

“As a result of these lessons, I have made several important changes: I have switched from whole milk and dairy products to low-fat options, I check nutritional labels before purchasing any items, I exercise for 30 minutes each day, I plan my meals for the week and I use a shopping list when I go grocery shopping.”

—Iman, Nutrition Education Program group class participant at Good Neighbor Community Center

2024 Extension Highlights

Engaging with Nebraskans wherever they are, connecting them with the resources, research and innovation of the University of Nebraska.



Nutrition Education Program (NEP) — NEP equips limited-resource families to live healthier lives through classes and policy, system and environmental (PSE) initiatives. In 2024, NEP in Lancaster County taught 5,500 adults and 7,700 youth in 1,850 classes. NEP fostered 51 PSE changes to increase health accessibility and affordability. Pictured (L-R): Alaya Greene teaching youth at the Malone Center about healthy eating, Hannah Schielke serving samples at a local farmers’ market to promote the Double Up Food Bucks program (which gives SNAP recipients up to \$20 a day in fresh produce), Lori Vossler preparing fresh garden produce with Healthy Recipe Kit recipients (over 600 kits were distributed in 2024) and Extension Assistant Zahraa Rida working with a participant to learn their cultural food practices.



**Volunteers
 Valued at
 \$772,431**

Lancaster County Extension’s estimated **2,226 volunteers** gave **24,861 total hours of service worth \$772,431*** to our community! Extension benefits from these volunteers who help extend the reach of programs such as 4-H, Master Gardeners and Extension Board members.

*Based on Independent Sector’s estimate of Nebraska’s value of a volunteer hour in 2023 as \$31.07

THANK YOU!

**Extension
 helps people
 solve
 real-world
 problems**

MORE HIGHLIGHTS ON NEXT PAGE



Agriculture Outreach — Water & Cropping Systems Educator John Nelson was one of several presenters at the Nebraska Soil Health & Cover Crops Field Day held at the Eastern Nebraska Research Extension and Education Center. 75 attendees learned about the results of the Highboy Cover Crop Interseeding Project (HiCCIP) and saw an equipment demonstration. As part of Extension’s On-Farm Research Network, HiCCIP included 16 farms covering 2,000 acres. The goal is to address barriers to adopting cover crops in corn fields prior to harvest.



Early Childhood Prep Academy — Extension Educator Hayley Jackson Perez partnered with Lincoln Littles and Ruth Staples Child Development Laboratory to offer 6-hour workshops to 22 middle school students about career possibilities in early childhood education. This program was aimed at increasing the Early Childhood workforce, which is an issue within Lancaster County and beyond. One participant said, “I enjoyed working with the kids doing hands-on activities. My favorite was assisting in the outdoor learning. The other kids and staff all made the day fun and a great experience.”

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Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
 444 Cherycreek Road, Suite A
 Lincoln, Nebraska 68528-1591



Horticulture, Landscape, and Environmental Systems (HLES) Team – HLES Extension experts assist thousands of homeowners, renters and industry professionals each year to identify issues and solve problems. In 2024, over 15,000 questions were answered by horticulture, entomology and water experts (via emails, phone calls and walk-ins). Pictured: Horticulturist Sarah Browning, Urban Entomologist Kait Chapman and Statewide Domestic Water/Wastewater Program Manager Becky Schuerman. The HLES Team assisted over 2,000 Husker Harvest Days visitors during the 3-day event in September.



Cultivating Healthy Intentional Mindful Educators (CHIME) – Developed by Extension, CHIME teaches Early Childhood professionals how to improve their well-being. As part of a Head Start–University Partnership funded by a grant, Extension Educator Jaci Foged organized and presented a 2.5-day CHIME Facilitator Program (pictured). One participant said, “Nebraska Extension has provided me with practical strategies for cultivating mindfulness and self-compassion, enhancing both my professional life as an educator and my personal life.”

4-H Engaged 34,177 Youth

4-H equips youth with skills for the future while meeting them where they are today.



Beyond Ready



4-H Clubs – With over 50 clubs ranging from 5 to 75 youth members, clubs are an important part of the Lancaster County 4-H program. 4-H clubs are led by adult volunteers, hold regular meetings, elect youth officers, recite the 4-H pledge, learn together and do community service projects. Pictured is the 4-H Clover Kids club for youth ages 5–7.



4-H at Lancaster County Super Fair – 502 4-H/FFA exhibitors showcased 4,696 exhibits (including static exhibits, animals, contest entries and Clover Kids exhibits). The Super Fair provides 4-H youth an opportunity to share the projects they’ve worked on throughout the year. The 4-H Swine Show (pictured) included many exhibitors from the Pick A Pig club for non-farm youth.

4-H builds a ready generation in a world of change



4-H STEM – A new club focusing on generative artificial intelligence (AI) met seven times in two months. Youth in grades 5–8 journeyed into the world of AI through storytelling, art, games and more. They gained hands-on experience with AI tools like ChatGPT and DALL-E and explored how AI is impacting our world and shaping the future. This program was piloted in Lancaster County by Extension Specialist Brad Barker and University of Nebraska–Lincoln doctoral student Mackayla Kelsey (pictured helping a 4-H'er).



4-H in the Classroom – Lancaster County 4-H presents several programs in local schools which meet Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska or national education standards. The Nutrition School Enrichment Kits program for grades K–5 reached 17,593 students in 41 schools during the 2023–24 school year. Pictured is Extension Assistant Sam Isaacson leading kindergartners in learning how to make a healthy snack, after reviewing the five basic food groups.



Afterschool Programs – 4-H delivered 144 afterschool/out-of-school programs focusing on hands-on STEM programs such as creating slime in a bag. Pictured is Extension Assistant Elizabeth Thiltges leading a 4-H STEM club in learning about polymers.

Nebraska Extension’s Strategic Direction

- 1) Strengthen Nebraska Agriculture & Food Systems
- 2) Inspire Nebraskans & Their Communities
- 3) Enhance the Health & Well-being of all Nebraskans



How the Big 3 energize Nebraska’s future:

- ✓ Developing a skilled workforce
- ✓ Enhancing health & well-being
- ✓ Creating statewide economic vitality
- ✓ Retaining & attracting young people
- ✓ Leveraging our strengths for sustained success



Reflection, Growth and Whole-Person Wellness for 2025

By Emily Gratopp, MS, ACC, ACTC, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

What was the most exciting or fulfilling part of 2024? What is most hopeful as 2025 begins? What needs to be prioritized to foster growth, peace, vitality and whole-person wellness? Reflecting on these questions is crucial before 2025 swiftly gets underway, and

all sense of newness fades into routine. Reflection enables intentional living, the cornerstone of a fulfilling life.

In 2024, the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) achieved remarkable impact. The team of seven served over 16,000 people, including 500 New Americans in a dozen languages, taught 120 adults to manage hypertension, grew 2,000 pounds of vegetables for food pantries, distributed 2,400 fresh meals,

improved 51 policies and environments for healthier practices and empowered young leaders to establish a free Soccer for Success (SfS) club for youth. These efforts reflect the program's commitment to equipping limited-resource families for the healthiest lives possible.

Which efforts were most fulfilling? That depends on who you ask. A parent of a youth participant shared, "Our kid now makes sure there is water and milk at meals, we have started taking daily walks and we sit at the table together for meals." An adult participant in the hypertension class reflected, "I just learned I have high blood pressure. This program taught me to measure my blood pressure at home, which helped me communicate with my doctor for a more accurate treatment."

A young adult SfS Coach Mentor said, "The kids in this program don't have access to other sports. This is a safe place for youth to make friends, have trusted adults to talk to, learn teamwork and hard work and get physical activity. Being the adult a kid trusts means a lot to me and shows how important what we do is."

These testimonials underscore the transformative power of investing in health and well-being. They also serve as a reminder that programs like NEP succeed not only by addressing immediate needs but by building a foundation for long-term growth, resilience and fulfillment. As 2025 begins, the chal-

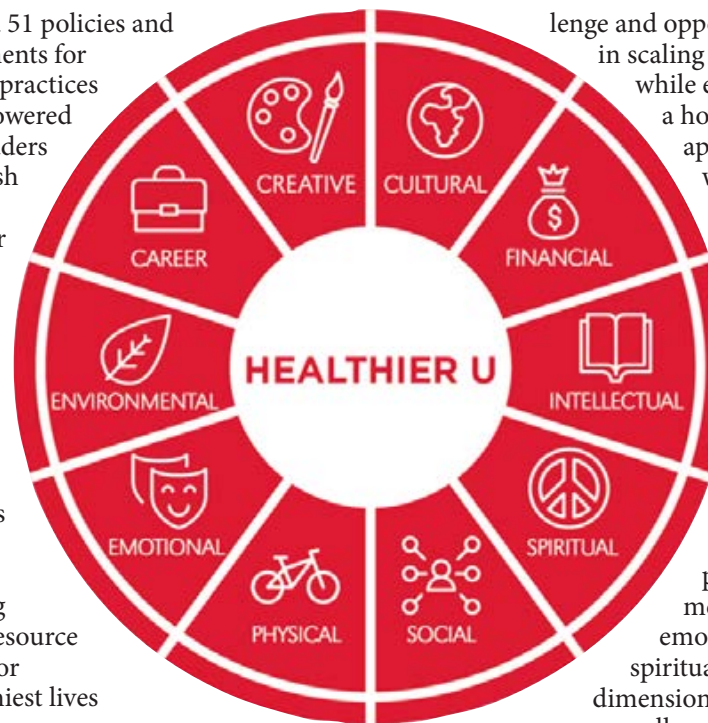
lenge and opportunity lie in scaling this impact while embracing a holistic approach to wellness.

The year ahead invites a renewed focus on whole-person health — a balance of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social dimensions. Whole-person wellness fosters resilience, purpose and vitality.

Physical wellness encompasses proper nutrition, exercise and sleep. Mental health requires stress management, self-awareness and emotional regulation. Spiritual health connects people to their values or faith, offering hope and meaning. Social health cultivates relationships that provide support and connection. Together, these dimensions enable individuals and communities to thrive.

As 2025 begins, ask: What needs to be balanced to achieve whole-person health? Which element — physical, mental, emotional, spiritual or social — needs more attention? What would it mean to experience greater social connection this year?

To make 2025 the best year yet, give time and space to reflect on the past, dream about a balanced and fulfilling future and, most importantly, set intentions and action steps to make it happen. Whole-person wellness is a lifelong journey, but 2025 offers a fresh opportunity to live intentionally and thrive in all dimensions of life.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

By Emily Gratopp, MS, ACC, ACTC, Extension Educator in Lancaster County

This tortilla soup recipe perfectly captures the cozy essence of winter while being easy to make, budget-friendly and packed with wholesome goodness!

SLOW COOKER CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

(Yield: 8 servings)

- 3 chicken breasts, boneless, skinless
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes with mild green chilies
- 2 (15 ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 ounce) can tomato sauce, no salt added
- 1 (4 ounce) can green chiles
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 cup frozen corn (optional)
- Cheese, shredded (optional)
- Cooked rice or corn chips (optional)
- Fresh cilantro, gently rubbed under cold running water, chopped (optional)



Photo by Marusa Jonas, Nutrition Education Program

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Spray slow cooker bowl with non-stick cooking spray.
2. Place chicken breasts in bottom of slow cooker. Wash hands with soap and water after handling uncooked chicken.
3. Add tomatoes, black beans, tomato sauce, green chiles, salsa and corn, if desired. Gently mix.
4. Cook on low for 8–10 hours or on high for 4–6 hours and until internal temperature of the chicken reaches 165°F as measured with a food thermometer.
5. 30 minutes before serving, remove chicken breast and shred. Return chicken to slow cooker and stir.
6. Optional, serve over rice or top with cheese, tortilla chips or cilantro, if desired.
7. Store leftovers in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Nutrition Information: Serving Size (1/8 of recipe): Calories 230, Total Fat 2g, Saturated Fat 0.5g, Sodium 845mg, Total Carbohydrates 32g, Fiber 10g, Protein 23g.

Extension's 2025 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Begins Soon

If you have a strong interest in gardening and enjoy helping others, you are invited to become a Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteer.

This program will increase your knowledge and understanding of horticultural topics such as:

- Best cultural practices for growing flowers, vegetables and turf.
- Plant disease and insect pest identification and control.
- Preserving beneficial insect and wildlife habitat and much more!

Instructors are Extension specialists, educators, associates and horticulture professionals.

To become a Master Gardener volunteer, you must attend all training sessions, pass an examination and

volunteer for Extension educational programming. Many fun and educational volunteer opportunities are available, including answering gardening questions from the public, teaching 4-H youth gardening, assisting at the county or state fair, assisting with community garden participants and many others.

The cost for those participating in the 2025 training class is \$250 per person. There are two options for Master Gardener training in Lincoln.

Daytime Training

The Lancaster County Extension-based training program will begin in February; training hours are during the day, with on-line resources available for study anytime. For additional

information, call Mary Jane Frogge at 402-441-7180. Application deadline is Friday, Jan. 17. Apply online at <https://go.unl.edu/lancaster-emgv-app>.

Evening Training

The campus-based training program will begin in January, training hours are during the evening, with online resources available for study anytime. For more information, contact Terri James at 402-472-8973. Apply online at <https://go.unl.edu/campus-emgv-app>.

Don't miss this opportunity to increase your gardening knowledge, share it with others in the community and have fun!

Upcoming Green Industry Conferences

NEBRASKA TURFGRASS CONFERENCE

• JAN. 7-9

LaVista Conference Center,
LaVista, Neb.

Agenda and registration –
nebraskaturfgrass.com/conference



GREAT PLAINS GROWERS CONFERENCE

• JAN. 9-11

Missouri Western University,
St. Joseph, Mos.

Agenda and registration – greatplainsgrowersconference.org



NEBRASKA ARBORIST ASSOCIATION WINTER CONFERENCE • JAN. 21-22

Embassy Suites, Lincoln, Neb.

Agenda and registration – nearborists.org



NEBRASKA NURSERY & LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION • JAN. 30-31

Nebraska Innovation Campus
Conference Center, Lincoln, Neb.

Agenda and registration –
nebraskanurseryandlandscapeassociation.com/event



MIDWEST INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF ARBORICULTURE ANNUAL CONF.

• JAN. 29-31

Double Tree Inn, Overland Park, Kas.

Agenda and registration –
mwisa.org/annual-conference



WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19

8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
conference rooms,
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln

Workshop for nursery & green industry professionals,
public works employees, landscape managers, arborists,
tree board volunteers and cemetery & groundskeepers.

Cost: \$35/person

ISA and NAA CEU credits available

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: FEB. 14

Register at <https://go.unl.edu/prohort>

For more information, including a full agenda, visit
<https://go.unl.edu/prohort> or call Sarah Browning at
402-441-7180.



GARDEN GUIDE

THINGS TO DO THIS MONTH

By Mary Jane Frogge, Extension
Associate in Lancaster County

January is a good time to order flower and vegetable seeds. Many varieties sell out early.

Prune fruit trees and grapes in late February or early March, after the worst of the winter cold is passed, but before spring growth begins.

Check any vegetables, like potatoes or onions, you have in storage. Dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.

Do not start your vegetable transplants indoors too early. Six weeks ahead of the expected planting date is early enough for the fast-growth species like tomatoes. Eight weeks allows enough time for the slower-growing types such as peppers.

Check young trees and shrubs for rodent or rabbit damage. Prevent injury with fencing or protective collars.

Late February is a good time to air-layer such house plants as dracaena, dieffenbachia and rubber plant, especially if they have grown too tall and leggy.

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.

Avoid heavy traffic on the frozen, dormant lawn. The crown of the plant may be severely damaged or killed.

Brush snow from evergreens as soon as possible after a storm. Use a broom in an upward, sweeping motion. Serious damage may be caused by heavy snow or ice accumulating on the branches.

Check all house plants closely for insect infestations. Quarantine gift plants until you determine they are not harboring any pests.

During the winter, most houses are too dry for house plants. Humidity may be increased by placing plants on trays lined with pebbles and filled with water to within one half inch of the base of the pot.

Analyze last year's planting, fertilizing and spraying records. Make notes to reorder successful varieties as well as those you wish to try again.

2025 Pesticide Applicator Trainings

If you have a pesticide applicators license expiring April 2025 — either private or commercial, or you need to get a new license — classes begin soon. Make plans now to participate in the training option that best fits your needs.

COMMERCIAL/ NONCOMMERCIAL APPLICATORS

Commercial/noncommercial applicators are professionals who apply restricted-use pesticides for hire or compensation. Anyone who applies pesticides to the property of another person, either restricted- or general-use products, for control of pests in lawns, landscapes, buildings or homes must also have a commercial pesticide applicators license. Public employees (those employed by a town, county or state) applying mosquito control pesticides, whether restricted- or general-use, must also hold a commercial or noncommercial certification.

Commercial/noncommercial applicators have several options to recertify or get a new license.

Traditional In-Person Training Classes

Visit <https://pested.unl.edu> for dates, locations and registration. Registration is required. Cost is \$95 per online registration. Trainings will be held at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln.

- **Initial trainings** start at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday — Feb. 18, March 11 and Wednesday, April 9.
- **Recertification trainings** start at 8:30 a.m., Thursday — Jan. 30, Feb. 20 and March 13.

In-person trainings are a supplemental learning opportunity; they DO NOT replace pre-class studying of category manuals or flip charts for test preparation. Purchase study materials online at <https://pested.unl.edu>.



Online Self-Paced Option — Recertification Only

This is a 100% online training, which includes watching the General Standards recertification video, plus a video for each additional category to be renewed. Cost is \$95 per participant. Register at <https://pested.unl.edu>.

Conference Options: Recertification Only

Crop Production Clinics — General Standards (00), Ag Plant (01) or Demonstration/Research (D/R) categories. See related article at right. Registration is required, cost is \$95 per participant.

Nebraska Turf Conference — General Standards (00) and Ornamental & Turf (04) categories. Visit <https://nebraskaturfgrass.com/conference> for more information.

Urban Pest Management Conference — General Standards (00), Structural Health (08), Wood Destroying Organisms (08w) and Fumigation (11) categories. Visit <https://www.nspca.org> for more information.

Testing-Only Options

Walk-in testings — are closed-book exams are given by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA). Visit https://nda.nebraska.gov/pesticide/applicator_testing.html for a list of available test-only dates, times and locations.

NDA Computer-based Testing — provided through the Pearson VUE company. Visit <https://nda.nebraska.gov/pesticide/>

[pearson_vue_testing.html](https://nda.nebraska.gov/pesticide/applicator_testing.html) for a list of testing sites, exams available, dates and registration information. There is a charge of \$55 per exam charged by Pearson VUE.

PRIVATE APPLICATORS

Private applicators are farmers or producers raising an agricultural commodity on land they own or rent or an employee making pesticide applications on their employer's farm. Private applicators have four ways to recertify or get a new license.

Traditional In-Person Classes

Lincoln dates will be held at Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln on Friday, Jan. 31, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. and Thursday, Mar. 6, 1–4 p.m. and again at 6–9 p.m. Cost is \$60 per participant, collected at the door. To register, go to <https://pears.io/events/unl> and search for PSEP and your county.

Crop Production Clinics

Initial training in General Standards (00) and Ag Plant (01) is available for private applicators. See related article at right. Registration is required, cost is \$95 per participant. To register, go to <http://agronomy.unl.edu/cpc>.

Online Self-Study Program

This is a 100% online, self-paced training with 10 modules. There are questions within the modules and a score of 100% is needed to pass. Visit <https://pested.unl.edu/training-and-certification> for more information and a link to register. Cost is \$60 per participant.

NDA Testing Options

Take a written, closed-book exam given by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Visit https://nda.nebraska.gov/pesticide/applicator_testing.html for a list of available test-only dates, times and locations.

Crop Production Clinics

In January 2025, the Crop Production Clinics sponsored by Nebraska Extension will be presented in person at eight locations across the state. They offer practical, profitable, environmentally sound, high-impact training for agricultural professionals and producers. All clinics will offer pest management topics (meets commercial pesticide applicator recertification requirements and private pesticide certification) and crops, economics, soils and water management topics.

All trainings will be 8:45 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Cost is \$95 per participant, includes lunch and training materials.

The Crop Production Clinics in southeast Nebraska will be:

- Wednesday, Jan. 15 — Ithaca (Eastern Nebraska Research, Extension and Education Center, 1071 Co. Rd. G)
- Friday, Jan. 17 — Beatrice (Holiday Inn Express, 4005 N. 6th St.)
- Friday, Jan. 24 — York (Holthus Convention Center, 3130 Holen Ave.)

If you are planning to receive recertification as an applicator, arrive early and check in with the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) at the registration table.

Certified Crop Advisor credits will be available for crop production, nutrient management, integrated pest management, water management and precision agriculture.

For more information and to register, go to <http://agronomy.unl.edu/cpc>.

Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Midwestern Farm Women

A multi-state Extension workshop series for women in agriculture will offer strategies to evaluate and improve farm estate and transition plans.

“Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Midwestern Farm Women: A Succession Planning Series,” will be held from 5–8 p.m. Central time on Jan. 21, Jan. 28, Feb. 4 and Feb. 11, 2025. The series is being produced through a collaborative effort by Extension programs at Kansas State, Nebraska–Lincoln and Purdue Universities. The Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms at 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A in Lincoln will be a workshop site.

Topics covered will include motivation for succession planning, communicating with family, the financial aspects of estate and transition plans and the legal aspects of putting a plan in place. A keynote speaker will be simulcast to every workshop location during each meeting, with time for questions and a hands-on activity for participants. A meal will be provided on each date. Register at <https://go.unl.edu/leaving-a-legacy>.

At Ag Literacy Festival, Students Learn How Agriculture Impacts Their Daily Lives

More than 450 fourth and fifth graders from 10 schools in the Lincoln area, and various homeschooled, attended the Agricultural Literacy Festival held Oct. 23–25 at the Sandhills Global Event Center. Students gained a greater understanding of agriculture and how it impacts their daily lives. They rotated

between the following ten interactive stations: Beef, Water, Equipment & Technology, Poultry, Dairy, Corn & Soybeans, Swine, Ag Careers, Horse and Sheep.

The Ag Literacy Coalition, led by Nebraska Extension, organizes the festival with the help of Lancaster County Farm Bureau, Nebraska

Corn Board, agriculture businesses, commodity associations and food industry companies. This is the 22nd year the festival has been held in Lincoln.

More photos are on Flickr at <http://go.unl.edu/agliteracyfestival>.



Photos: Karen Wedding, Nebraska Extension

Extension Assistant Elizabeth Thiltges presented the sheep session, explaining that sheep are raised for wool, meat and byproducts such as milk and lanolin.

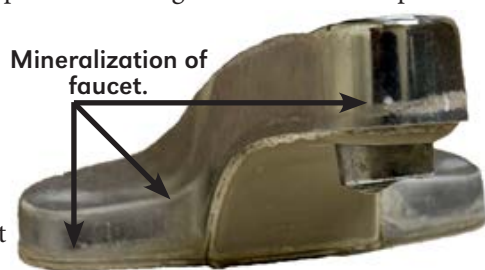


Extension Assistant Madelaine Polk shows youth a calf at the dairy station. Students learned about dairy operations, different breeds of dairy cattle and more.

Managing Hard Water

By Becky Schuerman, Extension Associate in Water/Wastewater Mgmt.

Many parts of Nebraska have hard water. Hard water has a high mineral content; hardness primarily refers to the amount of calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg) dissolved in the water. Hard water is not just a private well owner's problem, it affects many municipal water users, too. While hard water does not present a health risk for the vast majority of the population, it is often a nuisance for rural and urban homeowners across the state. Having your well water tested for hardness is helpful in assessing what treatment system will work best. Municipal customers can contact their public water system to get their hardness test results.



Ion Exchange Treatment

Hard water can be softened using an ion exchange softening process. Ion exchange involves removing the hardness ions calcium and magnesium and replacing them with non-hardness ions, typically sodium supplied by dissolved sodium chloride salt, or brine. A potassium chloride product can also be used within an ion exchange treatment system instead of a sodium chloride product. The softener contains a microporous exchange resin, usually sulfonated polystyrene beads that are supersaturated with sodium to cover the bead surfaces. As water passes through this resin bead, calcium and magnesium ions attach to the resin beads and the loosely held sodium is released from the resin into the water. After softening a large quantity of hard

water, the beads become saturated with calcium and magnesium ions. When this occurs, the exchange resin must be regenerated, or recharged. To regenerate, the ion exchange resin is flushed with a salt or a potassium brine solution. The sodium ions in the salt or potassium brine solution are exchanged with the calcium and magnesium ions on the resin and excess calcium and magnesium is flushed out with waste water. Protocol has been established to assess the effectiveness of ion exchange water softeners by the National Sanitation Foundation/American National Standards Institutes (NSF/ANSI) 44 technical requirements. An ion exchange treatment system is considered point of entry (POE) treatment equipment, meaning that it treats all of the water coming into the home or building.

Emerging Technologies

There are a variety of devices that claim to manage hard water scale

without the use of salt; using primarily emerging technologies such as electrochemical treatment, electrically induced precipitation and template-assistance crystallization. Manufacturers generally claim the devices utilize energy to alter the behavior of compounds or elements within the water so the calcium and magnesium do not form a scale on pipes or plumbing fixtures. Some research supports the application of some of these devices in industrial applications for anti-scaling treatment. Currently, it is hard to predict which devices will work in all homes, given the high degree of variability in water quality and water-use patterns. Standards and protocols for these no-salt softening devices are being developed and may offer testing and certification of these household products in coming years. These no-salt technologies offer consumers both the promise and problems that may occur with emerging technologies.



2025

LINCOLN EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE

SATURDAY, MARCH

22

8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
(6 hours of in-service will be given
for this conference)

NEBRASKA EXTENSION IN LANCASTER
COUNTY CONFERENCE ROOMS
444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln

Cost: \$30

A light breakfast and lunch will be served.

For more information or questions, contact
Cara Small at cara.small@esu6.org
or 402-761-3341

Register online at www.esu6.org
by March 15, 2025



National Speaker
and Social
Entrepreneur

Jerletha McDonald Empowerment and Success for the Early Childhood Educator

This dynamic workshop is designed to inspire and equip early childhood educators with the tools, strategies and confidence to thrive personally and professionally. Through engaging sessions, participants will explore self-care, professionalism, diversity and inclusion, leadership and advocacy. They will leave empowered to elevate their impact on children, families and the field of early childhood education while achieving their own personal and professional goals.

This conference is approved through the Nebraska Department of Education and sponsored by the Southeast Early Learning Connection.

Don't Let Fungus Gnats Bug You and Your Plants

By Kait Chapman, Extension
Educator in Lancaster County

While winter brings quiet to the insect world outside, there's a chance we may still encounter some buggy creatures indoors. Small flies and gnats, for example, are common nuisances and pests, whether they be fruit flies in the kitchen, or flies in the drains.

Another small fly, the fungus gnat, is a common issue associated with a more inconspicuous source — overwatered potted plants.



Fungus gnat (highly magnified).

Photos by Jody Green, Extension Educator in Douglas/Sarpy Counties

What to Look For

Adult fungus gnats are small, about 1/8-inch long and black. Their maggots breed and develop in the moist soil of potted plants, where they feed on fungi and other organic matter. However, unless you're trained to tell the difference between small flies, distinguishing them from others may be difficult. Be sure to reach out to your local Nebraska Extension office for help with identification.

How to Control

Getting rid of fungus gnats requires tackling both the adult flies and their larvae. Here's how to do it:

Trap the Adults: Use yellow sticky traps strategically placed near the soil of affected plants to capture the flying adults.

Dry Out the Soil: Fungus gnat larvae thrive in moist conditions. Allow the soil to dry out between waterings, and make sure your pots have proper drainage to prevent water from pooling.

Use Biological Control: If the infestation persists, try a biological product containing *Bacillus thuringiensis* (*Bt*) specifically labeled for fungus gnat control. These products target larvae in the soil without harming your plants. Be sure to follow the product's label instructions for safe and effective use.



Fungus gnats on sticky trap.

Nurturing Empathy in Young Children: A Guide for Parents & Caregivers

By Hayley Jackson Perez,
Extension Educator in
Lancaster County

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. Empathy is a fundamental building block for children's social and emotional development. As parents and caregivers, we play a vital role in fostering this crucial skill in our young children.

Here are some practical tips to help you cultivate empathy in your child:

1. Model Empathy Yourself:

Children learn by observing, so be a role model. When you see someone struggling,

express your concern and offer assistance. You should also be open to talking about your own feelings, both positive and negative. This helps children understand that emotions are a normal part of life and that it is helpful to talk about how they are feeling with those around them.

2. Engage in Emotion-Focused Conversations:

Regularly discuss emotions with your child. Ask questions like, "How do you think your friend felt when you took their toy?" or "What do you think makes your baby sister cry?" With

older children, you can also encourage your child to identify and label their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others.

3. Read Books Together:

Choose books to read with your child that explore different emotions and situations. After reading, discuss the characters' feelings and how they handled their emotions. Ask open-ended questions to encourage your child to think critically about the story. If you would like examples of questions to ask and books to read, visit <http://child.unl.edu/read4resilience>.

continued on next page



HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

David Smith

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce David Smith of Lincoln as winner of the January "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

A former Extension staff member, David has continued to volunteer with 4-H since transferring to a City of Lincoln employee in 2017. At the annual Clover College, he has taught 4-hour fishing workshops where youth are driven to Bowling Lake and learn to fish. The most common fish caught are bluegill, sunfish, bass and catfish, which the youth catch and release.

"I like youth activities, especially hands-on outdoor activities," David says. "I like to teach children and introduce them to new activities. I also like to give back to the community if I can, and volunteering is a great way for me to do that. My favorite experience as a 4-H volunteer is taking children who have never fished before and teaching them how to fish."

Extension Educator Tracy Anderson says, "The fishing workshop is always a hit, filling up quickly as our 4-H'ers embrace the chance to learn how to fish! Over the years, I've witnessed David's dedication as he generously shares his time and expertise with youth, both through fishing at Clover College and other engaging workshops."



HEART OF 4-H VOLUNTEER AWARD

Tom and Becky Schuerman

Lancaster County 4-H is proud to announce Tom and Becky Schuerman of Martell as winners of the February "Heart of 4-H Award" in recognition of outstanding volunteer service.

They have helped with 4-H in Gage County for over 15 years, helping with livestock projects for two clubs and at the Gage County Fair. Tom was also a fair superintendent for engineering exhibits.

For 5 years, Tom and Becky have been involved with Lancaster County 4-H, helping set up static exhibit displays and poultry cages at the Lancaster County Super Fair, as well as hauling large items in their pickup. They also have loaned a chest freezer for freezing water bottles to keep rabbits cool at fair. For this year's Horse Awards Night, Tom and Becky donated 10-foot wooden cowboy/cowgirl silhouettes they previously built for the Norris High School Band program.

"We have always believed in and enjoyed giving back to our community in whatever ways we can," Becky says. "It has been exciting to witness and help kids grow, learn and build their knowledge base through their projects each year. Seeing the pride and sense of responsibility the kids exhibit with their static and livestock projects is always a neat thing!"



Empathy

from previous page

Read 4 Resilience is a project by the Early Childhood Extension Team at the University of Nebraska that provides Storybook Guides for a number of children's books. The guides include questions you can ask your child while reading the book, as well as ideas for activities that extend the learning experience.

4. Practice

Perspective-Taking:

Help your child understand that others may have different experiences and viewpoints. One way to do this is to play games that involve role-playing different scenarios. You can also encourage your child to consider how their actions might affect others.

5. Encourage Acts of Kindness:

Help your child find ways to help others, such as sharing toys, volunteering or donating to a charity. Whenever your child engages in an act of kindness, celebrate with them! You can also talk about the positive impact that their kind action had on others around them.



Wesely and Polk at National Horticulture Contest

Lancaster County 4-H'ers Kaily Wesely (pictured at left) and Catherine Polk (right) participated in the national Senior Horticulture Identification Contest at the National Junior Horticulture Association conference held in Lincoln on Oct. 11-13. They were part of a four-member team which represented Nebraska, and received 4th place! Individually, Kaily placed 4th and Catherine placed 16th.

The youth qualified for the national contest by placing high at the Nebraska 4-H Horticulture Identification Contest held during the Nebraska State Fair. Extension Educator Elizabeth Exstrom of Hall County coached the team. Catherine also competed in the floral arranging and horticulture art contests.

Kaily and Catherine are members of the Horticulture 4-H Club led by Extension Associate Mary Jane Frogge.



2024 4-H Horse Awards Night Results

The 2024 4-H Horse Awards Night, held Oct. 24, recognized top achievements at the Lancaster County Super Fair and other accomplishments throughout the past year. Congratulations to all Lancaster 4-H equestrians for your outstanding accomplishments! Additional results and photos are online at <https://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/horse-awards>.

HORSEMANSHIP ADVANCEMENT LEVELS

The Nebraska 4-H Horsemanship Advancement Levels program is designed to serve as a guide for instruction and evaluation of each member's progress. The correct handling of horses is emphasized from the beginning level to the most advanced level.

Ground — MacKenzie McCoy

Level I Walk/Trot — Piper Pillard, Annabelle Zade

Level I — Lena Barnes, Madalyn Becker, Arianna Behrend, Saylor Bontrager, Shiloh Braunsroth, Addyson Carl, Grace Chevalier, Hannah Chevalier, John Chevalier, Madelyn Chevalier, Thomas Chevalier, Rue Faller, Bryce Golka, Annie Illian, Gwen Johnson, Layla Kravchuk, Zoey Kravchuk, Mili Macdissi, Stanley Newby, Avery Stohs, Brystal Thompson, Ethan Woledge, Christina Zade, Samson Zade

Level II — Lena Barnes, Corrine Byrne, Gracen Byrne, Grace Chevalier, Hannah Chevalier, John Chevalier, Lilee Chevalier, Madalyn Chevalier, Reagan Dinger, Meg LaPlante, Katelyn Lightbody, Reese Pillard, Avery Stohs, Brystal Thompson, Campbell Tran, Ethan Woledge

Level III — Thaxton Bourek, Xavyer Bourek, Grace Chevalier, Hannah Chevalier, Madalyn Chevalier, Lyra Krutak, Addisyn Lorenson, Ava Schepers, Evelyn Smith, Isla Strasburger, Campbell Tran, Lily Woledge

Level IV — Braylee Thompson

INCENTIVE AWARDS

4-Hers logged the hours they spent working with or learning about horses. The more hours invested, the more valuable the reward! The Horse Incentive Awards are sponsored by the Lancaster County 4-H Horse Volunteers in Program Service (VIPS) Committee.

Bronze (100+ hours) — MacKenzie McCoy

Silver (minimum of 225 hours or points) — Saylor Bontrager, Maya Dicks, Reagan Dinger, Brogen Frink, Lena Gropp, Gracie Mittan-DeBuhr

Gold (minimum of 390 hours or points, and completed horse record book) — Lena Barnes, Liz Boshart, Corrine Byrne, Easton Byrne, Gracen Byrne, Kiara Eppenbach, Shea Frink, Caraline Higgins, Lyra Krutak, Meg LaPlante, Addisyn Lorenson, Natalie Plautz, Amelia Proffitt, Max Roberts, Ava Wharton

TOP AWARDS

Top Trail Award for all-around champion of the Lancaster County Super Fair 4-H Trail obstacle class, sponsored by Dick and the late Cookie Confer — Caraline Higgins

All-Around Cowboy/Cowgirl Award age division awards for most total points scored from specified classes at the Lancaster County Super Fair — **Senior:** Caraline Higgins; **Junior:** Kayla Isaacs; **Elementary:** Braylee Thompson

All-Around Ranch Horse Awards age division awards for All-Around Ranch Horse at the Lancaster County Super Fair, sponsored by Olive Creek Acres Performance Horses — **Senior:** Caraline Higgins (horse "J Friends in Gold Places"); **Junior:** Kayla Isaacs (horse "Aces Shining Freckle"); **Elementary:** Braylee Thompson (horse "Rosie")

Franklyn Manning All-Around Barrels Award for fastest time in the Lancaster County Super Fair 4-H Barrel Racing competition, sponsored by Brad and Susan Frink — Nina Roberts (horse "Holly")



Horse Incentive Awards — Gold level recipients

Bluestem All-Around Miniature Horse Award for high point 4-H miniature horse and youth pair in two age divisions at the Lancaster County Super Fair, sponsored by the Bluestem Miniature Horse Club — **Senior:** Ava Wharton and horse ("D.M. King Chipette"); **Junior:** Gemma Bunz (horse "Juan")

High Score Dressage Rider Awards for high score riders in the 4-H Dressage Show in both the dressage classes and the western dressage classes at the Lancaster County Super Fair, sponsored by Nebraska Dressage Association — **high score dressage riders:** Elsie Maranville (champion) and Xavyer Bourek (reserve champion); **high score western riders:** Shiloh Braunsroth (champion) and Gracen Byrne (reserve champion)

Lowell Boomer High Point Jumping Award for the all-around champion in the 4-H jumping classes at the Lancaster County Super Fair — Gracen Byrne

Top NRHA Reining Awards for highest NRHA pattern score in each age division at the Lancaster County Super Fair 4-H Reining competition, sponsored by Dr. Kelly Stich — **Senior:** Scarlett Battles (horse "Baby Step Up Your Whiz"); **Junior:** Kayla Isaacs (horse "Aces Shining Freckle"); **Elementary:** Evelyn Smith (horse "Whizkeys Hot Jewel")

All-Around Versatility Horse Award for the most versatile horse/rider combination at the Lancaster County Super Fair, sponsored by Brad and Susan Frink and Pam Schaaf — Shea Frink and horse ("Maggie")

Wilhelmina Wittstruck Memorial All-Around Champion Award for Lancaster County Super Fair all-around 4-H champion individual, sponsored by Joan and the late Dwayne Wittstruck — Caraline Higgins

JUDGING CONTEST

The Horse Judging Contest (a Lancaster County Super Fair contest) emphasizes how much 4-H members know about horse conformation as they judge four or more classes of horses along with the opportunity to give oral reasons. The champion of each division receives a buckle.

Senior Division: Elizabeth Funk (champion), Max Roberts (reserve champion), Shea Frink (3rd)

Junior Division: Kiara Eppenbach (champion), Lily Wood (reserve champion), Kayla Isaacs (3rd), Clairra Heinze (4th), Xavyer Bourek (5th), Cayle Callahan (6th), Meg LaPlante (7th), Katy Weaver (8th), Greta Rogers (9th), Bryce Golka (10th)

Elementary Division: Lena Gropp (champion), Gracen Byrne (reserve champion), Christina Zade (3rd), Corrine Byrne (4th), Braylee Thompson (5th), John Chevalier (6th), Madalyn Chevalier (7th), Campbell Tran (8th), Thaxton Bourek (9th), Madelyn Becker (10th), Thomas Chevalier (11th), Brystal Thompson (12th)



High Score Dressage Rider Award winner Xavyer Bourek (reserve champion)



High Score Western Dressage Rider Award winners Shiloh Braunsroth (champion) and Gracen Byrne (reserve champion)



Top NRHA Reining Award winners Evelyn Smith (elementary) and Scarlett Battles (senior)



Wilhelmina Wittstruck Memorial All-Around Champion Caraline Higgins

4-H Events Open to All Youth

CAT SHOW, JAN. 11 — This Cat Show will be the purrrfect opportunity to learn and practice showing your cat in 4-H. It will be held Saturday, Jan. 11, 9 a.m. at the Sandhills Global Event Center, 84th & Havelock, Lincoln in the Lancaster County Farm Bureau Room (by the Extension 4-H office and South Hall). Open to all youth ages 8–18, with a Clover Kids opportunity for youth 5–7. Register at show. Cost is \$2 per class or \$5 for unlimited classes. Show flyer with classes and health requirements is at <https://go.unl.edu/4h-ani-show>.

WILDLIFE WONDERS EVENT, FEB. 1 — Youth ages 8 and older are invited to the Wildlife Wonders workshop on Saturday, Feb. 1, 10 a.m.–12 p.m., at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Explore fascinating wildlife species, learn about their habitats and interact with live animals! There will also be games and crafts. The cost is \$5 per youth, payable at the door (cash or check made payable to Lancaster County Extension). Register at <https://go.unl.edu/2025wildlifeevent> by Jan. 27.

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! The knowledge contests are also open to adults for a minimal fee! Show flyer will be posted at <https://go.unl.edu/4h-ani-show>. For questions, contact Kate Pulec at kpulec3@unl.edu or 402-441-7180.



4-H Announcements FOR 4-H'ERS AND VOLUNTEERS



The 4-H e-newsletter at <https://go.unl.edu/lan4hnews> has up-to-date information about upcoming 4-H opportunities.

2025 4-H CALENDARS — Lancaster County 4-H has compiled three handouts of 2025 events which are at <https://go.unl.edu/4hcal>:

- Overall Calendar
- Horse Calendar
- Rabbit Calendar

HORSE INCENTIVE PROGRAM BEGINS JAN. 1 — Any Lancaster County 4-H'er may participate in the horse incentive program and earn points by participating in horse-related activities. The more points you earn, the more valuable the reward! Log hours/points by participating in various horse-related activities Jan. 1–July 21. To be eligible for rewards, families must have paid annual \$20 family dues to Lancaster County Horse VIPs. Instructions and forms are available online at <https://go.unl.edu/horse-incentive>.

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIP FORMS DUE JAN. 3 — Many Lancaster County 4-H award forms and college scholarship applications are due Jan. 3. Forms are available at <http://go.unl.edu/4has> and the Extension office. Recipients will be announced at Lancaster County 4-H Achievement Celebration on Thursday, Feb. 13.

PILLOW SEWING WORKSHOP, JAN. 25 — 4-H youth ages 8 and up are invited to learn beginning sewing skills while constructing a pillow at the "Pillow Party" sewing workshop on Saturday, Jan. 25, 9 a.m. until about noon at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. No registration fee. Must register by Thursday, Jan. 9 by contacting Kristin at 402-441-7180 or kristin.geisert@unl.edu. This early date is needed to order pillow forms. Bring your sewing machine (make sure it is in good working order), basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape), etc. Also bring 3/4 yard each of 2 coordinating/contrasting woven fabrics, pre-washed, 100% cotton (NO PLAIDS, NO KNITS, NO FLANNELS) and matching thread. Pillow forms will be provided. A few office sewing machines are available for use upon request. Parents/adults are needed to attend to help their 4-H'er.

BB GUN/AIR RIFLE & AIR PISTOL CONTEST, FEB. 1 — Lancaster County 4-H is offering a BB Gun/Air Rifle & Air Pistol Contest on Saturday, Feb. 1, 8 a.m. at the Nebraska Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44th St., Lincoln. Register by Friday, Jan. 24 at <https://go.unl.edu/bbgun-airpistol-contest-2025>. To participate, youth must be ages 8–18 (by January 1 of the current year) and actively enrolled in the 4-H shooting sports project under the direct supervision of a certified 4-H shooting sports instructor. Participants exhibiting unsafe practices may be disqualified from the contest at

the discretion of the superintendent. Shooters are classified according to age division and shooting styles.

ACHIEVEMENT CELEBRATION, FEB. 13 — Lancaster County 4-H and 4-H Council invite ALL 4-H'ers, 4-H families and volunteers to the 4-H Achievement Celebration on Thursday, Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. 4-H members, clubs and volunteers receiving awards, scholarships or milestone pins will be mailed invitations. The evening's theme is "4-H'ers Have Heart!" Award winners are asked to submit award-related photos to <http://go.unl.edu/Lan4HPic> by Wednesday, Jan. 29.

4-H JAMMIE SEWING WORKSHOP, FEB. 22 — 4-H youth ages 8 and older are invited to practice their basic sewing skills and make pajama or lounge wear pants or shorts using a pattern at the "Jammie Jamboree" sewing workshop on Saturday, Feb. 22, 9 a.m.–Noon at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A, Lincoln. Adults are needed to attend to help their 4-H'ers. Bring your sewing machine (make sure it is in good working order), basic sewing equipment (scissors, pins, measuring tape, etc.), simple pull-on pajama bottom pattern in appropriate size, pre-washed flannel or 100% cotton fabric — see yardage requirement on pattern envelope — (no one-way design fabrics or plaids — If you choose flannel, purchase an additional 1/2 yard as it is not as wide), elastic as recommended by pattern and matching thread. Choosing a very fuzzy or furry fabric with nap is highly discouraged as these fabrics are very difficult to sew for beginners. Make sure your machine is in good working order. A few office machines are available upon request. To avoid mistakes, do NOT cut out pants/shorts ahead of class time! No registration fee. Register by Monday, Feb. 10 by contacting Kristin at 402-441-7180 or kristin.geisert@unl.edu.

PLAY WITH CROCHET WORKSHOP, MARCH 1 — 4-H youth ages 10 and up are invited to learn how to crochet a washcloth utilizing the single crochet stitch at this "Basic Crocheting" workshop on Saturday, March 1, 1–3 p.m. at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Suite A. No cost to attend — all supplies will be provided. A parent or adult must attend with their 4-H'er to help guide them through the steps. Register by Tuesday, Feb. 18 by contacting Kristin at 402-441-7180 or kristin.geisert@unl.edu so supplies can be ordered. Completed washcloths may be exhibited at the Lancaster County Super Fair in July.

Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council presents its annual...

OVERNIGHT LOCK-IN

for 4th & 5th graders (need not be enrolled in 4-H)

**Fri. Jan. 17, 8 p.m.–
Sat. Jan. 18, 8 a.m.**

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms
444 Cherrycreek Road,
Suite A, Lincoln

Cost \$20/person
Registrations due
by Friday, Jan. 10

**THEME:
UNDER
THE SEA**

Sleep Over!
Fun Projects!
Games!
Snacks!
Movies!

Bring your sleeping bag, pillow, toothbrush, toothpaste, active wear, sleepwear (sweats) and invite a friend to also attend!

For more information, contact Tracy Anderson at tracy.anderson@unl.edu or at 402-441-7180.
(Lobby phone during 4-H Lock-In is 402-441-7170)

TO REGISTER

Make check payable (\$20/participant) to Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council and mail with "NEBRASKA 4-H PARTICIPANT PERMISSION AND HEALTH FORM" (available at the Extension office and online at <https://go.unl.edu/lock-in>) BY FRIDAY, JAN. 10 to: Tracy Anderson, Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County, 444 Cherrycreek Rd., Suite A, Lincoln, NE 68528

No refunds




Meet the 2024–25 4-H Council



The Lancaster County 4-H Council, comprised of adult and youth volunteers, helps determine long- and short-term goals and policy for Lancaster County 4-H. 4-H Council also raises funds to help support 4-H programs, activities and scholarships. Extension Educator Tracy Anderson is the staff liaison. This year's 4-H Council: (front row L-R) Russ Parrott – President, Carley Parrott – Vice-President, Emma Thomson – Secretary, Marsha Prior – Treasurer; (middle row L-R) Rachel Koch, Tammy Sheldon, Ruby Dean, Emalea Dean, Pam Cuttlers; (back row L-R) Analisa Peterson, Kari Schepers, Nathan Gabel, Phil Wharton – ex officio Extension Board representative, Parker Hansen; (not pictured) Vanessa Peterson

Meet the 2024–25 4-H Teen Council



The Lancaster County 4-H Teen Council is a leadership organization for youth in grades 7–12. Members are involved in several leadership activities and community service projects such as donating hygiene kits to the People's City Mission (shown in the photo above). Karol Swotek is the Teen Council volunteer leader, and Extension Educator Tracy Anderson is the Teen Council staff leader. To join Teen Council, contact Tracy at 402-441-7180 or tracy.anderson@unl.edu. (Not all youth are pictured.)

4-H Thanks 2024 Sponsors

The Lancaster County 4-H program — a partnership between Nebraska Extension and the Lancaster County government — would like to thank all of the businesses, organizations and individuals who sponsored 4-H events, activities, programs and trophies during the 2024 4-H year. This support enhances the educational experience of the 4-H youth. 4-H also thanks all of our valuable volunteers!

1893 Coffee & Cream	Dale Docter	John Heineman	Lancaster National Club Calf Sale	Dick Parrott Memorial — Parrott & Walbrecht Cattle	Calvin & Rochelle Schrock Family
5 Star 4-H Club	DaVinci's – Kelly Knudson	The Heinzle Family	Lancaster County 4-H Council	Parrott Family	Tammy Sheldon
J David Aiken	Dean Machine	Lyle & Teresa Hespen	Lancaster County 4-H Horse VIPs Committee	Paula Peterson	Sid Dillon
Jason & Tracy Anderson	The Dearmont Family	Heritage Nursery	Lancaster County 4-H Livestock Booster Club	The Pillard Family	Ames Simmental
Anderson Ford	Calvin & Jordyn DeVries	The Higgins Family	Lancaster County 4-H Rabbit VIPs Committee	Mike Pinho	Slim Chickens
Anonymous	Sherry Wolf Drbal	Highlands Animal Hospital	Lancaster County Agricultural Society	Rochan Pinho	Smart Chicken
Arends Interiors, Inc.	Dick & the Late Cookie Confer	The Hilkemann Family	Lancaster County Farm Bureau	Pioneers 66	The Snider Family
Deborah Arends	The Dinger Family	Hillcrest Animal Clinic	The Lanik-Frain Family	Justin & Julia Plugge	Southeast Community College
Arrow Pest Control	Dowding Shorthorns – Ron & Nate Dowding	HL Muhlbach Construction	Lan-Otoe Farms	Prior Pines	Dale & Marilyn Stertz
Artisan Custom Builders	The Downing Family	Hog Wild Pit Bar-B-Q	David & Edie LaPlante & Family	The Pulec Family	Steven's Creek Mowing
The Barnes Family	Dwayne Wittstruck Memorial – Joan Wittstruck	Rod Hollman	Kevin & Toni Lewis	R.U. Nuts	Studio 8 Lincoln
Lorene Bartos	Earl May Nursery	The Holthus Family	Licorice International	Rabbits R Us 4-H Club	Ron & Barb Suing
Jim & Cindy Bauman	East Campus Starrs	Julia & Fred Hoppe	Lincoln Children's Zoo	The Raisch Family	The Sump Family
Gary Bergman	Jan Edwards	Karen A. Hothan	The Lorenson Family	Rainbow Ends	Sun Valley Lanes
Jo Anne & Bob Bettenhausen	Ehlers Animal Care	Hudkins Farms	Lost in Float	Amber Ramirez	Superior Bingo
Bison, Inc.	Electrical Enterprises	Rachel Huenink	Magical Lights	Sheri Ramirez	The Swotek Family
Bloom's Mini Rex – Cody & Karen Hanson	The Eppenbach Family	Husker Rehab & Wellness	Ken Majors	Rick, Tammy, Nick & Andra Rasby	The Tate Family
Bluestem Miniature Horse Club	Farm Credit Services of America	Hy-Line North America	David Marte	The Rautert Family	Ryan & Judy Terwilliger
Bob & Willie's Wonderbowl	Farmers Cooperative – Dorchester	Hy-Vee (27th & Superior)	McCashland Kirby Insurance Agency	The Rawlinson Herd	The Tim Powers Memorial
Bomgaars	Fitch Trucking, Inc.	Hy-Vee (40th & Old Cheney)	Cole & Kylea Meador	Reproductive Services	Tractor Supply Co. (both Lincoln stores, Waverly store and Waverly Distribution Center)
The Bontrager Family	Five Alarm Farm – Cuttlers Family	Heather Ingracia	The Metcalf Family	William & Barbara Rishel	Triple H Rabbitry
The Boshart Family	The Frink Family	The Isaacs Family	Millard Lumber	Rock Creek Ranchers	Triple RRR Farms
Bruck Design Company at The Studio	The Fort	James Arthur Vineyard	Wayne Motycka	The Ron Dowding Family	The Vanderford Family
Bruss Brothers	Four Winds Farms	Vicki Jedlicka	The Mueller Family	Runza (33rd & Pioneers Blvd.)	Dr. Eric & Amy Vander Woude
Butterfly Bakery	Frink Quarter Horses	David & Jill Jensen	Nebraska 4-H Foundation	Runza (Waverly)	Carol Van Rossum
Capital City Horse & Pony Club	Frontier Cooperative	JJ Frink Hard Knock Horse Shoe'n	Nebraska Dressage Association	Russ's (66th & O St.)	Rick Vest
Cargill Animal Nutrition – Jodi Holmes	Roger & Kim Funk	Linda John	Nebraska Realty – Kim Funk	Ryan's Market, Inc.	Wachal Pet Health Center
The Coe Family	Gana Trucking	Doug & Cheryl Johnson	Neemann Refuse, Inc.	Salt Valley Equestrian	The Wahlbrecht Family
Mike & Kath Conroy	Genesis Health Club	Jeff & Anne Johnson	Neogen	Sam's Club (Andermatt Dr.)	Wahoo Livestock Market
Chopsticks Chinese Cuisine	Blayne Glissman Family	Lisa & Squire Johnson	Next Gen Ag Partners	Cary & Becki Sandell	Warren Cheney Family
Clocktower Vet	Great Plains Security, Inc.	Brett Jurgens	Brent & Jackie Nisely	Sandhills Global Event Center	Waverly Grange #369
Colby Ridge Popcorn	Greater Lincoln Obedience Club	Kay Clinch Memorial	Norris FFA Chapter	Pam Schaaf	The Weaver Family
Shirley Condon	The Groom Room	Ken & Susan Cassman Charitable Fund	Dena Noe	Kari Schepers	Wilhelm Auto Repair
Cooper Specialty Feeds	Addison Gropp	Joseph Kerrigan	Olive Creek Acres Performance Horses – The Vogler Family	Becky & Tom Schuerman	Dayle Williamson
Cornhusker Pony Club	Habitat Gifts and Gourmet	Deborah Kinney	P Double Bar Ranch Feeds	Settje Agri-Services & Engineering	Wilkinson Sheep Farm – Jay & Brenda Wilkinson
Craft Axe Throwing	Larry & Julie Hafer/Hafer Cattle Company	Kiwanis – Lincoln Center	Paint Yourself Silly	Alice Sittler	Karen Wobig
Crawford Family Shorthorns	Karen & Cody Hanson	Shellee Kotera		Meghan Sittler	Wolf Tackle Shop
John & Krista Croghan	The Heather Family	Gary & Diane Kubicek		Andy & Jen Smith	The Yarn Guild – Lincoln
Culver's of Lincoln (all three locations)				Sarah & Kyle Smith Family	
				Dr. Kelly Stich	

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

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Landlord/Tenant Cash Rent Workshop

The University of Nebraska–Lincoln’s Center for Agricultural Profitability and Nebraska Extension will present a workshop for farm and ranch landowners, landlords and tenants who want to learn more about current trends in farm or ranch real estate, and best practices for managing or leasing land. “Big Questions and Innovative Solutions in Land Management” will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m., at the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County conference rooms, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. No cost to attend. Registration is required by Monday, Feb. 10 by calling Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County at 402-441-7180.



EXTENSION CALENDAR

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

January

1	4-H Horse Incentive Program Begins	
3	4-H Award & Scholarship Applications Due to Extension Office	
3	4-H Club Treasurer’s Reports Due	
7	4-H Council Meeting	6 p.m.
10	Extension Board Meeting	8 a.m.
11	4-H Cat Show, Sandhills Global Event Center – Lancaster County Farm Bureau Room	9–11 a.m.
12	4-H Teen Council Meeting	3 p.m.
17	Deadline for Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Applications	
17–18	4-H Teen Council’s Lock-In For 4th & 5th Graders	8 p.m.–8 a.m.
21	Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Farm Women: A Succession Planning Series	5–8 p.m.
23	Pesticide Applicator NDA “Walk-In” Testing Session	9 a.m.–2 p.m.
25	4-H Pillow Party Sewing Workshop	9 a.m.–12 p.m.
28	Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Farm Women: A Succession Planning Series	5–8 p.m.
30	4-H Horse VIPs Meeting, Virtual	6 p.m.
30	Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training	8:30 a.m.
31	Private Pesticide Applicator Training	9 a.m.–12 p.m.

February

1	4-H BB Gun/Air Rifle & Air Pistol Contest Nebraska Outdoor Education Center, 4703 N. 44th St.	8 a.m.–12 p.m.
1	4-H Wildlife Wonders Event	10 a.m.–12 p.m.
3–4	4-H EGG Cam Chicks Hatching, https://go.unl.edu/eggcam	
4	Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Farm Women: A Succession Planning Series	5–8 p.m.
4	4-H Council Meeting	6 p.m.
9	4-H Teen Council Meeting	3 p.m.
11	Landlord/Tenant Cash Rent Lease Workshop	10:30–2 p.m.
11	Leaving a Lasting Legacy for Farm Women: A Succession Planning Series	5–8 p.m.
13	4-H Achievement Celebration	6:30 p.m.
18	Commercial Pesticide Applicator Initial Training	8:30 a.m.
19	ProHort Lawn & Landscape Workshop	8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.
20	Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification Training	8:30 a.m.
22	4-H Jammie Jamboree Sewing Workshop	9 a.m.–12 p.m.

EXTENSION NEWS

Statewide Extension Awards

Nebraska Extension recently announced their 2024 Extension Award Winners. Several Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County staff were members of teams receiving “Excellence in Extension” awards.

- The **Little Free Pantry** 18-person team, including Extension Educator **Kayla Colgrove**, was recognized for “Collaboration.” They collaborate with youth organizations (including 4-H clubs) to build and maintain Little Free Pantries. Currently, collaborations exist in 22 counties.
- The **Communities For Kids (C4K)** 11-person team, including Extension Educator **Jaci Foged**, was recognized for “Collaboration.” They facilitated discussions and data-driven focus groups in participating communities to provide



(L–R) Kayla Colgrove, Jaci Foged, Emily Gratopp and Zahraa Rida

a comprehensive understanding of local childcare needs. The partnership between Extension and C4K communities led to an increase of 1,934 childcare spots between June of 2021 and June of 2023. Vice president of Early Childhood Programs at Nebraska Children and Families Foundation Marty Beard said, “Nebraska Extension has been integral to our success in improving access to high-quality child care and increasing capacity.”

- The **National Association of County & City Health Officials** 4-person team, including Extension Educator **Emily Gratopp** and Extension Assistant **Zahraa Rida**, was recognized for “Inclusive.” They developed culturally responsive nutrition education materials in partnership with Arabic, Kurdish, Pashto and Dari speaking partners and culture experts. Their project was funded by the National Association of County and City Health Officials.

Outgoing Extension Board Member



(L–R) Bob Huttes and Extension Educator Karen Wobig

The December Lancaster County Extension Board meeting marked the final meeting for outgoing board member Bob Huttes, who served a full two terms (6 years). Lancaster County Extension thanks Bob for his service, advocacy, guidance and leadership.