

Agriculture

For updated Valley E-Newsletters click [here](#)

Jerry Clark | Regional Crops & Soils Educator



An on-farm research study for farmers, agriculture industry and agency professionals where manure application and nitrogen credits will be evaluated to better understand the effect of corn yield to validate current nitrogen rates and manure credits for corn production and protect ground and surface water quality.

An on-farm study to better understand the effect of nitrogen application rates on nitrogen cycling and corn yield. Results from this study will help corn growers in that they can implement and adapt N management practices to optimize economic return, improve efficiency of N fertilizer resulting in more sustainable corn production and farm profitability.

A field event for farmers and agronomy professionals where participants discussed and learned the soil benefits of aerial inter-seeding rye into corn silage to increase understanding of soil health and economic opportunities and challenges and increase farm profitability.

A land evaluation clinic for students where participants learned land management principles, soil properties, and land use, to increase effective land management practices and maximize soil and agricultural land production into the future. The goal of the program is to increase knowledge and understanding of the importance of land and soil management and the impact agriculture and commercial development has on the land.

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator



An evening virtual program for cattle producers to increase their understanding of a new regulation regarding official identification aiding disease traceability. This management practice influences the biosecurity and economic viability of their farms.

An introductory article to the Regional Livestock Educator position in the Extension in the Valley, the tri-county monthly newsletter focusing on Agriculture and Horticulture news. This effort was designed to keep participants connected to current agriculture and livestock happenings.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Educator

Extension in the Valley agriculture and horticulture e-newsletter, view newsletters [HERE](#).



Attended the UW Madison Division of Extension All Colleague Conference Agriculture Institute meeting where individuals were provided an overview of UW Madison climate related resources and updates on current progress of climate change workgroups. This effort was designed to connect participants to the continued work on issues of climate change.

Provided garden articles in the Extension in the Valley, tri-county monthly newsletter that

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focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news where participants can learn about winter care and protection of trees, care and maintenance of holiday indoor plants and storage of winter squash through links to UW Madison Division of Extension factsheets. This effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture matters. (Collaborated with: Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

An activity for people living with dementia and their care partners where individuals engage in a seasonal, nature-based craft with fall produce. This effort is designed for participants to take part in a hands-on, festive activity that encourages the use of fine motor skills, stimulates the senses, boosts creativity and provides an opportunity for positive socialization.

Spotlight

One of our Area 6 Extension Health and Wellbeing colleagues who is programming with the Eau Claire Area Hmong Mutual Assistance Association (ECAHMAA) networked with ECAHMAA to discuss programming possibilities. We planned a program on discussing the basics of garden soil and soil testing. I gave a presentation on the basic elements of garden soil such as soil texture, soil structure and organic matter. What role they play in healthy soil. Discussed how to take a soil sample and walked through 2 different soil test results and how to determine the rate of application of recommended soil amendments. We discussed the possibility of doing a follow up program at a community garden to further illustrate how to take a soil sample and why it's important.

Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Community Development Educator



A strategic Planning process for the Eau Claire County Criminal Justice Collaborating Council (CJCC), where seated members completed individual interviews, and participated in a three-part workshop series to affirm the purpose, establish goals, and develop work plans to achieve them. Through this effort, the CJCC will build its organizational capacity to address pressing issues in the criminal justice system and enhance the efficacy of the system to build safer and more just communities.

The UW-Madison Division of Extension is facilitating a study by Eau Claire County Government to move to a county-wide emergency medical services (EMS) program. Extension staff are regularly meeting with Eau Claire County leadership and have begun interviewing county EMS service and local government leaders as part of a study on how to best create and implement a county-wide EMS service that will replace struggling local EMS services. This program is intended to put the pieces in place to create a county-wide EMS service beginning January 1, 2026. The EMS service is intended to relieve the EMS expenditure burden off of local 19 local units of government and to provide enhanced emergency services response across the county.

Provide a leadership role in the founding and operation of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative. Extension is working closely with a cooperative board of local civic and business leaders to move forward on constructing a new hospital and related clinics. The goal of the cooperative is to create renewed healthcare access in a region adversely impacted by the recent closure of two closed hospitals and 19 clinics, to preserve nearly 1,400 high paying jobs, and to support local economic development efforts and to support the local tax base.

A meeting of Wisconsinites working towards civic health co-hosted with the Center for Community and Nonprofit Studies at UW-Madison. The goal of this meeting was to share information about current civic health

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activities and reflect upon civic health in the state. Participants were able to bring forward concerns for this group to address in 2025 with the release of the Civic Health of Wisconsin Report and initiative.

Health & Well-Being

Sandy Tarter
FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner
FoodWise Educator



Jael M. Wolf
Bilingual FoodWise Educator



Two 6-week nutrition education series to 1st graders in Flynn and Longfellow Elementary schools. The goal of this effort is for students to learn about eating healthy, being active, exploring fruits and vegetables, and the importance of handwashing.

A 4-lesson series for 4K preschoolers at Altoona Head Start Centers. This effort helps youth to learn about fruits, vegetables and keeping their bodies healthy. This effort helps children to learn to use their senses with colors and tastes to explore foods and includes movement.

Participation in Eau Claire Health Alliance meetings to develop the Community Health Improvement Plan with a focus on Nutrition and Physical Activity- one of CHIP's priority areas to be addressed during 2025-2027. This effort will include reviewing data, mapping partners, and developing goals and strategies as they link to basic needs of residents.

A 4-lesson series at Affinity House, a residential care treatment program, covering MyPlate, food waste, gut health, reading nutrition labels, meal prepping, and understanding sugar content in drinks. This effort helps women to plan and prepare healthy meals while learning to stretch their food dollars.

Spotlight

Affinity House is a Lutheran Social Services residential care facility that offers women comprehensive substance use treatment. They requested FoodWise to share information that will add health and wellness to their recovery. FoodWise offers a 4-lesson nutrition education series quarterly on a range of topics that include but not limited to utilizing MyPlate nutrition principles, gut health, food waste, stretching produce, meal prepping, reading nutrition labels, understanding sugar in drinks and impacts on health. Each class involved a taste test and offered recipe preparation based on participant voting. This effort helps to support the learning of food resource management in the harvest, preparation, and storage of garden produce. Participants learn of the impact good nutrition has on their health which supports them in the recovery process from substance use. They also are more knowledgeable about stretching their food dollars when living on their own.

Margo Dieck | Health and Well-Being Educator



A facilitated conversation for Eau Claire County Aging and Disability Resource Center leadership staff where participants intentionally reviewed staff feedback around professional quality of life in the areas of secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue. Through this activity, leadership team members provided invaluable context around staff feedback, discussion around the process of data collection, and action steps they envision being successful within their teams.

A series of facilitated conversations for Eau Claire County Department of Human Services leadership staff where participants intentionally reviewed staff feedback around professional quality of life in the areas of secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue. Through this activity, leadership team members provided invaluable context around staff feedback, discussion around the process of data collection, and action steps they envision being successful within their teams.

A Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) presentation for Eau Claire County Human Services and Eau Claire County Aging and Disability (ADRC) staff where staff learned the aggregated ProQOL scores for each team within the agency, participated in an activity to gather feedback on potential interventions for the agency, and identified individual action steps they can take to positively influence their professional quality of life. The goal of this effort is to provide staff with understanding of their personal and organizational level of compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction, ask questions, brainstorm solutions, and personally engage with strategies to improve professional quality of life where they work.

A series of meetings for WeCOPE facilitators where the curriculum is being reviewed and revised. This effort is being conducted to ensure a quality learning experience for participants in this program and to support consistent facilitator delivery of the content.

Participation and membership in the United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley's (UWGCV) Health Advisory Council, which consists of community leaders and local professionals with expertise and/or interest in health, with particular focus on the top issues identified in the Community Health Assessment. The Advisory Council's guides impact efforts in the Chippewa Valley by identifying community needs and supporting efforts to achieve the UWGCV Bold Goal.

Participation in the Eau Claire Health Alliance: Mental Health and Community Connections action team in collaboration with community partners. The goal is to review data and develop focus areas, goals, and strategies to address this portion of the 2025-2027 Eau Claire County Community Health Improvement Plan.

Spotlight

The leadership team for Eau Claire County ADRC reached out looking for professional development for their staff centered around professional quality of life. This office is committed to annual professional development for their staff and decided to focus their efforts for staff wellbeing on the ProQOL. Fostering and improving the mental health of service professionals is integral for healthy workplace dynamics and interactions with their clients.

Positive Youth Development

Rachel Hart-Brinson | 4-H Program Educator



Planning for the 2025 Tri-County Speaking and Demonstration Festival and Tri-County Performing Arts Festival for 4-H youth in collaboration with Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire County 4-H programs. The goal is to help youth develop communication skills, share passions, and boost confidence through speeches, demonstrations, and interpretive readings, so that they build essential life skills and inspire others in a supportive environment. To promote the event, the three educators created a video of a puppet show.

A 4-H project exploration event open to the public where youth and adult volunteers led an activity that you could do as part of 4-H at the Eau Claire Public Library. This provided an opportunity for the public to see what 4-H was about as well as for young people to practice leading an activity.

A tortilla-making workshop at Fall Forum where we explained nixtamalization (cooking corn with lime) and then made corn tortillas. This workshop was to share cultural practices and to provide participants with a way to then be able to lead a session by raffling off 8 tortilla presses.



A weaving and texture workshop at Fall Forum where adult volunteers and older youth were able to practice weaving patterns with paper and then practice weaving on a small, handheld loom with different materials. This session allowed youth and adults to explore a spark and think about ways they could bring weaving into project exploration in their counties.

A radio interview as part of the 4-H On the Air program hosted by WAXX radio. This interview program helps promote the 4-H program to the community and maintain relationships with long-term supporters. Eau Claire County has a club or activity highlighted every month on the program. This month, the 4-H Educator, Art Camp participants, and the Eau Claire Clovers 4-H Club recorded interviews to be aired at a future date.



One on one check in interviews with volunteers by phone, zoom, or in person. This helped build relationships with our volunteers and find out what volunteers are excited about helping with in the program to help bring some new programming forward.

Planning for a virtual cultural baking series. This series will use recipes from around the world to explore food science, the art of baking, and cultural connection to food.

A 4-H Interview Night where youth in grades 7 and up were interviewed by a team of adult volunteers. This is part of the awards process through the 4-H Leaders Association to access scholarships for educational experiences. This practice also helps youth gain skills and confidence that will help them find the job that they would like.

Testimonial: "The 4-H Interview Night was last week, and I participated. I have found it to be helpful in other parts of my life. I really recommend you do it if you have the chance." Ben S.

Spotlight

The Area Six Speaking and Demonstration Festival was developed in response to the need for youth to enhance their public speaking and communication skills, which are essential for leadership and personal development. Many 4-H youth expressed interest in improving their ability to confidently share their knowledge and passions with others but lacked formal opportunities to practice these skills in a supportive environment. Recognizing the importance of these abilities in future career and community leadership roles, we engaged in this program to provide a platform for youth to gain experience and feedback, helping them grow as effective communicators and leaders.

Area Extension Director

Kristen Bruder | Eau Claire, Chippewa, and Dunn Counties



The role of the AED is like that of the department head in the county. If you have ideas, thoughts, or want to chat about Extension please reach out! Below is a brief overview of the role of AEDs:

Extension fully invests in Area Extension Directors (AEDs) who oversee an area. These administrative positions are responsible for partnership management, staff development, financial management and program coordination.

Through the many interactions the AED has with county partners and local educators, the AED develops a solid understanding of the local needs and county priorities and helps to align Extension educational programs to ensure the programs address county needs. Educators also communicate local needs to their programmatic Institutes which collectively identify opportunities to address statewide needs.

For a full list of upcoming events throughout Extension, click [here](#)

Value Added Programming (don't put in planning or fact sheets, only programming)

A Virtual Brown Bag Lunch was held for cranberry growers for the purpose of better understanding (1) water and nutrient uptake into fruit during the growing season and (2) the 2024 set of priorities identified at the Research Round Table. These will enable growers to manage nutrients and water efficiently, and to help understand research priorities for funding opportunities. (Allison Jonjak, Amaya Atucha)

To understand the top short term and long-term research priorities of cranberry growers in Wisconsin, a Research Round Table was held in which 57 participants joined to discuss top needs in -soil & water quality - horticulture -plant pathology -entomology -general management (business management as well as equipment needs) in addition to long term collaborative & strategic needs. A 7-page document was produced to assist researchers in proposing desirable research, and growers in allocating research funding according to priorities. (Allison Jonjak, Amaya Atucha, Jed Colquhoun, Leslie Holland)

Responding to a grower call, a field visit was conducted to review possible causes of abiotic stress and consider seeking analysis from campus specialists. (Allison Jonjak)

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Our Extension broadband team was invited to present for the economic development professionals and elected officials during their one-day broadband summit. The presentation recapped highlights from the day-long Rural Economic Development Summit held in March of 2023. The presentation allowed attendees to review data in economic, employment, and housing areas that are impacted by the expansion of broadband in their communities. (Brittany Beyer, John Parrish)