Extension
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Extension Eau Claire County
September 2026 Report

Dashboard Report

(July - September)

This dashboard provides a snapshot of how Extension is connecting with community members through both in person and online engagement across the county and region. These numbers reflect the frequency and breadth of those connections rather than unique individuals or depth of impact and should be considered alongside program outcomes to fully understand Extension's value.

105	**Number of coalition, partner, and workgroup meetings**
77	**Number of presentations, programs (online and face to face), and outreach events**
2618	**Number of participants served in presentations, programs (online and face to face), and outreach events**
89	**Number of public requests for information from the Eau Claire Extension Office**

Online Presence

- Newsletters
  - *Clover Leaves* is a bi-weekly 4-H newsletter distributed to 267 members and subscribers
  - *Tri-County Connection* is a quarterly area wide newsletter distributed to 1.8 K subscribers
- Social Media
  - 4-H Facebook: 786 Followers, 252 Content Interactions, 9.8K views
  - Extension Facebook: 966 Followers, 230 Content Interactions, 2.4 K views

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Upcoming Events

October 17 at 10:00am I Garden Hour Chippewa Falls Community Garden on fall garden cleanup



Free Movie Night & Youth Mental Health Resource Fair!

Join us on **Friday, November 6th** at UW-Eau Claire for community connection, youth mental health resources, and a free movie screening of *Inside Out*! Before the movie starts at 6pm, drop by to grab some **free popcorn** and connect with local organizations dedicated to supporting youth mental health in our area.

Where: UW-Eau Claire | Dakota Ballroom (3rd Floor, Davies Student Center – Building 5)
When: Friday, November 6th from 5 - 8pm *(Inside Out starts at 6pm)*
Parking: FREE after 4 pm in lots F, S, F/S, R, and G (Phillips Lot is recommended!)



The conversations and connections that began at the 2026 Partnership Summit have laid the foundation for meaningful community action, and we'd like to continue that important work together. We invite you to join us for a **virtual reconvening session on Thursday, October 29 from 9:00 - 11:00 am via Zoom**. This will be an interactive session to reconnect, hear updates on the group work that began at the Summit, celebrate progress, and identify next steps as we continue creating positive change together. Open to all. Register here.

Agriculture

For updated Valley E-Newsletters click here

Jerry Clark | Regional Crops & Soils Educator



A social field event for business leaders and lenders where participants learned about how UW-Madison Extension programs serve the agricultural industry and community development to increase economic development activity.

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 N fertilizer resulting in more sustainable corn production and farm profitability, and reduce risk to ground and surface water.

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A field event for farmers and agronomy professionals where participants learned about their corn silage moisture content to ensure corn silage was harvested and stored at the proper moisture for optimal animal performance and farm profitability. (In partnership with: Melissa Ohlrich & Ryan Sterry)

A field event for farmers, agronomy professionals, and students where participants learned soil nitrogen management strategies to minimize nitrogen application rates to increase farm profitability and protect groundwater resources.

A webinar where Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association members learned about manure spill response to better prepare county land and water conservation professionals to respond to manure spills and releases.

Spotlight

A social field event for business leaders and lenders where participants learned about how UW-Madison Extension programs serve the agricultural industry and community development to increase economic development activity. Total Reach: 42 - entrepreneurs, business leaders, lenders - BEAR at the Orchard is about helping entrepreneurs build relationships, learn from others, access resources, and keep moving their ideas and businesses forward. The objective for presenters was to introduce what organizations provide and visit participants about their businesses and goals to help connect them with the people, organizations, and next steps that may be useful to them. BEAR at the Orchard was held at Dixon's Orchard near Cadott and was coordinated by the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation to provide a forum for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and lenders to network and connect about services provided by public and private sector organizations. As an invited presenter representing the agricultural industry, I provided an overview of how educational programs and services provided by local Division of Extension offices can help new and established businesses achieve their goals. Forty-two Chippewa Valley entrepreneurs, business leaders, and lenders were provided an opportunity to learn about The University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law Extension Chippewa County September 2026 Report Extension's educational programs and services related to agriculture and economic development. Several of the participants were new connections to Extension.

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator
Celebrating 20 years of service!!



An interview with Spectrum News on beef x dairy crossbreeding to increase income for dairy farms and potential impacts of trade policy. (With: Bill Halfman, & Leonard Polzin)

An article for beef producers on the grazing of corn stalk residue on crop fields post-harvest. Articles such as this one keep relevant and up to date research and findings within the industry at the producers fingertips. Producers can take this information and utilize it in their operations as they see fit to make economic impacts, better manage cattle, and make environmental use of land. (Written with: Casey Lobdell, Adam Hartfiel, & Bill Halfman)

A presentation on UW-Madison Extension resources and programming for rural stakeholders.

Spotlight

Dairy farms have widely adopted beef × dairy crossbreeding as a valuable source of additional revenue. As interest in these calves continues to grow, Spectrum News interviewed UW-Madison Extension about the origins of beef × dairy

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crossbreeding, calf performance, and the effects of beef market trends and tariffs on dairy farm profitability. Extension expertise was featured in the final story, increasing visibility of UW-Madison Extension as a trusted resource for producers and consumers. Find the video here.

Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | Horticulture Educator

Sign up to receive Extension in the Valley and for more garden articles, visit Seasonal Gardening Articles.



An in-person program for the public to have hands-on practice collecting a soil sample and filling out a soil sample submission form. This effort was designed to teach gardeners about soil health and how a soil sample supports good soil maintenance.

An in-person guided tour of a native prairie for the public where participants learned about native plants and how they positively impact the local ecosystem, support biodiversity and native wildlife. This effort was to provide information on native plants while actively engaging in a productive, healthy and scenic native plant system to encourage participants to consider incorporating native plants into their own landscape.

An in-person program for the public where participants learn basic tips on how to create a rain garden, why location matters and how rain gardens benefit a landscape. This effort was designed to help participants understand the dos and don'ts of rain gardens and whether a rain garden is right for their space.

Provide monthly garden articles to the public where participants learn about timely horticulture topics. This month included information on growing garlic, planting trees in the fall and keeping your landscape watered before heading into winter after a dry season. This ongoing effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture topics, gardening tips and concerns and includes links to many other articles as well as upcoming events. Total Reach: Reach is over 700 emails on distribution list (Collaborated with: Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, and Ryan Sterry)

An in-person field event for 5th grade students where participants learned about pollinators, native plants and invasive species. The goal of this effort was to increase participants' awareness of the importance of pollinator conservation, native plants and the removal of invasive species. (Collaborated with: Jerry Clark, Amber Gilles, Jeanne Walsh, Jordan Blue)

Community Development

Vacant | Community Development Educator

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Health & Well-Being

Margo Dieck | Health and Well-Being Educator



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.

A screening of the documentary Aging in America where participants learned about key issues facing the aging population including housing, healthcare, and longevity. Discussion after the screening focused on how to stay engaged in the community, increase social connection, and prioritize various dimensions of wellness.

Spotlight

Eau Claire County, like the state of Wisconsin and the rest of the United States, is seeing an increase in the aging population. Infrastructure is not designed to support this growing population, and the film Aging in America identifies key issues this population is facing. Encouraging older adults to watch the film and brainstorm ways to engage in their own health and community is one strategy to address some of these concerns. In partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Eau Claire County Aging and Disability Resource Center, and L.E. Phillips Senior Center. I provided resources to help participants create SMART goals, as well as a guided SELF-care action plan. I also promoted the Healthy Minds app through the Center for Healthy Minds.

Positive Youth Development

Vacant | 4-H Program Educator

Cindi Syverson | 4-H Associate Educator



Juntos has had a strong start at South Middle School in Eau Claire with 15 youth fully enrolled and approved in 4-H online. Juntos also participated in the Multicultural Festival at Phoenix Park, reaching over 200 people. Being recognized by ECASD school board for Hispanic Heritage Month was the first time many Juntos families had been in the District Office.

Working at the Spaghetti Dinner for National 4-H Week was a great way to connect with more families. Fall Forum is fast approaching as in YPCL.

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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

Collaboration Across Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties

An on-farm research study to better understand manure application, commercial nitrogen application rates, and nitrogen credits on corn yield and potential effect on ground water. 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, Joshua Kamps, Todd Prill)

Provide monthly garden articles to the public where participants learn about timely horticulture topics. This month included information on growing garlic, planting trees in the fall and keeping your landscape watered before heading into winter after a dry season. This ongoing effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture topics, gardening tips and concerns and includes links to many other articles as well as upcoming events. (Margaret Murphy, Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

Provide garden articles to the public published in the Extension in the Valley, tri-county monthly newsletter that focuses on Horticulture and Agriculture news, where participants learn about various topics. This month included information links to water-wise landscape plantings, currently seen yard and garden insects and pumpkins. This ongoing effort is designed to keep participants connected to current horticulture topics, gardening tips and concerns and includes links to many other articles as well as upcoming events. (Margaret Murphy, Amber Gilles, Jerry Clark, Ryan Sterry)

Planning for a Partnership Summit Reconvening across Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire Counties in collaboration with partners who work on food insecurity, housing, transportation, and childcare. The goal of this effort is to reconnect after the May 2026 Partnership Summit, hear updates on the group work that began at the Summit, celebrate progress, and identify next steps as we continue creating positive change together. (Margo Dieck, Deanna Wiersgalla)

Coordinating action steps from the 2026 Partnership Summit to continue collaboration and coordination of next steps. The goal is to create an impact report, create videos with partners to answer questions, create a website to host all follow-up information, and plan for a reconvening of partners in October. (Margo Dieck, Deanna Wiersgalla, Garret Zastoupil)

An in-person field event for 5th grade students where participants learned about pollinators, native plants and invasive species. The goal of this effort was to increase participants' awareness of the importance of pollinator conservation,

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native plants and the removal of invasive species. (Margaret Murphy, Amber Gilles, Jeanne Walsh, Jerry Clark, Jordan Blue)

Continued planning and support of the Market Match Program in collaboration with the Eau Claire Downtown Farmers Market through acquiring funding and educating the community about the program. The goal of this effort is to ensure FoodShare eligible community members continue to receive free Market Match dollars to increase access to local, nutritious foods. (Margo Dieck, Sandy Tarter)

A webinar where Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association members learned about manure spill response to better prepare county land and water conservation professionals to respond to manure spills and releases. (Jerry Clark, Kevin Erb, Matthew Bolen, Todd Prill)

A field event for farmers, agronomy professionals, and students where participants learned soil nitrogen management strategies to minimize nitrogen application rates to increase farm profitability and protect groundwater resources. (Jerry Clark, Todd Prill)

A webinar where Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association members learned about manure spill response to better prepare county land and water conservation professionals to respond to manure spills and releases. (Jerry Clark, Kevin Erb, Matthew Bolen, Todd Prill)

Value Added Programming

Developing interactive maps and planning an educational program to help community organizations identify and connect with others by addressing similar system-level issues. The initiative aims to strengthen collaboration and increase organizational capacity to respond to local needs and drive meaningful changes. (Tim Borud, Michael Brenneis, Sarah Schlosser)

Health insurance Navigator assistance for anyone in Wisconsin, where a total of 74,147 coverage services were provided directly to increase enrollment, retention, and appropriate use of benefits. Through this effort, our Navigators assisted 13,360 consumers with qualified health plan enrollments through the federal Health Insurance Marketplace and applications to Medicaid, supporting access to health care and improved health outcomes. (Adam Vanspankeren, Allison Espeseth)

Between January and December 2025, Covering Wisconsin offered 18 virtual training courses for health insurance enrollment assistants and other professionals located throughout Wisconsin. The 503 registrants were educated on Medicaid, BadgerCare Plus, and HealthCare.gov Marketplace eligibility and enrollment policy and program processes to enable effective application help and successful consumer coverage enrollment and retention. Our webinars have up-to-date information regarding health care policy changes and updates, complex case support, fixing coverage for consumers that have been victims of health insurance enrollment fraud, Special Enrollment Periods, and guidance for meeting both federal and state licensing requirements. (Elizabeth Rothe, Adam Vanspankeren, Allison Espeseth)

Planning for a presentation in November for library staff from ten counties in Western Wisconsin, to develop the requested training on working with teenagers. Library staff regularly interact with teen clients and want to know how to appropriately support their development and mental health. (Luisa Gerasimo, Robert Nix)

A certification training for approved 4-H volunteers, where participants earned National 4-H Shooting Sports certification in a specific discipline. Through this training, certified volunteers are equipped to provide safe and effective shooting sports education in their counties, creating opportunities for youth development while promoting outdoor ethics and conservation stewardship. (Jason Hornickel)

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Planning has begun for the 2027 Dunn, Clark, and Eau Claire County 4-H camp. The first step is to set up camp counselor interviews. Educators have met to create the camp counselor application and set the dates of the application period. Applications will be accepted in October. (Zachary Rozmiarek, Seth Harrmann)

The Restorative Justice Summit is a statewide educational forum that brings together young people and youth-serving professionals to collaborate in advancing equitable, evidence-based restorative justice and peacemaking practices that aim to transform youth services, programs and communities in Wisconsin. (Joe Maldonado, Annie Lisowski, Christa Van Treeck, Justin Lieck, Laura Pine, Ronda Davis, Simon Harty)

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