



### 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*

A series of factsheets covering beef cow nutrition through all 4 production phases. The goal of these factsheets is for beef producers to better understand production in order to achieve a calving interval of 365 days. To meet this goal, producers need to make sure their cows are on the correct plane of nutrition. With good management, nutritional needs of the beef cow-calf operation can be largely met with forages. (Liz Gartman, Adam Hartfiel, Bill Halfman)

- Wisconsin can experience both poor and great growing seasons depending on human and environmental factors. Beef cows need proper nutrition year-round to achieve optimal production. Poor nutritional management leads to decreased performance and profitability. Poor management of pastures and forage systems will lead to a decrease in forage quality and quantity available for beef producers throughout the year.
- Educational materials offered on the nutrients the cow needs throughout the year and how forages can achieve an ideal calving interval can help producers achieve economic viability long term.
- This series of factsheets on Beef Cow Nutrition throughout the 4 production phases can help producers improve pasture and forage management while ensuring proper nutrition for the whole herd year-round.

A four part Focus on Forage webinar series for forage growers, livestock producers, agency staff and agricultural consultants where research based forage management solutions are shared to optimize forage yield and quality to improve animal performance and overall farm profitability. (Liz Gartman)

- Quality forage production is important to support the livestock and dairy industries in Wisconsin. Meeting forage quality and yield goals is a key metric to improving profitability on these operations.
- The Forage workgroup identified key topics affecting forage growers in the state and generated a four session series - Focus on Forage Management, Focus on Forage Research, Focus on Managed Grazing and Focus on Cover Crop Forages. Each one hour webinar featured three short topics with different speakers from Extension, Dairyland Laboratories, USDA Dairy Forage Research Center and Land Cares LLC. Time was also offered for participants to get their forage questions answered.
- Focus on Forage Management - 119 attendees; Focus on Forage Research - 82 attendees; Focus on Managed Grazing - 91 attendees; Focus on Cover Crop Forages - 82 attendees.

A webinar for dairy farmers and Ag professionals that focused on virtual fencing and how it meets pasture nutrition for Maximum Productivity. The purpose of this webinar was to provide participants with unbiased, evidence-based research about other strategies for grazing and nutrition. (Manuel Pena)

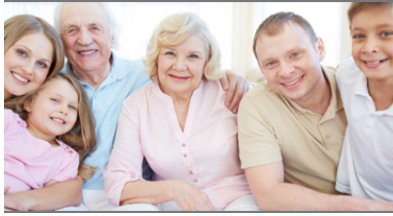
- Well-managed pastures can deliver highly digestible, protein-rich forage. Pasture alone rarely provides a perfectly balanced diet, especially for high-producing dairy cows.



- Dairy educators from the nutrition workgroup worked together to find topics to address this need. From a dairy farmer using virtual fencing on his dairy heifers, research done on performance of heifers raised on pasture and in confinements operations, and how to get the most out of pastures to raise our dairy animals.
- Participants explored current research on pasture-raised heifers, including effective supplementation strategies to optimize their performance. They also gained insight into emerging virtual fencing technologies and how these systems can be used to improve herd management.



## Community Development



Community Development provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. We educate in leadership development, organizational development, food systems, community economic development, local government education and much more. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.

### **Kirtis Orendorff, Community Development Educator**

Kirtis Orendorff Joins UW Extension - Sheboygan County as Community Development Educator

Kirtis began his career with UW-Extension on March 2, 2026. Kirtis started his professional career in software development after graduating from the University of Missouri. After 3 years he pursued his master's in urban planning at UW-Milwaukee. Following graduation, he accepted a position as a city planner with the city of Columbia, Missouri. In this position he built experience with municipal level planning, project management, plan review, public presentation, and public engagement.

- In the few weeks he has been here, Kirtis has been able to meet with many local community groups, such as the Sheboygan chapter of the Wisconsin Towns Association, the Planning Commission of Howards Grove, and the town and village clerks of Sheboygan County. In these meetings, Kirtis has gotten the opportunity to meet with community stakeholders, begin relationship building, and start to understand what needs are in the community.



## 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

- Sheboygan County Extension continues to support *StrongBodies*, a research-based strength training and health education program designed for older adults. StrongBodies focuses on progressive resistance training to improve strength, balance, and overall functional fitness. The program also incorporates education on injury prevention and healthy lifestyle behaviors to support long-term well-being. Programs are being offered twice a week at the Aging and Disability Resource Center, Pigeon River Recreation Center, and statewide virtually this spring.
  - Older adults in the community face increasing risks related to physical decline, limited mobility, chronic disease, and social isolation. Barriers such as transportation, fixed incomes, and limited access to age-appropriate exercise programs can make preventive health efforts more difficult. StrongBodies addresses these challenges by providing structured, safe, and accessible classes led by certified instructors and supported by community partnerships.
  - Participants engage in regular exercise sessions adapted for varying ability levels, building strength and confidence over time. Outcomes extend beyond physical health. Participants report improved mood and energy, greater social connection, and increased confidence in maintaining an active lifestyle. At the community level, StrongBodies contributes to stronger wellness networks and increased engagement in preventive health programming. Over time, sustained physical activity supports reduced chronic disease risk, increased independence, and improved quality of life for older adults in Sheboygan County.

**"The young man you had guiding us today was great. His comments were so funny and much appreciated. He verbalized the struggles of working out we all have. I look forward to having him guide us again" - *StrongBodies* participant**

- Sheboygan County Extension is supporting fathers and father figures through *Focus on Fathers*, a monthly parenting program designed to strengthen children's social and emotional development. Through this series, participants learn practical parenting skills that promote positive parent-child relationships while also building connections with other fathers in the community. The program creates a welcoming space for fathers to share experiences, learn from one another, and grow in their role as caregivers.

Although research continues to highlight the important role fathers play in child and family well-being, fathers often remain underserved in family-based programming. Barriers related to cultural expectations, program accessibility, and limited outreach have historically reduced participation. However, studies show that children with engaged fathers demonstrate higher academic achievement, stronger emotional well-being, and fewer behavioral challenges. Father involvement is especially impactful for children in single-parent and low-income households.



In response to a statewide fatherhood needs assessment, Extension educators and specialists developed the *Focus on Fathers* program to provide fathers with direct parenting education and opportunities for peer connection. This program reflects a growing commitment to supporting fathers as essential contributors to healthy families and thriving communities.



## 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**

A 4-H Project Day for youth, ages 5-17, where participants took part in hands-on projects to learn or enhance a skill. (Sarah Feider)

- Many of our leaders and parents have indicated that they do not have the capacity or skill to teach certain projects/skill to their youth. To allow for learning or enhancing new skills, several projects were set up for youth to participate in based upon their interest. Many youth reported positive experiences with the projects they participated in. The project day also allowed older youth to teach younger youth. Of those who were surveyed, 93% of participants indicated their sessions were fun and engaging.



### **One youth indicated, "I liked this session of Project Day because there were new things for me to try."**

A sparks program for Middle School and High School students where students engaged in various activities throughout the school year to practice something new to them. Through this program, students will have greater implications on their intellectual, social, and emotional self. (Sarah Feider)

- The guidance counselor reached out to me to engage the youth at the school in areas that they were not necessarily familiar with. 4-H was a program that was unfamiliar to all students. In this particular school, the rural students do not or cannot participate in after school activities. Sarah Feider, 4-H Program Educator, partnered with the Sheboygan Area School District to bring 4-H and experimental learning to a new audience. Students engaged in activities through centering youth in the community, building belonging, and learning together - 4-H Core Values.





## **Positive Youth Development** | *Diana Hammer, Youth Development Educator*

Planning for a youth entrepreneurship workshop at the 2026 Summer Academy for 4-H members and non-members in collaboration with county and statewide Extension educators and community partners. The goal is to help young people explore their SPARKS and transform those passions into foundational business skills such as creativity, problem-solving, opportunity recognition, and early-stage planning, so that they are better equipped to grow as successful and sustainable entrepreneurs in their communities and across Wisconsin. (Hannah Altimus, Diana Hammer, Joseph Miller, Lisa Taylor)

- Extension educators look for opportunities to prepare students for different careers. This year, a team of Community Development Educators, including Hammer, is preparing a three-hour workshop on entrepreneurship for participants in grades 8-11 at the 4-H Summer Academy in June. A main goal is to help youth recognize problems in their communities that they could solve using their talents (sparks) and entrepreneurial thinking.

Relationship building to learn of youth empowerment opportunities and gaps in Sheboygan County (Diana Hammer)

- 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 voice could be added to discussions of community issues and where civic engagement learning opportunities could be useful.

In the last month, Hammer learned more Sheboygan County in preparation for the Government Day Field Trips she is organizing. She designed an introductory classroom presentation to teach ahead of time about the county and a Monopoly game customized to Sheboygan County.

She also researched evidence-informed, educational responses for reducing recidivism among youth in the legal system. In partnership with Sheboygan County Youth Justice, she's working on a youth-led series of activities that could build self-efficacy for young people in juvenile detention or on supervision. This complements state efforts to engage system-impacted youth as leaders.



**Value Added** -Sheboygan County Community members actively engage in UW -Madison Extension Regional and Statewide Program offerings. Highlights of these programs are shared in this section of the report.

**Natural Resources**

A series of 7 in-person half day workshops (and one virtual) for Wisconsin DNR permitted farms (CAFOs) owners/managers/key staff, their agronomic & engineering consultants, and agency staff working with these farms where participants learned the latest research/updates on reducing nitrogen losses and how to use the Ag Water N loss assessment tool, the root causes and ways to prevent manure spills/incidents, and updates from the DNR on nutrient management and other policies. Participants are better equipped to prevent manure spills and aware of the N loss assessment tool. Total Reach: More than 400 CAFO farm owners/manager/key employees, agronomic consultants, engineering consultants and agency staff.

- 2/3 of Wisconsin’s 12 billion gallons of dairy manure annually. Proper training in accurate and efficient manure applications is critical to applying manure where and when it is needed to reduce environmental risk and improve farm profitability. A manure applicator training 101 session was offered to commercial applicators and farmers. These sessions are part of a series of statewide applicator training. Interactive mapping activities were created to engage applicators and farmers in problem solving and decision making. Scale replica model tractors, tankers, semis, toolbars, dumpsters, and hoses were provided to help participants visualize problems and solutions. The mapping exercise focused on manure storage siting, transportation, environmental setbacks and impact, application methods, safety, spill response, and manure sampling. An updated Manure Application Workbook was developed to correspond with the mapping activity. The workbook and materials were created by team members Kevin Erb, Landon Baumgartner, Chris Clark, Jerry Clark, Anastasia Kurth, Dan Marzu, Melissa Ohlrich, Todd Prill, and Jordyn Sattler. Forty-five applicators, farmers and crop consultants attended the session. This was part of a statewide series of trainings held across the state in February and March. An evaluation summary of all statewide locations is currently being summarized.

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| Liz Gartman<br><i>Regional Crops Educator</i>             | Sarah Feider<br><i>4-H Youth Educator</i>                          | Jayna Hintz<br><i>Area Extension Director</i> |
| Manuel Peña<br><i>Regional Dairy Educator</i>             | Diana Hammer<br><i>Positive Youth Development Educator</i>         | Emily Lamb<br><i>Support Staff</i>            |
| Kirtis Orendorff<br><i>Community Development Educator</i> | Truong Tran<br><i>Human Development and Relationships Educator</i> | Cassi Worster<br><i>Marketing Specialist</i>  |

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