

NEBRASKA EXTENSION NEWS COLUMN

Nebraska Extension Educator - Holt/Boyd Counties - Ladonna Werth

Nebraska Extension Educator - Holt/Boyd Counties - Amy Timmerman

Nebraska Extension Educator - Brown/Rock/Keya Paha Counties - Brittany Spieker

Nebraska Extension Educator - Holt/Boyd/Garfield/Loup/Wheeler Counties - Bethany Johnston

Nebraska 4-H Assistant - Holt/Boyd Counties - Debra Walnofer

FOR WEEK OF: OCTOBER 19, 2025

October 13- 30: Knowing, Growing, and Grazing Grass Webinar Series, Monday and Thursday evenings, 7:30pm-8:45pm CT, go.unl.edu/knowning_grass

October 26: Holt County Achievement Ceremony, 5:00pm, Faith Wesleyan Church, Atkinson, NE

October 29: Cedar Workshop, 1:00pm-4:00pm, E-Free Church, Ainsworth, NE. To register: BKR Extension Office at 402-387-2213 or email Mary Jo at Mmccall2@unl.edu

November 2: Boyd County 4-H Jamboree, 2:00pm, T&S Farmstore and Food Coop, Bristow

November 19: Cedar Workshop, 1:00pm-4:00pm, Fire Hall, Ericson, NE. To register: Holt County Extension Office at 402-336-2760 or email Bethany at bjohnston3@unl.edu

December 10: Cedar Workshop, 1:00pm-4:00pm, Location TBA, Boyd County. To register: Holt County Extension Office at 402-336-2760 or email Bethany at bjohnston3@unl.edu



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Many Uses For Pumpkin

The most popular use for pumpkins this time of year is jack-o-lanterns and fall decorations. But pumpkin is healthy and versatile, so we could be preparing and eating it in a variety of ways as well. Pumpkin provides fiber, vitamins A and C, potassium and protein.

Here are some guidelines when choosing a pumpkin for cooking:

- Choose a small pumpkin that weighs between two and six pounds.
- “Pie pumpkin” or “sweet pumpkin” is a good choice, but the jack-o-lantern variety also works just fine for eating.
- Look for a pumpkin that has one or two inches of stem left. Pumpkins with shorter stems decay more quickly.
- Choose a pumpkin that has a rich orange color with skin that cannot be easily broken or scratched by your fingernail.
- For every pound of whole pumpkin, you can expect to get one cup of pumpkin puree.

To get multiple uses out of it, you can use first use your pumpkin as a decoration by painting a funny face on it using non-toxic paints. Then, after the holiday, you can wash and cook it.

To use the pumpkin for maximum benefit, don’t throw out the seeds - they can be roasted and eaten. Start by removing the stem with a sharp knife. Cut the pumpkin in half and scoop out the seeds and scrape the stringy part away. Wash the seeds in warm water and spread them out to dry. To roast, spray pan with oil and spread seeds thinly on the pan. You can sprinkle the seeds with salt or any seasoning that appeals to you (such as cheesy popcorn or Cajun seasoning). Bake in a 250° oven for 15-20 minutes.

There are three ways to prepare the pumpkin in order to make pumpkin puree.

- To bake: Cut the pumpkin in half, place the cut side down on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees until fork tender or about an hour.
- To microwave: Place half of the pumpkin cut side down on a microwave safe plate and microwave on high for fifteen minutes or until fork tender.
- To boil: Cut the pumpkin into large chunks and rinse in cold water. Place the chunks in a large pot in about an inch of water. Cover the pot and boil for 20-30 minutes until tender.
- After following one of the three methods above to prepare it, you can now make the puree: Cool and peel the pumpkin and use a food processor, blender, ricer or potato masher to puree it.

Pumpkin puree can be used in any recipe in which you use purchased pumpkin. Pumpkin puree can be frozen at 0 degrees for up to one year.

If you have pumpkins but you're not quite ready to cook them, keep in mind that pumpkins can be stored for several months if kept at 50-55° in a dry airy place.

Source: Tammy Roberts, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition and Health Education Specialist, Bates County, University of Missouri Extension



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Whole Raw Soybean a Competitive Protein Supplement for Cows and Calves

Current market conditions for raw, whole soybean are making them price competitive in parts of Nebraska with other protein sources, such as distillers grains and alfalfa hay, to be used as a protein supplement for cows, as well as weaned calves.

The following are some principles to remember when feeding raw, whole soybean to cattle.

Soybeans are approximately 40% crude protein and 20% fat and should be introduced gradually into the diet. Because high fat levels in cattle diets can negatively impact fiber digestion, they should not be fed at a level higher than needed to meet protein requirements in the diet.

In growing calves, limit soybeans to 7% of the diet or less, and 5% or less in finishing diets.

Raw soybeans contain a trypsin-inhibiting enzyme important for protein digestion in non-ruminant and monogastric animals. Because of this enzyme, raw soybeans should not be fed to nursing calves and calves less than 300 pounds.

Raw soybeans also should not be fed to animals receiving a diet containing urea. Soybeans contain the enzyme urease, which breaks down urea into ammonia at a very rapid rate. Toxicity occurs when the rate of ammonia entering the bloodstream overrides the liver's capacity to filter it out.

The protein in soybeans is approximately 70% rumen degradable and 30% rumen undegradable. Growing calves being fed corn silage and other feeds that are low in rumen undegradable protein show improved average daily gain performance when protein sources - such as distillers grains that are high in rumen undegradable protein -

are utilized to meet protein needs. Feeding raw whole soybean in place of distiller's grains to meet protein needs in a diet that is predominantly corn silage would result in decreased animal performance.

Raw, whole soybean has a total digestible nutrient value of 91%. While it is a price-competitive protein source at current commodity prices, there are other sources of energy that are more economical. Therefore, they should be used primarily to meet protein requirements.

For mature cows on forage-based diets, soybeans should not be fed at more than 10% of the diet on a dry matter basis. This would be approximately 2-3 pounds per day. Cows needing 0.4-pound of supplemental crude protein per head per day could be fed two pounds every other day and meet their protein requirement.

Raw, whole soybean can be an excellent protein source when utilized as a supplement. Producers looking for an economical protein source for cows to complement low-quality forage should consider the potential of using raw, whole soybean this fall and winter.

Source: Aaron Berger - Beef Extension Educator (CropWatch – October 17, 2025)



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Livestock Facility Inspections: Do I Need One? If So, What Should I Expect?

Inspections collect information about livestock facilities and are how the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment (DWEE) determines whether the facility is in compliance with regulations. There are two primary kinds of inspections for livestock operations. Initial inspections help NDEE determine whether a permit is needed. Routine inspections allow the NDEE representative to make sure permitted operations are in compliance with their permit.

What facilities need to be inspected?

If you have any questions about inspections or any Nebraska manure regulations, don't hesitate to call DWEE at 402-471-2186.

Is my Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) permitted? If yes, Nebraska rules and regulations (found in Title 130) and your permit requires a routine inspection of your facility. As the farmer, you will not need to do anything to instigate this inspection. The inspector will reach out to you for your inspection.

If the operation is not permitted, you may or may not need an inspection. Nebraska Rules and Regulations indicate that initial inspections are required for non-permitted medium and large AFOs. Initial inspections are needed to start a new AFO, if the facility has never been inspected before or is considering expanding.

Small AFOs are exempt from inspections unless there has been a discharge from the operation or NDEE has determined that a discharge will likely occur and therefore requires the facility to be permitted.

I need an initial inspection, now what?

If your operation is in need of an initial inspection, you can request one by filing out Form A - Request for Inspection and submit the appropriate fee. Once that form is received, NDEE will schedule a time to meet with the producer and talk about how the

operation is or will be utilized and look at the operation (proposed or existing) to determine whether a permit will be required. Failure to request inspection can result in late fees.

DWEE is going to conduct a routine inspection at my facility, now what?

DWEE offers guidance for facilities that are regulated and therefore must be inspected. The guidance walks the producer through:

- The process of being inspected,
- Preparing for an inspection,
- What records will be reviewed,
- What the inspector is looking for during a tour of the facility, and
- What happens after the inspection.

The Routine Inspection Process

The inspection usually begins with a meeting between the inspector and a farm representative that is familiar with records and the farm. The inspector will then look through the records and tour the farm where he or she may take photos, collect samples or run tests. A routine inspection looks for agronomic application of manure, regular waterline inspections as well as facility maintenance. After the tour, the inspector and a farm representative talk over changes that need to be made if there are any and anything else that the inspector finds during the tour and review of records.

Preparing for a Routine Inspection

While an inspection is likely to be unannounced or occur with a short notice, there are things you can do so that your operation is ready for an inspection.

1. Read and understand your permit and the regulations that apply to your operation. If you're following your permit, chances are very good that your inspector will not find many problems.
2. Keep all documents organized and easy to find. Keeping records all in one place or having a reference sheet as to where particular records can be found makes it easier for the inspector to review the records and gets the inspection done quickly.
3. Maintain your facility so that everything is in proper working condition.
4. Have more than one person that can serve as the farm representative during an inspection. If farm staff does not know where records are, the inspection may take much longer than necessary.

The Records Review

During the records review, the inspector will be looking through all records required for that facility. If you don't know what records you need to keep, look in your permit as it will give you a list of records specific to your facility. For animal feeding operations, records must be maintained for 5 years, so be prepared to show the last 5 years of your records. Some examples of records might include:

- Storage, holding pond or lagoon levels and weekly inspections
- Land application records
- Soil, manure, and irrigation water test results

- Equipment and facility maintenance records
- Personnel that have taken Land Application Training

The Farm Tour

During the farm tour, the inspector will be looking for possible problems with the facility. They'll watch to make sure everything is in proper working order. The inspector may take photos or collect samples as evidence of the current facility status. Following the tour, the inspector will meet with the farm representative discuss any findings, so the mailed report you receive will not be a surprise.

After the Inspection

Shortly after your inspection, you'll receive a report in the mail from the inspector. If there were problems at your facility, you will receive a letter of non-compliance that identifies problems that were found and the time frame in which it should be corrected. If needed, a follow up inspection or a compliance assistance visit may occur after the inspection.

If you have any questions about inspections or any Nebraska manure regulations, don't hesitate to call DWEE at 402-471-2186

Inspections don't need to be stressful but should be an opportunity to review your stewardship of your animal manure resources. With knowledge of your permit as well as regular maintenance and organized record keeping on your operation, a visit from an DWEE inspector should be no problem. And remember, an NDEE inspector will help you identify solutions for any problems they might find during the inspection.

Size Classifications for AFOs

Livestock Type	Large CAFO	Medium AFO	Small AFO
Mature dairy cows	700	200 to 699	less than 200
Veal calves	1,000	300 to 999	less than 300
Beef cattle	1,000	300 to 999	less than 300
Swine ≥55 lbs.	2,500	750 to 2,499	less than 750
Swine	10,000	3,000 to 9,999	less than 3,000
Horses	500	150 to 499	less than 150
Sheep or lambs	10,000	3,000 to 9,999	less than 3,000
Turkeys	55,000	16,500 to 54,999	less than 16,500
Chickens (liquid manure)	30,000	9,000 to 29,999	less than 9,000
Broilers (dry manure)	125,000	37,500 to 124,999	less than 37,500
Laying hens (dry manure)	82,000	25,000 to 81,999	less than 25,000
Ducks (liquid manure)	5,000	1,500 to 4,999	less than 1,500
Ducks (dry manure)	30,000	10,000 to 29,999	less than 10,000

Source: Leslie Johnson - Animal Manure Management Extension Educator (October 3, 2025)

NEWS RELEASE

Workshops to Address the Spread of Cedar Trees and Control Options

Cedar trees are rapidly spreading across Nebraska's grasslands, threatening valuable forage for grazing animals and habitat for wildlife. In some areas, grass production has dropped by as much as 75% over the past three decades due to cedar tree encroachment. The best time to control your cedar trees is now!

To help landowners and producers tackle this issue, hands-on workshops will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. CT at three locations:

- Oct. 29 at the E-Free Church in Ainsworth,
- Nov. 19 at the Fire Hall in Ericson, and
- Dec. 10 in Boyd County (location TBA).

Gain insight from real-life examples of various cedar control projects, including before/after photos, cost of the projects, cost-share options, and how producers are maintaining cedar-free pastures to maximize grass. Understanding how cedar trees spread and grow will help producers decide the best control options to use. Learn how to keep your prescribed burn contained to the unit- as slope, tree height, piles, weather, crew/equipment can be mitigated to ensure a safe and controlled burn.

Walk-ins are welcome, but registrations are appreciated. Call the Holt County Extension Office at 402-336-2760 or email Bethany at bjohnston3@unl.edu to register. Participants attending the Ainsworth location can also call the BKR Extension Office at 402-387-2213 or email Mary Jo at Mmccall2@unl.edu.

Thanks to these partners: Nebraska Extension, Pheasants Forever, the Nature Conservancy, Sandhills Task Force, Nebraska Game & Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and NRCS.
