Meeting the Challenge
A dramatic shift in attitude towards pesticide use on row crops in recent years is cause for environmental, human health and economic concern. Currently, the perceived importance of integrated pest management (IPM) principles is declining, making efforts to educate both the current and next generation of farmers and agronomists increasingly important. The goal of these programming initiatives is to increase the foundation of IPM knowledge among future soybean and corn farmers and agronomists.

Extension’s Impact

“It (Excellence in Ag Sciences Day) has definitely had a positive impact on me and my students as it allows me to do a better job of teaching. It has also provided great hands-on experience for the students.”
- Excellence in Ag Sciences Program Participant

- The 8th Excellence in Ag Sciences Days was held with 68 ag teachers participating. A follow-up evaluation (n=62) was conducted which showed 97% of participants expect to use the UNL Irrigation Home Study Course for their own professional development needs or with students. Eighty-six percent of participants plan to utilize UNL Extension faculty (& materials) in their water-related curriculum as a result of the conference.
- Six teams from across Nebraska competed in the first annual Youth Crop Scouting Competition. Youth reported the following: “I learned how to ID diseases”, “I learned how to care for the soil” and (I enjoyed) “learning how to do useful things in crop scouting that will benefit my future.” All youth surveyed (n=15) increased their knowledge of crop scouting procedures and how to determine if practices implemented in the field are profitable.

Public Value
- Youth who learn agronomic principles will become well informed and aware of agricultural production and careers.
- Youth who learn integrated pest management strategies will be knowledgeable producers and homeowners using environmentally and sustainable production practices.
CROP & PLANT SCIENCE YOUTH EDUCATION STATEWIDE IMPACT REPORT (CONTINUED)

Extension’s Impact

- Fourteen teams signed up for the 3rd Annual Nebraska Innovative Youth Corn Challenge, representing nine counties.

- The 2014 Nebraska Extension Special Garden Project distributed educational materials and 1,625 packets of Love-Lies-Bleeding Amaranth seeds to youth in 69 counties across Nebraska. Youth learned important skills and practices of flower gardening including weed identification, irrigation frequency, and insect control measures. Evaluations (n=78) reported
  - 78% learned new information about gardening
  - 67% grew these plants for the first time
  - 28% took a 4-H gardening project for the first time

- Other crop science focused workshops and programs reached over 200 youth with evaluation results (n=160) showing
  - 92% agree it is important to take care of the environment
  - 85% agree agriculture is Nebraska largest industry
  - 81% agree Nebraska agriculture helps feed people all over the world.
  - 65% agree agriculture is important to everyone

- Youth also shared one thing they would be do to support agriculture in the future.
  - 35% want to teach family and friends about agriculture
  - 27% want to learn more about agriculture
  - 27% want to grow a garden with their family

- Nebraska 4-H Horticulture Team placed 2nd nationally.

“I also learned that many of the things we call flowers my dad (rancher) calls weeds. I learned through conversations that we have introduced some plants to this area as decorative plants that now have become weeds that are hard to control.”

- Special Garden Program Participant

Public Value

- Youth who improve their understanding of plant science will become more informed home and acreage owners and aware of a wide range of horticultural related careers.

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