



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DUNN COUNTY

# July 2025 Report

## Agriculture

Jerry Clark | *Regional Crops & Soils Educator*

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



An on-farm study to better understand the effect of nitrogen application rates on nitrogen cycling and corn yield. Results from this study will help corn growers in that they can implement and adapt N management practices to optimize economic return, improve efficiency of N fertilizer resulting in more sustainable corn production and farm profitability.

A field event for farmers, agronomy professionals, and conservation agency staff where participants learned soil nitrogen and forage management strategies to minimize nitrogen application rates and ensure forage inventory to increase farm profitability and protect groundwater resources. (With: Ryan Sterry and Teal Polzin)

A field event for farmers, agronomy professionals, and conservation agency staff where participants learned current season pest and crop management strategies to scout for pest populations and minimize crop protection inputs to increase crop enterprise and farm profitability. (In partnership with: Matthew Bolen and Teal Polzin)

A West Central Wisconsin Land and Water Summer Tour for conservation professionals where participants learned about local conservation production practices, research, and technology to increase understanding of the environmental impact of agriculture on the landscape and strategies to protect environmental resources.

An on-farm research study to better understand manure application, commercial nitrogen application rates, and nitrogen credits on corn yield and potential effect on ground water. Results from this study will help farmers, agriculture industry professionals, and agency professionals in adjusting manure and commercial nitrogen applications to optimize corn yield and protect groundwater resources. (With: Christine Clark, Joshua Kamps, Lindsey Rushford, Liz Gartman and Scott Reuss)

### Spotlight

*Partners and farmers in all three counties I serve have identified nitrate in groundwater as an issue in their county. Nitrogen Use Efficiency on-farm field research plots were established in Eau Claire and Dunn Counties. This research addresses the challenges to questions surrounding selection of N fertilizer rates, use of pre-plant and pre-sidedress nitrate tests, crediting nitrogen from manure and other on-farm nutrient sources. The research also investigates how to best use soil health nutrient tools to improve sustainability of nitrogen management practices. Nitrogen rates applied in the study are 0, 40, 80, 120, 160, and 200 (preplant and sidedress) pounds per acre. Field plots were sampled for pre-plant nitrate soil tests. Yields*



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*will be collected and compared to nitrogen rates applied within the replicated plots. The data from this on-farm research project will be used to help farmers and agronomists with nitrogen management decisions. Data will be analyzed for potential yield and soil nitrate differences between nitrogen application rates.*

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**Ryan Sterry** | Regional Livestock Educator

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



Planning a September 2025 in-person, full day, lambing school for Northwestern Wisconsin. The goal is to help producers prepare ahead of winter lambing. This workshop will cover essential topics, including biosecurity, animal health, parasite management, and nutrition, to ensure your flock thrives. Focused on sheep, but goat producers are also welcome to participate. Learn about the necessary lambing supplies, the phases of lambing, and effective lamb processing techniques. Thanks to generous support from the American Sheep Industry Association, hands-on activities include a realistic lambing simulator. (In partnership with: Carolyn Ihde)

A webinar, one session part of Badger Dairy Insight, for dairy farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned about updates to Heifer synchronization protocols to promote increased heifer pregnancy rates. (Hosted with: Heather Schlessner, Jackie Mccarville, Paul Fricke)

Planning a September 2025 in-person late afternoon meeting hosted on a commercial beef operation and taught by livestock, and crop and soil educators. The goal is to increase cow-calf producers' understanding of heifer reproduction and fall forage management to improve their farm's economic viability. (In collaboration with: Sandy Stuttgen, Bill Halfman, Jerry Clark, Melissa Ohlrich, and Sandy Stuttgen)

Planning a hybrid workshop series for dairy and beef producers, and dairy workers (in Spanish) in September 2025. The goal is to provide information and techniques to boost cattle caretakers' confidence in preparing the cow for calving, obstetric techniques, and newborn calf care so that their health and reproductive programs maintain their farm's economic viability. (With: Heather Schlessner, Matt Lippert, and Sandy Stuttgen)

## *Spotlight*

*Badger Dairy Insight is a monthly webinar offered to dairy farmers and dairy industry professionals around topics related to reproduction, nutrition, emerging technologies, and animal welfare to increase their knowledge around the latest University research. Then the reproduction and genetics workgroup provided speakers to talk on changes to heifer synchronization protocols. Attendees and those watching the*



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*recording of the presentations will have knowledge on changes to heifer synchronization protocols to increase breeding success.*

## Horticulture

**Margaret Murphy** | Regional Horticulture Educator

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



Garden class on planting containers for the public. Participants learned best practices on caring for container plants, ideas for container designs and planted both sun and shade containers for display at a public library. This effort was designed to promote success with container gardening and to encourage people to include plants and gardening in their lifestyle even when space is limited to experience the many benefits that gardening provides.

Program for families visiting Lake Wissota State Park on the types of animals that roam the Park and how they use their habitat. Participants learned how to be a wildlife detective by examining the clues they leave behind, especially their scat. This effort was designed to increase awareness about the importance of natural areas and the community of fauna they support as well as to encourage people to explore nature.

Provide garden articles published in the Extension in the Valley, tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news. In the current issue, participants learned about common issues of tomatoes, growing eggplant, upcoming programs and were provided links to more horticulture articles and information found at UW Horticulture Division of Extension. This effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture topics. (In collaboration with: Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

A garden program for participants of a community based residential facility where participants created a mixed garden design of vegetables and flowers in a small plot. Classes focus on continued maintenance of the garden and strategies for managing pests/problems that may arise. The goal of this effort is to teach the basics of vegetable gardening as well as to encourage people to include plants and gardening in their lifestyle even when space is limited to experience the many benefits that gardening provides. (In collaboration with: Sandy Tarter)

### Spotlight

*This program came about as a result of a FoodWise educator reaching out to the horticulture educator to do a garden program with women at a Community Based Residential Facility Participants and I meet to plan, plant, learn and care for the garden and address any pest or problems that arise. Participants have the lead on how the garden grows and are actively involved in the garden activities*





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## Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | *Regional Community & Leadership Development Educator*



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. (In collaboration with: Bill Oemichen, Karl Green, Kristen Bruder)

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 childcare in Dunn County by bringing together a variety of partners from the business, education, and nonprofit communities.

### Spotlight

*The 2024 Dunn County Community Health Needs Assessment identified Childcare as a top need in Dunn County. The Dunn County Human Development and Relationship Educator approached the Community and Leadership Development Educator about co-chairing a new Childcare Action Team with Health Dunn Right, the coalition group that leads the Community Health Improvement Plan. As a new group and an issue that is essential to community vitality, it was important for the educator to step into this role. The educator led the new group through a strategic doing process that allowed the action team to set goals and action plans.*



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## Health and Well-Being

**Sandy Tarter**

*FoodWise Coordinator*



**Joy Weisner**

*FoodWise Educator*



**Hillarie Roth**

*FoodWise Educator*



**Macy Lien**

*FoodWise Educator*



Collaboration with the Menomonie Farmers Market to advance the Market Match program. This effort will provide additional resources to FoodShare families to purchase SNAP eligible foods, strengthen relationships and provide added income with vendors, and build a foundational Market Match program.

### *Spotlight*

For over 30 years UW–Madison Extension has been providing local nutrition education throughout our state that has been funded by the federal SNAP–Ed grant program. Our FoodWise educators have been a cornerstone of Extension’s mission to improve the health and well-being of Wisconsin residents.

FoodWise reaches over 133,000 people with nutrition education and community-based strategies to support healthy eating and active lifestyles – partnering with schools, food pantries, farmers markets, and community centers to engage children, families, and seniors. Despite extensive advocacy efforts by Extension, UW–Madison’s University Relations, and partners such as the Wisconsin Counties Association, the congressional budget reconciliation bill signed into law on July 4 eliminated all SNAP–Ed funding effective September 30, 2025.

FoodWise is one of six SNAP–Ed implementing agencies in the state, and Extension is currently navigating the difficult process of winding down our SNAP–Ed-funded programming including a layoff notice process for affected employees. We will continue FoodWise programming through September 30, 2025. We will also be exploring all possible pathways to sustain some of the program’s capacity through alternative funding sources, including leveraging our infrastructure, expertise, and remaining EFNEP funding.

This is not just a loss of funding – it is a loss of services that have been vital to communities across Wisconsin. FoodWise’s staff of more than 90 educators across the state have directly helped families with limited incomes make a healthier choice for their future. The impact will be felt in schools, food pantries, and community centers where our educators have helped families make healthier choices and stretch limited food dollars.



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FoodWise has always been about more than just nutrition education. It's about empowering communities to thrive. We know that SNAP-Ed makes Wisconsin healthier. We are proud of the work we have done and the lives we have changed for the better. Thank you for supporting our staff, our programs and our mission.

Extension's commitment to your community remains and we will continue to bring university resources to residents in your area across our program areas. Please reach out to Sandy Tarter, FoodWise Nutrition Coordinator, [sandy.tarter@wisc.edu](mailto:sandy.tarter@wisc.edu), and Area Extension Director Kristen Bruder, [kristen.bruder@wisc.edu](mailto:kristen.bruder@wisc.edu), with your questions.

## Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*



**Parents Forever**, a co-parenting class for parents and caregivers experiencing separation, divorce or changes in the custody of their children was taught online this month. Parents learned 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. (With: Tracy Henegar, Douglas County). Spotlight below.

**Making Reading Memories and Read and Connect Workshop** is offered monthly for parents who are currently being held at the Dunn County Jail. In July parents learned about why they should interact and read to their children to help their growing brains develop. Because a large number of parents signed up for the program Officer Pyka, the Dunn County Jail's amazing Director of Educational Programs offered to help so that we could record 15 books that will soon go out to families where kids are missing their parents. Several fathers have participated for several months in a row and they commented on how this program is helping them feel closer as a family as they await their day in court.

**WeCOPE**, Connecting with our Positive Emotions, is a 6 session online series designed to help everyday people deal with everyday stress in a more positive way. I am cooperating with colleagues in my own institute and in the Health and Well Being Institute to offer the program state-wide. A number of Dunn County residents, including several Dunn County employees are taking the summer session now. Locally, we will be offering fall sessions as well and hope that people in our county continue to sign up in large numbers so that more of our neighbors have a handy tool box for dealing with life's inevitable ups and downs.

**Book Bin Update:** every week or so I add another stack of books to the free book bin I've set up in the family waiting area on the main floor of the government





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center. Books keep going home with families! Thanks to donations by the Menomonie Public Library, county citizens, and Dragon Tail Books, I have been able to keep the bin filled each week. I also added bookmarks directing families to Extension resources for reading and for parenting. The bookmark is now getting used by other educators. If you have gently used children's books you would like to donate, please contact us.

## Spotlight

**Parents Forever:** *All families experience transitions in life, and around half of Dunn County's families will experience divorce, separation, or changes in the custody of their children. Divorce and separation can have profound consequences for children, parents, and families, although adequate support can soften the negative outcomes in childhood and adolescence.*

*The quality of parenting and the presence of parental conflict are key drivers of children's well-being and are often the focus of court-mandated parent education. Extension's Family Engagement and Relationship program partners with family courts across Wisconsin to provide the evidence-informed parent education program called Parents Forever for parents and caregivers experiencing divorce, separation, or changes in the custody of their children. As a result of the Parents Forever program, parents improve their understanding of parental well-being, co-parenting relationships, and parent-child relationships.*

*Most parents who respond to our post-program survey feel more prepared to coach their child through difficulties related to divorce or separation and are more confident they can keep their child out of the middle of parenting issues. Most parents also report learning new strategies to communicate effectively with their co-parent. Most parents who responded to our follow-up survey reported that a conversation that normally would have become a conflict did NOT escalate.*

*Most also reported that they tried to collaborate more with their co-parent to make choices in the best interest of their children. The impact of the Parents Forever program is important because changes in family structure can have profound impacts on child and parent well-being, findings well documented by research.*

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## Positive Youth Development

Zachary Rozmiarek | 4-H Program Educator



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

Work has been done to create a new visitor's center for the 4-H program at the Dunn County Fair. We have created displays and planned youth activities. We have also partnered with the Dunn County Historical Society to set up exhibits.

Sam Stephens, the Dunn County 4-H intern planned, organized and presented a day camp for cloverbuds in Dunn, Eau Claire, and Chippewa Counties. She was assisted



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by the Eau Claire and Chippewa County interns. (In collaboration with: Jordan Blue and Rachel Hart-Brinson)

A foods and nutrition project day was put on for the cloverbuds. They learned how to make a healthy treat while using cooking skills such as measuring, mixing and freezing.

Area 6 Chippewa County Day Camp welcomed 26 youth participants in grades K–3 for a day of hands-on learning and community exploration at Irvine Zoo in Chippewa County. AmeriCorps Members Lily and Chloe led and developed the program, creating engaging activities that encouraged curiosity, connection with nature, and discovery of local resources. This program was a collaborative effort between AmeriCorps Members in Chippewa County and Student Interns in Eau Claire and Dunn County. (In partnership with: Jordan Blue, Amber Gilles, Deanna Wiersgalla, Kristin Peterson, Rachel Hart-Brinson)

The Wonderlab Day Camp was one in a series of three day camps planned by summer interns for grades K-2. This day camp experience aimed to provide exploration of STEAM topics, including tie-dye, slime, journaling, and playing animal-themed games in a positive youth development atmosphere. (With: Rachel Hart-Brinson and Jordan Blue)

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## 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.

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## Value Added Programming

**Covering Wisconsin** creates education, outreach, and promotions messaging and tools for the public that are disseminated through myriad formats and venues around Wisconsin (e.g. toolkits for community partners, social media campaigns, bus placards and billboards, streaming digital ads, resource events and fairs, trainings for professionals, and health insurance literacy "How To" sheets). Through this programming, we help people in Wisconsin obtain, effectively understand and utilize health insurance, reducing the number of uninsured and underinsured people in our state. (Colleen Harryman, Tina

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Navigator enrollment assistance provided to anyone in Wisconsin, where 97,013 consumers were assisted with health insurance questions or enrollment. Through this effort, our Navigators completed 4,041 qualified health plan enrollments through the federal Health Insurance Marketplace and assisted 5,615 consumers with Medicaid, resulting in widespread access to health care and improved health outcomes. (Adam Vanspankeren, Allison Espeseth, Elizabeth Rothe)

Co-Chairing the **Chippewa Valley Suicide Prevention Workgroup**, which covers suicide prevention efforts in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. The goal of this group is to collaborate on efforts to reduce deaths by suicide in the region. (Margo Dieck)



An outdoor field training for volunteers and local coordinators, where participants learned how to conduct an **in-stream fish habitat assessment**. The goal is to provide volunteers and local coordinators with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to assess their local stream's fish and macroinvertebrate habitat quality while learning more about the characteristics of a healthy stream ecosystem. (Katy Bradford, Emily Heald)

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## Upcoming events

[Event Calendar – Extension](#)

## Dunn County Extension in the News

Ryan Sterry, Jerry Clark and Teal Polzin- **Forage & Nitrogen Management** [Forage & Nitrogen Management Field Day is July 16 in Osseo](#)

[Forage & Nitrogen Management Field Day Set for July 16 in Osseo | WTAQ News Talk](#)

**Jerry Clark- Corn and Humidity**

[Feel humid outside? It could be the corn | Chippewa Valley News | wqow.com](#)

**Jerry Clark - Tariffs**

[Growing season is on pace, but farmers concerned about tariffs, migrant workers | Daily Updates | leadertelegram.com](#)

**Jerry Clark- Armyworms**

[True armyworm spotted across Wisconsin](#)

**4-H - Key Award**

[Looking Local: Menomonie Youth Selected as 4-H's Key Award Winner ★ 715Newsroom.com](#)



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