



Agriculture & Natural Resources

Agriculture



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Agriculture educators continue to respond to challenges experienced by farmers related to COVID-19 and have adapted outreach to virtual platforms. I collaborated with farm management educators and state specialists in drafting articles, factsheets and videos to guide farmers through challenging financial decisions. The COVID-19 outbreak occurred during an already challenging economic time for farmers. Many farms may face tough conversations in the year ahead. I have provided direct outreach to Dunn County farmers and agribusinesses and indirect outreach via electronic newsletter and Extension’s social media. Resources and information is available for farmers at:

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/covid19/category/topics/farming/>

Since we weren’t able to host the Heart of the Farm – Women in Ag Conference in person this year, educators worked to connect in an online way. The Heart of the Farm-Women in Agriculture “Coffee Chat” series is an Extension program that addresses the needs of farm women by providing education on farm business topics, connecting them with agricultural resources and creating support networks. Farming is a complex business and more farm women are becoming active business partners in farm operations.

Educators in Western WI hosted weekly Zoom webinar sessions in May and early June covering topics of Time Management: Structuring your Day with Purpose; Communications: Exploring Perspectives to Improve Communication; Relationships: Nurturing Healthy Relationships Under Times of Stress: Bidding for Connection; and Financial: Finding Financial Well-Being. I also drafted an Extension Innovation Funding grant application to support the development of curriculum by educators in Extension Agriculture and Human Development and Relationships Institute that can be shared with farm women, further strengthening and deepening relationships with this audience.

Horticulture



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I have been busy answering horticulture inquiries that are coming in daily. Questions range from multiple plant IDs, how to get my soil tested, management of Eastern tent caterpillars, apple tree pest management, invasive species removal to why my tree is losing its bark.

We continue to work to keep community gardens safe this season during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have posted signage on “best practices”,

plus I participated on a small working group to create an infographic that will be translated into multiple languages that can be posted at gardens..

I continue to support Master Gardener Volunteers in the four counties I serve to keep them informed of Extension-related programs/news and online opportunities for continuing education. The Horticulture Program offered a training on *Responding to Horticulture Inquiries*. The training had several Extension specialists covering topics that included plant disease, insects, wildlife and weeds. Several Master Gardener Volunteers from Dunn County did attend this training. The presentations were recorded so folks involved in fielding gardening questions from the public or industry can view them again for review.

I continue to stay engaged with Extension colleagues from Area 6 counties and Polk County as well as horticulture and Master Gardener colleagues via regular Zooms.

**Best practices for
COMMUNITY GARDENERS
during COVID-19**

Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
go.wisc.edu/communitygarden

Our priority is to keep our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.) These guidelines are here to keep you and others safe and our garden open.

Feeling ill? Stay at home!

Always rinse vegetables before use.

Keep your distance.

Allow at least
..... 6 feet
between gardeners.

Wash your hands regularly with soap.

**Avoid touching your face.
Wearing a mask is recommended.**

**Clean commonly touched surfaces.
Don't share tools if possible.**

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements. Icons adapted from freepik.com.

Youth, Family, & Community Development

Health & Well-Being



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I would like to highlight the impact that Covid19 has on food insecurity and the efforts made locally to address this issue. It is estimated that since the COVID-19 crisis began, more than one in five US adults have experienced food insecurity. With unemployment rising, these numbers are likely to increase.

The Great Rivers Consortium manages FoodShare (FS) applications in 10 counties including Dunn and our local call center (888-283-0012). They confirm the expected rise in FoodShare applications. Per FS Wisconsin data, from February-April, 2020, Dunn County had an increase of 199 households, 423 individuals receiving FoodShare benefits. Additionally:

- Some members are getting additional maximum benefits if they did not get it previously depending on the number of eligible people in their home.
- Families receiving Free/Reduced price school meals will now get temporary food benefits in place of the school meals- Pandemic EBT.
- FS and P-EBT recipients can now purchase food on Amazon and Walmart websites.
- More grocery stores are providing EBT payment options online or phone.
- Menomonie Market Food Coop offers a Double Dollars Program on Tuesdays for FS participants.
- Menomonie Farmers Market offers an EBT payment program.

Stepping Stones Food Pantry adapts to meet the increasing community need.

- Pre-Covid19 average 1500 visits per month to now 1700 visits monthly
- Twice as many new families per month: prior 60 ave to now 120
- Attendance in rural pop-up pantries has doubled: prior 90 ave to now 180
- They offer a Senior Commodity program but numbers are down, presumably because seniors are social distancing and not going out. This may be one way to help neighbors and ask to pick up their share.

Our community meal sites (Tuesday's Table-St. Joseph's, Wednesday's Table-Christ Lutheran Church, and Thursday's Table-First Congregational United Church of Christ) are also reporting increased numbers.

Human Development & Relationships



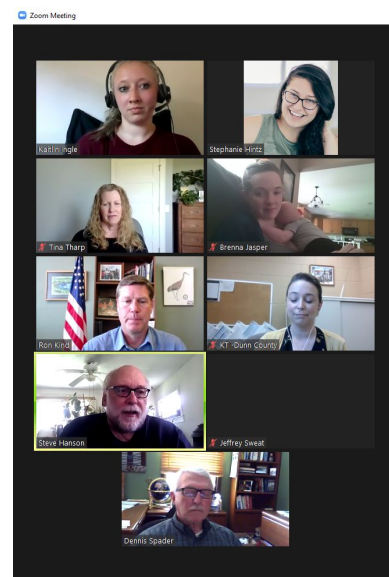
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This month I continued my progress and programs by shifting program delivery methods and addressing emerging needs for example:

- The monthly Parents Forever program continued to be held on via zoom with positive feedback from participants.
- An online Lunch and Learn Program from the newly developed Taking Care of You program will be held in collaboration with the Menomonie Co-op for all Dunn County Residents for free, we will provide tools for

self care and offer local resources for residents in need of additional support.

- A new online learning series is being launched in collaboration with Heath Dunn Right called the Greater Good Toolkit, where participants can learn science-based practices for creating a mindful life. This is developed as another way to provide free, relevant, and resilience strengthening programming to our Dunn County community.
- As a reminder, the Health Dunn Right Covid-19 Action team has been meeting weekly to develop and support relevant programs, prepare resources, and connect community members. A few of the Team Leaders met with Congressman Ron Kind to update him on our efforts and shared Q&A



Positive Youth Development



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On May 5th I held my first virtual open house for 4-H kids. Just 4 people showed up, but we had so much fun that I vowed to try again soon! I also put out an opinion survey to my club and project leaders on how they are doing during this difficult time, and after I shared it with several colleagues, it got picked up and used in other Wisconsin counties. Of course, I also held many phone and email convos with club leaders wondering what to tell their families about softball, the Meat Animal Sale, camp and the Dunn Co. Fair.

The Meat Animal Project forms were all due on May 15th so Michelle and I dealt with a flurry of paperwork as the deadline loomed. The good news is every single family that still wanted to be in the project completed everything on time! A record!

I also worked on learning about a multi-state effort to help families begin child savings accounts for post-secondary education. Several colleagues in the area are involved and I was able to assist with a university innovation grant application which we hope will help fund the effort.

The state working group on LGBTQ+ issues that I helped create a year ago, has been asked to join the new Expanding Access Advisory Committee as a subcommittee. I have been asked to serve on both.

I attended interesting professional trainings and hours of state-wide meetings via Zoom. We are all working very hard to meet local needs in new and innovative ways while we wait out the pandemic. June will likely involve some creative thinking as we attempt a county fair for youth in an entirely unusual circumstance.

Community Development

The Community Development Educator position is currently vacant. No additional updates at this time. Please contact Catherine Emmanuelle with any questions catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu 715-450-0823. For information on Extension's Community Development efforts see <https://extension.wisc.edu/community-development/>, and how Extension is responding to COVID-related work supported by Community Development Educators, see <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/covid19/category/topics/communities/>.

Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle
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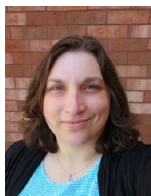
We are entering another month of transitional and transformative educational work. In an interesting way, the transformative work reflects what Extension is about - using knowledge to empower and transform people's and communities lives. The educators and staff in Dunn County continue to adapt their services to help serve the people they teach and collaborate with, including public health, horticulture, youth, families, farmers, and our community. Our support staff colleague Michelle Bachand will start working from the Extension Department office on June 2. She has taken the lead to set up the office to facility safety to the public and employees, and following county public health guidance. While we are open, we continue to encourage alternate ways for the public to engage, such as telephone and email.

I mentioned last month that all UW-Madison employees, including the Division of Extension, were going to take furlough (unpaid days off) between mid-May through October. We took our first furlough day in May. The county will receive a reduction in the contract fee to reflect the unpaid furlough days for state employees. This will be reflected on the 2nd invoice for 2020 between the county and the state.

Last and not least, we as staff continue to stay connected, between staff meetings at the county, area, and state level, in additional check-ins with one another. Our colleagues continue to impress me with their dedication to the people we serve, bringing the university and life-changing knowledge to our communities, and doing so during unprecedented times in our country and world.

Please reach out to me on any questions you have. You are always welcome to email me catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu or call my cell 715-450-0823.

Support Staff



Michelle Bachand
Support Specialist

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As May has also seen the changing of the seasons, from snow to 80 degrees, it was a great time to participate in some Horticulture training for the questions that will start being asked by the community. I participated in Extension's Responding to Horticulture Inquiries training that took place via webinar over a period of 6 days. In the past this has been a full day in-person training event.

The 4-H Meat Animal Project youth members had a deadline of May 15th this

year for turning in their forms to complete eligibility requirements to show at the Fair. With our building being closed to the public and staff telecommuting, the turn-in and organization of these forms had to be adapted. Typically, paper forms were dropped off or mailed into the office, but due to COVID-19 we requested them electronically. I worked with 4-H members that had varying levels of technology available to ensure they were able to submit the forms in whatever format was accessible to them. All of the forms have been organized and relayed to the species leaders as they continue to plan for how the project will go forward this summer.

I have spent time this month working on video editing and creating closed captioning of videos for our 4-H Youth Support Fund and an Agriculture video on Working With Your Lender during COVID-19.

May also means that it is time to start working on the budget for FY21. The first draft of our department budget has been submitted to the Department of Administration for review.

While we are looking forward in terms of finances for next year, we are also in the process of looking back to 2019 as we prepare our annual report. I have been leading the project of organizing information from each educator into our 2019 annual report which will be submitted for the June County Board meeting.