

Monthly Highlights December 2025

Agriculture – Crops

Educator: Will Fulwider

The development of the research plan for the Dodge County Research Farm. Met several times with the farmers and solicited opinions from Extension state specialists to collaboratively render three discrete modes of management—low-input value cropping, UW recommendation following, and yield chasing performance cropping—intended to mirror the management from Dodge County farmers across the spectrum.

The county owned land surrounding the airport is an opportunity for the county to showcase some of the practices that the county would like to see implemented across the county. Furthermore, it presents the county, Extension, and local farmers with an opportunity to collaborate and bring more local research to the area. A big question of conservation agriculture amongst farmers is does it hurt the pocketbook. The goal of the approach of this research plan is to test how no till agriculture fares in three different farm management scenarios to see if economically it is able to perform as well as more conventionally minded approaches. This also presents an opportunity to compare these three management approaches against each

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.



other economically to evaluate whether UW recommendations produce the best financial outcomes vis a vis the value cropping and yield chasing approaches.

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Agriculture - Dairy

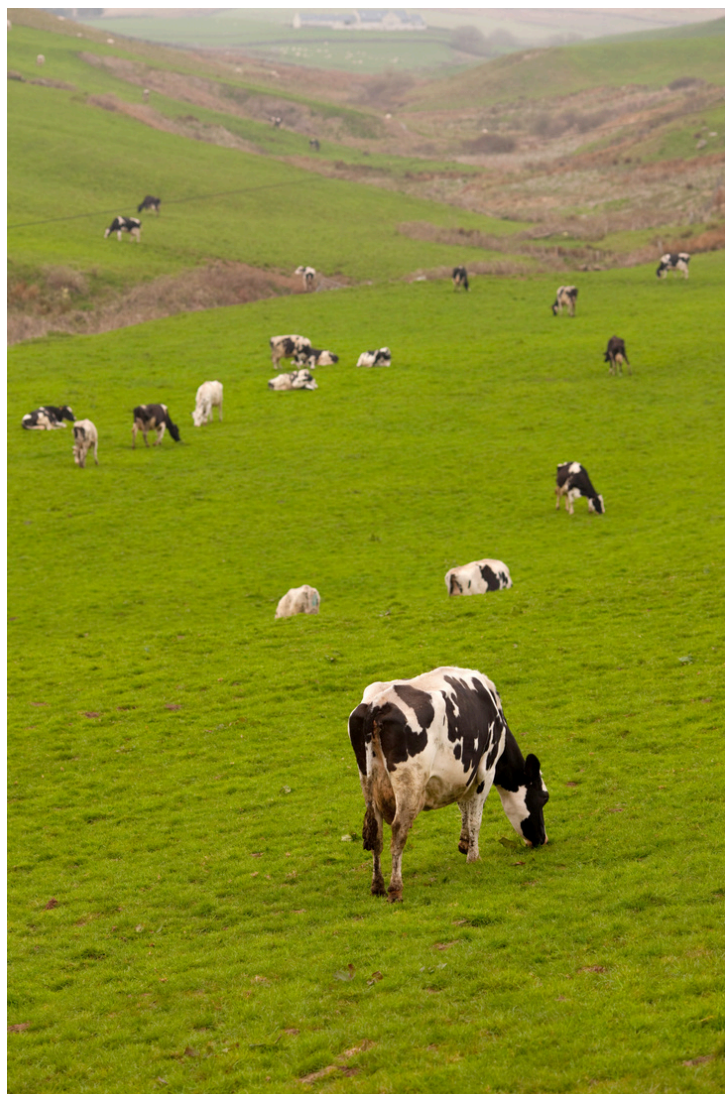
Educator: Manuel Peña

An article written for dairy farmers and industry professionals where we discussed the importance and impact of Body Condition Score (BCS). The purpose of the article is to help farmers of Dodge County to measure it on farm, to help prevent digestible disorders at different stages of production, and to increase efficiency of their cows.

Fresh cow issues cost producers approximately \$8 billion each year in the United States, representing a significant economic burden on the dairy industry. A substantial portion of these problems can be traced back to the cow's body condition at the time of calving, which plays a crucial role in determining her health, productivity, and ability to transition smoothly into lactation. Cows that are either too thin or too fat at calving are more susceptible to a range of metabolic disorders, such as ketosis, milk fever, and displaced abomasum, all of which can compromise milk production, increase veterinary costs, and even lead to early culling. Proper management of body condition during the dry period and close-up phase is therefore essential to minimizing these fresh cow issues and improving both animal welfare and farm profitability. This article is designed to guide farmers in accurately scoring the body

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.



condition of their animals at different stages of production. By understanding and applying proper scoring techniques, farmers can make informed management decisions that support herd health, productivity, and overall farm efficiency.

Monthly Highlights December 2025 Human Development & Relationships

Educator: Pattie Carroll

During the reporting period, Pattie Carroll advanced multiple high-impact initiatives focused on financial well-being, parenting education, family resilience, and workforce support across Dodge County and Wisconsin.

A major focus continues to be Encouraging Financial Conversations (EFC), a six-module professional development course for social workers, case managers, and community agency staff. The course builds participants' knowledge and confidence in addressing financial topics such as goal setting, budgeting, saving, debt management, and credit use with economically vulnerable clients. By strengthening the capacity of frontline professionals to engage in effective financial conversations, EFC supports improved client financial functioning and long-term stability, with anticipated outcomes including reduced reliance on public assistance and increased self-sufficiency.

Locally, Carroll launched Thrive @ Work: Dodge County Lunch & Learn Series, a monthly program developed in direct response to feedback from Spring 2025 Dodge County Community Forum. Attendees identified financial stress and life management challenges as key concerns. In partnership with Dodge County Human Resources, this series provides accessible, expert-led sessions on topics such as debt management, saving, stress, and estate planning. Sessions are offered in-person and recorded for later viewing, averaging approximately 15 in-person participants per session, with broader reach through internal communications to all County employees. Early

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.



feedback indicates the series is relevant, practical, and empowering, benefiting not only individual employees but also the broader organizational culture and community.

Carroll also continues to lead a monthly drop-in parenting program for parents of children in grades K–5. Developed in response to community and school partner input, this low-barrier program addresses timely topics such as positive discipline, routines, and screen time. Hosting sessions in a familiar school setting during the day has reduced participation barriers and fostered peer connection. Parents report increased confidence, practical skill use at home, and a growing sense of community support.

At the statewide level, Carroll is actively engaged in planning continuing education workshops for childcare providers in collaboration with the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, as well as preparation for the annual virtual Raising Wisconsin's Children Conference, which connects parents, caregivers, and professionals to research-based child development education and Extension resources.

Finally, Carroll supports families navigating transitions through Resilient Co-Parenting, a monthly virtual series for parents experiencing divorce, separation, or custody changes. Participants gain skills in communication, conflict reduction, and emotional support for children, with evaluation data showing improved family interactions and parenting confidence.



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DODGE COUNTY

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Positive Youth Development

Educator: Marie Witzell

An activity for Wisconsin 4-H clubs, where clubs completed the annual chartering process to ensure compliance with state and national 4-H policies and strengthen their organizational structure. Through this effort, clubs demonstrated accountability, set goals for the year, and affirmed their commitment to positive youth development. This process not only supports transparent and effective club operations but also empowers youth and volunteers to work collaboratively toward meaningful learning experiences and community impact. Total Reach: 27 chartering entities in the county

Wisconsin 4-H clubs are required to complete an annual chartering process to maintain compliance with state and national 4-H policies. This requirement ensures that clubs operate with transparency, financial accountability, and a clear plan for youth development. The need for this effort arises from the importance of safeguarding youth, promoting responsible use of funds, and supporting clubs in setting intentional goals for the program year. Without chartering, clubs risk losing recognition and access to resources, which could limit

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.



opportunities for youth engagement and leadership development. Reviews of the charters submitted by the clubs. We engaged in this program to provide guidance and support to clubs through the chartering process, ensuring they understand the requirements and the value behind them. This effort helps strengthen club operations, fosters volunteer confidence, and ultimately enhances the quality of experiences offered to youth across Wisconsin.