



**Happy Harvest
2025**

Progressive Agriculture Safety Day



Axtell, Minden, and Wilcox-Hildreth 1st-3rd grade students participated in Progressive Ag Safety Day on September 16 at Kearney County Fairgrounds.

Nebraska Extension and the committee of Rhonda Herrick, Sherry Nielsen, and Diane Spaulding organize the annual educational event sponsored by the Progressive Ag Foun-



dation. Utilizing resources and curriculum provided by the national foundation, organizers collaborate with local FFA chapters who provide members to teach lessons and serve as group leaders to the younger students.

The goal of this day is to help kids be prepared to be safe on the farm, personally, and at home. This year's students rotated through hands-on learning sessions on harvest safety, grain safety, stranger danger, chemical safety, fire safety, and first aid.

At the end of the day, students went home with goody bags filled with more products and information from local businesses to help them practice safety. Next year Kearney County 4th-6th grade students will attend Progressive Ag Safety Day.

WISHING EVERYONE A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL HARVEST SEASON!

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Thank you,
farmers!



FFA Students of the Month



WILCOX-HILDRETH

Name: Cheyenne Lieb

Grade: 12th Grade

Supervised Agricultural Experience: Placement SAE working at Fritz's Market

Involvement in the chapter: I am the 2025-2026 President for the Wilcox-Hildreth FFA Chapter. I have been involved in many different FFA competitions such as Floriculture, Ag Demo, Natural Resources, Nursery Landscape, and Farm Business Management.

Recent successes: I had recent success competing at the State FFA Ag Demo Competition with my teammates Brooke Casper and Cody Schriner. Our Ag Demo project was freeze drying colostrum and we received a Silver Emblem.



AXTELL

Name: Emma Hall

Grade: Junior

Supervised Agricultural Experience: Emma's SAE is working at Andrew's Garden in Kearney. She packages produce, maintains the cash register, and helps manage the store.

Involvement in the chapter: Emma serves as the Axtell FFA secretary, where she is responsible for organizing records, recording notes from meetings, and informing members of upcoming events. Emma is very active in participating in leadership conferences, volunteer opportunities, and contests throughout the year.

Recent successes: With the school year just starting, Emma is most excited to compete in land judging on October 8th, where students evaluate soil texture, slope, and land capability, as well as how the land should be used and conserved.



MINDEN

Name: Sophie Birkestrand

Grade: 11th Grade

Supervised Agricultural Experience: Event Planning and Communications

Involvement in the chapter: Sophie is serving as the chapter reporter this year. She also participates in Floriculture, Ag Communications, and Food Science contests. Recent successes: As the new school year is beginning, Sophie has been active in helping the chapter develop a SWOT analysis, set chapter goals for the school year, and brainstorm chapter fundraiser ideas. This summer, Sophie helped with our community BBQ for Blue Jackets at the Kearney County Fair. Looking ahead at this school year, Sophie hopes to plan a community pickleball tournament again and participate in Floriculture.

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Harvest Meals: Food, Community, & Support

CINDY RAMSEY

Harvest season is getting underway and farmers can spend 12 hours or more each day bringing in crops. This demanding schedule leaves little time for rest, socializing, or even the simple joy of a hot meal. Grain elevators, local businesses, and community organizations are helping to lessen the burden by feeding the farmers who feed the nation during harvest meals.

Aurora Cooperative Keene location has been serving harvest meals for more than 25 years. The elevator would have food catered in and the price of the meal would be added to customers' bills. This was a small service the company offered to help refuel farmers before they headed back to the field.

"We had farmers just going nonstop and it seemed as though they would go without food. They had a lack of food and sleep. We started doing meals as kind of a service to them and it drastically improved," Lance Jelden said. "We couldn't make them go take a nap, but we could offer a meal."

Later, local businesses began reaching out about the possibility of hosting their own meals at the grain elevator. Food was still catered for a time with the cost being absorbed by local business sponsors, but have since evolved to meals prepared and served by the businesses and organizations sponsoring each meal.

"We provide a free meal to our customers and we have four to five businesses that also do one every year. They're very well received and very well attended," Jelden said.

Farming, and especially harvest, can be an isolating time for producers. While some farmers are content to accept portable harvest meals, tables are set up for those who

can spare some time for a much rest and social break.

"It's a great thing that they stop and have a little bit of fellowship with their fellow farmers and everybody else," Jelden said. "Harvest time is pretty chaotic and I think this aids in safety some. I definitely think it aids in morale and outlook. We're still herd animals and I think it's good to seek each other out once in awhile."

Hosting a harvest meal is a great opportunity for businesses to advertise, network, and connect with customers. Many of the companies that have sponsored a harvest meal in the past have given away hats, key chains, and other products to the 70 to 90 people served.

"They get to meet with their customers and maybe gain some customers while they're doing it. It adds a personal touch," Jelden explained.

Harvest meals are typically held during the month of October with the number of meals dependent on the number of businesses sponsoring a meal that year. Dates are posted at the elevator and Jelden sends reminder texts to customers even if they are rained out of the fields.

"I think it does wonders psychologically and socially for us. It's just taking care of our customers. We've been here since 1903 and we're owned by the farmers so we want to make sure that we cater to what their needs are," Jelden said.

Businesses and organizations that are interested in sponsoring a meal are encouraged to reach out to get on the schedule. Most area grain elevators also host harvest meals and invite the community to help support the producers that support them.



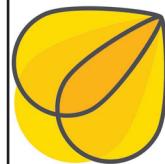
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Did You Know?

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY, AUTUMN WAS THE TIME WHEN PERSEPHONE WAS ABDUCTED BY HADES. HER MOTHER DEMETER, GODDESS OF THE HARVEST, WAS UPSET AND, AS A RESULT, PLANTS WITHERED.

CRYPTO FUN
Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to the harvest. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 7 = e)

A. 22 25 4 16 7 11 14
Clue: Gather crops

B. 17 25 4 3
Clue: Place for growing crops

C. 16 7 21 7 14 25 24 15 7 11
Clue: Plants used as food

D. 1 4 20 23 11
Clue: Plants

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FALL IS HERE **WORD SEARCH**

K	Z	U	D	B	C	W	I	M	K	P	U	O	O	T	H	V	Y	E	L
T	Z	W	G	O	U	R	D	S	E	G	A	I	O	L	T	F	B	D	R
C	H	L	R	B	O	M	W	S	R	D	A	G	E	N	O	G	H	M	Y
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P	P	S	V	R	N	I	K	P	M	U	P	C	A	E	R	V	F	O	H
M	E	C	I	P	S	F	A	W	F	L	H	T	S	D	C	D	V	Z	R
O	S	U	N	S	E	T	S	P	R	B	Y	U	T	S	E	E	L	W	A

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

ACORNS CHILLY CREEP HARVEST ORCHARD SEPTEMBER
APPLE CIDER FESTIVAL LEAVES PUMPKIN SPICE
AUTUMN CINNAMON FOLIAGE MAPEL RAKE SUNSET
BONFIRE CORNUCOPIA GOURDS MAZE SCARECROW SWEATER

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Nebraska Farm Bureau Leadership Academy Members Bring Farm and Ranch Voices to Washington, D.C.

P R E S S R E L E A S E

LINCOLN, NEB. — When members of the Nebraska Farm Bureau (NEFB) Leadership Academy boarded their flights to Washington, D.C., they carried with them the voices of farm and ranch families from across Nebraska. Over the course of several days, they met with all five members of Nebraska's congressional delegation and other officials, putting the challenges and priorities of agriculture front and center on Capitol Hill.

For the Leadership Academy cadet, the trip was about more than policy. It was a chance to see firsthand how grassroots advocacy can shape the future of farming and ranching.

"Our time in Washington, D.C. gave us a firsthand opportunity to share how policies being debated in Congress directly impact Nebraska farm and ranch families," said Hannah Pearson of Custer County. "We were able to bring the challenges of high input costs, volatile markets, and rising interest rates right to the people making decisions."

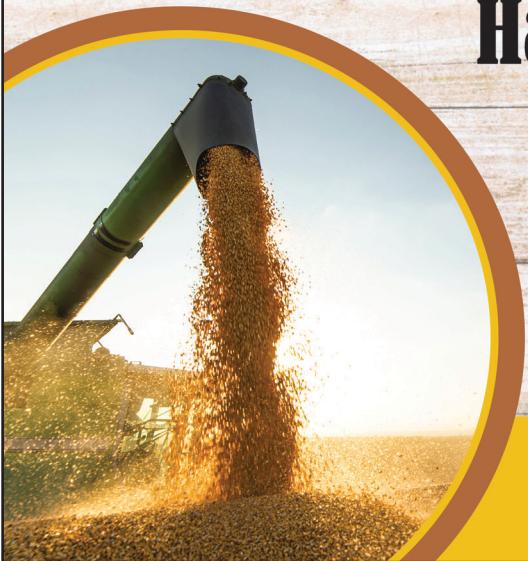
The group's conversations centered on the realities of today's agricultural economy. With tight margins, uncertain markets, and rising borrowing expenses, increasing both domestic and international sales is critical. Members also highlighted the urgent need for Congress to pass a "Farm Bill 2.0" before the current extension expires in September 2025, asking the delegation to support a federal legislative fix to California's Proposition 12 and year-round E15.

"Farmers are operating on razor-thin margins, and programs passed last year won't



Nebraska Farm Bureau Leadership Academy and Board of Directors advocate for agriculture in our nation's capital. (from left, back row) Mark McHargue, NEFB President, Merrick County; Lisa Bousquet, Dakota County; Bruce Williams, Saunders County; (from left, middle row) Lance Atwater, Adams/Webster County; Chad Nienhueser, Adams/Webster County; Teagan Thode, Keith County; Adam Boeckenhauer, Dixon County; (from left, front row) Halie Groth, Buffalo County; Hannah Pearson, Custer County; Kris Rut, Arthur County; Joni Titus, Cherry County; David Grimes, Kearney/Franklin County.

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time this Harvest and stay safe.



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provide support until next season," said Chad Nienhauser of Adams/Webster County. "We need policies that deliver certainty now and keep agriculture competitive in both domestic and international markets."

Trade also took center stage. Nebraska farmers depend on export markets for roughly 30% of their income, making strong trade agreements and access to new buyers critical.

"Trade is absolutely essential," said Bruce Williams of Saunders County. "We need new markets and fewer barriers. At the same time, it's important that Nebraska's farmers aren't left carrying the cost of trade disputes."

The Leadership Academy cadets also voiced concerns about the federal "Make America Healthy Again" report, which included sharp criticism of crop protection tools like atrazine and glyphosate. NEFB urged lawmakers to ensure any recommendations are guided by sound science, while at the same time, not making policy changes that put our abundant food supply at risk.

"As farmers, we care deeply about the health of our families and our communities, but we also rely on proven tools to grow safe, abundant food," said Halie Groth of Buffalo County. "It's important that health policy decisions are based on science and facts, not fear."

For the Academy cadets, the trip to Washington, D.C. was part of their yearlong Leadership Academy journey. The program is designed to equip emerging Farm Bureau leaders with the skills to advocate effectively, connect with members, and strengthen the grassroots foundation of the organization.

"Leadership Academy is a powerful experience for county board members and rising leaders," said Audrey Schipporeit, NEFB's director of generational engagement and facilitator of the 2025 Leadership Academy. "By visiting Washington, D.C. and engaging directly with lawmakers, these members are learning how their voices can move agriculture forward, not just in Nebraska, but across the country."

For this year's Leadership Academy members, the trip was a reminder of the value of showing up and speaking out, keeping the grassroots mission of Farm Bureau strong.

Leadership Academy members that participated in the visit to Washington, D.C. included: Lisa Bousquet (Dakota County Farm Bureau), Kris Rut (Arthur County Farm Bureau), Bruce Williams (Saunders County Farm Bureau), Chad Nienhauser (Adams/Webster County Farm Bureau), Teagan Thode (Keith County Farm Bureau), Joni Titus (Cherry County Farm Bureau), Hannah Pearson (Custer County Farm Bureau), Halie Groth (Buffalo County Farm Bureau)

Members of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Board of Directors who also participated include: Lance Atwater (Adams/Webster County Farm Bureau), Adam Boeckenhauer (Dixon County Farm Bureau), **David Grimes (Kearney/Franklin County Farm Bureau)**, Mark McHargue (Merrick County Farm Bureau)

The Nebraska Farm Bureau is a grassroots, state-wide organization dedicated to supporting farm and ranch families and working for the benefit of all Nebraskans through a wide variety of educational, service, and advocacy efforts. More than 55,000 families across Nebraska are Farm Bureau members, working together to achieve rural and urban prosperity as agriculture is a key fuel to Nebraska's economy. For more information about Nebraska Farm Bureau and agriculture, visit www.nefb.org.

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Nebraska Corn: Safety First, Avoid the Worst

PRESS RELEASE

As harvest season approaches, the Nebraska Corn Board (NCB) and Nebraska Corn Growers Association (NeCGA) are reminding farmers, rural communities and motorists to prioritize safety during National Farm Safety and Health Week, September 21-27. This year's theme, "Safety First, Avoid the Worst," highlights the importance of taking proactive steps to prevent accidents during one of the busiest and most dangerous times of the year in agriculture.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Nebraska's economy, with one in four jobs tied to the industry. But farming continues to rank among the most hazardous occupations in the United States. Fatigue, stress, heavy equipment and unpredictable conditions all contribute to the risks faced by farmers and rural residents alike.

"Harvest is a season that brings families together across generations, but it also requires us to be more vigilant than ever," said Brandon Hunnicutt, chairman of NCB. "Taking a few extra moments for safety, whether in the field, on rural roads or around equipment, can save lives and help us avoid the worst."

Nebraska Corn encourages both farmers and the public to keep these safety reminders top of mind this fall and beyond:

Equipment and Roadway Safety

- Make sure equipment is properly maintained before heading to the field.
- When approaching harvest equipment, do so from the front to ensure the operator sees you.
- Motorists should slow down and use caution when sharing the road with farm machinery, which often travels well below highway speeds.

Health and Wellness

- Fatigue and stress can impair decision-making, schedule breaks and get adequate rest.
- Pay attention to mental health needs, and don't hesitate to reach out for support when stress builds during harvest.

Generational Safety

- Teach youth safe habits early, including the importance of staying away from running equipment.
- Assign age-appropriate tasks and ensure children are supervised around harvest activity.

supervised around harvest activity.

Confined Spaces and Grain Bin Safety

- Never enter a grain bin while equipment is running.
- Always have a harness and lifeline and never work in a bin alone.
- Keep children away from grain storage areas.

ATV/UTV Use

- Always wear helmets and seatbelts where applicable.
- Avoid carrying extra passengers unless the vehicle is designed for them.
- Operate off-road vehicles only in appropriate areas, not on public highways.

Nebraska Corn also reminds those traveling through rural areas to be patient during harvest traffic and be aware of Nebraska's updated move-over law. The updated measure requires drivers to slow down and move over for stopped vehicles and vulnerable road users which now includes agricultural vehicles and equipment. Slowing down and staying alert can prevent accidents and help avoid the worst.

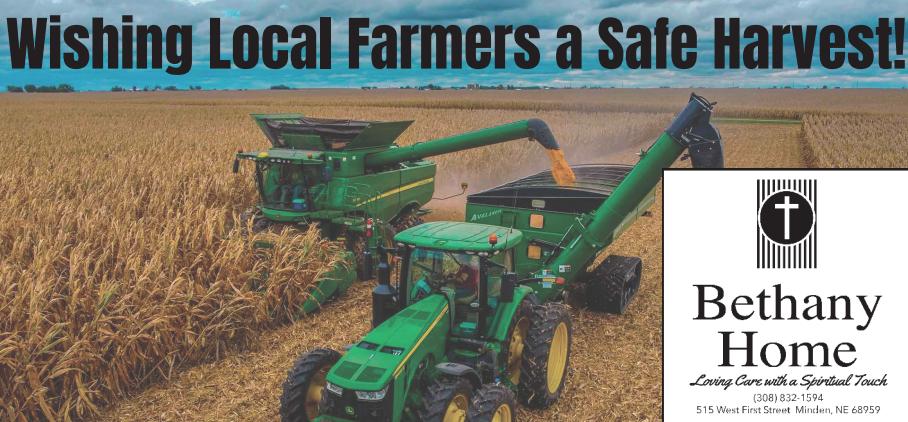


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