

Agriculture



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.

Crops | *Liz Gartman, Regional Crops Educator*

Dairy | *Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator*

An educational program for dairy producers, crop consultants and livestock nutritionists where attendees learned about strategies for improving corn silage digestibility, opportunities for using short corn in crop rotations and risk management for corn and soybeans to provide quality forage to support milk production and total farm profitability. (Liz Gartman, Luiz Ferrareto, Manuel Pena Pena)

- The Fond du Lac Forage council reached out to the regional crop and dairy educators to provide a forage focused program for their members. The council provided timely topic ideas to the educators to consider when determining the program.
- The educators reached out to several speakers to highlight the topics provided by the forage council. Dr. Luiz Ferrareto was willing to discuss his work with corn silage digestibility, Liz Gartman shared an update on the use of Short Corn in dairy crop rotations, John Heinberg from Total Farm Marketing provided a grain market and risk management update, and Manuel Pena discussed Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza as well as providing an update on dairy programming available to producers.
- 20 individuals representing a number of dairy farms, feed companies and agronomy consulting companies attended the meeting. Attendees commented that they would be interested in implementing different chopping heights when harvesting corn silage, improving NDF digestibility, and implementing grain marketing strategies to manage risk.

A regional agriculture newsletter for Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, Washington and Ozaukee county agriculture producers, industry representatives and agency staff that provides timely crop production updates, dairy and farm management resources and upcoming agriculture events. The goal is to create awareness of Extension programming and research in the region and maintain a connection between UW and the ag community. (Liz Gartman, Manuel Pena Pena)

- Crop, dairy and livestock producers make key management decisions every day based on challenges related to markets, weather and farm goals. It is important for them to have access to up-to-date information and opportunities to help them choose production methods that help them achieve their goals.
- The Regional Extension Ag Updates newsletter is prepared and e-mailed to approximately 850 ag producers, agency staff and agribusiness consultants that support farmers. In the winter months, the newsletter is sent monthly, with issues every two weeks during the crop production months. This newsletter shares field trial opportunities, timely management updates and tools to support production decisions, along with UW Extension and partner event opportunities.

- This newsletter consistently has a 40% open rate and one recipient shared the importance of having upcoming local and statewide events listed in one place. It further has become a great partnership tool between Extension and local producer-led watershed groups, land and water departments and state agencies. This effort creates a greater awareness of resources available to support their farm production goals.

Human Development and Relationships



The Extension Institute of Human Development & Relationships provides the tools Wisconsinites need to thrive as well-rounded, capable individuals and families. We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding. Our programs promote aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents and help families put technology, mindfulness and financial awareness to use.

Truong Tran, Human Development & Relationship Educator

Parents and Youth Working Together for parents and their children, where participants learned about Robert's Rules. Students spoke in Spanish and parents spoke in English to practice the language they use less often. The goal was to get the youth to learn how to collaborate and express their opinions to their parents, solving problems as a family. Parents would take into consideration the "why" behind what the youth added to the conversation and be given a "voice".
(Sarah Feider, Diana Hammer, Truong Tran)

- The guidance counselor at Sheridan indicated that parents are more comfortable speaking in their native language, Spanish. Students are more comfortable speaking in English. Parents gave feedback to the guidance counselor that they wanted their children to practice speaking Spanish. Based on what the guidance counselor indicated, we had various trail mix items to put in the bowl. Parents would use Robert's Rules to make a motion, in English, and youth made motions in Spanish. The parents and youth would have discussions together to make a decision and voted on that decision after everyone was heard. Parents indicated that they would use something like this at home to make decisions in the future. 100% of youth indicated that they felt safe in the environment, they tried something new, they listened to others' ideas, and the decisions were better because they were made together. Joaquin indicated that everything we did was excellent.

An interactive workshop for non-English-speaking parents where participants learned practical strategies to support their children's language and early literacy development using conversation, storytelling, and picture-based reading in any language. Through this effort, families strengthened confidence in engaging with their children's learning while reducing language barriers to educational participation. (Truong Tran)

- Non-English-speaking parents in Sheboygan County face barriers to engaging in traditional literacy and family education opportunities due to limited language access and difficulty navigating available resources. While families value education and want to support their children's learning, parents may lack practical guidance on how to promote early literacy and language development when they do not read or speak English fluently. Without accessible instruction that affirms home languages and oral storytelling traditions, families risk reduced access to early learning supports that contribute to school readiness, parent-child bonding, and long-term educational success. To address language access barriers, Extension delivered a 60-minute interactive workshop designed for non-English-speaking parents. Live interpretation was provided to ensure full participation across multiple languages. The session modeled interactive reading strategies that emphasize conversation, storytelling, picture exploration, and child-led engagement rather than word-for-word reading. Participants practiced reading in small groups and explored practical strategies for supporting children's language and early literacy development when parents do not read or speak English. The program also introduced families to local library services and literacy resources to improve access and system navigation. The workshop intentionally validated home languages, oral traditions, and family strengths while creating a supportive learning environment that reduced anxiety around literacy skill levels. This effort increased access to culturally responsive family literacy education for non-English-speaking caregivers and introduced practical strategies for supporting children's

language development in any language. Participants learned that interactive reading can also support their own English learning by listening to children read, asking questions, and practicing new words together, reinforcing shared learning within the family. Participants gained awareness that conversation, storytelling, and picture-based interaction promote early literacy and strengthen parent-child connection, helping reduce barriers related to English fluency.



StrongBodies is a strength-training and health education program for older adults. Participants engage in regular, progressive exercise that builds strength, improves physical and mental well-being, and strengthens social connection within the community. (Truong Tran)

- Older adults in the community face increasing challenges related to physical decline, limited mobility, social isolation, and chronic disease risk. Many lack access to affordable, age-appropriate exercise opportunities and practical health education that supports healthy aging. Barriers such as transportation, fixed income, and limited program availability further restrict participation in preventive wellness activities. Extension responds to these needs by providing structured, research-based programming that supports physical activity, health literacy, and social engagement. StrongBodies creates accessible opportunities for older adults to improve functional fitness, maintain independence, and strengthen community connections. Extension implemented StrongBodies through community-based classes led by certified instructors and supported by local partnerships. **Program Development:** Sessions are designed using strength-training principles and adapted for varying ability levels. Educational content addresses injury prevention and healthy lifestyle behaviors. **Community Outreach:** Extension collaborates with community organizations to promote enrollment and reduce participation barriers. **Program Delivery:** Classes meet regularly at accessible locations, providing progressive exercise instruction that prioritizes safety, consistency, and participant confidence. The StrongBodies program generates outcomes at individual, community, and systems levels. **Individual Outcomes:** Participants increase strength, balance, and endurance; report improved mood and energy; and experience greater social connection and confidence in maintaining physical activity. **Community Outcomes:** Increased participation in preventive health programming contributes to healthier, more engaged older adults and stronger community wellness networks. **Long-Term Outcomes:** Sustained physical activity supports reduced chronic disease risk, increased independence, and long-term healthcare cost containment.

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Positive Youth Development



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.

4-H | Sarah Feider, 4-H Program Educator

Positive Youth Development | Diana Hammer, Youth Development Educator

Relationship building to learn of youth empowerment opportunities and gaps in Sheboygan County (Diana Hammer, Sarah Feider, Truong Tran)

- Diana Hammer started on June 9 as Sheboygan County's half-time Positive Youth Development Educator. The role is focused on centering youth voices in spaces where young people and adults work together. Hammer is meeting youth and adults to learn where youth voices could be added to discussions of community issues and where civic engagement learning opportunities could be useful. In the last month, Hammer and colleague Sarah Feider provided enrichment activities at the county juvenile detention center. Hammer, Feider, and colleague Truong Tran facilitated a bilingual youth voice and shared decision making activity for parents and kids at Sheridan Elementary which included simultaneous interpretation and translated materials. Hammer also volunteered at the Dr. King Day event held by Black-American Community Outreach at Above and Beyond Children's Museum. She also met with County Board Supervisor Joe Liebau and Plymouth School Board Member Aaron Martell to learn about opportunities for youth participation in local government. Efforts in the planning stages include a civics workshop for 3rd-5th graders at Lakeview Community Library (Random Lake), County Government Days for Kohler, Central, and South High Schools, and a youth entrepreneurship workshop for 4-H Summer Academy.

Planning for a multi-county Winter Leadership Camp experience for youth grades 7 and above. The goal of Winter Leadership Camp is to involve young people in a variety of workshops and experiences that build leadership and personal development skills so they can be better prepared in life. (Penny Tank, Aimee Elkins, Amy Boelk, Carlea Liermann, Katrina Pionek, Megan Suehring, Sarah Feider, Sarah Ferdon, Tracy Keifenheim)

- Offering educational experiences for older youth is a priority in positive youth development. Winter Leadership Camp is an annual opportunity focusing on developing a variety of leadership skills. Educators from each of the counties collaborate to plan a schedule, theme, promotion, and other details for the event. Youth input is encouraged for parts of the planning. Winter Leadership Camp has been cancelled for the current dates due to extreme dangerous wind chills. We are in the process of rescheduling for February. The impacts we are hoping to achieve are that youth will increase their leadership skills, meet new people, learn about leadership opportunities in 4-H, and enjoy a winter camping experience. In addition, this year we are focusing on life skills like financial planning, sewing, first aid, bicycle repair, writing thank you notes, and more.

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A Day Camp for K-5th graders where participants learned about what 4-H is and explored their sparks in order for them to expand their particular interests. (Sarah Feider)

- This year, winter break for youth was very long. I connected with the Sheboygan Area School District Recreational Department and they were looking for activities during this long break. After communicating what the needs were from the Rec. Department, I created a day long camp with information about what 4-H is and how they can get involved. We did all sorts of activities including, but not limited to, team building, obstacle courses, foods and nutrition, and arts and crafts. After completion of the day, 90% of youth said that they felt safe, had fun and tried something new. 100% of participants said they learned about what 4-H is and that they learned something new that day. Seven of the participants said that they would like to join 4-H.



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