

Mission Statement

The purpose to which we commit:

We teach, learn, lead, and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

Introduction

It is with great pleasure and pride that Fond du Lac County UW-Extension reports a few of our initiatives and accomplishments from 2014. Serving county residents of all ages, organizations, agencies, and businesses is our passion. Armed with expertise from across the state and within the UW-System, we carry forward the Wisconsin Idea of extending the boundaries of the university to the homes, businesses, and farms of Fond du Lac County. In doing so, our goal is to empower people to make informed decisions that will lead to more productive, healthy, and fulfilling lives. A sincere thanks goes to all of the volunteers and partners who help us make Fond du Lac County a better place to work and live. We also acknowledge the various branches of Fond du Lac County government for their steadfast support and encouragement. Our staff looks forward to a productive 2015 and beyond.

Animal Well-Being

The care and well-being of cattle in Wisconsin is important to consumers and farmers alike. Dairy producers, employees, and service providers are responsible for the welfare of cattle under their care, and are committed to making sure all animals are treated humanely.

Animal care begins at the farm level.

Although all farmers strive to take excellent care of their animals, there are times when cows are injured or sick and not able to stand on their own.

UW-Extension responded in numerous ways to animal well-being in 2014 due to the release of a potential animal abuse case on a northeast Wisconsin dairy farm. Piloted in Fond du Lac County, *Dealing with Compromised Cattle* was a five meeting road show developed to address prevention, safety, and management of the down cow. Forty-three individuals attended the pilot meeting with a total of

116 participants across all locations. As part of *Dealing with Compromised Cows, Assessing Risk-Ensuring Animal Well-Being on the Farm* has been an additional effort throughout the programming year, reaching over 325 large dairy operators and consultants and over 100 livestock youth.

With 15 to 20 percent of US beef sales being from the dairy industry, producers must be committed to food safety and quality every time a cow is culled from the herd. Managing dairy cattle to avoid quality defects has the combined effect of promoting dairy animal well-being, herd health, performance and profitability. Twenty-nine dairy producers participated in a Meating our Responsibility JBS Packerland Tour to learn how animal husbandry practices impact carcass quality and to improve the value of their cull cows.



Tina Kohlman, Fond du Lac/Sheboygan County dairy & livestock agent, teaches animal well-being

Celebrating 100 Years of Wisconsin 4-H

Throughout 2014, 4-H members across Fond du Lac County took part in recognizing and celebrating the Wisconsin 4-H centennial. Denise Retzleff, 4-H youth development educator, served as a catalyst for clubs and members to investigate their place in 4-H history. Forest Hills 4-H Club members did 100 service projects throughout the year. Armstrong 4-H hosted their first ever 5K Fun Run/Walk. Green Valley 4-H created a new club banner that celebrated the changes in the program and community over the past 100 years. Five 4-H clubs from the Eden/Campbellsport area wrote weekly 4-H articles for the Campbellsport News. Photography members in Brandon Tanagers 4-H had a special outing to capture photos of historic buildings. Ryan Stommel led an effort to create a 4-H centennial cookbook that features favorite family recipes as well as 4-H history. Five members used the centennial theme in the annual county writing contest. Weeping

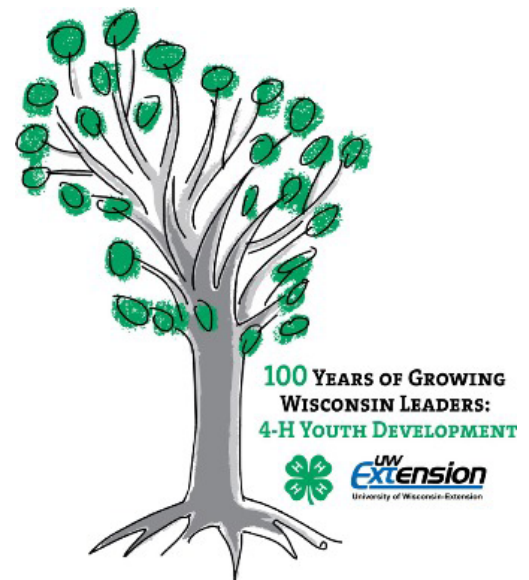
Willow 4-H hosted an alumni potluck; among attendees were a charter leader in the foods project and a leader who taught handicrafts 60 years ago. Special events were held at the county fair. Three youth gave testimonials to the county board on the impact of 4-H. Fifteen members and leaders participated in 4-H Day at the Capitol where they spoke to elected

officials about the value and impact of 4-H and how it has changed communities. Recognition was received by 334 members for their involvement with the centennial. Through these activities youth increased their sense of belonging to 4-H and developed skills in leadership, teamwork, communication, decision-making, service, planning and organizing.

“I went to three centennial celebrations that Wisconsin State 4-H held: Day at the Capitol, 4-H Day at the Wisconsin State Fair, and Fall Forum. I even presented about 4-H with two other people at the Fond du Lac County Board meeting. With these centennial celebrations I have enjoyed looking at all the Wisconsin 4-H history. Wisconsin 4-H has been around for 100 years and I hope it will last for another 100 years or more. I love 4-H always and forever.” - Noah J.



Green Valley 4-H members display their new club banner created to commemorate the WI 4-H centennial.



IGNITE!

Because Wisconsin has less entrepreneurial activity than other states and a higher rate of business failure, UW-Extension joined with area business development partners to create IGNITE! — a formalized collaboration of organizations that support existing and aspiring entrepreneurs. Area job creators use IGNITE! to quickly access consultations, funding, and education. Through IGNITE!, Community, Natural Resource, and Economic Development Educator Diana Hammer Tscheschlok:

- Obtained a UW-Extension grant of \$4510 to promote IGNITE! to people of color, women, and immigrants; groups that use existing business development services less than other residents.
- Initiated a needs assessment to learn more about the area's African-American, Asian, Latino, Native American, and immigrant entrepreneurs. In addition to

“This was one of the best classes, where I didn’t get bored or tired. I so appreciate it. You were as passionate about it as I was and that made all the difference when I really didn’t know what I was getting myself into.” - Going Solo participant, June 2014

informing them about IGNITE!, Ripon College business students interviewed business owners about what has worked well for them, what could improve, and any needs they have for education or business development services.

- Taught the 5-week Going Solo workshop series, an introduction to starting a business, which five women successfully completed. These participants indicated the class increased their level of preparation to pursue their business goals, increased their awareness of organizations that can support their business development, increased their

motivation to continue working on their business, and increased their ability to judge the feasibility of a business idea.



At a Going Solo class, Jan Saunders (left), owner of Tiny Town Child Care in Brandon, describes some of her marketing techniques, staffing challenges, and growth in clients despite the 2009 flood. Ger Xiong (right), Business Development Specialist at ADVOCAP and member of IGNITE!, financed flood-repair loans for Saunders' who describes ADVOCAP as a “partner in my business.”

“As an African-American woman in a predominately white area, will people even use my business?”

- Going Solo participant, June 2014

Community Service is Foundation of Master Gardeners



Master Gardeners working with elementary students to prepare a garden plot

The Master Gardener Volunteer Association is a group of committed individuals with a passion for horticulture, education, and public service. Members are required to maintain an annual commitment of 24 hours of community volunteer time and 10 hours of continuing education. They maintain a number of the gardens on the UW-Fond du Lac campus and various gardens in the community. They also work on garden projects at area elementary schools and answer many of the horticultural questions that come into the UW-Extension office. Their commitment to the community and UW-Extension resulted in nearly 5800 hours of volunteer service provided in 2014.

Twenty-four individuals completed the 12 week, Level 1 Master Gardener training in 2014. This is the first step to becoming a

certified Master Gardener. Trainees learn basic horticultural concepts and how to diagnose plant problems and recommend solutions. Each participant took a written test in order to attain intern status as members of the Fond du Lac County Master Gardener Volunteer Association. They obtain full certification once they meet their volunteer hour requirement in 2015.

“Master Gardeners offers me the opportunity to follow my passion and feel like I’m contributing to the community at the same time.”

Communicating Agronomic Information: The Rules Have Changed

Information and communication are foundational to the core of Extension work. Good, research based information is of little value if it can't be communicated to those who will put it into practice with beneficial results. Similarly, poor information that is well communicated benefits very few and may actually do more damage than good. When Mike Rankin, crops and soils agent, started with UW-Extension in 1988, communication with clientele was limited to the phone, local media, meetings, and mail of the stamp variety. Today, all of these "old school" forms of communication still exist and remain effective. No longer, however, do they stand alone as good enough.

"Just a note to say how much I enjoy your 'Crop Lines' articles in The Reporter. Yes, we're city slickers, but we also like to eat."

The agribusiness sector and many farmers now exclusively use electronic means of obtaining information: email, text messaging, websites, webinars, and social media. Neglecting these forms of communication limits the capacity of UW-Extension to accomplish its mission and carry forward the Wisconsin Idea of extending the boundaries of the university to the boundaries of the state.

"How are you going to reach my kids who are running the farm now? They say they're too busy to go to meetings."

The success of growing a good crop often hinges on timeliness of field operations and weather. Similarly, the utility of agronomic information has its greatest impact when delivered in a timely manner. Electronic forms of information can be communicated in real time. A significant communication upgrade in 2014 was the total makeover of the Fond du Lac County Agronomy website. Clients now have the ability to subscribe to the site and receive an email alert when new information is posted. Others have the option to read it in the newspaper on Sunday morning if they so choose. Both are effective; today, both are needed. If that's still not good enough, find it on Twitter® as well.



Retooling: cutting edge agronomy info is delivered electronically

Focusing on the Environment

Residents across the county were empowered with new environmental education through the work of Noreen O'Brien, community environment educator. Examples are:

- Citizens learned about radon testing and mitigation through print media, social media, table displays, and health fairs.
- O'Brien developed a four-page questionnaire to determine the effectiveness of the impact of 25 years of well water education. It will be distributed in 2015.
- Ten tons of hazardous waste were diverted from landfills and groundwater when more than 150 households, farms, and businesses participated in Clean Sweep. Before the event, O'Brien promoted Clean Sweep with flyers in English and Spanish, as well as one for low-literacy readers.

- Fond du Lac County set a goal four years ago to reduce its energy consumption by 10% by 2015. In 2014 O'Brien recruited employees to join an energy communications team. The

team has met four times and initiated a short newsletter to educate co-workers about energy issues at work and at home.



Ten tons of hazardous waste were diverted from landfills and groundwater

Building Community Through the Gardens

Over 100 families who cannot garden in their own backyard had an opportunity to dig in the soil at the Fond du Lac Community Gardens. Nutritious food supports the family while building a sense of community around gardening. Patty Percy, community garden coordinator, with UW-Extension and Master Gardeners



Junior Master Gardeners mulch tomatoes to hold in moisture and prevent weeds



provide education and management for the 193 garden plots. While the gardeners provide their own tools, plants, and labor, the Master Gardeners are available to mentor the inexperienced gardeners. Through newsletters, gardening news and resources are shared. Garden improvements in 2014 included installation of a water line and delivery of topsoil in order to increase garden productivity. Master Gardener volunteers completed a final harvest with the delivery of unused produce to local food pantries.

The Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program, a collaborative effort between the Master Gardener program and the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP), is a gardening program for children ages 8 to 19 years old in Fond du Lac County. Thirty-five children and parents attended this program over a six month time period. They started seeds and created a garden plan. Through hands-on activities in the garden and the kitchen, children learned about gardening and good nutrition. A field trip was taken to Maywood Environmental Park and the Bookworm Gardens in Sheboygan. The children prepared a celebration meal for their parents and had great fun making bouquets to take to the nursing home, which were much appreciated by the residents.

Education Strengthens Parenting Skills When Living Apart

In 2014 Fond du Lac County had 564 marriages and 554 divorces. Fifty-six percent of the divorces involved 603 minor children. Living Apart-Parenting Together is collaboratively taught by Shelley Tidemann, family living educator, and the Fond du Lac County family court services counselor on a monthly basis for court ordered separating and divorcing individuals. The Living Apart-Parenting Together program objectives are focused towards helping parents understand the impact of divorce on their children and acknowledge the important role both parents continue to play in their children's lives. Results from participants' end of session evaluations report significant gains. "Make a strong effort to maintain a good relationship with my ex-spouse and handle our issues without involving the kids" and "I think the 'I' messaging is going to be very important. Also, direct communication with my ex-husband and not asking the kids any questions about him."

Fond du Lac County UW-Extension Family Living, Family Court Services, and the Birth to 3 program designed a Keeping it About

"I wish we would have had this workshop sooner."

the Kids program. It targets families involved in paternity cases and the specific needs these parents have in co-parenting their children. Participants learn about the early years of child growth with an emphasis on brain development. This is coupled with communication skills in order to be more effective parents when parenting apart. They also learn about the court mandated co-parenting plan. Seventy-two individuals attended the paternity co-parenting sessions.



"This was more informative than I expected."

Safely Preserving Farmers Market Produce

Through a collaboration with UW-Extension, the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, and Fond du Lac Public Library, 191 Fond du Lac County residents received education on safe food preservation. Facilitating this partnership was an \$800 national grant from the Jarden Corporation (makers of Ball canning supplies). The purpose of the Discover You Can grant was to promote the purchase and use of farmers market produce and to provide education on safely preserving foods. Amanda Miller, family living educator, and Dr. Barb Ingham, UW-Extension food science specialist, developed educational lessons for use at the farmers market. Miller taught three all-day events in June, July and August. Each event had a different focus (freezing, canning tomatoes, and canning jams and jellies) with demonstrations, samples, and incentives. In addition to the farmers market, food preservation classes were held at the Fond du Lac Public Library and the UW-Extension office.

"An informative refresher course. I am looking forward to attending more classes in the future. I plan to share this information with family members."



"This information is great. I enjoyed the demonstration."

"Tomatoes Healthy and Delicious: Canning Tomatoes and Tomato Products" at the Downtown Fond du Lac Farmers Market, July 2014.

Young Dreamers

The Young Dreamers is a group created to better serve the fast growing Latino community in Fond du Lac County. The Holy Family Catholic Parish provides a place to hold the meetings, helps with promotion, and provides a platform for children to showcase their projects. This group has 12 Latino children, ages 4-16. They meet the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at the Sacred Heart School in Fond du Lac.



UW Fond du Lac students present science activities at Young Dreamers 4-H club meeting.

“I learned that kids love to have fun, no matter what the case is. I also learned how to incorporate myself as a role model around individuals who look up to me. Overall I had fun with the kids, and I learned how to appreciate the smaller things in life that get overlooked.”

- Chris, UW-FDL Student

UW-Fond du Lac Professor Kristy Wilkum and her students agreed to make Young Dreamers part of their curricula and service-learning. 4-H values, mission, and goals were discussed and all the materials were revised and corrected before each presentation. The students selected a broad list of topics including: team work, self-motivation, states of matter, and electricity. Each session included a 20 minute presentation and a hands-on activity related to each topic. The Latino youth appreciated having a variety of topics/activities and enjoyed interacting with the college students; they viewed them as role models. Dr. Wilkum and her students have expressed their wish to continue with this partnership and have shared the lessons they have learned through service-learning.



Young Dreamers 4-H club meeting topic on electromagnetism.

Food Resource Management for W-2 Participants

The Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) partnered with Forward Services (employment and training agency) to teach 57 W-2 clients food resource management skills. The “Money for Food” program helps individuals and families better budget their food dollars throughout the month. As a result of

the WNEP lessons, survey participants noted 83% had a goal of planning meals in advance; 79% learned something to make it easier to purchase healthy foods and 100% listed one action related to food budgeting that they planned to do at home.

“The class was very helpful. Today, I learned that I can price match (unit price), meal plan before shopping and shop at the farmers market for fruits and vegetables. I plan to utilize your suggestions on how to save money, know how much to spend on groceries and plan ahead.”



UW-Extension Fond du Lac County Staff

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- Miguel Gonzales, *Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA)*
- Ann Kaiser, *Program Assistant*
- Gloria Kelroy, *Program Assistant*
- Tina Kohlman, *Dairy & Livestock Agent*
- Amanda Miller, *WNEP Coordinator & Family Living Educator*
- Pamela Nelson, *WNEP Educator*
- Noreen O’Brien, *Community, Natural Resource & Economic Development Educator Special Assignment*
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- Patty Percy, *Community Garden Coordinator*
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- Denise Retzleff, *4-H Youth Development Educator & Co-Department Head*
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