



## Agriculture

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

Over 200 farmers, agriculture professionals and educators from over 30 Wisconsin counties registered for a Farm Management three-part webinar program focusing on farm financial and risk management, with over 160 viewing the live and/or recorded series in January 2022.

- January 7th, Farm Gate Economic Outlook, facilitated by Katie Wantoch, <https://youtu.be/lzo2jm19Os0>
- January 21st, Farm Pulse Program, Make Sense of Financial Management, co-taught by Katie Wantoch, [https://youtu.be/-H1h0xm\\_CGM](https://youtu.be/-H1h0xm_CGM)
- January 28th, Don't Gamble the Farm Away, Take Charge of Your Future Today!, co-taught by Katie Wantoch, <https://youtu.be/vi4JWZbjcQA>

As a result of attending this program, participants of the evaluation (N=44) indicated they learned about the purpose and value of financial and risk management practices (61% strongly agreed, 39% agreed). They learned some ways to determine whether a business opportunity is likely to succeed (48% strongly agreed, 43% agreed). They plan to use something they learned to help make a decision about a business opportunity or new enterprise. (26% strongly agreed, 62% agreed). Participants included farmers (30%), ag professional/service provider/consultant (18%), educators (33%), and others (10%).

As a result of the program, some of the actions that participants said they plan to apply to their farm, or farms they work with, include:

- Risk aversion techniques, look at the risk rating tools
  - Take the time to address sensitive issues
  - Look at my trend and my assets and how I'm using them, where I can do better
  - Focus on the important ratios to start with, and this will help find areas to focus on improvements!
  - Make a spreadsheet of costs and profits
  - Implement price floors for 2022
- A series of webinars for farmers, agriculture professionals and educators where they learned about farm-scale economics for agriculture markets in 2022, the purpose and value of having basic financial statements for their business, and resources and tools to assess their business in order to make informed financial and risk management decisions.
  - A training for people in Dunn County who use pesticides to produce an agricultural commodity on property they or their employer owns or controls, where participants learn to safely apply restricted-use pesticides. The goal of this program is to increase personal safety of employees and farmers who use pesticides.
  - 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.
  - Updating and adapting a financial management curriculum for beginning, female, and other farmers into a more relevant format for use in-person, stand-alone educational videos, and an on-line course. This curriculum will assist farmers in identifying strengths and weaknesses of their business to assist them in making decisions that will improve their farm profitability.

## Community Development

Addison Vang | *Community Development Educator*

This month was full of coordinating and rescheduling canceled workshops. One of the workshops will be the kick off workshop for the FEED series for food business entrepreneurs in Wisconsin. The FEED workshops will cover a series of food related business topics with some great presenters. For more information on the series go to the following link [shorturl.at/mqFG6](http://shorturl.at/mqFG6). To register you can go to this link <https://go.wisc.edu/b8m3it>.

This month was the second of three planned winter virtual meetings "Exploring Capacity to Serve Wisconsin HMoob Farmers. It had a great turnout with a lot of organizations throughout Wisconsin who are either already supporting or looking into how to support Hmong Farmers. The discussions will continue next month March 15, 2022 that will conclude



the workshop with a potential fourth meeting to be determined.

- An educational program for underserved Hmong Farmers, where they learn how to complete financial documents and learn of financial resources to support their farm businesses. The goal is to reduce challenges and barriers to support and/or expand underserved farm operations with introduction of financial practices and increased knowledge to access financial resources.
- Planning a statewide conference to support a Hmong economic development summit. The goal is to build a network of underrepresented entrepreneurs and business owners to learn and support one another.
- Planning meetings with the executive leadership of the nonprofit Literacy Chippewa Valley during which organizational needs are diagnosed and a strategic planning process will be designed. The purpose of this effort is to help the organization identify a strategic direction in order to more effectively use its resources to address regional literacy needs.
- Planning for a series of virtual FEED workshops for food business entrepreneurs in Wisconsin. The goal of this effort is for entrepreneurs that are considering expanding or starting a food based business to learn about types of food business and what is involved in operating these types of business so that they can decide if they want to pursue their business idea and what it would entail.

## Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | *Horticulture Outreach Specialist*

Horticulture inquiries - So far this year, I have received questions on insects in the home, apple tree pruning and landscape plant selection. In 2021, I had recorded a minimum of 300 horticulture contacts. Of these initial contacts in 2021 45% were made by phone. Email was the next frequent way folks reached out for horticultural advice. This was similar to inquiries that came specifically from Dunn County. From the three counties I serve, tree related questions accounted for the majority of the recorded inquiries (21%). In Dunn County, horticulture questions spanned a wide range with questions on ornamentals, trees, plant ID, lawns, landscape and fruit topping the list.

2021 Master Gardener Mentorship Program - I reviewed the feedback from new Master Gardener volunteers who participated in our 2021 Mentorship program pilot. Results showed that 86% of survey respondents found that the mentorship had helped them become better familiar with their local Master Gardener Program. The same amount also stated that the mentorship helped facilitate their involvement in volunteer service. This is good news as one of the primary objectives of the mentorship program was to help acclimate new volunteers and get them quickly involved with local Master Gardener activities as this has been shown to help with volunteer retention.

Developing new educational opportunities - I serve on a committee that is developing a series of horticulture mini webinars for the 2022 growing season. The webinars are called mini because they last approximately 30 minutes including Q&As. The webinars are free. The first round focuses on fruit and starts at the end of February. For more information visit <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/mini-webinars-for-gardeners/>.

- Planning for a statewide webinar series for consumer horticulture audiences where participants will learn about pollinator decline, climate change and environmental contamination and pollution. The goal of this effort is to increase adoption of horticultural practices addressing identified environmental issues in Wisconsin.



## Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter | *FoodWise Coordinator*

Nancy Fastner | *FoodWise Educator*

Joy Weisner | *FoodWise Educator*

Jael Wolf | *FoodWise Educator*



Welcome to Nutrition Educator Jael M. Wolf!

### Message from Jael:

I am very excited to be part of this fantastic team and the amazing work of Extension and FoodWise. I am passionate about community outreach and education and making science available to the public, and I am so happy that my role allows me to do that!

**WIC:** Nancy is planning upcoming virtual events for families and in-person events at the Farmers Market this summer.

**Colfax Head Start:** We are offering parent virtual classes to parents to discuss the importance of having children help in the kitchen! There are many tasks even 2-3 yr olds can do that dramatically impact their comfort level and desire to help out and try foods as they grow.

**Virtual StrongBodies:** Nancy and Sandy continue to lead and provide nutrition lessons for the winter and spring series.

**Workforce Resource:** Joy is planning upcoming spring virtual sessions that will be offered to Dunn residents.

**EBT/Market Match at the Farmers Market:** Sandy is working with Health Dunn Right to garner the funding needed for our Market Match program. We have been successful in obtaining \$2000 from Marshfield Clinic! More grant funding will be applied for in hopes to cover the additional \$4000 costs.

**UW Stout:** Nancy and Sandy presented on Extension/FoodWise to the Community Nutrition class at UW Stout. We shared the purpose, mission, values of Extension and our FoodWise role in programming for local residents.

## Human Development and Relationships

Stephanie Hintz | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*

February has been a month filled with sunsetting projects and creating succession plan resources for people to pick up the projects I am currently leading or co-leading. I am focusing on ending my time with Dunn County strong and setting the new person up for success. Activities include but are not limited to creating a succession planning document for Health Dunn Right, the Community Health Needs Assessment, and my other classes and projects like Parents Forever, Practicing the Pause, and Making Reading Memories. My wish is for the new person in this role to be so prepared and armed with the correct information that they will be able to hit the ground running.

- 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.
- A weekly virtual drop-in session for participants who have taken a resiliency skill building focused class, workshop, or series with Extension (i.e. WeCope, Farm Stress, etc.) and general community members interested in self-care, where participants learn skills such as deep breathing, guided imagery, values exercises, gratitude meditations, etc.. The purpose of these sessions was to reduce stress and increase self-awareness, and help sustain learnings and practices learned in previous Extension educational opportunities.



## Positive Youth Development

Luisa Gerasimo | *4-H Program Educator*

February is a short month filled to the brim with 4-H activity! At our regional professional development training, 4-H educators from the northern counties gathered to discuss All Things Spring and Summer. This included topics like summer camp, recruiting and training counselors, summer fun programs, county based travel ideas, and of course getting ready for the 2022 Fair Season.

I also had the chance to meet our new UW Eau Claire spring intern Hannah, who will be doing her capstone experience with Dunn and EC counties from now to May. Hannah will be helping us with some of our upcoming events and will be setting us up for future success by pulling together fun activities for us to use with youth in the coming months.

This month we got all the supplies together for our upcoming 6 session Art U with UW-Stout art educators, held a pack up day and confirmed pick up and delivery of supplies before our first March session. Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire county 4-H educators are also very busy getting ready for our first in-person Tri-County Performing Arts Festival since early 2020. This fun activity will take place in Cadott on March 5th, with clubs and individuals competing in speaking, drama, and music.

- Planning for a 4-H Art U series for 4-H and other local families in three counties proceeded in cooperation with staff from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. The goal of this 6 session hybrid activity is to give local youth, in grades in Kindergarten through 12th, the chance to work in age-appropriate break out rooms with college students who are art educators and to show their best work on the college campus at the end of the series.
- Ongoing support for an afterschool club for Hmong youth which builds community through 4-H activities, mindfulness moments, and goal setting activities. The goal of this effort is to support youth mental health and to keep youth connected to their peers and caring professionals.



Making goal boards for the New Year

## Support

Michelle Bachand | *Support Specialist*

This month I worked on a variety of activities, some of which include:

- Preparing the FY2021 year-end financial reports.
- Preparing a request for carry-forward funds.
- Assisting with the Pesticide Application Training logistics; room reservations, requesting catering, processing and mailing of test forms.
- Preparing for the upcoming 4-H Art U sessions; assisting with registrations, invoicing participants, receiving payments, purchasing supplies, and packing supplies into kits.
- Preparing for the 4-H Tri-County Performing Arts festival; creating speaking schedule, event program, certificates, and judging sheets.
- Assisting with the upcoming Youth Livestock Nutrition and Care Workshop; researching room rental availability and costs, creating a flyer, coordinating with sponsors, and advertising.
- Entering paper evaluation surveys for StrongBodies for participants without computer access.
- Compiling demographic data for programming.



## Area Extension Director

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

I have started the hiring process to fill the Human Development & Relationships educator position for Dunn County. We will aim to have someone in place sometime in the month of May, depending on the applicant and if they need to give notice at their current employment. We are planning to hire the same focus of community based education that Stephanie has provided in, which is Family Engagement and Relationships, so the next educator can take the baton from Stephanie and bring us to our next chapter of supporting families in Dunn County.

We have welcomed our newest FoodWise educator colleague, Jael Wolf, on Monday, February 21. We had a potluck for her home office of Eau Claire, where we could introduce ourselves and share a little about our Extension and community/county programming. While Jael will be based in Eau Claire County, she will join our “Area 6” Team of FoodWise educators based in Chippewa County and Eau Claire County to provide programming in Dunn County.

We have an intern that has started in partnership with UW-Eau Claire and the Area Community Health Centers. Her name is Hannah Campen. She is a public health major and will primarily be supporting Luisa and Rachel in our Dunn and Eau Claire County Extension programs for a total of 90 hours this semester.

## What’s Next

- 4-H Tri-County Performing Arts Festival, March 5th
- Growing Together: 2022 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminars
  - The Western Wisconsin District of Master Gardener Volunteers will be hosting a Virtual Spring Garden Seminar. Registration for the seminar includes two presentations on Saturday morning, March 12. All seminar presentations will be online via YouTube Live and will be available to registrants for a limited time after the presentation. Cost for the Growing Together Seminar is \$5. We welcome all gardeners, new and experienced, to register and participate.
- Youth Livestock Nutrition and Care Workshop, March 19th
  - All feeds are made up of nutrients. Just like people, livestock must have certain nutrients in their daily feed to remain healthy and continue to grow. Join Extension, Synergy Cooperative and Purina for hands-on activities and demonstrations for youth to learn about the proper nutrition and care for raising livestock. Animals will be on hand at the Colfax Fairgrounds
- Middle School Leadership and Games Day, March 19th
  - A fun day for Middle Schoolers in Dunn and Eau Claire Counties. Join for fun games and activities that will help you think about different kinds of leadership.
- Art U, Mondays in March & April
  - A series of 6 art classes delivered primarily in the virtual world! This series is a collaboration between A.I.M. at UW-Stout and 4-H in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. The classes will be taught by Art Education students.