

## News Column

Jeff Lounsbury, Extension Educator/Livestock  
October 14, 2011

### **“Change” A Constant in Life.**

I have been writing weekly columns for Lincoln County newspapers for close to twenty years and this will be my last.

As some of you may remember, last April SDSU leadership announced structural changes which included elimination of the County Extension Educator positions in South Dakota. This transition takes place starting October 22<sup>nd</sup>. After that point a regional concept will take over with the closest regional location in Sioux Falls. Regional offices will handle Agronomy, Livestock, Family Consumer Science and Community Development Programming. Each county office will have a full or part-time 4-H/Youth Advisor to coordinate 4-H programs and community youth development programming.

As for my future plans they are not defined however I will not be going forward with my Extension career as for me it is simply time for change. As the great Yogi Berra (NY Yankee) saying goes “When you come to a fork in the road, take it.”

I have greatly enjoyed my time in Extension and working with all the people here in Lincoln County. In the past 20 years I have walked fields during yield checks and after hail storms, inspected farm buildings and livestock facilities, diagnosed garden and lawn pests, identified weeds and grass plants, formulated livestock rations, taught pesticide application classes, held beef and dairy A-I schools and coordinated crop clinics.

I have talked to hundreds of you in person and on the phone regarding questions you had from seeding rates and stand counts to land management and rental agreements and how to eliminate skunk smell from your family pet. I have had questions on how to keep rabbits and deer from destroying your flowers, shrubs, and garden plants, moles and pocket gophers in yards and pastures, wood chucks, snakes, bats and rodents in and outside the home. With all that said however the number 1 question over the span of the last twenty years was easily “What is wrong with my tree.” I have looked at thousands of them large and small, green and brown with leaves and leafless. After twenty years I am quite aware that Lincoln county residents are highly passionate about their trees. Maybe in my next job I will consider becoming a tree doctor. Going forward there are two definite things I know regarding trees. It is not a good investment in time or money to plant green ash or colorado blue spruce because of impending insect and existing disease problems with these species.

Of course, I cannot talk about my last twenty years in Extension without mention of my true job passion which is 4-H. 4-H is STILL the best family involved organization in the United States. There is no other youth activity in our great country that more effectively teaches leadership and communication skills coupled with the importance of responsibility and respect for one-self and others more than 4-H. All this while still involving family members, ages 2 to grandparents.

In the last twenty years, I think the most amazing thing I have seen is the hundreds of 8 year old, first time 4-Hers grow up. They have become doctors, teachers, lawyers, nurses, secretaries, editors, industry workers, business owners, farmers, ranchers, bankers, writers, administrative personal, clerks, engineers, electricians, firemen, policemen, veterinarians, and most importantly adults that positively influence their own children as Moms and Dads.

I cannot write this last column without a big THANKS to those I have worked closest with. To Anna Mae Edwards, Marilyn Rohrer, Tara Stubbe, Mark Rowen, Tam Ractliffe, Maria Cornelius, Fonda Maassen, Bridget Twedt, Kelley Kruger, Irene Ness, and the late Kerwin Ulrikson. I truly appreciated your encouragement, advice, patience, and hard work. Your friendship will go with me for the rest of my life.

Thanks also to all the Extension Board Members and County Commissioners I had the privilege to work with over the years. Your support for Extension is to be commended.

As I close, I do so with a list. Much of this list is by H. Jackson Brown Jr. My sister, Shari Duminy a member of the clergy, has a giant poster copy hanging in her kitchen. Not only are there a lot of good things on this list to think about, most of what is on this list are things to live by. Thank you for letting me be a part of your Lincoln County Community over the past two decades.

- Treat everyone you meet like you want to be treated.
- Watch a sunrise at least once a year.
- Leave the toilet seat in the down position or the ladies in your house will be unhappy.
- Never refuse homemade brownies.
- Strive for excellence, not perfection.
- Plant a tree on your birthday.
- Learn three clean jokes.
- Return borrowed vehicles with the gas tank full.
- Compliment 3 people a day.
- Leave everything a little better than you found it.
- Keep it simple.
- Think big thoughts but relish small pleasures.
- Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know.
- Be forgiving of yourself and others.
- Over tip waitresses.
- Say “thank you” a lot.
- Say “please” a lot.
- Buy whatever kids are selling on card tables in their front yards.
- Avoid negative thoughts, negative people are unavoidable.
- Remember other people’s birthdays.
- Carry jumper cables in your trunk.
- Commit yourself to constant improvement.
- Look people in the eye.
- Be the first to say “Hello.”
- Return all things you borrow.
- Make new friends but cherish the old ones.
- Keep secrets.
- Sing in a choir, if not there than at least sing in the shower.
- Have a family pet.
- Always accept an outstretched hand.
- Stop blaming others.
- Wave at kids on school buses.
- Be there when people need you.
- Don’t expect life to be fair.
- Never underestimate the power of love.
- Don’t be afraid to say, “I made a mistake.”
- Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know.”
- If you create the situation, you are responsible for it.
- In life it is not the work that is difficult, it is the decisions we make.
- Watch a sunset at least every month; they are more colorful than sunrises.
- Keep your promises (no matter what).
- Count your blessings.
- Call your mother.