

Backyard Maple Sugaring Workshop: How to Make Your Own Maple Syrup!



Have you thought about making your own maple syrup? Do you want to know what is needed and learn how to do it? Attend this workshop if you do, it will cover all the steps from the tree to the table plus the equipment needed. This special workshop is geared to first-timer and beginner *maplers* having less than 75 taps. All aspects of maple sugaring will be covered, including tree id, tapping, collecting, boiling sap, finishing, filtering and packing syrup. Equipment and supplies needed, especially sizing and operating small evaporators, homemade and commercial, will also be discussed.

This program is presented by Sumner Dole of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension where he has been a county forester for almost thirty years and also specializes in maple. He has been making maple syrup in his own backyard with various systems for many years.

When: Wednesday, February 1, 2006
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where: Blow Me Down Grange Hall
Rt. 12A, Plainfield, NH

This program is free of charge, but pre-registration is requested. To register or for more information contact Chuck Hersey at 863-9200 or chuck.hersey@unh.edu.

Two *Strengthening Families Programs* 10-14 for parents/caregivers and youth ages 10-14 will run this winter. Classes are free and include dinner and child care.



- Claremont - January 19 through March 9, 2006 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. at the Diana Love Center. Call Marti Pacini at 542-3947 x105 for more information or to register.
- Newport - January 23 through March 13, 2006 from 5:30-8:00 p.m. at the South Congregational Church. Call 863-9200 for more information or to register.

Preparing for Winter Storm Emergencies

Planning ahead for winter storm emergencies can range from a well-organized 7-day emergency food supply to a few basic items to keep on hand. Regardless of where you are on the range of planning activities, the **ABCD's** of keeping food safe in an emergency can help you plan what you'll need. The **ABCD's** are:

A - Always keep meat, poultry, fish and eggs refrigerated at or below 40°F and frozen food at



or below 0°F. If the power goes off, the refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about four hours if it's unopened, and a full freezer approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it's half full).

B - Be prepared by stocking up on foods that don't need to be refrigerated and can be eaten cold.

C - Consider what you can do ahead of time to store food safely in an emergency, i.e., keep an insulated cooler on hand and have frozen gel packs or blocks of ice in your freezer to keep perishable food cold in the cooler.

(see "Storm Emergencies" on page 8)

NH Poultry Producers: Avian Influenza ("Bird Flu" Advisory)

You've probably heard about the avian influenza ("bird flu") that's resulted in the death or destruction of more than 100 million birds in Southeast Asia since 1997. You may have questions about whether this flu could affect you or your flock.

Fact: Dozens of strains of avian flu viruses circulate among birds worldwide. Wild birds serve as the natural hosts and carriers for avian flu viruses. Scientists say the current H5N1 outbreak is the largest and most severe strain of avian flu on record.

Fact: Some people in Asia have caught this flu from birds, and occasionally, from other humans. Human health experts have concerns about the potential of the H5N1 avian flu virus to change into a form that passes easily from human to human, triggering a global epidemic, or *pandemic*. Because humans won't have natural defenses against this new form of flu, it could cause more serious illness and more deaths than outbreaks of the "regular" flu that comes around each winter.

Fact: Until a pandemic flu actually strikes, we probably won't have a vaccine that can protect people against it. Your regular fall/winter flu shot will not protect against a pandemic flu.

Fact: Prevention, the best form of protection against any infectious disease, remains our primary form of protection against a pandemic flu outbreak.

(see "Avian Influenza" on page 7)

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Keeping Bag Lunches Safe



Whether it's off to school or work we go, millions of Americans carry "bag" lunches. Food brought from home can be kept safe if it is first handled and cooked safely. Then, perishable food must be kept cold while commuting. After arriving at school or work, perishable food must be kept cold until lunchtime.

Why keep food cold? Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly in the "danger zone"—temperatures between 40° and 140°F. Perishable food transported without an ice source won't stay safe long. Perishable food should not be left out at room temperature for more than 2 hours. Here are safe handling recommendations to prevent foodborne illness from "bag" lunches.

- Prepackaged combos that contain luncheon meats along with crackers, cheese, and condiments must be kept refrigerated. This includes luncheon meats and smoked ham which are cured or contain preservatives.
- At lunchtime, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness.
- Pack just the amount of perishable food the night before and store the packed lunch in the refrigerator. Freezing sandwiches helps them to stay cold. However, for best quality, don't freeze sandwiches containing mayonnaise, lettuce, or tomatoes. Add these later.
- Insulated, soft-sided lunch boxes or bags are best for keeping food cold, but metal or plastic lunch boxes or paper bags can also be used. If using paper lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to help insulate the food. An ice source should be packed with perishable food in any type of lunch box or bag.
- Prepare cooked food, such as turkey, ham, chicken, and vegetable or pasta salads, ahead of time to allow for thorough chilling in the refrigerator. Divide large amounts of food into shallow containers for fast chilling and easier use. Keep cooked food refrigerated until time to leave home.
- To keep lunches cold away from home, if a refrigerator is not available, include a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box. If no cold source is available, pack items such as canned meat or fish and bread, hard cheese and crackers, or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Keeping Hot Lunches Hot

Use an insulated container to keep food like soup, chili, and stew hot. Fill the container with boiling water, let stand (cap on) for a few minutes, empty, and then put in the piping hot food. Keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot—140° or above.

When using the microwave oven to reheat lunches, cover food to hold in moisture and promote safe, even heating. Reheat leftovers to at least 165°F. Food should be steaming hot. Cook frozen convenience meals according to package instructions.

For further information, contact the Meat and Poultry Hotline:

1 (800) 535-4555 (Toll free nationwide)
1 (800) 256-7072 (TTY)

FSIS (Food Safety and Inspection Service) web site: www.fsis.usda.gov

Source: USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

Family Development

Gail P. Kennedy
Extension Educator
Family & Consumer Resources
gail.kennedy@unh.edu



The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The Earned Income Credit (EITC) is a special tax benefit for people who work full-time or part-time. Millions of low and moderate wage taxpayers qualify although some don't apply. Last year, New Hampshire residents qualified for more than \$8 million in Earned Income Credit that went unclaimed.

If you qualify for EITC and file a federal tax return, you can get back some or all of the federal tax withheld from your pay during the year. You may also get some cash back from the IRS. Even if you didn't earn enough to pay an income tax, you may qualify for EITC.

How much can you receive in EITC and who qualifies?

The amount of money you receive varies depending on your earnings in 2005 and who is in your

family. There are essentially two types of families who can qualify for the earned income credit. One type is for workers between ages 25 and 65 with no children. The other type is for workers with qualifying children. This child can be a son, daughter, adopted child, grandchild, stepchild, your brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister whom you cared for as you would your own child; or a foster child placed by a government or private agency. The child had to live with you for more than six months in 2005. This child must be under age 19 or under age 24 and a full-time student, or any age if the child is permanently disabled.

The chart below illustrates the income guidelines and maximum EITC you can earn.

Family Size	Single	Married Filing Jointly	Maximum EITC
Two or more children	\$35,263	\$37,263	\$4,400
One child	\$31,030	\$33,030	\$2,662
No children	\$11,750	\$13,750	\$399

Source: Internal Revenue Service

How do you get the EITC?

To get your earned income credit if you have a qualifying child, file Form 1040 or Form 1040A and attach Schedule EIC for the Earned Income Tax Credit. To get your earned income credit if you don't have a child, file Form 1040, Form 1040A or Form 1040EZ. These forms are available at libraries, some post offices and banks.

Workers raising children can get part of their EITC in their paychecks throughout the year. The rest will come back as a check from the IRS after the worker files a tax return. This is called the Advance EITC payment option.

FREE help filing your tax forms

If you would like to save money on tax preparation or need help filling out the EITC forms, call NH Helpline at 1-800- 852-3388 to find out where the nearest free IRS certified tax preparation site is located. IRS certified volunteers are trained to help you fill out the tax forms. These sites are operational in late January.

4-H and Youth



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Join the Fun at Teen Winter Day!



If you are 13 years old or older and belong to 4-H, you are invited to the NH 4-H Teen Winter Day on **Saturday, February 11 at Arrowhead Ski area in Claremont.** This is a great chance to meet other 4-H teens! All 4-H teens in the state are invited to an afternoon of outdoor fun including tubing, skiing, snowboarding or ice skating. (We'll also have indoor board games available for those who choose to play.) After the outdoor activities from noon to 4 p.m., we will walk 2 doors down to the Claremont Middle School for more socializing, dinner and a dance. The dance will end at 8 p.m. so that 4-H teens from around the state can get home at a reasonable hour.

The registration cost for the Teen Winter Day is \$10 per person to ski, board and tube. Ski or snowboard rentals are also available for an additional \$10. You can also bring your own equipment if you have it. (Only Arrowhead tubes will be allowed on the tubing hill this year and they are included in your registration fee along with a new tubing lift.) For a packet of registration materials, call our office at 863-9200 and ask for Sandy Rumrill or email sandy.rumrill@unh.edu. Be sure to give her your mailing address.

This event was lots of fun in 2004 so call now so you don't miss out on the excitement!

Join other 4-H teens at Pat's Peak

Snow Tubing at **Pat's Peak, Henniker, NH on Sunday, January 29 at noon - 5:30 p.m.** The cost is 15.00 per person. The meeting place will be at the Valley Lodge. Open to all 4-H teens age 13 years and up.

Schedule: 12 - 1 p.m. Get Acquainted Activities
1 - 4:45 p.m. Tubing
4:45-5:30 p.m. Pizza Gathering
Pizza will be provided.

Bring warm clothing suitable to weather conditions.

Deadline for sign up: Friday, January 20, 2006.

For more information call Debbie Cheever at 225-5505 or go to: http://www.patspeak.com/winter_fun.htm

CURRENT NEWS

Eight Reasons to Start Preparing for County Activities Day

1. IT IS A LOT OF FUN!
2. It will help your leader get registrations in early, so you are sure to be signed up.
3. You can enter all events at County Activities Day and Fashion Revue if you plan ahead.
4. By starting early, you can prepare a high quality product that may qualify you to attend State Activities Day on Saturday, June 3, 2006 at the University of New Hampshire (if you are 12 years of age or over). (Horse topic speeches, demonstrations and action exhibits can also compete for the horse roundup in Louisville, Kentucky.)
5. You can get the best ideas before your brother, sister or other club member.
6. Practice makes perfect.
7. Long range planning lets you prepare better.
8. The office has free half sheets of poster board, first come, first serve.



These Washington Generals 4-H members sewed for the first time last year and made these wonderful chef aprons. We hope to see them again this year!

Start sewing for Fashion Revue or try Fashion Selections!

It's time to start planning now to take part in our fashion program in April. If you don't want to sew, we have an **exciting alternative way for you to participate!** For "Fashion Selections" you **choose a purchased outfit to model and be judged on. It can be something you wear to school, for special events, a prom outfit or you can even put together an outfit entirely from thrift stores or yard sales!** The idea is to use your consumer skills and accessorizing talents to put together a functional outfit. Everyone buys clothing but not everyone likes to sew, so we can include more 4-H members in our show this year.

Please help us spread the word about this new opportunity to your members, both boys and girls, **age 12 or older.** We have an excellent 4-H curriculum called "Discovering Choice: Clothing Decisions" that will help project leaders work with youth on the consumer decisions used in purchasing clothing. Members may still choose to sew an outfit and also put together a purchased outfit this year. They will be judged on both on **Saturday, April 1 and model in the Fashion Show on Friday evening, April 7.** Both events take place at the Claremont Middle School and gifts will be given to everyone who participates.

*Please note that Fashion Evaluation Day will again be held the same day as County Activities Day so

it's a little harder to do both events, but not impossible. We'll schedule you to make it work.

All organization leaders and clothing project leaders will receive information in the mail on Fashion Revue and Fashion Selections. In the meantime, please talk to members about how they could choose an outfit for one of their hobbies or sports, be sure it is appropriate and fits well, bring props or accessories, and then write a script about how they intend to use their outfit.

Fashion Selections categories include:

Best Bargains for under \$25
Sports / Leisure activities
School
Special Occasions
Makeovers
Interview Outfits
Career Fashions

For members planning to sew an outfit, it is important to choose your fabric and pattern early and get started sewing this month so you are not doing it all at the last minute! We still have some patterns in the Extension office that you can borrow for free. We also have guidelines to help you choose appropriate patterns and fabric for each year of sewing. Cloverbuds are also invited to sew something very simple! Sewing leaders are urged to call Nancy Berry for more information.

4-H MEMBERS' CORNER

National Arbor Day Poster Contest

Each year the National Arbor Day Foundation sponsors a poster contest for fifth graders. This year's theme is: "Trees are Terrific...in All Shapes and Sizes!"

You can visit <http://ceinfo.unh.edu/Forestry/FORKET.htm> to read more about Arbor Day and the local contest. Leaders can e-mail (karen.bennett@unh.edu) to request a poster contest curriculum packet. The national contest is for fifth graders but Karen Bennett, State Coordinator, will accept

submissions from all grade levels with the understanding that only fifth grade entries are eligible for the national contest. Though she hasn't had any entries from 4-H clubs in the past, she will accept them as well. All entries are eligible for the NH contest and the fifth grade winner is submitted to the national contest. Schools should submit winning entries to Karen Bennett, 131 Main St., Nesmith Hall, Durham, NH 03824, by March 20, 2006.

Attention New Reporters and Club Secretaries!

Send your items and reports to the office! We will print them in our 4-H newsletter. If you would like, we will forward your articles over to local newspapers for publishing.

It is time to begin registering 4-H project animals for 2006 summer 4-H fairs

Are you planning to show your 4-H project animal at the fairs during the summer of 2006? If so, your project animals must be registered with the Sullivan County Extension office. Call to request a current animal or horse project approval form or download a copy from the Extension website ceinfo.unh.edu in 4-H youth development section/publications/project resources. These forms must be completed and submitted before or on the most appropriate

deadline date listed as follows:

February 1: **Beef Steers to be shown at Eastern States. (a special eartag is required to be in place before February 15). Contact a 4-H educator to let them know you are interested in participating.**

April 1: **Horses to qualify for Eastern States.**

May 1: **Beef Heifers to be shown at Eastern States, Working Steers, Dogs, Dairy Cattle, Llamas and Horses.**

June 15: **All Sheep, Goats, Swine, Small Animals, Poultry and other Beef not to be shown at Eastern States**

Outstanding Accomplishments Recognized During 4-H Rally

Creativity, achievement, enthusiasm for 4-H club membership and leadership are examples of the areas in which members and/or leaders are recognized each year at 4-H Rally and Awards Night. Oak Hill Rider 4-H member **Victoria LaBelle** and Fun 4-H member **Megan McPherson** served as commentators, introducing presenters and narrating the program. Several members of the Covered Bridge 4-H club conducted the flag ceremony. The stage decorations provided by Newport's Clever Cardinals provided a wonderful fall theme as a background to the awards ceremony. Thanks also to the Fun 4-H Club for sponsoring a food raising raffle to benefit Alstead flood victims.



Congratulations to **Ashley Bailey** of the Horse Huggers and **Victoria LaBelle** of the Oak-Hill riders who were each recognized as the 2005 Ivan Head Outstanding 4-H'er award winners. This is the highest honor presented to a Sullivan County 4-H member. To achieve this honor, candidates submit a Senior 4-H record and participate in an interview process. Through this process Sullivan county 4-H members having a strong combination of qualities including leadership,

service to others, outstanding project accomplishments, active participation in community, county, and state 4-H events, and an enthusiasm for the 4-H are chosen to be recognized with this honor during Rally.

This year the Washington Generals 4-H club members and leaders were recognized as the 2005 Outstanding 4-H Club. This group is entering it's eleventh year as a 4-H club. They have been an active and enthusiastic group participating in Rally, International Foods Day, the poster contest at County Activities Day, Fashion Revue, many of our family field trips and the Cornish Fair. Club members sold cookies and candy bars, and sponsored a car wash to raise money for their local food shelf. They enjoy sharing their creativity and talent. During their club achievement meeting youth members sang and danced to songs from "Grease".

An outstanding community service award was presented to the Jim Dandies 4-H club. This wonderful group recently completed the installation of a new playground at Patch Park. It was no small effort to raise the thousands of dollars for the structure and to coordinate donations for the sign, bark mulch, cement and stone from area businesses. The playground project will be enjoyed by the many families spending time at the park during youth sports events. The Jim Dandies 4-H club hopes to add three more pieces of equipment next year. This is just one of many ways Jim Dandies 4-H club members contribute back to the community where they live and learn.

County medals of honor recognizing outstanding 4-H project accomplishments were presented to: **Michelle Ash** of the Country Kids, **Ashley**

Bailey, Amanda Jones & Dominique Rondeau of The Horse Huggers, **Rachel Baker** of Fun 4-H, **Daphne Rondeau** of Covered Bridge 4-H, **Shelby Pillsbury** of the Crafty Kritters and **Monica Stout** of the Clever Cardinals. In addition, Honorable Mention certificates were awarded to **Anna Haron** of the Oak Hill Riders and **Andrew Rondeau** of the Upper Valley Livestock club. Each recipient submitted a record of their accomplishments in 4-H. Individual records were reviewed by a committee of volunteers from which members were nominated for project recognition.

Five 4-H members were honored for reaching their tenth year membership anniversary. Ten year members recognized were **Laura Harthan, Nicholas Shackett** and **Isaiah Whitman** of the Sullivan County Teen Club; **Lisa Lawrence** of Fun 4-H and **Kristen McKane** of the Hemlock Hi-Toppers. Each attending member received their ten year pin in honor of their dedication and long term commitment as youth members.

Pumpkin Decorating contest award winners included: Golden Clover 4-H members **Angelika & Dan Seaman**; Covered Bridge 4-H'ers **Ali Reza** and **Mehdi Oroggi, Andrew and Dorian Rondeau**; Fun 4-H'ers **Megan McPherson** and **Abby St. Pierre**.

The Ruth Bascom and N. H. Antique Tractor Club scholarships were awarded to 4-H members: **Laura Harthan** of Cornish, attending Cornell University in New York. Laura plans to become a Veterinarian, **Amanda Jones** of Cornish, attending Midway College in Kentucky. Amanda plans to become an Equine Therapist and **Shannon St. Pierre** of N. Charlestown, attending St. Michaels College in Vermont. She is studying English and Elementary Education.

4-H LEADERS' UPDATE

Come to the Leader's Banquet!

Friday, March 10 at 6:00 p.m. is your chance to treat yourself to a nice meal as our way of saying "thank you" for all you do for young people in 4-H.



Mark your calendar today because we want YOU to attend our annual Leader Banquet at the Teal Room in the Sugar River Technical School in Claremont. (It's right next to Claremont Middle School on South Street.) We will enjoy a specially catered buffet prepared by the culinary arts students at the school. The menu will feature a meat entree, a chicken entree, a fish entree, a potato or pasta dish, vegetables, soup, salad, rolls, dessert and beverages.

The meal is **FREE** for all currently enrolled 4-H volunteers and there is a small charge for spouses or guests who attend. We will have door prizes and a surprise for your entertainment enjoyment as well. Your invitation will be mailed to you at the end of January. It's always an enjoyable evening.

Note: Only **enrolled** 4-H leaders will receive an invitation, so this is one last reason to get your enrollment form in to our office **now!**



Celebrate World Diversity During International Foods Day on Saturday, January 28

International Foods Day is a county favorite. It provides opportunities for learning, tasting unfamiliar foods and swapping ideas with 4-H members and leaders from participating clubs. International Foods Day is scheduled for January 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Newport Middle High School.

The basic steps for club participation follow:

1. **Choose a country** to learn about. Work together to plan a menu using a combination of recipes commonly eaten during a meal.

2. **Plan a short presentation** to share a tradition, dance, music, clothing, or a ceremony that stands out because it is unique & interesting. Keep club presentations short, focused, simple and fun. Rehearse at least twice so you can be sure the presentation is not longer than two or three minutes. Your audience will include some of our youngest 4-H'ers and siblings who have very limited attention spans. Ask members with speaking parts to use the microphone. The room is very large and it is a challenge to hear what is being shared.

3. **Attend Event:** Saturday, January 28.

Arrive at 11:00 a.m. with a precooked meal from your country. Bring dishes, silverware, napkins, serving spoons, and pots & pans to re heat foods as needed. Members set tables while leaders and parents warm food to be served at noon. Bring a bit more of one item to share. Milk and coffee will be provided.

Please call the extension office as soon as you decide which country to represent. As the event gets closer, please let us know the number of participants expected to attend from your 4-H club. As always call with questions.

Save the Date! Get R.E.A.L. Workshops Saturday, March 4 8:30 - noon Charlestown Middle School

Watch your mail for a brochure describing all of the exciting hands-on workshops being offered to Cheshire and Sullivan County volunteers and Teens.

Learn Leathercraft, Microwave Magic, Latin cultural arts, Clothing Decisions, Animal Science, forestry, Mapping with GPS and much more!

Sewing Leaders and Teens Workshop Saturday, January 7, 2006 (Snow date: Saturday, January 14, 2005) at Plymouth State University Memorial Union Building, Plymouth, NH

Come and update your skills, learn some new techniques or ask questions about current projects.

These are all hands-on workshops. Call 863-9200 immediately for registration materials.

Welcome new clubs!

We have three new clubs who are gearing up and starting. One is the "**Matchbox Munchie Bunch**" of Claremont. These Cloverbuds chose their own club name because "they like to eat and they like matchbox cars." Club leader is **Sherrie LaClair** and teen leader is her daughter, **Shelby Pillsbury**.

Another Cloverbud club is starting in Plainfield under the leadership of **Naomi Fitzgibbons**. In addition, **Bill and Jim Taylor** and their father, **Steve Taylor** also plan to start a club for older youth in the Plainfield area. We are always glad to see our 4-H alumni come back to lead clubs for their children and grand-

children. Another 4-H alumnus who is returning is **Dave Kelsey** of Lempster, a former 4-H member in Strafford County, who now has young children who are joining 4-H. **Dave** and his wife **Chris** and their children and **Paul** and **Julia Ritz-Williamson** of Croydon and their children have banded together to start a Cloverbud Club called "**4-H Friends**." The club is busy planning to represent Japan at International Foods Day.

Welcome to all of our new 4-H leaders and members! We are excited to have you join our Sullivan County 4-H family!

GENERAL 4-H NEWS AND INFORMATION

Volunteer Toolbox - Some Decision Making Techniques

One of the things our members are telling us is that they don't feel that they have a lot of say in club decisions. Of course, we also hear leaders say how frustrated they are in getting members to participate in business meetings. Here are few different techniques to try and get more 4-H'ers more engaged in club decision making.

First, do you know what your members goals are for the year? Member goals could lay out your program focus for the year. But the club should also have a goal or focus for the year. Have you asked what members liked, what they didn't like, what they wish for this year? If not, ask us for the Clover Goal Setting Activity to get your members thinking.

Once you know what to focus on for the year, here are some decision making techniques.

Multi Tier Voting ⇒ A good technique when creative ideas need sorting such as a fair theme. Everyone has 1 minute to share their idea. Then each member has X number of votes for first round (2 to 5 depending upon number of ideas to sort). The top X ideas are kept, the others are dropped (usually there is a natural break between popular and not so popular ideas.). Then the group discusses the pros and cons of each idea remaining and a final vote is taken. You can add a few more rounds of voting if a lot of ideas are on the table. This technique allows all ideas equal billing to start and allows the club to get excited about the best ideas as the process goes along.

Consensus ⇒ For a quick assessment of an idea that is taking a lot of discussion, have members indicate their thoughts by a thumbs up, open hand, or thumbs down. A thumb down means the idea should be dropped, an open hand lets you know that a committee should be assigned or more information gathered before a decision. A thumb up means you just need to clarify some items and move on.

Dot Voting ⇒ A good technique when there are a variety of choices. Each person is given a set number of votes. Choices are written on newsprint, a dry erase board or some other large format. Voting can be by sticky dots, a hash mark with a marker, or some other marking method.



Scaled Response ⇒ Each person responds by ranking the idea (either on a card or on a wall scale) from 1 (I strongly disagree/probably won't participate) to 5 (I strongly agree/I would love to participate). This technique makes it easy to sort out how popular a topic is when not every member vocally participates in discussion. Also good to use when history has shown that members vote for something but then don't follow through. It can give a good indication of how much commitment to an idea each member has.

Mad Minutes ⇒ Good for generation of ideas or quick pros and cons of issue on table. This can quickly move a discussion forward. A

timer is needed and the group is given 1 minute to generate ideas, or list the positives or the negatives of an issue.

- written by Lauren Bressett, Cheshire County Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development

Round Robin ⇒ Go around the room, letting each person in turn give response and reasons for it. Person may pass and may respond at the end but anyone already responding may not respond again. Limit responses to no more than 30 to 60 seconds to avoid the hard core lobbyist in your group.

Lobbying ⇒ Each member is allowed one minute to explain why they feel a certain idea is best. Then have the group vote. You can combine this with Round Robin to get everyone involved but this time the focus is to sell others on an idea.



Meeting Ground Rules

It is always a good idea to set ground rules for a decision making meeting. This insures that everyone feels respected and has an opportunity to participate. The members themselves should set the rules but some suggestions include:

1. Be respectful of each other
2. No put downs.
3. All ideas are great.
4. Speak one at a time.
5. Be concise.
6. You may pass.
7. It's okay to piggyback on an idea.
8. No judgements, or suggestions are better than criticisms.
9. Group ideas whenever sensible.

CLUB HIGHLIGHTS

Hemlock Hi-Toppers

We have three new members: Hanna & Katy-Jo McKenzie and Travis Willette. Our club ordered 12 cases of 4-H cookies. We set up a table at September 17 Flea Market. We set up a club exhibit in Charlestown Library for National 4-H Week and month of October. Renewed insurance policy and donated to Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Jim Dandies

The Jim Dandies 4-H club bought clothes and food for the people affected by the flood in Alstead.

Fun 4-H

Fun 4-H officers are: Dylan Mix - President, Reed Chuda - Vice President, Abby St. Pierre - Secretary and Rachel Baker - Treasurer. All officers attended Officer Training on October 22.

Clever Cardinals

November 10, 2005: We began our meeting with the pledge. The secretary and treasurer gave their reports and they were accepted. We talked about our bake sale and were told by Mary it will be on November 22. Our bake sale money will be given to the refugees of the Alstead floods.

Bunny Bunch

On September 27, we held the first Bunny Bunch meeting for the year. We welcomed two new members, Bridget and Emily. We talked about Cornish Fair and elected new officers. Officers are Chloe Fleming - President, Holly Towne - Vice President, Amanda Towne - Secretary, and Mathew Bascom - Treasurer.

Covered Bridge 4-H

Officers elected: Alireza Oroggi - President, Aminah Oroggi - Vice President, Jordan McCarthy - Treasurer, Fatima Oroggi - Secretary, Daphne, Maryam, Helen, Aliza - Historians.

We handed in gift boxes for operation Christmas child. We chose a date for wreath making as a community service project. A motion was passed and approved for the club to purchase stamps and envelopes for the secretary. The club discussed International Foods Day topics and selected Switzerland as a country. After the regular part of the meeting we made Christmas salt dough ornaments.

Agricultural Resources



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“Avian Influenza” from page 1

Q. Could my birds catch avian flu from wild birds?

A. That’s unlikely, but not impossible. Bird biologists around the world, including biologists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are monitoring wild birds for signs of avian flu infection. The U.S. government has banned imports of all birds and bird products from parts of the world where the H5N1 virus has appeared.

Q. How can I tell if my birds have avian flu?

A. Many strains of avian flu can infect domestic birds. Birds sick with avian flu may show one or more of these symptoms:

- Sudden death without other signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Soft-shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swollen head, eyelids, comb, wattles, and hocks
- Purple discoloration of the wattles, combs, and legs
- Runny “nose”
- Coughing, sneezing

- Lack of coordination
- Diarrhea

If you want information about having your birds tested for avian flu, call the N.H. State Veterinarian’s office at 271-2404.

Q. What if one or more of my birds dies?

A. Wearing protective latex, plastic, or rubber/nitrile gloves, place the dead bird in a double plastic bag and seal the bags. If the dead bird showed signs of illness, or other birds in your flock appear sick, call the N.H. State Veterinarian’s office (271-2404) and ask for further instructions.

Q. Could I or others catch bird flu from my birds?

A. That’s also unlikely. But because the facts of avian flu could change quickly, we encourage you to learn and practice using personal protective procedures that can help protect you and your family members. These procedures should become part of the overall biosecurity practices in your poultry operation.

- Wash your hands often, especially after handling birds, cleaning out poultry pens, slaughtering birds, or handling raw poultry products. Lather hands with soap and rub them vigorously for at least 20 seconds, rinsing with very hot water.
- Whenever you clean the coop, handle poultry manure, or slaughter birds, wear disposable latex or reusable rubber/nitrile gloves and a disposable N95 respirator. The respirator will help protect you from any molds, bacteria and viruses present in poultry litter. You may also wish to wear safety goggles and coveralls for these tasks.
- Place disposable masks and gloves in a plastic bag; seal bag and toss with the household trash.

- Disinfect reusable gloves, goggles and coveralls by soaking for at least 10 minutes in a 10 percent bleach solution (1 part household chlorine bleach to 9 parts water).
- When working around birds that show signs of disease, wear full protective gear: gloves, safety goggles, N95 (or higher) respirator, coveralls and booties. Remove and dispose or disinfect gear and wash your hands before entering your home.
- Don’t eat, drink, or smoke when working around poultry.


Q. What if I find a dead bird on my property?

A. Birds die of many causes. There’s no need to report each single instance. Put on your protective gear and (1) either bury the dead bird in a deep hole, or (2) double-bag the carcass and dispose of it with your household trash (unless local ordinances prohibit disposing of dead animals).

Q. Can people catch avian flu from eating eggs, chicken, turkey and poultry products?

A. Experts agree that people can safely eat eggs and poultry products that have been handled, stored, and cooked using standard food safety procedures.

For the latest science-based food safety information: visit the Web pages of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Safety Information Service http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp, or the World Health Organization’s pandemic alert paper on food safety http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/foodrisk2005_11_03/en/index.html



Forest Resources

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Firewood Markets Heating Up

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If the sharp climb in heating oil prices has you dusting off that old wood stove in the corner or researching the latest wood stove technology then you will also want to spend some time contemplating **where** you are going to get your firewood. As a rule of thumb, a cord of dry hardwood fuel yields about the same usable heat as 200 gallons of heating oil, a ton of hard coal, or about 4000 kilowatts of electricity. By comparing the cost of other fuels with cordwood, you can figure out the savings you’ll realize by burning wood to heat your home.

Fuelwood needs time to dry

Don’t expect to go out in the backyard when the weather turns cold to cut down a few trees to saw up and throw into the new stove. It takes time to cure and dry firewood. Burning green firewood

is very inefficient, and it can be unsafe. The moisture content of green wood averages 60 percent to 80 percent by weight, depending on when it was cut.

Evaporating all that water in your stove will use as much as 15 percent of the potential heat in your firewood, so you are better off letting nature do it for you by air-drying your wood before you burn it. Burning green wood also promotes a buildup of creosote in the chimney, increasing the risk of a dangerous chimney fire. It will take about six months to air-dry a cord of cut and split wood to 30 percent moisture content and a year or more to reach 20 percent moisture content.

Brace for higher prices

If you haven’t bought a cord of cut-and-split firewood in a few years, you might be surprised by the prices. A quick perusal of your local weekly newspaper or “shopper” will show advertised prices exceeding \$200 for a cord of dry wood.

Don’t be too quick to assume the high price of dry firewood is a reaction to the sudden surge in demand. The firewood business is labor-intensive and requires a lot of transportation. During the 1990’s, when oil was cheap and firewood profits were thin, most large firewood dealers started to automate the production of firewood through the use of firewood processors in an effort to stay competitive. These processors are designed to cut and split log-length wood (16-foot logs).



In response, many firewood dealers started to buy in log-length wood by the truckload from local loggers. This strategy worked well until demand for hardwood pulp surged two or three years ago. Suddenly, firewood dealers who were used to paying \$30 to \$40 a cord for log length had to pay \$80 to \$100 per cord for the same wood. They had to pass these costs along to their customers. Add surging prices for insurance (especially workman’s compensation) and fuel to run the equipment, and the old standard of \$120 to \$140 cord of firewood quickly rises to \$200.

Wood-buying saavy

If you’re in the market to buy three or four cords of dry wood for the winter, I suggest you look in your local newspaper or “shopper,” or ask your neighbors and friends about dealers they might know. Be sure you are buying dry wood. Ask the dealer how long the wood you plan to buy has been drying since it was cut and split. Learn the species mix of the dealer’s wood, too. The denser the wood, the longer it will take to dry. Oak, for example, may take more than a year to dry to 20 percent moisture content.

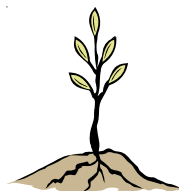
Be sure to clarify what measure of wood you are buying. By state law, a cord of wood is 128 cubic feet of air, bark, and wood. That’s a pile of wood 8 feet long by 4 feet high by 4 feet wide. A vendor may legally sell a fraction of a cord, but must rep-

(see “Firewood Markets” on page 8)

Tree & Shrub Seedlings

Tree and shrub seedlings will be available for purchase from the New Hampshire State Nursery for reforestation, Christmas tree, and wildlife purposes. Seedlings that were available in 2005 included: White Pine, Norway Spruce, White Spruce, Red Spruce, Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Red Pine, Scotch Pine, Balsam Fir, Hemlock, and Fraser Fir are available conifers. Arrowwood, Crabapple, Fragrant Sumac, Grapes, Highbush Cranberry, Dogwood, Rose, Wild Raisin, Beach Plum, Elderberry, Winterberry Holly, Bayberry, Hazelnut, Red Oak, Cedar, Sugar Maple and White Ash seedlings are some of the other species usually available in quantities of 25. Also, a Christmas Tree sampler package of 25 trees and special Wildlife/Songbird, Wetlands, Native Species, and Winter Survival packages are available that contain 25 assorted trees and shrubs.

Catalogs and order blanks for 2006 are available and the catalog can be accessed at their website www.nhnursery.com. The seedlings can be ordered starting in January with delivery being made to a county drop off point in late April or early May. To be put on the mailing list for a catalog contact the NH State Nursery, NH Division of Forest and Lands, P.O. Box 1856, Concord, NH 03302-1856, or call their office at 603-271-3456.



“Storm Emergencies” from page 1

D - Digital, dial, or instant-read food and appliance thermometers will help you know if food is at a safe temperature and which should be thrown out when the power comes back on.

When the power is out, extra care is needed to keep food safe. These general food safety tips apply every day but are especially important when food preparation routines are disrupted:

- Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Cook food to recommended temperatures.
- Keep cold food cold and hot foods hot.
- Follow the 2-hour rule: throw out perishable food kept at temperatures above 40°F for 2 or more hours.

Lastly, be sure to contact the UNH Cooperative Extension Family, Home & Garden Education Center Info Line at 1-877-398-4769, for answers to your food safety and food preservation questions. For more information on keeping food safe during an emergency, to go <http://www.fs.is.usda.gov/PDF/KeepingFoodSafeDuringAnEmergency.pdf>

“Firewood Markets” from page 7

resent it accurately as such (e.g., a half-cord). Remember that stacking a cord is an imperfect skill, so the cord will vary in slightly in size every time it is stacked.

Receiving and storing firewood

It's a good idea to meet the delivery truck before the load is dumped to make sure you are satisfied by the mixture of species and cleanliness, and to tell the driver where you want the wood dumped. Most firewood dealers don't want to return to your house to reload their truck.

Unless you've arranged otherwise, it's up to you to restack the pile. Stack it outside in a well ventilated area off the ground (used pallets make a good platform if you don't have a woodshed). Don't cover your stacked wood until about a month or so before you begin to use it, to encourage natural air circulation to drive the moisture from the wood.

Even if you're buying your firewood, the work of stacking it, loading your stove all winter, and removing the ashes will enable you to understand the old adage “wood warms you twice.”

Extension Calendar

January

- 6 4-H T-Shirt Orders Due to Nancy Berry.
- 7 4-H Sewing Leaders & Teens Workshop, Plymouth State University, Plymouth, NH. See page 5 for details.
- 18 **Organic & Sustainable Growing, Marketing and Managing Risks Workshop**, 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Hanover Library, Hanover, NH. Call Vickie Smith, Bureau of Markets at 271-3685 for questions or to register.
- 18 **4-H Teen Club and Leaders' Association Meetings**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Extension Office, Newport.
- 1/19-3/9 **Claremont Strengthening Families Program 10-14**, 5:30-8:00 p.m., Diana Love Center, Claremont. Call Marti Pacini at 542-3947 x105 to register.
- 1/23-3/13 **Claremont Strengthening Families Program 10-14**, 5:30-8:00 p.m., South Congregational Church, Newport. Call 863-9200 to register.
- 26 **Forest Health Concerns in New Hampshire Lecture**, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Fox State Forest, Hillsborough. Call Trish Churchill at 224-9945 x311 to register.
- 28 **4-H International Foods Day**, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Newport Middle High School. See page 5 for details.
- 29 **4-H Teen Winter Day at Pat's Peak**, noon to 5:30 p.m. See page 3 for details.

February

- 1 **Backyard Maple Sugaring Workshop**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Blow Me Down Grange Hall, Plainfield, NH. See Page 1 for details.

February (continued)

- 1 **4-H Beef Steers Shown at Eastern States Registrations are Due** (a special eartag is required to be in place before Feb. 15). See page 4 for details.
- 3&4 **NH Farm & Forest Expo**, 9:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m., Center of NH, Radisson Hotel, Manchester, NH. See www.nhfarmandforestexpo.org for more info.
- 4 **New Hampshire Dairy Goat Seminar**, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Farm & Forest Expo, Center of NH, Manchester, NH.
- 11 **4-H Teen Winter Day at Arrowhead**, noon-8:00 p.m. See page 3 for details.
- 15 **4-H Teen Club and Leaders' Association Meetings**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Goodwin Community Center, Claremont.
- 15 **Greenhouse Energy Efficiency Workshop**, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., UNH Research Greenhouse, Durham. Call 862-3200 for more information or to register.

March

- 4 **4-H Teen & Volunteer Leader Workshops**, 8:30-noon, Charlestown Middle School. See page 5 for details.
- 7, 14, 21, 28 **The Developing Relationship: Parenting Early Adolescent Children**, 6:00-7:30 p.m., Claremont Middle School, Claremont. Call 863-9200 to register.
- 10 **4-H Leader Banquet**, 6:00-9:00 p.m., Sugar River Tech Center, Claremont. See page 5 for details.
- 16&17 **New England Christmas Tree Pest Management Course**, Keene State College, Keene, NH. Call Marshall Patmos at 352-4550 for more info.



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