



Agriculture



Katie Wantoch | Associate Professor and Agriculture Agent, Specializing in Economic Development

UW Extension and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP) Farm Center are partnering on a project to learn about farmers' and farm families' unique challenges and stressors related to farmer mental health. This project is part of Wisconsin's research activities for the North Central Farm & Ranch Stress Assistance Network grant (PI - Joy Kirkpatrick), funded by National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). I assisted in facilitating three focus group sessions on February 16 and 18 and on March 5, 2021, along with two other Extension and DATCP staff. In preparation for reviewing this qualitative research, workgroup members (7) conducted a thorough literature review on farm stress and mental health related resources to provide an overview of concepts, themes and categories that may be identified in our research. Workgroup members met in May to review final transcripts of the focus group sessions, organize, and categorize data using the MAXQDA software. Quotes from participants were also highlighted for future use. Members continued to meet in June to review coded data, interpret results, and began to summarize into a final report with expected completion in July. This information will be used in the next phase of the grant to develop curriculum to inform health care and mental health care professionals about farm life and farm culture so they can better support their patients/clients in Wisconsin's rural communities.

- A poster session at statewide and national virtual conferences where our team shared results of Motivational Interviewing as a Tool to Address Farm Stress and Transitions efforts. This program increased the professional capacity of UW Extension educators by improving their communication and facilitation skills with the clientele they serve.
- A literature review on farmer mental health to better inform our qualitative analysis of the farmer focus group sessions. Results from these sessions will be used to inform health care and mental health care professionals about farm life and farm culture so they can better support their patients/clients in Wisconsin's rural communities.
- An article for Dunn County News readers where research on planting dates was shared to provide a comparison on spring planting progress in the local area.
- Qualitative analysis of farmer focus group sessions to better understand farmer stress and mental health. Results from these sessions will be used to inform health care and mental health care professionals about farm life and farm culture so they can better support their patients/clients in Wisconsin's rural communities.
- A podcast series, AgriVision, for farmers and ag professionals, where UW Extension educators answer Farm Management questions and share knowledge and expertise on how farmers can improve their farm management skills.



Extension

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Community Development

Vacant

The hiring process for the Community Development Educator position is ongoing.

For information on Extension's Community Development efforts see
<https://extension.wisc.edu/community-development/>

Horticulture



Margaret Murphy | *Horticulture Outreach Specialist*

Horticulture inquiries continue come in daily and have focused on disease and insect pests of vegetables and flowers.

Margaret began a 10-week class with the Boys and Girls Club in Chippewa Falls in partnership with FoodWise Educator, Nancy Fastner. The program is based on the highly successful program ongoing in Eau Claire County. Current feedback is that the kids are thoroughly enjoying the class. The hope is to implement a similar program in Dunn County for 2022.

Margaret and other Extension colleagues attended a garden day hosted by the Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association in conjunction with UWEC-Youth Leadership Camp at Jeffers Community Garden. Margaret gave a brief talk about the benefits and importance of community gardens.

The Master Gardener Mentor Program is in full swing. New Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) are now paired with mentors to help them through first year as a new volunteer. Two Dunn County MGVs are mentoring three new MGVs.

Dunn County MGVs are involved in multiple community projects that are available to engage new MGVs including horticulture work at the Dunn County Historical Society, Dunn County Humane Society Garden, Veterans' Memorial Garden, Dunn County Jail Garden, CedarRama Park Garden and Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Garden.

Lastly, Margaret has completed her Plan of Work that focuses on Encouraging Best Horticultural Practices in Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire Counties for better Environmental Outcomes.

- Master Gardener Volunteer Mentorship Program for new volunteers where established volunteers help familiarize them with local volunteer service projects and help acclimate them as they begin their volunteer service. This effort is designed to increase volunteer retention and their involvement with community horticulture projects.



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Health and Well-Being



Sandy Tarter | *FoodWise Coordinator*



Nancy Fastner | *FoodWise Educator*



Pamela Warren-Armstrong | *FoodWise Educator*



Joy Weisner | *FoodWise Educator*

We completed our spring virtual Strong Bodies Series for seniors throughout the state. Participants reported improved balance strength and better eating habits along with the benefit of having the socialization. We will start another Strong Bodies series on July 13th-September 2nd.

Our FW team attended a mapping database training. This will help to find underserved areas for outreach in our county.

Nancy lead a Cooking Matters class with WIC participants at the Menomonie Farmers Market. We had 14 attendees who learned how to make the most of their farmers market and WIC benefits. We covered produce selection, storing and freezing fruits and vegetables. Parents shared ideas to increase their family's fruit and veggie intake.

- A 12-week virtual strength training series for older adults where participants improved strength, balance, and flexibility. This effort was designed to help individuals stay healthy and socially connected during a difficult time of isolation.
- Planning summer nutrition education series with the Boys & Girls Club- Greater Chippewa Valley. Working in collaboration with Boys and Girls Club staff, Extension Horticulture Outreach Specialist, Master Gardeners, and community gardens to plan activities in alliance with Covid19 processes so that youth can gain knowledge in how plants grow while learning about nutrition and tasting their harvest.
- Virtual lessons for youth where they learn about handwashing, MyPlate, and explore fruit and vegetables with stories and identification activities. This effort led to youth being more willing to try the fruits and vegetables provided at snack time from the school, which is the first step towards building healthy eating habits.
- Planning the implementation of the Farmers Market -Market Match program in collaboration with local partners and the Health Dunn Right -Chronic Disease Prevention Action Team. The goal of this effort is to allow SNAP/FoodShare recipients to receive double tokens which increases their food security.
- Collaborating with three local coalitions in planning a tri-county summer activity program encouraging families to get out and enjoy their communities. This effort supports movement, stress reduction, and increased fresh fruit and vegetables intake as action steps towards better health in chronic disease prevention.



Human Development and Relationships



Stephanie Hintz | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*

This month's highlight I want to emphasize a new weekly program called Practicing the Pause. Practicing the Pause is a weekly, 30-minute virtual space to practice a variety of techniques to calm your mind and body, decrease stress, and increase self-awareness and resiliency. We'll practice holding space while also practicing skills such as deep breathing, guided imagery, gentle stretching, etc.

It was created to give people the opportunity to continue their practice of mindfulness after taking our one of our many mindfulness and self care class offered through extension across the state. Instead of each educator hosting a program like this we decided to create a state-wide offering that all educators can encourage their participants to continue their practice.

Each week we send follow up resources from what we learned. Example below:

- Last week did an introduction to guided imagery. A few resources we talked about:
 - Health Journeys <https://www.healthjourneys.com/>
 - Tara Brach <https://www.tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/>
 - Center for Healthy Minds
<https://centerhealthyminds.org/join-the-movement/your-well-being>
 - The apps Healthy Minds, Calm, Simple Habit, and MyLife
- The Extended Breath and Body Scan recordings are now available on our webpage: <https://dunn.extension.wisc.edu/family-community/practicing-the-pause/>
- Here is the website for Practicing the Pause, where you'll find resources and research on mindfulness. We hope to grow this page and welcome your input on what would be helpful to add at any time. Bookmark it for easy access: <https://dunn.extension.wisc.edu/family-community/practicing-the-pause/>
- Bring a friend! Share this link with friends and family to register: <https://forms.gle/KCTXh3swYhJc8Ue37>

We will gather every Thursday morning, from 8:30-9:00 AM. You are free to join us when you are able.

- A 4-hour online class for parents in a legal court case for divorce, placement change, child support or paternity, where they learn about the effects of family transitions on children and how parents can minimize problems for their children through cooperative co-parenting strategies.
- Hosted a virtual open house event for parents, caregivers, professionals, and community members where participants learned where to access parenting resources, the research behind this parenting program, and what services through this program are offered in the county. The goal of this effort was to bring awareness to Extension and non-Extension resources around positive parenting and the impact on child development.



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Positive Youth Development



Luisa Gerasimo | 4-H Educator

This month the focus was squarely on our Eau Claire-Dunn Summer Camp at the Town of Pleasant Valley (Cleghorn School Park), near Eleva. Our theme was Around the World with youth broken into Continents instead of cabins. All 12 counselors were hard working, creative and cheerful despite the record setting heat wave. This year we had a higher proportion of Dunn county campers and counselors and several families expressed deep appreciation of being able to attend. On our very first day of camp we were joined by our Area Extension Director and three summer interns who will be serving our region through July. They provided just the boost we needed to get through the first of four incredibly hot days with 50+ participants each day. Our camp nurse had only a few customers, as we kept our kiddos hydrated and in the shade as much as possible. The usual camp fun was had, even though we could not host an overnight and I know we attracted a bunch of families for next year when we hope the traditional camp will be "back on the menu."

Other activities this month included planting several courtyard planters at the Dunn County Government Services patio. I created a "3 Sisters" planting and added an educational placard to share why the Native American traditional companion planting of squash, corn and beans makes good sense. I spent a whole day in Marathon County assisting with Area Animal Science Days and got to watch some of our Dairy Project participants show off their stuff. June also marked the beginning of a multi-week summer book reading circle our LGBTQ+ state 4-H committee sponsored with the support of the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation. We are reading "I Wish You All the Best" by Mason Deaver and I highly recommend this young adult novel that deals with issues facing youth who are dealing with identity and acceptance. So far we have had more adults than youth across the state join us but the discussions have been amazing and eye-opening.

- A series of meetings, work-dates, and site visits (virtual and in person) counselor interviews and training by colleagues from two counties, in order to plan an early June summer camp. The planning is essential to implement a camp which has not happened in over two years due to the pandemic and bad weather.



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Support



Michelle Bachand | *Support Specialist*

Summer programming got off to a quick start in June with the Tractor Safety Course and 4-H Day Camp! In addition to the support provided preparing and wrapping up these two events, I completed a variety of other tasks, such as:

- Promoting June Dairy Month through blog and social media posts,
- Updating the Extension COOP/COG,
- Editing various audio, video, and photo files,
- Closed captioning videos in both English and Spanish,
- Formatting, printing, assembling, and mailing the Summer Agriculture newsletter to 472 local farmers,
- Completing Extension cybersecurity training,
- And more!

Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle | *Area Extension Director – Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties*

My big bucket items have been working through county budgets in all three counties (Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire), continuing work on the Community Development Educator position, our return to the office plans (July 6th is our big day), and working with our grant-provided Community Health Internship Program interns. They are taking a multidisciplinary approach and working with 4-H, FoodWise, Horticulture, some local public health with our Extension educators, and some broader work on research for creating more inclusive website and office presence. Farm Tech Days is July 20-22. I'll be there for a couple days so stop and say hey! Extension will be leading with an educational presence along with the greater Agriculture community. You can visit their website here for more information <https://www.wifarmtechdays.org>. There is still a need for volunteers and you can sign up here: <https://www.wifarmtechdays.org/volunteers> Have a great rest of your month!



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What's Next

- July 12th, 10am - Heart of the Farm Coffee Chat: Traditions - Today and Tomorrow. Register at <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/heartofthefarm/conferences/coffee-chats/>
- July 14, 12:30pm - Badger Crop Connect: Value of Legumes in Cover Cropping Systems after Short Season Crops & New Normals Reflect a Changing Climate in Wisconsin. Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/bccsummer2021>
- July 20-22 - Wisconsin Farm Technology Days - Huntsinger Farms. For more information, visit <https://www.wifarmtechdays.org/>
- July 28, 12:30pm - Badger Crop Connect: Late Summer Forages & Extension Alternative Forages Workgroup. Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/bccsummer2021>
- August 9, 10am - Heart of the Farm Coffee Chat: Dinner Conversations. Register at <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/heartofthefarm/conferences/coffee-chats/>
- August 11, 12:30pm - Badger Crop Connect: Corn Silage Update. Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/bccsummer2021>