



EXTENSION

Douglas-Sarpy Counties

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



2020: PROGRAMMING IN A PANDEMIC

The year started off strong with great in-person programming, but our faculty and staff quickly had to adapt to meet the needs of our learners and clients in a mostly virtual environment. Our programs and information was more popular ever with parents managing education at home, more people gardening, and more people preserving food. In addition, our programs were instrumental in helping other organizations serve others, producing food to help with food access and more.

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Douglas-Sarpy Counties

2020 Impact At-A-Glance



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“Before your class, I was having a hard time feeding my children healthy items because they only wanted unhealthy foods. Now I am confident I can improve my family diet.” - EFNEP Class participant

Douglas-Sarpy taught online cooking and healthy living classes. One in-depth multiple session class was at an apartment-style transitional living facility for women and children. Our staff aimed to improve participant knowledge and confidence in the areas of food preparation. There was also hands-on education teaching nutritious meals planning and preparation on a limited budget. One mom stated that she was very happy to have completed the EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) class because she feels empowered to use what she learned to make a healthier life for her family.

Programs At-A-Glance

- Our community urban farm harvested 10,191 pounds of produce, and 4,500 pounds of additional produce was donated to provide fresh food to individuals experiencing food insecurity.
- “Because of you, I will make sure that the temperature of the meat is correct and not cross-contaminate when preparing food.” - A teen participating in Extension job training.

210,390 HOURS

continuing education hours were taught to childcare professionals by our Learning Child Team.

8,200 YOUTH

were taught Science education through Douglas-Sarpy School Enrichment programs.

1,800 LEARNERS

participated in our new horticulture virtual learning series.

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Engaging Youth

The 4-H program was founded as a way to transfer and translate innovations with hands-on, non-formal learning experiences.

The Douglas-Sarpy 4-H program continues to empower kids to discover and explore and prepare them to meet the challenges of the future.



Next Chapter Nebraska

Next Chapter at Nebraska is a college readiness program offered to enrolled 4-H members at the beginning of their 8th-grade year. Throughout high school, Next Chapter scholars engage in a variety of events, activities, and curriculum where they will participate in career exploration, develop research skills, and experience a variety of learning methods that will help them transition to and succeed in college.

What youth enjoyed about participating in Next Chapter:

- “being able to learn new things about the real world. It’s extremely helpful to get a head start”
- “I enjoyed being able to ask question about college & how well she shared information.”

School Enrichment

This past year, Douglas-Sarpy 4-H reached over 8,200 youth through STEM school enrichment, Next Chapter Program, after school programs & Ag Literacy Festivals. We modified many of our programs to be delivered virtually.



A modified Sarpy County Fair, was offered with over 1,200 entries exhibited.

The community club program reached 480 youth.



“You guys have done an amazing job of continuing to educate and come up with creative ways to reach others during this season!”

LeAnn Loghry, Lifegate School

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The Learning Child



The Learning Child team offered a variety of virtual, innovative and new classes in 2020 like “Children with Autism and other special needs.”

This education helps childcare professionals learn more about the autism spectrum that has then better equipped them to prepare for and make informed to help children in their care thrive.

“I enjoyed the class very much.”
Marie Scholl, 2020 class participate

Choosing Quality Childcare was nationally for the “Communications Internet Education Technology”

This program uses technology to help parents understand and examine quality through an interactive website.

Find childcare resources to help you make the best choice for your family. Learn about the five areas that play an important role in the overall quality of a childcare program.
<https://child.unl.edu/choosing-quality-child-care>



Nearly 3,013 providers have taken our classes!

The trainings are great and it works so well having them on Zoom.—Thanks again, Cheri Chalupa Toddler Teacher

“We really appreciate everything that you are doing for our benefit!”

Christine Grothe, Director
Montessori Academy of
West Omaha

59 classes (4,500 service hours)
were offered for free in 2020.

This provided economic value to community over \$22,080.

Horticulture



2020 Impact At-A-Glance

What sets our horticulture team apart? Our real, live staff and volunteers answer personalized gardening questions, helping to choose plants, and offering assistance with reducing water waste and practical advice.

2020 has shown how our staff have adapted programs to meet the needs of you.

Innovative Programs

- GroBigRed (GBR) Virtual Learning Series - Staff created 12 programs over Zoom on the year's hottest topics, including edible gardening, and trees. This was viewed by nearly 1,200 participants!
- ProHort Seminars – These programs are designed for the small horticultural businesses and public grounds workers that do not traditionally participate at the highest level of training opportunities available to them. Significant impact was achieved as 93% of the time, ProHort participants utilized Nebraska Extension resources to assist them and/or their clientele with problematic landscape issues. As well, as a result of attending previous ProHort programs, 81% of participants positively identified plant problems before treating with pesticides.
- GBR News & Tips – The number of clients who contacted the local Douglas-Sarpy team via email doubled during COVID. To enhance learning for these clients, a new timely news & tips piece was created and delivered each month. Participants demonstrated additional learning and adoption of new best management practices, with 82% of respondents shared the information with family and friends and 82% of respondents made positive changes in their landscape based on information received in GBR News and Tips.

Because of your help, I will not be wasting money on plants that won't grow well in my yard .



Scott Evans receives Excellence in Extension for Exceptional Teaching and Learning.

Scott reaches learners through a variety of outputs including weekly email updates, social media posts, newspaper articles, television segments, community events, and thousands of individual contacts.

During these challenging times, we are grateful to Scott for his creativity, steadfastness to the duties of his job and encouragement of his team members.

10,000 pounds of produce grown and donated to Heartland Hope Mission Food Pantry by the HOPE Garden helping 13,000 people.



Vegetables 101

The increased time that families spent at their homes sparked a new and renewed interest in edible horticulture. In response, new web pages were created by our statewide team for homeowners who have had minimal to no gardening experience or wanted to explore new-to-them crops and techniques.



Personalize care

Wow thank you so much for sending the information. I'm so gratefully to know it won't kill the trees. I googled the problem it suggesting the trees had a deadly disease.



2,200

Lunch 'n Learn Views for live attendance and 88 recording views.

6,000

hours of volunteer hours recorded equating to \$14,982.00

Urban Entomology

2020 Impact At-A-Glance



Contribution to the Community Environment Team

- Provided entomological training for Master Gardeners in various counties throughout Nebraska.
- Provided continuing education for Master Gardeners through Lunch n' Learn Zoom presentations.
- Provided support and content for **Gro Big Red Virtual Learning Series** a 12-week collaborative program.
- Co-wrote and designed *Vegetable Garden Insect Pests* for **Veggies 101** project.

"Every person and every interaction matters"

Ron became aware tickborne disease after returning from a weekend away. It had taken several days for him to notice the tiny bump along his waistline, but after he removed it, he realized it was an embedded tick.



Ron knew there was an entomologist at the Douglas-Sarpy County Extension office, so at 9:00 PM, he sent an email along with an image. Jody responded immediately, identifying the blacklegged tick and providing Ron with specific instructions on how to communicate with a physician in order to prevent contracting Lyme Disease. "If it weren't for Jody, I would have gone untreated and my symptoms would have become worse." - Ron Ruhs

Entomology Resources

Content is distributed through newsletters, factsheets, infographics, Extension blogs, Facebook, Twitter, podcasts, local news and newspaper interviews, public access television, online media articles, YouTube, radio broadcasting, and in-person community programming.



334%

Increase in squash produced and donated to Heartland Hope Mission (compared to 2019) due to adoption of IPM practices

"When looking up information about insects, I deliberately include "Nebraska" in my search terms because this typically brings up Nebraska Extension publications, many of which have been written by Jody and I consider Jody a highly reliable source of information. I look for Nebraska Extension materials over other materials"

- Dr. Lynch-O'Brien, Assistant Professor of Entomology, UNL

850

Client inquiries by email, telephone or in-person interaction

4,000

Learners received direct teaching methods by in-person presentations or by virtual platform

99%

Clients who found resources were useful in resolving pest concern

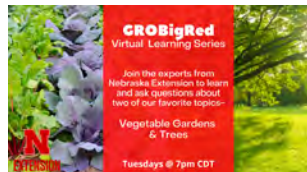
Urban Agriculture

2020 Impact At-A-Glance



Extension Educator John Porter worked with colleagues to quickly develop and offer virtual programs in response to COVID-19, including food safety training, online sales platforms for producers and farmers markets, and virtual coffee chats.

Contribution to the Community Environment Team



Coordinated and led the statewide effort to develop the GROBigRed Virtual Learning Sessions and Veggie Garden 101 website to provide virtual learning opportunities during the pandemic. 1098 participants logged into live GROBigRed Sessions and 861 watched recordings.



Provided timely growing info through print, radio, TV and online platforms, including the Backyard Farmer TV show, which was more popular than ever during the pandemic.



Developed and taught the Home Hydroponics 101 virtual course with Extension Specialist Stacy Adams. 85 participants from around the country participated in the 4-part course. 100% of participants in a follow-up survey said that the course impacted their future plans and 84% said that they had or would build a hydroponic system.



This year Urban Agriculture Educator John Porter was recognized by his peers when he received the **Distinguished Service Award** from the **National Association of County Agriculture Agents**.

Contribution to the Regional Food Systems Team

Took a lead role in planning and facilitating the 2020 Regional Food System summit, where 147 participants engaged in learning and network building around food policy, farm-to-school, farm entrepreneurship, and tribal food sovereignty.

Facilitated and developed video content for Virtual Food Chats and COVID-19 trainings for producers to relay important information to producers, including mental health, COVID-19 food safety, and online sales platforms.

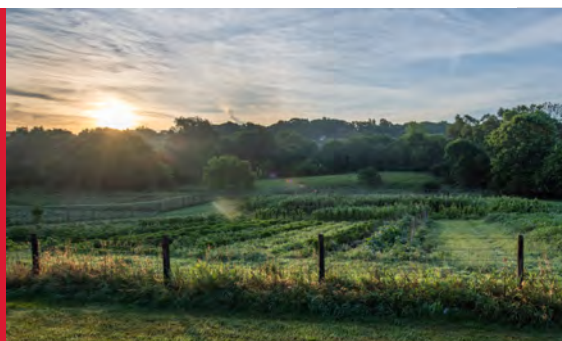
Nearly \$200,000 in grants secured with team members to conduct a vegetable variety trial and host a new specialty crop conference in Nebraska.



About a dozen Master Gardener volunteers were engaged in "citizen science" research testing 25 new fruit and vegetable crops for the All-America Selections program. Nationally recognized AAS crops allow home gardeners select the "best of the best" for their own gardens.

Cooper Farm Urban Agriculture Center and COVID-19

John Porter coordinated with City Sprouts, Lutheran Family Services, Whispering Roots, and Refugee Women of Nebraska to utilize production space at Omaha Home for Boy's Cooper Farm to grow food and supply growing space to refugees as a response to COVID-19 food access issues. Produce was distributed at low or no cost in low-resource communities.



4
partnering organizations

10,191
pounds of produce

24
refugee farmers

Early Childhood Nutrition & Physical Activity

Establishing healthy habits early through policy, system and environment changes.

"It was very helpful to do the pre assessment and figure out where we were lacking and what we could do to fix those. We turned them into goals and the teachers rocked it!" - Child Care Director after completing Go NAP SACC



"The coaches were very helpful in this process. They were very interested in helping me achieve as many best practices as I could." -Child Care Director after participating in Go NAP SACC



"After our coaching sessions, I slow down more at mealtimes and have better engagement with the children. I take the time." -Director/Teacher participating in EAT Family Style Dining Program

Nutrition & Physical Activity

6 hour training provided to:

- 5 cohorts
- 2 in-person (Omaha area)
- 3 virtually statewide audience
- 39 sites
- 118 teachers
- 2,983 children
- 1,454 contacts through newsletter
- Breastfeeding Support Webinar

COVID Adaptations

- Pivoted to virtual statewide training
- Adapted training to meet best practices while adhering to CDC guidelines
- Initiated private Facebook group for training cohort
- "The Dish" Virtual Q & A on Facebook

"I have enjoyed learning about new ways to incorporate healthy activities into the daily curriculum. The children enjoy helping plan large motor activities with the teacher, and they are becoming more interested in trying new foods. Our daily discussions during meal times now often include how each food helps our bodies grow, and the children become excited and cheer each other on when they discover a new food to try. I have noticed that concentration levels have increased as a result of the increase in healthy choices. I'm so thankful for the NAPSACC program and all of the healthy strategies I have learned to incorporate into my classroom."

Team Members:

Lead: Audra Losey alosey2@unl.edu
Paige Wernick & Connie Askew

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Nutrition Education Program

Teaching limited resource Nebraskans in need & increasing food access.



Lisa Larkin, teaching youth weekly at Open Door Mission.

The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) is funded by USDA grants aimed at teaching limited resource audiences and increasing food access. With the support of our partners we were able to continue offering classes virtually.



Using Facebook Live Jonnisha McCleod, co-lead a 21 Day of Building Healthy Habits Challenge.



"A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words" Alyssa Wessling, has captured images from her virtual programs that have been used in newsletter, web pages, and reports.



Topacio Ortiz, teaching Salud Siembra families at the Latino Center for the Midlands.

After participating in a series of NEP classes a mother living in a transitional housing stated, "I feel confident that now I can improve my diet and also my children's habits. I plan to include my children when I cook, so that they can learn and will be more likely to eat what they make. These classes have had such a positive impact on my life!"

Hundreds of Omaha families in need were able to stretch their food dollars through the Double Up Food Bucks program, administered by Nebraska Extension, Omaha Farmer's Market and Las Nena's Zamora Market in South Omaha. "Without this program many of our customers can't afford fresh fruits and vegetables."





Increasing Consumer Confidence in Food

Nebraska Extension thrives to help individuals who produce, prepare, or consume food feel confident about the safety and sources of that food. This is a full menu of services but one that the team feels provides the necessary education for consumers to increase their confidence in the food available to them.

Overarching goals include:

- Present clientele experiences to have a deeper understanding of how food is produced and where it comes from.
- Providing food safety training and certification for Nebraska restaurant foodservice workers, as well as, childcare and adult care providers, and cottage food producers.
- Teaching families how to select and prepare safe, nutritious meals.

Food Safety

Nebraska Cottage Food Law Training – Online Course

With the passage of LB304 part of the Nebraska Pure Food Act, development of the cottage food online training course for producers that want to sell non-perishable foods out of their homes was developed. Extension's development of this course fulfills the requirements for registration and has been endorsed by The Nebraska Department of Agriculture, & The Douglas County Health Department. The training was written specifically for the State of Nebraska, and reflects the laws and regulations unique to our state. Since August 2020, over 40 entrepreneurs have completed the course and are eligible to launch their own Cottage Food Business in Nebraska.

Broadening the scope of individuals reached is underway by translating the training into Spanish to be offered online and in-person throughout the state.



Food safety is important at any time of the year. Sadly, during the pandemic, a great deal of misinformation circulated on social media. Sometimes by professionals that many thought were trustworthy. Leaving your groceries in your garage for three days or bleaching your produce were all popular media misinformation posts. Thanks to the bleach and produce information, calls to poison control went up 40% in April and May of this year.

During the pandemic we have collaborated with the Nebraska Food Safety Team to meet consumers' needs for accurate, research-based information across several social media platforms. Weekly, social media posts, newspaper articles, radio and TV spots were created to educate and inform clientele dealing with important timely topics. Some of those topics included handwashing, cleaning and sanitizing, safe storage of meat and are just a few of the 56 food safety posts provided and distributed on county and personal media sites.

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Home Food Preservation: Part of the Food Safety Team

This year has created an increased interest in people growing their own produce and the need for that produce not to go to waste. We have collaborated as a team to respond to the needs of fellow educators and the residents of the state with up-to-date, research-based home food preservation information.

Professional development and collaboration with the North Central Food Safety Region has been more important than ever to stay on top of the most current food preservation research and development.

Social Media topics on food preservation were developed. All topics for social media were credited to researched based locations.

As **one on one calls** for food preservation increased, due to relatively inexperienced canners, updating the Food.unl.edu webpages was worked on.

Collaborated on a series of four food preservation **virtual learning classes** that averaged 56 participants per week. Attendees were from both in state and out of state. Several other classes were delivered in this virtual manner as part of wellness programs for various companies.

Food Preservation Video's: Development of a variety of relevant videos to be used through our food.unl.edu webpages and part of a partnership with the Little Priest Tribal College.



Home Food Preservation Virtual Learning Series

Wednesdays @ 6:30p.m.CST
FREE/ VIA ZOOM

**Join Nebraska Extension
Learn & Ask Questions:**

August 5 - Food Preservation 101 - Overview
August 19 - Boiling Water Canning/
Steam Canning/Pressure Canning
September 2 - Freezing/Dehydrating



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#UNLFoodSafety

Register At:
<https://go.unl.edu/homefoodpreservation>

Do you know?

How to preserve late season tomatoes.

Don't can them - FREEZE them!

Tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines may have less acidity.

Recommended canning times and acidification could be insufficient for a safe product.

Source: Colorado State University
For More Information:
<https://go.unl.edu/end-of-season-tomatoes>

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Home Food Preservation

Nebraska Extension



#UNLFoodSafety



Simply use water and gently rub with your hands to remove soil from produce.

Soap and other chemicals should not be used.

N EXTENSION
#UNLFoodSafety

For more information
<https://go.unl.edu/handlinggroceries>

2020 - Nebraska Extension in Douglas & Sarpy Counties

Admin Team		4-H & Youth Development		Community Environment		Food, Nutrition, & Health		The Learning Child	
						Nutrition Education		Food Safety	
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