

## Monthly Highlights

September 2020

### Agriculture



**Lyssa Seefeldt**

Agriculture Educator

[lyssa.seefeldt@wisc.edu](mailto:lyssa.seefeldt@wisc.edu)

Farmer requests for assistance converting silage and small grain acres to bushels for their applications to the USDA [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#) are coming to a close. The deadline for this program is September 11.

In the agriculture program we are starting to plan for winter meetings. Many of the larger area meetings are going to be virtual, so additional advanced planning is needed to ensure that they are engaging for our farmers.

Several small livestock-related projects are being wrapped up, including a meat harvest facility survey that will help guide future statewide Extension efforts to provide training to employers and employees that work in the meat industry. Another livestock project that is currently in transition to virtual is a series of small ruminant meetings in partnership with a local livestock cooperative.

Planning for the next Heart of the Farm series, a program for women in agriculture, has started, and more details will be shared as they become available. The current structure for the Heart of the Farm program is virtual meetings over several months, with regional facilitation by several counties that are in proximity (i.e. Eau Claire, Chippewa, Dunn, St. Croix and Barron). These meetings are an important way for women in agriculture to form support networks and learn more about farm financial topics.



**Margaret Murphy**

Horticulture Agent

[margaret.murphy@wisc.edu](mailto:margaret.murphy@wisc.edu)

As we move toward the season's end, I am answering harvest-related questions from gardeners. This year, we are seeing several physiological disorders with tomatoes, including fruit cracking (learn more at <https://chippewa.extension.wisc.edu/2020/08/26/3713/>). Tomatoes top the list for being the most popular garden crop. I recently gave a presentation on tomatoes to two groups of FoodWise StrongBodies participants. I am also getting questions about apples, trees, garlic, and soil nutrients.

Together with Horticulture Outreach Specialist, Diana Alfuth, we are offering eight Zoom sessions that will cover basic horticulture instruction. Due to changes in the Master Gardener program in how an individual becomes a certified Master Gardener Volunteer, this is not a certification course, but instead the classes are designed to be a preparation course for those interested in becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer.

In the newly developed model, those who wish to become a Master Gardener Volunteer must complete the online onboarding course, which will be available this coming winter. Taking the prep course will help increase an individual's horticultural knowledge in preparation for the horticulture exam that is required in the onboarding course.

This offers an opportunity for horticulture instruction for individuals who had registered for our Master Gardener training earlier this spring that was canceled due to COVID-19. The preparation classes will run October through November.

## Health & Well-Being



**Sandy Tarter**  
FoodWise Coordinator  
[sandy.tarter@wisc.edu](mailto:sandy.tarter@wisc.edu)



**Joy Weisner**  
FoodWise Educator  
[joy.weisner@wisc.edu](mailto:joy.weisner@wisc.edu)



**Pamela Warren-Armstrong**  
FoodWise Educator  
[pamela.warren-armstrong@wisc.edu](mailto:pamela.warren-armstrong@wisc.edu)

It was definitely a summer unlike any before for our FoodWise team! Instead of busy mornings at the Kids' Garden, afternoons spent in a kitchen or conference room, and an occasional evening class we were busy doing work virtually and from our own homes. We have missed working with our local partners such as the EC Boys & Girls Club, Workforce Resource Center and Affinity House, to name a few. Many thanks to Margaret Murphy and the Master Gardener Volunteers for planting, watering and caring for the North River Fronts Park Kids' Garden. If not for them, the garden produce would not have been available to the neighborhood.

We look forward to summer 2021 and hope to be out in the community, if it is safe to do so.

We continue to learn how to work in this virtual world. We are teaching Strongbodies online and have 50+ participants joining from their homes on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. This work has helped to keep us strong both physically and mentally. After the hour long exercise session we offer a nutrition topic in which participants can partake. Many participants thank us for offering the program in their homes when they might otherwise feel isolated and alone.

Pamela and Joy look forward to connecting with teachers & students (ECASD and Augusta) in the coming weeks to find out how we can offer nutrition education in a virtual format. We continue to have regular Zoom meetings with our State FoodWise teams for guidance. We will also reach out to the partners mentioned above to see how we can best meet their needs for Nutrition Education with Adults.

## Human Development & Relationships



**Yia Lor**  
Human Development & Relationships Educator  
[yia.lor@wisc.edu](mailto:yia.lor@wisc.edu)

Just like that, we have ventured into fall colors and the season of layers!

The entire Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) team passed accreditation in August, and we are ready to support families and children as we move into another school year. We have seminars and discussion groups offered through the [Family Resource Center](#) this September. In October, I will be offering a seminar to families at Family Promise (Beacon House) in partnership with the ECASD. The leadership team also held its first meeting to discuss developing a media campaign and training more practitioners to include the Department of Human Services and other school staff who could support higher levels of Triple P.

I have been collaborating with educators from the Health & Well-Being Institute to create modules around stress and resiliency that can be used across the state. This month and into October, I am also co-facilitating Extension's "Highlights of Taking Care of You" program. We have overbooked our first offering, which shows the desire and need in our community and across the state to manage stress effectively.

Through the community needs assessment, parents/caregivers and family-serving agencies also expressed a need to increase awareness of the influence of racial discrimination and how it shapes outcomes for families. I am partnering with Dr. Rob Nix (Extension Specialist for Diverse and Underserved Children, Families and Communities) to create two prevention education programs around race conversations for families and family-serving agencies and hope to bring this to Eau Claire soon.

## Positive Youth Development



**Rachel Hart-Brinson**

4-H Program Coordinator

[rachel.hartbrinson@wisc.edu](mailto:rachel.hartbrinson@wisc.edu)

August has flown just as fast as July.

I held a county-wide “rocket build and launch” at the end of August that was well received. We ordered rockets, had people pick them up at the Extension office, offered a group build and then offered a launch where anyone could launch. Our 4-H volunteer who helps support our rocket program has a 4-pad launcher and it was a beautiful day. Everyone wore masks without complaint and we launched 25 rockets. We had one young man who is aging out of the program launch 4 rockets that he had previously built. It was his “last 4-H activity.” I thought it was a pretty good one to go out on.

I am now in planning mode for October and November. In partnership with Dunn and Chippewa counties, we are setting up a “Discover 4-H” box that will be available for \$15. It will include 6 projects and an opportunity to join a zoom where one of us will lead the activity. This will be offered October 4 through November 15. We are helping to build the model along with several other counties and will make it available for other 4-H educators across the state. The projects I will be leading are “marshmallow catapult challenge” and “string art.”

I am joining the JUNTOS pilot group for the state of Wisconsin. JUNTOS, which means “together,” in Spanish is a program developed by North Carolina Extension that focuses on serving the Latino community with an emphasis on creating educational goals and parental involvement. There is also a 4-H component. We will be offering online programming starting October 20 for 6 weeks. There is a partner meeting on September 17. If you know of an organization that would be a potential partner (provide information on higher education options, financial aid, or would be an organization that might recruit families), please let me know.

I did not mention the Fair last month. (How could I forget?!) I have continued to work closely with the Fair Coordinator and Fair Committee Chair in supporting them to take on the responsibility for the Eau Claire County Fair. This year was called the “Eau Claire County Showcase” because of all of the changes required due to COVID-19. Participation was about 50% of what it has been in past years. Those who did participate had very positive things to say and there were many safety precautions that were developed and followed, especially in the EXPO building.

## Community Development

Community Development

The Community Development Educator position is currently vacant. Updates shared at the 2021 budget discussions with the committee. Please contact Catherine Emmanuelle with any questions [catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu](mailto: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](#).

## Support Staff



**Kristi Peterson**

Office Coordinator

[kristin.peterson@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:kristin.peterson@co.eau-claire.wi.us)

August is already gone, and school has started. Life seems a tiny bit normal right now, but as each day passes, I expect that will change. September is always hard, the end of summer is official.

The budget updates have been given to the finance department, our annual report is complete. I look forward to more details soon.

I continue to work with educators and support staff to collaborate on ways to make things easier as it seems most of our work from home will continue for some time. We have all worked together to make ends meet, meetings run and coordinate so things to be as normal as possible.



**Andy Heren**

Administrative Specialist

[andy.heren@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:andy.heren@co.eau-claire.wi.us)

The others keep commenting on how time flies, and September is here already. It sure does fly by! This month I will be working with Rachel on getting out the annual fall mailing to the 4-H leaders. The 4-Hers are preparing their record books and turning them in before their interviews for the travel experiences.

I am working with Margaret on contacting the Jeffers Road Gardeners and bringing those gardens to a close this season (sometimes a hard thing for gardeners).

I am working with Yia on some Civil Rights updates for our office.

I am assisting Lyssa with some Agriculture related mailing lists and upcoming state update meetings that will be held virtually this year. Never a dull moment or “down time” in Extension!

### Area Extension Director



**Catherine Emmanuelle**

Area 6 Extension Director

[catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu](mailto:catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu)

I want to thank many committee members who joined our Area 6 Meet & Greet Meeting recently. All of our time is valuable, and we appreciate the time and interest to learn about how Extension employees are adapting and continuing to provide valuable education to equip and transform lives and communities, even in the current COVID-landscape. If you are interested in seeing the meeting, you can access an archived version here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfijfkuQRe0>. Please look for an email the week of September 7, which will include resources shared from our team for those who are interested in additional Extension resources. We continue to support employees working from home, with limited exceptions to work from the office and/or community programming event, while following local and state public safety guidance. Extension colleagues will continue taking limited furlough days, ending on October 31. At this point I am not aware of additional furloughs, and will communicate if there is information to share. With some employees having school-aged children who have started their fall semester, Extension remains supportive of employees to balance their “parent hat” and “employee hat.” This means flexibility with scheduling.

Last and not least, this report may be changing its format in the future. Our Extension colleagues in Dunn County agreed to help pilot a new format with the state, where we can use our internal reporting to generate a local highlights report. We are still in the pilot phase, and will roll out when ready. It will be a nice change to be able to give our county partners relevant updates and impact reports, while decreasing the amount of reporting for staff. While I have not found the “easy” button, this would certainly fall into the make life “easier,” and that is a good thing! Please remember you are welcome to connect with me if I can be a support or resource to you.

catherine.emmanuelle@wisc.edu or 715-450-0823. My very best to you all.