

NEBRASKA EXTENSION NEWS COLUMN

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FOR WEEK OF: NOVEMBER 2, 2025

November 13: Holt County Extension Board Meeting, 5:30pm, Holt County Extension Office, O'Neill

November 13: Boyd County Extension Board Meeting, 6:00pm, Boyd County Courthouse, Butte

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 2: ServSafe Manager Training, 8:30am-6:00pm, Hall County Extension, Grand Island, NE

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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What to Do if Your Child Worries Too Much

"My daughter worries at bedtime every night. She always asks, 'Will you check on me soon?' Will you check on me after you go downstairs? Will you check on me before you go to bed?' I always tell her I will be close by, but it does not seem to help. What can I do?"

Some of this is normal worry. Children want to be reassured, and they want to know they will be safe. Some need extra reassurance, and routines and traditions can help calm them. Some children, however, will not be calmed by your answers. It does not matter how many times you reassure them or how many times you check on them, they still worry.

Children who have these kinds of worries might struggle in other situations, too. They may not want to meet new children or go to other kids' homes because of their worries (for example: "What if I need something?" or "What if I don't know what to do?"). It is easy for adults to say, "Don't worry" or "Stop worrying so much." Just saying these things, however, does not work. There are strategies that can help, and these strategies can give your child a way to gain control over the worries.

These strategies are from Dr. Dawn Huebner in her *What to Do When You Worry Too Much* workbook (2006):

Contain the worry

Dr. Huebner gives the example of relating worry with milk. When milk is in a container, you can hold and move it. The container does not take up much room. If, however, that milk is not in the container, it spreads and flows out and makes a huge mess. The same goes with worry. It needs to be contained, or it will spread and grow.

Set up a worry time

If the child worries about many things throughout the day, set up a worry time. Set aside 15 minutes where a child can talk about her worries. Or the child can write worries on paper and share with parents, grandparents or adults who will listen. (Make sure to eliminate distractions during this time.)

If the child starts to worry at another time, she should say, "Stop. That is for my worry time." Then the child should do something else to distract herself. As a parent, you may need to help your child remember to wait for worry time by saying (in a positive and supportive voice), "Keep that for worry time. We will talk about it then. For now, how about riding your bike?"

Create a worry box

Have the child picture a box with a lock in his mind. This is a worry box. If a child starts to worry, he can imagine opening the box, putting the worry in the box, slamming the lid closed and locking the worry there. Better yet, you can create a worry box and encourage the child to write the worry on a piece of paper and put it in the box.

Remember, the child can then talk about the worry during worry time. You can help with strategies and ways to deal with the worry at that time.

Put the worry outside of the child

It can help the child to think of herself as being separate from the worry. Have the child picture the worry as a creature or thing. Let her create the image and then draw a picture. (Is it furry with claws, a dark cloud or just a blob?)

When the child starts to worry, she can picture that creature and can do something about it by talking back and standing up to it! Have the child write down things to say to the worry creature:

- o Stop that!
- o I do not believe you!
- o Get away!

This part will take practice. The first few times the child does this, the worry creature may return. The child should repeat her message in a firm voice (either in her mind or aloud), and could even imagine flicking the worry creature off of her shoulder or catching it in a net and kicking it out of the room.

As before, encourage the child to do something else (play, read, run up and down the stairs).

Do something else

Being involved with something is key in keeping away worries. The way our bodies and minds are, we cannot be relaxed and worried at the same time. This can be a powerful way for a child to keep worries away. If a child is playing with a toy or riding a bike, there is less room for the worry creature to bother the child.

Make a list of things to do. Remember, the child may not feel like going outside or playing, but help him understand that being active will help. The child might have to make himself be busy. As children realize that doing things helps keep worries away, it will be easier to want to play and do fun things. Here are some ideas:

- o Take three deep breaths
- o Run up and down the stairs five times
- o Draw a picture
- o Read
- o Play music
- o Sing a song
- o Play a game
- o Help a neighbor with yard work
- o Take a pet for a walk

These strategies take practice and time. Give your child positive messages and tell him that you believe in him. You may want to get help from a school counselor or a licensed therapist/counselor.

Also, if you as the adult tend to worry, your child may have the same tendencies as you. These strategies can help you, too. You and your child can practice these strategies together.

In answer to the question at the beginning of this article, work on some of the ideas listed here, like helping your daughter create an image of her worry monster, talk back to it, and create a worry box. At bedtime, say something like, "Sounds like your worry monster is bothering you again. How about we tell it to go to bed? Picture that furry green rascal. OK, ready?"

Have the daughter say something such as, "Go to bed worry thing! Leave me alone. I am safe here and you get out!"

Then tell your daughter, "Great job! I love you!" Have her think of something happy or positive right after she tells the worry monster to go to bed and have her hug a favorite stuffed animal.

Source: Lucy Schrader, former HES Associate State Specialist and Building Strong Families Program Coordinator, University of Missouri Extension



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Southern Rust and Corn Residues

Southern rust has made noticeable impacts on corn fields in Nebraska this year. As these fields open for grazing following harvest, many are wondering whether rust affects how we manage livestock on those acres.

Southern rust (*Puccinia polysora*) is a fungal disease that creates lesions on corn leaves, weakening the plant in the process. While limited research exists on the direct effect on corn leaf quality, what we do know is that infection causes leaves to senesce earlier and nutrients to be remobilized from the leaf and stalk to help with grain fill as the plant's photosynthetic capacity declines.

So, what does this mean for grazing residue? Overall residue quality may be somewhat lower, but the bigger concern is that there is simply less leaf material left. Along with husks, leaves are the primary component of residue-based diets. Their loss, therefore, can indirectly lower the overall residue feed value. In addition, with earlier senescence and existing tissue damage, corn leaves are likely to decompose faster than normal — shortening the window of quality grazing even further.

There is one bright spot: southern rust requires actively growing tissue to survive, so it will not overwinter in residue. It must blow in from the south each year, meaning there is no risk of spreading the disease through grazing or feeding infected residue.

Southern rust may not change corn residue quality directly, but it can reduce the amount and quality of available leaf material. Monitoring residue condition and adjusting stocking rates or grazing duration accordingly can help make the most of affected fields while maintaining livestock performance.

Source: Ben Beckman – Extension Educator (CropWatch – October 28, 2025)



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Keys for Corn Stalk Grazing

Corn residue is a tremendous feed resource for cattle in Nebraska. With Nebraska's 9 million corn acres and 1.8 million beef cows, there is more than twice the number of corn stalk acres needed for grazing all of Nebraska's beef cows! The Nebraska Extension Circular Grazing Crop Residues with Beef Cattle is an excellent resource on grazing corn stalks. The following are keys from that resource when planning for grazing cornstalks.

Keys to Consider

- **Scout fields prior to grazing to determine the amount of corn present and to look for piles that could cause grain overload which can result in bloat or death in cattle.** If there is more than 8-10 bushels of ears of corn per acre on the ground, a grazing strategy to control corn intake will need to be used.
- **Stocking rate should be determined based on corn bushel yield per acre and the average weight of cattle that will be grazing.** The Corn Stalk Grazing Calculator is an Excel® spreadsheet that can be used to calculate this.
- **A quick way to estimate grazing days per acre available for a 1200 pound non-lactating cow is to take corn bushel yield and divide by 3.5.** For example, 180 bushel yield / 3.5 = 51 grazing days per acre.
- **Quality of grazing starts high at approximately 70% total digestible nutrients (TDN) and then decrease to a low of 45% TDN at the end of the grazing period.** The rate of quality decline is dependent on stocking rate and environmental factors such as moisture and field conditions.
- **Mature non-lactating, spring calving cows in a body condition score 5 or better will not need protein supplement when grazed at recommended stocking rates according to University of Nebraska–Lincoln research.**
- **First-calf heifers in the 90 days prior to calving will need protein and energy supplementation to meet nutrient requirements.** Feeding 3.5 lbs per head per day of dried distillers grains would meet this need.
- **Fall-calving cows will need additional protein and energy to meet nutrient requirements.** Cows less than three months after calving will need 4.5 lbs per

head per day of a supplement that is at least 30% protein and 90% total digestible nutrients (TDN) on a dry matter basis. Feeding 5 lbs per head per day of dried distillers grains would meet this need.

- **Weaned calves grazing corn stalks with a targeted gain of 1.0 lb per day will need to be feed an energy and protein supplement.** Research has demonstrated that dried distillers grains fed at 2 lbs per head per day when calves are grazing corn stalks will usually meet this targeted gain.
- **Deep snow and ice can severely limit the ability of cattle to graze corn stalks.** Have a backup plan and other feed resources available to meet cattle needs when this occurs.

Corn stalks can be an excellent, economical resource for late fall and winter grazing in many parts of the state.

A recent presentation by Dr. Mary Drewnoski highlighted recent research on cattle grazing corn residue and key things producers should be aware of that impact cattle performance.

Interviews with the authors of BeefWatch newsletter articles become available throughout the month of publication and are accessible at <https://beef.unl.edu/beefwatch-podcast/>.

Source: Aaron Berger – Extension Educator (BeefWatch – November 1, 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.

NEWS RELEASE

Unit Cost of Production Workshops

The Nebraska Extension will host Unit Cost of Production workshops in central Nebraska in December and January to provide hands-on learning experiences for producers in calculating the unit cost of production for a cow-calf operation.

Workshops will be held at two locations. Both days will run from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. CT.

- The first workshop will be held on Dec. 8 and 9 at Community Center (small room) in Atkinson.
- The second workshop will be on Jan. 27 and 28 at the Legion Hall in Burwell.

Pre-register one week in advance. Call the Nebraska Extension office in Holt County at 402-336-2760 or email Bethany Johnston at bjohnston3@unl.edu.

Each location is limited to 25 people. The cost is \$50 per participant and includes meals and materials for both days. Contact Aaron Berger at 308-235-3122 with questions about the workshops.

“Having information to make effective business decisions is important for ranch success. Enterprise analysis and unit cost of production (UCOP) are tools that can help ranchers identify where value is being created on the ranch, where costs are occurring, and what changes could be made to improve profit,” Berger said.

While it takes time to set up and calculate a UCOP, the benefits are:

- Knowing what present costs are.
- Projecting what unit cost of production will be in 2026.
- Identifying opportunities to improve profitability.
- Using information to make management and marketing decisions.

Participants in this workshop will work through a sample ranch to determine the economic profitability of four common ranch enterprises: cow-calf, stockers/breeding heifers, hay, and land. They will go through the steps of analyzing costs and calculating what it costs to produce a unit of product for each enterprise. Participants will also learn how to identify how changes could improve ranch profitability.

Again, pre-register one week in advance for both locations. Call the Nebraska Extension office in Holt County at 402-336-2760 or email Bethany Johnston at bjohnston3@unl.edu.
