



Views from VanDeWalle

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Celebrate Agriculture!

Growing up on a small farm in Saline County, I appreciate the work of our farmers and ranchers. My dad still farms and my girls enjoy visiting the farm and I hope I can instill the same hard-working values and beliefs my parents instilled in my sister and I. This is part of the reason, my husband and I have starting raising a few chickens and have bucket calves for the girls to care for. With my husband as the Fillmore Central ag education instructor and myself as an extension educator for UNL, we hope to be teaching future generations the vast opportunities available in the agricultural industry. This week marks the time to celebrate agriculture so I have included some of the Agriculture Council of America's press release in my column this week as well as some of Extension's work in ag literacy.

The Agriculture Council of America (ACA) will host National Agriculture Day on March 14, 2019. National Ag Day is celebrated in classrooms and communities across the country. The theme for National Ag Day 2019 is "Agriculture: Food For Life."

On March 14, 2019, ACA will host major events in the nation's capital including an event at the National Press Club as well as a Taste of Agriculture Celebration. Additionally, the ACA will bring approximately 100 college students to Washington to deliver the message of Ag Day. These events honor National Agriculture Day and mark a nationwide effort to tell the true story of American agriculture and remind citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us. A number of producers, agricultural associations, corporations, students and government organizations involved in agriculture are expected to participate.

National Ag Day is organized by the Agriculture Council of America. ACA is a nonprofit organization composed of leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, dedicating its efforts to increasing the public's awareness of agriculture's role in modern society. The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

- Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry.

You might be glad to know that Nebraska Extension has a team of extension staff working on programming to educate consumers and youth about agriculture and tell the story of the American farmer and rancher. This is being done through agricultural literacy-focused festivals and programs, development of beef-booster curriculum, quality assurance programs and many others. Through 2018, over 51,000 Nebraska youth and adults statewide made changes and/or reinforced knowledge of food safety practices from when food is produced until food reaches consumers' plates. Their actions will influence both the safety of food consumed by them and others.

Nebraska Extension's team finalized and utilized five questions to evaluate youth programming focused on Consumer Confidence topics. Compiled results from youth who participated in three state-wide programs (Animals Inside & Out, AgCiting Science & Ag Festivals, which Fillmore & Clay County



youth participated) for over 5400 elementary youth in 2018 showed: 97% of youth stated yes “I learned something new” as a result of the program, 97% of youth stated yes “I know farmers make good choices to keep our food safe”, 95% of youth stated yes “I can make healthy decisions about my food”, 95% of youth stated yes “I better understand where my food comes from” & 86% of youth stated yes “I will share with others about agriculture”. Forty-five certifications were provided in 2018 with 2,879 Beef Cattle Producers completed Beef Quality Assurance Certification which is valid for 3 years. In 2018, 9,189 Nebraska Youth participated in the Youth for Quality Care of Animals. This program trains youth of the Quality Assurance practices for all food animal species.

To see more of the impact Nebraska Extension’s programs had in 2018, go to <https://extension.unl.edu/impact/>.