In 2014, approximately 38,000 youth and 15,000 adults were reached for a total of 53,000 Nebraskans. Spire-related Extension publications have been downloaded over 48,000 times and newsletter listserv subscribers total almost 9,000. Since 2010, food.unl.edu had over 5.2 million pageviews and 2.6 million users. Potential savings for rural Nebraskans totals nearly $6.8 million on prescription costs because of Medicare education and enrollment assistance since 2005. In its 14 year history, calculated savings in medical costs for Control Diabetes for Life participants equates to $6.3 million. Creating healthier eating patterns, increasing physical activity levels, improving health management practices, and reducing foodborne illness are top priorities to reach the goal of improving health and reducing social and economic costs for Nebraskans.

Responsive: Approximately 50 spire members are located statewide providing food, nutrition, and health programming to an array of audiences through a variety of teaching methods. The Spire provides resources for use in daily life and in environmental, economic, health and community crises and emergencies.

Innovative: Program participants are impacted through one-on-one education, group settings, health fairs, on-line and distance programs, social media such as Pinterest, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, newsletters, blogs, webpage development, mobile applications, and media. USDA/NIFA/AFRI grants with multi-state partners are focused on childhood obesity, food safety, and food security.

Trusted: Spire members provide timely, relevant, and research-based information to media outlets, peer-reviewed publications and presentations, and have won individual and team awards at state, regional and national levels. Collaborators include multi-state groups, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), county and district health departments, USDA, Nebraska Department of Education, Community Action Partnerships, Action for Healthy Kids, Restaurant Associations, hospitals, and senior programs.
Food Smart Families – Helping Youth Make Healthier Choices

More than 1,000 hours were devoted to teaching healthy living programs to over 14,000 youth across Nebraska. A grant-funded initiative, the 4-H Food Smart Families program, reached 2,945 youth. As part of this undertaking, 14 youth ambassadors were trained to assist with presentations. Sessions were conducted at 11 sites across the state. Because of program participation youth agreed to strongly agreed that they:

- Learned what foods they should eat everyday (96%)
- Learned how to make healthy food choices (94%)
- Thought their family has prepared healthier meals (90%)
- Learned cooking skills (86%)
- Learned skills for buying food on a budget (80%)

Discovery Neighborhood: Youth Food Safety Education Program

A six lesson food safety curriculum was developed for K-5th graders using conversation map™ methodology and experiential learning activities. Each lesson focuses on one FightBac™ food safety concept with age-appropriate activities. Cartoon characters help youth learn curriculum concepts and each lesson has an optional food activity that reinforces main concepts. A family newsletter is also distributed for youth to share at home. The curriculum was piloted in afterschool settings in three different communities. Participants in the pilot showed an increase in knowledge for: handwashing (17%), cleaning and positive identification of items that contaminate surfaces (12%), separating (10%), and cooking (30%). The curriculum can be used in afterschool or in-school settings and is now available throughout Nebraska and for purchase nationally at: http://go.unl.edu/7gii.

Worksite Wellness: Adults Achieving Healthier Outcomes

Working in partnership with Nebraska DHHS and WorkWell, Nebraska Extension designed and delivered a seven-week series of ‘food and fitness’ webinars intended to meet workplace wellness requirements and be offered at a low individual fee. Offered twice during the year (spring and fall), a total of 172 employees from 40 companies/organizations enrolled. The format allowed Extension educators to collaborate on programming and insured consistent message delivery. Webinars could be viewed live or recorded, which provided flexibility in viewing and increased participation. Post-pre program survey results (45% return rate) included:

- About 82% of survey respondents viewed all webinars.
- Overall improvements were noted in healthier eating habits (73%), increased physical activity levels (51%), and weight loss (14%).
- Approximately 90% agreed to strongly agreed that information was useful, up-to-date, and they learned something worthwhile.

- FNH Spire web page: http://www.extension.unl.edu/progfocus/actionteam-food-nutrition-and-health
- Food Safety Resources: Microwave It Z-mag at http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/7aedd26c#/7aedd26c/1 and Safe Food Leftovers App at http://www.4daythrowaway.org/
- Control Diabetes for Life Program: http://food.unl.edu/fnh/controldiabetesforlife
- 2014 Action Team Leaders: Lisa Franzen-Castle (lfranzen2@unl.edu), Donnia Behrends (dbehrends2@unl.edu), Ann Fenton (afenton1@unl.edu), and Rebecca Versch (rversch1@unl.edu)
UNL Extension’s Food Resources

University of Nebraska–Lincoln (UNL) Extension’s Food Team is comprised of specialists, educators and assistants statewide who provide educational programing on nutrition, food safety and physical activity. Extension’s resources are research-based and practical for use in people’s daily lives. Many of the Food Team’s resources are easy to connect with — and share — through its centralized website and social media. Since 2010, the Food website had over 5.2 million pageviews, 3.1 million sessions, and 2.6 million users.

Continuously updated, the Food website offers information in six overall areas: Food & Nutrition, Health & Fitness, Food Safety, Home Food Preservation, Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska, and Youth/4-H. The website includes several e-newsletters, PowerPoints, videos, handouts, recipes, a food calendar, links to blogs, and much more! It’s easy to subscribe to the newsletters and/or blogs.
Website Traffic Increase since Last Year
- Sessions (Visits): 78% increase (1,582,593 vs. 890,129)
- Users (Unique Visitors): 79% increase (1,383,999 vs. 773,152)
- Pageviews: 57% increase (2,234,871 vs. 1,418,518)

Extending our Reach and Broadening our Audience
- 112,291 links to the site (~25,000 are internal links).
- Top social media referrals included Pinterest, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Blogger, WordPress, and SlideShare.
- Age of visitors ranged from 18 to 65 plus, with 45% of visitors being 18-34 years old. Approximately 70% of visitors were female.
- Visitors to the website came from 230 countries/territories, with the top countries/territories including the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Alaska, Philippines, India, and New Zealand.
- Visitors to the website came from 18,879 different cities with top cities including New York, London, Chicago, Lincoln, Los Angeles, Toronto, Sydney, Omaha, and Melbourne.

Feedback from Website Users
- “Information is accurate; well researched; [and a] trusted professional resource.”
- “Thank you for this great web site and the information you share.”
- “Very valuable information [and] very credible which means a lot.”
- “I love your site, great info, current and very helpful for all age groups-relevant and easy to understand, gets the point across!”

Accomplishments Associated with Website
To date, our team has achieved the following with activities conducted in relation to the Food website:
- Six peer-reviewed journal articles
- Six peer-reviewed national presentations and seven poster sessions
- Training for state Extension staff in 4 other states
- Two national webinars for National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS)
- Two “1st place” and Two “2nd place” national awards in relation to technology from NEAFCS
- Nebraska Extension Innovation in Team Programming Award
- Four blogs, four monthly newsletters, and food calendar highlighting national food days, weeks, and months

Links to Selected Journal Articles
Using a Food-Themed Calendar to Engage the Public and Promote Extension from Field to Fork: http://www.joe.org/joe/2014april/iw3.php
Changing Food Behavior through an E-mail Newsletter: http://www.jneb.org/article/S1499-4046(13)00769-0/abstract