

## Monthly Highlights

February 2021

### Agriculture



**Lyssa Seefeldt**

Agriculture Educator

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This month during the Badger Dairy Insight series we completed our second dual-language zoom on farm worker safety with animal handling. This was also recorded for future use. Teaching while working with an interpreter over zoom is a bit tricky since the interpreter is on a different audio channel than you are as a presenter. I paused and slowed down several times as sometimes the technical terms take a bit longer to translate. Needless to say each time we do a dual-language zoom, we learn how to do it a bit better!

On February 8, I moderated the Heart of the Farm session on understanding your milk check and an overview on how milk pricing is determined. I know I learned a few things with this session, and participants indicated they did too with some of their parting comments.

I have been continuing working with Greg Leonard on planning the agriculture portion of Leadership Eau Claire for the scheduled session in May. We aren't sure what the restrictions will be then, so we are making as many plans as we can for digital at the moment.

I have also been continuing in my role with the [Chippewa Valley COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force Agriculture and Rural subcommittee](#) to help keep our rural and agricultural communities recovering. Recently I, along with others on the team, have been helping the COVID-19 Incident Command Team get connected with agricultural mailing lists to help prepare for vaccine eligibility notifications.



**Margaret Murphy**

Horticulture Agent

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Though COVID-19 has resulted in reduced recruitment in the Master Gardener Program, Eau Claire County is one of 9 counties in the state that will be training new Master Gardener Volunteers this year.

- 11 individuals from Dunn, Chippewa and Eau Claire counties are currently in our new onboarding class, the last step before becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer
- 8 out of the 11 are from Eau Claire County

To assist new volunteers, I've been working with Master Gardeners from all three counties to develop a mentorship program.

- 14 Master Gardeners have volunteered to serve as mentors in 2021
- We will be taking a team approach to mentoring to allow for a full array of skills and interest to be available in supporting our new volunteers

The Master Gardener virtual seminar: Growing Together 2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminar, is set to begin February 20.

- We currently have 242 people registered
- I've assisted by developing registration and evaluation forms in Qualtrics
- For more information and to see the list of presentations, please go to <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/education>

On the plant diagnostic front, this month I have been fielding questions on trees, planting groundcovers, building raised beds, soil sampling, native plantings/seeds, control of aggressive plants and houseplants.

Lastly, I will be attending the virtual Wisconsin Community Garden Conference, February 12-13. The virtual event will cover topics on gardening techniques and leadership.

### Health & Well-Being



**Sandy Tarter**  
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**Joy Weisner**  
FoodWise Educator  
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**Pamela Warren-Armstrong**  
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**Workforce Resource:** Joy and Pamela offered weekly virtual lessons to FSET (Food Share Employment Training) and W2 participants from Eau Claire, Dunn, and Chippewa in January. They utilized our Healthy Cents curriculum which combines nutrition education and food resource management principles to encourage limited resource families to make healthy food choices on a limited budget.

**Strong Bodies:** A new series started on January 5th, 2021. Guest speaker Dr. Beth Olson, Extension Nutrition Specialist, joined our post exercise chat to discuss bone health and the importance of Vitamin D & Calcium on Jan. 26th. Extension Health and Well-Being Educator Katie Gellings presented on mindfulness with breathing techniques.

We receive weekly emails with examples on how much this class helps participants physically, mentally, and socially. There are about 382 statewide participants including 24 Eau Claire County residents registered.

Strong Bodies registration January 5 - March 25, Tues/Thurs 9 am - link here:  
<https://go.wisc.edu/58h0qb>

**Longfellow and Locust Lane Elementary:** Joy and Pamela are teaching nutrition lessons via Microsoft Team to first graders at Longfellow and Locust Lane Elementary for five weeks. They are focusing on healthy habits, exploring the food groups, and reading stories about fruits and vegetables. It is so much fun interacting with the students and the teachers are thrilled that we can still teach the lessons virtually.

**Third grade nutrition classes:** Last month Joy and Pamela recorded introductions, and recapped the message at the end of each video in a series of five nutrition videos that will be shared with ECASD third graders at Longfellow, Lakeshore, Locust Lane, and Flynn. These videos will be used as an enhancement with the nutrition/science lessons that are already being taught by the third grade teachers. This is considered indirect education.

### Human Development & Relationships



**Yia Lor**  
Human Development & Relationships Educator  
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As predicted, January has certainly been a month full of connections and collaboration.

I continue to facilitate the HMoob StrongBodies twice a week to Eau Claire residents in the mornings. We have also partnered with the Marathon County educators to offer HMoob StrongBodies in the evenings. After the sessions, we teach a lesson on health or nutrition. Recently, in partnership with the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention through the health department, we provided education around medication storage and disposal. We also distributed medication lock boxes and deactivation bags. Upcoming lessons will focus on positive parenting and stress management.

I also attended the Adult Mental Health First Aid training offered by Extension educators in our Health and Well-Being Institute. It was wonderful to see so many people across the state and county participate. Extension also offers the Youth Mental Health First Aid training, which I will take in March. These trainings are free for everyone, and more information can be found [here](#).

February will be all about the Positive Parenting Program, also called Triple P. There's much excitement around this new program we are bringing to our state and county. I am facilitating seminars with the Extension team and also with the Eau Claire team throughout the month with almost a hundred registered participants at my first one! I think that's a great way to end my first year with Extension, and I look forward to what my second year will bring.

### Positive Youth Development



**Rachel Hart-Brinson**  
4-H Program Educator  
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A team of two 4-H leaders and I worked on reviewing and updating the Eau Claire County 4-H Bylaws and Policies document. We clarified roles: the Fair Committee makes rules regarding the Fair; the Leaders Association makes rules about how people can get recognized for awards sponsored by the Association; the 4-H educator makes county-wide program policies. We cleaned up the topics covered in each section and made sure the numbering of articles was consistent. It was a lot of work and I REALLY appreciate that Lisa Roettger and Heather Iverson were willing to do that work with me. They were dedicated to the task and I think it will put the Leaders Association in a better position as we go forward.

We were extremely pleased with the success of our “Discover 4-H” boxes and program that we did last fall. Luisa, Heidi, and I have planned a follow-up program we are calling, “Digging Deeper into 4-H” for grades 4-8. There will be five project areas explored and cost will be \$25/child. (Scholarships will be available.) We will be making corn tortillas, a board “barn quilt,” a make-your-own flashlight, learning to digitally edit photos, and building model rockets. We are in the process of advertising and promoting the program. Registration closes March 2.

It is camp planning season and we are busy planning for summer camp. We are not sure if we will be able to host an overnight camp, but Luisa and I are planning on providing some sort of camp experience. We have camp counselor applications posted and are laying the groundwork for day camps in case we cannot do the usual overnight camp at Beaver Creek Reserve. In addition to the local camp work, I have been participating in the “Camp Work Group” facilitated by Upham Woods where the idea for a state-wide camp counselor training program started and is in the process of development. I am happy to be supporting this work that will meet a need across the state.

“Current Conversations” is a state-wide team that was formed to create a space for young people to talk about the many social and political moments of the past year. They did a lot of work in establishing “how” to set up safe conversations around potentially difficult topics. I joined the team back in the fall. We presented at the Wisconsin Leadership Committee retreat on January 23. Our goal was to introduce the work that the team is doing, but also to start a discussion about diversity in 4-H. It takes intentionality to think about expanding the 4-H program outside of the typical communities that we have been in. This is important work and I look forward to sharing more about that work in the next Highlights.

### Community Development

#### Community Development

The Community Development Educator position is currently vacant. Catherine had a discussion with the Community Development Institute Director and gave her support to share this message with our county funding partners: “Catherine, I wanted to connect with you regarding the Community Educator position in Area 6. As you know, there is a “thaw” on the blanket hiring freeze here at Extension. The Dean’s leadership team is now working through a set of hiring priorities across the various institutes that comprise Extension. At this point, I have placed the Area 6 position as our Institute’s top priority hire. Of course, this doesn’t guarantee that it will be “approved” in the upcoming round. But, I am optimistic that it should be approved in the upcoming months. I will update you each month when I hear back regarding which positions were “unfrozen.” Please pass on my thanks and appreciation to the County for their support and patience!” 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 <https://extension.wisc.edu/community-development/>, and how Extension is responding to COVID-related work supported by Community Development Educators, see <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/covid19/category/topics/communities/>.

### Support Staff



**Kristi Peterson**  
Office Coordinator  
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I have been busy working with educators to create a variety of items in Canva. The FoodWise team and I collaborated on an awesome newsletter they have shared. I also have created a variety of ads for Facebook to get details out to the public in an effective way.

I am continually busy with tracking and budget details with 2021 upon us.

I continue to work on the website organization and hope to have this completed soon.

With a large horticulture event on the horizon, the payments are flooding in. This is exciting, and the Growing Together event looks to be a successful one.



**Andy Heren**  
Administrative Specialist  
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My big thing right now is the registration for the Growing Together Virtual Garden Seminar.(I take all the registrations and send out confirmation emails when payment is received.)The Master Gardener Volunteers of most counties have a garden seminar every winter or early spring. These in person seminars can't happen now, of course, so seven counties in Western Wisconsin are working together to host this virtual seminar which will occur on four Saturdays in February and March. We are excited that one of our speakers is Melinda Myers!

I am continuing to help Rachel with 4-H tasks, especially as she and the Educators from the other counties in Area 6 are planning so many mini camps to keep the kids engaged in 4-H as well as get non 4-H kids interested in a great program.

Then I handle other tasks for all the Educators as they are needed, such as making website updates and sending out information on Ag workshops, such as the Midwest Manure Summit on February 24.

### Area Extension Director



**Catherine Emmanuelle**  
Area 6 Extension Director  
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I give a lot of credit to our Extension team for the continued adaptability to serve with and in our communities - a little in-person and mostly virtually. While virtual is not the same as in-person, we are seeing that in some cases, there is higher participation with virtual programming. Our staff continue to mostly work from home, with availability to return to the office up to 50% of the time. Our Area has kicked-off our all-area staff meetings for 2021. We are working together with these priorities that weave our work together:

~regularly recognize our [purpose, vision, and values](#)

~grow in our strengths

~develop skills to current and emerging community needs

~connect with Extension's strategic commitment to inclusivity & anti-racism work

~create fun & wellness