Early bird fee due by Feb. 8.

Nebraska women will learn how to care and plan for their farms, their communities, their families and themselves at the 28th Women in Agriculture Conference, one of the longest-running women's conference of its kind, Feb. 21-22 at the Kearney Holiday Inn.

The theme of this year's conference is "Communicating in Challenging Times," and it features a variety of workshops, "funshops" and speakers, including renowned animal scientist Temple Grandin.

Grandin, a professor of animal science at Colorado State University, is a world leader in the design of livestock handling and cattle processing facilities. Her designs emphasize reducing animal stress. Grandin also consulted with such companies as McDonald's, Cargill and Tyson.

Along with her research in animal handling, Grandin has both written and spoken about her experience with autism, which she was diagnosed with as a child.

Other speakers include Jolene Brown, a farmer and author from West Branch, Iowa, and Cheryl Burkhart-Kriesel, co-owner of Kriesel Certified Seed and University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension community development specialist.

Brown will be the keynote speaker Thursday morning with her talk, "It's a Jungle Out There! Blazing New Trails for Agriculture." Burkhart-Kriesel will speak on how to draw residents to rural Nebraska communities. Grandin will close the conference with her speech at noon Friday.

In between these lectures, conference-goers can choose from more than 30 workshops spread over five sessions during the event. Topics include livestock and grain marketing, crop insurance, family communication, business transition and beef nutrition.

R.P. Smith, a cowboy poet from Broken Bow, will entertain for the Thursday evening program, followed by "funshops," opportunities to network and socialize in a low-pressure setting.

Those interested can register online at wia.unl.edu. They can also register by calling 1-800-535-3456 or by faxing their form to 1-402-472-0776. Hard copy registration forms can be sent to Women in Agriculture, UNL Agricultural Economics, 303 Filley Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583.

The early-bird fee of $100 per person is due by Feb. 8. Following that date the fee is $120 per person. Fee includes workshop materials, registration and meals.

The conference is sponsored by the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and the Department of Agricultural Economics.

Lodging is available at the Kearney Holiday Inn, 110 2nd Ave., 308-237-5971.

For more information, visit wia.unl.edu.