

Monthly Highlights

May 2020

Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle

Area 6 Extension Direction

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April has been another full month of adjustments, recalibrating, trying to find a little sanity, and in the midst of everything, your Extension Eau Claire County team remains hard at work adapting to our current work-from-home and local programming. I remain connected with Eau Claire County and attend the department head meetings, submitted a revised 2020 budget document that identified best and worst case scenarios, and have ordered a plexiglass shield for when our office may open back to the public. Staff input was key in putting together the budget forecasting. At the present time, Extension is awaiting potential return-to-the-office guidelines from UW-Madison. We will continue to adapt and partner with Eau Claire County and support the efforts of serving the local need.

Area 6 (Chippewa, Dunn, & Eau Claire Counties) “met” with Area 9 (Buffalo, Jackson, Pepin, and Trempealeau Counties) to do a professional development training called StrengthsFinder. We were originally set to do this in Osseo - a halfway point, however we met on Zoom. I am a fan of StrengthsFinder because it teaches us to look at our strengths and spend more time maximizing what we are naturally good at. It also allows us to better understand how our team works, how we can grow, and who to connect with if they have a strength that we don’t.

The Division of Extension has a permanent dean, Dr. Karl Martin. After a national search, our interim dean was named as the permanent dean. You can read more about the announcement here:

<https://news.wisc.edu/interim-extension-official-to-lead-division-permanently/>

We are delivering much of our programming remotely in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, and we are already planning for the days when our participants can again meet face-to-face. Our response to this pandemic is informing the future of our programming. We are adapting our model to successfully reach people in new ways that we aim to continue and enhance after the outbreak subsides. You can see a lot of the work we’re doing right now to support our community through this pandemic on our website at fyi.extension.wisc.edu/covid19 and in our monthly highlights.

Like most UW-campuses, we received news that state Extension employees will be part of a campus-wide furlough, taking 3-5 unpaid days off between mid-May through October. The Chancellor’s email to staff and furlough policy information are available to view here, <https://covid19.wisc.edu/budget-furlough-information-uw-madison-employees/>. I think these sentences from Chancellor Blank best sum up the campus position: “Over two hectic months, COVID-19 has dramatically changed the world we live in and our campus operations. I am tremendously proud of the ways UW-Madison has responded. The value of a great public university has never been clearer, providing research, information and education related to the pandemic. Unfortunately, the costs of this crisis to the university are substantial.”

So, how are we doing on the local level? There is a phrase that goes something like “weddings, funerals, moving, and divorces bring out the best and not-so-great parts of people”. The word “pandemic” can be added to this list. I was reflecting on the colleagues in Area 6: Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire, and just how absolutely impressed I am with each and every person. There is a depth

	<p>of humanity and compassion for one another, a fervent dedication to continuing to serve the local needs in the community through a university partnership, <i>and</i> a good sense of humor is still intact.</p> <p>Please reach out to me on any questions you have. You are always welcome to email me catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu or call my cell 715-450-0823.</p>
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Agriculture & Natural Resources

Agriculture



Lyssa Seefeldt

Agriculture Educator

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April was certainly a blur with all of the changes in how we, as educators, are delivering content to folks. Part of the transition of programming has been moving meetings online to webinars and other online platforms.

The dairy sector has continued to face challenges from COVID. Several dairy processing plants across the state have asked farmers to decrease milk production as “bottlenecks” further down the distribution line have currently reduced demand. This has created a logistical problem for some farms: how do you dial down milk production, while still being nimble enough to be ready to deliver the product when the logistics of doing so return?

I have been working with my colleagues on helping farmers think through this very complicated topic, and spoiler alert, it requires multiple strategies. I have co-authored a factsheet titled “[Deciding When a Dairy Cow Starts Her Second Career](#)”, which is one of a series of six factsheets that came from this effort.

I continue to connect with county and community partners to discuss agriculture needs.

Despite all of the changes, mother nature doesn’t stop and planting season has arrived.



Margaret Murphy

Horticulture Agent

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Spring is a busy time for horticulture. With the great support of our state horticulture team and County Extension staff, I have been able to stay in touch and continue my outreach to gardeners. Here is what’s been happening in horticulture -

I’ve been participating in weekly Zooms with Extension colleagues from Area 6 counties and with Polk County colleagues.

I continue to support over 100 Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) in four counties to keep them informed of Extension-related programs/news and online opportunities for continuing education.

We have kept the public updated on current procedures for sample submissions to soil, plant and insect labs.

Community gardening for food production is an allowed outdoor activity under the Safer at Home Order, and gardens can remain open. While community gardens in our area remain open, our priority is to keep our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and are sharing the Wisconsin Department of Health Services COVID-19 Guidance for Community Gardens at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/community.htm>. I am participating in a small working group charged with creating companion materials such as signage and infographics that can be posted at gardens and will be translated into different languages.

Media attention to vegetable/community gardens:

- Article in the Leader Telegram: - https://www.leadertelegram.com/country-today/country-life/gardening/gardeners-look-forward-to-opening-of-community-plots/article_0ec5f0b1-fa13-5b70-8ddf-636f703d5716.html
- Article in May issue of VolumeOne Magazine: https://volumeone.org/sites/homegarden/articles/2020/04/29/35974_gardening_is_che

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I continue to respond to horticulture inquiries via email and phone.

Community Development

The Community Development Educator position is currently vacant. No additional updates at this time. Please contact Catherine Emmanuelle with any questions catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu 715-450-0823. For information on Extension's Community Development efforts see [here](#), and how Extension is responding to COVID-related work supported by Community Development Educators, see [here](#).

Health & Well-Being



Sandy Tarter
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Pamela Warren-Armstrong
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All FoodWise staff continue to join the many Zoom meetings for our counties, Area 6, regional/ statewide FoodWise, and Extension groups.

Additionally,

- Pamela is involved in the Serving Up My Plate school workgroup concentrating on 3rd-4th grade curriculum.
- Joy joined the Growing Healthy Kids workgroup which focuses on gardening lessons.
- Pamela, Joy, and Sandy are part of the Nutrition for Life workgroup working to engage high school seniors that had our nutrition lessons in elementary grades. We are asking them to fill out a survey to see if those lessons had an impact on their food choices as teenagers.
- We all participated in taking a Clifton Strengths Assessment and joined in an Area StrengthsFinder training which enabled us to understand not only our own strengths but see what talents our colleagues excel at as well.
- Sandy has been leading statewide virtual Strong Bodies classes.
- We are hoping to continue the Cooking Matters Pilot program with Augusta families through on-line learning.
- Joy and Pamela are planning on taking the Zoom Teaching training and practice to perfect teaching on-line if telecommuting remains in effect in the upcoming months.
- We are all keeping apprised of discussions and efforts towards statewide FoodWise pilots around online programming.

The Eau Claire Downtown Farmers Market opens May 16th. You'll see safety processes in place that follow Extension's market guidelines. Until restrictions lift, only food vendors will be there in a U-shaped format around the outside of the pavilion with a one directional flow. The EBT/Token Sales and Market Match program will begin on June 6th. Sandy is working on securing sponsors and volunteers so that this program remains available and strong during this difficult economic environment.

Human Development & Relationships



Yia Lor
Human Development &
Relationships Educator
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April has certainly been a busy month despite being physically distant!

I've continued hosting virtual meetings with community partners as a part of my assessment and will start to piece together my Plan of Work.

I'm also working with other Hmong professionals and the Eau Claire City-County Health Department on culturally appropriate approaches to reaching the Hmong community during this pandemic. I've partnered with an Extension educator in Marathon County to share resources as they have a large Hmong population as well.

One project I'm excited to put together is a family newsletter in partnership with the ECASD. The ECASD has about 300 homeless students, and many families do not have access to the internet. The newsletter is another way to share Extension resources focused on parenting tips, mental health, and staying healthy.

Feed My People (FMP) has activated emergency procedures to distribute food, and I was able to help this month with repackaging food and preparing other high-demand items. The items are being distributed at pop-up food pantries and in partnership with the schools. I am grateful for organizations like FMP and the volunteers who continue to address hunger and food security as we move through this pandemic together.

Though there is still quite a bit of uncertainty, I'm glad to have a supportive team to move through May together!

Positive Youth Development



Rachel Hart-Brinson
4-H Program Educator
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It's been a year since I started as the 4-H Program Coordinator (April 18.) How time flies. (And, now my title has been changed to 4-H Program Educator.)

I have been spending lots of time on zoom meetings discussing everything from administrative details to checking in with colleagues to supporting my 4-H volunteers and partner organizations such as the Eau Claire County Fair. I've become a zoom pro and while I would rather meet in person, seeing faces over the computer is better than not seeing faces and the commute is right. (One has to look at the bright side.)

Last week I participated in "4-H Fundamentals." This is usually a two-day, in-person retreat for new 4-H colleagues that was squeezed into 6 hours of zooms. (Needless to say, a follow-up has been planned for June.)

I have been continuing meeting with a record book committee to re-do our record book forms and hopefully make them easier to follow while still accomplishing what we want them to: promote personal reflection (and therefore, growth) and record-keeping skills. I am excited to be very close to rolling these out.

With the stay-at-home order because of coronavirus, all of our in-person programs have been canceled. I have been working with individuals, committees, and the Fair organizations to postpone, transition, and plan for programming. We will have poultry education online the next two Thursdays. We are working on if and how to hold the clothing revue. And, I have been supporting the Fair Coordinator, Friends of the Fair Chairperson, and the Fair Committee chair as we plan for a very different-looking fair for this year. Stay tuned for more details.

Support Staff



Kristi Peterson

Office Coordinator

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April has flown so quickly and May is here. I have been working with educators to give our website a facelift. Andy has been getting all of the updates into place. It is a work in progress that will take time, but this is the best of any.

My May goal is to start transferring budget documents and planning for the 2021 updates.

I was able to attend a Zoom titled "Thriving in a Time of Change". This was an excellent reminder that we all thrive and adjust differently. A wonderful quote was shared, "A bend in the road is not the end of the road...unless you fail to make the turn" ~Helen Keller



Andy Heren

Administrative Specialist

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Working from home has proven to have its own unique challenges. Occasionally I find I need something that is at the office, but we are becoming skilled at improvising. I look forward to seeing my colleagues when we meet regularly via Zoom.

We still plan on holding the Eau Claire County Fair July 29-August 2. Work is being done to prepare the families to use Fair Entry, the new program we are using for them to enter their fair exhibits.

I am also assisting Margaret on the managing of the Jeffers Rd Gardens. I am happy to report that all plots will probably be filled this gardening season. There has been a lot of interest in gardening this year!

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/>