



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DUNN COUNTY

# October 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 industrial hemp fiber and grain performance related to varieties, effect of planting date, tillage treatments, and nitrogen application rates. Results from this study will help hemp growers select better performing varieties and optimize economic return to nitrogen to increase sustainable hemp production and farm profitability.

A field event for 5th grade students where participants learned about conservation issues and careers to increase student awareness about the importance of conservation. (In collaboration with: Jeanne Walsh, Jordan Blue, and Margaret Murphy)

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

*Establishing conservation and environmental stewardship within students was identified as a need by teachers to help students understand the importance of conservation. As students explore career opportunities, conservation topics related to various careers are needed. The annual School Conservation Day program was held at Brunet Island State Park to provide conservation education to 5th grade students in Chippewa County. The purpose of the program is to increase knowledge of students on several conservation topics and meet conservation professionals working and living in their area. The program was attended by 247 students and 21 teachers, aides, and parents. Another program is scheduled for October at Lake Wissota State Park. Topics covered during the programs included ground and surface water protection, energy conservation, soil management and conservation, careers in conservation, rules and regulations, invasive species, forestry, and wildlife management. Conservation professionals provided educational topics from the Division of Extension UW-Madison, Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Chippewa County Department of Land Conservation and Forest Management, Master Gardener Volunteers, and the City of Chippewa Falls. This was the 52nd year of the event for students.*



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**Ryan Sterry** | Regional Livestock Educator



An in-person learning event for sheep producers, where participants learned about good management practices leading up to lambing, learned the differences between normal and abnormal lamb birthing positions, and how to intervene if necessary. (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 proper semen handling and tools they need in their AI toolbox so they can have better pregnancy rates. (With: Heather Schlessner, Angie Ulness, and Jackie Mccarville)



*A hybrid workshop series for dairy and beef producers, and dairy workers (in Spanish). The goal was 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. (Heather Schlessner, Sandy Stuttgen, Matt Lippert, Ryan Sterry)*

## Spotlight

*Conversations with local sheep producers identified a need for education directed at beginning producers and those curious about starting a flock. One of the most labor-intensive times with the sheep flock is lambing. Because of the time-sensitive nature of the lambing process, new shepherds must learn to diagnose problems at birth quickly, learn when and how to intervene, and know when to call for help. To address this need, a day long in-person workshop was developed and delivered. Class room teaching topics included biosecurity, nutrition, and health. Breakout sessions covered the phases of lambing, lamb processing, recordkeeping and technology, and practice with a lambing simulator. A pre-post evaluation was conducted the day of the workshop using a Likert scale (1=low and 5=high). All topics had an increase in knowledge of 1 point or greater, with most topics increasing by 1.5 to 1.9 points.*

## Horticulture

**Margaret Murphy** | Regional Horticulture Educator

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



A fall cleanup workday for two community gardens for the participants of the gardens. Participants received assistance with fall cleanup and were welcomed to ask questions about best practices. This effort was designed to assist garden participants with their fall cleanup and aid them with any questions they may have about garden cleanup.



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A class on fall garden cleanup with a small group of youths interested in vegetable gardening that are engaged in Dunn County Human Services programs. Participants learned and discussed tasks and strategies for eco-friendly garden clean up. This effort was designed to teach participants about the importance of good fall cleanup to reduce disease or other issues in the garden next year and to provide, where possible, potential overwintering sites for pollinators.

A class on bringing outdoor plants indoors for the winter for the public. Participants learned best practices for bringing plants indoors and helping them thrive through the winter. This effort was designed to help participants be as successful as possible in overwintering prized plants that can be placed back in the landscape next spring.

A field trip class on tree identification for home school families with elementary-aged children where participants learned the basics of identifying both deciduous trees and conifers together with general facts about the trees we saw on our walk. This effort was designed to inspire kids to learn about and appreciate trees and have an opportunity to walk through the woods to practice their tree identifying skills.

Provide garden articles to the public published in the Extension in the Valley, tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news, where participants learn about various topics. This month includes yard and garden tasks for October. Links to UW Madison Extension fact sheets, garden articles and upcoming events are also provided. This ongoing effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture topics and concerns. (Created with: Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, and Ryan Sterry)

Planning, coordinating and presenting the optional Lab component of the fall 2025 Foundations in Horticulture online course for course participants where they can dig deeper into important horticulture concepts and apply what they learn through interactive activities. This effort is designed to increase both knowledge and confidence in addressing topics of pruning, soil testing, IPM and plant identification. (In collaboration with: Amy Freidig, Andy Heren, and Julie Hill)

A class on gardening with kids at the 2025 UW Stout Family and Consumer Sciences Education and WI DPI Childcare Conference where participants learned how gardening can enrich a child's life in many ways. We discussed strategies on how to create a garden space just for kids and about available research-based youth garden curriculum. This effort was designed to encourage gardening with youth with strategies to engage kids in gardening activities

## Spotlight

*This program came about after the conference organizer reached out to ask about giving a talk on gardening with kids, again as I presented on the topic at the conference two years earlier. The conference attracts a diverse group of educators which presents an opportunity to discuss how gardens are a great place to cultivate a meaningful and fun learning experience for children. Gardening offers numerous*



*benefits for children. It promotes healthy eating habits, encourages physical activity, and enhances motor skills. Furthermore, gardening cultivates responsibility, patience, and a connection with nature.*

## Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Regional Community & Leadership Development Educator



Strategic planning for a community-serving organization where we updated the organization's mission and vision statement, identified goals, and developed action plans. The planning process is intended to clarify the organization's purpose and develop achievable steps to realize its vision.

Planning for a three-part workshop series titled "Building Powerful Networks of Support" for librarian directors, staff, volunteers, and leaders in collaboration with IFLS Library System. The goal is to build the strategic capacity of these individuals

to lead their organizations, so that they can strengthen volunteer, financial, and community support for libraries across the IFLS region.

Continued development of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative and its efforts to re-open the former St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls as a 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, and 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

*Community-serving organizations, including nonprofits, local governments, and coalitions, are more effective when they have a clear purpose/mission, vision, and goals. When there are changes in leadership, resources, community needs, and other internal or external factors that affect the organization, it is a best practice to engage in some form of strategic planning to set priorities, focus energy and resources, and ensure everyone is working towards common goals. Extension met with organization leaders to diagnose the needs of the organization. When strategic planning was identified as a need, Extension worked with the organization leaders to design and facilitate a systematic process that was unique to the organization, and which helped the organization create, affirm, or revise its mission, vision, and goals. Extension also helped the organization facilitate the development of action plans intended to move the organization forward in addressing its goals. The strategic planning process facilitated by Extension generated several important outcomes for the organization. First, the process provided clarity and direction as outlined in the strategic*





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*plan report. Second, it taught organization leaders about the importance of planning as a tool for increased organizational capacity. Third, the strategic planning process built trust, understanding, and shared knowledge that will lead to collective action to address local needs.*

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## Health and Well-Being

**Sandy Tarter**

*FoodWise Coordinator*



**Joy Weisner**

*FoodWise Educator*



Planning for transition of kitchen supplies and resources for low income adults in collaboration with UW-Stout, UW-Eau Claire, and local partners as FoodWise program ends. The goal is to share equipment and curriculum to create sustainability with some limited nutrition education services for adults needing support with independent living skills including healthy eating and food preparation.

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## Human Development and Relationships

**Luisa Gerasimo** | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*



**Two one hour presentations for Wisconsin Family and Consumer Science Teachers** where the audience was introduced to the benefits of connecting with positive emotions. The goal was to offer participants the opportunity to sign up for a lunch and learn series and offer handouts to share with their community. (This program was done in partnership with Missy Bablick, a family educator from Extension Barron County. See below for the Spotlight segment, and a photo of the presenters).

**Planning for continuing education workshops in six regions of Wisconsin for childcare providers in collaboration with the Child Care Resource and Referral Network.** The goal is to provide high-quality, research-based education to directly improve childcare providers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors and indirectly improve child well-being. (With: Lindsay Weymouth, Alicia Utke-Becher, Amanda Griswold, Carol Bralich, Hannah Zellmer, Kula Yang, Lisa Bents, Missy Bablick, Pattie Carroll, Robert Nix, Roxy Etta,

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Sarah Hawks, Tracy Henegar)

**Planning for an annual statewide virtual conference (Raising Wisconsin's Children)** for parents, caregivers, and family-serving professionals. The goal is to provide research-based, high-quality content about child development and parenting and to link new Wisconsinites to Extension outreach. (In collaboration with: Lindsay Weymouth, Amanda Griswold, Beverly Doll, Bridget Mouchon, Danielle Hairston Green, Hannah Zellmer, Missy Bablick, Pattie Carroll, Roxy Etta)

**A co-parenting class (Parents Forever)** for parents and caregivers experiencing separation, divorce or changes in the custody of their children, where they 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:Missy Bablick)

**A monthly topic-specific series (Resilient Co-Parenting)** 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. This series is designed to improve understanding of positive parenting practices that are useful during stress, while providing social connection for parents experiencing family transitions. (In partnership 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)

**A program (Making Reading Memories)** 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.

## Spotlight

**The Family and Consumer Science Department at UW Stout sent an invitation to present at their annual conference.** *The conference theme was focused on the importance of self-care for educators, who are often very stressed. We applied to present on the research-based statewide series WeCOPE that we will be offering statewide this fall. The series promotes mindfulness and focuses on positive emotions. Demographic sheets were collected and several teachers signed up for the series on the spot, taking materials home with them. The Parenting and Family Relationships website link was shared via a QR code and a bitly link. Flyers for the program, and for upcoming classes offered by Human Relationships and Engagement Institute were shared with each session's participants. 25 participants in two sessions greeted the topic with interest and were active participants in the program. Teachers expressed interest in connecting more with their own positive emotions and highlighted practices that they were already using, such as*





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*gratitude journals and mindful breathing.*

## Positive Youth Development

Zachary Rozmiarek | 4-H Program Educator



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

Planning for year 6 of the virtual Cultural Baking series that explores flavor and ingredients from cultures around the world, exposes participants to a variety of baking techniques, and explores food science facts. (Rachel Hart-Brinson, Andrea Rippley, April Daniels, Zachary Rozmiarek)

Planning has begun for the Project Discovery Day. This event is for 4-H'ers who would like to try out different projects, and non-members who are exploring 4-H. The event will feature project areas led by youth and adults. Currently, we have 25 youth signed up, with more to be added in the upcoming days. Its goal is to spark interest in different project areas and 4-H in general.

Planning has begun for a county-wide 4-H event at the Mabel Tainter Theater. I have worked with the Menomonie Theater's Guild to get reduced tickets for the musical "White Christmas." I am also working with them to get an educational component to the event.

Recruitment has begun for 2026 Summer Camp Counselors. Any youth in High School or older is invited to be a counselor. As a team, we have created an application and guidelines for youth who are interested in being counselors to use. We have also advertised the positions in facebook, newsletters, and emails. Finally, we have created deadlines for applications and a list of next steps to use after the applications have closed. (Recruitment partners are: Rachel Hart-Brinson and Seth Harrmann)

The Dunn County 4-H participated in a Trunk or Treat Event. The purpose of our participation was to build community awareness about the 4-H program, as well as allow the truck or treaters to explore their sparks. We did this by not only handing out candy, but also including a small craft and information on other activities that would allow them to explore their interests.

Planning for multi-county youth development programming for 4-H members and community youth in collaboration with Area Six 4-H educators. The goal is to deliver engaging events in speaking, STEM, robotics, performing arts, and leadership throughout the year, so that youth across Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties have expanded access to skill-building opportunities and collaborative learning experiences. (In partnership with: Jordan Blue and Rachel Hart-Brinson)

### Dunn County 4-H Day at the Mabel Featuring:



**Presented by:**  
**The Menomonie  
Theater Guild**



#### Cost:

- 4-H members: \$12
- Non 4-H Youth: \$18
- Adults: \$20

**Sunday Dec 7, 2pm**  
**Mabel Tainter Theater**  
**Menomonie, WI**



Planning has started for the creation of a 4-H school club which would focus on raising trout through the Trout in the Classroom Program. This is a unique partnership with 4-H, Knapp Elementary, and Trout Unlimited.

A General Leaders Meeting was held in the month of October. At this meeting I shared important information about the 4-H program to the leaders. I also got their feedback on a number of county wide activities. We also build community by having a meal together before the meeting.

### Spotlight

*The Trout in the Classroom Program gives youth an opportunity to engage in hands-on learning through raising trout from eggs and then releasing them in a nearby stream. Unfortunately, many teachers do not have the time to put into a project of this caliber. This means that this quality program is being under utilized and youth are missing out on this great learning experience. Through my experience with the Trout in the Classroom Program, and my training as a PYD Educator, I am in a position to help bring this program to the schools. I am working on an unique partnership where I will be taking the resources provided by Trout Unlimited and present them to a class of 5th graders. This will create a one of a kind partnership between 4-H, a school district, and Trout Unlimited. It is my hope that this partnership will remove some of the barriers that teachers have to presenting the program. It is my goal to create a partnership model that can be replicated by other 4-H Educators and thus help bring this great experience to other youth.*

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## Value Added Programming

Planning, in partnership with Wisconsin Farmers Union and member farms, a farm tour for Hmong-speaking farmers to explore small-scale farm operations (ideally 5 acres or less) that differ from typical Hmong farming practices. The tour will highlight season extension techniques, post-harvest handling, infrastructure, wholesale market preparation, and sustainable practices (e.g., cover cropping). The goal is to increase awareness, knowledge, and interest in diverse small-farm models. (Addison Vang)

Over the past year, Covering Wisconsin has coordinated and overseen 12 regional- and population-focused coalitions in which Wisconsin professionals interested or directly involved in health insurance enrollment gather to discuss changes to health coverage policy, share outreach and educational strategies, receive free professional trainings, and offer ideas for relevant consumer resource messaging and design. Through our efforts, a total of 88 coalition meetings were held, attracting 1,649 attendees, to focus on the health coverage issues affecting Wisconsin residents, especially immigrants, Spanish-speaking residents, Hmong residents, and those located in Central, East Central, Milwaukee, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and Western regions. (Caroline Gomez-Tom, Allison Espeseth)

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

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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)

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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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### Upcoming events

[Event Calendar – Extension](#)

### Dunn County Extension in the News

Garret Zastoupil : [Dunn County Seeks Input from Community on Childcare Needs](#)

Ryan Sterry: [Beef Cow-Calf Workshop](#)

[Beef Cattle Winter Prep Event](#)