchase a good rabbit for a 4-H project, and to learn and practice showmanship. Rabbit Quiz and Breed Identification contests are free for youth to enter. Rabbit Races \$1/entry; proceeds will go towards the Rabbits R Us 4-H club service projects. Show flyer is posted at <https://go.unl.edu/rabbit-show-25>. For questions, contact Kate Pulec at [kpulec3@unl.edu](mailto:kpulec3@unl.edu) or 402-441-7180.

### UNL Chick Days, March 22

University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Chick Days for small and backyard poultry producers and youth will be held on Saturday, March 22, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. at the Department of Animal Science, 3940 Fair St., Lincoln on UNL East Campus. More information and registration is at <https://animal-science.unl.edu/extension-outreach/poultry/chick-days>. Register by Saturday, March 15.