

Monthly Highlights October 2025

Agriculture – Crops

Educator: Will Fulwider

A demonstration project in Dodge County for clients of Universal Co-op to trial drone seeded cover crops of camelina and rye to compare against no cover treatments in winter cover and subsequent corn yield. This project is a first collaboration with Universal Co-op in Lebanon, the goal of which is to drive cover crop adoption by middle adopters in the county.

- The potential outcome of this demonstration is a win-win-win-win-win. Extension gets access to more fields to trial the cover crop on and initiate new relationships within the ag industry and farmers; the co-op has a new product that they are able to sell, increasing revenue, that is less management intensive and time sensitive for them to have to manage in the spring; farmers get to trial a cover crop that poses less risk to their corn crop, the drone operator spends less time seeding the cover crop because of its smaller seed and lower rate, allowing them to do more acres, increasing revenue; and finally acres that were not previously covered during the winter get a cover crop to reduce erosion and nutrient loss, benefitting water quality.

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.



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Agriculture - Dairy

Educator: Manuel Peña

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 are creating an in person and bilingual event where participants will learn and reinforce 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 we will increase the knowledge and good practices related to the earliest stage of life in dairy cattle, which will represent an increase in herd health, work safety and farm profitability. Total Reach: Thursday English session : 12 people - 6 different dairy farms Friday Spanish session : 30 people - 11 different dairy farms. The event was a collaborative effort between the educator of the more southern region and me; thus, the event occurred at Jefferson County, which was a middle ground for my region and hers.

- Dairy farm profitability, animal welfare, and worker safety are directly impacted by the quality of calving management and neonate care. To meet the need for ongoing education, we hosted a bilingual, in-person workshop titled "Calving Management and Neonate Care in Dairy Cattle" on August 28-29, 2025. Designed for anyone involved

The Dairy Program offers education by holding in-person meetings and live webinars, as well as developing resources such as articles, factsheets, and videos.

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.



in calving on dairy farms, the workshop aimed to strengthen knowledge in obstetrics, calving pen care, neonate care, and colostrum management. This program addresses the critical link between effective calving management and overall farm success. It provided tools to recognize signs of birth, assist with calving, and implement best practices for neonate care and colostrum use. It also covered transition cow nutrition and disease prevention. A hands-on component using a cow model ensured practical learning.

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Community Development

Educator: Pat Malone

Planning for a beginner's workshop on artificial intelligence for Dodge County Employees in collaboration with Bill Oemichen, local government specialist, and the Dodge County IT department so employees will learn how to use available AI tools and understand the weaknesses and strengths of AI so that service to taxpayers can be improved.

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.

Small rural communities like Dodgeville and Columbus are in need of identifying ways to attract visitors, new families, and new businesses. The old saying... you never get a second chance to make a first impression. As a county based CDI educator, it's important to help the communities we serve access the programming Extension has to offer.

Extension worked on strategic planning with the Dodgeville Area Chamber of Commerce in 2024,

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



and this program was identified as something Dodgeville should consider doing. The catalyst for this effort was Dodge County CDI Extension Educator, reaching out looking for a community to pair with Columbus to participate in the First Impressions program. The Dodge and Iowa county CDI educators reached out to state specialist Todd Barman to discuss the First Impressions program and request his assistance in educating our community about the program and benefits. Dodgeville is at the intersection of many major roads/highways, and it was identified that we need to do a better job of making any "impression" to those who make their way to and through Dodgeville. This work will help Columbus and Dodgeville identify aspects of their community that are attractive to visitors as well as identify aspects of their community that could be improved upon to create a better first impression. Results will be used to inform community development.

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Human Development & Relationships

Educator: Pattie Carroll

Resilient Co-Parenting Series

Patricia Carroll supports families experiencing separation, divorce, or changes in child custody through Extension's Resilient Co-Parenting series—a monthly, topic-specific virtual class designed to help parents and caregivers build skills that strengthen family relationships during times of transition. This one-hour session provides evidence-informed strategies to improve communication, reduce conflict, support children emotionally, and foster healthier co-parenting dynamics. The series also creates a space for social connection, helping participants feel less isolated and more supported.

Research shows that the quality of parenting and parental conflict are key drivers of children's well-being, and brief interventions like Resilient Co-Parenting can significantly buffer families from the negative impacts of instability. Carroll's facilitation of this program reflects a commitment to providing accessible, research-based education that meets families where they are. Participant feedback has been overwhelmingly positive: most respondents report learning practical techniques that improve family interactions and help them better support their children. Many also express gratitude for the opportunity to connect with others going through

Human Development and Relationship programs in Dodge County focus on parenting, family relationships, aging, and financial education. We support resilient individuals and families from cradle to grave. Our programs offer research-based classes and resources for parents, caregivers, and professionals to promote child and family development. We also help families achieve financial well-being and build capacity among family-serving practitioners. Additionally, we support aging individuals with end-of-life planning and local partnerships. Responding to local needs our programs also promote mental health and well-being through evidence-based initiatives.



similar experiences, noting that the series helped them feel more confident and hopeful.

Given that nearly half of all marriages in the U.S. end in divorce, and that family structure changes are common, the impact of Resilient Co-Parenting is both timely and essential. Through this initiative, Carroll is helping families build resilience, strengthen relationships, and promote child well-being during some of life's most challenging transitions.



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DODGE COUNTY

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Positive Youth Development

Educator: Marie Witzell

Planning for a virtual development sessions workshop series for Cloverbuds in collaboration with Sauk, Columbia, Dodge and Marquette County 4-H educators. The goal is to engage Cloverbud members in positive youth development sessions that introduce them to four new activities related to 4-H project areas.

- Our youngest 4-H members—Cloverbuds—deserve strong support as they are introduced to the values and activities of 4-H in a safe, fun, and non-competitive environment. This virtual series provides Cloverbuds an opportunity to participate in engaging, hands-on activities beyond their typical 4-H club experience. It also welcomes youth guests in the Cloverbud age range who aren't yet part of 4-H, giving them a chance to explore what 4-H is all about. The series theme is helping youth identify their sparks - things that they enjoy doing that gives them a sense of purpose. Each county educator develops and delivers a 45-min lesson around that theme, and provides a hands-on activity related to a 4-H project area. The county educators create kits of supplies and lesson materials for families to pick up at their county extension office. Most of the supplies are

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.



provided by each county's 4-H Leaders Association. Families are asked to provide some of their own supplies. We are currently in the planning stage and will be able to provide impacts after we complete the series.