



## Agriculture, Natural Resources, & Community Development

### Agriculture



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*An annual regional conference for ag professionals and educators, where attendees gained an awareness of the outlook for commodity prices in the coming year. This conference was designed to increase their knowledge when advising their farm clientele in preparing for the upcoming year.*

Approximately 160 agriculture lenders, professionals, and educators virtually attended the annual Western WI Ag Lenders Conference on January 7, 2021. The traditional day long in-person conference was held via Zoom by UW Extension educators.

Additional speakers and topics included: 2021 Dairy Price Outlook—Mark Stephenson, PhD, Director of Dairy Policy Analysis, UW Center for Dairy Profitability (CDP); 2021 Crop and Livestock Market Outlook by John Kruse, PhD, Associate Research Professor, Division of Applied Social Sciences (DASS), University of Missouri – Columbia; Concentration and Consolidation in Meatpacking & COVID-19—Dr. Tina Saitone, Associate Cooperative Extension Specialist, University of California, Davis; The Diversity of Wisconsin Agriculture—Julia Nunes, 73rd Alice in Dairyland; DATCP Overview – Randy Romanski, Secretary-designee, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; Cash Flow Budgeting – Kevin Bernhardt, PhD, Professor of Agri-Business, UW—Platteville, and Extension Farm Management Specialist, UW-Madison.

The 2021 conference realized an increase in attendance utilizing Zoom, including 31% of registrants that had not attended this conference in the past. Participants found the presentations more than useful (average 4.3, scale 1-poor and 5-excellent) and the speakers to be very effective (average 4.2). One participant commented, “Once again a good conference and an excellent presentation given the virtual format. Well done!”

The Western WI Ag Lenders Conference is primarily supported by Wantoch and Michelle Bachand, Dunn County Extension Support Specialist, with support from a planning committee of agriculture professionals and Extension educators, including Carl Duley (BuffaloCo), Richard Halopka (ClarkCo), Ryan Sterry (StCroixCo), Jerry Clark (ChippewaCo), Lyssa Seefeldt (EauClaireCo) and Simon Jette-Nantel (Extension/UW-River Falls).

## Horticulture



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Though COVID-19 has resulted in reduced recruitment in the Master Gardener Program, Dunn County is one of 9 counties in the state that will be training in new Master Gardener Volunteers this year. I recently met virtually with ten individuals from Dunn, Chippewa and Eau Claire counties to get them started in our new onboarding class, the last step before becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer. All ten participated in the horticulture class offered last fall by Diana Alfuth, Horticulture Outreach Specialist for Pierce and St. Croix Counties, and myself.

To assist new volunteers, I've been working with certified Master Gardeners from all three counties to develop a mentorship program. Fourteen Master Gardeners have volunteered to serve as mentors in 2021. We will be taking a team approach to mentoring to allow for a full array of skills and interest to be available in supporting our new volunteers.

The Master Gardener virtual seminar: Growing Together 2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminar, is set to begin February 20. We currently have 156 people registered. I've been assisting with the registration and evaluation surveys. The seminar is a series of four weekly, online presentations. The fee is \$10 which includes all four presentations. For more information and to see the list of presentations, please go to <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/education>.

On the plant diagnostic front, this month I have been fielding questions on trees, planting groundcovers, building raised beds, soil sampling and houseplants. Dr. Brian Hudelson, Director of the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, is offering monthly talks for Master Gardeners and the public on plant issues. Our area will be hosting Dr. Hudelson's presentation in April.

## Community Development

The Community Development Educator position is currently vacant.

Catherine had a discussion with the Community Development Institute Director and gave her support to share this message with our county funding partners: "Catherine, I wanted to connect with you regarding the Community Educator position in Area 6. As you know, there is a "thaw" on the blanket hiring freeze here at Extension. The Dean's leadership team is now working through a set of hiring priorities across the various institutes that comprise Extension. At this point, I have placed the Area 6 position as our Institute's top priority hire. Of course, this doesn't guarantee that it will be "approved" in the upcoming round. But, I am optimistic that it should be approved in the upcoming months. I will update you each month when I hear back regarding which positions were "unfrozen." Please pass on my thanks and appreciation to the County for their support and patience!"

Please contact Catherine Emmanuelle with any questions [catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu](mailto: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/>.

# Youth, Family, & Health

## Health & Well-Being



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**Workforce Resource:** Joy and Pamela offered weekly virtual lessons to FSET (Food Share Employment Training) and W2 participants from Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire Counties in January. They utilized our Healthy Cents curriculum which combines nutrition education and food resource management principles to encourage limited resource families to make healthy food choices on a limited budget. One Dunn participant expressed interest in additional personal help and they are working to meet her needs.

**Strong Bodies:** New series started on January 5th, 2021. Guest speaker Dr. Beth Olson, Extension Nutrition Specialist, joined our post exercise chat to discuss bone health and the importance of Vitamin D & Calcium on Jan. 26th. I receive weekly emails with examples on how much this class helps participants physically, mentally, and socially.

Strong Bodies registration -January 5- March 25, Tues/Thurs 9 am- link here: <https://go.wisc.edu/58h0qb>

**River Heights Elementary:** Pamela and Joy taught three nutrition classes to 3rd graders via Zoom in December and will Zoom in again for another three in February! The lessons will cover Nutrition Fact Label reading, fruits and vegetables and Powering Up with Breakfast.

**River Heights Elementary:** 4th grade sections were provided a video package including intro/outro by Nancy and 3 videos on MyPlate, handwashing, and a healthy snack.

<https://youtu.be/Gq6mO7w9IbU?list=PLOgEEzp4TqX0N4wblknyzrhNmWVNpN33i>



**Stepping Stones Food Pantry:** We are in touch to see what foods would be helpful to promote in videos. Nancy created one on a simple 3 can chili and is looking to do more for the pantry.

## Human Development & Relationships



Stephanie Hintz  
Human Development  
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This month I continued my work with mindfulness, Parents Forever, Health Dunn Right, and other ongoing programs and initiatives. However, I'd like to use the bulk of my space to share about an upcoming project I am working on with an interdisciplinary Extension state team to promote a fair and just recovery to those most impacted by the coronavirus.

The COVID-19 crisis has spotlighted inequities that prevent opportunities for all Wisconsinites to thrive based on the seven vital conditions for health and wellbeing. People of color and lower-income households continue to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Attention has focused on addressing critical needs arising from the pandemic. It is also important to ensure recovery solutions address those most impacted and build energy in communities to create a better, and more just, "normal." Without action, the harmful status quo will be maintained and long-standing inequities will continue to grow and impact health. Our plan is to bring together the strengths of our various disciplines in order to create conversation that leads to action focused on creating a healthier post-pandemic Wisconsin where everyone can thrive. Our project will support colleagues across institutes to facilitate conversations that support a fair and just recovery in communities. These conversations and subsequent actions will focus on centering the voices of those most impacted to build awareness and take action towards addressing social and economic inequalities.

Colleagues across the state will then be recruited from multiple programs to participate in a professional development cohort, in which they will be trained to facilitate community conversations that center the voices of those most impacted. After receiving this initial training, colleagues will conduct one-on-one intentional conversations with most impacted community members to learn their perspectives on community assets and what is happening in the community. This step will deepen and cultivate new relationships, draw out issues of interest, identify individuals who want to co-create a better future, and allow for next steps that build on existing momentum and work being done in the community. From there, colleagues will assist with the formation of local conversation for action teams. These local teams will be composed primarily of most impacted community members in order to deepen engagement and lead to actions that contribute to a fair and just recovery. Until it is safe to do so, we will rely on innovative virtual approaches to engage and organize these conversations.

Conversations will focus on different issues that COVID-19 has highlighted in the local communities, including racial inequities and expanding access and opportunities to thrive. These engaged community members will join the cohort to build capacity alongside Extension colleagues to facilitate Fair and Just Recovery Conversations, identify and engage local allies, and take action in their communities. What we learn from this project will be shared with Extension colleagues so they can replicate and adapt the model in their communities.

## Positive Youth Development



Luisa Gerasimo  
4-H Educator

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January seems like it slipped by in a blink of the eye. I focused on helping a number of adults finish their requirements to become “official” 4-H volunteers, and on planning and promoting upcoming virtual activities such as the Arts and Crafts Mini Camp and the Speaking Festival which will happen in late March via Zoom in front of live judges. Some of our clubs hosted virtual meetings and one club got approval for their annual sliding party.

The Meat Animal Project has requested to move to become a subcommittee of the Dunn County Fair, so I have worked hard to help them communicate their needs and go through the needed paperwork. Meanwhile, the beef weigh in is going forward in early February, with sheep and goats waiting until April. The Fair Board continues to move forward with plans for summer. Eau Claire and Dunn have formed a committee to work on summer camp options. Our state 4-H program will communicate guidance for in person summer programming by April 1st.

I am serving on a state-wide executive committee for Youth Forward Wisconsin to promote universal childhood savings accounts. We have support from an Innovation Grant and from the Stewart Mott Foundation, which is sponsoring a midwestern effort that includes many states and gives us support from a team that has already had experience starting these programs in Indiana. Our local Community Foundation of Dunn County is a likely partner and we are excited to begin figuring out how this might work to benefit our families.

WAXX Radio interviewed me last week for their early Saturday morning 4-H On Air program, and I published an article in the Dunn County News Wednesday January 20th. I enjoyed talking about all the things we are doing to keep 4-H going during this tough time in our community and was proud to be able to say how we live out the words of our 4-H pledge.

## Support Staff



Michelle Bachand  
Support Specialist

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2021 got off to a quick start with the Western WI Ag Lenders conference. This year with the conference going virtual, my support tasks looked different as well. Instead of processing registration payments, preparing name tags, and stuffing folders with handouts, I co-hosted the Zoom meeting, uploaded handouts to our website, and ensured the recorded presentations have accurate closed captioning for attendees to review if necessary.

The shift to virtual programming has also changed the way that participants receive physical materials and completion certificates. In all program areas there has been an adjustment made so items are either mailed to

participants or a time is scheduled for them to pick up the items at our building.

Budgetary Update: Both FY20 and FY21 financial reports have been included with the highlights. A few payments for FY20 have been processed this month and should wrap up all of the expenses for last year.

## Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle  
Area Extension Director  
Chippewa, Dunn, &  
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I give a lot of credit to our Extension team for the continued adaptability to serve with and in our communities - a little in-person and mostly virtually. While virtual is not the same as in-person, we are seeing that in some cases, there is higher participation with virtual programming. Our staff continue to mostly work from home, with availability to return to the office up to 50% of the time. Our Area has kicked-off our all-area staff meetings for 2021. We are working together with these priorities that weave our work together:

- ~regularly recognize our [purpose, vision, and values](#)
- ~grow in our strengths
- ~develop skills to current and emerging community needs
- ~connect with Extension's strategic commitment to inclusivity & anti-racism work
- ~create fun & wellness