



Agriculture

Educator: Will Fulwider

An on-farm research to better understand how nitrogen crediting from multi species cover crops planted after wheat. Results from this study will help inform farmers as to what percentage of their mixes should be composed of legumes in order to derive the benefits of nitrogen crediting while also getting the benefits to soil health and nutrient leaching of other species.

- As farmer concerns for soil health and nutrient loss during fallow periods has spread, farmers are increasingly adopting cover crop mixes as a way of reaping the benefits from grasses, legumes, brassicas, and forbs, while minimizing the disadvantages of each. There is little to no systematic, on-farm research in Wisconsin on the yield effect from these multi-species mixes. This research seeks to understand how the composition of these mixes affects the nitrogen crediting to the following corn crop. The research team collaborated with three farmers in Dodge County and three in Dane, to design the research plots and the farmers planted the first year of the research in August 2023. Yield, soil health and nitrogen data were collected from the plots and will allow the research team to construct response curves to estimate the nitrogen credit derived from the cover crop mixes. Presentations at various farmer conferences and field days as well as an Extension fact sheet on the research will help to the results of the research reach farmers.

Advise the Dodge County Healthy Soils Healthy Waters monthly board meetings, helping the producer-led watershed group to bolster rigor of on-farm research projects through connections with ongoing research at UW-Madison and connecting their educational efforts with the resources of the University. The goal of this effort is to increase replicability of the group's on-farm projects to in order to influence fertility, cover crop species, grazing, etc., recommendations across the state.

- While these groups have often had Extension educators as advisors to their groups, there is definite need to maintain that the approach to particularly the educational workshops maintains a science and research-based approach appropriate for the Wisconsin context. The group is a vital connection to progressive farms, which can serve as local interpretations of research conducted at the agricultural research stations and encourage participating farmers as well as others to take a more systematic and research-based approach to answering the challenges facing agriculture in Wisconsin. The result of my advising of the group has been a continued presence of Extension at the farmer group's field days and workshops, which also helps keep Extension's ear tuned to the needs of farmers in Dodge County as we devise research programs that meet local needs.

Ag Dairy

Educator: Manuel Pena

A series of in person and virtual meetings with UW Madison - Extension colleagues, producer led conservation groups, USDA and Farm Service Agency partners, agriculture industry contacts and crop producers where we discussed opportunities for partnerships, ag community needs and programming gaps, to be able to develop an accurate needs assessment, that will lead to accurate programming that benefit all the different parties of the dairy industry in the region.

- As a new regional dairy educator in Sheboygan, Ozaukee, Dodge, and Fond du Lac counties, I keep working on getting to know what are the needs and priorities of my counties. To best understand the needs of the dairy



farmers, and different stakeholders in the dairy industry in the region, the dairy educator is meeting with these potential partners to determine gaps in programming and specific educational strategies necessary to properly serve them. As of November 27, 2024, the educator has met with the Clean Farm Families watershed group board, financial officers from Compeer Financial, Nutritionists from the Vita Plus nutritional company, and the Forage Council groups, while also making connections with other UW Madison-Extension educators and academics, producers, workforce and support personnel. The educator is asking questions (for both, English and Spanish speakers involved in the industry) and recording the responses to generate a needs assessment which will provide guidance into future programming plans. Further, the educator has provided support to local dairy farmers as needed by leveraging UW- Madison Extension professionals. This outreach will continue over the future but stronger for the next month to develop relationships with potential partners to establish an Extension presence in the dairy programming area of the region.

A workshop "Dairy Feeder School" for all the individuals with a link with the formulation, mixing, and/or delivering of feedstuff for dairy cattle. We are creating an in person and bilingual event where participants will learn and reinforce their knowledge about feed safety, feed management, transition cow health, and the economics of feeding. Through this effort we will impact animal health and milk production efficiency, by improve the use of resources such as, feed ingredients, time and labor leading to an increased farm profitability and waste reduction.

A newsletter for farmers, managers, employees and agribusiness professionals in collaboration with the Eastern Wisconsin Dairy Herd Improvement Cooperative that informs the reader of upcoming UW Madison Division of Extension programs, provides key crop and dairy management updates and includes timely production articles.

- A partnership between the Eastern Wisconsin Dairy Herd Improvement Cooperative and Extension results in a newsletter mailed to 300 current dairy producers in Eastern Wisconsin. The newsletter pairs results from the cooperative's milk testing and allows local Extension educators to share key activities, events and articles that focus on improving management related to crops and dairy cattle.
- The partnership allows Extension educators to determine what resources are most important to producers at the times the newsletter is published, which in turn provides research-based solutions to growers and farmers when it makes sense for their farm. We collaborate with DHIC staff to ensure timely delivery of the content.

Community Development

Educator: Patricia Malone

Planning for a needs assessment for myself and key elected officials where I will identify priority community development issues. Through this activity I will establish relationships with key individuals and develop a work plan that reflects county needs.

- I began my role in Dodge County in mid-November. The political climate and best practice made conducting a needs assessment imperative. This effort began in December and will continue through the first half of the year. Response to Need The first step was to identify key groups that could inform my needs assessment. I included school superintendents, elected and appointed officials, and chambers and economic development organizations as key places to start. Beginning with the school superintendents, I sent an invitation letter and developed questions for our interviews. This will be repeated with the other key groups. Outcomes of Effort This effort has begun to develop relationships with key actors. I have identified additional influentials to interview. The summaries of these interviews will be included in the Extension needs assessment being



conducted in the county. The names and addresses I identified have been shared with the rest of the office in order to send out the invitation to our community summit.

Health and Well-Being

Educator: Kimberly Lafler

A 6-week series for 3rd grade students at Dodgeland Elementary where students learn about the importance of eating five food groups, being physically active and practicing food safety. This effort was designed to make healthy eating a positive and engaging experience which in turn will help with food choices being made in the future. The more students are exposed to and learn about fruits and vegetables when they are young increases the likelihood of students continuing to make healthy choices as they grow and become independent which can lead to better health outcomes.

An eight week series of strength training sessions combined with nutrition lessons (StrongBodies) in Dodge County was held for mid - older adults. In this series participants learn best practices for strength training along with learning nutrition and health education. Participants engage in regular strength training exercises to improve strength, balance, and flexibility. Doing these activities in a group atmosphere also allows adults to stay or get more socially connected. These are all things that can help adults remain healthy and age in place.

Human Development and Relationships

Educator: Patricia Carroll

Resilient Co-Parenting is a monthly topic-specific series for parents and caregivers experiencing separation, divorce, or changes in the custody of their children, where they learn skills to improve communication and problem-solving, support children emotionally, and keep kids out of the middle of conflict. This series is designed to improve understanding of positive parenting practices that are useful during stress, while providing social connection for parents experiencing family transitions.

As a result of the Resilient Co-Parenting class series, most parents and caregivers who respond to our survey report learning techniques that can help make their family interactions more positive. The impact of the Resilient Co-Parenting program is important because changes in family structure can have profound impacts on child and parent well-being, findings well documented by research. Parents who receive and engage with parenting classes during family structure changes can learn valuable and effective communication and parenting skills that act as major buffers from the deleterious effects of instability.

Dodge and Jefferson County Directors Caucus:

In Dodge and Jefferson counties, the early care and education (ECE) profession is facing a critical crisis. Staff shortages and a fragmented support system for existing providers are threatening the very foundation of early childhood education. To combat these challenges, it is essential for ECE administrators to have opportunities to come together. By collaborating to solve problems, sharing best practices, networking, and building strong industry relationships, they can ensure the success and sustainability of their businesses.

Response to Need

To address this urgent need, I established a bi-monthly consortium for early childcare professionals. This initiative will provide a dedicated space for ECE administrators to:

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.



Collaborate on solutions to common challenges.

Learn and implement best practices from industry leaders.

Network with peers to build supportive relationships.

Strengthen industry connections to enhance business success.

By coming together regularly, we can create a more cohesive and resilient ECE community, ensuring that Dodge and Jefferson counties' children receive the high-quality care and education they deserve.

Outcomes of Effort

Research shows that networking and professional learning communities significantly benefit early childcare professionals. These opportunities allow educators to stay informed about the latest educational trends, gain insights into innovative teaching methodologies, and find mentorship opportunities that foster career advancement. Networking also helps professionals build supportive communities, share best practices, and collaborate on solutions to common challenges. This exchange of ideas and experiences enhances both professional development and personal growth, ultimately improving the quality of care and education provided to children.

Positive Youth Development

Educator: Marie Witzel

A Livestock Career fair for youth where adults in livestock careers shared information about their employment so youth could see a future in work related to livestock

- Youth don't always know about possible career choices. Without that knowledge youth may not know what is needed in high school and beyond to make plans for their future. The livestock education committee works with local employers to offer an opportunity for youth to learn more about their choices Youth have a chance to visit with employers to learn more about their careers, educational requirements and opportunities in high school and beyond

A community service outreach for Reeseville where the Lakeside 4-H club is involved with local partners over the summer, to learn more about community needs and help support them

- Local clubs can be involved in their community and strengthen the ties with the service workers Some clubs do outreach programs in their community to learn more about the community and contribute to service. January 12th, 2025 wasn't just an ordinary meeting the Lakeside 4-H Club in Reeseville. During their regular meeting Deputy Dale Bratz, Representing the Dodge County Sheriff's Department, Fireman Kevin Hankes from the Reeseville Fire Department, Representing the Clyman Lowell and Reeseville arrived for a group photo while members of the Lakeside 4-H presented each department with a donation for their time and service during the summer of 2024 community events that they all as a team participated in together.