

EXTENSION DODGE COUNTY MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

MAY 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

A podcast episode on advancing winter wheat as a third crop for Wisconsin by meeting quality parameters like test weight and DON levels and pushing yield.

Dodge County is one of the largest wheat producing counties in the state and has a long history of wheat production. There are many benefits to adding wheat into a corn-soy rotation, including yield bumps to both crops. While wheat does not produce as much revenue per acre as corn and soy, the effect of these yield bumps coupled with its lower input costs, raises the long term profitability of the system often above that of a corn-soy rotation. However, growing wheat in Wisconsin requires meeting quality parameters that do not exist or are not as strict in corn and soy production. Talking with Dodge County farmer Charlie Hammer and his crop consultant Bill Stangel on the Field Notes podcast, we help farmers think through how to push wheat yields and meet quality parameters to avoid elevator dockage and make wheat pay dividends.

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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

Bovi-noticias is a collaboration between Educators on the Dairy team and Farm Management team. This bilingual (English & Spanish) newsletter was designed to support dairy farms and their employees. This publication delivers accessible, research-based information in both English and Spanish, aiming to provide relevant, practical insights for workers, managers, and owners; Increase awareness of the “why” behind practices to encourage employee understanding and enhance engagement of dairy teams; Serving as a resource for team meetings, facilitating discussions between management and workers, and fostering problem-solving. (Manuel Pena)

To address the identified need for accessible, research-based information for the diverse dairy workforce in Wisconsin, the Bovi-noticias e-newsletter has been developed. This bilingual (English and Spanish) publication directly responds to the challenge of ensuring all individuals involved in daily dairy operations have access to relevant and practical insights. By providing content in both languages, Bovi-noticias aims to overcome language barriers and promote a shared understanding of best practices across farm teams. Furthermore, the newsletter goes beyond simply providing information by explaining the “why” behind recommended practices. This approach fosters deeper comprehension and encourages greater engagement among employees, empowering them to contribute more effectively to farm goals. By serving as a resource for team discussions and problem-solving, Bovi-noticias facilitates better communication and collaboration between management and workers. Ultimately, this initiative directly responds to the need for a more informed, skilled, and engaged dairy workforce, which is crucial for improving animal health, optimizing resource utilization, enhancing farm efficiency, and increasing profitability within the Wisconsin dairy industry.

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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

Planning for programming utilizing the First Impressions framework in collaboration with the City of Columbus and the City of Dodgeville. The work will help each community develop a better understanding of what their community looks like through the lens of others, gain perspective of what other communities are doing to make their "first impression", and inspire both communities to engage in actions that will make improvements to their own communities. I presented a program to the Columbus Community Development Authority and they formally agreed to move forward with the project.

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.

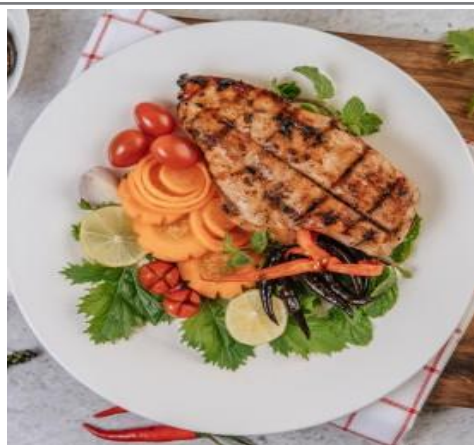
Facilitated a 2-day planning and design workshop to help the community of Waupun, Wisconsin make improvements to their downtown. Members from 5 local organizations as well as citizens at-large worked together to develop a shared vision for future development and enhancements to the downtown. The 2-day workshop provided a forum to collect information to inform community placemaking planning and design alternatives that the community could use to make Waupun more vibrant. This program was facilitated by Todd Johnson, one of Extension's Community Development Specialists. Waupun lies in both Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties.

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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 a 15 week series of Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention in Beaver Dam, where older adults participate in a program that combines Tai Chi, nutrition and additional health education. Regular Tai Chi practice helps improve balance, flexibility and weight transfers which are key elements for reducing fall risk. Participants have reported feeling less stiff as a result of these gentle, effective movements. Some participants have shared making small changes such as identifying added versus natural sugars in their foods and beverages. The group setting fosters social connections allowing participants to form new friendships. These small changes can lead to significant impacts to support aging in place and for the well-being of older adults.

A 5-week series of interactive nutrition lessons each for 4K students at Beaver Dam Head Start, and 5th grade students at SAGES Elementary where students learn about the importance of eating nutritious foods from the five food groups and being physically active. This initiative is designed to make healthy eating a positive experience while equipping students with the knowledge and skills to make healthy choices. By fostering these habits early, students develop a foundation for long-term health that can benefit them well beyond their school years.

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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

Planning Ahead is a collaborative effort with ADRC of Dodge County, community libraries and UW Extension Dodge County. Together we provide a 6-session course that helps adults of all ages to make end-of-life financial, healthcare, and final wishes decisions in order to reduce the stress experienced by survivors and to ensure that their wishes are honored. End of life planning can be an intimidating process. It can also be confusing and emotional which may explain why only 37% of Americans have completed Advance Care Directives. In 2018, UW Health indicated that out of 41,000 patients, only 40% of those 65 and older had completed Advance Directives, and of those 85 and older, only 63% had one. Proactive planning for end-of-life decisions and care can prevent these financial and emotional burdens. In response to this need, Extension developed a comprehensive end-of-life program called Planning AHEAD (Advance directives, Handling financial changes, Estate Planning and Arriving at Decisions for the end of this life). The Planning AHEAD curriculum covers seven topics: Handling Financial Changes, Advance Directives, Estate Planning, Choices in End-of-Life Care, Final Wishes, and Understanding Grief. The course is typically delivered in one-hour sessions once/week for seven weeks.

Focus on Fathers is a monthly parenting program for fathers where participants learn skills to build their children's social and emotional learning. Each session is unique and offers fathers practical tips and provides opportunities for them to connect with each other. This series is specifically designed to improve understanding of positive parenting practices, while providing social connection for fathers and father figures. Despite recent advances in research on fathers' roles and unique contributions within families, fathers remain underserved in family-based programming (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). This is due to barriers originating from community partners, cultural norms, legal structures, and fathers' abilities or desires to participate. Yet, fathers' contributions to child and family well-being are critical. Children with more engaged fathers exhibit higher academic achievement, better psychological outcomes, and fewer challenging or delinquent behaviors (e.g., Allen and Lo, 2012; Lee and Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017).

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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

Youth in Horicon do not have options for 4-H or some other out of school programs Youth came to learn how to create a personalized stuffed creation. Youth began by creating an outline of a shape or animal they wanted to create on a piece of craft felt. After some planning, they cut their shapes out and learned to join them together after a tutorial of a running stitch. Youth practiced their new sewing skills as they joined their pieces of felt together and stuffed them with recycled fabrics in honor of Earth Month. Older youth were challenged to further personalize their stuffie with buttons, different stitches, and utilizing different colored felt. Youth navigated a new skill, through patience and perseverance. We had 12 youth participate after seeing information from the 4-H focus and the Horicon Library calendar. It was great to meet different community members and families from the Horicon area, and we hope to continue a connection with the Horicon Public Library in the future.

Youth need to have the opportunity to discover new sparks, or passions from adults in the area where they work, live and play. The sessions can be projects of interest, trying something new or in my case helping them learn more about how to deal with mental health stress as it arises. Family Learning Day in March was bursting with energy. Over 205 youth were registered for the program with several additional walk-ins that day. They could choose from 4 different sessions during the day to explore their sparks. From the evaluations the overall organization rated 75% rated it as excellent, 67% rated the workshop quality as excellent, and 78% rated the venue and facility as excellent.

A Cloverbud Sparks virtual learning opportunity for K-2nd grade to try new projects and explore their sparks through Hatching New Ideas in 4-H series. I taught the Youth Mental Health session on Puzzling World session while AmeriCorps member Molly taught collage ornament. We asked the parents to help youth respond to the following evaluation questions: 100 percent responded that they learned something new tonight. 100 percent responded that doing the kit at home gave them a chance to connect with my family 100 percent responded that they were excited about the next session. Suggestions for kits at home in the future: glitter is fun. Quinn enjoyed crafting. Animals, learn to make crafts, anything crafting or puzzle related or animals. Parents: please share one thing your child learned tonight: how to clean up glitter, how to decorate bulbs, making creating are cool, and they don't have to match the plan exactly, to have fun, Harper learned that creating stuff is fun, how to make an ornament, to have fun, thinking of improving skills every day.