



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
DUNN COUNTY

# September 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 day for farmers, consultants, and agency personnel where participants learned the impact of liquid manure injection and surface applications to reduce soil disturbance, retain nutrients, and protect surface and groundwater. (In collaboration with: Deanna Wiersgalla, Michelle Bachand, and Ryan Sterry)



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. (Hosted with: Christine Clark, Joshua Kamps, Lindsey Rushford, Liz Gartman, & Scott Reuss)

An in-person workshop for beef cow-calf producers, where participants learned about selecting heifer replacements, fall weed control, winter feeding, and truck and trailer safety. Through this workshop, beef cow-calf producers can make informed decisions when it comes to management practices. (With: Beth McIlquham, Bill Halfman, & Sam Bibby)

### Spotlight

*Liquid manure management is a critical component of dairy and livestock production. An increasing number of animal production facilities are out of necessity moving toward liquid manure handling systems. Dragline systems are becoming increasingly more popular with dairy and livestock facilities due to the efficiency of manure movement and application. Dragline systems also reduce the amount of manure handling vehicles such as tractors, tankers, and semis on local and county roads. Use of dragline manure*



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injection systems inherently causes soil disturbance to increase nutrient availability and reduce odor. A Low Disturbance Manure Application Field Day was held to provide farmers, consultants, and agency personnel with an opportunity to observe liquid manure dragline injection toolbars and surface applications. The purpose of the event was to observe differences in soil disturbance and manure placement and how liquid manure is handled to reduce ground and surface water impact. Eighty-one participants attended the field day. Six dragline toolbars were demonstrated with each custom operator, farmer, or company representative provided an opportunity to discuss the benefits of their toolbar and how the toolbar places manure within the soil profile. A post-event Qualtrics evaluation survey was sent to those who registered, and data results will be shared in the future. Discussion and feedback during and after the event was very positive with some attendees recognizing a need to do an event like this every year.

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**Ryan Sterry** | Regional Livestock Educator



An article was written that explores the potential shifts in reproduction management associated with adopting Automatic Milking Systems (AMS). Changes in reproduction management can have significant effects on herd performance and subsequently impact farm economic performance. This article provides an unbiased summary of considerations related to reproductive management in AMS situations. (Developed with: Katelyn Goldsmith, Heather Schlessner)

A September 2025 in-person beef cow-calf producer meeting was hosted on a commercial beef operation and taught by livestock, crop and soil educators. The goal was to increase cow-calf producers' understanding of heifer reproduction and fall forage management to improve their farm's economic viability. Total Reach: Thirty individuals attended, of which 33% responded to a post-workshop evaluation. Their feedback showed they gained knowledge in several areas: heifer selection by 1.7 points, dewormer resistance by 1.4 points, soil sampling and understanding the pasture soil report increased by 1.3 points, and hay sampling and understanding forage reports by 1.0 point. When asked what strategy they plan to use, 40% chose soil sampling, 40% chose hay sampling, and 10% plan to apply dewormer knowledge. They suggested future meeting topics such as cow/calf nutrition, treatments and vaccinations, cattle handling, and obstetrics. (Collaborated with: Sandy Stuttgen, Bill Halfman, Melissa Ohlrich, Jerry Clark, Sandy Stuttgen)

## Spotlight

The adoption of automatic milking systems (AMS) has steadily increased since their introduction, with an estimated 6–8% of Wisconsin dairy farms now using the technology. AMS introduces an opportunity to adjust reproductive management practices, prompting farms and advisors to seek reliable guidance. A comprehensive article series (“Understanding Automatic Milking Systems (AMS)”) is being developed.

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*Kaitlyn Goldsmith, Heather Schlessner, and Ryan Sterry collaborated on an article providing a summary of foundational considerations related to reproductive management in automatic milking systems (AMS) to be posted on the Extension Dairy Team website.*

## Horticulture

**Margaret Murphy** | Regional Horticulture Educator

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



A field event for 5th grade students where participants learned about pollinators, native plants and invasive species. The goal of this effort was to increase awareness of the importance of pollinator conservation, native plants and the removal of invasive species. (In partnership with Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, & Jordan Blue)

A class on fall yard and garden cleanup for the Lake Wissota Garden Club where participants learned and discussed tasks and strategies for balanced, eco-friendly fall yard and garden care that supports birds and pollinators.

A class with students on fall clean-up of their garden that included taking a soil test and discussing preparations for next spring. This effort was designed to connect and encourage youth to participate in gardening and enjoy the benefits gardening offers and experience the feeling of accomplishment.

An activity for people living with dementia and their care partners. Surrounded by the beauty of an apple orchard, attendees participated in an art activity and created their own unique piece of glass fusing allowing them to tap into their imagination and creativity while using fine motor skills. The experience also provided a sense of accomplishment, positive socialization, and a way to stimulate the senses.

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. Articles coming soon include 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. (In collaboration with: Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

A presentation for the public on native plants and pollinators where participants learned the value of creating native niches in their landscape to support a host of different insect pollinators. This effort was to encourage individuals to adopt gardening practices that increase pollinator habitat and support pollinator health throughout the year.



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A walk through the wildflower trail at Lake Wissota State Park for the public where participants learned about native plants and how they positively impact the local ecosystem and support native wildlife. This effort was to provide information on native plants while actively engaging in a productive, healthy and scenic native plant system to encourage attendees to consider incorporating native plants into their own landscape.

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.*

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## 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 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 partnership with: Bill Oemichen, Karl Green, Kristen Bruder)





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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 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.*

## Health and Well-Being

**Sandy Tarter**

FoodWise Coordinator



**Joy Weisner**

FoodWise Educator



**Hillarie Roth**

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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## Spotlight

"This makes me sad! We will miss your partnership! We value your partnership and the work that you have done for our community."

"Definitely this is sad news for so many people. Our students learned so much from the many collaborations with SNAP-Ed Programs and the knowledge you passed on to them from your presentations. Many of our former students have a love for community nutrition because of you."

"We value your partnership and the work that you have done for our community."

"Thank you for all the incredible work you and the FoodWise team have done to support communities across Wisconsin. I know this must be such a difficult transition, and I want to acknowledge the huge impact your efforts have made over the years."

~Partners of FoodWise

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## Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*



**WeCOPE:** Six one hour sessions at the Dunn County Jail where women came together to learn tools to help them focus more on positive emotions and mindfulness so that mental health may increase while overall levels of stress may decrease. This series was requested by jail personnel.

**Making Reading Memories:** a grant funded 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.

**An emotion coaching workshop** for parents who have experienced domestic violence where participants learned to manage their own emotions and help coach their children's emotions. The goal is to improve parent-child relationships and ultimately engender children's cooperation, self-control, and prosocial behavior. The program was provided in collaboration with Zachary Rozmiarek, who provided a 4-H Lego playtime for the children of those participating in the emotion coaching program.

**Parents Forever**, a co-parenting class 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

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well-being and reduce parental conflict during family transitions. (With: Missy Bablick, Barron Co.)

**Resilient Co-Parenting:** A monthly topic-specific series 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 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)

## Spotlight

*The Dunn County Jail runs a wide variety of educational programming for their population. The jail's educational programs director reached out to ask if we could fit in a WeCOPE series for some of the women who might benefit. I was able to fit in 6 sessions this fall and maintained a class of 4-8 women in session throughout the series. Each session was slightly different in topic and in who was able to attend but the work between sessions kept the class moving forward together as they learned a number of techniques to improve overall health even under stressful circumstances. Several participants mentioned their favorite tools from this class and that they felt they were likely to continue to use them long past the end of the series. The most commonly mentioned tools were Box Breathing, Positive Reappraisal, and the Gratitude Journal.*

## Testimonial from Emotion Coaching Workshop at a local crisis center:

*"I needed this. It reminds me why I need to do my own work so that I can really be here and help my kids understand their own feelings. I was in therapy all summer and feel that effort was worth it so I can do better. I was told so many lies as a child that it is hard for me to parent the way I really want to for my own children and myself."*

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## Positive Youth Development

Zachary Rozmiarek | 4-H Program Educator



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

Planning for a virtual baking program that is in its 6th year. This program explores culture and the art and science of baking. (Rachel Hart-Brinson, Andrea Rippley, April Daniels, Zachary Rozmiarek)

Planning has begun for the fall General Leaders Meeting. This is an annual gathering of leaders where they are able to come together to build a community.



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The meeting will consist of updates from state 4-H, program updates, and a time to share thoughts, concerns, and ideas. So far, an agenda has been made, and invitations have been sent.

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 6-7 project areas led by youth and adults. It's goal is to spark interest in different project areas and 4-H in general.

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.

## 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

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)

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)

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)





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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

#### Upcoming events

[Event Calendar – Extension](#)

### Dunn County Extension in the News

**4-H:** [Dunn County Dairy Judging Team Takes First](#)

**Human Development & Health and Well-Being:** [Raising Wisconsin's Children Upcoming Classes](#)  
[Extension Offering Class on Coping Better](#)

**Livestock:** [Ewe Got This Lambing Basics Workshop](#)