

## Views from VanDeWalle

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### What is Extension?

Often times when I tell people I work at the “Extension Office” they have no idea what it is we do. It is so hard to describe without giving a plethora of information. One of our signature programs people often most often associate with is the 4-H program. While this is a large and very successful component of Extension, it is only one of many programs.

Everyday, whether you know it or not, you have most likely been indirectly impacted by Extension programming. Extension essentially takes science and research-based information from the University Of Nebraska - Lincoln and delivers it into the hands of the public. We make UNL easily accessible to the public. For example, we provide services and resources to the agricultural community, but also sectors as diverse as nutrition, health care and technology. From border to border, Nebraska Extension is making an incredible impact on the success of our state - its youth, its families, its farms & ranches, its communities, its economy.

For example, as a result of our Learning Child Extension staff, approximately 24,000 children in Nebraska benefit from early childhood professionals and parents who have the essential skills and knowledge to support the healthy growth and development in the children in their care. Take the crops area: last year, Extension presented workshops in 94 locations to over 4,000 participants from 93 Nebraska counties, 9 U.S. states and 4 foreign countries. Our community vitality programming has engaged over 10,000 Nebraskans in Broadband planning and engaged over 2,500 people through the Entrepreneurial Community Activation Process which resulted in community-wide visions, a new economic development corporation being started, community web portal and a young professional network.

Nebraska Extension continues to evolve and is one of the leading Extension programs in the world. In doing so, Extension Educators are more focused in their area of expertise and able to provide clients with robust information. For example, Extension staff covers a specific region to ensure clients are being served well. Each county has access to a professional in the areas of:

- Community environment (horticulture)
- Food, Nutrition & Health
- Crops & Water
- The Learning Child
- Community Vitality
- Beef & Livestock Systems
- 4-H Youth Development

This has been a very brief overview of Extension and next week we’ll discuss how this impacts our multi-disciplinary programming and Fillmore County.

**Ag Safety Day Reminder:** Current 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to attend Progressive Agriculture Safety Day on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at the Fillmore County Fairgrounds. Registration and consent form is REQUIRED by all youth who participate. This can be found at [fillmore.unl.edu](http://fillmore.unl.edu). Registration is only \$5 per child that includes a t-shirt, lunch, snack and goodie bag. For more info or to register, call