
Agriculture

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Jerry Clark | Regional Crops & Soils Educator



An on-farm research study to better understand manure application, commercial nitrogen application rates, and nitrogen credits on corn yield and potential effect on groundwater. Results from this study will help farmers, agriculture industry professionals, and agency professionals in adjusting manure and commercial nitrogen applications to optimize corn yield and protect groundwater resources. (Jerry Clark, Christine Clark, Joshua Kamps, Lindsey Rushford, Liz Gartman, Scott Reuss)

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 nitrogen management practices to optimize economic return, improve efficiency of nitrogen fertilizer resulting in more sustainable corn production and farm profitability.

A series of alfalfa measurements that will help to better understand optimum alfalfa and winter cereal harvest across Wisconsin. The results of this study will help forage growers to determine what techniques can best predict optimum forage harvest timing to improve first cutting forage quality for livestock. (Liz Gartman, Aerica Bjurstrom, Anastasia Kurth, Angie Ulness, Jackie Mccarville, Jerry Clark, Jordyn Sattler, Kevin Jarek, Scott Reuss)

Spring alfalfa quality monitoring, utilizing scissors clippings for lab analysis and PEAQ stick measurements (Predictive Equations for Alfalfa Quality), was an effort to increase awareness of Extension resources on forage quality and local forage crop conditions. This effort for farmers and agribusiness professionals was aimed at improving forage quality and yield, thereby improving farm profitability. (Ryan Sterry, Jerry Clark)

Spotlight

Farmers and Regional Educators are collaborating to implement on-farm research to discover corn yield and water quality effects of various rates of nitrogen to areas of fields with and without applied manure. The purpose of the project is to understand how manure application impacts the Maximum Return to Nitrogen (MRTN) for corn throughout the growing season. A Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program grant through the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection was secured in 2024 to investigate the effect of manure and commercial nitrogen on corn grain and silage yields. The research seeks to validate the recommended manure nutrient credits and MRTN values for corn. Participating farmers and extension educators anticipate there will be an increase in yield for plots with manure and nitrogen applied, but a lower crop response to nitrogen as the amount of nitrogen applied increases. This would allow manure sample data to be utilized to correlate total amounts of nitrogen received for each plot to the harvested yield. Six rates of nitrogen from 0, 40, 80, 120, 160, and 200 pounds per acre are applied with four replications at six farms across Wisconsin. Water quality measurements through lysimeters installed at one location will assist in evaluating the movement of nitrate nitrogen through the water profile. This is a two-year project to be completed in fall of 2025.

Extension Eau Claire County

June 2025 Report

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator



An interactive display on animal handling, safety, and promoting Extension at the Eau Claire County Dairy Breakfast. The information provided included how to tie a quick-release knot, how cattle's vision differs from humans', and how to use cattle handling tools. The display was included in WEAU's story on the event [Wisconsin grade A dairy farms on the decline, with production showing an opposite trend](#)

An educational article for the Midwest Forage Association's "Clippings" newsletter, focused on forage growers and agri-business professionals, where the audience will learn about forage needs and planning if transitioning from dairy cattle to beef cattle. (Ryan Sterry, Bill Halfman)

An educational article for the Wisconsin Agriculturalist, focused on beef producers and agri-business professionals, where the audience will learn about setting breeding and calving seasons. (Ryan Sterry, Kimberly Kester, Sandy Stuttge) [Defined breeding season: Simple yet important strategy – Livestock](#)



Working to identify host sites for field day programs and demonstrations, Ryan has continued to meet with livestock producers, public agencies, and agribusinesses in the Chippewa Valley.

A series of introductory videos introducing regional livestock educators to provide examples of livestock area programs to county partners and public stakeholders. (Ryan Sterry, Beth McIlquham)



An artificial insemination course for dairy and beef producers, where they learned how to breed their own cattle. Through this program, producers will be able to save money and increase reproductive rates by breeding their own cattle in a timely fashion. (Heather Schlessner, Ryan Sterry, Sandy Stuttgen)

Spotlight

Local area livestock and dairy educators have received requests for livestock obstetrics training. Time and money are heavily invested in the farm's reproductive program to obtain a live calf from every breeding. The nutrition and health of the pregnant animal contribute to her potential for successful gestation, calving, future rebreeding, and a healthy calf. Newborn calf care provides the opportunity for calves to reach their full genetic potential as productive individuals for years to come. A series of bovine obstetrics workshops is being planned for September. During virtual classrooms and in-person hands-on training, dairy and beef producers will learn about transition cow diets and body condition, recognize key signs of labor and handle difficult deliveries with precision, and gain practical strategies to support both cow and calf health. For the producer's convenience, they may choose a September afternoon or evening Zoom or in-person hands-on combination that fits their needs, as well as one session with Spanish translation. Outcomes will be reported after the workshop series is completed.

Extension Eau Claire County

June 2025 Report

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Educator

Sign up to receive [Extension in the Valley](#) and for more garden articles, visit [Seasonal Gardening Articles](#).



Provide garden articles published in the Extension in the Valley, tri-County monthly newsletter that focuses on Agriculture and Horticulture news. In the current issue, participants learned about common pests of cucurbits, and the herb Rosemary. Links to more horticulture articles found at UW Horticulture Division of Extension and upcoming events were also provided. This effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture matters. (Margaret Murphy, Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

Planned and planted a native plant demonstration garden for the public. The goal of this effort is to encourage people to incorporate native plants into their landscape for both beautification and an opportunity to support pollinators by increasing their habitat. This effort also hopes to demonstrate how native plantings can help reduce the use of water in the landscape as well as the need for fertilizer and pesticides to the benefit of our waterways and to reduce chemical input to our environment.

An educational pollinator/tree themed booth at a nature reserve's annual event where the public learned the value of creating ecological niches using native plants allowing urban areas to support a host of different insect pollinators. This effort is to encourage individuals to adopt gardening practices that support pollinator habitat and health throughout the year. (Margaret Murphy, Andy Heren, Ryan Sterry)

Two classes for the Academy for Lifelong Learners participants on the benefits of gardening. This program explored the positive impacts plants have on our lives and offered an activity for participants to build their own sensory garden in a pot. This effort was designed to encourage people to include plants and gardening into their lifestyle and experience the many benefits that gardening provides.

Program for families at the Lake Wissota State Park on pollinators in celebration of Pollinator Week. The program offered a tour through a well-established pollinator garden together with information on pollinators and native plants. This effort was to encourage individuals to adopt gardening practices that support pollinator habitat and health throughout the year.

Spotlight

The Nature Reserve organization reached out to Extension to participate. Provided written materials on pollinators, native plants and trees. Staffed a table for interactive Q&As. There were 12 informational/educational booths in attendance together with approximately 30+ people from the public. I networked with other local, regional and state conservation and agricultural organizations and gained resources pertinent to my local work in sustainable horticulture.

Extension Eau Claire County

June 2025 Report

Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | Community Development Educator



Continued development of the Chippewa Valley Health Cooperative and its efforts to re-open the former St. Joseph's Hospital in Chippewa Falls as an full-service interim healthcare facility, and to build a new full-service hospital in Lake Hallie, Wisconsin to replace the 34% of regional health care lost with the closure of the two HSHS hospitals in Eau Claire and Chippewa Falls and 19 Prevea clinics across the region. (Bill Oemichen, Garret Zastoupil, Karl Green, Kristen Bruder)

Facilitated a 2-day planning and design workshop to help the community of Fairchild, Wisconsin make improvements to community infrastructure (parks, trails, downtown, etc.). Members from 3 local organizations as well as citizens at large worked together to develop a shared vision for future development and enhancements to community infrastructure in Fairchild. The 2-day workshop provided a forum to collect information to inform community placemaking planning and design alternatives that the community could use to make Fairchild more vibrant. (Todd Johnson, Garret Zastoupil, Krist Runge, Melissa Kono, Todd Barman)

A facilitated workshop of Momentum West Housing Summit participants to identify successes, challenges, and resource gaps to support housing development in western Wisconsin. Through this workshop, participants were able to share with one another and identify opportunities for ongoing professional development for local government leaders, housing developers, and community economic development professionals.

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 three-part workshop series convened leaders from over 30 homeless service providers in Eau Claire County to build and refine a community plan to end homelessness through participatory methods and the inclusion of people with lived and living experience. This collaborative effort, in partnership with Eau Claire County Department of Human Services and Eau Claire City-County Health Department, aims to establish a unified and effective strategy for addressing homelessness across the county.

Spotlight

The Community Development Educator had engaged in preliminary conversations with community members during their onboarding. During this process, they developed a system map for homelessness in the county to understand relevant organizations and share with Public Health and other organizations. Later, the Educator worked with the Department of Human Services on a strategic plan and built trust with staff who later approached the educator about the potential to support efforts on community conversations. The Educator is in a series of meetings to co-design processes that will build trust among service providers, increase community engagement, and strengthen the participation of those most impacted by these challenges in creating new futures. 1. Build trust among service providers 2. Increase sense of belonging among community members 3. Decrease the number of people who are functionally homeless 4. Increase community capacity to respond to challenges

Extension Eau Claire County

June 2025 Report

Health & Well-Being

Sandy Tarter
FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner
FoodWise Educator



Hillarie Roth
FoodWise Educator



We warmly welcome Hillarie Roth to our Eau Claire team! Hillarie has been an Area FoodWise Nutrition Educator working out of the Chippewa office, covering Chippewa and Dunn Counties, since January 2023. She transitioned to Eau Claire on June 2nd.

"I am excited to work in the community where I live and where I have raised my family. Helping my neighbors and community members to live healthier, more active lives is something I am passionate about, and I am excited to serve in that capacity!" ~Hillarie

A collaboration with Eau Claire Master Gardener Volunteers, Eau Claire City Parks and Recreation, Chippewa Valley Builders Association, and Chippewa Valley Technical College to start activities in implementing the FoodWise Garden Grant program - Year 2. This effort will replace 9 raised beds and widen pathways for accessibility in the North River Fronts Kids Garden.



A 6-week series with Eau Claire Boys & Girls Club of the Greater Chippewa Valley at the North River Fronts Kids Garden from June - August in collaboration with the Master Gardener Volunteers, and in partnership with the City of Eau Claire Parks and Forestry Division. This effort integrates nutrition education with gardening and expects to increase exposure to locally grown fruits and vegetables by tending a garden, helping youth learn parts of the plants, engaging in interactive activities, and providing tastes of a variety of fruits and vegetables.



Spotlight

The North River Fronts Kids Garden has been in existence for 19 years. FoodWise collaborates with the Eau Claire Master Gardener Volunteers to provide garden and nutrition education to the Boys and Girls Club youth each summer. Overall wear and tear along with weather impact has broken down the raised beds. FoodWise submitted a garden grant application with details of partners, work to be done, budgeting, and plan to include the community. A grant of \$2500 was secured for work to be started in 2024 when 6 garden beds were replaced and garden supplies purchased for the garden. FW secured another grant of \$2500 in 2025. Work of replacing 9 garden beds that are left will commence after the FW education is completed in August. Replacing the old, worn-down garden beds ensures that this Kids Garden will continue for many more years. This effort was made possible by the collaboration of multiple partners including Master Gardener Volunteers, Chippewa Valley Builders Association volunteers, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Boys and Girls Club- Mary Markquart Center, and Eau Claire City Parks and Recreation.



Extension Eau Claire County

June 2025 Report

Margo Dieck | Health and Well-Being Educator



A series of meetings for WeCOPE facilitators where the curriculum is being reviewed and revised. This effort is being conducted to ensure quality learning experience for participants in this program and to support consistent facilitator delivery of the content. (Sheila Michels, Danette Hopke, Janeth Orozco, Jennifer Park-Mroch, Margo Dieck, Sara Ennocenti)

Co-Chairing the Chippewa Valley Suicide Prevention Workgroup, which covers suicide prevention efforts in Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties. The goal of this group is to collaborate on efforts to reduce deaths by suicide in the region.

Co-Chairing the Eau Claire Health Alliance: Mental Health & Community Connectedness health priority area. The goal of this effort is to guide the work of two task forces, which are collaborative groups with specific and focused health improvement plans connected to objectives identified in the Community Health Improvement Plan. Current task force work is focused on youth mental health and safe and sober spaces in the community.

Collaborating with the Safe and Sober Spaces Task Force to plan for policy, systems, and environmental change around increasing the frequency and availability of substance free events/spaces/groups/establishments in Eau Claire County. The goal is to 'Improve mental health by providing opportunities for community connection.', and the specific objective is 'Support at least three strategies to increase community access to options for safe and sober spaces for socialization outside of work, school, and home, focusing on areas/communities with the largest gaps in access.'

Collaborating with the Youth Mental Health Task Force to plan for an equitable approach to increasing the amount of youth accessing mental health services in Eau Claire County. The goal is to 'Support youth mental health', and the specific objective is 'At least quarterly each year promote training, programs, and resources that equip families with knowledge, skills, and resources to support youth mental health focusing on youth most at risk.'

Met with three agencies (public, private, nonprofit, school) in effort to better understand the mental health landscape in Eau Claire County and the Chippewa Valley.

Spotlight

The 2024 Eau Claire County Community Health Assessment identified Substance Misuse and Mental Health & Community Connectedness as two of the health priority areas to address in the 2025-27 Community Health Improvement Plan. This Task Force works to bridge the gap between these two priority areas, hoping to decrease loneliness and isolation among adults who are in recovery or seeking sober event spaces.

Positive Youth Development

Rachel Hart-Brinson | 4-H Program Educator



With guidance from the 4-H Educators, the Area 6 interns have been planning a Day Camp Series for youth in grades K-2. The educators have helped them by offering education on program planning, helping select the sites, and working through a budget. The interns have selected the themes and planned the activities. (Zachary Rozmiarek, Jordan Blue, Rachel Hart-Brinson)

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

Extension Eau Claire County

June 2025 Report

4-H Camp Counselor training where youth counselors practiced leading campfire skits and songs, explored personal culture, and discussed safety scenarios. This training was intended to increase self-awareness, confidence, and practice leadership abilities.

4-H Camp Chaperone training where chaperones went over roles and responsibilities and camp rules in accordance with the 4-H camp policies. This training was to make sure that adult chaperones understood their role at camp and supported positive youth development best practices.



Eau Claire-Dunn-Clark 4-H Base Camp at Kamp Kenwood on Lake Wissota where 14 high school counselors led camp activities for 64 campers in 3-6 grade. This was a leadership development experience for the counselors and an opportunity for campers to try new things, gain confidence, and practice social skills.

Spotlight

Eau Claire-Dunn-Clark 4-H Outpost Camp where 17 young people slept in tents and cooked their meals over the campfire with the support and guidance of one high school and one college-aged counselor and the direct guidance of the Eau Claire and Dunn County 4-H Educators. They played games, worked together to prepare and clean up meals, hiked, canoeing, and sang songs. Guest speakers brought in the aspect of career exploration. We heard from Drew Kaiserson of Kaiserson Honey, Rich Maki from the Department of Natural Resources, Heidi Conde from the Chippewa Valley Astronomical Society, Trout Unlimited, and our own Zac Rozmiarek. This experience aimed to provide an opportunity for young people to try new things, experience personal growth, and enjoy the outdoors as well as provide a leadership development opportunity for the counselors.



Outpost Campers learn about forest fire management from Zac Rozmiarek

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](#)

Extension Eau Claire County

June 2025 Report

Value Added Programming

An updated suite of nutrient management publications is being prepared to enable cranberry farmers to reference the most up-to-date information regarding nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and micronutrient needs and efficiency for cranberry production. The current publication suite is from 2000 and does not address modern hybrids in sufficient depth. (Allison Jonjak, Amaya Atucha)

An educational opportunity for programming 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)

Part 2 of the Introduction to Qualitative Data Analysis Workshop for Local and Tribal Health Departments where participants learn about tools and tips to conduct qualitative data analysis, develop codebooks, present data in a report and share findings back to their community. The goals of this effort are to increase community capacity in qualitative data analysis and program evaluation, and community capacity to incorporate community inputs in decision-making in public health. (Pearly Wong, Sarah Boulton, Selena Freimark, Sheena Cook-Fuglsang)

Navigator enrollment assistance provided to anyone in Wisconsin, where 97,013 consumers were assisted with health insurance questions or enrollment. Through this effort, our Navigators completed 4,041 qualified health plan enrollments through the federal Health Insurance Marketplace and assisted 5,615 consumers with Medicaid, resulting in widespread access to health care and improved health outcomes. (Adam Vanspankren, Allison Espeseth, Elizabeth Rothe)

Growing Capacity and Connections for Hmong-Focused Farm to School is a grant-based project funded through the USDA and Lake Michigan School Food System Innovation Hub in collaboration with Community Food Systems Program's Hmong Community Food System Outreach Specialist and Farm to Institution Outreach Specialist. The goal of this effort is to increase Farm to School (F2S) wholesale-market readiness for Hmong farmers through capacity and network building and increase school food service operators' awareness of and readiness to purchase and use Hmong foods. Impacts of this work aim to improve the amount and quality of nutritious produce purchased locally and increase availability of culturally relevant foods available in school meals. The project also includes the development and dissemination of statewide outreach materials for both farmers and school audiences; and opportunities for statewide Hmong-focused F2S network development. (Karie Johnson, Addison Vang, Cathryn Herlihey, Emily Yang)

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)

Summer Academy, a college and career readiness residential experience on UW-Madison's campus for middle and high school aged youth from across the state of Wisconsin. Participants chose career tracks either at UW-Madison or Madison College. The final morning included a capnote addressed by Dane County Judge Everett Mitchell, an historical overview of the significance of the Juneteenth federal holiday, and the importance of empathy in the youth justice system. It also included a presentation by the Wisconsin Leaders Council of 4-H and an activity around community action planning by youth and adults from End Domestic Abuse, a statewide community organization focused on violence prevention, healthy relationships, and youth voice. Five Eau Claire County Youth attended Summer Academy, along with Eau Claire summer 4-H intern, Gracie Gray.



Three of the Eau Claire County 4-H Youth attending Summer