

Monthly Highlights

October 2020

Agriculture



Lyssa Seefeldt

Agriculture Educator

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I will be continuing to help plan the Heart of the Farm series, a program for women in agriculture. The meeting series will kick off in November on the second Monday of the month from 10:00 - 11:00 am from November through March. Topics include: taking care of you, tax preparation issues & concerns, how to read and understand your milk check, and value-added enterprises & farm diversification.

We are continuing to plan for virtual winter meetings in the dairy area. We have been coordinating with other Extension programs that are planning virtual winter meetings to try to prevent overlap so that farmers don't have to choose between programs. There are several state specialists that want to share their information with local farmers. Local educators will have an opportunity to host one or more of these meetings and I look forward to working with some of our specialists on programs that are relevant to Eau Claire County farmers.

The Badger Swine Symposium is a program connecting swine farmers with research and innovation in the industry. Like many of our programs this year, we are launching a virtual program, which will be on November 5. I am working through transferring the Badger Swine Symposium planning process to another educator as we plan this year's symposium for Wisconsin Pork Farmers. This is allowing some continuity in program planning while allowing the other educator to see the process before taking it over next year.



Margaret Murphy

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We began our Master Gardener online prep class. This class is not a certification class but instead a prep course for those interested in becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer. It will prepare individuals to enroll in the newly required online onboarding class, which will be available this winter. We have 29 people participating in the prep class. Many are from the Eau Claire area.

I've been asked by the Master Gardener State office to serve on a committee to discuss strategies to keep new volunteers connected to the local Master Gardener programs when volunteers are being trained through an online format. One approach we will be taking locally is to offer a mentorship program.

I am also working with area Master Gardeners to transition their spring gardening seminars from in-person to virtual events.

Garden clean-up is in process at the Community Garden off Jeffers Road. We had a very successful season. Several new gardeners joined the garden community this year. We had additional guidance on safety at the garden due to COVID-19. I felt everyone did a great job of keeping the garden area safe.

Yard and garden questions continue to come in. Recent inquiries have included questions on trees, yellow-bellied sapsucker damage and prepping gardens for use next spring.

Continuing with professional development, I attended the National Extension Master Gardener Coordinator virtual four-day conference. The conference included discussions on how to evaluate the impact of Master Gardener projects, how to keep volunteers engaged in a virtual environment and how to increase diversity and inclusion in the Master Gardener Program. Also, I recently completed a four-week learning circle on leadership using the book Dare to Lead by Brené Brown and will soon begin a learning circle on expanding access that will focus on race, ethnicity, and gender.

Health & Well-Being



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Even though there was no programming done at North River Fronts Kids Garden this Summer with Boys & Girls club, the Master Gardener Volunteers were kind enough to plant and maintain the garden for the neighborhood. End of Summer clean up was just completed. Hats off to EC County Master Gardener Volunteers, Judy & Tracy!

Pamela and Joy have been learning how to adapt our lessons for virtual learning. We have been involved in Statewide Curriculum Work Groups and Video Review Teams and other FoodWise Virtual Learning sessions in order to prepare for this Fall.

We are excited to start connecting with our teachers in both the ECASD and Augusta!
We look forward to the challenge, teaching our lessons virtually versus face to face.
We continue to be positive and flexible in these ever changing times.

Joy, Pamela, and Sandy started teaching a new Statewide 10 week series of Strong Bodies virtually every Tuesday and Thursday morning. Nancy Fastner, FoodWise Educator from Chippewa County is part of the teaching team as well. We kicked off the series the week of October 6 and on the first Thursday we had over 120 participants following along on Zoom. Each Tuesday a 20 minute nutrition lesson is offered after the strength training exercises and on Thursdays a follow up discussion is offered. Some of the nutrition topics offered are Seasonal Vegetables, Good for you Whole Grains, Food Safety, Stretching our Food Dollars, and more! We even have special guest speakers to share their area of expertise pertaining to keeping us strong and healthy.

Human Development & Relationships



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Fall has certainly been a busy season! I am starting to wrap up the "Highlights of Taking Care of You" program. The feedback has been very positive with participants sharing their gratitude for the tips and resources to support their overall health during these difficult times.

Yesterday, I offered my first Triple P Seminar focused on "Raising Confident, Competent Children" to families staying at Family Promise (Beacon House) in partnership with the ECASD. We had a great turnout and went beyond our time due to the excellent discussions around parenting challenges and tools that families can consider when teaching children important life skills.

Other projects I'm working on are developing a curriculum with state specialists around race conversations with families and a Youth in Crisis Training for Extension staff and volunteers. The support staff have been helping me sort through the process of printing the "Just in Time Parenting" newsletters, which provides research-based information to support children as they grow. We will be offering copies in English and Spanish to new parents this year.

I also attended the 10-day Collective Trauma Summit, which had over 100,000 participants from all across the globe. Topics included intergenerational trauma, racism, and the global pandemic crisis. It was such an incredible honor to attend and learn from world leaders on how to recognize, prevent, and work with collective trauma.

Positive Youth Development



Rachel Hart-Brinson
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I have been working with Heidi Benson, (formerly Vanderloop) 4-H Program Educator in Chippewa County and Luisa Gerasimo, 4-H Program Educator in Dunn County to develop and execute a "Discover 4-H" Box and experience that includes a welcome night, 6 projects, and a closing "celebration." The response has been enthusiastic. We had over 130 families sign up, some for multiple boxes. The three of us spent numerous days last week readying supplies and packing them in boxes. It was the first time that we have seen each other in person since March and it felt great to be working on a meaningful program that is launching during National 4-H week. We had 57 families participate in our welcome night and look forward to our first activity-building zoom tonight.

This model was also used by other educators across the state who developed different project ideas to include in the box. These will be shared across the state with other educators to support them in their work. The success of "in-a-box" programs suggests that this might be a great way to reach a broader audience in our work.

This is the season for the Record Book Review and Awards process in preparation for the Eau Claire County Recognition Banquet. We cannot have an in-person banquet this year, and many of the educational experiences that youth might participate in at a state or national level have been canceled or transitioned to a virtual experience. Despite this, our Awards Committee has decided to go forward with the interview process as it is an educational experience and will build skills.

I have also been working with the state-wide Juntos group to develop and promote a High School Family Virtual Workshop starting on October 20. Juntos is a program developed and championed by North Carolina Extension that really targets and works with the Latinx community, focusing on educational achievement and goal setting.

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 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
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It has been a very crazy start to the school year, and yet has provided a wonderful sense of normal!

I have been collaborating with the county and the state to ensure when our educators are able to get back to some form of in person programming, we have adequate PPE supplies. As an area we have created an idea to allow check out garbage receptacles filled with everything they will need for an event. We hope this will provide ease of organization and help everyone stay safe.

I have teamed up with Information Systems to provide our office with virtual faxing capabilities. This will be extremely helpful, being most staff are working from home. It will be one less step to worry about while we work through the pandemic.

I look forward to 2021 and the next budget steps.



Andy Heren
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Autumn not only brings beautiful fall colors, but more activities in the 4-H world. 4-H clubs are now placing their orders for project disks and plaques on which to put them for their members. The new 4HOnline v 2.0 is now ready for families to enroll and re-enroll in 4-H for the year. And the beginning of the month is the time to publish the monthly *Clover Leaves* newsletter.

People are still bringing their canner lids to be tested, but horticulture questions are slowing down.

Our office manages the Jeffers Rd Gardens, which I will be helping Margaret close out for the season at the end of the month.

Area Extension Director



Catherine Emmanuelle
Area 6 Extension Director
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Our educators continue to mostly work from home. Extension has updated guidance that educators may return to the office up to 50% of the time, although they are also fully supported to work from home up to 100%. We thank the county for their tremendous support in understanding. There is some educational programming occurring in the county, with approvals for events in the public to be consistent with Extension's program guidance and local public health guidance.

As you prepare for your last weeks of budget deliberation, please feel free to contact me if there are any questions I can help answer. Thanks for all you are doing to serve and lead in these trying times. It's not easy for anyone, and the continued partnership is truly appreciated!