

## Monthly Highlights November 2025

# Agriculture - Crops

***Educator: Will Fulwider***

October field work to set up the 2026 iteration of 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.

- 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 credited to the following corn crop, but also the effect that these mixes have on the soil health

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.



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 the results of the research reach farmers.



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# Agriculture - Dairy

***Educator: Manuel Peña***

A statewide program promoting humane dairy cow-handling practices for dairy cow handlers where the participants will learn to be aware of their own beliefs about working with cows, which affect how they interact with them. They will also learn how to form or maintain good habits, which will make the cows easier to handle and their job smoother. This program will be available in English and Spanish

- A growing number of people worldwide are expressing concern about the treatment of farm animals, particularly dairy cattle. Dodge County is no stranger to that situation. Emphasizing that the actions and attitudes of dairy handlers have significant implications both within and beyond the farm environment is key. Recognizing this need, we are developing a bilingual learning program aimed at improving dairy handlers' understanding, attitudes, and interactions with the cows under their care. The program seeks to promote evidence-based handling practices that enhance animal welfare, worker safety, and overall farm productivity. The initiative will begin with a pilot phase designed to gather feedback through observation and participant input, allowing

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.



for systematic refinement of the training materials. Once finalized, the program will be implemented on selected farms and rigorously evaluated to assess its effectiveness in fostering positive behavioral change and improving animal well-being outcomes.

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# Community Development

*Educator: Pat Malone*

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

Fundamentals workshop for newer plan commission members to learn about roles and responsibilities, primary tools for decision-making, plan and ordinance updates and commissions role in rezones, conditional uses and plats. This educator promoted the program to encourage participation from plan commission members in Dodge County.

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. No date has been set.

Facilitated a session on how to build a resilient community at the Small Community Forum held in Hustisford. The goal was to stimulate discussion on strategies smaller communities can use to address challenges they may face.

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# Human Development & Relationships

***Educator: Pattie Carroll***

Planning for continuing education workshops in six regions of Wisconsin for childcare providers in collaboration with the Child Care Resource and Referral Network. The goal is to provide high-quality, research-based education to directly improve childcare providers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors and indirectly improve child well-being.

Planning for an annual virtual conference (Raising Wisconsin's Children) for parents, caregivers, and family-serving professionals. The goal is to provide research-based, high-quality content about child development and parenting and to link new Wisconsin communities to Extension outreach.

A monthly topic-specific series (Resilient Co-Parenting) 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.

All families experience transitions in life, and many will experience divorce, separation, or changes in the custody of their children. In the United States nearly half of all marriages will end in divorce and divorced parenthood is common. Divorce and separation can have profound

*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.*



consequences for children, parents, and families, although with adequate support negative outcomes in childhood and adolescence can be mitigated. The quality of parenting and parental conflict are key drivers of children's well-being and can be boosted by brief interventions that focus on emotional support for parents and caregivers. Extension's Family Engagement and Relationship program provides the evidence-informed parent education series Resilient Co-Parenting for parents and caregivers experiencing divorce, separation, or changes in the custody of their children. Resilient Co-Parenting is a monthly one-hour series that provides parents and caregivers will valuable skills for improving effective communication, reducing family conflict, strengthening co-parenting relationships, and positively supporting children. The series is offered virtually for parents and caregivers in Wisconsin via Extension Human Development and Relationships educators. 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.





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# Positive Youth Development

***Educator: Marie Witzell***

A week-long celebration and outreach event for youth, families, and community members, where participants engaged in hands-on learning, project showcases, and leadership activities that emphasized 4-H's core values of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity, to highlight the impact of 4-H in developing life skills, civic engagement, and adaptability in young people, while strengthening family involvement and community support for youth development.

National 4-H week is a great week to promote what happens in the 4-H program. I created several news releases that were sent to the media, a club participated in the community service which was promoted in the newsletter and on facebook, I did a 40 minute live stream program on Hometown today (see link information below) we asked for participant feedback on the Dodge 4-H facebook and Extension facebook. Prizes were given to the people who responded to facebook prompts on the 4-H and extension facebook page. Hometown today program on WBEV radio streaming live at <https://dailydodge.com/audio/hometown-today-audio/> on October 10, 2025.

An officer training session for 4-H youth club officers, where 22 participants—ranging from

*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.*



grades 3 through high school and including a few adult leaders—engaged in role-specific workshops and a general leadership session. Participants learned key skills such as parliamentary procedure, meeting facilitation, financial management, and teamwork strategies. To build confidence, strengthen club operations, and empower youth to take active leadership roles in their clubs.

Participant Feedback Highlights:

- **Skill Development:** Youth reported learning how to write and present secretary reports, manage club finances responsibly, and use parliamentary terminology effectively.
- **Teamwork & Communication:** Many noted the importance of working together, speaking up, and using icebreakers to engage shy members.
- **General Session Impact:** Participants appreciated learning how teamwork improves club dynamics, how to resolve conflicts, and how to make meetings more inclusive and productive.
- **Overall Experience:** Comments included “really fun,” “helpful and fun,” “good session,” and “this helped me quite a bit,” reflecting strong engagement and satisfaction.