



**Extension Eau Claire County  
Monthly Highlights  
May 2019**

**Agriculture & Natural Resources**

**Agriculture**



**Mark Hagedorn**

Agriculture Agent

Specializing in Dairy Science & Farm  
Management

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To say the last several months has been a challenge for farmers, especially dairy and livestock farmers, is the major understatement of the year. Take low milk and commodity prices, add in record snowfall since late January, throw in several collapsed buildings, plus a late April snow storm, add a late spring and planting season, and now sprinkle in the realization that alfalfa and other perennial forages have suffered winter injury or worse winterkill and dairy and livestock farmers have more management obstacles to overcome.

As alfalfa has, or should have, started to green up, now is the time to assess existing fields for winterkill and injury. The only way to assess an alfalfa stand and individual plants is to dig them up. Dig the plants from three or four representative locations in the field being sure to include the top six inches of the root. Examine the crowns for size, symmetry, and the number of shoots present. Then cut the root lengthwise and check for rot or discoloration in the crown and root. A healthy alfalfa plant should have a firm, white taproot with little to no brown discoloration.



**Youth, Family, & Community Development**

**Community Development**



**Joseph Malual**  
Community Educator  
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April was full of administrative and professional development activities: These include the state quarterly report, Civil Rights Review, Annual performance review, and the Joint Council of Extension Professionals among other things, all of which were crucial for strengthening programing. I continued to conduct needs assessment and meet community leaders to learn about the community and build relationships necessary for effective educational programing throughout the county.

As high interests in community-based food system emerge, I work with the Clear Vision team and others to plan and design an integrated community food system that supports small-scale local farmers and provides access to fresh healthy food for the residents. As part of this effort, I visited and had a great meeting with the Executive Director of Vernon Economic Development Association in Viroqua and toured the food Enterprise Center.

During the month, I continued to provide organizational capacity building and facilitated two sessions of strategic planning for the Tandem Mentorship Program in Eau Claire City. I also provided a half day strategic planning session for the Literacy Chippewa Valley. These two nonprofit organizations provide critical services (mental health services for youth and literacy program for adults) for underserved populations.

**Health & Well-Being**



**Sandy Tarter**  
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**Joy Weisner**  
FoodWise Nutrition Educator  
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**Pamela Warren-Armstrong**  
FoodWise Nutrition Educator  
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Preparation for Civil Rights Review for Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire Counties received a large allocation of my time since the last highlights. I am happy to say that our efforts were well received.

We implemented the new performance management system and completed our annual performance reviews. Our FY19/20 professional development plan includes FoodWise curricula training, leadership/team building, expanding our programming to Hmong Elders, and expanding our understanding of Native American culture to be more responsive to our residents.

Annual Area FoodWise budget and program planning for Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire is ongoing for the next year. It seems that further difficult budget reductions are inevitable in FY20 and FY21. Final decisions have not been made by our state FoodWise Director as she balances the statewide budget but we are looking at roughly a \$70,000 reduction from our Area FY19 budget for FY20. As a team we are considering many options to provide quality Area FoodWise programming while keeping within our financial projections. Our budget is mainly staff salaries, fringe benefits, and 15% of total goes back to the state. We cannot meet our projected budget unless FTE's of staff is reduced. We are thoughtfully considering the impact on our partners and what events will need to be reduced. More details on this to come with my report at the next Extension Education Committee.

Pamela and Joy are kicking off May by starting a 7 week nutrition series at Lakeshore 1st grade (4 classrooms). They are also starting a 4 week series at Western Dairyland Altoona & Truax 4K/Head Start Early Learning Centers using a new curriculum titled "Color Me Healthy". The Truax Center has four classrooms of 3 - 5 year olds that includes AM and PM sessions.

The lessons focus on nutrition and physical activities for preschoolers. Designed to stimulate all the senses of young children: touch, smell, sight, sound, and of course taste! Joy and Pamela are excited to introduce fruits and vegetables to the preschoolers throughout the four lessons.

The school year is wrapping up in early June and then Joy and Pamela are excited to start programming with the Boys and Girls Club at the Kids' Garden located at the North River Fronts Park.

## Human Development & Relationships

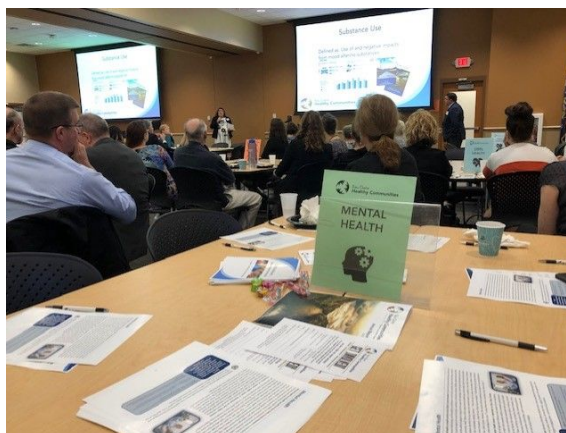


**Brook Berg**  
Human Development &  
Relationships Educator  
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Over the past month, I have had several opportunities for professional development and connecting with colleagues across the state. At the end of April, I joined my Extension colleagues at the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Conference in Stevens Point. During our two days together, I had the opportunity to attend sessions on teaching classes online using Zoom technology, literacy development for children and their justice-involved parents, opioids-meth-juling and alcohol, utilizing UW-Madison partnerships and promoting hope through person-centered programming. I also attended the WI Association of Family and Consumer Sciences annual meeting and banquet. (pictured below)



I also attended the Eau Claire Healthy Communities annual celebration and was able to share information with the community on what the Mental Health Action Team has been up to over the last year. We heard from a great speaker on addiction, as well as improving the effectiveness of our action team.





**Rachel Hart-Brinson**  
4-H Program Coordinator  
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I started as the 4-H Program Coordinator on April 18th and have been busy sorting through boxes of program materials and miscellany left from years of 4-H. There is a bronze plaque presented to EC County 4-H in honor of the club members who served in WW II. If anyone has a good suggestion on a suitable purpose/destination for this plaque OR if you know its story, I'd love to hear about it.





I have also been busy networking. I've met with a variety of 4-H Leaders and Colleagues to start building relationships. I attended the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) conference in Stevens Point just a few days after officially starting my position. It was a crash course in Extension and confirmed that I am working for a great organization with absolutely wonderful employees. AND, it gave me lots of ideas that are currently percolating as I continue building relationships in the community with potential partners.

A quick "about me" that I sent out to 4-H leaders: I grew up in Potosi, Wisconsin (Grant County) on a hobby farm. We had sheep, chickens, ducks, dogs, and cats. I was a member of the Happy Clovers 4-H Club from early elementary school through my high school years. I held leadership positions in my club and valued that experience. I also really enjoyed entering projects in the fair and remember many late nights putting the finishing touches on my fair entries. Several of my sewing projects were sent to the State Fair, including for Clothing Revue. I did not show animals other than my cat, but my sister showed her dog and many of my friends showed pigs, dairy cows, and chickens. 4-H taught me so much and allowed me to explore a variety of life skills and interests. I'm excited to dive into the 4-H world again.

I come to the position with a background in biological sciences, youth education, and leadership. I have worked as a camp counselor, an environmental educator on a barrier island, as a substitute teacher in Eau Claire middle schools, and have held a variety of leadership positions in organizations in the community. I bring many skills to the table and look forward to expanding the 4-H program to even more young people in our county.

**Support Staff**

 <p><b>Kristi Peterson</b> Office Coordinator <a href="mailto:kristin.peterson@co.eau-claire.wi.us">kristin.peterson@co.eau-claire.wi.us</a></p>	<p>I have been busy working with logistics of changes in software as well as internal changes in the office. All educators and coordinators have new email addresses <b>@wisc.edu</b>! All are listed here so please make notice.</p> <p>I attended a training at CVTC to discover valuable workplace strategies in order to better learn, lead and grow.</p> <p>We welcomed a new employee Rachel! I have been working closely with her in on-boarding and settled in the Eau Claire office as our new 4-H Program Coordinator. Welcome!!</p>
 <p><b>Andy Heren</b> Administrative Specialist <a href="mailto:andy.heren@co.eau-claire.wi.us">andy.heren@co.eau-claire.wi.us</a></p>	<p>This time of year finds me in the throes of preparations for the Eau Claire County Fair. I am still recruiting judges. Fair Entry forms will soon be coming in and all those entries need to be added one at a time (last year there were over 4,600!) I am also assisting other educators with any tasks with which they need assistance. I love this busy time of year!</p> <p>Since December I have been helping the 4-H Leaders in the absence of a 4-H Program Coordinator. I am so happy that Rachel is here to take the reins of 4-H!</p> <p>I have also been assisting the Master Gardener Board in the organization of Eau Claire county's Master Gardener Program. Next week we will welcome Margaret Murphy as the Horticulture Program Coordinator for not only Eau Claire, but Chippewa, Dunn, and Polk counties as well. She will be overseeing the Master Gardener programs in each county. Welcome Rachel and Margaret!</p>

**We're a part of UW-Madison! Click here to read about Extension's transition updates.**

Developments in the planning process can be found at <https://universityrelations.wisc.edu/extension/>