

Agriculture

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Jerry Clark | Regional Crops & Soils Educator



A seminar for agricultural finance lenders where participants learned about emerging agricultural economic issues to improve lending decisions. The goal of the program is to provide university-based research, information, and market analysis for regional financial leaders to make informed decisions.

A panel discussion for educators, agronomy industry and agency professionals where attendees learned about the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) to increase awareness of nitrogen management results and involvement in the program. The goal of the presentation as a panelist was to discuss experience with the program as an extension educator and fiscal agent.

Thinking About Farm Succession workshop for farmers where participants learned about what happens if they don't do any estate planning and how to start the conversation with their families about estate planning.

Planning for a four session Focus on Forage webinar series for forage growers and agriculture consultants in collaboration with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the US Dairy Forage Research Center. The goal is to provide research-based forage management solutions to improve forage quality and meet producer goals.

Spotlight

Extension UW-Madison regional educators coordinated an on-farm research project through the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) to investigate the effect of manure application and commercial nitrogen application rates on corn silage and grain yields. The Wisconsin Agribusiness Association hosted a panel discussion to present farmer, industry, and extension experience with involvement in the NOPP. Extension was invited to participate in the panel discussion to present their experience in the program. One hundred-six agronomy professionals attended a panel discussion on the Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program: Highlights of On-Farm Research. Panel members discussed their experience with involvement in the NOPP. Panel members included Monica Schauer and Jerry Clark, UW-Madison; Jason Rowe, Farmer-led Watershed; Ted Hoffman, InDepth Agronomy, and Susan Mockert, Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. Evaluation information was not available and will be shared when available.

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator



Thinking About Farm Succession workshop for farmers where participants learned about what happens if they don't do any estate planning and how to start the conversation with their families about estate planning. Evaluations indicate participants learned how to better prepare to meet with service providers (average 4.69 response on Likert scale with 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree). They learned about tools to help them effectively communicate with business partners and/or family with an average response of 4.76 on the same Likert scale. Respondents identified communication, fair versus equal inheritance, and financial capacity of the farm as barriers to their succession planning. (Collaborated with Jerry Clark)

Extension Eau Claire County

January 2025 Report

Planning for an artificial insemination course for dairy and beef producers. The goal is to teach farmers how to breed their cattle, so that they are not dependent on an AI technician.

Planning for a calving management course for dairy and beef farm owners and workers. The goal is to teach farm owners and workers to recognize signs of stress during calving and to know when assistance is needed and how to assist with the delivery of the calf, so that more live calves can be born.

Planning for a dairy heifer reproduction data collection and survey project in collaboration with UW-Madison Department of Animal and Dairy Science faculty and graduate students. The goal is to assess current management practices and identify areas for improvement. Raising replacement dairy heifers is a significant and rising cost to dairy farms, and poor reproductive performance only adds to rearing costs.

Spotlight

Wisconsin is continuing to see popularity in beef production and with this comes interest in important and emerging topics. The Noontime Beef Roundup Webinar Series for 2025 will provide insights for beef producers and industry professionals. This free series will cover a range of topics critical to the success of the beef industry, featuring expert speakers and interactive sessions with the hope of maintaining beef operations' economic viability. Members of the UW-Extension Livestock Team identified important and emerging topics in beef production and contacted industry experts to provide insight and research-based information for beef producers and other industry professionals. Short-term: Beef producers gain awareness of management practices that influence the economic viability of their farms. Practices include feeding and breeding strategies, market access, and animal handling. Medium-term: Beef producers adopt management practices that positively influence the economic viability of their farms. Long-term: Beef producers achieve and maintain economic viability.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Educator



Collaborating with Affinity House and FoodWise to plant the garden at Affinity House and teach several garden lessons

Continue to plan and develop programs for 2025 which include co-chairing a workgroup addressing environmental pollution issues within horticulture and incorporating adaptive gardening strategies in gardening

Continue to provide timely garden and landscape articles for the Extension in the Valley, a monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news. January's issue includes guidance on poinsettia care and upcoming programs and presentations. Sign up to receive [Extension in the Valley](#) and for more garden articles, visit [Seasonal Gardening Articles](#).

Participating in the UW Madison Plain Language Certificate course to hone my communication skills.

Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Community Development Educator



Strategic planning for a community-serving organization where we updated the organization's mission and vision statement, identified goals, and developed action plans. The planning process is intended to clarify the organization's purpose and develop achievable steps to realize its vision.

A two-part facilitation workshop with the Eau Claire County Economic Development Committee to clarify the scope and responsibilities of this group and identify goals so that the committee can pursue efforts that sustain the economic vitality of Eau Claire County.

Planning for a Strategic Planning workshop for Eau Claire County in collaboration with Eau Claire County Administration. The goal is to assist the County with identifying key priorities and develop coherent action plans, so that the county government can be responsive to challenges and opportunities and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.

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.

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.

UW-Madison Division of Extension is facilitating a study with the Eau Claire County Government to move to a county-wide emergency medical services (EMS) program. Extension staff 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 local 19 local units of government and to provide enhanced emergency services response across the county.

Spotlight

Eau Claire County's 19 municipalities provide EMS services through one of the six EMS services operating in the county. Rural towns are struggling with the cost of providing the service to constituents in part because of levy limits but are also struggling to maintain adequate levels of state-licensed EMS providers due to lower volunteer rates. This is causing the rural towns to struggle to meet the state's minimum EMS service standards, causing rural residents to face long wait times for EMS response. This in turn is leading to a greater risk of death. U.W.-Madison Division of Extension's Local Government Education Program, and Eau Claire County Extension, are working closely with County Administrator Kathryn Schauf and her senior staff to create a framework for a county-based EMS service beginning in January 2026. Extension staff have extensive EMS experience, including laws and regulations, and are contributing unique expertise to the county's efforts. Extension staff is also facilitating the community conversations needed to successfully implement such a countywide EMS service. This project began in July of 2024 and is ongoing. If successful, the rural towns within Eau Claire County will be relieved of the expense of funding EMS service for their constituents while receiving a higher level of service from a county-based EMS service. Moreover, this is likely to create a model that can be duplicated by other counties across the state.

Health & Well-Being

Sandy Tarter | FoodWise Coordinator Joy Weisner | FoodWise Educator



A 6-week nutrition education series for 1st graders in two classrooms at Lakeshore 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 hand-washing.

A 6-week nutrition education series for 3rd graders (3 classrooms) and 5th graders (2 classrooms) at Longfellow Elementary school. The goal of this effort is for students to learn about MyPlate: the five food groups, eating healthy foods in each food group, reading nutrition facts labels, finding total sugars and how to incorporate physical activity into daily life.

An educational caregiver event at the ECASD Early Learning- Prairie Ridge Center where parents learned helpful techniques to help feed their picky eaters along with a tasting party of healthy, seasonal vegetables. This effort supports parents in encouraging their families to eat healthy and reduce mealtime struggles.

A series of virtual strength training sessions (StrongBodies) for adults in the community, where participants engage in regular, progressive strength training and health education to improve their physical and mental health and enhance social connectedness.

Collaboration with Eau Claire Area School District and Augusta School District food service managers to take part in the WI DPI School Meal Appeal program. This effort has supported Longfellow, Locust Lane, and Augusta Elementary schools in completing a self-assessment of their food service and each one has selected strategies to enhance their meal service. Schools will receive \$1000 reimbursement towards implementing those strategies. The goal is to increase student satisfaction and participation in their breakfast and lunch programs. FoodWise will continue to support these strategies within their upcoming direct education.

Spotlight

The WI DPI School Meal Appeal grant opportunity was offered in the fall of 2024. In Eau Claire County, Longfellow, Locust Lane, and Augusta Elementary schools have joined in and completed their meal services assessments. Some of the quality meal improvement strategies selected include the following: Longfellow and Locust Lane- adding banners, posters, floor decals, and student artwork to the cafeterias to make them more appealing, conduct taste tests with students to gain feedback on likes and dislikes, add needed decorative serving bowls, pans, and dispensers to display food items, and provide more information to parents/teachers to encourage support for the healthy lunch program; Augusta is planning on adding decorative serving bowls, pans, and dispensers to display food items like fruits and vegetable and a menu board with student generated creative names for menu items so youth can be involved and think about their options earlier in the day.

Margo Dieck | Health and Well-Being Educator



A Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) workshop for Eau Claire County Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinic staff where staff learned their individual ProQOL score and collective team ProQOL score, 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.

Spotlight Eau Claire County Department of Human Services participated in a series of ProQOL presentations/workshops in June 2024. In October 2024, the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Outpatient Clinic manager requested similar training, but on a smaller scale with just the clinic staff. The goal would be to compare staff results between June 2024 to January 2025, as well as plan to reassess the team every January to monitor individual and team professional quality of life.

Positive Youth Development

Rachel Hart-Brinson | 4-H Program Educator



An application and interview process for new and returning high school camp counselors to staff our 4-H summer camp. This process gives the applicants experience in interviewing as well as makes sure that we bring on personable and teamwork-oriented young people to make our camp program a success.

Planning for the 2025 Camp Counselor Retreat that will serve as a bonding and learning opportunity for this year's camp counselor team.

Planning for a project learning day, Clover University, for youth in grades 6th-13th in collaboration with volunteers and Area 6 4-H staff. The goal is to provide hands-on learning experiences in various project areas, where participants will gain new skills and knowledge. Through this event, youth will develop practical abilities, foster a love for project learning, and build confidence in their capabilities, contributing to their overall personal growth and future success.

The Area 6 4-H educators have begun planning for Art U 2025. This program is a collaboration between Area 6 4-H, UW-Stout Art Education Department, and Arts Integration Menomonie. To prepare we met with the professor at UW-Stout to develop this year's program. We have decided on the dates, times, and began looking at the types of activities that will be offered. We have also begun promoting the event through newsletters, Facebook, and a press release that has been picked up by four local news outlets. (Zachary Rozmiarek, Jordan Blue, Rachel Hart-Brinson)

Spotlight

STEM Day at UW-Stout's "Fab Lab" where young people in grade 6-8 experienced hands-on learning using laser cutting, laser engraving, and soldering equipment to build a "useless machine." This experience provided programming for those with a spark in STEM. It was the first time that we have collaborated with this department at UW-Stout.



Two STEM Day at UW-Stout participants soldering wires onto the switch.

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunity programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of requirements.

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

A one-day workshop for community broadband leaders, economic development organizations, public and private permitting agencies, and internet service providers, where participants learned about broadband permitting requirements, engagement and endorsement of Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) projects, and engaged in peer learning through case studies so they can build effective public-private partnerships that meet their community's broadband needs, increasing economic opportunity and quality of life for all community members. (John Parrish, Brittany Beyer, Christopher Stark, Gail Huycke, Jessica Beckendorf, Kristen Bruder)

A coaching program for families and individuals, where participants learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships. (Jeanne Walsh)

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Facilitation of regular monthly meetings of the Eau Claire River Watershed Coalition, where partners meet to discuss ways to implement a ten-year comprehensive watershed management plan, plan events, assess activities, update each other on work being done, and formulate new ways to collaborate. (Daniel Zerr)

An educational opportunity for program alumni to return as peer facilitators and support new participants through a 17-week entrepreneurship class to help more people finish the class successfully and deepen their learning. (Diana Hammer, Erin Rivera, Michael Senn)

A team development workshop (Real Colors) for organizations where participants increased their ability to recognize their strengths and the strengths of others, build rapport quickly with others, understand how others process information, and modify their communication to connect with others. The workshop is intended to help teams work together more effectively. (Facilitated by Rachel Hart-Brinson in support of Margo Dieck's work with Eau Claire County's DHS Outpatient Clinic Staff.)