



January 8, 2010

### **KATIE BAR THE DOOR!**

I asked UNL climate expert Al Dutcher, during this last snowstorm episode, what was to be expected next in January. That way I had another source of information other than the Farmer's Almanac. On January 6th he predicted we shouldn't see much more snow (according to the models) during the following 14 days.

The models do indicate a rather ominous system moving into the west coast about January 21st

-  
22nd. It looks like it may follow a similar path as the December storms. So, it is entirely possible that another heavy event will hit the southern and central U.S. before month's end. If the storm verifies and we get the right amount of cold air, well, Katie bar the door!

His big fear is a rapid warm-up coupled with thick river ice that has the potential to create problems like the early 90's on local streams/rivers. Therefore, he is hoping it will not snow the remainder of the winter (like last year).

#### **NEW SNOW BLOWER OWNERS NEED TO THINK SAFETY**

One business in Lincoln told me they had been selling 20-22 snow blowers a day this year in December. With a lot of new, inexperienced snow blower owners, I hope a few can take time to think safety also. Take the time to read the owner's manual. It will give the best insight and instructions on how to properly use each function of the blower.

Removing snow as soon as possible after the snowfall is most effective. Packed, wet, frozen or heavy snow will slow down the machine and can cause jams if the snow freezes up in the discharge chute. These jams can be solved by bringing the blower into a warmer area. If that isn't possible, try using hot water, but be sure to clean off the water to keep it from re-freezing the area.

Never put a hand in the blower unless the machine is turned off. A snow blower essentially operates like a lawn mower. It is important to clear branches and rocks out of the path. If these get inside the blower they can be dangerously discharged at a high speed. Also, if removing snow from an incline, always go downhill at a slow speed.

When blowing the snow, shoot it away from sidewalks or the house. Try to dump the snow in the lawn. Do not build snow windrows uphill from drives and walks to prevent thawing snow to melt across these pathways. This prevents ice formation when the melted snow refreezes.

#### **IMPORTANT PROGRAM DATES**

\* Annie's Project, "Empowering Farm Women": Fillmore County Extension Office, Geneva - January 26, February 8, February 22, March 1, March 15, March 22. Contact Brandy VanDeWalle, (402) 759-3712.

\* NeATA (Nebraska Agriculture Technology Association): Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island - January 27-28.

\* Spatial Variability in Soils Workshop: Midtown Holiday Inn, Grand Island - January 29.

\* Wilber Crop Clinic: Sokol Hall, Wilber - February 12.

Randy Pryor, Extension Educator  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension in Saline County  
306 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Wilber, NE 68465

Phone (402) 821-2151 • Fax (402) 821-3398 • e-mail: [randy.pryor@unl.edu](mailto:randy.pryor@unl.edu)