

Views from VanDeWalle

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4-H School Enrichment & More

With county fair being over and in the midst of state fair time, I often am asked, “What are you doing now that fair is over?” The answer to that question is, “A lot!” This week, I’m focusing on the delivery methods of 4-H which involves much more than fair! In fact, in Clay and Fillmore counties, our small staff reaches 1 in 2 age-eligible youth and families in our respective counties. In Nebraska, 4-H reaches 1 in 3 age-eligible youth and families in all 93 counties with the support of over 12,000 volunteers. Nebraska 4-H strives to enable all youth to develop strong personal mindsets and the social skills necessary for successful futures.

The Nebraska 4-H Youth Development Program strives to empower youth to reach their full potential working and learning in partnership with caring adults. 4-H reaches youth through club, camp, afterschool, school enrichment, and special interest programs. The traditional 4-H club and camp experience are likely the familiar methods people are most familiar. Working with 4-H club leaders, parents and club members throughout the county fair is a very visible time. Youth can go to our state 4-H camp, area camps or participate in day camps or workshops which many people, again are familiar.

Did you know that extension staff work year-round to deliver programs to youth during the school year? School enrichment programs are learning experiences offered to students during school hours by local 4-H staff. These programs are designed to enhance the subject matter being studied in the classroom, provide hands-on education, introduce a new topic to students, or spark a new interest! The 4-H school enrichment program is a great way to connect and collaborate between your local Extension office and achieve school classroom’s educational goals. Locally, current programs focus on Career Development, STEM, and Agricultural Literacy.

Although this year will look different as we adapt our programming to online learning programs, etc. we will still be at the forefront of helping educate youth through a variety of avenues. As times change, we adapt to meet the needs of our clients and in this case, teachers and youth.

Locally, some of the school enrichment programs we have done in the past include: Farm to the Cart, My Clothing & Weather, Beef Cattle from A to Z, Soils is Not a Dirty Word, Plant Parts we Eat, How Did That Get in my Lunchbox, Pumpkin Life Cycle, Positively Popcorn, Hot House Detective, Bacteriology, Embryology, & GPS/Geocaching. We also have beef related topics that can be used in collaboration with local school Beef Boosters to provide the educational component to students. Most of these programs are at no cost or have a minimal fee. If you are interested, be sure to check out our website at fillmore.unl.edu.

There are some extension offices that provide after-school workshops or educational sessions for youth. Finally, there are special interest types of programs that extension staff provide. Locally, examples of these include the upcoming AgVenture Day which is a collaborative effort among the South Central Cattle Women and Extension. At this program, area 4th graders learn about



agricultural products and how their food is produced. In the spring, Progressive Agriculture Safety Day reaches over 120 youth with presentations to keep participants safe.

To identify the impact that the 4-H Program is making in the lives of youth ages 5-18, various research studies have been conducted across Nebraska and the nation. For example, a nationwide longitudinal study by Tufts University (2013) found that compared to their peers, youth involved in 4-H programs are nearly 4 times more likely to make contributions to their communities (grades 7-12). Also, 4-H'ers are about 2 times more likely to be civically active (grades 8-12). The same study found that 4-H young people are nearly 2 times more likely to participate in science, engineering and computer technology programs during out-of-school time (grades 10-12). Finally, 4-Her's are nearly 2 times more likely to make healthier choices (grade 7).

Next time you consider asking an extension staff "What are you doing now that fair is over?", consider instead asking, "What programs or projects have you been working on?" I'm sure you will hear about some of the school enrichment programs, in addition to the countless efforts related to foods, early childhood development, crops, livestock, horticulture, community development and other youth development programs. For more information about Nebraska Extension's educational programs, research and initiatives, go to extension.unl.edu.

Watch Nebraska Extension Field Days And Tours

Out of abundance of caution with COVID-19, Extension did cancel the in-person option for Nebraska Extension field days and tours this summer in eastern Nebraska. However, these field days still went on behind the scenes as we recorded short videos to capture many of the demonstration plots and speakers. I want to highlight a few field days and tours that you can watch online that address some of the common agronomic challenges in our area. One benefit this year to the online videos is increased accessibility to the information from Nebraska Extension field days because in the past if you missed or could not attend that day in-person, you did not get the information. These online videos allow more potential Nebraskans to see and hear about the work being done by our land-grant institution. In the future, we should be offering both options for you, i.e. in-person and online.

Watch the 2020 Nebraska Extension Weed Management Field Day at South Central Ag Lab near Clay Center at <https://agronomy.unl.edu/2020-virtual-weed-management-field-day-south-central-ag-lab>. There are four short videos ranging from five to 10 minutes discussing weed control and crop safety in Xtend Flex Soybean, Authority Brands Programs in Enlist Soybean, and glyphosate alternatives for terminating cereal rye cover crop. There are three more corn-related videos discussing the comparison of herbicide programs for weed control in corn, atrazine alternatives for PRE weed control in corn, and management of johnsongrass and foxtail species with post-emergence herbicides in white and yellow popcorn hybrids.

Watch the 2020 Nebraska Extension Field Day in Thayer County for Management of Atrazine, Glyphosate, and ALS-inhibitors resistant Palmer amaranth in Corn at <https://agronomy.unl.edu/2020-virtual-field-day-management-atrazine-glyphosate-and-als-inhibitors-resistant-palmer-amaranth>. There are six short videos ranging from five to 10 minutes discussing the effects on rowing spacing, Enlist E3 corn, early and late post herbicides, and non-GMO white corn herbicide programs.

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The 2020 UNL Winter Wheat Variety Tours for the south central and eastern Nebraska regions are online to watch on my UNL MediaHub channel at <https://mediahub.unl.edu/channels/12207>. Extension created short 25 one-minute videos of each variety for the eastern Nebraska trials (Washington, Saunders, and Lancaster counties). They shot these videos from the field at the UNL Havelock Farm in Lancaster County. Additionally, for the south central (Jefferson, Clay, and Harlan counties) trials, my colleagues Todd Whitney and Nathan Mueller recorded three longer presentations including an introduction, commercial varieties, and long-term checks/experimental varieties. You can view results of the winter wheat variety trials result by county and by region including one, two, and three year average variety performance at our Nebraska Extension agronomy website at <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/winter-wheat-variety-test-results>.