



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.

Dairy | *Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator*

A corn silage dry-down event for dairy farmers and forage growers in Fond du Lac and the surrounding region, where participants can submit corn silage samples to assess their dry matter content. This information helps participants determine the appropriate time to harvest their corn silage and maximize forage quality. (Manuel Pena Pena)

- Dry matter (DM) data is important because it helps dairy farmers determine the appropriate harvest timing for corn silage. Harvesting at the proper DM content helps achieve good fermentation, preserve nutrients, reduce storage losses, and maintain consistent forage quality. To host an event as an opportunity to submit corn silage samples and assess their dry matter content. During three weeks, every Wednesday from Aug 26th to Sept 9th. The results provide participants with information to evaluate harvest timing and make more informed decisions to maximize corn silage quality and preserve nutrients. The work provide participants with timely dry matter data that helps them evaluate corn silage harvest timing. This information supports more informed harvest decisions, with the goal of maximizing corn silage quality and preserving nutrients for consequent dairy diet formulation.

A presentation for dairy farmers and forage growers that explains the background and importance of high-oleic soybeans in dairy nutrition. Participants learn the differences between conventional and high-oleic soybeans, allowing them to evaluate the addition, use, or improvement of this ingredient in their operations. (Manuel Pena Pena, Jackie Mccarville, Katelyn Goldsmith, Matt Lippert)

- The program was developed in response to the need for dairy farmers and forage growers to better understand high-oleic soybeans and their potential role in dairy nutrition. There was a need to provide background information on this ingredient and clarify the differences between conventional and high-oleic soybeans so participants could better evaluate its use in their own operations. The effort was designed to provide producers with information to support their evaluation and decision-making regarding the addition, use, or improvement of high-oleic soybeans in their operations. A presentation for dairy farmers and forage growers focused on high-oleic soybeans and their role in dairy nutrition. The presentation explained the background and importance of high-oleic soybeans and compared them with conventional soybeans. The presentation is a portion of other topics taught during the High Oleic Field day. Participants gained knowledge about the differences between conventional and high-oleic soybeans, allowing them to better evaluate the use of this ingredient in their operations. The program provided participants with information they could use to make more informed decisions about the addition, use, or improvement of high-oleic soybeans in their dairy operations.

An article to be used in several newsletters, publications and on our Extension website to assist producers to understand and utilize the complex nature of harvesting and feeding high quality forage to improve ration digestibility, dry matter intake and productivity of lactating dairy cows. (Matt Lippert, Luiz Ferraretto, Manuel Pena Pena)

- Producers generally understand the importance of harvesting high quality forages. However weather, machinery limitations and the trade off between quality and quantity often work against producers to obtain their goals of



harvesting high quality feed. Producers need continued encouragement to prevent drift toward the average of producing quality forages by finding new ways to provide further understanding of what is quality feed. Financially production of very high quality forage is essential to optimize milk production in a cost effective way. Since forage quality greatly effects both total production and the economics of production it generally is the single largest lever for profitable production on a dairy farm, This article establishes that quality forage is essential on modern dairy farms. Further it identifies what practices are required to produce quality forage. This includes harvesting forages at the correct moisture level and maturity with correct storage and harvest processing. It details that harvesting high quality forage is not a simple process requiring careful attention to detail at selection of seeds, harvesting at the correct maturity, proper harvest procedures, correct storage and accuracy to include in a carefully balanced ration. This article will be used in the Clark County Extension Views Agriculture newsletter, the Wisconsin Agriculturist magazine the Midwest Forage Association Clippings e-newsletter and in the nutrition section of the Extension Dairy website.

A bilingual (English and Spanish) newsletter, Bovi-noticias, for dairy farms, their employees, and industry partners, where research-based information is shared in accessible language to explain the reasons behind key farm management practices and provide practical insights for daily work, to strengthen communication, support the implementation of best practices, and foster a healthy farm culture that ultimately builds an engaged workforce, improves animal herd and well-being, enhances safety, optimizes resource use, and supports farm profitability. (Carolina Pinzon-Sanchez, Alison Pfau, Angie Ulness, Hernando Duarte, Jeff Reisdorfer, Manuel Pena Pena)

- The Wisconsin dairy industry continues to face challenges in animal health, productivity, and farm efficiency. While owners and managers often have strong foundational knowledge, frontline employees—responsible for daily animal care, feeding, and parlor work—need information that is both practical and easy to access. Language barriers further limit understanding and adoption of best practices. To address this gap, Dairy and Farm Management Extension Educators collaborated to create Bovi-noticias, a bilingual (English and Spanish) e-newsletter. This resource delivers relevant, research-based information that explains not only what to do, but also why it matters. The goal is to build a more informed and engaged workforce, improving animal well-being, resource use, farm efficiency, profitability, and workplace safety. In response, we developed and launched Bovi-noticias, a bilingual (English and Spanish) e-newsletter designed for dairy farm employees, managers, and industry partners. The newsletter addresses language barriers by providing clear, research-based information on daily farm practices while emphasizing the reasoning behind recommendations. This approach supports deeper understanding and encourages the consistent adoption of best practices. In addition, Bovi-noticias serves as a tool for team communication, discussion, and problem-solving, helping strengthen collaboration between managers and employees. By improving communication and reinforcing shared knowledge, the newsletter supports better employee management, fosters a healthy farm culture, and empowers workers to contribute more effectively to farm goals. Through multiple distribution channels including email, WhatsApp, printed materials at Extension events, and direct farm visits, Bovi-noticias is expected to initially reach approximately 350 individuals. Its impact will be evaluated after the first year through surveys assessing readership, knowledge gained, and reported behavior changes on farms. These outcomes will help determine how the newsletter contributes to improved management practices, stronger workforce engagement, and better communication across dairy operations. Over time, these efforts are expected to support broader impacts, including improved animal well-being, enhanced safety, more efficient use of resources, and more sustainable and profitable dairy farm operations.

Planning and preparation for field days around the state of Wisconsin focused on the use of high-oleic soybeans (HOSB) for dairy farmers and agriculture professionals. During these field days, participants will increase their HOSB related knowledge through educational sessions, facility tours, and peer-to-peer learning. The goal of this effort is to help

farmers and their advisors make informed, strategic, and economically viable decisions regarding HOSB adoption and use. (Katelyn Goldsmith, Jackie Mccarville, Jerry Clark, Jordyn Sattler, Luiz Ferraretto, Manuel Pena Pena, Ryan Sterry)

- With the introduction of high-oleic soybeans (HOSB), many farmers are interested in feeding them on their farm. However, growing and feeding HOSB required careful planning and management by farmers from seed purchases and agronomics to diet formulation and feeding. Currently, there is a lack of publicly available, non-commercial educational opportunities for farmers and agricultural professionals to learn about the considerations of HOSB adoption and feeding. To address this current gap, a team of Extension professionals are developing and organizing field days focused on HOSB adoption and use. Participants will learn about HOSB adoption and use through educational sessions, facility tours, and peer-to-peer learning. The goal of this effort is to help farmers make informed, strategic, and economically viable decisions regarding HOSB adoption and use. HOSB focused field days will be held at multiple locations in Wisconsin that include farm tours, educational sessions, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

A weekly Thursday dairy radio segment for dairy producers, consultants, agency staff, and other industry professionals to share updates about state and local Extension resources, information, and events relevant to dairy operations. The goal of this effort is to maintain a regular connection between the dairy community and Extension resources, providing tools and timely insights to support informed decision-making related to herd management, nutrition, reproduction, farm profitability, among others. (Manuel Pena Pena)

- As another Agriculture Educator in my area has already built a strong connection with farmers through regular radio updates, I have been invited to contribute a dairy-focused segment as part of the daily Farm Report. This provides a valuable opportunity to engage an established agricultural audience and expand Extension's outreach within the dairy community. Through this segment, it is possible to share research-based, science information relevant to dairy producers, along with timely updates on educational events, resources, and tools that can support informed decision-making and strengthen farm viability. Agricultural producers use a variety of sources to obtain information, including radio. Each Thursday morning, I provide a UW-Extension dairy segment as part of the daily Farm Report. This segment focuses specifically on timely dairy production topics, herd management strategies, seasonal nutrition and health considerations, and updates on upcoming events, webinars, and educational opportunities relevant to dairy operations. Delivering this information through public media allows us to reach producers who may be underserved, unable to attend in-person programs, or unaware of Extension's agricultural resources. This expanded outreach strengthens our connection with the dairy community and helps ensure that research-based information is accessible, practical, and timely. Additionally, the segment provides dairy producers with greater insight into the work being done through Extension and creates consistent opportunities for them to engage in programs that support informed decision-making, farm profitability, environmental stewardship, and long-term business sustainability.

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.



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

Presented at clerks meeting on Act 68 and 173, as well as an overview of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts.

- The 2026 Community Needs Forum found that local governments are having difficulties learning what state statute changes may affect municipalities. Certain organizations do compile these bills and distribute their findings, but not in a centralized manner and not directly to municipalities in Sheboygan County. Kirtis created a presentation for the August Clerk's meeting regarding a few of the more important acts to come out of the 2025 State Assembly session. Notably, Acts 68 and 173 were discussed. These acts change how local governments regulate subdivisions and comprehensive plans. There were two acts passed last session that changed how municipalities implement Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts, so a brief overview of how these districts work was included in the presentation.

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 six-hour day camp for 18 youth in grades K–7, where participants built teamwork and communication skills through team-building activities, 4-H Bingo, art, LEGO sink-and-float challenges, S'mores, puppet and air-dry clay creations, and hands-on exploration of what 4-H has to offer. Through these experiences, youth developed new skills, connected with peers, and were introduced to the wide variety of opportunities available through 4-H. (Sarah Feider)

- The program was developed in response to an ongoing partnership with the local library, which had invited 4-H to provide programming for youth for two consecutive years and expressed interest in continuing the partnership the following year. This created an opportunity to provide engaging, hands-on activities while increasing youth awareness of 4-H programs and the learning, leadership, and social opportunities available to them. I responded by collaborating with the library to provide a six-hour, hands-on 4-H day camp for 18 youth in grades K–7. Activities included team building and teamwork challenges, 4-H Bingo, art, LEGO sink-and-float challenges, S'mores, puppet and air-dry clay creations, and an introduction to the opportunities available through 4-H. This approach allowed youth to experience a variety of fun, educational activities while building connections with 4-H and learning about future opportunities to participate. The program supported the broader community by giving youth opportunities to build teamwork, communication, creativity, problem-solving, and social skills in a welcoming environment. By introducing youth and families to 4-H through the library partnership, the program helped increase awareness of local youth development opportunities and strengthened community connections between 4-H and the library. These experiences can help youth develop confidence, positive relationships, and skills that contribute to their success in school, their communities, and future leadership roles.



Casey Fertnig, Programming and Outreach Coordinator explained, "Lakeview Community Library patrons who participated in the summer 4H program enjoyed the wide variety of activities, fun facilitators, and opportunities to learn more about 4H. Families of participants were impressed with the new skills their children learned--especially the cooking experiences like making butter and all the fun art projects. This was a fantastic program and we hope to continue the 4H fun at the library next summer."



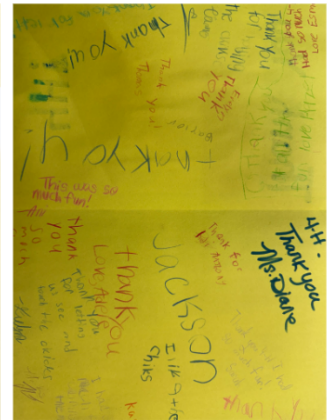
A four-week hands-on Chick Quest program for three groups of 25 youth in grades K–5, where participants incubated and observed chicks while learning about the chick and egg life cycles, identifying the parts of a chick and egg, and designing engineering solutions through egg-drop challenges. Through this experience, youth developed science, problem-solving, and observation skills while gaining a deeper understanding of animal development and agriculture. (Sarah Feider)

- Youth have never incubated chicks or learned about their life cycle. This was an opportunity to allow youth to gain insightful information about chicks and watch them grow and change in real time. The 4-H Chick Quest program has been an excellent curriculum to reach the needs of teaching youth about food, animal science and agriculture. It also provided an excellent opportunity to partner with a local youth organization. Youth learned about the incubation environment, care for incubating eggs, chick development stages, egg science (parts of the egg), the hatching process and baby chick needs. It also gave me the opportunity to talk about 4-H and what our program offers.

Sarah said, "Thank you 4-H I had so much fun!"

"I had so much fun caring for them," said Carry.

- Chick Quest Sheboygan Rec. Dept.



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

Planning for a 5-day, 20-hour financial education and career exploration camp with teens in Sheboygan County juvenile detention so that they can practice skills now that they will use later in their career journeys. Learning to think critically, adjust with the situation, and set long-term goals increase self-efficacy, which is a key in reducing youth recidivism.

(Diana Hammer, Amy Boelk, Joanna Skluzacek)

- Sheboygan County Juvenile Detention has no programming in the summer time other than religious classes. The person who leads those is on vacation the last week of August, so teens in detention are especially eager for enrichment activities. Hammer has gotten permission to do a 5-day series of personal - career - financial education with teens in custody August 24-28. Self-efficacy is a key to reducing youth recidivism. Since some of these kids will be in custody a long time, we're focusing on skills they can practice now which will pay off down the road. We're also exploring their strengths which are easily overlooked in the criminal legal process. Using the newly developing Extension curricula called LifeSkills Launchpad, Adulting 101, and Legos, Hammer and Skluzacek are designing a customized, accessible learning experience. We'll be asking teens twice each day to do reflection activities based on the morning and afternoon content. On Friday we will do a summative Lego build and reflection conversation. Another outcome will be in attendance: for those who are in detention all week, can they achieve attendance each day through good behavior? This will result in more learning, planning and joining the celebration on Friday, and earning the \$50 gift card for 6 hours of financial education.

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.*

Part 2 of the Introduction to Qualitative Data Analysis Workshop for local and Tribal Health Departments and community health partners, where participants learn about tools and tips to conduct qualitative data analysis, developing a codebook, presenting data in a report, and sharing findings back to their community. The goals of this effort are to increase community capacity in qualitative data analysis and program evaluation and increase community capacity to incorporate community inputs in decision-making in public health.

- Multiple health departments and partners reached out to express need for qualitative data analysis support. This need was reaffirmed by DHS Public Health Strategists from Division of Public Office of Policy and Practice Alignment. The first workshop received more than 70 registrations and had to be closed, as the limit was 25 seats. This workshop is a recurring and ongoing offering to accommodate those who are interested but have been unable to attend a workshop. Workshop has been updated to enhance participatory elements and applied learning. Building on the content of the Part 1 QDA Workshop, we developed more content to respond to participants' needs and also build in more practice and group discussion time, as suggested by the evaluation survey. We organized and delivered a 2-hour curriculum and training materials on Qualitative Data Analysis. This includes a guidebook, a coding template, a sample report, and a compilation of resources to support participants. As a result of the training: 100% of survey respondents strongly agreed (57%) or agreed (43%) that they gained tools and tips to conduct qualitative data analysis. 100% of survey respondents strongly agreed (57%) or agreed (43%) that they increased their confidence in conducting and reporting on qualitative data analysis. 100% of survey respondents strongly agreed (43%) or agreed (557%) that they increased their readiness to incorporate community input into public health decision-making.

Jayna Hintz <i>Area Extension Director</i>	Sarah Feider <i>4-H Youth Educator</i>	Vacant <i>Support Staff</i>
Manuel Peña <i>Regional Dairy Educator</i>	Diana Hammer <i>Positive Youth Development Educator</i>	Cassi Worster <i>Marketing Specialist</i>
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