



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, Paul Fricke and JP Martins discussed their new latest research on optimizing use of sexed and beef semen in dairy herds, managing heifer growth and reproduction, and optimizing re-synchronization programs in lactating dairy cows.

Radio Interview - Dairy

A weekly radio interview for farmers, agricultural industry persons, youth livestock, and youth dairy where they learned about extension agriculture related resources, information, and timely webinars. The goal is to help them to be connected and supported, and make better informed decisions regarding their farm business operations or large animal project to improve farm business viability, environmental sustainability, and food safety.

Dairy Quality Assurance Training

A dairy quality assurance training for youth exhibitors, where youth learn about the quality care of animals through animal well-being, food safety, and life skills to help individuals understand their role in food animal production to improve business viability, environmental sustainability, and food safety. Youth attending the quality assurance program have a better understanding of raising animals and their role as a youth exhibitor. They are also better equipped to answer questions from people attending the fair about how animals are raised.

Somatic Cell Count

A live in-person meeting for dairy farmers and employees, where attendees learned about implications of high somatic cell count and mastitis on production. They also learned the tie between dairy nutrition and health immunity.

State Dairy Judging & Animal Handlers Competition

An in-person event where qualifying FFA teams judged dairy cattle, answered type assessment, pedigree, and dairy management questions. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge in the dairy industry especially around animal welfare, nutrition, reproduction, and emerging technologies. Working with a dairy farmer from Iowa County, we divided the tasks needed for the day. She engaged with finding dairy judges and cattle for the competition. I took over the task of creating a 50 question dairy management test, questions on the test were related to animal welfare, nutrition, reproduction, and emerging technologies especially automatic milking systems.



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Jordyn Sattler, Regional Crops & Soils Educator



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Radio Interview – Crops & Soils

Weekly radio interviews for farmers and agriculture professionals where the audience learns about current crop management considerations and/or resources available to them from the UW-Madison Division of Extension to help them make more timely and economic decisions on their farms. I record weekly radio segments and participate in radio interviews where I share field conditions, crop management considerations, and resources available to farmers. This effort is promoting Extension and building credibility in the community so farmers can better understand the resources available to them, and use them to make the most economical and environmentally conscious decisions for their farm and surrounding areas.

NOPP Planning

Planning for a Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program trials for corn growers in collaboration with the USDA, Lafayette Ag Stewardship Alliance, and four area producers. The goal of this effort is to learn more about how rye cover crops affect optimum nitrogen rates so that producers can apply commercial fertilizer more efficiently.



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Kimberly Kester, Regional Livestock Educator



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Genomic Testing – Replacement/Selection Decisions



Development of: A project to demonstrate the applicability of genomic testing to inform replacement/selection decisions for commercial and purebred beef cattle, in collaboration with CALS faculty and Lancaster ARS personnel. Results from this demo project will provide beef producers with real-world genomic results and genetic comparisons, as well as how to use the results to make sound selection decisions based on herd goals.

Swath Grazing

Development of: A pilot study to gauge the feasibility of swath/windrow grazing as a winter feeding option for beef cows in southwestern Wisconsin, in collaboration with CALS faculty and Lancaster ARS personnel. Results from this pilot study will offer beef producers a potential new winter feeding strategy that utilizes drought-resistant forages, saves time and money by reducing fieldwork/fuel usage, reduces damage to fields, and provides adequate nutrition for cows.

Honey Bee Biology



An in-person presentation where participants learned about honey bee biology, how bees see flowers, how to incorporate quality nectar and pollen sources in their gardens, and how to make their gardens more hospitable for honey bees and native pollinators in order to ultimately improve pollinator protection in the local environment. Attendees were equipped with knowledge to make appropriate plant selections with honey bees in mind. They were also provided with plant species guides that indicated whether they were adequate source of nectar and pollen for bees, as well as sunlight needs and plant height.

Managing Heat Stress in Cattle

An article in the Wisconsin Agriculturist about managing heat stress in cattle. Long-range weather outlooks for summer 2024 indicate Wisconsin has a significant chance of being hotter than normal. High sustained temperatures can leave to cattle heat stress, including early embryonic loss, semen quality issues, and reduced weight gain in feeder cattle. The article detailed proper implementation of shade, sprinklers, water access, and ventilation to keep cattle cool and comfortable. By using a statewide publication, it increased the likelihood of reaching more cattle producers across Wisconsin.

Radio Interview - Livestock

A weekly radio spot for livestock producers, allied Ag industries, and the general public to learn about Extension publications and resources, programming updates, and available webinars or workshops in the area. The intent was to reach a broader audience with timely topics and resources in order to positively influence on-farm economic viability, knowledge and skills, and overall impression of Extension.

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.

COMET –Changing our Mental & Emotional Trajectories

A Changing Our Mental and Emotional Trajectories (COMET) for emergency responders, where people learn basic skills of noticing and asking others about their wellbeing and mental health in order to improve their ability to open up a conversation with someone they are worried about to reduce isolation, and help them get to additional help or support if needed.

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 some kind of 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. 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 now has over 10 clients at any given time and inputs their information into the Community Health Records System through our Community Health Worker HUB. These efforts advance health equity for Latino and Hispanic people in Green and Lafayette Counties.

Suicide Prevention Program

Planning for a comprehensive community outreach effort for everyone living and working in Green and Lafayette Counties in collaboration with Mental Health Matters Coalitions in both counties. The goal of this effort is to build awareness of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention resources, so that we respond quickly and supportively to a recent significant increase in suicide deaths in our area, and prevent further deaths by suicide.

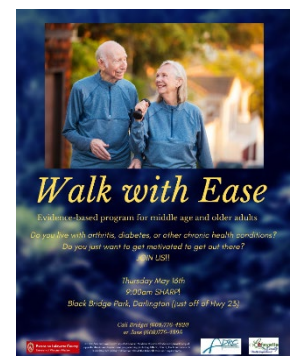
Juntos – Introducing 4-H

A three-evening programming opportunity for participants (elementary through middle-school aged) of Juntos Family Nights to be introduced to local 4-H program areas incorporating youth-driven experiences and interests to bridge the connection between Juntos and 4-H. Collaboration and support from the 4-H Program Educator, the Health & Well-being Educator, and the local Juntos Family Night youth has allowed for facilitated discussions, planning, and programming implementation to spark interests for a wide-range of youth and families.

Walk with Ease program planned

Collaborating with the Lafayette County ADRC, Health Department and the Home and Community Education (HCE) Association of Lafayette County to provide this evidence-based program. We will walk along the river in Darlington, starting at the Black Bridge Park. Multiple trainers will be able to lead and coach supporting older adults' physical and mental health! Soft start on May 16 at 9:00am, and an advertised "official start" on Thursday June 6th.

Pictured are Maggie Milcarek and Bridget Mouchon at the Senior Social on May 8th.



FoodWise

Maggie Milcarek, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator



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Garden Nutrition Education Class



The first in a series of garden nutrition education classes to be held with adults at the Lafayette County Housing Authority Riverview Apartments in Blanchardville. This class was a nutrition education class and garden planning event. The class focused on the recommendations for and benefits of eating all colors and types of fruits and vegetables. Participants talked about meals and snacks that feature fresh vegetables that could be grown in the garden. Participants also learned about the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans and talked about the physical and mental health benefits of gardening. We generated a list of vegetables and herbs that participants would like to grow in the garden and talked about topics for future garden classes. The goal of these classes is to encourage healthy eating habits and increase the use of fresh vegetables from the garden.

Educational & Outreach Events

Planning for a series of educational and outreach events in partnership with The Aging and Disability Resource Center. FoodWise would partner with ADRC staff to provide education about and promote the use of Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers. The goal of these programs would be to encourage healthy eating habits, promote the purchase of local fresh fruits and vegetables, and increase the redemption of the vouchers.

Community Partnerships – Farmers Market Managers & FoodWise

Support for a coalition consisting of Farmers Market Managers and FoodWise staff in Southwest Wisconsin. The goal of this effort is to strengthen community partnerships, empower members through sharing of best practices, develop and disseminate resources, and promote equitable access to healthy and local foods.

Community Garden



Planning and purchasing items for a food garden with Lafayette County Housing Authority and residents at the Riverview Apartment affordable housing property in Blanchardville. This month FoodWise staff is working with the resident garden expert to begin construction of the raised garden beds. 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 will provide nutrition education cases 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.



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.

Fill the Floral Hall



Based on the grass-roots efforts of several 4-H parents/volunteers, ongoing support and program facilitation is provided to create unique monthly experiences for youth currently enrolled and those interested in enrolling in 4-H. As monthly programming experiences vary from month to month, more adults and older youth have taken part in demonstrating and participating in the programming. By consistently offering short monthly programming the events have held the engagement of both youth and adult by creating spaces for relationship-building, engagement, and shared SPARKS. The intergenerational interactions have broadened youth's experiences within and around the community. March 2024's "Paint Pouring on Canvas" event featured an older 4-H youth (expert) demonstrating a technique with acrylic paint that many have been interested in learning about. Through the interactive leading of this event, youth and adults could engage, foster relationships, and learn from one another further expanding their SPARKS around acrylic painting techniques. One of the outcomes from this experience was increased participation in April's event, connecting people with shared interest, and the creation of supportive community artists. April 2024's Fill the Floral Hall was the re-introduction of Macrame (knotting). Through the community collaboration with a small business partner, 4-H was able to provide two different keychain kits to enrolled participants at 50% discount. By reducing costs for participants from minimal or no cost, the access to FtFH monthly programming has made it possible to reach a wider audience within 4-H and the community, thus continuing to create intergenerational community connections.

Juntos

A three-evening programming opportunity for participants (elementary through middle-school aged) of Juntos Family Nights to be introduced to local 4-H program areas incorporating youth-driven experiences and interests to bridge the connection between Juntos and 4-H. Collaboration and support from the 4-H Program Educator, the Health & Well-being Educator, and the local Juntos Family Night youth has allowed for facilitated discussions, planning, and programming implementation to spark interests for a wide-range of youth and families. The first Juntos-Introducing 4-H event was held in April at the Darlington High School where 3 expert 4-H youth led demonstrations on introductory techniques of cupcake decorating for interested youth and members of the Junto Community. Translation services were provided by an older Juntos youth to engage all individuals present at the event. Youth and adults were able to experience true 4-H "hands-on" learning experiences by being active participants after the demonstrations. By offering Introduction to 4-H nights at Juntos events, 4-H is expanding its accessibility for all and the broadening of programming being able to be offered to all county youth.

4-H Shooting Sports

The 4-H Youth Development Educator provides ongoing facilitation support for the growth of the Lafayette County 4-H Shooting Sports - Gun program through the continuation of volunteer capacity and growing youth enrollment. By offering a safe and relevant shooting sports program, youth are able to explore their SPARKS, engage and develop relationships with trusted WI 4-H Certified instructors in discipline areas that fit their interests. Upon the introduction of the air pistol discipline at the end of spring 2023, the participating members increased by 250% for the Winter/Spring 2024 season. Youth participated in a minimum of 3 clinics learning about pistol safety, shooting standards, and Wildlife component of Forestry Level 1. Clinics wrapped up during the first weekend of May.

4-H Archery Program

The 4-H Program Educator provides ongoing facilitation support for the Lafayette County 4-H Archery program by providing them with resources and strategies to make sure youth have educational experiences that are supported by equipment safety, skilled knowledge, and hands-on learning. The 4-H Archery program provides youth with the opportunity to explore their SPARKS while creating a sense of belonging and engagement, while also nurturing developing relationships. During the Winter/Spring 2024 Archery season, 2 new volunteers were certified, increasing the number of WI 4-H certified volunteers to 5. This increased volunteer capacity supported the 37 enrolled youth participants. The number of active participants varied each week from January through May based on participant's availability in meeting the required 3 clinics. At minimum, 11-29 participants participated at each of the clinics over the course of 4.5 months, thus increasing drastically from 0 during the 2023 Archery season.