



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY

June 2022 Report

Agriculture

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

The Chippewa Valley Agricultural Extension Report is mailed quarterly during the year and emailed via MailChimp with information on Extension Agriculture related events, workshops and timely relevant resources and information. A Spring newsletter was mailed in mid-June with timely articles and information for farmers. Newsletter can be viewed online at <https://dunn.extension.wisc.edu/2022/06/14/spring-edition-of-the-chippewa-valley-agricultural-extension-report-3/> Newsletter was mailed to 470 addresses and emailed via MailChimp to 223 recipients.



At the end of June, I had the wonderful opportunity to learn about agriculture in Scandinavia - Norway, Sweden and Denmark - as part of the 23rd International Farm Management Conference, which was hosted by the University of Copenhagen. The theme of the conference was Strategic Farming in Scandinavia, and focused on what it takes to be a successful farm business manager under a variety of circumstances and different conditions. I explored the farming challenges, as well as had the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful countryside of Scandinavia during both the conference, and the pre-conference tours. I experienced how world quality products are produced, whilst at the same time, showed how respect for the environment is embedded in their decision making. The theme of the conference focused on key elements such as: production, markets, finance, leadership, strategy and regulatory borders. I had the opportunity to experience Scandinavian hospitality first hand, and gain an understanding of why the three countries are ranked as some of the happiest countries in the world! It was an amazing opportunity to meet and learn from educators and farmers around the world and share a little bit of Wisconsin research and agriculture with them!

- A community event (Dunn County Dairy Promotion Breakfast) where attendees learned about dairy farming in Dunn County through attending an on-farm breakfast, enjoying dairy products, and community conversations. This effort is designed to bring awareness to the importance of dairy farming in the county and the state of Wisconsin.
- A podcast series, AgriVision, for farmers and ag professionals, where UW Extension educators answer Farm Management questions and share knowledge and expertise on how farmers can improve their farm management skills.
- A monthly column in WI Agriculturist magazine for farmers and Ag professionals, where readers learn about farm management and available Extension resources. The purpose of this effort is to improve farm business decision-making.

Community Development

Addison Vang | *Community Development Educator*

With the farmers market starting to peak with the harvest season, I have been busying making rounds to the markets throughout the Chippewa Valley. I had an opportunity to meet with many vendors at the Menomonie Farmers market. One purpose of my visit was to introduce myself to the farmers. I was also able to promote a High Tunnel Field Day/Tour to be done primarily in the Hmong language with English interpreters for non-Hmong speakers. The tour is an exciting opportunity for our Hmong speaking farmers to learn about the use of high tunnels in their farm operations, but also raise awareness of funds supporting its purchase using the USDA Equip program. The DATCP Produce Safety Team will also provide food safety rules and will also be part of the tour. Registration can be found here: shorturl.at/aCMUZ.

This month was also the last of Extension's New Colleague Onboarding cohort 10, and it was a great orientation opportunity to get to know more about Extension services, staff, and other valuable things to know. The orientation was completed over multiple virtual sessions including two in-person meetings starting in February through June. It was great to meet other new hires and learn together as we start our careers with Extension.

- Planning a statewide conference to support a Hmong economic development summit. The goal is to build a network of underrepresented entrepreneurs and business owners to learn and support one another.



- Plan and promote a tour of a small farm who used grant funds to purchase a high tunnel to support their farm businesses. Majority of the tour will be conducted in HMoob language with English interpretation if needed. The goal is to reduce challenges and barriers to underserved farm operations on the use of and awareness of financial resources to purchase a high tunnel.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | *Horticulture Educator*

The youth gardening program at Riverview Heights Elementary School held its first class June 22. We focused on plant needs and how our garden meets those needs. We discussed how we, as gardeners, may need to give our plants some supplemental help such as providing water and nutrients and reducing competition by weeding – it was a nice segue to doing some weeding! Our second class will focus on soil: what is soil and why it is important. I work with two groups – 4th graders and 2nd graders and am happy to have the help of Aya Elmir, North Central Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Intern.

I am serving on the Search and Screen Committee for the Master Gardener Program Coordinator position. This is a state position that provides leadership for the Wisconsin Master Gardener Program. We will be conducting final interviews in the next few weeks.

I am also serving on the Search and Screen Committee for the Area 6 Extension Director. The posting for this position has recently closed and we will begin our review of the applicants in the coming weeks.

Yard and garden inquiries in June brought in questions concerning lawns, growing fruit, plant ID, landscaping, tomatoes, insects, pruning, emerald ash borer, trees and invasives.

Going forward, I continue to work with staff and volunteers at Lake Wissota State Park to create a rain garden with native plantings plus, develop signage for the rain garden and neighboring pollinator garden. I'm also gearing up to work with participants from several community gardens to donate fresh garden produce to area food pantries.



National Pollinator Week, June 20-26. We offered the public a few opportunities to learn about the importance of pollinators and how to encourage them in the home landscape. One opportunity was at Lake Wissota State Park, which included a tour through their pollinator garden and a second at the lovely Menomonie Community Garden, which included a bee themed craft for kids.



- Planning for a statewide webinar series for consumer horticulture audiences where participants will learn about pollinator decline, climate change and environmental contamination and pollution. The goal of this effort is to increase adoption of horticultural practices addressing identified environmental issues in Wisconsin.
- A 6-week garden program for youth at the Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Chippewa Valley Menomonie Center where they learn best practices in the garden through hands-on activities. The goals of this program are to teach kids how to food garden, connect them to the natural world and promote life-long healthy eating habits.
- Planning for a statewide webinar series for consumer horticulture audiences where participants will learn about pollinator decline, climate change and environmental contamination and pollution. The goal of this effort is to increase adoption of horticultural practices addressing identified environmental issues in Wisconsin.



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY

June 2022 Report

Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter | *FoodWise Coordinator*

Nancy Fastner | *FoodWise Educator*

Joy Weisner | *FoodWise Educator*

Jael Wolf | *FoodWise Educator*

Menomonie Boys and Girls Club: Joy, Jael, and Sandy completed two sessions with 4 classes. Youth have learned and identified various fruits and vegetables as the different parts of the plant- from leaves, stems, fruit, seeds, roots. First class participants tried leaves (spinach) with dressing and in the second class we enjoyed making a sauce from stems and fruits (rhubarb and berries) and served over yogurt-yum!

WIC families at the Menomonie Farmers Market: Nancy completed two sessions with 10 families at the Farmers Market. Parents learned about produce storage and processing, along with utilizing all their WIC, FoodShare, and Market Match benefits to economically feed their families.

Summer Activity Passport: Health Dunn Right-Chronic Disease Prevention Co-chair, Sandy is working to implement the Summer Activity Passport with all three counties. Learn more here: <https://qrco.de/cvpassport>



Interns Libby Peplinski and Aya Elmir have provided a helping hand at the EBT/Market Match table at the market, youth lessons, and with our Summer Activity Passport.

- A collaborative effort with Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams under the Eau Claire Healthy Communities, Health Dunn Right, and Chippewa Health Improvement Partnership coalitions to promote our 2022 Summer Activity Passport. This effort helps promote community engagement in summer activities that promote increased physical activity, increased fresh produce access and consumption, and stress reduction as action steps to reduce chronic diseases.
- A series of virtual strength training sessions for older adults where they improve strength, balance, and flexibility. This effort helps them to stay healthy and socially connected with other seniors throughout the state.
- A 5-week nutrition education series with Western Dairyland Fresh Start program for at-risk teens and young adults where they learn about nutrition, food preparation/cooking, food safety, and mindfulness. The goal of this effort is to empower teens/young adults to adopt healthier lifestyles by the teaching them the knowledge and skills needed to prepare nutritious snacks and meals at home.
- Collaboration with Boys and Girls Clubs of the Chippewa Valley-Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, and Menomonie in planning a summer garden nutrition education series. This effort will introduce youth to gardening, promote fresh produce, and provide opportunity for youth to increase produce consumption.
- Collaboration with local agencies to create sustainability and promotion of the farmers markets token and match programs. This effort enables FoodShare participants to utilize their benefits in purchasing market foods while supporting increased vendor sales.
- Monthly meetings with the Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams under the Eau Claire Healthy Communities, Health Dunn Right, and Chippewa Health Improvement Partnership coalitions. This effort helps guide the action teams in providing community awareness and activities concerning healthy food access, food security, and increased physical activity for local families.
- Monthly Steering Committee meetings with the executive leadership of the Chippewa Healthy Improvement Partnership and Health Dunn Right during which organizational needs are reviewed and discussed. The purpose of this effort is to help the organization identify a strategic direction in order to more effectively guide its action teams including the Chronic Disease Prevention Action Teams.



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY

June 2022 Report

Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*

I started my new role in June by moving one office over from my 4-H office. After sorting through all the programming materials left for me by my colleague Stephanie Hintz, I began to reach out to potential partners to begin a community needs assessment. This process will likely be ongoing for several months.

In June, I met with the Dunn County Jail program coordinator. The Dunn Co. Jail would like to continue the Making Reading Memories program we have offered in the past. This well-studied and effective program builds family cohesion between incarcerated parents and their children. They choose a book from a grant funded collection, practice reading it, and are then recorded reading it to their child. The book and recording are mailed to the youth.

I also began training to become a facilitator for Parents Forever, a co-parenting course that is often court ordered for parents who are divorcing, but is available to the whole community. These 4 hour classes are offered once a month and we will go back to in person programming in mid-July.

Positive Youth Development

Vacant

Well, if you have to finish up four and a half years in a very demanding job, I cannot think of a better way to bow out than to help run a 3 county 4-H summer camp on Lake Wissota. We had perfect weather, excellent food, madcap activities, educational offerings, flag ceremonies, taps in the evening and wonderful campfire songs every night. I even got to teach polymer science (aka slime), how to write a note and address an envelope, and canoeing. It was epic. My last day on the job was putting away all the camp supplies.

The 4-H Educator position has been posted, and we hope to find just the right person to tackle the wild and wonderful world of head, heart, hands and health. – Luisa Gerasimo



Fun at Camp! Water balloon toss with shaving cream.

Support

Michelle Bachand | *Support Specialist*

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

- Meeting with Interim AED Jason Hausler to help ensure a smooth transition during the Area 6 AED vacancy.
- Assisting with preparation for 4-H camp at Kamp Kenwood.
- Working with the Dunn County Dairy Promotion Committee to create brochures, sponsor posters, and thank you notes for the Dunn County Dairy Breakfast.
- Scheduling Facebook and Blog posts celebrating June Dairy Month and National Pollinator Week.
- Planning and preparing for the upcoming Farmers Out at the Fair event.
- Working with the Finance department and the 4-H Leaders Council Finance Committee related to upcoming Wisconsin 4-H financial management policy changes.
- Preparing for the end of the 4-H fiscal year and the upcoming 4-H annual financial report and charter season.
- Preparing, printing, assembling, and mailing the quarterly Ag newsletter.
- Editing and captioning ten Agriculture case farm videos.
- Viewing the weekly Wisconsin Horticulture Updates.
- Learning the Emma email marketing system and using the system to create and send the July Clover Courier.



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY

June 2022 Report

Area Extension Director

Jason Hausler | *Interim Area Extension Director*

- The Area 6 AED position closed on June 26th. Preliminary interviews will be conducted virtually on June 22nd, with final face to face interviews early in August.
- Attended the Management Team meeting on June 22nd, learning more about First Amendment Audits and information regarding the 2023 budget process from Interim County Manager Nick Lange
- Had a meeting with Interim County Manager Nick Lange on June 29th to discuss his current thoughts on Extension services in Dunn County and where we can be of better assistance
- Met with Facilities Director, Scott Nabbefeld, to discuss the potential of an Extension "regional hub" office space utilizing the county house behind the Government Center. Also connected with Interim County Manager Nick Lange on this as well. More information to come.