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By Rita Shelley

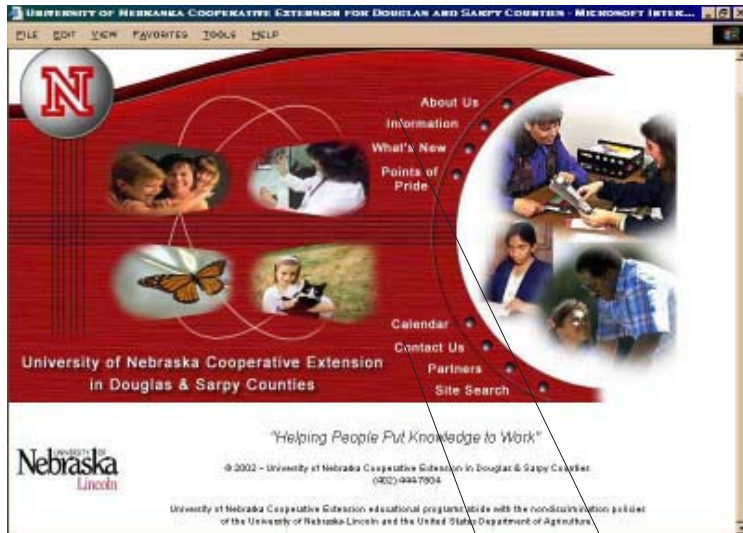
Want to sign your kids up for 4-H? Find out when the Extension Board is meeting this month? Sign up for classes on minimizing your children's exposure to lead poisoning? Safely eradicate silverfish from your basement?

Each month, an average of 1,300 people get their Extension questions answered on the information highway by logging onto the Douglas/Sarpy web site. Now beginning its second year of operation, the site provides connections to the following from its home page: 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture, Bugs

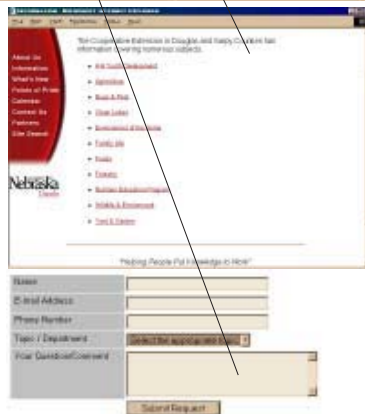
and Pests, Clean Lakes, Environment of the Home, Foods, Forestry, Nutrition Education Program, Wildlife and Environment, and Yard and Garden. You also can view current and recent issues of *The Insider* online.

Each section contains links to relevant forms and information. For instance, the 4-H page includes links to enrollment forms for youth and for leaders. You also can read complete descriptions of 4-H projects online. Besides offering complete information, the website offers the additional advantage of being available outside normal business hours. You also can download enrollment and application forms for a variety of programs, rather than requesting them by phone and waiting for them to be mailed.

If you haven't visited the Douglas/Sarpy web site, we invite you to take a look.



Douglas/Sarpy Extension's web site is a quick and convenient way to get many of your questions answered about Extension programs and resources. The site includes several pages of information that are updated monthly. Clicking the "Information" heading on the home page opens a menu of 11 Extension program areas. You also can reach any member of the staff with any question by using the form that opens when you click "Contact Us" on the site's home page.



Programs Help Parents Protect Children from Lead Poisoning

By Sharon Skipton
Extension Educator

Forty-one people have attended a Living Safely With Lead program to help them learn how to keep their children from getting lead poisoning. And all of them agree that their time was well spent. Participants say they learned a lot and will make changes to protect their children from lead in and around their home.

A Living Safely With Lead: Reducing The Risk® program is offered every month. The two-hour program covers landscaping to cover and stabilize lead-contaminated soil, care and maintenance to reduce lead dust in the home, and nutrition and hygiene to reduce lead absorption. Nearly 100 percent of homes east of 72nd Street in Omaha were constructed before 1978, when lead was banned from paint. Recently, tests conducted in east Omaha revealed higher than allowable levels of lead in soils. These factors contribute to an alarming percentage of children in Omaha testing positive for lead poisoning. The program focus is on managing risk from lead contaminated soil, as well as that from lead paint.

A Living Safely With Lead: Maintenance Of Older Homes® program is offered every other month. The two-hour program covers minimizing lead-based paint hazards during renovation, remodeling, and painting. While lead-based paint in good condition does not present as high a risk as peeling or deteriorating paint, many children are lead poisoned during home renovations that release lead from paint and dust into the air.

The fee for either program is \$20 per household, with vouchers and discount coupons available for qualifying individuals. For information and a current schedule, call the central office.

Choose Crucifers for your Health

By Nancy Urbanek
Extension Associate

With research playing a vital role in the prevention of cancer, scientists are continuing to look more at what we eat to help prevent cancer. Through this research scientists are advocating that some foods may protect against cancer. High on the list are the group of vegetables known as crucifers.

Cruciferous vegetables derive their name from the shape of their flowers, which have four petals in the shape of a cross. Some vegetables that are members of this cabbage family include: bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts,

Gear Up For 2003 Canning

By Cindy Brison
Extension Educator



Now is the time to get ready for this season's canning. There are a few things you could do now to save time this summer when you are up to your ears in produce.

Check all of your empty jars to make sure that they do not have any chips or deep scrapes in them.

Check all rings and throw away the rusty ones.

Have your pressure canner checked at your local extension office.

Weighted gauges cannot be tested, but recommendations can be made on your seals.

Move last year's canned goods to the front to use soon. Research has proven that home canned products should be used within one year of canning.

Make a list of everything you'd like to can this season, and decide if you are growing this produce, or purchasing it.

Life Challenge Event Features New Opportunities

Ribbons, cash prizes, gift certificates and a \$500 UNL College of Human Resources and Family Sciences scholarship are among awards for which participants will compete at the Life Challenge Event June 30-July 1 on UNL's East Campus. Nebraska 4-H and the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences are sponsoring the event.

Life Challenge is a new way to help 4-H members learn about issues related to family and consumer sciences, explore career opportunities, compete with other teens from across the state and make new friends. Activities include:

- Challenges, in which 4-H'ers apply information they have learned in their club activities to hypothetical situations. Challenge teams can have two, three or four members.
- Placing questions, in which participants rank a group of four items, based on how well they meet the criteria of the situation.
- Workshops, on such topics as fashion and design, textiles and entrepreneurship.

Lodging on campus is \$15 per person, per night. Lodging fees are required in advance and are non-refundable. Cost of participating in challenges is \$20 per team per challenge. Placing contests and workshops are offered at no cost. Pre-registration is required for contests, meals and workshops.

Additional information is available at both Douglas/Sarpy extension offices.

kohlrabi, radishes, turnips and many greens such as Chinese cabbage, turnip greens, mustard greens, and more.

These vegetables are low in calories, and high in vitamins A and C, fibers, enzymes, calcium and iron. Additionally, they contain plant compounds called phytochemicals that appear to have cancer-fighting properties.

Results from a study at UCLA Medical Center showed that men and women who consumed 3.7 cups of broccoli a week were 50% less likely to develop colorectal cancer than those who never ate broccoli. So try to eat cruciferous vegetables two to three times a week.

When purchasing cruciferous vegetables keep in mind that one pound of untrimmed greens typically will serve two or three people. Frozen cauliflower, broccoli, collard greens, kale and Brussels sprouts are available year round. Frozen vegetables can save you time because they are ready to go into your recipe.

Storage tips:

- *Greens should be used within a few days of purchase.
- *Wrap collards or kale in a damp towel and place in an open plastic bag in the coldest part of the refrigerator.
- *Store chard, chicory, rabe and mustard greens in a perforated plastic bag.

Cooking tips:

- *If stems are small and tender, simply chop them along with the leaves.
- *If stems are large, remove the outer tough layer, chop finely and cook longer.
- *Steam cook vegetables in your microwave. Rinse with water and place in a covered container. Microwave on full power until tender, about three minutes per cup.

Serving Tips:

- *Add to calzones, pizzas or pasta.
- *Well-cooked kale is excellent in potato dishes.
- *Add chopped greens to soups, stews and chili dishes.
- *Saute cooked crucifers with a small amount of flavored vinegars or a combination of olive oil and garlic.

Spring Break Baking Workshops

Touch of Spring Muffins

Strawberries and rhubarb are a winning combination. That's what makes these spring muffins so wonderful.

Date: Thursday, April 17

Time: 9:30 to 11 a.m.

Beary Cute Cookies

These cheery cookie cubs will delight kids of all ages. Delicious sugar cookies topped with M&M's and milk chocolate kisses.

Date: Monday, April 21

Time: 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Classes meet at the central office and are open to youth ages eight to 18. Pre-registration is required, and enrollment is limited. Cost is \$8 for 4-H members and \$18 for non-members. For further information, or to register, call Amy at 444-7804.

Storing Emergency Drinking Water

by Sharon Skipton
Extension Educator

The suggestion from Homeland Security to store a three-day supply of food and water has resulted in many people taking action. Some people are purchasing commercially bottled drinking water. Others are storing containers of tap water. If you store tap water, it is important to remember the container you put it in may be clean, but will not be sterile. For this reason, you need to add a small amount of disinfectant. Follow the directions below to store drinking water safely.

Store water in food-grade plastic or glass containers with tight-fitting screw-on caps. Good choices include 2-liter soda bottles and other water, juice,

Treating Water at Home for Biological or Chemical Agents

People have been asking about the capabilities of different Point Of Use (POU), or in-home, drinking water treatment systems to remove or reduce biological or chemical agents that could be introduced in an act of terrorism.

The first defense against chemical and bioterrorism is in the hands of the water utility management. Water utilities have a long record of providing a safe drinking water supply. The US Environmental Protection Agency, along with the Centers for Disease Control, state administrators, and the American Water Works Association have worked with water utilities to increase their vigilance of source water investigations, security measures, and analyses to provide even greater protection of our public water supplies.

Many toxic biological organisms, as well as chemical substances, could be of concern. Sabotage and terrorist threats to water have not been encountered. Therefore, manufacturers of POU drinking water treatment systems have not made an effort to incorporate removal of those substances in their product designs or performance standards. In other words, POU drinking water treatment systems have not been specifically designed to remove toxic biological or chemical agents associated with possible terrorism. Further, POU drinking water treatment systems have not been tested for their effectiveness in reducing these chemical or biological sabotage agents.

This does not mean that POU units cannot provide additional protection. In fact, POU units may provide some protection against some agents. For example, POU systems designed to remove large organisms such as protozoan cysts might also remove other large organisms of concern. POU distillation units produce heat, so they might protect against biological organisms that can be inactivated by heat. And POU systems designed to absorb contaminants such as pesticides and radon might also absorb some chemical agents of concern. But, at this time, there has been no research done to evaluate the effectiveness of POU systems to reduce biological or chemical sabotage agents.

Extension Educator Joins Neighborhood Center

Area residents who seek the services of the Neighborhood Center for Greater Omaha (NCGO) now also will find the resources of UNL Cooperative Extension easily accessible there as well.

Located at 115 S. 49th Street in Omaha, the NCGO provides free information and support for neighborhood organizations and volunteers. With the placement of a full-time Douglas/Sarpy extension educator at the center, UNL Cooperative Extension has joined the agencies present at the neighborhood for residents to rely on for expertise.

Mark Simmons will serve as liaison between Extension programs and neighborhood/community organizations. Mark can be reached at 561-7575.

or punch containers. New plastic containers can be purchased at hardware and sporting goods departments, as well as some water vending locations. Wash the containers and lids thoroughly with hot tap water and dish detergent. Rinse thoroughly with hot tap water.

In most cases, your drinking water should be suitable to store for emergency purposes. The water should be potable (bacteria and pathogen free). To treat water for storage, use liquid household chlorine bleach. Do not use bleach with soaps or scents added. Add eight drops of bleach per gallon of water, using a clean, uncontaminated medicine dropper. Stir or shake the water and allow it to stand for 30 minutes. You should be able to smell chlorine after the 30 minute waiting period. If you cannot, add another dose and let the water stand another 15 minutes. Cap containers and label each, describing the contents and preparation date.

Store containers in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Store water in plastic containers away from gasoline, kerosene, pesticides or similar substances because vapors from these products can penetrate plastic. Remember, water weighs over 8 pounds per gallon, so make sure the shelf or storage area is strong enough to support the weight. For best quality, replace stored water every six months.

Water can also be stored in a freezer. If you lose electricity, the frozen water provides the added benefit of keeping foods frozen until power is restored. Leave 2 to 3 inches of air space in the top of containers before freezing to prevent the container from bursting as water expands during freezing. Some thin-walled glass containers may break regardless of the air space provided.



Sign-up for summer embryology is Monday, May 5, at the central office. For a \$15 fee, participants receive a dozen fertilized eggs, an instruction book and the use of an incubator until the eggs hatch. Once the eggs hatch, return the baby chicks to the 4-H office, to be donated to area farms. A \$25 refundable deposit is due at registration. There will be two sessions available. For the first session, pick up your eggs and incubator June 2 and return the chicks on June 27. The second session begins July 14 and ends August 8.



Looking Forward to the 2003 Fair



The Douglas/Sarpy 4-H Council has approved some changes for how 4-H contests and entries will be handled during this year's fair July 30 to August 3. Many of these changes help reduce costs.

Beginning this year, 4-H members from both Douglas and Sarpy counties will enter their exhibits at the Sarpy County Fair in Springfield. The Sarpy fair is the only fair in which 4-H items will be judged. Some static exhibits will be displayed at River City Roundup in Omaha in September.

Also new this year, Douglas/Sarpy 4-H will save printing costs by not printing a fair premium book. The State Fair book provides guidelines for county fair exhibits. 4-H members who want their static items to be considered for State Fair entry should follow the State Fair premium book rules. The book is on the State Fair website, plus a few reference copies will be available at the central and south offices. A 4-H fair supplement

will list dates for contests and guidelines for beginning project entries. Monte Stauffer and John Kilpatrick will have information on animal exhibits, pre-entries and contests.

For static exhibits, 4-H'ers may submit multiple entries in a given category. All entries will be judged, receive comment sheets and be awarded ribbons. But only the highest-scoring entry will qualify for premium money.

The Council also has changed policies for appointment of fair superintendents. Terms for superintendents, assistant superintendents and junior superintendents in a particular area are limited to three years. Anyone who has served in one of these capacities for three years or more has been asked to step down. These volunteers still are welcome to be superintendent, assistant or junior superintendent in a new area.

If you have questions, comments or suggestions about any of these changes, please call Carol McNulty at 444-3338.

4-H Premium Raffle

A fund raising raffle is being organized to raise money to support 4-H premiums at this year's Sarpy County Fair. Tickets are for sale at either Extension office or from many 4-H members and leaders. First prize is half of a cut and wrapped beef. Second and third prizes are front and rear quarters of beef. The raffle drawing will be on August 2 at the fair.

Livestock Spring Fling

4-H members, leaders and parents are encouraged to attend the University of Nebraska's 4-H Livestock Events Spring Fling. The event will be Saturday, May 3 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Animal Sciences Complex in Lincoln. A livestock judging contest beginning at 10 a.m. includes six classes of beef, sheep and swine, and three sets of questions. Recognition is sponsored by the PAK 10 4-H Extension Counties and will be given to the top ten individuals in junior, intermediate and senior divisions.

A quality assurance program in the afternoon is designed for all ages of youth. Small groups will participate in hands-on activities about animal handling and carcass quality. The QA testing will include an opportunity to complete practice tests on the Internet. Tests will be available for intermediate and senior levels. Youth may retake the tests if necessary. Successful completion of these tests satisfies the requirements for quality assurance training for intermediate-age youth until they turn age 15. For senior-age youth, the tests satisfy quality assurance requirements until their 4-H careers are complete.

Livestock Judging and Evaluation Camp

The Third Annual UNL Livestock Judging and Evaluation Camp will be June 11-13, at the Animal Science complex in Lincoln. This year's camp will have both novice and experienced divisions.

The novice division will be geared to students aged 12 to 14 who have limited experience with judging or simply wish to get started. Novice activities will focus on judging basics and what to look for when evaluating animals, learning the animal parts and some basic terminology, and the essential components of taking notes/giving oral reasons.

The experienced judge (or those who have participated in the past) will receive a more intense workout to hone their evaluation/judging skills and presentation of oral reasons. They also will participate in competitions to test visual recall, understanding of basic terminology and animal parts, and to make and defend sound judging decisions. As in the past, we will continue to videotape the reasons sessions and provide one-on-one assistance with each individual.

Cost is \$150 per camper, which includes meals, lodging from Wednesday afternoon through Friday morning, and camp materials.

Registration deadline is May 1, but attendance is limited to the first 60 paid registrants. For additional information, contact Monte Stauffer at 444-4092, or Bryan Reiling at the UNL Department of Animal Sciences, 402-472-8960.

Clover Kids Livestock Clinic

A clinic for Clover Kids, ages five to eight, to learn about caring for sheep and calves is scheduled for May 30 at Cooper Farm in Omaha. The clinic will be held during the evening and the kids are welcome to bring their animals. Watch for additional details in the May *Insider* and on the Extension web site.

Spring Break Sewing Class

By Carol Fritz
4-H Assistant

Boys and girls interested in getting a head start on projects for the fair should join us on Thursday, April 17 to make a drawstring "everything" bag. The class will meet at the central office from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. When completed, this project may be entered by 4-H'ers at this summer's Sarpy County Fair.

This is a beginning sewing class open to anyone eight years of age and older. The class will teach how to make a casing, use a zigzag stitch and continuous sewing or pivoting at corners. Materials needed for the class include: 1 yard of medium weight 100 percent cotton fabric, matching thread and 1 1/2 yards of 3/8-inch cotton cording. Students also should bring a basic sewing kit. Class size is limited.

Call 444-7891 to register. A few sewing machines are available for a rental fee of \$5. Cost for the class is \$15 for 4-H members, \$30 for non-members.

Film for Fair Photos

Douglas/Sarpy 4-H is in need of color print film to be used to take pictures of 4-H show winners and other activities during the Sarpy County Fair. Your donation of 400-speed, 35 mm, 36 exposure rolls of film can be dropped off at either office at your convenience.

Planting Trees: The Right Thing to Do

By Dave Mooter
Community Forester

Each year thousands of trees are planted in Nebraska. After all, Nebraska is the “Home of Arbor Day” and Nebraskans have a rich tradition to uphold so give some thought to planting trees on your property. This year Arbor Day will be celebrated on April 25, the last Friday in April.

Planting trees is good but it is important that you plant them properly. Today, one of the biggest reasons for planting failure is planting trees too deep. Tree roots need air as much as they need water so be certain that you know where the tree’s root collar is before you plant. Take time to review the following tree planting tips and your Arbor Day tree planting will have a greater chance for success:

1. The planting hole should be significantly wider than the root system or root ball and not any deeper than the former depth of the root system - perhaps even slightly shallower. Locate the root collar area. This will be where the final grade should be.

Lift and hold plants only by the container or burlap ball, not by the trunk.

2. Ball and Burlap plants should be placed in the planting hole prior to removal of any burlap or wire basket so as to prevent any possible break up of the root ball. After placing the plant in the hole, cut away or peel back the wrapping material (burlap and wire baskets), to the bottom of the planting hole or as deep as possible. Be careful not to damage any roots if the soil ball is loose. Be sure to cut and remove all twine, wire or similar material that may be wrapped around the base of the trunk. This is also a good time to remove any labels, wire, tags or wrapping material from the trunk and branches.

For container-grown plants, the pot should be removed before placing the plant into the hole. If the plant was pot bound with heavy masses of circling roots, cut through them in a few places and straighten them out as much as possible.

Once the plant is in place, use the soil removed from the hole as the backfill around the plant’s roots. Backfill in several layers, watering occasionally

to remove air pockets. Be careful not to tamp the soil, since that can lead to excessive soil compaction and possible root damage.

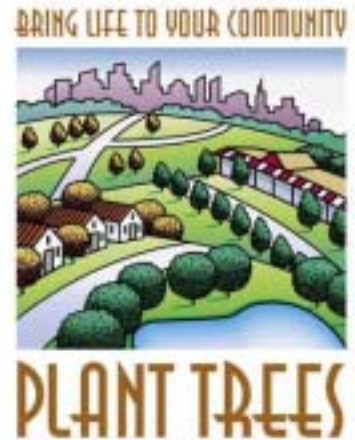
3. Do not incorporate organic matter, sand or other material into the backfill because differences in soil-pore sizes will be created and restrict water movement and root growth between the root ball, planting hole and surrounding soil.

4. Mulching is the most important post-planting practice that can be done to improve the health and vitality of landscape plants. Mulching conserves moisture, reduces weed competition, insulates roots from heat and cold extremes, helps prevent mower and trimmer damage, and aids in long-term development of good soil structure. Wood chips and other organic materials such as pine needles, bark, corn cobs and leaf matter are by far the best mulches.

5. Ideally, mulch should be applied in a 3-4 inch deep layer around the plant’s root zone (five to six feet diameter for trees) and kept back a few inches from the trunk.

6. Generally it is not necessary to stake or guy trees. Wrapping should be avoided.

Learn more about the history of Arbor Day by visiting the National Arbor Day Foundation’s web site at <http://www.arborday.org/>.



Try Using Black Plastic for Weed Control Around Vegetables

By John Fech
Extension Educator

Many gardeners find weed control the bane of their gardening existence. In the search for inexpensive, effective weed control measures, consider black plastic mulch. Plastic mulch has gained a bad reputation over the last decade, primarily because it was used indiscriminately in the past for shrub beds. Many of the installations declined because the plastic deprived the root zone of oxygen and water, which is crucial to plant survival.

Yet, for vegetable and small fruit gardening, it may be a good option. Black plastic mulch stops weed growth by cutting off the light, and eliminates problems with both annual and perennial weeds. Plastic mulch also helps warm the soil in early spring and so helps plants and seeds get off to a quicker start.

Using plastic mulch around tomato plants keeps fruits off the ground so they stay cleaner and have fewer problems with ground rot. Other frequently mulched crops include eggplant, peppers, strawberries, melons, squash, pumpkins and cucumbers. Transplants and seeds are planted through holes made in the plastic. It usually is not used around cool-season crops such as broccoli, cabbage and peas because these crops prefer cool soils.

Using black plastic for weed control eliminates the need for repeated cultivation and so reduces the chances of soil compaction. It saves time and labor in the garden and reduces the chance of injury to plant roots, stems and fruits during cultivation. The few weeds that manage to come up in rows or around transplants or hill crops can easily be hand pulled and tossed on the plastic to wither in the summer heat.

Black plastic is a handy tool if you’re converting lawn to garden. Simply spread it over the area to be cleared and let the heat that builds up under it kill off the grass. Because plastic is lightweight, it needs to be secured somehow so it doesn’t blow and flap and damage crop plants. One way to anchor plastic is to use a hoe to dig a trench in which to bury three to four inches on each side of the plastic sheet. Plastic gallon milk jugs filled with water, old tires and other found objects can be used for weight on the plastic.

Agriculture and Construction Career Fair

Junior high and high school students and parents are invited to attend a career fair at Northwest High School in Omaha on April 24. This will be an opportunity to learn about the many career opportunities available in agriculture and in construction. Agriculture careers featured at the fair will include food production and processing and horticulture. Young people also can explore career opportunities in several construction trades. Door prizes and refreshments will be available. For additional information, contact Monte Stauffer at 444-4092.

Delegates Sought for Ag Institute

Applications to attend the Nebraska Agricultural Youth Council Institute July 13-17 are due April 15. The institute is sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture

Theme of the event, open to high school juniors and seniors, is “Blazing Our Brand on the Future of Agriculture.” Selection of delegates is based on leadership skills, interest and involvement in agriculture. To obtain an application, call Carol McNulty at the central office.

Calendar

April

2	10,000 Steps	6:30 to 8:30 p.m.	Central Office
7	Extension Board Mtg.	6 p.m.	South Office
7 - 8	ServSafe	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Central Office
12	4-H District Speech Contest		UNL East Campus Lincoln
14	4-H Council	7 p.m.	Central Office
15	Ag Youth Institute Delegate Application Deadline		
17	Baking Class	9:30 to 11 a.m.	Central Office
	Sewing Class	9:30 to 11 a.m.	Central Office
21	Baking Class	2 to 2:30 p.m.	Central Office
24	Commercial Pesticide Training and Testing	9 a.m. to 4 p.m.	Central Office
	Ag and Construction Career Fair		Northwest H.S. Omaha
25	Arbor Day		
28	4-H Superintendents' Meeting	6 p.m.	Central Office

May

3	Spring Fling Livestock Event		Animal Science Bldg., UNL
4	4-H Camp Open House		
5	Extension Board Mtg.	6 p.m.	Central Office
6-7	WaterWorks		AkSarBen Acquarium
10	Eastern Nebraska 4-H Horse Clinic		Saunders Co. Fairgrounds Wahoa
15	4-H Horse Enrollment Deadline		
26	Holiday		
30	Clover Kids Livestock Clinic		Cooper Farms Omaha

Nebraska 4-H Camp Open House

Tours of the Eastern Nebraska 4-H Center, 21520 W. Highway 31, and a special presentation by the Nebraska Raptor Recovery Center are on the agenda for Sunday, May 4, from 1 to 4 p.m. Come see the camp facility and learn about the activities that will be part of this summer's 4-H Camp experiences.

Camp dates and applications are available on the Nebraska 4-H web site, 4h.unl.edu, or from either extension office.

We Appreciate Your Patience....

The 4-H staff has changed this year. As many of you know, due to the budget and uncertainty of extension's continuing presence, the 4-H full-time staff now includes Marci Carroll, John Kilpatrick and Carol McNulty. Amy Turner and Carol Fritz work part time. Monte Stauffer is full-time, but also coordinating agriculture programs.

The entire extension staff has volunteered to help 4-H when needed and we really appreciate that. The 4-H staff has made commitments to several schools for 4-H days at the schools. We will try to have someone in the offices whenever possible. There will be days when neither office will have 4-H staff as we will all be out at schools. To help us get through these situations as smoothly as possible, please call before you stop at either office and leave us messages - we will return your call as soon as we can. We appreciate your patience and thank you for all your help.

If we're not here when you call, it's because we're out working with the kids, and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.



4-H staff members Carol McNulty, left, and John Kilpatrick brought 4-H to kindergartners at Field Club Elementary in Omaha in March. Their presentations tied in with OPS science curriculum for early grades, and included presentations on insects and basic science concepts.

Learn About Educational Needs of Pre-Schoolers

By Mary Nelson

Extension Educator

This is a series of sessions geared to the needs of childcare providers and parents of young children. The April session, "What Children Really Need to Start School," will be offered on Wednesday, April 23, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the south office. The program will be repeated on Thursday, April 24, from 6:15 to 8:15 p.m., at the central office.

Topics include:

- What children really need (and don't need) before starting school;
- Simple things you can do to prepare children for school;
- How to help parents understand what children need; and
- How to start infants and toddlers on the right path.

The first 75 minutes will be a satellite transmission from Pennsylvania State University. Mary Nelson, an extension educator trained in child development, will present the remainder of each program.

At the end of each session, participants receive a certificate verifying attendance and the issuance of two hours of continuing education credit.

Registration is \$10.

Address and Feedback Form

To update your address or to submit comments and story ideas, fill out this form and return it to the central office. You can also use this form to let us know if you'd like to receive the newsletter electronically instead of by mail.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Comments: _____

Story Ideas: _____



Photo courtesy of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Avoiding erosions situations such as this is the purpose of federal regulations governing soil run-off during construction projects and after they are completed.

Storm Water Regulations Protect Lakes and Streams

By Steve Tonn
Extension Educator

New federal regulations for controlling storm water runoff from smaller construction sites and smaller municipal storm sewer systems took effect in March. The new regulations are a part of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System created under the Clean Water Act. As a part of the permit, small construction sites and small municipal storm sewer systems will be required to have a storm water management plan. The intent of the plan is to provide policies and programs that will protect Omaha metro streams and lakes from pollutants discharged to the storm drain system.

Representatives of the local construction industry recently had an opportunity to become familiar with the impact of new regulations at a half-day seminar hosted by Douglas/Sarpy Extension. Those attending included developers and landowners, engineers and architects, grading contractors, and residential and commercial builders. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha Public Works Department, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership presented information. In addition to these agencies, the Omaha Metro Builders Association and the Nebraska State Home Builders Association also sponsored the seminar.

The City of Omaha is already required to have a Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality permit. Under the new regulations, the urbanized areas of Douglas and Sarpy Counties in the Omaha Metro Area, including the communities of Bellevue, Boys Town, Elkhorn, LaVista, Papillion, and Ralston will be required to have a permit.

The cities of Omaha, Bellevue, Bennington, Boys Town, Elkhorn, Gretna, LaVista, Papillion, and Ralston; the counties of Douglas and Sarpy; and the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District have formed a partnership to address issues related to surface water quality and storm water quantity in the Papillion Creek Watershed which covers the Omaha metro area. The Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership is working to establish goals and standards common to the region for development through 2040. The Partnership will focus on completing the storm water permit applications for the participating entities, and will work on the planning elements of a comprehensive Papillion Creek Watershed Management Plan.

Laws Protect Native Species

by Dennis Ferraro
Extension Educator

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission recently banned commercial exploitation of our state's amphibians and reptiles. In the past Nebraska has been a haven for pet trade collectors from all over the country. Thousands of Milk snakes, lizards and Box turtles were being commercially exploited and sold. Our native animals were being depleted to a point where many populations could not rebound.

Amphibians and reptiles are one of our states' most misunderstood natural resources. These animals transmit no germs or viruses to humans or livestock yet are responsible for the control of hundreds of thousands of rodents and insect pests. The amphibians and reptiles of the state are extremely important to the ecological balance of our environment.

New regulations allow teachers, hobbyists and youth to possess and keep a defined number of the common species within the state. There also are exceptions for commercial dealers of salamanders and common frogs. Another portion of the new regulation prohibits anyone from moving any amphibian or reptile in the wild more than 100 yards. This is important because most amphibians and reptiles do not survive being moved out of their original habitats.

A copy of the new regulations has been posted on the Douglas/Sarpy Extension web site.

Chess Tournament

The Lancaster county 4-H Checkmates clubs is hosting a statewide chess tournament on Saturday, May 3, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call 402-441-7180, or check the website <http://lancaster.unl.edu/4h/club>.

Pesticide Collection Day a Success

Nearly seven tons of hazardous products were collected recently at the central extension office from 250 area homeowners, businesses, governmental agencies and farmers. Materials collected included more than 10,000 pounds of pesticides that were out-dated, damaged, unwanted or banned by the EPA. Besides DDT and chlordane, banned products that were collected included cyanide gas and 1080, which in the past were used for killing coyotes and prairie dogs.

Products collected have been hauled to a licensed incineration facility for disposal. This economic impact is in addition to the environmental impact achieved by properly disposing of products that present a threat to ground and surface water quality, and the health impact achieved by eliminated the risk of exposure by humans, pets and farm animals.

The University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture coordinated the collection program statewide. A grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, with additional funds from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, funded the program.



The Douglas/Sarpy central extension office served as a collection site for safe, free disposal of pesticides and herbicides in March.

How to Reach Douglas and Sarpy Extension

Phone Numbers: 444-7994, Horticulture Teletips
444-7804, Central and South Offices

Office Hours: Central: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
South: 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m., closed noon to 1 p.m.

Website: <http://douglas-sarpy.unl.edu>



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