

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 3, 1985

Source: Deborah Brown
612/376-7574

Editor: Sam Brungardt
612/376-8182

TO KEEP POTATOES, STORE THEM AT THE RIGHT TEMPERATURES

Storing potatoes at the correct temperatures greatly increases their keeping quality.

"If you've grown your own potatoes, allow them to surface dry, then keep them at 45 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit for 10 to 14 days. After that, store them at 38 to 40 degrees," says Deborah Brown, horticulturist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

If potatoes are stored at cooler temperatures, Brown says they will develop an undesirable, sweet flavor. This will go away, though, if the potatoes are kept at room temperature for several days before they are cooked.

Brown says potatoes will begin to sprout when they are kept at temperatures above 40 degrees. The warmer the temperature, the sooner they will sprout.

"Keep potatoes out of the light to prevent greening," she cautions. "The green portions are bitter tasting and mildly poisonous. Peel away any green areas that might develop. The rest of the potato should be fine."

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TCO,P2,4H,4HE

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NAGRO946

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Oct. 3, 1985

Source: Deborah Brown
612/376-7574
Editor: Sam Brungardt
612/376-8182

HARVEST WINTER SQUASH, PUMPKINS BEFORE HARD FROST

Winter squash and pumpkins have very little frost tolerance, so they must be picked before hard frost, says Deborah Brown, horticulturist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

"The rind should be tough and the color, deep," she says. "Always leave an inch or so of stem attached to the fruit to prevent decay during storage. And, try not to bruise the skin during handling."

Brown says squash and pumpkins should be cured for about 10 days in a warm (75 to 85 degrees F, if possible), dry room. Then, they should be stored in a dry area, where the temperature stays around 50 to 55 degrees. They should keep that way for months.

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TCO,P2,4H,4HE

NAGR0947

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news

Agricultural Extension Service
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University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 3, 1985

Source: Paul Ellefson
612/373-0851
A. Scott Reed
218/879-4528

Writer: Monica L. Brodersen
612/376-8182

MANDATED TIMBER HARVESTING PRACTICES MIGHT DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD

Minnesota timber owners and operators would lose a considerable portion of their profits if state regulations required them to use specific harvest practices to protect water quality, according to University of Minnesota studies.

Forest resources scientist Paul Ellefson, who studies policies affecting the forest industry for the university's Agricultural Experiment Station, says that small, nonindustrial, private forestland owners and timberland operators would be hardest hit. "It doesn't take much to put these people under," he says.

Ellefson says that since smaller woodland owners and loggers operate on a small profit margin, additional costs of following such regulations may make it unprofitable to harvest some timber stands. This could discourage sound management of forestland.

His research shows that the use of selected practices could reduce net revenues up to 60 percent. Minnesota does not require

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such practices now, but they are discussed periodically in the legislature.

Erosion and excessive run-off are water quality problems usually associated with timber harvesting activities, especially the construction of forest roads. Examples of harvest practices designed to curb such problems are the use of culverts and buffer zones around streams and redesigning logging roads and skid trails.

If it becomes necessary to mandate certain timber harvesting practices to protect water quality, Ellefson thinks that timber owners shouldn't be the only ones to bear the additional costs. "The public also enjoys the water supply, not just timber owners," he says. He adds that state subsidies would help offset costs if owners were forced to adopt these harvest practices.

A. Scott Reed, forester with the university's Agricultural Extension Service, doesn't feel that such regulations are needed in Minnesota. "We have a lot of water and gentle slopes," he says. "It's not as if we had the same problems they have in the Rocky Mountains. The potential for damage to water quality in Minnesota is not that serious."

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CON,EXP,P2,4F

NCRD0923

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 3, 1985

Source: Peter J. Olin
612/443-2460
Writer: Sam Brungardt
612/376-8182

OLIN NAMED DIRECTOR OF U OF M LANDSCAPE ARBORETUM

The new director of the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum at Chanhassen is Peter J. Olin, a professor in the University of Minnesota's Department of Horticultural Science and Landscape Architecture. Olin has been acting director of the arboretum since former director Francis de Vos retired last December.

Olin, a native of Granby, Conn., has been on the faculty of the University of Minnesota since 1974. Before he assumed duties at the arboretum, he was chairman of the landscape architecture program, which he expanded to include graduate studies leading to a Master of Landscape Architecture degree.

The new arboretum director has a B.S. degree in Landscape Design and Ornamental Horticulture from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., and a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He also has varied experience in environmental planning and landscape design with firms in Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut and California.

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The 675-acre Minnesota Landscape Arboretum is located next to the University of Minnesota's 230-acre Horticultural Research Farm. Scientists and specialists with the university's Agricultural Experiment Station and Agricultural Extension Service work at the two facilities to develop new horticultural information and plant materials, disseminate horticultural information, and develop designed plant displays and collections. All of these efforts are directed toward increasing public appreciation for horticulture and landscape architecture.

The landscape arboretum has continued to grow since its founding in 1958. Its newest attraction, a Japanese garden, will be publicly dedicated at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 5.

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CEO,EXP,TCO,P2,4H

NAGRO956

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 10, 1985

Source: Sharon Knutson
218/784-7183

Writer: Jack Sperbeck
612/373-0715

ADA MAN RECEIVES HONOR FROM U OF M EXTENSION SERVICE

Karol Berglind of Ada, Minn., has received the Director's Award for Distinguished Service from the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Berglind received the award from Patrick J. Borich, director of the extension service, during the annual extension staff development conference Oct. 8. He was recognized for his support of 4-H and other extension programs in Minnesota.

He and his wife serve as organizational leaders for their local club. Both have served in leadership positions for more than 15 years. He promotes the 4-H speaking contest by providing cash awards to serve as incentives to strengthen the program. The Berglind family annually hosts a winter fun night for area 4-H club families, 4-H alumni and extension staff.

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Berglind is chairman of the Norman County Extension Committee. On a state level, he has been a trustee of the Minnesota 4-H Foundation since 1980. He has also a member of the Minnesota Extension Advisory Committee, which meets with administration of the extension service to evaluate and advise on program needs.

The Director's Award for Distinguished Service is given annually in recognition of outstanding service to Minnesota citizens through the Agricultural Extension Service.

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SELMED,1A,P2,4Y

NEXT0964

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 10, 1985

Source: Tom Milton
218/327-1790

Editor: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

OCT. 20-26 IS NATIONAL FOREST PRODUCTS WEEK

Benefits of the forests nationwide will be remembered with the theme, "America Grows on Trees," during National Forest Products Week, Oct. 20-26.

Wood products affect daily life and American forests are said to be healthier than ever. Tom Milton, area forest products agent with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, notes that the week is designed to call attention to the need for productive and healthy forests to meet the growing demand for wood products.

Lumbering in Minnesota peaked in 1899, when a record 2.5 billion board feet of timber was harvested in the north woods. For many years Minnesota's 17 million acres of forest, which blanket more than a third of the state, have played a key role in the state's economy. Ownership of forestlands is almost equally divided between private commercial and the public. Thirty-five percent of Minnesota's forestlands belong to state and county governments.

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The U.S. forest products industry employs 1.4 million people, with another 400,000 involved in complementary activities: independent loggers, foresters and private landowners who tree farm. Each year, the forest products industry ships products valued at over \$120 billion.

Nationwide, the forest products industry owns only 14 percent of the total commercial forest, but provides over 30 percent of the national harvest. Private, nonindustrial landowners own 58 percent and supply 48 percent of the harvest. Government-owned lands account for 28 percent of the commercial forest and 22 percent of the harvest.

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CEO,P2,4F

NCRD0967



**National Forest Products Week
October 20-26, 1985**



**National Forest Products Week
October 20-26, 1985**



**National Forest Products Week
October 20-26, 1985**

Oct. 10, 1985

Source: Eileen Anderson
218/726-7512
Writer: Jack Sperbeck
612/373-0715

VIRGINIA SOCIAL WORKER RECEIVES AWARD FROM EXTENSION SERVICE

Marian Chase of Virginia, Minn., has received the 1985 Director's Award for Distinguished Service from the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Chase is the volunteer coordinator for the St. Louis County Social Service Department for the northern part of the county, headquartered in Virginia. She received the award from Patrick J. Borich, director of the extension service.

She was recognized for fostering a "true partnership" between her agency and the extension service on a volunteer budget consultant program. "We use each other's resources and expertise to assist families in economic crisis and change," said Eileen Anderson, county extension agent in Duluth, who nominated her for the award.

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Chase came to the St. Louis County extension service with the idea for the volunteer budget consultant program about five years ago. "The program is now expanding to other counties in the state due to requests from social service departments, county commissioners and extension agents," Anderson said.

"This relationship between two agencies makes limited resources go further," Anderson added.

The Director's Award for Distinguished Service is given annually in recognition of outstanding service to Minnesota citizens through the Agricultural Extension Service.

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SELMED,1A,P2,4HE

NEXT0963

Oct. 10, 1985

Source: Jeffrey Hahn
612/376-3377

Editor: Sam Brungardt
612/376-8182

FALL IS TIME TO TACKLE IRIS BORERS

The onset of fall is usually the signal that insect problems are over for another year. While this is mostly true, there's still work to be done outside if you have irises, which are a refuge for a very destructive pest, the iris borer.

Jeffrey D. Hahn, entomology educator with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, says the iris borer damages iris plants while it is in the caterpillar stage. After the caterpillars hatch in early spring, they crawl up to the leaves of the iris plant. As they feed inside the leaves, the caterpillars work their way down to the rhizome, where they eat out the interior.

"The injury caused by this feeding is severe, but the iris borer's real impact is in allowing a bacteria that causes soft rot into the iris," Hahn says. "The borer pupates at the end of the summer and emerges as a moth in the fall. The female lays eggs on old iris plants, where they remain through the winter."

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Cutting the foliage back to 6 inches and removing plant debris after the first frost will destroy the eggs and minimize the number of iris borers that will be present next year, according to Hahn.

He adds, "It will still be necessary to apply an insecticide next spring. Dimethoate (De-Fend 267 or Cygon) is the recommended insecticide. It should be applied in the spring, when new growth is 4 to 6 inches tall. Also, iris plants should be checked when they are reset at the end of the summer, and any that are infested should be destroyed."

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TCO,P2,4F

NAGRO950

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 10, 1985

Source: Delores Andol
218/463-2761

Writer: Jack Sperbeck
612/373-0715

ROSEAU COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT ANDOL HONORED

Delores J. Andol, county extension agent in Roseau County, received the Director's Award to Distinguished Faculty Oct. 8 during the annual staff development conference of the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Andol was recognized for managing an excellent 4-H and home economics program and for setting an outstanding example for other extension agents. She received the award from Patrick J. Borich, director of the extension service.

"Delores is extremely well organized and is recognized as a national authority on youth," said Blake Peterson, who worked with her in Roseau County and is now the county extension director at Mankato.

"I don't know of any extension worker as dedicated as Delores. She has one of the top youth programs in Minnesota. She has devoted her life to her work and has reached an extremely high percent of the youth in her county," Peterson said.

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Andol has been an extension agent in Roseau County since 1946. "Being in the same job for almost 40 years could make one willing to sit back and rest on their laurels. But this is not true of Delores," said Mary Jenkins, county extension director in Hallock, who nominated her for the award.

"Delores is constantly trying new ways to help youth develop their full leadership potential. At a time when 4-H programs are competing with many other activities, 4-H remains a strong program in Roseau County," Jenkins added.

Andol has been active in international youth programs. She has also been a summer program coordinator for the citizenship program of the National 4-H Foundation.

A few of her awards and achievements include:

--induction into the Red River Valley Winter Shows Hall of Fame in 1985;

--president of the Minnesota Extension Agents' Association;

--Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of 4-H Agents; and

--member of the state 4-H advisory committee.

The Director's Award to Distinguished Faculty is given annually to an outstanding field staff faculty member. It carries a \$1,000 stipend through the University of Minnesota Foundation and is financed by contributions to the Agricultural Extension Service.

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Oct. 10, 1985

Source: Eileen Anderson
218/726-7512
Writer: Jack Sperbeck
612/373-0715

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SELMED,1A,P2,4HE

NEXT0963

Oct. 17, 1985

Source: Jeffrey D. Hahn
612/376-3377
Editor: Sam Brungardt
612/376-8182

SPRAY SCALE INSECTS WITH DORMANT OILS IN FALL OR SPRING

It may be too early to be thinking of spring, but it's not too soon to consider what strategy to take if you had a tree or shrub infested with scale insects this year.

Says Jeffrey D. Hahn, entomology educator with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, "Although scales do not usually cause significant injury to healthy, mature trees or shrubs, heavy numbers can weaken young plants. Control can be attempted during the summer, when the vulnerable crawler stage is present, but the crawlers are easy to miss when they are out. Using dormant oil sprays is also effective and less of a hit-and-miss proposition."

Dormant oils, formulated from petroleum oil, are used to suffocate the scale insects. They are applied in the fall, while the tree or shrub is dormant, or before bud break in the spring.

Hahn says, "Although early spring is generally best, you may safely spray trees and shrubs in the fall. It's important that the temperature is around 50 degrees F. Do not spray if the temperature is below 40 degrees or is expected to go below freezing within 12 to 24 hours. If you apply an oil spray when it's too warm, the tree or shrub may be 'burned'. Trees, such as maples and conifers, that are sensitive to oil sprays should not be treated."

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TC0,P2,4H

NAGRO949

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 24, 1985

Source: Sherri Johnson
612/376-1537
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

BRUSH UP ON WOOL KNOWLEDGE BEFORE WINTER WINDS BLOW

Wind chill factors and wool clothing seem to be an unbeatable combination in Minnesota. Sherri Johnson, textiles and clothing specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, suggests that learning a bit about the language of clothing labels may help you select new wool clothing and care properly for the garments already in your closet.

Fiber content labels are required by law. These tell the consumer what fibers are in the garment and what percentage of each kind of fiber is included. Johnson cautions consumers that sometimes fiber names appear on labels just to make the clothing seem superior or higher class. Silk and cashmere are sometimes used in this way.

"Usually a textile must have at least 15 percent of the fiber in order for it to make a meaningful difference in the texture or performance of the garment," she adds. "Wool garments must be listed as percent wool--which has never before been used in cloth --or percent recycled wool. Recycled wool includes fibers

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recovered from previously manufactured new or used cloth and it tends to be less strong than new wool."

She says that "virgin" wool means that the wool has never been made into cloth, but use of the term is voluntary among manufacturers. "Lambswool" means that the fiber came from a young animal. Such wool is likely to be very soft and pleasant to touch.

Wools such as angora, alpaca, camel, cashmere and rabbit must be present in amounts of 25 percent or more to alter the properties of the fabric, Johnson notes.

In addition to labeling garments for their fiber content, manufacturers also must provide either washing or drycleaning instructions. These must warn if any part of a regular care procedure would be harmful. Such procedures might include the use of bleach, tumble drying or drycleaning.

Water temperature, dryer settings or ironing temperatures are sometimes spelled out on labels. Johnson adds, however, that these do not have to be given if hot water, hot drying or a hot iron will not harm the garment. Some garments are labeled "no bleach" or "use only nonchlorine bleach when needed." If all bleaches are safe to use, bleaching instructions need not be mentioned on the label.

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Oct. 24, 1985

Source: Harold Alexander
612/373-0931
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

COMPANY COMING? HERE'S A GUIDE FOR SPACE NEEDS AT THE TABLE

Festive holiday meals seem to require an abundance of both good food and family members to enjoy it. Harold Alexander, interior design and furnishings specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, says planning dinner parties often raises questions of how many people can be seated comfortably at a table.

As a general rule, he suggests allowing at least 24 inches for each guest at the table. A 30-inch allowance at the table's edge will be even more comfortable if your space will permit it, he adds. In addition, Alexander recommends allowing each diner a depth of 16 to 18 inches for individual dishes and glassware. Serving dishes and centerpieces will require 10 to 18 inches in the center of the table.

Space needs will also be affected by who the guests are. Large people will require more space at the table and children may too, depending, as Alexander puts it, on their "dining

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graces." Guests in wheelchairs will require more space because the chairs themselves are 25 inches wide and they are also deeper than regular dining chairs. Disabled guests will also require more space to get to their places at the table, and they may need extra room between the table's edge and the wall or any other obstruction, Alexander says.

He adds that towards the end of a meal, chairs are often shoved back slightly from the table and this may restrict movement around and behind it. An informal dinner may also require less space than an elaborate, formal meal.

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CEO,P2,4HE

NHEC0973

Oct. 24, 1985

Source: James Houck
612/376-3560
Writer: Jack Sperbeck
612/373-0715

FARMERS LOSE INCOME WITH FREE MARKET FARM POLICY

Minnesota farmers would lose income in the short run under almost all realistic, current farm policy proposals. That includes the Reagan administration proposal, according to a University of Minnesota study.

Farmers would lose if the government got out of agriculture--with the sector returned to a free market and no unexpected increases in world demand. Farm prices and income would fall, according to the study, conducted for the university's Agricultural Experiment Station by Kenneth W. Bailey and James P. Houck.

"This would force many more farmers out of business," the two agricultural economists say in the report. The winners would be the federal budget deficit, consumers and foreign importers. "A transition to a free market would help reduce the future size of the federal deficit, and would continue to provide relatively cheap food to American consumers and foreign buyers."

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The other extreme is the Farm Policy Reform Act, or parity bill. It would require farmers, after a referendum, to subject themselves to strict marketing quotas. In return, farmers would receive loan rates at 80 percent of historic parity. "Such a proposal would benefit farmers by assuring quota holders stable farm prices and a parity return on their marketings."

The federal deficit would also be lowered under a "well managed" quota system since target price deficiency payments and paid acreage diversions would be eliminated. But this reduction in federal budget costs requires that the program be properly managed, meaning supplies must be reduced enough from current levels to generate much higher market prices.

"But the losers under the parity option would be grain handlers, input dealers and consumers," the economists said. Grain handlers would lose as the supply of grain available on the market is reduced. Input dealers such as seed, fertilizer, machinery and chemical dealers would lose as acreage planted is reduced in response to marketing quotas. Marketing firms and exporters would suffer a sizeable reduction in volume of business.

Consumers would also lose as higher food and feed grain prices would raise the cost of meat and other products.

The objective of the study was to project prices and production for major Minnesota commodities and to project Minnesota's net farm income under various proposed policy options.

The study analyzed two sets of policy options. The first reflects "stylized" options, from a free market bill to an 80 percent parity option. The second set analyzed the Reagan administration's proposal and a variable loan repayment option. Net farm income was projected to drop sharply for all options except the parity option.

"The outcome of the 1985 farm bill debate will affect farmers well into the next decade," Bailey and Houck say. Their report, "The Economic Impact of Alternative Agricultural Policies on Minnesota's Farm Economy," is available from the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

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BSS,CEO,1A,P2

NAGRO988

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Oct. 24, 1985

Source: Jerry Fruin
612/376-3563
Writer: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

HEALTH OF MINNESOTA BARGE INDUSTRY TIED TO THAT OF AGRICULTURE

When Minnesota farmers hurt, so does the Upper Mississippi River barge industry, which depends heavily on farm commodity "passengers."

"Barge traffic," says Jerry Fruin, marketing/transportation specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, "is very dependent on farm exports." Corn, wheat and soybeans account for more than half of the total traffic; 20 million tons of commodities go in and out of Minnesota ports during the state's eight-month shipping season.

Barge costs are less than those of other transportation modes: less than 1 cent per ton mile, compared with more than 3 cents by rail and two or three times that by truck, Fruin says.

"Some 10,000 grain barges are being used on the river, but there are another 3,000 tied up and not being used," says Fruin, who collaborated on two papers about the barge industry with graduate students Dan Halbach and Scott Wulff based on research they conducted for the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station.

Keeping the shipping channel dredged to a satisfactory operating depth (generally 13 or more feet) is a concern of barge

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operations, who, Fruin says, believe that Minnesota is indifferent to problems of commercial navigation.

In recent years, the Army Corps of Engineers has cut back on dredging. Fruin says this has been largely for environmental reasons. Although sometimes used for beaches and land reclamation, dredged material (which is often considered a pollutant) has to be removed from the flood plain at high cost without careful consideration of the true costs and benefits.

Consequently, the depth and width of dredged portions of navigation channels can be less than optimal for safe and efficient barge operations. Barges are pushed in tows 100 feet wide and 1,000 feet long that can carry 22,500 tons or 800,000 bushels of grain, as much as 14 railroad boxcars. Narrow bends make it harder to navigate, shallow channels require more fuel to move the same loads and the resulting slower speeds increase capital costs. The result is a higher transportation bill for Minnesota agriculture.

Although commercial navigation pays a fuel tax (10 cents a gallon) for use of the Mississippi, pleasure boats pay nothing. Fuel costs for barge operators have risen much as they have for motorists over the last few years.

"Without the barge industry, we can't afford to maintain the river for recreation in Minnesota," Fruin says. "It makes little sense to keep \$7-million locks open just for cabin cruisers."

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Oct. 24, 1985

Source: Deborah Brown
612/376-7574
Editor: Sam Brungardt
612/376-8182

ORDER SEEDS OF '86 ALL-AMERICAN SELECTION WINNERS EARLY

The All-American Selections are chosen each year from the many new flower and vegetable varieties that have been developed. They are improvements over existing varieties and have been thoroughly tested throughout the United States and Canada for outstanding performance under a wide range of growing conditions.

The All-American Selection winners for 1986 are 'Sunny Red' cosmos, 'Blondy' okra and 'How Sweet It Is' sweet corn.

Says Deborah Brown, horticulturist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, "Because these varieties are new, seed supplies will probably go fast. If you like to be among the first with new or unusual plants in your garden, look for these in next year's seed catalogs and get your orders in early."

'Sunny Red' cosmos are versatile plants, tolerant of dry or moist weather as long as they have plenty of sunlight. Plants form dense mounds of blooms 2 feet tall and 2 feet across. The bright red, single flowers soften to scarlet-orange as they mature.

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Brown says 'Sunny Red' cosmos can be planted directly in the garden after the soil has warmed in mid-May, or plants can be started under fluorescent lights indoors five or six weeks before transplanting time. They should begin to bloom in 60 to 70 days.

"Okra has not been grown much in Minnesota, partly because older varieties require a long growing season," Brown says.

"'Blondy' has solved this problem, developing pods only 48 days after it is up. Okra can be started indoors or direct seeded in the garden. It does need a warm soil, however, and seeds shouldn't be planted until the soil reaches 60 degrees, probably in June.

"Plants of 'Blondy' grow 3 feet tall and produce dozens of pale, yellow-green pods. Pick the pods when they are about 3 inches long. They'll be a good source of potassium, fiber, the B vitamins and vitamin C. They're delicious cut crosswise, added to fresh salads, soups or cooked vegetable combinations."

'How Sweet It Is' sweet corn is aptly named. Bred for supersweet flavor, it has the distinction of retaining its delicious taste for 7 to 14 days after harvest. Usually, each plant produces two ears about 8 inches long.

Brown says, "This white sweet corn takes 85 days to mature in Minnesota. It must be planted when the soil warms in mid- to late May, and should be isolated from other corn varieties. To get a jump on the season, gardeners can start seeds indoors, but only two or three weeks before it's time to transplant the seedlings into the garden."

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Oct. 24, 1985

Source: Chris Cook
612/373-1556
Bill Angell
612/373-0910
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

U OF M HOUSING STUDY INVOLVES FAMILIES IN 12 MINNESOTA COUNTIES

Housing decisions and the impact they have on midwestern, rural and small town families is the focus of research which is getting under way in 12 Minnesota counties.

Professional interviewers representing the University of Minnesota will be contacting randomly selected residents in Blue Earth, Carlton, Clearwater, Dodge, Freeborn, Kanabec, Otter Tail, Red Lake, Renville, Redwood, Rice and Swift counties within the next few weeks. The interviewers will attempt to conduct personal interviews, each lasting about an hour, with 85 families from each county.

According to Chris Cook, director of the project and a researcher with the university's Agricultural Experiment Station, the interviews should shed light on how Minnesota families make decisions about housing options and how those decisions affect their economic, social, psychological and physical well-being.

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University of Minnesota, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Minnesota Counties Cooperating

situations are important to the study if the results are to reflect accurately the housing situation in the state. She also stresses that information collected in the interviews will be kept confidential. The trends and results of the research will be reported to Minnesotans through news reports and programs offered by Agricultural Extension Service agents in many counties, but no individual names or situations will be singled out.

Cook says the interviewers will carry identification attesting to their connection with the university and the Agricultural Experiment Station's research efforts. Anyone wishing further information about the study may contact Chris Cook at (612) 373-1556 or extension housing specialist Bill Ange11 at (612) 373-0910.

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BSS,CEO,1A,P2

NHEC0985

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Oct. 31, 1985

Source: Dave Noetzel
612/373-1888

Writer: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

BROWN RECLUSE SPIDERS? NOT IN MINNESOTA

In 17 years, entomologist Dave Noetzel has yet to see a brown recluse spider in Minnesota, but he gets a half dozen phone calls a year from people who think that's what has bitten them.

The University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service entomologist also receives vials of spiders (preserved in alcohol) in the mail not just at Halloween time, but year around.

"They have all turned out to be common Minnesota spiders," he remarks, adding that a brown recluse bite needs treatment, but isn't ordinarily fatal. According to the Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta, about one spider bite in three years proves fatal in the United States compared with 30 to 50 insect stings each year."

One of Noetzel's most recent callers was a person who thought he had been bitten by a brown recluse while outdoors. "That's impossible," Noetzel says emphatically, "because the recluse isn't an outdoor spider in Minnesota (it is in the South)."

Page 1 of 2

Not an aggressive spider, the brown recluse is more apt to run for cover to hide (hence its name). It has not been known to leave warmer climes voluntarily and won't survive in unheated buildings, according to Noetzel. The brown recluse has a nondescript, "cobweb"-type webbing, which it uses more for "hanging its hat," as an Oklahoma State University publication describes, than for trapping food, the purpose of most spider webs.

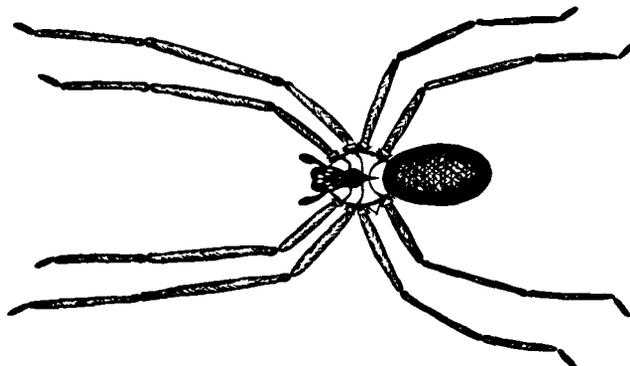
"You can't go backward on a bite," Noetzel says, meaning that trying to make a diagnosis from symptoms is not scientifically sound. One must have the actual "animal", so to speak, and then the tracking goes forward. An analysis of a blood sample could indicate what antibodies are present and that would be the only positive clue as to what had done the biting.

Noetzel says if he were to imagine how a brown recluse might get to Minnesota it might be as a hitchhiker in a box shipped from somewhere in the southern United States. "But," he concludes, "we have never had a call like this."

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CEO,P2,TCO

NAGRO991



news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Nov. 14, 1985

Source: Jerry Fruin
612/376-3563
Writer: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

RAILROADS NEED TO CATCH UP

U.S. railroads will need some dynamic thinking to survive in the 21st century. In an age when cows may wear a computer chip in their ear to regulate the amount of feed they get each day and airplane signals can be detected 200 miles away, can the railroads catch up?

That's the scene Jerry Fruin, transportation specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, sees. Agriculture and the air transportation industry are having problems, but "culture lag has overtaken the railroad system, and not recently. The system was designed to work in the 1880s and though parts of it have been brought up to date, the entire system has never plunged headlong into the 20th century."

Space age technology needs to filter down to earth to help the railroads. There has been walkie-talkie, satellite and short wave radio use by the railroads, but Fruin says, "the system only goes to Communication Traffic Control (an electronic handoff) when there gets to be too much traffic to control it manually. Our space age technology should be applied so that it would be

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impossible for two trains traveling 40 miles an hour on fixed tracks to collide."

He says one promising development is the Association of American Railroads' encouragement of research aimed at developing a concept called the High Productivity Integral Train. Train operating costs for some types of movements would be reduced 35 to 50 percent when such systems are developed.

"Looking at the economics of it, the railroads can make money, but they must win some business back through service and favorable rates," Fruin says. As small towns know best, trucks have taken over the bulk of the transportation business. The local train station may be gone or used for a museum or restaurant. "It would be impossible to think of moving goods (with a time value to arrival) by rail less than 75 miles from St. Cloud to Minneapolis, for example. But for long- distance rail carrying, heavy commodities such as coal and grain are ideal."

Perhaps there will be some changes with the Soo Line Railroad Company's \$571 million purchase of the bankrupt 3,100-mile Milwaukee Road. The Soo Line is majority-owned by Canadian Pacific, Ltd. The Chicago and North Western outbid the Soo, but a U.S. District Court determined the Soo's lower bid to be in the public interest. Fruin says Soo ownership means fewer communities would suffer abandonment of rail service and total rail employment would be higher than if Chicago and North Western had been successful.

Rail piggybacking is up 10 to 20 percent in the past few years, Fruin says. For example, with this system a truck semi-trailer loaded with fresh produce is put on a flat car. The trailer is loaded at 4 a.m., the train leaves by 5 a.m. and in 36 hours the trailer is on the West Coast. "This does away with two drivers needed to get the semi-trailer that distance on the highway," Fruin says.

The point often comes up--why can't we be like the Japanese bullet trains or the speedy European carriers? Fruin is quick to defuse these theories. Of the bullet trains he says, "they give no return on investment and not even interest on the capital investment. Built with government money, enough funds aren't generated from fares to replace the system when it wears out. In Europe, the government regulates trucking and reserves lots of freight for the rails. Population density is concentrated and destinations not as spread out as in the United States, so there are short travel times between large population areas."

The Staggers Rail Act of 1980 allowed deregulation and competition among railroads. While rates went up, so did some operating efficiencies, but it also made abandonment easier. When operating costs exceeded revenue, subsidies to branch lines stopped and many smaller towns lost their daily trains.

Fruin says it will be interesting to see how this "use it or lose it" philosophy goes with the trains into the 21st century--just 15 years from now.

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news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Nov. 14, 1985

Source: Diane Hedin
612/376-7624
Writer: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

MINNESOTA YOUTH EXPRESS FRUSTRATION AT NUCLEAR THREAT

Youth very much want to be informed on the nuclear threat, but voice frustration that no one will listen to them and that they can't make a difference. These are a few of the conclusions from a poll conducted in spring 1984 by associate professor Diane Hedin of the University of Minnesota's Center for Youth Development and Research.

About 800 Minnesota high school students participated in the study, which was funded by the university's Agricultural Experiment Station. Rural participants were from Braham-Westview, Motley, Moose Lake, Worthington and Chokio-Alberta High Schools and from Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls. Suburban high schools involved were those in Coon Rapids, Osseo and Hopkins. Urban high schools participating in the study were St. Paul Central, Southwest and Washburn in Minneapolis, John Marshall in Rochester and the Children's Theatre School in Minneapolis.

Hedin says, "The majority of teenagers polled called for more information and education about war and peace. Because of this,

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we prepared a list of resource materials and organizations on this topic. (Available from the Center for Youth Development and Research, 386 McNeal Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.) Although it's not a complete reference, we hope it provides multiple viewpoints on war/peace concerns."

One question the poll asked was, how important is the threat of nuclear war to young people and in what ways are they affected by it?

Although youth participating in the study considered nuclear war the most important public policy concern, two-thirds said they are not affected by it on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, about three-fourths said their plans for the future, in terms of career, marriage and having children, were not affected by the threat of nuclear war. The most frequent theme was that one had to act as though the future were predictable and not be immobilized by the threat of nuclear war.

Yet, for 10 to 15 percent of the respondents, the fear was constant and pervasive. One student said, "I feel sick when I think about it. It's depressing and sometimes gives a hopeless feeling." Others said (there's) "nothing we can do to stop it, so why worry about it?"

The students said they rarely discuss the nuclear threat with family or classmates. About 40 percent thought their parents had opinions on nuclear war similar to theirs, but didn't actually know because "the subject never comes up." Those who watched "The Day After," a television simulation of the aftermath of a

nuclear attack, said they had talked about it some then. (The poll was conducted within a month after this movie.)

Male and female students were nearly identical in their support of the need to study war, peace and nuclear issues, but urban students (87 percent) were more likely to favor this than were rural (72 percent) and suburban (70 percent) students.

Sixty percent of the students said they had studied about nuclear war in school. Yet, 25 percent of the poll participants said war and peace issues should not be taught in school. Among their comments: "It will scare people and all they will do is worry about it all the time." "It's just too depressing. Who needs it? I don't want to know how I'm going to die."

Of those who wanted education about the nuclear threat, 41 percent said it should begin in junior high, 26 percent preferred grades 4-6 and 18 percent said senior high. Some 20 percent wanted it to begin as young as possible, in grades kindergarten through 3, "when the person wants to learn" or "when a person is mature enough." Again, more urban than rural and suburban youth felt that this education should begin well before senior high.

Students were also asked in what ways could young people influence government policy about nuclear weapons?

More than half of those polled thought they should try to influence government policy, the rest said they should not.

"What is striking about those holding the latter view is their deep cynicism, Hedin says. "These youth perceive that the government does not value their opinions and that their

involvement will have little or no effect."

One student said, "They don't seem to care what our opinions are. The people who are involved have lived all their lives and we're just getting started." Another said, "It's hard to try to influence someone when you don't know what's going on."

Most of the poll respondents vehemently disagreed with some researchers who speculate that adolescents' early sexual experimentation is in reaction to the spectre of nuclear destruction. Some 80 percent of the youths polled categorically denied any relationship.

The study concludes that the threat of nuclear war is of deep concern to young Minnesotans and few believe they could survive a nuclear war or would even want to. The study's closing paragraph states, "A society in which a large proportion of its young citizens believe that it's futile to try to have a voice in what they consider to be the most important public issue of the day must re-examine itself and wonder what democratic decisionmaking can possibly mean to its young people."

A 40-page publication, "Minnesota Youth Poll: Youths' Views on the Nuclear Threat," reports the findings of the research and contains the individual and group questionnaires used in the poll. To obtain a copy, item AD-MR-2667, inquire at a county office of the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service or send a check for \$2, payable to the University of Minnesota, to the Distribution Center, 3 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave., University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

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news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

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Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Juanita Reed
612/373-1083

Writer: Hank Drews
612/373-1250

4 MINNESOTANS TO RECEIVE PARTNER IN 4-H AWARDS

Duane A. Wilson, H. Janabelle Taylor, Charles M. Myrbach and Richard L. Boniface will receive the Minnesota 4-H program's highest honor, the Partner in 4-H Award, for their significant contributions. The awards will be presented Nov. 29 at the State 4-H Recognition Banquet at the Sheraton Inn Northwest, Brooklyn Park.

Wilson is the recently retired secretary of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. Since his childhood membership in Pipestone County 4-H, he has been a strong advocate of the youth program--as Sibley County agent, as extension district supervisor, as Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture and as secretary of the Board of Regents. As president of the 4-H Foundation Board of Trustees, Wilson has had significant impact on the structure of the board and the private support base for 4-H.

Janabelle Taylor recently retired as program director of the Hallie Q. Brown Center in the Summit-University area of St. Paul.

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She has promoted 4-H among volunteer leaders and taught nutrition and health skills to youth. Taylor served on the Minnesota Agricultural Extension Service Advisory Committee and was on the Ramsey County Extension Committee for 14 years, where she helped identify priority needs and provided strong support for family and community 4-H programs.

Charles Myrbach, director of research and institutional grants at Southwest State University in Marshall, was a member of the original task force of youth professionals from southwestern Minnesota which looked at the problem of teen suicide, a serious problem today. Myrbach suggested the research, sought funding and helped conduct the survey and analyze the data. The results are real-life data from rural youth, which help professionals understand the rise in stress, depression and suicide.

Richard Boniface is director of public relations and field service for the North Central Wool Marketing Corp. A longtime supporter of 4-H, Boniface has judged county and state fleece and wool shows. He has also provided educational materials, tours and awards and has conducted wool judging and marketing workshops for 4-H members.

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TCO,1A,P2

N4-H1031

MTR
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Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Bill Berguson
612/376-3246
Writer: John Colmey
612/376-9689

CLONAL SCREENING CONTINUES FOR PEATLAND ENERGY PRODUCTION

Short-rotation forestry on peatlands may be a viable energy alternative in Minnesota within 10 years, says associate soil scientist Bill Berguson, who works on an agroforestry research project for the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Experiment Station.

Berguson describes short-rotation forestry as a blend of agronomy and forestry: Trees are planted in high densities and managed on short rotations to produce maximum yields of wood for use as fuel or pulp. Management of the trees is similar to that of farm crops, with weed control, fertilization and mechanized planting and harvesting.

The primary objective of the research, which is moving into its fifth year, is to find poplar and willow hybrids that have high biomass yields, the ability to regrow from stumps abundantly and are winter hardy and disease resistant. Although

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final results will not be known for two more years, seven years after planting, Berguson says 20 of the 200 hybrids tested appear to have the characteristics necessary for peatland energy production.

Some of those 20 hybrids have been producing 17 tons of biomass per acre, among the highest yields recorded in the world. "With yields that high," Berguson says, "fuels from peatland forests could potentially cost half as much as natural gas."

Minnesota has about 7 million acres of peat soils, second only to Alaska. Berguson believes that 1 million acres, planted with willows and harvested on a four- to seven-year rotation, could provide up to 10 percent of Minnesota's energy needs.

Peatland energy research is also being conducted in Michigan, Wisconsin, Washington, Florida, Sweden and Canada.

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BSS,CEO,1A,P2,4F

NCRD0948

MTR
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Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Alice Tibbetts
612/373-1708

Editor: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

DUNKING IN COLD WATER PRESENTS HYPOTHERMIA DANGER

Getting dunked, unprepared, in cold lake water is uncomfortable at any season, but particularly dangerous when hypothermia (subnormal body temperature) can be the result.

In western Lake Superior, for instance, the danger of hypothermia is constant year-round because the water temperature often doesn't exceed 60 degrees Fahrenheit. This is true of many inland lakes and streams in Minnesota, particularly in winter and spring.

Loss of body heat can occur 25 times faster in cold water than in cold air, according to a publication of the University of Minnesota's Sea Grant Extension program. It suggests wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) collar or vest as the best hypothermia protection available for survival in cold water.

"Whether you are a duck hunter, sailor, fisherman or other person out on cold water, a PFD and hypothermia prevention equipment are inexpensive compared to the potential dangers of hypothermia or loss of life," the publication states.

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Anyone who happens to get dumped in cold lake or river water should get as much of his or her body out of the water as soon as possible, the publication suggests, by boarding a life raft, a floating object or the swamped boat if at all possible.

Don't attempt to swim any distance, since swimming causes body heat loss and eight-tenths of a mile or less is about all the swimming distance possible in cold water. Only swim to reach a nearby craft, other survivors or floating objects.

Hypothermia victims with moderate to critical symptoms should always have professional medical care as soon as possible. After medical assistance, victims should be protected from re-exposure to cold and kept in warm conditions for a period of time.

Moderate symptoms are when body heat goes down to 90 to 93 degrees F from the normal 96.8 degrees. From 82 to 90 degrees F indicates severe symptoms and critical symptoms are 82 degrees F and below.

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CEO,TCO,P2,40S

NCRD1018

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

MTR
N47
JAH

Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Ron Pitzer
612/376-3851
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

CHILDREN NEED HELP IN ACHIEVING POSITIVE SELF-IMAGES

Before children can like others, they must like themselves. This comes largely from a child's relationships with parents and early caregivers, according to Ron Pitzer, family life specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Pitzer adds that if a child's self-image is that he or she is bad or not worth much, the youngster often will live up (or down) to those expectations. "Many children need help in accepting and liking themselves for what they are. A child who is secure in his opinion of himself is rarely threatened by the accomplishments or possessions of other children," he notes.

Children's feelings about themselves are affected by their parents' realism about them, Pitzer says. Parents who view their children's strengths and weaknesses realistically and with a large measure of loving acceptance let their children know that they have a right to be themselves. "Such children need never

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apologize for what they are (although sometimes for what they do) no matter how strong, how rich or how gifted anyone else may be," Pitzer adds.

In their eagerness to have their children excel and be a credit to them, some parents make the mistake of measuring one child against another. According to Pitzer, this competitiveness often boomerangs, causing a child to feel that he or she must be something or somebody different to win parental approval. He reminds parents that children in the same family are often unlike each other, but when parents respect each child for his or her individuality, they help children gain self-confidence and esteem.

"Perhaps the most basic prescription for assuring a child's feeling of self-worth is a generous dose of parental love and tenderness," says Pitzer. "A child who is appreciated for what he or she is and who is not constantly being compared unfavorably with others generally learns to like himself."

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CEO,TCO,4HE

NHEC1027

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

MTR
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Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Donald Breneman
612/373-1792
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

GET CAMERA READY FOR HOLIDAY SHOOTING

Holiday gatherings call for photographs. You can save yourself frustration and disappointment by checking your equipment and supplies now, suggests Donald Breneman, communication specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Batteries are a likely trouble spot. Since they last about a year, it's a good idea to give your camera a new set of batteries for a Christmas present, Breneman suggests. By doing it at Christmas time, you will always know when the batteries have been changed.

Check your camera inside and out to be sure it's clean. Look at the lens and film chamber and check the battery terminals for corrosion. If they are corroded, rub off the corrosion with a pencil eraser.

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"If you haven't used your camera for a couple of months, shoot a test roll and have it processed immediately," Breneman says. "Then you'll know for sure that the camera works. You may save a lot of disappointments later."

Be sure to have plenty of film and batteries on hand, he advises. It's hard to buy these supplies on Christmas Eve or Christmas day. If you are giving a camera as a gift, you may want to buy and wrap extra film in a separate package so the gift can be used immediately.

Once you're confident your camera is in working order, keep it handy and use it often during the holidays, Breneman says. Snapshots of the gift opening around your tree or of someone wearing or using a gift will make welcome enclosures in thank you notes or letters. Keep next Christmas in mind and try for a picture to put on your greeting cards, he suggests.

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CEO,TCO,4HE

NHEC1029

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

NOTE
DHT
JAP

Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Ron Pitzer
612/376-3851
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

HELP YOUR CHILDREN 'CATCH' THE ART OF GIVING

Most children focus on the receiving side of gift-oriented holidays. It's up to parents to help them "catch" the spirit of giving as well, suggests Ron Pitzer, family life specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

He says parents' examples are vital in teaching children to share and give gifts graciously. "This year, when gifts are exchanged, remember that you're making a big impression on your child in the way you accept gifts from him or her," he adds. "Don't complain about 'having to give' or about not receiving enough in return."

Parents are sometimes guilty of giving generously but not receiving gifts in the same spirit. Ask yourself if you make it possible for your children to feel satisfied with their efforts at sharing. "The feeling of good will that can come through giving is more wonderful to a child than is his or her pleasure at receiving gifts," Pitzer says.

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He adds that the younger the child, the more he depends on adults to help him give. Very young children should not be excluded from planning, making and presenting gifts. As they grow older, the happiness experienced through early gift-giving will enable them to give generously and joyously as adults.

Pitzer thinks children should be encouraged to make at least some of their gifts. "It doesn't matter how it looks to you," he adds. "He or she will feel the joy of creating and the good will of giving. If you have to say something about the gift, stick to 'Wasn't it fun to make?' or 'Grandma will be pleased that you thought of her.' Children aren't fooled by gushing, but insincere praise."

For adults who may laugh at or pass over the homemade gifts of your children, Pitzer suggests you guide your children in buying or making appropriate gifts. He recommends food and decorations as nearly foolproof gifts for children to make because nearly anyone can appreciate the usefulness of such items.

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CEO,TCO,4HE

NHEC1028

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Ron Pitzer
612/376-3851

Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

TMR
N47
8/24/85

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK: MAKING TIME FOR NURTURANCE, TOGETHERNESS

A commonly seen bumper sticker asks, "Have you hugged your kid today?" During National Family Week, Nov. 24-30, family's needs for nurturance and enjoyable time spent together should be spotlighted, suggests Ron Pitzer, family life specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Pitzer recognizes, however, that the pace of modern life often makes family time difficult to schedule. "But creating a home that provides nurturance and pleasant interactions among all members should still be a high priority for families even though it isn't easy with the kinds of pressure everyone is under today," he says. "If the family is to support and prepare children for the future, there needs to be an abundance of positive feelings among family members. Feelings of belonging, affection, concern and commitment require time together--time to exchange feelings and experiences."

What we blame on time shortages may be more a problem of our inclinations. Pitzer says, "It is easier to blame time rather than inclination for our procrastination. Yet, some families

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with exactly the same 24-hour day available to them still find time to spend together because they make family time a priority."

Pitzer hopes the attention focused on National Family Week will cause some families to strive for more family time. He suggests several steps that families can take to insure this:

--For a week or so, check on your typical family activities, Pitzer recommends. "Just how much time does Mother spend with each of the children? Father? Various combinations? The whole family?"

--Next, have a family meeting to review what you have found about the time spent together. What modifications are needed? From this, develop a plan with definite goals for time together and family activities:

--As part of this goal setting, try to reduce family fragmentation and arrange opportunities to get to know each other better. Try to balance individuals' time, whole family time, time for various combinations of family members and, possibly, time for the whole family to be together.

Pitzer adds, "Setting aside time to be together may nudge some family members into new skills or interests because of the value that others place on the activity. Be sure, however, that the activities meet the needs and interests of all concerned. Otherwise, some members may resist family activities because they feel that others dictated the terms."

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news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

MTK
10417
EAP

Nov. 21, 1985

Source: Ron Pitzer
612/376-3851
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

START OF HOLIDAY SEASON IS APPROPRIATE TIME FOR FAMILY WEEK

Thanksgiving, with its rich family traditions, is an appropriate time to note "National Family Week," which is Nov. 24 through 30. Holidays give us a chance to reflect on rituals and traditions that bind families together, says Ron Pitzer, family life specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Family traditions don't all focus on holiday celebrations, however. They can be as elaborate as the events surrounding Christmas or as simple as Sunday morning pancakes or viewing a particular television program together each week.

"Anything a family likes well enough to repeat on a regular occasion develops into a tradition," Pitzer says. Some traditions evolve gradually so that family members can barely recall how they got started. Birthday celebrations might be an example. The simple cake, ice cream and gift opening may take on new elements each year. Soon a family has an intricate routine

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for birthdays including certain foods, guests and privileges for the family member who is having the birthday.

Other traditions may not change over the years. The tradition of opening gifts on Christmas morning versus Christmas Eve may depend on how adult family members celebrated the holiday when they were children. Once established, the gift opening routine often remains the same for years.

Families benefit from traditions, Pitzer says. They give young children a sense of security and help draw families together. They also provide common memories and pleasant associations. When adults continue traditions that they learned as children, they establish a link with the past. If their children adopt the customs and carry them to their own homes, they provide continuity into the future.

Pitzer suggests that during National Family Week, families should examine the traditions that they observe. "And think about other things that you enjoy doing together," he says. "Is there an opportunity to build pleasant traditions around these? Even a simple weekly routine such as distributing allowances on Friday evening or reading the Sunday newspaper together can become a cherished tradition."

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CEO,TCO,4HE

NHEC1025

Nov. 27, 1985

Source: Ron Pitzer
612/376-3851
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

KEEPING CHRISTMAS ECONOMICAL, BUT CREATIVE, IS A WORTHY GOAL

Keeping Christmas expenses within a tight budget can be both a challenge and a worthwhile goal for families. But, warns Ron Pitzer, family life specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, it's almost never easy.

Pitzer says that family traditions and expectations for Christmas giving become established quickly. No matter how good the reasons for cutting back may be, some friends and family members may be disappointed or upset by changes.

He says that any move to spend less or cut back on the number of gifts should be discussed and agreed upon by both the givers and the receivers. Even then, he adds, it may be difficult to escape some hard feelings. Such a decision, however, is always better if it's made after talking to everyone involved.

"Because it's often so difficult to change holiday traditions once they're established, young couples or families just starting out should think very carefully about the traditions, patterns

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and spending levels they establish in their first few Christmases," Pitzer says. "Like them or not, they may become the standard for many years to come."

To avoid what Pitzer terms the "tyranny of gifting," he suggests that families work together to set some ground rules for their gift giving. This may mean limiting the cost of each gift, drawing names for gifts among relatives or specifying that certain gifts should be handcrafted or original rather than purchased.

He applauds the idea of homemade gifts to get away from some of the commercialism of the holiday, but says that this may only substitute the giver's time for his or her money. That, too, can be a burden if givers attempt too much at the last minute for the people on their gift list.

"If making gifts is approached as a family project and is done throughout the year rather than in a hurry right before Christmas, it can be a great activity," Pitzer adds. "Gifts that truly reflect our creativity and our insights into the receiver's personality can be the most meaningful ones under the tree even if they cost almost nothing to make."

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CEO,P2,4HE

NHEC1035

Nov. 28, 1985

Source: Dave Noetzel
612/373-1888

Writer: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

INSECTS ADAPT TO WINTER VERY WELL

Minnesota's insects don't need to go south for the winter, they'll survive right here (overwintering, the scientists call it), although not all in the same pattern.

"Some survive in the egg stage, others as larvae or pupae, either in the soil or in plant materials best suited in the field," describes Dave Noetzel, entomologist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service. He is speaking of what most of us refer to as bugs: meaning mosquitoes, cutworms, banded sunflower moths, seed weevils and other insects.

Armyworms and greenbugs (not native to Minnesota) die at the end of each growing season; however, a new crop of them may blow up from the south next spring--their carrier, the wind.

"Some native insects won't make it through winter, but unless the total mortality rate is 98 percent or higher, you won't notice any decline in the numbers around next summer," Noetzel says. "Their reproduction potential is high and most

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serve a useful purpose which further aids their survival." When an insect species does disappear, another gradually takes its place because the niche it occupied is vacant.

Fear of this upset to nature prompted a letter to the State 4-H office which Noetzel was asked to answer. After seeing collections of dead insects exhibited at the State Fair, the writer expressed concern that 4-H'ers trapping insects for their collection trays would cause the extinction of some species. "I wrote back that for this to happen there would have to be a total change in the environment, including the temperature and the plant community. The purpose of having young 4-H'ers (4-H is statewide program sponsored by the University's Agricultural Extension Service) collect insects is to educate them on the value of insects to humans as part of the chain of life."

Noetzel says soil tillage doesn't drub out insects either. "Tillage should be done for its value to the soil and not for its effect on insects," he says. "Some insects may be killed, but the slight mortality amounts to little because of the high reproduction potential. Besides, we need the majority of them."

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Dec. 5, 1985

Source: Ron Pitzer
612/376-3851
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

MAKE IT A SAFE HOLIDAY FOR CHILDREN ON YOUR LIST

The thrill of a new toy can turn to tragedy if the gift was selected carelessly or used inappropriately and unsafely. Ron Pitzer, family life specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, says safety and appropriateness for the child's age should be top considerations when buying toys.

"Become a careful label reader," he says. "Look for and heed the age recommendations". They are an indication of both safety and the child's interest level. Also look for other safety labels such as "flame retardant/flame resistant" on fabric products and "washable/hygienic materials" on stuffed toys.

Pitzer adds that the labels of potentially dangerous toys must warn the consumer under regulations set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. For instance, cap guns can produce noises that can damage hearing so the law requires a label warning against shooting them indoors or too close to the ears.

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These warnings, recommendations and cautions have been agreed upon for the consumer's safety after extensive legal discussions. Pitzer says it would be foolish for gift buyers to ignore them.

Electrical toys must carry labels assuring proper construction. Those with heating elements are recommended only for children over eight years of age and warning labels say such toys should be used only under adult supervision.

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NHEC1039

Dec. 5, 1985

Source: Ron Pitzer
612/376-3851
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

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CREATIVE GIFTS TAP FAMILY INGENUITY, TOGETHERNESS

The most meaningful gifts become creative outlets for the givers as well as treasured, personal items for the receivers. Ron Pitzer, family life specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, thinks that planning and presenting gifts with flair and ingenuity can make Christmas both less costly and more significant for families.

If you are trying to cut holiday expenses, Pitzer suggests that delightful gifts can result from a family's brainstorming with an emphasis on creative, unique and highly personal items.

He admits that such gifts, which often take hours to make, may merely trade the giver's time for his or her money. He adds, however, the time invested in this type of gift often makes the act of giving particularly meaningful to the giver.

"If you hope to economize or to get away from the commercialism of the holiday season, the trade-off of time versus money may be one you are happy to make," Pitzer says.

"Sometimes, the family discussions and time that go into planning a clever, homemade gift become favorite memories years later.

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"Ideally, any gift should be more than just the purchasing or creating of something," he adds. "It should reflect the insight you have into the receiver's personality and the things that he or she holds dear."

Pitzer recalls a gift he once gave a friend--a humorous poem he had written about a fantasy he knew the person enjoyed. Accompanying the poem was a small toy, which also symbolized part of his friend's fantasy life. Although the gift was very inexpensive, it delighted the person for whom it was prepared and created a further bond and pleasant shared memory for Pitzer and his friend.

Pitzer says such gifts often depend on an elaborate presentation, which can be time consuming but enjoyable. In his family, gifts to his and his wife's parents often revolve around a theme. One Christmas gift consisted of many small, individually wrapped trinkets and foods from around the world, following the theme, "Around the World in 80 Ways." Because his family had talked about the gift and accumulated items throughout the year, it was as enjoyable for them to put together as it was for the receivers to open all the cleverly interrelated gifts and humorous notes accompanying them.

Although there may not be time to put together such gifts for this holiday season, Pitzer suggests it may be something families would like to consider for future occasions.

"Part of the value of gift-giving is the thought that goes into it," he points out. "If a gift shows an appreciation for the receiver and his or her personality, sense of humor and wants, it will be a thoughtful and long remembered gift no matter what it cost."

Dec. 5, 1985

Source: Jean W. Bauer
612/373-0909

Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

HOLIDAY GIVING BRINGS 'RETURNS' OF THE SEASON

Along with the traditional tree and plum pudding, returning unwanted or unwearable merchandise to stores seem to be an inevitable part of Christmas.

Jean W. Bauer, family resource management specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service, recommends returning problem merchandise as soon as possible.

Some stores don't accept returns after 10 days.

"Try to bring back items when the store isn't very busy," she says. "Avoid closing times or days when the store is having a large sale. If possible, have the sales receipt with you. Never wear or use anything that you plan to return."

Some stores will only exchange one item for another. Others will give you a gift certificate of equal value. If a credit card was used in the original purchase, some stores will just take the credited amount off the bill. If this is the case, you should make arrangements with the gift giver," Bauer adds.

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"Sometimes you will find an item to be defective or broken. In this case, you have a right to return it to the store," Bauer says. "If you leave it at the store for repairs, make sure to get a receipt, proving that the item was paid for. If an item is too large to carry back to the store, telephone the manager. Keep a record of the date you called, whom you spoke with and what they said. If you have to call again, tell them about your first call."

Sometimes, you'll have to return something by mail. Before sending it, write a letter stating the problem and asking what steps you should take. Keep a copy of the letter for your files. When you actually return the item, clearly state why you're returning it in a letter taped to the top of the package.

If you don't get an answer in two or three weeks, write again, this time sending your complaint to the store manager. If that does not suffice, you may need to contact the consumer protection division of the state's attorney general's office.

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CEO,TCO,P2,4HE

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news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Dec. 5, 1985

Source: Jean W. Bauer
612/373-0909

Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

'TIS THE SEASON TO FEEL THE FINANCIAL PINCH

Despite what the Christmas song says, 'tis the season to feel anything but jolly for many families. The financial pressures of the season may be particularly acute for many rural and Iron Range families this year, according to Jean W. Bauer, family resource management specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

Facing those pressures while keeping the budget in line can be a grim task over the holidays, she adds. "Our society is accustomed to promoting and advertising Christmas 'wants' so that we often feel we must have certain items," Bauer says. "We're all targets of the advertising so by the holiday season we all have long wish lists."

She urges families facing a lean Christmas to take some action. "Think through your situation and try to determine why you choose to give or exchange gifts. How important to you is this sharing? How important to the others is it?" she asks.

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Gift giving may be done out of tradition or impulse rather than planned action. "This may be the year for you to clarify with yourself and others in your family your gift-giving plans and budget," Bauer notes.

Instead of gearing your shopping list to new and costly items, Bauer suggests thinking of things that you can share with each person on the list that may have meaning for both giver and receiver but cost little or nothing. "Be creative and try to think of something that you would not buy. For instance, give someone vouchers for spending time with you or your family. It could be for a meal a month, an outing or anything that the receiver would enjoy," she says. "This is a gift of yourself and takes a lot of love and thought to give."

She says children can often think of creative and thoughtful gifts for their siblings, friends and relatives. This helps them think of gift giving in a new spirit and may make an otherwise lean Christmas seem rewarding and memorable.

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CEO, TCO, P2, 4HE

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Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Dec. 5, 1985

Source: Jean W. Bauer
612/373-0909
Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

MAKE YOUR CHARITY DOLLARS COUNT

Too often we make donations to charities or groups without much thought about how this fits into the family budget or what it contributes to the overall good of others, says Jean Bauer, family resource management specialist with the University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service.

She says, "With the current economic conditions, you may have fewer dollars to give this year, so you will want them to do as much good as possible."

First, decide how much you plan to share with others, Bauer suggests. How much can your family afford? When should the contributions be made? Some groups have fund drives at times that may not be the best times for your family to contribute, but most groups happily accept contributions throughout the year. If the charity needs contribution information for planning purposes, you could make a pledge to give later.

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She adds that each family needs to set up criteria to use in deciding when to give. What types of activities do you wish to support? Which organization can most effectively carry out those activities? In evaluating a charity, ask about length of operation, objective of the program, geographic area, number and kinds of persons helped, organizational control, sources of income, ratio of program service spending to administrative costs, tax exemption status and availability of an independently audited tax statement. The charity should be willing to provide you with this information.

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University of Minnesota
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Dec. 5, 1985

Source: Theodore Labuza
612/373-1077

Writer: Deedee Nagy
612/373-1781

FOOD ALLERGIES ARE WIDESPREAD, U OF M SCIENTIST SAYS

Adverse reactions can be traced to nearly any item in the American diet, but fortunately such reactions are rare, according to Theodore Labuza, professor of food science and nutrition at the University of Minnesota.

Labuza, who conducts research for the university's Agricultural Experiment Station, recently headed a panel of experts from the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) that looked at the problem of food reactions and allergies.

The panel concluded that although very few people ever experience severe, life-threatening reactions, many people have some type of food sensitivity. Many commonly consumed foods, including milk, eggs, nuts, some types of seafood, peanuts and wheat, can cause problems for large numbers of consumers, the panel noted. Despite this, the panel pointed out that adverse reactions to foods and food ingredients are much more the exception than the rule.

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Labuza pointed out that although most persons refer to reactions as "allergic," physicians distinguish between true allergies--which affect the body's immune system--and the more common nonallergic reactions to food.

For example, one of the more common food sensitivities is lactose intolerance, an inability to digest the sugar in milk. This is not a true allergy, but it can occur in up to 90 percent of some ethnic groups such as Greeks, Arabs, Blacks, Chinese, Japanese and Filipinos.

Similarly, a protein in wheat and other grains known as gluten causes a sensitivity in about one person in 3,000.

Reactions to sulfites occur with about the same frequency, the IFT panel noted. Although this problem has received much publicity recently, its incidence is low. Sulfite-induced reactions are estimated to affect 5 to 10 percent of all severe asthmatics, or about 90,000 persons in the United States.

With true allergies, stomach and intestinal symptoms are most common, but the skin and respiratory system may be affected too. A rare but very dangerous result of food allergy is anaphylactic shock. This can result in severe itching and hives, perspiration, constriction of the throat, breathing difficulties, lowered blood pressure and death.

Labuza and his colleagues noted that persons with extreme sensitivities should carry epinephrine (adrenalin) kits at all times to counteract such reactions, which often occur rapidly.

The panel noted that diagnosis of food allergies and sensitivities can be difficult because symptoms vary widely. The IFT experts added, "Physicians frequently lack knowledge of food composition...and may be unaware of the patient's potential for reactions to trace substances in foods (rather than their major ingredients)."

The best treatment for most food allergies is merely identifying and avoiding the offending food, Labuza and his fellow panel members concluded. They acknowledge, however, that this can be difficult, particularly if the food is a minor ingredient in a prepared food such as a baked item, gravy, soup or salad dressing.

"Most food processors, if approached through a letter that clearly explains the problem of the individual, are willing to indicate in which of their products a particular food or ingredient may be found," according to Labuza. "Of course, the label of a processed food must contain all the ingredients added so a sufferer should become an avid reader of food labels."

The panel is generally opposed to banning certain foods because "small groups of people exist who will suffer significantly from exposure to almost anything. For the vast majority of us, the same foods or compounds are perfectly safe."

news

Agricultural Extension Service
Communication Resources
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Dec. 19, 1985

Source: Ronald Pitzer
612/376-3851

Writer: Mary Kay O'Hearn
612/373-1786

MEMBERS OF STRONG FAMILIES ARE ALLIES

Members of strong families think of each other as "allies not competitors," says Ronald Pitzer, a University of Minnesota's Agricultural Extension Service family life specialist, who calls belief in the failure of the family "a folk myth."

Pitzer summed up some of the research on families done across the country in his article, "Family Strengths & Rural Conditions: Some Speculations" in the "Sociology of Rural Life" newsletter.

A series of studies on family life in Muncie, Ind., compared the 1978-80 span with the 1920s and found today's family has increased solidarity, closer marital communication and smaller generational gap.

A remarkable finding, Pitzer says, was that people whose own families were in good shape often believe other families are "falling apart." He thinks "we may be confusing change with collapse."

Families inevitably fail the fantasies--their unrealistic expectations for marriage, parenthood and family life, but that doesn't make them failures, says Pitzer.

Family researchers, educators and counselors are beginning to focus on family strengths rather than deficiencies. Emphasis is on adaptability, flexibility, cohesion, communication skills and University of Minnesota, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Minnesota Counties Cooperating

support. A strong family is one in which individuals are attached to each other, do things together, communicate well and provide mutual support. Pitzer believes a search for strengths may find separation to be part of a process of readjustment that culminates in new and stronger family relationships.

Adults and teenagers in strong families, according to the research, are aware of what the family stands for and believes in. "These families tend to be busy with both adult and child members having outside-home interests while keeping strong ties to the family." It means, too, that everyone finds themselves hassled with some overload at times, but when they find their lives fragmented because they aren't spending enough time together, they recognize this, call a halt and make their families top priority for a time.

Pitzer noted that troubled families tend to be uninvolved with the larger community and isolated from other people. Strong families have networks of friends, kin and neighbors--so important for coping with stress and crises.

The family that is isolated from others, that often goes unnoticed in the community, is probably the family that should worry us most, he says. "This may be a central concern in outlying rural areas."

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