



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DODGE COUNTY

Monthly Highlights June 2026



Agriculture - Crops

Educator: Will Fulwider

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.

Extension educators continue a multi-farm research project examining how cover crop species influence oomycete-induced seedling disease in corn. The study is evaluating whether camelina, an alternative overwintering cover crop, may reduce disease risk compared to the commonly used cereal rye. Four farms are participating in the project, with findings expected to reach a broader audience through future Extension publications and outreach efforts.

Soil samples are being collected before corn planting and during early corn growth stages (V2-V4) to assess populations of *Pythium* species, which are common causes of seedling disease. Samples are being analyzed in collaboration with UW-Madison Extension Pathologist Dr. Damon Smith and his laboratory using DNA-based disease quantification methods.

This research will help determine whether camelina can be recommended as a cover crop ahead of corn, inform Extension management recommendations for reducing seedling disease, and contribute to ongoing efforts to understand yield impacts associated with corn planted after cereal rye cover crops. The project supports integrated pest management strategies by exploring cover crop options that may disrupt pathogen cycles while maintaining the agronomic benefits of cover crops.

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

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Agriculture – Dairy

Educator: Manuel Peña

UW–Madison Division of Extension provided an educational outreach station at the Dodge County Dairy Breakfast, reaching approximately 1,800 attendees, including dairy producers, farm employees, agricultural professionals, farm families, and community members. The station highlighted Extension programming in dairy nutrition, calf management, dairy herd management, and other areas that support the success and sustainability of dairy operations.

This event provided an important opportunity to connect directly with a diverse audience and increase awareness of the research-based resources, educational programs, and technical assistance available through Extension. Many attendees were unfamiliar with the breadth of services offered, making the event a valuable platform to showcase how Extension supports Wisconsin's dairy industry through practical education and applied research.

Through conversations and educational materials, participants learned about management practices that can improve animal performance, operational efficiency, and overall farm productivity. The outreach station also helped

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.



strengthen relationships between Extension and local stakeholders by encouraging continued engagement in educational programs and consultations.

By connecting producers and community members with trusted, research-based information, Extension supports informed decision-making that can enhance farm profitability, promote animal welfare, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of dairy operations in Dodge County. This outreach effort demonstrates Extension's commitment to serving agricultural communities and helping local farms remain successful in an evolving industry.

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Positive Youth Development

Educator: Marie Witzel

Dodge County 4-H continued to support positive youth development and strengthen community connections through several impactful educational and leadership experiences this month.

At Family Fest, Extension and community partners welcomed 546 attendees for a family-focused event that provided engaging activities, access to local resources, and opportunities to build meaningful connections. Participants gained valuable information and strengthened support networks that contribute to healthier, more informed families and a more connected community. The event also fostered collaboration among community organizations, strengthening partnerships that benefit county residents. As a result of this outreach, more than 15 families requested additional information about the Dodge County 4-H program, creating new opportunities for youth and families to become involved in positive youth development experiences.

Leadership development was also a key focus through planning for the Dodge County 4-H camp program. Seven youth camp counselors and eight adult volunteers worked together to develop camp schedules, activities, and

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.



leadership roles while strengthening skills in teamwork, communication, facilitation, and responsibility. This preparation helps ensure a safe, engaging, and youth-led camp experience that promotes confidence, belonging, and personal growth for campers.

Additionally, an adapted Spark Your Sparks leadership training at Summer Academy prepared teen leaders to facilitate a large-group lesson for 325 youth participants. Through interactive activities and peer connections, youth leaders strengthened their leadership and facilitation skills while helping younger participants identify their personal interests and passions, supporting increased motivation, well-being, and positive youth development outcomes.