



# Agriculture Dairy Programming: April to July 25



**Extension Dairy Educator Manuel Peña**

Contributes to the structure and processes of dairy producers, conservation and financial groups and other dairy professionals, enhancing their ability to function effectively.

Supports informed decision making by providing research-based information

to achieve their objectives.

## Ongoing Needs Assessment

- While the educator has successfully built strong connections and trust among the county's dairy farmers, the needs assessment remains an ongoing effort aimed at reaching as many farms as possible. This process involves in-depth discussions with dairy farmers operating across a range of breeds, farm sizes, production systems, and objectives, with the goal of developing a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the county's current dairy sector

## Main challenges:

- Communication/language
  - Safety/good practices training
  - Research on milk quality
  - Calving and Nutrition
  - Tractor safety Training
- In addition to working with dairy farmers, the educator is actively building connections with agribusiness professionals—such as veterinarians, nutritionists, financial service providers, and fellow educators—to gain broader insights and strengthen collaborative efforts that support the county's agricultural community

## Outcome:

- Sponsors for programing, co-work and future Collaboration:
  - o Zoetis will be sponsoring our next Calving Management Bilingual Workshop (August 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>)

## Projects and collaborations for Dodge County

### ▪ Bovi-News. Bilingual newsletter (2<sup>nd</sup> issue)

Although still new, the newsletter has received positive feedback from dairy farmers across the region. It is designed to improve understanding of the reasons behind daily practices, helping to enhance employee engagement and communication within dairy teams. Topics have been added based on conversations with farmers, ensuring the content remains relevant and responsive to their needs. The bilingual newsletter also continues to serve as a practical tool for team meetings and problem-solving discussions between managers and staff.

### ▪ Evaluating strategies utilized in dairy farms to mitigate language barriers and their impact on workforce management, recruitment and retention

In collaboration with Michigan State University and the Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture, UW-Madison Extension is conducting a research survey of both dairy farm employees and employers to examine strategies used to overcome language barriers. The survey provided by the Educator in this County seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies, their impact on labor recruitment and retention, and employee perceptions of communication improvement efforts

### ▪ Hometown Today – Radio Invitation

The educator was featured on 95.3 WBEV's *Hometown Today* program, hosted by Daily Dodge, to discuss current Extension programming and initiatives. This media appearance offered a valuable opportunity to introduce himself to a broader regional audience and share Extension's mission. During the interview, the educator emphasized the importance of engaging with Spanish-speaking individuals in the dairy industry and highlighted ongoing efforts to build meaningful dialogue with them—supporting their professional development and contributing positively to the success of dairy farms.