



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY

March 2025 Report

Agriculture

Jerry Clark | *Regional Crops & Soils Educator*



Sign up to receive the *Extension in the Valley* agriculture and horticulture e-newsletter [HERE](#).

A series of four Focus on Forage webinars for forage growers, livestock producers, agency staff and agricultural consultants where research-based forage management solutions are shared to optimize forage yield and quality to improve overall farm profitability. (In collaboration with: Liz Gartman, Anastasia Kurth, Damon Smith, Daniel Marzu, Harkirat Kaur, Jordyn Sattler, Joshua Kamps,

Kevin Jarek, Mark Renz, Marta Moura Kohmann, Megan Sankey, Melissa Ohlrich, Scott Newell, Scott Reuss, Sylvanus Gaku)

By participating in the Eau Claire Farm Show, farmers were made aware of current extension research and educational programs and information. The annual show provides a forum to teach and inform farmers and agriculture industry professionals about current extension resources and research results. North Country Enterprises estimates an annual attendance of 7,000-10,000 annually. (Partnered with: Ryan Sterry, Margaret Murphy, Teal Polzin)



A training session for manure applicators and farmers where participants learn to apply manure safely and accurately to keep themselves safe, protect the environment, respond to manure spills and increase farm profitability. (In collaboration with: Anastasia Kurth, Becky Brathal, Christine Clark, Jordyn Sattler, Kelsey Hyland, Kevin Erb, Landon Baumgartner, Laura Flandermeyer, Melissa Ohlrich, Scott Reuss)

A training program for private applicators where participants learned about safe handling and application of restricted-use pesticides to protect themselves and the environment.



A risk, crop insurance and grain marketing hybrid course, where material was adapted into a more relevant format for use in-person, webinars and an on-line course. The Farm Pulse –Crop Insurance and Grain Marketing has assisted farmers and agricultural professionals in identifying strengths and weaknesses of their crop business to assist them in making decisions that will improve their farm profitability. (Partnered



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with: Katie Wantoch, Joshua Kamps, Kevin Jarek, Michelle Bachand, Scott Reuss, Steve Okonek)

Spotlight

Pesticides are a management tool to assist farmers with control of farmstead pests such as weeds, plant diseases, insects, and rodents. Farmers interested in using restricted use pesticides to control pests on land and building owned and operated by them need to be certified every five years through a state-mandated pesticide training program. Farmers learned about the proper use of restricted-use pesticides through Private Pesticide Applicator training and certification testing programs held in Menomonie and Bloomer. The watch-party program was taught by UW Pesticide Application Training Program Manager Jordan Kampa and Pest Management Outreach Specialist Laura Flandermeyer. Twenty-five farmers learned rules and regulations to safely handle and apply restricted-use pesticides. Topics covered included, basic pest management identification and physiology, federal and state regulations, personal protective equipment, handling pesticides, calibration, and keeping pesticides on target. Following training, farmers completed a 70-question examination to be evaluated later to determine certification. Certification lies within the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator



Ryan attended meetings with seven entities (4 public and 3 agri-business) in an effort to introduce himself to the area and learn more about livestock producer needs in the Chippewa Valley.

An educational article for beef producers and agri-business professionals, where the audience will learn about setting goals, records to keep, and analyzing production records. (In collaboration with: Kimberly Kester)

Six-part virtual series for individuals new to beef production or dairy producers transitioning to beef production. Participants learned about various aspects of beef enterprises, including marketing strategies, cattle health, nutrition and reproduction, and cattle enterprises. The goal of this series is to enhance the economic sustainability of emerging beef producers. (Partnered with: Sandy Stuttgen, Adam Hartfiel, Beth McIlquham, Bill Halfman, Kimberly Kester)

Planning for a calving management course for dairy and beef farm owners and workers. The goal is to teach farm owners and workers to recognize signs of stress during calving and to know when assistance



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is needed and how to assist with the delivery of the calf, so that more live calves can be born.

(Collaborated with: Heather Schlessner, Alison Pfau, Sandy Stuttgen)

A monthly webinar series of timely topics for beef producers to inform and assist them in decision making on their own operations. (Developed with: Adam Hartfiel, Beth McIlquham, Bill Halfman, Kimberly Kester, Megan Nelson, Sandy Stuttgen)

Spotlight

Division of Extension beef educators were asked by the WI Cattlemen's Association to provide articles for their quarterly newsletter, Cattle Trials. The goal of these articles is to increase their members' awareness of current beef research and best management practices. Livestock Program beef educators take turns, and collaboratively schedule and peer-review our articles for accurate, unbiased scientific content, grammar, and audience appeal. Topics are selected in response to emerging situations, new research, or seasonal production practices. Our articles supplement or highlight our Program Plan of Work programming goals.

Ryan recently co-authored article can be found at: [Ryan's Article:](#)

<https://www.wisconsincattlemen.com/resources/cattle-trails-newsletter>

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Regional Horticulture Educator

Extension in the Valley agriculture and horticulture e-newsletter, view newsletters [HERE](#).



An activity to illustrate the benefits of gardening for people living with dementia and their care partners. Participants built their own sensory garden in a pot. This effort was designed to encourage people to include gardening in their lifestyle and experience the many benefits that gardening provides including using fine motor skills, getting a sense of accomplishment, stress relief, positive socialization, and a way to stimulate the senses plus having a connection to nature.

A program for the public on growing fresh produce to share with food recipient organizations where participants learned best practices when donating produce and tips on preferred vegetable selections to grow. This effort was designed to encourage people to share their extra produce to help offset food insecurity in our communities.

Provide garden articles published in the Extension in the Valley, tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news. In the March issue, participants learned about growing kitchen herbs, soil health and ideas for spring flowers to plant. Links to UW Madison Extension fact



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sheets and upcoming events were also provided. This effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture matters. (Collaborated with: Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

Attended the Red Cedar Watershed Conference and gained information on how clean water can start in your own yard.

Spotlight

A program for the public on growing fresh produce to share with food recipient organizations came about as a result of a request for programming from a local library. The local Extension horticulture educator has been partnering with this local library to provide a series of gardening talks every spring for the past three years. Plus, gardeners, particularly at the local community garden, often give their extra produce away to community members so wanted to touch base with local gardeners about best practices based on work done and being done through Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Created a PowerPoint presentation to support a talk discussing best practices and personal experience of managing and creating donation gardens while working as a horticulture educator with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Provided handouts for participants to take with them and share out plus, answered participant questions.

Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Regional Community & Leadership Development Educator



A 4-part workshop series in partnership with Wisconsin Literacy where board members and directors of small literacy organizations evaluate the current state of their organization, analyze support pools for volunteers and funding, and create action plans to ensure their organization is sustainable over time. (In partnership with: Sarah Schlosser, Alyson Sauter, Barbara Alvarez)

Continued development of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative and its efforts to re-open the former St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls as an full-service interim healthcare facility, and to build a new full-service hospital in Lake Hallie, Wisconsin to replace the 34% of regional health care lost with the closure of the two HSHS hospitals in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls and 19 Prevea clinics across the region. (Collaborated with: Bill Oemichen, Karl Green, Kristen Bruder)

Facilitated a series of meetings to support the Town of Elk Mound's development and submission of an Innovation Planning Grant with the Wisconsin Department of Revenue that will hire a consultant to examine opportunities to strengthen fire and emergency medical services in Dunn County. The Town of Elk Mound was awarded the grant for \$52,500 and I will continue to support the Town of Elk Mound and



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consultant in the development of a report and community conversations following its release.
(Facilitated with: Karl Green)

Co-Chairing the Childcare Action Team with Health Dunn Right, guiding a new group to identify its mission and goals, and development and implement an action plan. The goal of the group is to support affordable, accessible, high-quality child care in Dunn County by bringing together a variety of partners from the business, education, and nonprofit communities.

Provide a leadership role in the founding and operation of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative. Extension is working closely with a cooperative board of local civic and business leaders to move forward on constructing a new hospital and related clinics. The goal of the cooperative is to create renewed healthcare access in a region adversely impacted by the recent closure of two closed hospitals and 19 clinics, to preserve nearly 1,400 high paying jobs, and to support local economic development efforts and to support the local tax base. (Collaborated with: Bill Oemichen, Karl Green, Kristen Bruder)

Spotlight

Karl Green presented at the Dunn County Towns Association Meeting in Winter as part of the Local Government Education Outreach. At the meeting, Karl shared information about the Innovation Planning Grant through DOR and Tony Christopherson (Chair, Town of Elk Mound) approached him for support to address both fire and ems. Through conversation with county leadership and Tony, Garret and Karl coordinated a meeting to apply for this grant. The Town of Elk Mound successfully received their grant for \$52,500 and will have a report and analysis on recommendations to strengthen their fire and EMS services.

Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter

FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner

FoodWise Educator



Hillarie Roth

FoodWise Educator





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A series of virtual strength training sessions (StrongBodies) for adults in the community, where participants engage in regular, progressive strength training and health education to improve their physical and mental health, and enhance social connectedness. In March, Sandy led the exercises and provided a presentation on protein for older adults.

An educational caregiver event at the Menomonie Head Start Center where parents learned helpful techniques to help involve their children in the kitchen. Families had the opportunity to make and taste a Mango Smoothie. This effort supports parents in encouraging their families to eat healthy and reduce mealtime struggles.



Head Start family enjoying their mango smoothie

Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*



Menomonie Public Library presentation where staff introduced themselves and UW Extension parenting resources were shared. The goal of the presentation was to share what Extension may be able to provide to staff and clients of the library.

Resilient Co-Parenting statewide class sessions for parents and caregivers experiencing separation, divorce, or changes in the custody of their children, where they learn skills to improve communication and problem-solving, support children emotionally, and keep kids out of the middle of conflict. (In collaboration with: Hannah Zellmer, Adam Trunzo, Amanda Griswold, Beverly Doll, Heidi Ungrodt, Mary Campbell Wood, Missy Bablick, Pamela Wedig-Kirsch, Pattie Carroll, Renee Koenig, Todd Wenzel, Tracy Henegar)

Read and Connect Workshop where parents in jail and prison learn the importance of reading aloud to children and ways to engage their child through books. The goal of this program is to help parents strengthen the parent-child bond and build children's early literacy skills, which are an important foundation for success in school and life.

Making Reading Memories Program for families involved in the justice system where parents in jail are video recorded reading storybooks, which are then shared with their children at home. The goal is to reduce the trauma of separation, strengthen family relationships and at the same time increase children's exposure to books and reading.

Just In Time Parenting newsletter (pre-birth up to 5 years old) for parents, caregivers, childcare professionals, and professionals who are serving families where participants learn evidence-based



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parenting strategies and child development information to support positive family dynamics and child well-being. Through this effort, participants gain practical tools to strengthen their parenting skills and promote healthy childhood development, leading to a positive impact on family resilience and child success. (Partnered with: Amanda Griswold, Alicia Utke-Becher, Kula Yang)

Parents Forever Co-Parenting class for parents and caregivers experiencing separation, divorce or changes in the custody of their children, where they learn skills to prioritize the parent-child relationship and better communicate with their co-parent. This program is designed to increase child well-being and reduce parental conflict during family transitions. (Partnered with: Missy Bablick)

Testimonial

"Thank you very much for today's class! I enjoyed it and learned a lot. Towards the end of the class, my computer automatically restarted abruptly, and I did not get the chance to say "Thank you" before I leave the class...I just want to let you know that the class is really helpful to me. Thank you and look forward to the next class!" – Parent in a March 2025 Raising a Thinking Child, an online parenting series

Positive Youth Development

Zachary Rozmiarek | 4-H Program Educator



The April Clover Courier can be viewed [HERE](#).

The Tri-County Performing Arts Festival provided an opportunity for young people to practice performing solos, duets, or in groups in Music, Dance, or Drama categories. Preparing your piece or play, performing in front of an audience, and receiving feedback from a judge build life skills as well as a sense of belonging within clubs and the wider 4-H program. (Worked with: Rachel Hart-Brinson, Jordan Blue)

The Dunn County 4-H Team led a 2-day series of Spring Break Day Camps called Spring Break stay-cation. The premise was to give youth who were not leaving on a spring break trip to have an opportunity to explore their sparks. The events were modeled after typical spring break activities. The first day was Camping themed where the youth got to make a survival bracelet, do a hiking activity and sign camp songs. The second day was a pajama party! Youth did crafts, played games, and did relaxation activities.



Planning for a project learning day for youth in grades 6 and up in collaboration with Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire County 4-H Programs. The goal is to provide participants with opportunities to master their interests and skills through two sessions, so that they can grow and develop



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in their chosen areas. (In collaboration with: Jordan Blue, Amber Gilles, Rachel Hart-Brinson)

Youth working together to make survival bracelets.

The six week Art U sessions have begun. For one hour each Monday evening youth in grades k-6 meet online while youth in grades 7-12 meet in person on the UW-Stout Campus. The sessions are presented in collaboration with the UW-Stout Art Education Department. We have a total of 55 youth participating in this event. (In collaboration with: Jordan Blue, Rachel Hart-Brinson)

Planning has begun for the 2025 Battle of the Clubs. This event is an important tradition in Dunn County. The Youth Activities Council members help put on the event by leading the challenges for the clubs to compete in. We have met to set a date, time and location. We have also briefly discussed the activities and how the event will be funded.

Planning for a project learning day, Clover University, for youth in grades 6th-13th in collaboration with volunteers and Area 6 4-H staff. The goal is to provide hands-on learning experiences in various project areas, where participants will gain new skills and knowledge. Through this event, youth will develop practical abilities, foster a love for project learning, and build confidence in their capabilities, contributing to their overall personal growth and future success. (Partnered with: Jordan Blue, Amber Gilles, Rachel Hart-Brinson)

Spotlight

The Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire County 4-H Programs recognized a need for youth in grades 6 and up to have more opportunities to explore and develop their interests and skills in a structured, supportive environment. This prompted the creation of Clover University, a project learning day designed to address this need. By offering two focused sessions, the program aims to provide participants with hands-on experiences and practical knowledge in their areas of interest. The goal is to foster personal growth, skill development, and a sense of achievement among the youth, ultimately contributing to their overall development and preparing them for future challenges.

Value Added Programming

An online learning opportunity for Entrepreneurs in Training (EITs) and volunteer business leaders to collaborate on developing stronger business plans. This structured interaction builds confidence and entrepreneurial skill in the EITs and fosters empathy and confidence for volunteers that formerly incarcerated entrepreneurs can contribute positively and move our communities forward after prison. (Diana Hammer, Erin Rivera, Michael Senn)

A one-day workshop for community broadband leaders, economic development organizations, public and private permitting agencies, and internet service providers, where participants learned about broadband permitting requirements, engagement and endorsement of Broadband Equity, Access, and



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Deployment (BEAD) projects, and engaged in peer learning through case studies so they can build effective public-private partnerships that meet their community's broadband needs, increasing economic opportunity and quality of life for all community members. (John Parrish, Brittany Beyer, Christopher Stark, Gail Huycke, Jessica Beckendorf, Kristen Bruder)

An Introduction to Qualitative Data Analysis Workshop for Local and Tribal Health Departments, where they learn about the purpose, basics, methods and tools and tips to conduct qualitative data analysis to support health needs assessments. This increases community capacity in qualitative data analysis and program evaluation, and community capacity to incorporate community inputs in decision-making in public health. (Pearly Wong, Sarah Boulton, Selena Freimark, Sheena Cook-Fuglsang)

A study to better understand the geology of part of southwestern Dunn County. Results from this study will help the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and county officials make informed land and water use decisions. (Eric Stewart, Anna Fehling, Esther Stewart)

A watershed conference for people living and working in the Red Cedar River watershed, where attendees learned about efforts to reduce phosphorus pollution (and thus harmful algal blooms) in the river and its impounded lakes, and also learn what they could do to contribute to this effort. (Daniel Zerr)

A coaching program for families and individuals, where participants learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships. (Jeanne Walsh)

Area Extension Director

Kristen Bruder | *Area Extension Director – Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire Counties*



Please reach out with questions and ideas. The role of the AED is much like the department head in the county. Below is a brief overview of the role of AEDs: Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs) who oversee an area. These administrative positions are responsible for partnership management, staff development, financial management and program coordination.

Through the many interactions the AED has with county partners and local educators, the AED develops a solid understanding of the local needs and county priorities and helps to align Extension educational programs to ensure the programs address county needs. Educators also communicate local needs to their programmatic Institutes which collectively identify opportunities to address statewide needs.

Upcoming events

[Event Calendar – Extension](#)



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Dunn County Extension in the News

Ryan Sterry and Jerry Clark:

<https://www.newsbreak.com/the-country-today-1593253/3864298595291-news-in-brief>

https://www.chetkalert.com/news/free_news/article_849222d4-716a-414e-b424-b2df25f541c2.html

Luisa Gerasimo:

<https://citizenportal.ai/articles/2752124/Dunn-County/Wisconsin/Dunn-County-United-Way-Launches-Day-of-Caring-with-150-Volunteers>