

## **Mother Nature Bats Last - Get Used To It!**

### **AGRI-VIEWS**

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

It was the spring of 1975. I was a freshman at the University of Nebraska. My parents and I decided to take a long weekend over Easter and drive out to Colorado to see family. We headed out after work on Thursday night, got almost to the Colorado state line and ran square into the teeth of a raging blizzard. We spent 30 hours at a truck stop in Big Springs, NE. When the weather and roads cleared on Saturday morning, we turned around and drove back home.

That was the longest, most miserable 30 hours of my life. But I learned a very important lesson. Mother Nature plays by her own rules. It doesn't matter how upset you get, Mother Nature doesn't care. It doesn't matter what YOU think your plans are, they only happen if Mother Nature allows them to happen.

In the past few days we've seen a couple of snow storms hit the state. We took a glancing blow from one of them and nearly completely missed the second one. Lots of meetings and events were cancelled, in part because of what the weather might be like. In hindsight, many of these events could have gone on as scheduled. But canceling them was a prudent thing to do. There are very few scheduled plans that are so important as to risk life and limb, as the saying goes.

Our society has gotten to the point that we have scheduled ourselves so tightly, that it's just falling dominoes if one thing gets off schedule. We think that because of our technology, everything can go on as if nothing else is happening. That attitude, and the unwillingness to say, "Nope, I'm not going to that event because if the snow storm does strike, we could be in an uncomfortable situation" puts too many people at risk.

We can have tornadoes, coastal areas can have hurricanes. We can have snowstorms, we can have floods, we can have droughts, some areas can even have earthquakes and volcanoes. Any and all of these are natural occurrences that will happen regardless of what we have planned. The only thing that we can do, and must do, is to have plans in place of "what if". When we spend so much of our life living from moment to moment and day to day, it's tough to develop a plan if the unthinkable happens.

There are lots of resources available to help you in understanding what your risks might be and how to develop a plan. It doesn't mean that you're a doomsdayer, it doesn't mean that you're a pessimist, it doesn't mean that you think that the world's going to end soon. It simply means that you know that disasters can happen and you've started working out a plan of how you and you're family will be less vulnerable if something does happen.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a great website called Ready.gov that is worth your visit. It can take you through the possibilities and help you learn what the risks are and how to develop a plan, just in case. We've just been through some winter storms and the spring severe storm season isn't too far away. Right now would be a good time to start planning.

Had we had the information resources in 1975 that we have today, we probably never would have started on that trip to Colorado. We knew there was a storm between us and Colorado, but it intensified after we hit the road. I remember driving into it, and I was at the wheel, at about one in the morning. It truly was a blizzard and we couldn't get to that next exit quickly enough. Be prepared, have a plan, and remember that Mother Nature has a bigger bat, and she always bats last!