



## Agriculture

### Jackie McCarville, Regional Dairy Educator



*The Extension Agriculture Institute is your connection to the latest University of Wisconsin-Madison research. Our five program areas; Agriculture Water Quality, Crops and Soils, Dairy and Livestock, Farm Management, and Horticulture, are here to educate and respond to the needs of the agriculture community while providing resources that promote economic and environmental sustainability in Wisconsin. We apply research to challenges facing communities and businesses.*

#### Badger Dairy Insight

A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest research and applications regarding developments in genetic evaluations, feed efficiency research, methane emissions, and dairy cow resiliency. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research on the impacts that genetics plays on dairy cattle. Badger Dairy Insight is a webinar series to provide the latest research-based dairy information to improve animal welfare, breeding and genetic selection, automation and modernization, and nutritional decisions for producers, dairy workers and managers, Ag professionals, and educators. In this meeting, Lyssa Seefeldt and Sebastian Arriola spoke on fat source options and using amino acids balancing to maximize milk protein and fat.

#### 2024 Dairy Reproduction Roadshow

The Repro Roadshow was a multi-location, in-person program that provided the latest research-based information to improve the understanding of current timed AI protocols for use with sexed semen for dairy professionals. In this meeting, Extension Specialist Dr. Paul Fricke and Assistant Professor Dr. JP Martins discussed their labs' latest findings on the application of sexed semen in dairy herds and Timed AI protocols. One hundred percent of participants answering the evaluation poll (n=70) said "yes" to the question, "I have gained new insights on how to help me or my clients optimize conception rates and manage breeding in my herd." Local dairy educators presented on the impacts of Stress or Strain on reproduction or the impacts of personnel training on reproduction protocols. One hundred percent of participants answering the poll saying yes to the question "I have increased my understanding of how stress can affect the occurrence of disease." Overall, 99% of participants indicated they were somewhat or very likely to share information from the workshops with others, and that information from the workshop improved their understanding of ways to optimize fertility in their herds (Ave. 4.04; scale 1=a little; 5=a lot). One hundred and fifty-six people participated, representing dairy farmers, educators, and industry professionals. Participants completing the evaluation poll (n=70) indicated they own, or impacted the management, of over 250,100 cows. Participants attended from all four counties.

#### Dairy Quality Assurance Training

A set of 7 workshops for current CAFO permit farmers, their consultants and supporting agency staff, where Extension and DNR helped them make informed decisions, improve the quality/implementation of their nutrient management plans, reducing manure runoff impacts, reducing nutrient losses, consider climate smart livestock and manure management practices, and plan for future innovative practices to improve water quality. More than 350 livestock producers and key staff (including Latino), agriculture consultants and supporting agency staff attended one of the sites. Participants will be able to reduce water quality impacts via gained knowledge in three areas: Nutrient Management (manure spill prevention, pre and post manure application field checks, planning requirements), Production Area Management (considerations for reducing nutrient losses and long-term planning for climate-smart greenhouse gas management practices) and long term planning (adjusting for future manure and fertilizer regulations, managing manure for weeds and other components not usually considered (copper sulfate foot baths), cover crops, and clean water discharges from digesters) Participants attended from all four counties.



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### Jordyn Sattler, Regional Crops & Soils Educator



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### Town & Country Crop Insurance Services

A meeting for Town & Country Insurance Services crop insurance customers where participants learned about crop management considerations to become more economical decision makers on their farm and food safety.

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*Health and Well-Being*

*Bridget Mouchon, Health & Well-being Educator*



*The Extension Institute for Health & Well-Being works to catalyze positive change in Wisconsin communities to promote health and well-being. Our research-based programs are focused on food and nutrition security, chronic disease prevention, mental health promotion, substance use prevention, and access to health care. Rooted in both urban and rural communities, we're working together to help solve the state's most pressing well-being needs and to ensure that all Wisconsinites have the opportunity to live stronger, healthier lives.*

**WeCope**

A 7 session workshop (WeCOPE) for Southwestern Wisconsin residents and Southwestern Wisconsin Library Staff where they learn effective stress reduction strategies to increase awareness of how stress influences their body, emotions, thoughts and health behaviors. The long term goal is to help participants improve current health conditions through stress reduction and their improved ability to take care of mental, physical and spiritual health.



**QPR Suicide Prevention Training**

A 1.5-hour suicide prevention program (QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer) for Family Advocates domestic violence agency staff where participants learned skills and strategies to identify and respond to signs of suicidal thoughts and behavior in order to connect individuals to appropriate professional help, provide support, reduce stigma and risk of suicide.

**Mental Health First Aid**

A 6.5-hour mental health awareness program (Mental Health First Aid) for people in Southwestern Wisconsin where participants learned skills and strategies to identify and respond to signs of a mental health or substance use challenge in order to connect individuals to appropriate professional help, provide support, reduce stigma, improve mental wellness and reduce the risk of suicide. Since COVID's onset, adults – especially young adults – are facing more mental health challenges, according to the CDC. Having the ability to spot when other adults are experiencing a challenge or a crisis and offer support can improve short- and long-term outcomes for people, and has a ripple effect on those around them. Doll and Mouchon offered the evidence-based Mental Health First Aid class to people in Southwestern Wisconsin on February 16th. This class helps people understand multiple kinds of mental health and substance use disorders, and offers opportunities to do some skills building on how to intervene with someone at early stage, worsening stage, and during a crisis stage of a mental or substance use disorder. After the training people felt more confident and said things like, "I feel more comfortable with approaching people who are feeling down" "Inspired and educated", and "[I now know] how to talk more openly about suicide and general mental health."

**Community Health Worker**

Resources for Spanish-speaking community members in Green and Lafayette Counties are sparse. This includes access to resources to address the social determinants of health (SDoH) of Spanish-speaking Latino families and households. SDoH have a major impact on people's health, well-being, and quality of life. Examples of SDoH include: Safe housing and transportation; Racism, discrimination, and violence; Education, job opportunities, and income; Access to nutritious foods and physical activity; and Language and literacy skills. Mouchon supervises a Spanish-speaking Community Health Worker, Cristy Alvarado. Cristy has been through several trainings to provide education in the community on her own and as a co-facilitator. She has most recently been trained, with Mouchon as her supervisor, in the Community Health Records management system, a database where she receives referrals for clients who need medical or SDoH resources or support. She has also been integrated into the Southwest Wisconsin Community Health Worker hub as a part of this CHR database training, and is starting to receive referrals. She has been serving three clients, "learning the ropes" of the community systems and resources, and how to use this new database system. Her caseload will increase over time. Hospitals are beginning to be required to chart and find ways to address SDoH, and her integration into this system at this point in time is fortuitous. She has also gotten her first client through SSM-Monroe Occupational Health. These efforts advance health equity for Latino and Hispanic people in Green and Lafayette Counties.



*Maggie Milcarek, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator  
Kathy Lange, FoodWise Nutrition Educator*



Kathy Lange      Maggie Milcarek

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**Community Food Garden**

Planning and writing a grant for a food garden with Lafayette County Housing Authority and residents at the Riverview Apartment affordable housing properties in Blanchardville. The gardens and produce would be accessible to all residents. Excess produce would be donated to residents at other Lafayette County Housing Authority properties. In conjunction with the garden, FoodWise would provide nutrition education classes to residents. The goal of this project is to encourage healthy eating, improve access to local nutritional food, and improve food security for community members experiencing low incomes and low food access.

**Spring & Summer Strong Bodies Series**



Planning for a spring and summer series of Strong Bodies strength training and nutrition education classes: Reaching out to partners such as senior meal sites and affordable housing properties to gauge interest among partners and participants. The goal of this program is for participants to gain nutrition knowledge and engage in regular exercises to improve strength, balance and flexibility so they can stay healthy and socially connected.



## Positive Youth Development

### Hailee Kammerud, 4-H Youth Development Educator

The Extension Institute of 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 afterschool programs give youth people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.



### A Day in the Arts



4-H youth have talent! Day in the Arts provides an opportunity for youth (kindergarten through 13<sup>th</sup> grade) to showcase their creative talents through music, speech, demonstrations, visual arts, and photography. Between Iowa and Lafayette County there have been 42 entries submitted for the afternoon of arts fun! Judges will meet with participants face-to-face to evaluate and critique their work. Offering an event where 4-H can showcase their SPARKS allows for youth to become familiar with the evaluation process which can lead to a greater sense of comfort in performing in public. Public

speaking and presenting are essential life skills that many youth do not have the opportunity to practice and Day in the Arts encompasses that space for participants. Since COVID, the program has slowly been growing in participation numbers and entries and it's anticipated to continue with the upward trend over the next few years. During the planning process for 2024 the day of the week was adjusted to encourage more participation from youth and will continue to be accessed for the next two years. Allowing youth to express themselves through the art of expression and performance continues to hold significance at the county levels, and eventually the state.

### Fill the Floral Hall – February

Based on the need expressed and started by 4-H parents, the Fill the Floral Hall event has become a monthly occurrence where youth are able to experience SPARKS in a wide variety of project areas. For the month of February, Monroe High School Family & Consumer Science teacher, Melody Loeffelholz, led a second mesh wreath making event. The wreath kits (wreath frame, pre-cut mesh, and pipe cleaners) were provided from a generous donation from a community member. Individuals who participated in the event were able to learn the art of wreath making and to utilize their own creative ideas in the materials used to accent their themed wreaths. With the support of the 4-H educator and support staff within the Extension office, Fill the Floral Hall is continuing to grow in participation numbers. Extension resources are used for marketing, promotion, pre-registration, and the gathering of needed supplies, volunteers, and/or sponsors. By continuing to offer these events at minimal to no costs, 4-H is able to continue to market itself as financially accessible to a diverse group of participants, and also to provide space where a sense of community and belonging is welcomed for those individuals who are interested in 4-H programming.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Annual “Maple Syrup Experience”



During the Cloverbud Discovery Day 2023, 4-H Ambassadors created a producer-product matching game experience for youth in grades kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. They realized that knowing where our food comes from is vital to the sustainability of food production and human health. From that endeavor, conversations stemmed around local resources and food availability that could be accessible for youth regardless of their geographic location of living. What food could be grown or harvested from individuals living in town, cities, or in the country? By reaching out to producers within the county, I made connections with





various individuals who were interested in offering experiences on their farms or at their homes to educate youth about the opportunities available on a variety of scales to produce their own food. The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual "Maple Syrup Experience" was born. Pre-registered youth will experience on-site the components that go into tapping maple trees, collecting sap, the preparations that are needed to turn sap into syrup, and leave with samples of maple syrup produced locally. 4-H youth and adults will be a part of the hands-on process and gain knowledge of the variety of levels accessible to start small-scale or large-scale operations depending upon their entrepreneurship desires. Through hands-on learning opportunities, such as this, youth and adults are engaging in growing capacity for food access, health awareness, productivity in the real-world marketplace, and the sustainability of producing one's food.

### Shooting Sports – Air Rifle (EoS)

With the 1<sup>st</sup> discipline of shooting sports - air rifle coming to an end on Friday, March 15, SPARKS have continued to ignite! From February 2024, three more members enrolled in air rifle bringing the number of enrolled participants up to 23 from 20. Of those 23 enrolled participants, 17 youth have regularly participated in 3 or more clinics (a minimum requirement to qualify for the county fair shoot). As the youth's SPARKS are ignited in air rifle the need for growing volunteer capacity will remain. From the beginning of the 2022-2023 year, there was one volunteer certified by WI 4-H. Since then, two additional volunteers have been certified for 2023-2024, but more volunteers will need to be recruited to sustain the program. The Air Rifle program allows for youth to engage in meaningful relationships and learning opportunities with certified instructors for the safe handling and safe standards of equipment while working on marksmanship skills. The community support and collaborations with the local VFW clubs (Darlington and Gratiot), as well as the Darlington Gun Club have impacted the youth's experience in shooting sports for the better. The Darlington VFW annually loans 3 of their air rifles to the 4-H program for use during the season, as well as donating targets and pellets. The Gratiot VFW donated funds for the purchase of equipment. The Darlington Gun Club donates the use of their facility for youth to be able to shoot indoors and a club member as a point of reference during all 4-H clinics to support the youth shooting program. Without these community collaborations the 4-H Shooting Sports program would not be as accessible to as many youth as it has been for the past two years.