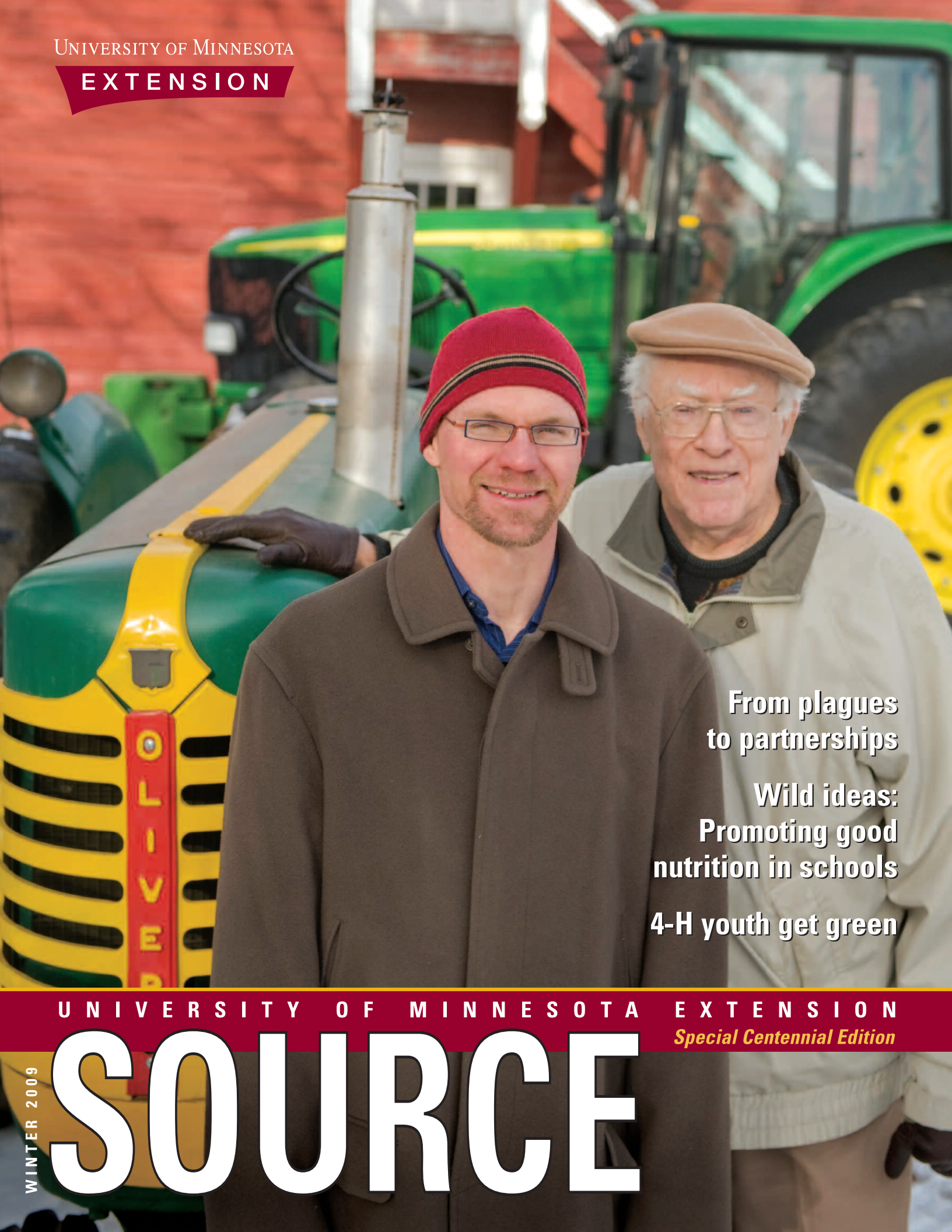


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

EXTENSION



From plagues
to partnerships

Wild ideas:
Promoting good
nutrition in schools

4-H youth get green

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Special Centennial Edition

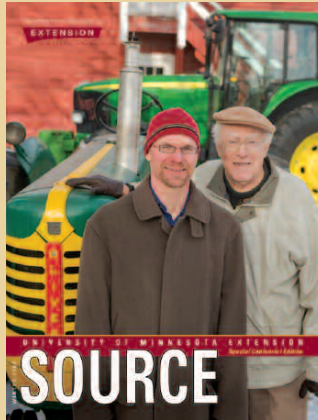
SOURCE

WINTER 2009

SOURCE

In this issue

From the Dean	1
Help for honeybees	1
From plagues to partnerships	2
Wild ideas: Promoting good nutrition in schools	4
4-H youth get green	6
Through the years: Families still turn to the U	8
Tourism work of 1960s helped lay foundation for today	8-9
Low-maintenance lawn care catches on	9
Celebrate with us online!	Back cover



On the cover: Past meets future as retired Extension agronomist Bill Hueg shares history and advice with current Extension agronomist Seth Naeve. Both scientists helped establish a legacy of cooperative teamwork in battling threats to Minnesota agriculture.

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University of Minnesota Extension mission:
Making a difference by connecting community needs and University resources to address critical issues in Minnesota.

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For 100 years, University of Minnesota Extension has extended the University into every corner of the state, connecting the University to the people, taking University research from the labs into people's lives, making Minnesota a better place to live, work and play.



The challenges facing Minnesota in 1909 were not unlike the challenges facing Minnesota today—demographic shifts, technology growth, economic concerns. Today, the need for the state's land-grant University to extend its research and resources to address the issues facing the state is as strong as ever.

This special Centennial issue of *Source* features several examples of ways Extension faculty have extended the University into every corner of the state, addressing the most pressing issues of the day.

- In the 1930s, Extension faculty helped farmers address the grasshopper plague, avoiding \$12.6 million in crop losses. Today, thanks to modern communication and partnerships between producers and the University, early warning signs provide a chance to research potential threats before they strike.
- Getting kids to eat healthy is not just a 21st century problem. For nearly 100 years, Extension has been educating teachers and other school staff about how to prepare and promote nutritious school lunches that kids will eat.
- The 4-H youth of today are protecting many of the natural resources nurtured by the early 4-H conservation leadership camp members in the 1920s and '30s. While water conservation and recycling consume much of the "green" 4-H efforts, today's youth are still planting trees, cleaning ponds and preparing hiking trails as part of their community service.

For more stories about Extension's impact on Minnesota over the last century, visit our Extension Centennial website at www.extension.umn.edu/Centennial. On the site you will find historical facts and figures, a quiz to test your Extension knowledge, videos, stories and photos, as well as an opportunity to add your Extension photos and stories to the archives.

Sincerely,

Beverly R. Durgan
Dean, University of Minnesota Extension

Help for honeybees

For Extension entomologist Marla Spivak, reaching into a hive of swarming bees is business as usual. But she's less concerned about getting stung than she is about honeybee survival.

Spivak's research counters the recent decimation of millions of honeybees. "One-third of our food depends on pollinating honeybees," she says. "Bees are vital to our nation's food supply."

Honeybees are critical to the production of many Minnesota crops, including alfalfa, clover, canola and plants commonly found in vegetable gardens, like cucumbers and carrots.

We also depend on honeybees for their production of propolis, a sticky resin with disease-fighting properties. Spivak's cross-disciplinary team of medical, agricultural and entomological experts is screening propolis for the complex compounds found to combat both bacteria and viruses like HIV, which could lead to a major public health breakthrough.

For more information on Spivak's work with honeybees or Extension beekeeping classes, visit www.extension.umn.edu/Honeybees



Extension entomologist Marla Spivak performs research to learn what is harming honeybees. Her research focuses on keeping bees healthy.

You can help ensure research on honeybees continues into the future with a donation to University of Minnesota Extension. To support the University of Minnesota Bee Center Fund, write "Extension Bee Center Fund #7168" on the envelope included in this issue of *Source*, or give online by visiting www.giving.umn.edu.

“I have seen clouds of grasshoppers darken the noonday sun. I saw them destroy every green thing on



Today, research and Extension education help ensure that agricultural pests are contained and managed before they reach worst-case scenarios, like the grasshopper plagues of the 1930s.

From plagues to partnerships

Grasshopper invasion of 1930s left a legacy of cooperation

Fortunately, Minnesota doesn't experience insect plagues like Laura Ingalls Wilder did from her little house on the prairie in the 1870s. The last major grasshopper invasion in the 1930s damaged crops but left behind the foundation for a problem-solving partnership. This research-based approach became the model that farmers, state officials and Extension would follow to tackle problems.

The 1930s brought tough times to Minnesota farms. Economic depression, droughts and dark clouds of grasshoppers invaded Minnesota fields. Fields were destroyed in hours. Grasshopper hordes ate paint off houses, riddled fence posts and chewed wooden parts of horse-drawn equipment. Nothing was safe. "I remember the grasshoppers being so thick they hit me in the face when I was mowing hay with horses in Houston County," recalls Harley Hanke, who was a teenager during the 1930s.

Minnesotans banded together to battle the attack. Extension entomologist H.L. Parten surveyed grasshopper eggs in the fall of 1931. His predictions triggered a response chain the following year. State funds covered the bait cost for farmers to eliminate the destructive pests. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture, with help from the Works Progress Administration and state highway department, moved the bait to hard-hit areas. Demand was such that Extension educators conducted as many as 500 baiting demonstrations each year for county farm bureaus and other groups.

the face of the earth... —Laura Ingalls Wilder, from “A Little House Sampler”

By the last big raid in 1939, the war against grasshoppers had become a well-oiled machine. Some one-fourth of all Minnesota farmers spread poison bait that year, avoiding an estimated \$12.6 million loss during a time of 40-cent per bushel corn.

Catastrophic disasters such as the grasshopper plagues are likely gone forever. “Modern communications gives us an early warning sign for potential threats and more time to do research,” says Extension agronomist Seth Naeve.

What survives, however, is the legacy of cooperative teamwork among farmers, Extension and state and federal agencies working to solve threats to Minnesota agriculture. That model was tested again in September 1956, after an exceptionally early frost left farmers devastated. Bill Hueg had just been hired as an Extension agronomist and remembers farmers panicking. “They planted corn later in those days and didn’t have experience feeding high moisture corn,” Hueg says. “We pulled the experts together and gave advice on what to do.”

Extension’s foundation as a problem solver also worked well in the 1980s when farm foreclosures spread across Minnesota.

Farmers, state leaders and Extension confronted the threat together. Extension’s farmer-lender mediation service helped borrowers and lenders through the crisis.

The same partnerships are working today to overcome bovine tuberculosis. An outbreak of the cattle disease in northwestern Minnesota in 2007 and 2008 prompted action by the state, Extension and producers to minimize the impact and eventually eradicate the disease from Minnesota.

“Today, when an emergency happens we can respond rapidly with research-based information,” Naeve says. “We use our partnerships with grower groups, state agencies and federal agencies to get the information out—quickly and accurately.”

For more information on Extension commodity crops programs, visit www.extension.umn.edu/CommodityCrops. Also see the Institute for Ag Professionals at <http://iiaap.umn.edu>

Not all bugs are alike

“The old strategy was bugs were bad and let’s get rid of them,” Extension crops educator Phil Glogoza says of the 1930s mindset. “We don’t have a zero-tolerance policy today.”

Indeed, an insect (or two) in the field doesn’t necessarily add up to crop losses. There are good bugs and bad bugs. And then there are bugs that haven’t reached numbers high enough to inflict economic damage.

“We teach growers the biological processes going on in the field and how to predict when a particular insect is approaching the level where it makes economic sense to treat it,” says Glogoza, who is based in Moorhead. That concept is called Integrated Pest Management, and Glogoza uses it to help growers of corn, soybean, sunflowers, wheat and other small grains make decisions based on research, knowledge and economics.



Quick response, big return

Strong partnerships among Extension, farmers and state agencies—like those reinforced by retired agronomist Bill Hueg and current agronomist Seth Naeve—help Minnesota respond more quickly to agricultural threats.

A modern-day version of the grasshopper story unfolded in 2001 when Extension educators discovered soybean aphids in Minnesota fields. Fortunately, the ending is different.

After Extension entomologists confirmed the outbreak, a partnership with Minnesota soybean growers and state and federal agencies fueled a coordinated response.

“The partnership between the soybean council and the University absolutely reduced economic losses by helping farmers know how to scout for aphids, when to control them and how to control them,” says Gene Stoel of Lake Wilson, Minn., a farmer and member of the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council’s board of directors.

Within a year, the University of Minnesota was using its sophisticated computer model to combine weather information with agronomic and entomology expertise to guide growers. The model has since been adopted throughout the Upper Midwest.

The University’s investment in research and outreach to create the model could generate \$1.3 billion over 15 years in the north central states, according to a study by Michigan State University.

For more information on Extension resources for managing the soybean aphid in Minnesota, visit www.soybeans.umn.edu

"Soon school officials will accept as their responsibility the serving of hot lunches in the schools just as they hire teachers and buy books," a St. Louis County Extension home demonstration agent wrote in 1935. Her prediction was spot-on. Just five years later, hot lunch programs were established in more than 200 Minnesota schools. Extension food preparation specialists scrambled to teach school cooks how to prepare nutritious lunches kids would love (or at least eat). Today, Extension educators have added a new twist to promoting good nutrition for life with a wildly fun program that helps children understand the why and how of healthy eating.



Beginning in 1941, retired Extension food and nutrition specialist Verna Mikesh worked with Minnesota schools to prepare healthier lunches on limited resources.

Wild ideas

Promoting good nutrition in schools

When Extension nutrition education assistant Tracy Baker uses a dirty bottle and a scrub brush to demonstrate the importance of digestive-tract-cleansing fiber in the diet, kids' first reaction is, "Ewww!"

Their second reaction? " 'Oh, that's why we eat the peelings, and why we eat fruits and vegetables,' " Baker says. "They get that."

Last year some 3,600 grade-school children learned about the what, why, and how of good food and physical activity through Go Wild With Fruits and Vegetables. Baker is one of nine nutrition education assistants who piloted Extension's activity-packed nutrition curriculum, Go Wild, in 22 schools in the Moorhead region.

"It was an outstanding program," says Frazee third-grade teacher Kathy Peichel.

Promoting good nutrition in schools is a longstanding tradition for Extension. In the 1930s Extension helped establish school lunch programs. In the 1940s and '50s,



Extension nutritionists taught school lunch staff around the state how to transform surplus commodities into healthful meals.

"They were given a certain standard they had to meet with their menus," recalls retired Extension food and nutrition specialist Verna Mikesh, who worked with Minnesota schools from 1941 to 1971. "A lot of the stuff they got was commodity cheese, eggs, dry milk, beans, canned meat. We had to work with them to help them utilize these things," she says. Mikesh also conducted informal school lunch evaluations.

Throughout the years, Extension educators have visited classrooms, teaching

children the importance of eating right. Today the need seems stronger than ever. Thanks in part to the appeal and widespread presence of junk food, the percent of children ages 6–11 who are overweight nearly tripled between 1976 and 2004, from 6.5 to 18.8 percent.

Enter Go Wild. Developed by a team of Extension nutrition experts and nutrition education assistants, the grade-school program includes a feast of fun to help kids and their families understand the how and why of nutrition. Each month, a nutrition education assistant visits the classroom, bringing stories, songs, games, a variety of

'Thank you for helping me'

Sixth grader Nichole had never even heard of a parsnip before "the Go Wild Lady" showed up at her Detroit Lakes area school last fall. Now it's one of her favorite vegetables.

Through a nutrition journal, Nichole told Extension nutrition education assistant Tracy Baker how important Go Wild was to her. Her previous snacking habits led to weight gain. Go Wild gave her the knowledge and motivation to make a change.

"I learned that fruits and vegetables may look gross but are yummy," Nichole wrote. "I told my sister and my mom, and now we're changing our lifestyle. ... Thank you for helping me."



Extension nutrition specialists helped establish school lunch programs in the 1930s. Today, the need to teach children healthy eating is stronger than ever. Nichole (foreground) is one of many children who started eating fruits and vegetables after an Extension educator visited her classroom.

fruits and vegetables, and a message to go with them: Good food and physical activity are smart choices.

"They've always been told, eat your fruits and veggies and you'll be healthy," Baker says. "We told them why."

Baker and her team of colleagues also showed them—in a way no child could resist. Music, "mystery food" taste tests and flip boards were used in conjunction with Minnesota animals to boost the lesson's fun quotient. When Baker walks in the door, the sky's the limit.

"It's opened up her eyes," says Evelyn Estenson of her daughter's experience with the program. "And it's kind of fun."

The Go Wild curriculum is being piloted in Crookston and Brainerd classrooms for the 2008-09 school year. It is expected to go statewide in 2009-10.

For more information on Extension nutrition resources for schools, visit www.extension.umn.edu/Health

Recipe for success

What makes Go Wild so wildly successful? Like most successes, good design is key.

Good design in this case started with involving Extension nutrition education assistants, with their in-the-trenches insights, in developing the lessons. It included stretching the program over seven months, to keep the message loud and strong.


Studies show that children are more likely to believe and act upon a message if they hear it from multiple sources. Using that information as a springboard, Go Wild reinforced its message with posters and by introducing new foods in the lunchroom, food challenges at home, and recipes in local newspapers. For Becker County nutrition education assistant Tracy Baker, good design meant capitalizing on the fact that learning—and good nutrition—really can be fun.

"Tell me a kid that doesn't like to go wild," she says. "It's an easy program to get excited about."

To see a sample lesson from Extension's Go Wild program, visit www.extension.umn.edu/Nutrition

Extension nutrition education assistant Tracy Baker helps third-graders at Frazee Elementary School make "pumpkin fluff" during a lesson on yellow/orange fruits and vegetables.





Minnesota 4-H conservation work dates back to 1926, when a state forester helped 4-H participants grow red pine seedlings at Itasca State Park. The goal, according to T. A. Erickson, the state's first 4-H club leader, was to help youth learn to appreciate trees, flowers, grass, bird and animal life, lakes and hills, good soil, and their importance in our lives. The reward is towering red pines, which are still appreciated by park visitors today.

More than 80 years later and some 150 miles away, a 4-H Green Team works on maintaining the Superior Hiking Trail. As they navigate the forests and ridges outside Duluth, they admire similar stands of massive red pine along stretches of the trail.

4H youth get green

Building on a tradition of environmental enthusiasm

Minnesota 4-H began its conservation efforts in earnest in 1934 with the Conservation Leadership Camp at Itasca State Park. Every September, two teens from each county—or about 200 kids—would spend five days learning about wildlife and land conservation from Extension faculty via lectures, discussions, demonstrations and nature hikes.

The foundation of 4-H is to work locally, guiding youth in learning and equipping them with the skills and knowledge to bring back and use in their communities. The early conservation campers kept meticulous records of their efforts once they returned to their hometowns. In one year alone, campers planted 166,343 trees, started 549 windbreaks, constructed 571 game shelters, built 1,051 bird feeders and seeded 3,346 forest tree nurseries.

“Thousands of youth have worked on 4-H conservation projects in Minnesota over the years,” says Wayne Carlson, camp director from 1964 to 1980 and Minnesota 4-H Foundation board member emeritus. “Even though the 4-H statewide conservation camp ended in 1985, 4-Hers continue to do environmental work today in county camps and programs.”

4-H Green Team members Joni and Heather carry forward a tradition of caring about the environment as they clear a trail that will connect Duluth to Split Rock Lighthouse State Park.





Changing the world one recycled plastic cup at a time

At age 11, Maria is a self-described nature geek who wants to change the world one recycled plastic cup at a time. She found the perfect outlet for her environmental passions in the 4-H Green Team at Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary School in Duluth.

The group's activities have included school-wide water conservation and recycling campaigns. On Earth Day, a campaign launched by Stowe Elementary's 4-H Green Team featured signs throughout the school with water conservation and recycling tips, such as turning off water when brushing teeth, picking up trash, and reusing plastic bags.

The hope is that students will take the good habits home and into their communities. The signs also included poems that Maria wrote about conservation, which were so well-received the school left them up most of the year.

All of Maria's friends have now joined the Green Team, and she says she has learned a lot. "If you work together," says Maria, "things can be accomplished faster."



4-H Green Team member Maria (middle) turned her passion for the environment into a volunteer recycling job at school, and along the way made new friends with similar interests.

For more information on 4-H clubs and program opportunities in your area, visit www.fourh.umn.edu

Fast-forward to present day and the 4-H Green Teams in Duluth. The after-school environmental service learning programs held at Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary and Morgan Park Middle School ensure continuity for 4-H participants as they graduate from one school to the next. Green Team members find and address the needs in their community. The list includes tree planting, buckthorn removal and cleaning up ponds and hiking trails.

"Our mission is to encourage Minnesota youth to love nature and teach them to be good stewards of the environment," says Valerie Coit, St. Louis County 4-H program coordinator.

Fourteen-year-old Joni was a member of Morgan Park Middle School's 4-H Green Team last year when the group worked on maintaining a portion of the Superior Hiking Trail outside Duluth. When completed, the trail will connect Duluth to historic Split Rock Lighthouse State Park, one of Minnesota's most treasured and beautiful visiting destinations.

The seventh- and eighth-graders cleared paths, removed debris, and put up "No Camping" signs in places that were not meant for camping. "We would find places that people camped where they shouldn't have, and we had to mess it up," says Joni. "We'd break up illegal fire pits, and pull

brush around so people wouldn't think about camping there."

Program coordinators also bring in high school and University of Minnesota Duluth students to work with the Green Team, encouraging environmental service beyond school and into the community. "When we have older youth and young adults partner with us or speak to our groups, we show that environmental service is something you take with you for your whole life," Coit says.

That message is taking root: Joni plans to start a 4-H Green Team at her new high school this year.

For more information on Minnesota 4-H Youth Development, visit www.extension.umn.edu/4-H

Through the years: Families still turn to the U

Extension resources remain modern, relevant

For decades Minnesota families have looked to the University for answers to their more pressing questions. In the 1920s, they struggled to feed and clothe children on severely limited budgets. In the 1940s, they learned to grow victory gardens to produce balanced meals with limited resources. And in the 1990s, some battled teen drug and alcohol issues.

Today, the challenges facing Minnesota families continue to multiply, due in part to the economic downturn and higher prices for food, fuel and housing.

“Our goal is to prepare families to make informed decisions that lead to better health and better well-being,” says Karen Shirer, Extension associate dean for family development. “As Minnesota becomes more diverse, our programs cannot be ‘one size fits all.’ We engage diverse families in terms of culture and ethnicity, income, stage in the life cycle and family makeup.”

The way in which Extension delivers information to families has seen tremendous change through the years. What began as a small staff of home-demonstration agents in 1912 has grown to include web-based resources, key partnerships with state agencies, and training to help other non-university educators reach as many citizens as possible.

Through personal financial education programs like Dollar Works 2, for example, Extension educators teach money management topics ranging from managing debt to saving and investing. Some 100 agencies partner with Extension annually to provide Minnesotans with training in family resource management.

“True to our land-grant mission, we’re bringing the University to the people who might not have access,” Shirer says.

For more information on Extension’s Family Development programs, visit www.extension.umn.edu/Family

For answers to questions ranging from budgeting to gardening, families have turned to Extension for help.



Extension tourism work of 1960s helped lay foundation for today



Lawrence Simonson began reaching out to Minnesota resort owners four decades ago, when he sensed needs within the tourism industry the University could help address.

“We already had a system in place in Extension to work with rural communities, businesses and agriculture,” says the retired Extension tourism specialist. “I could see where that could adapt quite well to the content of a tourism and recreation program.”

Simonson and his colleagues went on to establish Extension’s first such program in 1966 with the ultimate goal of improving the quality and profitability of Minnesota tourism. They conducted workshops and seminars catering to resort owners and operators, published a regular newsletter and worked closely with the state department of tourism.

This early work gave rise to the University’s now-thriving Tourism Center. Simonson and his fellow educators assisted community leaders in planning and developing tourism in a way that increased business activity, yet respected the interests of local citizens and protected their natural resources.

Parks, resorts and other Minnesota destinations have earned more tourism dollars while maintaining quality of life for citizens, thanks to Extension programming that began in the 1960s.

Low-maintenance lawns catch on

When interest in lawn care grew in the 1970s and '80s, Extension horticulturist Bob Mugaas set aside his rose pruning shears and swung his full attention to the shorter, finer plants that make up turf. As he balances aesthetic needs with environmental quality, Mugaas teaches Minnesotans how to address pesky lawn problems with fewer pesticides, less water and thankfully, less work.

Retired agronomist Don White's 46 years of turf grass research at the University provided the backbone for Extension lawn care education, including concepts taught by Mugaas today. White's work aimed to promote ecological

Today, industry leaders call that concept "sustainable tourism," and the Tourism Center helps educate business owners and community leaders how to continually improve upon environmentally responsible tourism practices.

For example, Nikki Anderson, manager of the Inn on Lake Superior, works to help ensure the Duluth establishment is up to speed on water-conservation techniques, recycling and energy audits, to name a few.

"We were plowing new ground back then," Simonson says. New ground that helped lay a solid foundation for today's tourism education efforts.

For more information on the University of Minnesota Tourism Center, a collaboration of Extension and the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences, visit www.tourism.umn.edu



Extension horticulturist Bob Mugaas has cut a wide swath through Minnesota since the early 1980s. He has worked to educate Minnesotans about how to achieve thick, lush lawns without first reaching for chemicals.

principles, like developing low-maintenance, high-quality grasses and using fewer chemicals.

"What the research told us was very different from what people had believed," White said. Findings revealed the value of late-season fertilizer applications, and using less fertilizer at the right times to get higher quality, cold-hardy grasses, he says.

Mugaas has cut a wide swath through Minnesota with his teaching since those early days. "People have opened up to learning how to create healthy grass plants rather than picking up a chemical to zap a problem," he says. "They want to make more informed choices, especially when it comes to protecting other natural resources."

Ever heard "Don't bag it" about lawn clippings? That was Mugaas' research-based advice beginning in the early '80s. He emphasized that leaving clippings on the lawn nourishes a thicker, healthier turf while keeping plastic bags full of grass out of landfills.

Extension presents horticultural research to lawn service businesses and the government as well. "Engagement, finding common ground in an objective manner so that something better can be accomplished," says Mugaas, "has been a hallmark of Extension education."

For more resources on home lawn care, visit Extension's Turfgrass Management website, www.extension.umn.edu/Turfgrass



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Extension Centennial 1909-2009

Celebrate with us online!

One hundred years ago, state legislators saw fit to enable the University of Minnesota to take the latest research from University labs into people's lives. For a century now, Extension faculty have extended the reach of the University into every corner of the state, providing Minnesotans with access to practical, research-based information to help improve their lives.

You are invited to celebrate a century of Extension contributions, dating back to the state Legislature's approval of the 1909 Agricultural Extension Act. Please join us on the Extension Centennial website, at www.extension.umn.edu/Centennial.

On the website you will find: historical facts and stories; an interactive quiz to test your historical knowledge; an opportunity to submit your personal photos and stories; video features that showcase the impact of Extension in Minnesota since 1909—"then" and "now" examples highlight water quality, disaster response, bridging cultures, youth development, and accessibility to healthy food.

We invite you to visit the site and share stories or an inspiring memory about how Extension has made a difference in your life.

How has Extension helped improve Minnesota?

Visit the Extension Centennial website, www.extension.umn.edu/Centennial, to find out how the University's land-grant mission has helped serve the people of Minnesota for decades.

Out of countless examples of Extension's positive impact on Minnesota through the years, listen to the story of a Renville County farmer whose father worked with Extension during the 1930s to drain wetlands for agricultural production. Find out about organized efforts to connect with the state's American Indian communities back in the 1950s. Or discover how 4-H has helped create a network of support for today's military kids.



During the first part of the 20th Century, many farmers raced to drain land for use in agricultural production, as shown here in Extension's Centennial video.

To watch videos or read stories of these and other examples of Extension's impact in the state over the last century, visit www.extension.umn.edu/Centennial