

## Monthly Highlights April 2026

# Agriculture - Crops

***Educator: Will Fulwider***

A program for members of the agricultural community where participants learned about winter camelina as a cover crop and oilseed market opportunities to implement more cover crops across Wisconsin and diversify crop rotations.

Growing interest in winter camelina as a cover crop and potential oilseed crop has stemmed from issues with the go-to overwintering rye cover crop (yield drag, disease and insect carryover risk) and cover crop timing challenges posed by a traditional corn/soybean rotation. Extension educators have been working to research this crop and its potential in Wisconsin in order to provide farmers and agronomists with an additional cover crop option. To disseminate Extension research and provide relevant information about this new crop for Wisconsin, we organized a workshop covering the following topics: what is winter camelina, on-farm nitrate leaching study, personal experiences growing the crop as both a cover crop and oilseed, further research, and market opportunities with Cargill. Participants were highly engaged in the comprehensive sessions. Audience members asked great questions and were interacting with

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.



presenters and other attendees. Our goal was to provide different perspectives and educational topics to help farmers make informed decisions about adding winter camelina as a cover crop or potential oilseed to their crop rotation with larger goals of reducing nitrate leaching and improving soil health. On a post-event survey, participants indicated that: -the workshop met or exceeded expectations -Average pre-event knowledge of camelina was 2.12 (on a scale of 1-5)-Average post-event knowledge of camelina was 3.96 (on a scale of 1-5)-Participants were open to altering their herbicide program to accommodate camelina-A majority of participants would be open to growing camelina.

## Monthly Highlights April 2026

# Agriculture - Dairy

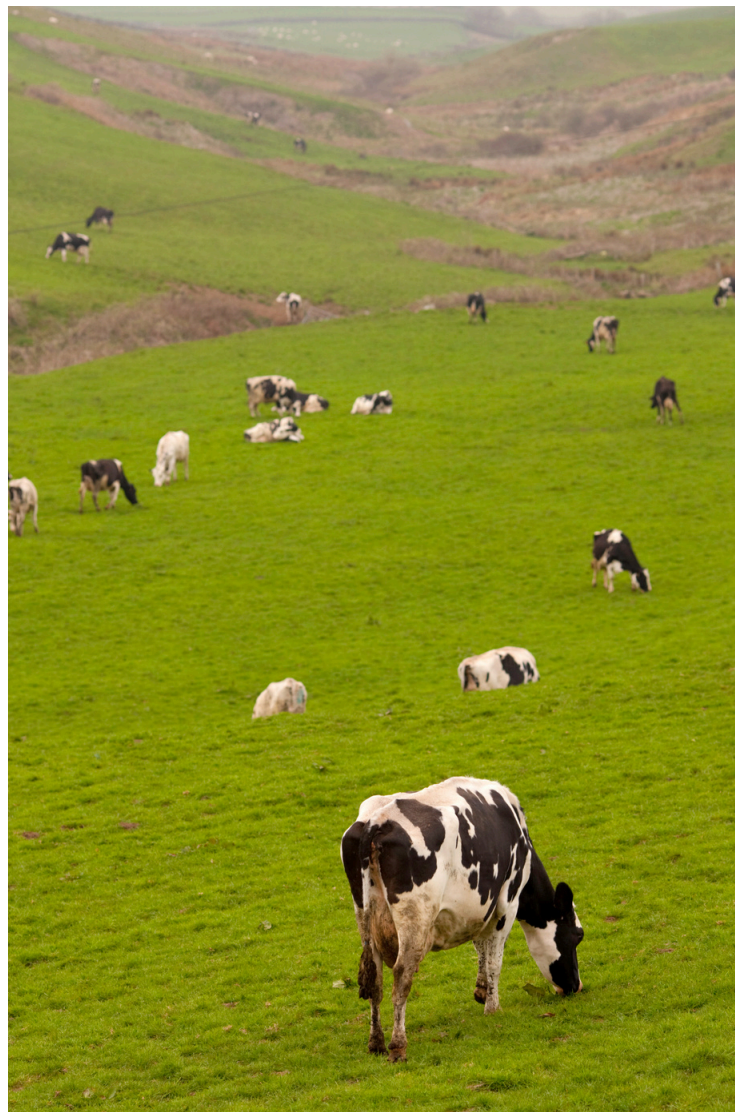
### *Educator: Manuel Peña*

A train the trainer safety toolbox program born in Dodge County for farm operations, safety consultants, educators, and instructors where they find materials to lead or support agricultural safety training by following an interactive guide and adult-learning principles to encourage participation, ownership, and responsibility, while encouraging a Safety Culture.

This program was developed in response to feedback from dairy producers from my region, but mainly at Dodge County, who expressed a need for practical, on-farm training to reduce injuries and accidents and maximize animal performance. In response, we designed this effort to deliver targeted, farm-based education focused on real-world scenarios for immediate application, with the goal of improving worker safety, animal welfare and profitability. Through pilot testing with farmers, participants reported improved understanding of workplace risks and identified specific changes they could implement immediately, such as safer animal handling, and tractor safety practices and clearer communication protocols among employees. Feedback from the pilot also helped refine the training to better align with different farm conditions, increasing its relevance and usability.

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.



This work contributes to broader societal goals by promoting safer agricultural workplaces, reducing the risk of injury, and supporting the well-being of farm employees. We are adding more modules to the program which is completely free and available for all the farms in Dodge on our website.



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DODGE COUNTY

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# Positive Youth Development

***Educator: Marie Witzel***

Dodge County 4-H provided multiple leadership and educational development opportunities during the year through scholarships, application processes, and intentional youth learning experiences designed to reduce barriers and promote positive youth development. These efforts supported equitable access to high-quality experiences, strengthened leadership skills, and reinforced the long-term value of 4-H participation.

Through the Dodge County 4-H Member Experience Scholarship, five youth received financial support to attend state or national educational opportunities such as Space Camp, American Spirit, or Summer Academy. These experiences promote leadership development, career exploration, and personal growth but often present financial challenges due to registration, travel, and related costs. Youth completed a structured application process including resumes, cover letters, and references, encouraging reflection, responsibility, and investment in their learning. Scholarship support reduced financial barriers and allowed youth to fully participate while representing Dodge County 4-H positively.

In addition, Dodge County 4-H implemented an annual scholarship program for high school seniors and alumni pursuing postsecondary

*Positive Youth Development prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs 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.*



education. Over 20 youth applied for one or more of five scholarships, resulting in more than \$25,000 awarded after students' first semester of school. The application and review process engaged eight adult reviewers and required applicants to articulate leadership and service impacts, develop professional application materials, and reflect on their growth through 4-H. This process strengthened college and career readiness while supporting diverse educational pathways.

Leadership development was further supported through a structured camp counselor application and interview process for youth ages 14–18. Seven youth were selected after reflecting on prior experiences and responding to real-life camp scenarios, resulting in a prepared and confident counselor team for Dodge County 4-H Camp.

Finally, a Sparks lesson was facilitated at Family Learning Day, reaching nine youth and families. Participants identified personal interests across areas such as arts, STEM, and animal science, supporting self-awareness while providing Extension with valuable data to inform future programming. Together, these efforts strengthened youth confidence, leadership capacity, and engagement across Dodge County 4-H.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.