

practical principles they can apply

Choquette learned to extend his grazing season with triticale and turnips, and to easily move his cattle every three days. He learned in-pasture weaning is better for both cows and calves because they still see each other and are happier. He learned cattle feel safer and more content in a confined area.

“Wild cows no longer exist,” said Choquette. “Your herd becomes your friend.”

Extension’s grazing education goes beyond beef cow-calf operations to dairy cows, finishing cattle, sheep, goats and buffalo. Last year, about 250 people attended grazing workshops. Over the last six years, another 250 participated in overnight grazing retreats. Scriven and Gompert estimate about 80 percent of retreat participants made changes.

Bruce Anderson, NU forage specialist and grazing management team member, said a 1996 team survey of program participants and nonparticipants showed twice the change in grazing practices among participants that saved \$3 million annually in feed and grazing costs.

“Many participants repeat or attend many different kinds of these programs,” Anderson said, noting multiple contacts often are important as people consider making changes.

Gompert said participants have positive attitudes, personal goals, concern for quality of life and the environment, and a desire to be profitable.

Often, he said, they just need a little nudge that says it’s OK for them to do things differently than most other people.

They need to see it’s legitimate to “do this strange thing, because even if it makes money, we’ve got to be accepted by our peers,” Gompert said.

Scriven can be contacted at (308) 236-1235, Gompert at (402) 288-4224, Anderson at (402) 472-6237.



Cindy and Kelly Bruns, Bloomfield, stand in their New Zealand-style milking parlor with Terry Gompert (right), NU Cooperative Extension educator in Knox County. The dairy is seasonal, with cows bred and managed to be milked until it gets too cold.

Producers find alternatives helpful in expanding dairy herd

When Kelly and Cindy Bruns of Bloomfield wanted to expand their Jersey dairy herd, they didn’t relish a \$1,200 per cow investment in a bigger conventional milking barn and machinery.

Working with Terry Gompert, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator in Knox County, the Bruns found an alternative – a cow-friendly, low-cost New Zealand-style milking parlor and specialized grazing management.

They built their new milking parlor in the middle of their 160-acre pasture. Cows walk a maximum one-fourth mile to be milked. The barn’s simple style moves cows through quickly because there are no steps and 10 cows can be milked at one time.

In their conventional barn, milking 70 cows took the Bruns 2.5 hours. They’ve milked their 87 first-calf heifers in the new milking parlor in a record 50 minutes.

“We knew it would work,” Kelly Bruns said.

The new dairy is seasonal; cows are bred and managed to be milked until it gets too cold, from about April until November. Kelly Bruns said they hope to sell their milk as organic, once they find a market.

Gompert and other extension personnel explore ways managed grazing can work with various livestock and situations. There are opportunities for people to succeed without spending much money, Gompert said, if they explore new ways to do things, take control of their lives and take greater advantage of what’s available to them.

Besides finding their lower-cost, cow-friendly functional dairy parlor alternative to a more expensive conventional milking barn, the Bruns said their planning, work and management have helped them realize another goal: Cindy has quit her town job to stay home with their children and help with the dairy.

KON CLEVELAND

ServSafe workshop offers food service managers facts on preventing food-borne illness

With nearly half of all meals in the United States eaten away from home, it's important food-service handlers know the facts about preventing food-borne illness, said Julie Albrecht, University of Nebraska food safety specialist.

Food-borne illness effects can range from "mild stomach discomfort or what people may term the flu all the way to death," Albrecht said, so prevention is vital.

ServSafe provides prevention facts.

NU Cooperative Extension cooperates with the Nebraska Restaurant Association to teach ServSafe, the industry standard in food safety training. It's an inexpensive, 16-hour safe food handling workshop for restaurants, schools, hospitals, institutions and catering services, Albrecht said.

"All establishments are selling safe food," Albrecht said, "otherwise they wouldn't be in business. The course provides managers with more information to understand why the food regulations are what they are. They go back with a greater understanding of what they're required to do."

Beginning in 1994, Albrecht taught teams of 24 extension educators with food safety/pest management expertise to train restaurant managers. She said an estimated 6,000 managers have taken ServSafe training since it began in Nebraska, adding each takes the information back to an average of 15 other employees.

ServSafe emphasizes proper cooking temperatures, cooling techniques and effective hand washing – three major causes of food-borne illness – as well as current sanitation procedures, proper thawing and more.

Steve Boyer, a certified ServSafe trainer, is vice president of human resources for Wild West Inc., which does business as Whiskey Creek Steakhouses. Boyer took ServSafe training from Cooperative Extension in Hall County in late 1999.

"We can't say enough about the program," Boyer said, adding it has all the

pertinent information to help restaurants operate safely. The training "opened the eyes of a lot of our managers."

For example, the restaurant logs food temperatures every two hours to ensure food safety, and stresses ways to avoid cross-contamination, especially for line cooks wearing gloves, Boyer said. He added he believes food safety training is so important it should be mandatory.

Carol Schwarz, NU extension educator in Buffalo County and a ServSafe instructor, said ServSafe helps managers focus on illness-causing bacteria and how they are transmitted.

Proper time and temperature required for safe food heating and cooling are easy to regulate if people understand why they're necessary, Schwarz said, adding, "we can't control some things, but these

we can control."

To help people better understand food temperature management, Schwarz chills a large kettle of thickened water, similar in consistency to cream-based soup, in different ways. She said workshop participants are surprised at how long it takes the "soup" to chill, even using walk-in coolers.

Although it seems some managers initially would rather not take the time to attend ServSafe, "by the time we're done, they'll say 'we're glad we came,'" Schwarz said.

Albrecht can be contacted at (402)472-8884, Schwarz at (308)236-1235.



NU Cooperative Extension Food Safety Specialist Julie Albrecht demonstrates proper heating and cooling temperatures using thickened water. This technique is used in ServSafe, the industry standard in food safety training for restaurant managers.



Brett Hampton

Two ServSafe spinoffs provide additional training

Two ServSafe spinoff programs are coordinated by University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension staff.

PrepSafe trains preparation cooks, head cooks and short-order cooks. WaitSafe trains host staff, wait staff and bussing staff.

In fall 2000 Nancy Urbanec, extension assistant in Douglas/Sarpy counties, taught the two courses to more than 100 people representing full-service steakhouses to take-out pizza parlors. Hygiene and sanitation are emphasized, she said.

"There's a difference between sanitation and just cleaning something," Urbanec said. Cleaning removes visible soil; sanitation reduces microorganisms to a safe level. Restaurants always have some microorganisms, as homes do, Urbanec explained, because unlike medical settings, they can't be sterile.

Urbanec teaches a number of sanitary tips. One example: Avoid picking glasses up by the rim, so germs don't pass from staff to customers that way, or from customers to staff.

Because of its health codes, the city of Lincoln, mandated through the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, is the only city to require ServSafe, PrepSafe and WaitSafe training, Urbanec said, but all three workshops are strongly encouraged throughout Nebraska as helpful insurance in avoiding problems.

"You pay for insurance because you hope you'll never need it," Urbanec said. "If you do have an outbreak but in good faith have been training employees ... you're less likely to have as many problems."

Urbanec can be contacted at (402)444-7804.

Now – "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?"

Little things count, too.

Ask family members who have divided up family mementos – Mom's glass salad bowl, Uncle Henry's watermelon hoe, Aunt Dot's favorite scarf pin.

Some attorneys say dividing non-titled property creates more emotion and conflict than dividing financial assets, said Cheryl Tickner, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educator in Howard County. Tickner is a coordinator for "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?," a workshop that helps people plan their intergenerational transfer of personal property.

"It's the small mementos that are sometimes overlooked which can cause the most conflict ... those are the ones with a lot of memories attached," Tickner said.

During the workshop the coordinator and participants discuss perceptions about what's fair, and options to help reduce misunderstandings and strengthen relationships.

How things are divided is just as important as who gets what, and may affect



Kayla Hinrichs

Cheryl Tickner, NU Cooperative Extension educator in Howard County, uses her grandmother's sewing basket as an example of non-titled property with personal meaning during workshops.

family relationships for years to come, Tickner said. For example, an in-law may provide more care to an elderly relative than a son or daughter, yet may be excluded when it's time to distribute the relative's belongings.

In 2000 Tickner led six workshops, attended by more than 60 people. Workshop size is kept small to allow people time to talk and ask questions. More workshops are scheduled in 2001.

Tickner can be contacted at (308)754-5422.

Students put Germbusters lessons to work in life

Fifth- and sixth-grade students at one Lincoln County school translated lessons learned in Germbusters, a University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H School Enrichment program on hand-washing, into a practical lunchroom suggestion.

They saw lunchroom forks being stored tine ends up and realized the forks were a target for germs on any unclean hands that might touch them.

Today those forks are stored tine ends down, said Cathy Weaver, extension assistant in Lincoln County and Germbusters program coordinator.

Weaver has children pass paper containing powder that glows under blacklight to illustrate the number one way to avoid communicable illnesses is to have clean, germ-free hands. Children see how easily the powder gets on their hands and realize how easily germs spread. Then through an activity using a fluorescent orange lotion, the students are shown how

difficult germs can be to wash off, Weaver said.

Proper hand washing requires soap, warm running water and rubbing hands vigorously for 25 seconds – long enough to say the ABCs. The combination of friction and heat helps break down the dirt and oils that contain germs, Weaver said. She teaches children to be especially conscious of commonly missed areas – backs of hands, wrists, under nails and rings. She also teaches them how to dry their hands with a paper towel and shut the water faucet off with the paper towel.

Weaver teaches Germbusters to more than 2,000 Lincoln County elementary school children annually. She said the proper hand washing lesson was so well taken that one school added warm water to restroom sinks after Germbusters education.

Weaver can be contacted at (308)532-2683.

Program provides beginning farmers and ranchers with information to help make decisions

Beginning farmers and ranchers today face major expense obstacles unless they have a farming/ranching relative working with them, or other financial backing. Sometimes, if financing is available, they may not know how or where to find it.

That creates a dilemma, because as Nebraska producers are getting older and planning to retire, few younger producers can afford to take their places.

Dave Goeller, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension's Beginning Farmer Program coordinator, helps.

Goeller provides potential producers with cash flow and financing information. Figuring through projected expenses and receipts "puts the pencil in their hand" to help people decide if farming or ranching is right for them, Goeller said.

Jim Weber, 30, Burwell, always wanted to farm or ranch for himself. Until last year, he worked for someone else. Then came the opportunity to rent his own ground and buy 120 beef cows.

With Goeller's assistance, Weber completed paperwork to obtain financing from the federal Farm Service Agency and began realizing his dream.

"He knew how they wanted things," Weber said. "Without talking to Dave and

discussing some of the options available, it wouldn't have been as easy.

"I think it's a good program and really there's no other way for a young guy to get started on his own," Weber said, adding he has since recommended extension's Beginning Farmer Program to others.

Not everyone he works with ends up on the farm or ranch, Goeller said, adding it's better people explore realities before investments are made.

"I'm helping them see the reality," Goeller said. "Sometimes they don't like the answer, but they're their answers, their numbers."

Goeller also works with producers carrying financial burdens and retiring producers doing pre-estate planning. In his first year he worked with about 200 families, nearly half of whom were trying to get started.

As of 1997, Nebraska had about 5,500 producers under age 35 and nearly 12,400 over age 65, Goeller said.

Goeller can be contacted at (402)472-0661.



Dave Goeller, NU Cooperative Extension's Beginning Farmer Program coordinator, provides financing information and helps potential producers project cash flow before investing in the high costs of agricultural production. He also works with producers planning retirement and those carrying financial burdens.



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