

EXTENSION DODGE COUNTY MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

APRIL 2025

AGRICULTURE - CROPS



If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species.

Educator: Will Fulwider

UW Madison has recommendations for nitrogen crediting for manure and for single species legumes like red clover following or interseeded into wheat prior to corn. However, 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 not only how the composition of these mixes affects the nitrogen crediting to the following corn crop, but also the effect that these mixes have on the soil health metrics that farmers are planting them for. 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. Cover crop and non-cover crop controls were evaluated for baseline measurements of soil health and nitrogen, while in season measurements of nitrogen provided a snapshot of the fate of the nitrogen from the cover crops. Yield collected at the end of the year from the plots 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.

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AGRICULTURE - DAIRY



The Dairy Program offers education by holding in-person meetings and live webinars, as well as developing resources such as articles, factsheets, and videos that can be found right here on this website.

Our program is made up of University Specialists and Regional Educators. Specialists perform scientific research based on dairy industry demands and develop practical resources for Wisconsin farm families. Regional Dairy Educators deliver research and resources to farms like yours and connect trusted, unbiased, university-based research to assist the dairy industry in making the livelihood of farming viable in the future.

Educator: Manuel Pena

A workshop "Calving Management and Neonate Care in Dairy Cattle" for all the individuals that are involved in parturition, and calving management in dairy farms. We created an in person and bilingual event where participants learned and reinforced their knowledge about obstetrics, care and support in the calving pen, neonate care and colostrum management, and how to maintain the success in the maternity areas. Through this effort pretended to increase the knowledge and good practices related to the earliest stage of life in dairy cattle, which should represent an increase in herd health, work safety and farm profitability.

Local dairy producers have expressed a strong interest in improving their calving management practices to enhance herd health and productivity. This workshop, "Calving Management Practices and neonate care" was developed in response to these needs, aiming to provide dairy producers with the recent research-based information. We addressed a program in Spanish and English to discuss topics such as calving preparation and assistance, neonatal care and colostrum management, disease prevention, nutrition and feeding, protocols and recordkeeping and data management. This program had a lecture session in the morning and Hands-On demonstration, where attendees had the opportunity to practice calving events on a cow model along with learning guidelines for calving management practices, record keeping and colostrum quality. With the development of this program, we provided great tools to farmers and workers to:

- Improved understanding of calving management practices
- Enhanced ability to recognize and address health problems
- Improved skills in colostrum management and feeding
- Increased confidence in handling calves
- Increased adherence to recommended protocols
- Improved recordkeeping and data management
- Enhanced commitment to animal welfare
- Increased willingness to participate in ongoing training and education

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Community Development provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. We educate in leadership development, organizational development, food systems, community economic development, local government education and much more. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.

Educator: Patricia Malone

I was approached by the Columbus Community and Economic Development Director. He has been struggling to get a key group to take action to improve the community's downtown and business area. I am at the beginning of my position in Dodge County and this program can spark interest in community development. My first step was to extend an invitation to other community development educators to see if they had a similar community interested in an exchange. Barry Hottman responded. He met to discuss the project and the process. We established a timeline and key actions along the way. We set June as the target month to conduct the exchange. The outcomes I am hoping to achieve include the following: A. Greater awareness of the tools/processes community development educators use to get local volunteers involved in community development. B. The participating communities will identify key action steps they will take. This type of programming can inspire communities to become more proactive. It increases their abilities and skills in building community.

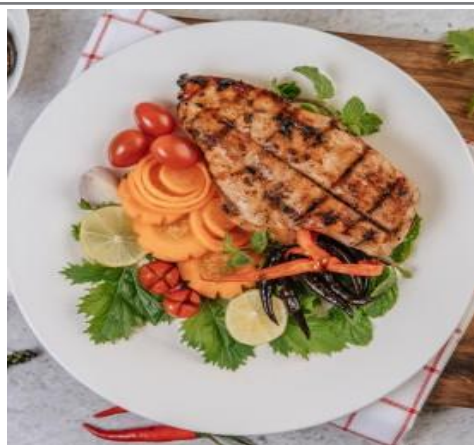
Planning for a survey of local officials in collaboration with Extension State Specialists. The goal is to develop a better understanding of how local officials view housing issues in their communities to provide more effective housing education.

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FOOD SECURITY, HEALTHY EATING, AND HEALTHY LIVING



FoodWise advances healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for families with limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels. *FoodWise* reaches individuals and families through local community partners by providing nutrition classes in-person and virtually, indirect education (newsletters, etc.), and social media/marketing. *FoodWise* is an obesity prevention program that addresses policy, system and environmental changes through local and state public health efforts. *FoodWise* is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).

Educator: Kimberly Lafler

FoodWise provides relevant evidence-based nutrition articles for the Beaver Dam Food Pantry and Gathering Source patrons. Offering this information can allow patrons to learn while they are utilizing services to aid in healthy choices immediately. It can allow people to feel more in control of their food choices, even when those choices are limited. This knowledge can empower individuals to make small, immediate changes in behavior which can lead to long term improvements in patrons' overall health and well-being.

Harvest of the Month, a program where a Wisconsin grown fruit or vegetable is chosen for students at Dodgeland Elementary to promote healthy eating and teach where their food comes from. Students learn about the nutrients, growing season, process and different ways to eat the Wisconsin-grown fruit or vegetable. Through this effort with the school nutrition director, the lunchroom highlights each month's item via posters as well as highlighting the item in the school newsletter. Through this effort, students are exposed to more fruits and vegetables in different forms, which can increase their acceptance of fruits and vegetables and help to shape lifelong healthy habits. Through fun and educational activities, Harvest of the Month has been shown to increase the amount of fruits and vegetables kids eat and participation in school meals.

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS



The Extension Institute of Human Development & Relationships provides the tools Wisconsinites need to thrive as well-rounded, capable individuals and families. We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding. Our programs promote aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents and help families put technology, mindfulness and financial awareness to use.

Educator: Pattie Carroll

A 6-week wellness series (WeCOPE) for incarcerated individuals where they learned different strategies that support awareness of mind-body connection. The goal of this effort is to offer skills to decrease stress and increase positive emotions of participants.

A social worker from Dodge Correctional Institution reached out to Pattie Carroll for Extension programs that could benefit the inmates in her caseload. Research has shown that teaching stress reduction and coping skills to incarcerated individuals can have significant positive impacts on their mental and physical health. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programs have been found to effectively reduce stress, PTSD-related symptoms, and improve self-esteem and coping skills among incarcerated individuals. For example, a study involving 58 men in a maximum-security prison found that participants experienced significant improvements in self-esteem, coping, and self-efficacy after completing an MBSR program (Samuelson et al., 2007). Additionally, research has explored how different coping styles impact the mental health outcomes of incarcerated individuals. Effective coping strategies can mitigate the negative physical, mental, and emotional effects of incarceration, leading to better overall well-being (Zamble & Porporino, 1988). These findings underscore the importance of incorporating stress reduction and coping skills programs in correctional settings to support the well-being of incarcerated individuals. References Samuelson, M., Carmody, J., Kabat-Zinn, J., & Bratt, M. A. (2007). Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction in Massachusetts Correctional Facilities. *The Prison Journal*, 87(2), 254-268. Zamble, E., & Porporino, F. J. (1988). Coping, Behavior, and Adaptation in Prison Inmates. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 44(5), 741-753. Carroll and Michels delivered a six-week program called WeCope. Their journey began with a tour of Dodge Correctional Facility, where they gained valuable insights into the population they would be teaching. This experience was enlightening, providing them with a deep understanding of the prison's operations and the unique challenges the participants might face when applying what they learned. The first class of the WeCope series was taught in-person by Michels and Carroll, allowing them to establish a strong connection with the participants. The subsequent classes were conducted virtually, ensuring continuity and accessibility for all involved. Will provide once the evaluations are complete

A meeting for early childcare professionals where participants learn about best practices, legislative updates, and licensing changes. The goal of this meeting is to provide a space for early childcare professionals to network with each other about best practices through facilitated dialogue.

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.

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· 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. 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: 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. 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.

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YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Positive Youth Development prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs like teens in governance build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and after-school programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.

Educator: Marie Witzel

An interview on the radio for the Dodge County community to hear more about 4-H programs especially ones open to anyone. We are always looking for new methods to reach a variety of audiences. Hopefully this Saturday morning radio program can be another method for outreach. I was invited to participate in the Saturday morning Party Line at WBEV. I connected with Bob Khouri at WBEV to do a radio program that is also shared on Daily Dodge. He shared the following message with me: Marie, Thanks for joining me on Party Line on Saturday. Here's a link to our interview: <https://dailydodge.com/audio/party-line-interviews-2/> And, as I mentioned, I'm happy to have you or someone from Dodge County 4-H join me again whenever there's something that you'd like to get the word out about. We can squeeze in a 5-minute phone blurb whenever something's timely.

Kindergarten through second grade members don't have as many opportunities to connect with others for fun, hands-on learning. This virtual program was offered by the state and had hundreds of youth registered. When the time came for a zoom program, the teacher needed additional assistance to best support the youth learning. I volunteered to help lead a breakout room. The flyer for the youth included: Get ready to explore the exciting world of Dinosaurs and Unicorns! This at-home lesson series encourages creativity and imagination while introducing science and building life skills. We will divide up our journey into four lessons: Sound Color Paleontology (the study of dinosaurs) Importance of creativity We hope you'll explore with us! From the 74 responses to the training, 100% of the youth said they are learning something new about sound and identified that this kit helped them connect with their family. Families share specific comments about the zoom session including: The smaller breakout room was nice. We love the zoom aspect of 4-H! I appreciated the small group time. Beau enjoyed doing a project and connecting with a larger group than our individual county. We really enjoy this and like the courses geared towards cloverbuds.