



Agriculture

Jerry Clark | *Regional Crops & Soils Educator*



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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, Kevin Erb, Scott Reuss)

A presentation and discussion for farmers and agronomy professionals where participants learned the impact of organic matter content on nitrogen, water, and nutrient management to increase awareness of the influence of organic matter on nutrient and water management to increase soil and crop productivity and farm profitability. (Developed with: Mallika Nocco)

A nutrient management program for farmers where participants learned to identify nutrient application strategies and management decision points to improve farm profitability and protect ground and surface water. The goal of the program is to increase overall efficiency of nutrients applied to the landscape. (Partnered with: Michael Geissinger)

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 panel discussion for educators, agronomy industry and agency professionals where attendees learned about the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) to increase awareness of nitrogen management results and involvement in the program. The goal of the presentation as a panelist was to discuss experience with the program as an extension educator and fiscal agent. (Partnered with: Christine Clark, Jordan Kampa, Joshua Kamps, Lindsey Rushford, Liz Gartman, Scott Reuss)

Planning for a four session Focus on Forage webinar series for forage growers and agriculture consultants in collaboration with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the US Dairy Forage Research Center. The goal is to provide research based forage management solutions to improve forage quality and meet producer goals. (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)

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 buildings 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. Thirty-nine 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



The school for Beginning Beef Producers was a 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. My teaching roles included animal handling, record keeping, reproduction, and genetics.

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)

Two Beef Quality Assurance training sessions were held in Northwest Wisconsin (Eau Claire and River Falls) in early 2025. These were part of a coordinated statewide effort to provide BQA certification to producers throughout Wisconsin through the Fall and Winter of 2024-25, which will be summarized at the conclusion of all training. A total of forty-eight individuals attended the Northwestern Wisconsin trainings. (With: Bill Halfman)

Continued meetings with community partners: Ryan attended the Northern Wisconsin Beef Producers Association annual meeting to learn more about the organization, its membership, and needs of beef producers in the area.

Planning for an artificial insemination course for dairy and beef producers. (Collaborated with: Heather Schlessler, Sandy Stuttgen)



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

Spotlight

Beef Quality Assurance is a nationally coordinated, state-implemented program that provides systematic information to U.S. beef producers and beef consumers on how common sense husbandry techniques can be coupled with accepted scientific knowledge to raise cattle under optimum management and environmental conditions. BQA is valuable to all beef and dairy producers because it: Demonstrates commitment to food safety and quality. Safeguards the public image of the beef and dairy industries. Upholds consumer confidence in valuable beef products. Improves sale value of marketed beef cattle. Enhances herd profitability through better management.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Regional Horticulture Educator

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



Planning demonstration plots for the public on how to use several types of season extenders. The goal of this effort is to help gardeners learn about techniques to extend the growing season for longer harvest potential.

Planned a garden series for the public that includes guidance on donating garden fare to pantries, container gardening with fruit and garden pests. The goal of this series is to provide information on garden produce safety when donating produce, expanding your container gardening experience and best sustainable practices when managing common garden pests.

Provided garden articles and factsheets for the public in the Extension in the Valley, a tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news. Included were resources on pruning deciduous trees, apple trees and deciduous shrubs together with information on floriology. This effort is designed to keep participants connected to seasonal horticulture topics.

The Dunn County 4-H Educator and the Dunn County Horticulture Educator met with Dunn County Human Services to discuss potential partnerships. The Horticulture Educator gave advice and direction on how to start a garden for youth to participate in. The 4-H Educator discussed how he could collaborate with the Pro-Social group and integrate aspects of the 4-H program with the youth in that group. (In collaboration with Zachary Rozmiarek)



Participate in a horticulture workgroup focused on environmental stewardship. Though in its infancy, this effort's intent is to encourage communication and collaboration around common programming topics including sustainable practices and promoting biodiversity.

Spotlight

I have the opportunity to set up several season extending equipment including cloches, a low tunnel and cold frame at a community garden to demonstrate their ease of use and how they can extend the garden season. This effort was in response to several questions from the public on such equipment. We plan to have 1-2 events at the garden to show the set up of equipment and the progress of crops. We will discuss any pros and cons to each type of season extenders.

Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | *Regional Community & Leadership Development Educator*



A series of meetings with municipal and county officials to discuss and prepare a Innovation Planning Grant with the Wisconsin State Department of Revenue. This grant, if funded, will support county-wide feasibility of coordinated fire and emergency medical services (EMS) across Dunn County. (Worked 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. (In partnership with: Bill Oemichen, Karl Green, Kristen Bruder)

Spotlight

On January 21, 2024, HSHS Hospital Sisters announced the closing of major hospitals in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls, and Prevea simultaneously announced the closing of 19 West Central Wisconsin clinics. This placed nearly 1,400 high paying jobs at risk, along with the local tax base and local economic development efforts in Wisconsin's second fastest growing region of the state. U.W.-Madison Extension Local Government Education Program staff were immediately contacted to assist in an effort to create



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new healthcare access in the region. U.W.-Madison Extension staff connected local business and civic leaders with a financial consulting firm, helped to obtain an initial cooperative development grant from WEDC, helped create a Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 193 cooperative by writing draft articles and bylaws, helped vet and train cooperative board members, assisted in apply for IRS Section 501(c)(3) charitable status, assisted in reviewing fundraising agreements, co-led efforts to obtain hospital/clinic construction and operational financing, educated state healthcare policymakers and acted as liaison with local units of government across 15 counties in West Central Wisconsin. Extension staff attend weekly board meetings and the above efforts are ongoing. With Extension's substantial assistance, the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative (CVHC) was formed in April of 2024. The CVHC Board of Directors is meeting weekly; CVHC financial, legal and public relations consultants are working with Extension staff on a variety of tasks, including meeting with local units of government across 15 counties, working with lenders and federal agencies to obtain construction and operational financing, working with federal agencies and cooperative organizations to obtain grant funding to form the necessary equity base, and working with CVHC board members on setting up a fundraising program.

Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter

FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner

FoodWise Educator



Hillarie Roth

FoodWise Educator



A meeting with Indianhead Enterprises for connection and relationship building with potential new programming. This effort would enhance the life skills for adults with varying intellectual and developmental abilities.

Planning for a parent/caregiver event at Menomonie Head Start where parents will learn techniques to help feed their little ones including a hands-on activity of making a healthy snack with their child. This effort supports parents in encouraging their families to eat healthy and reduce mealtime struggles.

Participation in the Health Dunn Right- Mental Health and Wellness Action Team. The winter initiative Menomonie Area Chilly Checklist is ongoing through March. Participants can share photos engaging in their favorite winter activity for a chance to win exciting prizes. Entries can be submitted [here](#). This



effort encourages residents to get out and explore Dunn County while increasing their physical activity.

Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*



WeCOPE, a 6-week lunch and learn program, for adults where participants learn 11 self-care and coping skills. The goal of this effort is to improve skills to manage stress, improve coping, increase positive emotions, and improve mental health. (In collaboration with: Margo Dieck)

WeCOPE Testimonial: "I started my six-week WeCope journey with Margo and Luisa on January 16, 2025. Just before the course began, I bought an Oura Ring as the first step in creating a toolkit to manage the stress I was facing in my daily life. Working in data and

analytics, I found the constant tracking of my stress levels both fascinating and concerning... Through weekly classes and assignments, I was able to see how my moments of stress steadily decreased while my restorative moments increased, as evidenced by the data from my Oura Ring. Additionally, I noticed my blood pressure dropping to normal levels, my sleep latency decreasing, and my total sleep duration increasing. **My mindset shifted towards positivity and gratitude, and the tension in my body eased as if a giant knot had been released.**... I eagerly anticipated each live class, where our group fostered a supportive community, making everyone feel comfortable to share and celebrate one another. The dynamic of the group reflected Margo and Luisa's collaborative talents in presenting the WeCope program in relatable ways that encouraged conversation and self-reflection." – participant in WeCOPE

Bridge to Hope: The Dunn County 4-H Educator and Dunn County Human Development and Relationships Educator partnered together to inquire about doing joint programming. We met with a family advocate and discussed our ideas. We presented the idea of the Human Development and Relationships Educator offering parenting classes to the adults in the facility while the 4-H Educator leads activities with the youth. (With: Zac Rozmiarek)

A presentation to the staff of the **Dunn County Health Department**. The goal of the presentation was to share what Extension may be able to provide to staff and clients of the department and to see if there might be areas which could provide opportunities for collaboration.

Promoting Family Reading (see spotlight below): A series of meetings and communications where the family educator connected a number of partners to initiate a donated children's book bin to encourage families to read together while waiting for county appointments and allow children to select a book to take home. Bookmarks were also created to direct people to reading and parenting resources online.

A presentation to the staff of the **Criminal Justice Collaboration Division**. The goal of the presentation was to share what Extension may be able to provide to staff and clients of the division.

Resilient Co-Parenting classes 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)

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 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. We sent out 8 children's books in January.

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 learned evidence-based parenting strategies and child development information to support positive family dynamics and child well-being. Through this effort, participants gained practical tools to strengthen their parenting skills and promote healthy childhood development, leading to a positive impact on family resilience and child success. We will be presenting this program to colleagues at Institute Meetings in March. (Developed with: Amanda Griswold, Alicia Utke-Becher, Kula Yang)

Spotlight



BOOK BIN WITH FREE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN! *The waiting area near Human Services, Veteran Services, Aging and Disability Services and Birth to 3 was recently remodeled with grant support from the Public Health Department. There are now child-friendly chairs, toys and a few books that were intended to stay in the waiting area. Having recently adopted several boxes of children's books donated by our public library and a local bookstore, it seemed a good time to bring partners together to supply books for children and provide education about the **importance of interactive reading** for parents. After several meetings with interested parties, a bin of children's books has*

been placed in the waiting area with laminated signs to promote reading and to thank donors. The Extension Family Educator will be responsible for checking the bin to replace books and the handouts about the importance of reading. The local library and local book store have agreed to continue to donate books to share with the public. The educator will provide bookmarks with links to Extension parenting and reading resources, as well as signs promoting the power of reading to children.



Positive Youth Development

Zachary Rozmiarek | 4-H Program Educator



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

A Camp Counselor planning retreat where we explored the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors, practiced leadership skills used in the camp counselor role, planned camp, and built the summer camp counselor team in order to prepare our counselors for executing a meaningful camp experience. (In collaboration with: Rachel Hart-Brinson, Seth Harrmann)

The six week Art U Lessons 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 partnership 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.

STEM Day at UW-Stout's "Fab Lab" where young people in grade 6-8 experienced hands-on learning by using laser cutting, laser engraving, and soldering equipment to build a "useless machine." This experience provided programming for those with a spark in STEM. (Partnered with: Rachel Hart-Brinson, Jordan Blue)



A leadership and parliamentary procedure training was held for two clubs in Dunn County. The club members started out by completing a team building activity which illustrated the importance of having rules. They then learned how to make motions during a meeting by voting on what items to add to trail



mix.

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. (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

Provided a Building your Spending Plan program for Head Start Parents, Parent Visitors and families. Through this program, participants learned effective strategies to manage their money, created spending plans which allows them to manage their monthly income and expenses, and were encouraged to make a plan to become debt-free (Jeanne Walsh)

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)

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)

Facilitation of regular (every other month) meetings of the Red Cedar River Water Quality Partnership, where partners meet to discuss ways to implement a ten-year comprehensive watershed management plan, plan events, assess activities, update each other on work being done, and formulate new ways to collaborate. (Daniel Zerr, Becky Brathal, Kelsey Hyland)



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](#)

Dunn County Extension in the News

[Area Youth Participate in 4-H Activities](#)