GROWING CITRUS IN NEBRASKA

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Growing Opportunities in Nebraska

As I write this column, I have felt the hot, humid days of early September turn into cooler nights as we move from Fall to Winter. As the weather turns colder, get ready for turkey time and see what recipes you can use to brighten your Thanksgiving holiday table this year on page 6. You will also see how one retired farmer in Alliance can grow citrus in Nebraska winters in a 78-foot-long geothermal greenhouse he calls Greenhouse in the Snow. You can see how large, bright and enticing his fruit looks on pages 8-9.

More and more consumers question the use of GMOs, and on page 10 you will see a breakdown of the myths surrounding GMOs. And finally, on page 14, see how Lincoln Public School students will be able to embrace science by way of Nebraska agriculture. Thanks for reading, and I hope you enjoy this fall issue of Nebraska Living Magazine.

By Tina Henderson

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PARTNERS WITH LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Dear Landowner,

I’m reaching out to say thank you. But before I do, I’d like to explain myself. I think a lot of hunters who share my passion would agree. I love to hunt. Like many of us, my garage is full of decoys, blinds, generators, camouflage and tools. Whatever doesn’t fit in the garage stays in the storage unit.

But sometimes it’s hard to find a place to put all that gear to use. I don’t own any land. My family doesn’t own any land. In Nebraska, we are lucky to have more than 1 million acres of land open to public, walk-in access. However, with Nebraska’s strong hunting culture, our publicly accessible land can receive a lot of pressure.

So sometimes, I rely on people I don’t know in order to do the thing that I love. Without them, we can’t always find a place to hunt.

This past waterfowl season has made that more apparent to me than ever. It certainly isn’t the first year with unpredictable weather, early freezes, unseasonably warm temperatures, high river levels or muddy fields. But for whatever reason, finding places to hunt was more difficult than usual for me. And it became clear to me just how much we rely on landowners to give us an opportunity to hunt.

I know you guys get tired of us knocking on your door. I know you get tired of picking up the phone and talking to some guy that you’ve never met about permission. I know you have better things to do with your time. But we bother you anyway. And often, you tell us “no.” But sometimes you say “yes.” Last season, three of us loaded up the trucks and trailer and headed west hoping to find somebody who would be willing to let us set out some decoys. We met a farmer who opened his door to us. Not only did he give us permission to hunt on his land, but he made phone calls to other landowners on our behalf. He invited us into his living room to talk. He let us stay in a big shed on his property that was heated! And he even hunted with us (a dang good shot, too). Everything about it was awesome. We got to make new friends and meet new people and hunt new places. Not to mention, he set us up on one of the best late-season mallard hunts that a guy could ask for. I can’t say enough about the way he welcomed us and treated us.

So to all the landowners who occasionally say “yes,” thank you.

Thank you for recognizing our passion.
Thank you for the opportunity to do what we love to do.
Thank you for the opportunity to use all of our gear that we devote so much time and money.
Thank you for giving us a chance to hang out with our buddies.
Thank you for opening up your property and your homes.
Thank you for sharing stories.
Thank you for hunting with us.
Thank you for letting us make new friends.

To Jim and to Trevor and to Tony and to everyone like you guys, thank you for giving us a place to hunt.

Sincerely,
Jake
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ROASTED TURKEY

1. Bring the turkey to room temp. (This allows for even cooking.)
2. Use a roasting rack. (This allows for air to circulate around the bottom of your turkey in the oven.)
3. Turn your oven to roast at 350º. (Cook low and slow.)
4. Use a lot of butter. (Before the bird goes in the oven and while it roasts. It’s key for crispy and golden skin.)

TOTAL TIME: 3 HOURS 15 MINS

Directions
Position rack to the lower third of your oven and preheat oven to 350º. Pat turkey dry with paper towels and season the cavity generously with salt and pepper. Stuff the cavity with onion, thyme, and garlic. Tie the legs together with kitchen twine and tuck the wing tips under the body.

Brush butter all over turkey then season generously with seasoning salt. Place turkey breast side up on a roasting rack inside of a large pan. Pour chicken broth into the pan. Transfer to oven.

Baste every 30 to 45 minutes with the juices on the bottom of the pan, and roast for 3 to 4 hours, or until the juices run clear when you cut between the leg and thigh. (The meat temperature should be 165º.)

Cover cooked turkey with aluminum foil and let rest for 20 minutes before carving.

INGREDIENTS
One 12-14 lb. whole turkey (remove neck and giblets)
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Seasoning salt
1 onion, cut into wedges
1 bunch thyme
1 head garlic, halved crosswise
1/2 c. melted butter
2 c. chicken broth

Balsamic-Roasted Brussels Sprouts
www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/balsamic-roasted-brussels-sprouts-recipe

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Being a new parent is no nine to five. Before the sun is even up, it’s breakfast time. And more often than not, you’re awake long after the sun has set. For those times, and everything in between, we’re there for you. Keeping the lights on when they need you the most.

NPPD.com
Winter in Alliance is harsh, with high winds, lots of dry, cold air and temperatures averaging 30 degrees and often dipping to 25 below zero. Farmers don’t seem to be growing much during a Nebraska winter. But with four careers under his belt, as a retired farmer, mail carrier, baker and manufacturer of riding cabs for pickups, 87-year-old Russ Finch has defied the odds and grows citrus and hundreds of other tropical plants inside a 78-foot-long geothermal greenhouse he calls Greenhouse in the Snow.

“We can grow the best citrus in the world on the high plains,” Box Butte County Farm Bureau member Finch said. “We have 13 varieties of citrus. While growing oranges in Nebraska seems to be a focus, lemons outsell oranges 10 to 1! They are a good money crop at farmers markets and can diversify Nebraska farms and ranches.”

For more than 25 years, Finch’s greenhouse has grown lemons, oranges, tangelos, mandarins, grapes, figs and plenty of tropical flowers. They are thriving inside the warm greenhouse, away from Nebraska’s harsh winter winds. The fruit is large, juicy, bright and delicious.

“Most 12-month greenhouses in Nebraska don’t make it because the cost of heating them up in the winter is too high. But by tapping into the earth’s heat you can drastically reduce the costs,” he said.

It all started in 1979 when Finch decided to build a new A-frame house using geothermal heat, and it worked. He found that at 8 feet deep, the earth’s temperature is a consistent 52 degrees. By tapping into this heat source, he created a frost-free greenhouse environment year-round.

“I don’t use any backup heat sources in the greenhouse. Some of our new structures do have heaters for growing vegetables. They are built at ground level, with a 4-foot drop to accommodate the 12-foot growing height needed for the citrus plants. From the outside, the structure is only 7 1/2 feet above grade, increasing its resiliency during windy and extremely inclement weather. Plastic tubes go out one end of the greenhouse and run a loop to the opposite end. A single fan circulates air through those tubes. As the air moves through, it picks up enough heat from the soil to keep lemons, oranges and other citrus usually grown in Florida or California from freezing,” Finch said.

Today, Finch has sold more than 60 greenhouse kits around the world, with one in northern England and several in Canada. Nebraska has 20 geothermal greenhouses across the state. The cost to run the operation is approximately 85 cents a day, making it economically sustainable to operate year-round. The newer geothermal greenhouses are a bit longer and average 96 cents a day.
“This concept can help grow or diversify a farm or ranch. You can sell the citrus and vegetables at a farmers market. It allows for the farmer to run an all-cash business. It offers an opportunity for growers to sell organic fruits and vegetables, locally grown year-round,” Finch said.

Finch sells the entire metal frame and the Lexan Glazing material that goes on the frame. The frame is fabricated by his partner, Allen Bright, at Antioch Machine Shop in Alliance.

“Right now, the price is $146 per lineal foot of greenhouse. All the other material is available at your local lumber yards, or at Menards, Lowe’s and Home Depot. If you have a backhoe and skid loader, two people can put a greenhouse up in 10 days. No welding, no bolting anything, everything just slides together. We figure a complete automated unit will run about $26,000,” Finch said.

Buffalo County Farm Bureau members Brock and Kerry Elsen and her parents, Randy and Penny John, built a newer version of Finch’s greenhouse after bringing 4-H and FFA students through for a tour of his Alliance facility. The Elsens’ greenhouse is called Cherry Valley Produce, and the vegetables grown in the greenhouse are sold locally to their school and a local bar/restaurant in Sumner.

“This is our second growing season. We grow vegetables mostly and have citrus fruit trees, lemons, limes, grapefruit and two different types of orange trees, as well as strawberries and grapes. But these trees are young, and it will take four to five years to produce fruit,” Kerry Elsen said.

“The vegetables being raised are tomatoes, squash, zucchini, radishes, peppers, onions, lettuce and cucumbers, and from what I hear the students love our local cucumbers,” she said.

“We are a young family and raise cattle near Miller. The geothermal greenhouse is efficient and helps us to keep our younger children engaged on the farm. They love to pick the produce and can’t wait to see the citrus grow,” she said.

Finch believes that one day all citrus sold in Nebraska could be produced locally by geothermal energy.

“We can grow all of the citrus we need for this area to furnish for the whole state. With so many little towns drying up, geothermal greenhouses are easy to establish with little cost. All you need is a vacant lot, electricity, and you too could raise citrus in the snow,” he said.
GMOs are Genetically Modified Organisms. These are crops developed with genetic engineering, which is also known as biotechnology. Plant breeders take a desirable trait (for example: disease resistance in corn) and transfer it from one plant to another to improve the plant’s characteristics.

**AVAILABILITY**

There are 10 GMO crops available today: alfalfa, apples, canola, corn (field and sweet), cotton, papaya, potatoes, soybeans, squash, and sugar beets.

**BENEFITS**

GMO crops provide benefits to plants which, in turn, benefit us as consumers! Nebraska ranks 3rd in the U.S. in corn production. It is important to our state. The majority of corn planted in Nebraska is GMO corn. Let’s look at the benefits:

- **Insect or disease resistance**—reduces need for farmers to apply chemicals and equals healthier corn plants.
- **Drought tolerance**—plants have better ways to keep and use moisture. It helps them endure drought conditions without need for irrigation.
- **Improved manufacturing processes**—GMO corn more efficiently produces biofuels because it is easier to break down cellulose and starch in the corn and reduces the environmental impact, too!

**CARE**

Consumers, such as you, your family, and friends, care about the safety of the food they eat. There is an overwhelming agreement of scientific experts who have done research and determined GMOs are safe to eat! All the GMO corn in Nebraska that is processed and is in your grocery store is not only delicious, but also full of nutrition and safe for your family to serve and eat.

The mission of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation is to engage youth, educators, and the general public to promote an understanding of the vital importance of agriculture in the lives of all Nebraskans.

Learn more at [www.nefbfoundation.org](http://www.nefbfoundation.org).
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Everyone’s financial goals are different, but we should all be thinking about retirement. By focusing on a strategy in each of life’s key phases, you can increase your chances of retiring comfortably. Use this guide to gain tips for saving throughout life for retirement.

23-35 Start your retirement savings

Now that you’ve landed your first job, getting your personal finances in shape should be a high priority. Your goals might include paying off debt, saving for a home, establishing a college fund for your children and/or putting away funds for retirement.

You would be smart to begin saving for retirement now. A good goal is to put away approximately 10 percent of your income for retirement. Investing in your 20s means your returns will compound for longer. If you put even a small amount of money into a retirement or savings account, you’ll get into the habit early and benefit from compounding interest.

35-55 Increase your contribution

These are the peak earning years for your retirement savings. While putting away money for your children’s college education or a bigger house may also be priorities, now is the time when your nest egg can really grow. By this age, you’ll likely receive a larger paycheck, and you may even benefit from bonuses or inheritance that can contribute to your investments. Plan to save as close to 20 percent of your income as possible.

To help cut costs, you might consider downsizing. While a bigger house may seem tempting, something smaller might be your best move. This goes for your vehicle, too. You may not need the gas guzzler anymore, but something smaller and more efficient.

55-Retirement Create a retirement budget

At this stage, your thoughts are probably turning toward retirement. You may be asking yourself, when should I retire? How much money do I need to retire? Your retirement planning should factor in the possibility of a longer life than past generations.

Draw up a budget for what you spend now, and then do the same for what you anticipate spending upon retirement. Consider the expenses that you’ll no longer incur once you’re finished working, but also think about what you might want to spend more on, such as leisure activities and traveling.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO SPEND YOUR RETIREMENT? Whether you’re retiring soon or have years to go, your local Farm Bureau agent or advisor can help you put yourself in the best position for retirement.

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1 https://www.fbfs.com/learning-center/maximize-your-nest-egg-tips-for-saving-for-retirement
For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence - driving. Colorado optometrist, Dr. Robert Stamm is using miniaturized telescopes which are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

"Some of my patients consider me their last chance for people who have vision loss," said Dr. Stamm, one of only a few doctors in the world who specializes in fitting bioptic telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that will give you back your independence. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50.

Bioptic telescopes treat both dry and wet forms of macular degeneration as well as other vision limiting conditions.

While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts.

“My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning,” says Dr. Stamm

“Even if it’s driving.”

“The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you’re looking at,” said Dr. Stamm. “It’s like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise.”

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The Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation and Lincoln Public School (LPS) officials have teamed up to develop a model for Nebraska teachers to create Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) lessons using agriculture as the context for learning.

“Using agriculture to teach NGSS engages students in projects and activities that use real-world application, critical thinking, creativity, innovation and collaboration,” said Courtney Schaardt, director of outreach education for the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation and program coordinator for the project.

The Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation was awarded a grant from the National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization to support the growth of agricultural literacy in pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade classrooms in Nebraska. Funding for the competitive grant program came from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

“Nebraska's model is titled, 'Learn, Then Do: A Phenomenon-Based Field Experience.' It allows the Foundation's Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom staff to work with Lincoln teachers to create lesson plans to ensure students begin to see science through a non-traditional lens, using agriculture to motivate students to explore science in new and exciting ways," said Schaardt.

The Nebraska Agriculture in the Classroom Program will provide LPS certified teachers a paid training opportunity to develop lessons that support Nebraska’s newly adopted science standards using real-life examples from Nebraska agriculture. A total of twenty teachers from LPS will be selected to participate.

“This program will support LPS teachers in the shift of moving to the new Nebraska standards,” said James Blake, science curriculum specialist at LPS. “I look forward to partnering with the Nebraska Farm Bureau Foundation on the project to achieve great science education for youth in LPS.”

The three-day workshop will start with training on phenomena-based learning and discussion about how Nebraska science standards and agriculture connect.

“Through this project, teachers will explore how to make agriculture relevant and interesting to students while succeeding with the new science standards. The aim is to create lessons that are fun, meet the standards of rigor required at LPS, and clearly articulate the building blocks for success in the classroom,” said Schaardt.

The project is slated to start in March 2020 with the selection of the teachers and conclude in September 2020 for the 2020-
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