



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DUNN COUNTY

July 2026 Report

Upcoming Events

- August 4 | 6-8:30 PM | Beef Cattle Feeders Twilight Meeting | Menomonie
- August 5 | 10:30 AM - Noon | Nitrogen and Soil Management Field Day | Dunn County Demo Farm, Menomonie
- August 15 | 10 AM - 11 AM | Garden Hour, focus food donation | Chippewa Falls Community Garden
- August 18 | 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM | High Oleic Soybeans for Dairy Field Day | CVTC Eau Claire and Elk Mound
- August 19 | 10:30 AM - Noon | Soil, Nitrogen, and Irrigation Field Day | Chippewa Falls area

Agriculture

Jerry Clark | *Regional Crops & Soils Educator*



Sign up to receive the Extension in the Valley agriculture and horticulture e-newsletter [HERE](#).

A field day where farmers learned about nitrogen and soil management strategies through local on-farm research to help farmers make decisions about nitrogen application and soil conservation to increase farm profitability and protect the environment. (In partnership with: Todd Prill)

A podcast where listeners will learn about mid-season hops management and production in Wisconsin to increase knowledge of opportunities and challenges of hops to provide a local ingredient to the craft brewing industry and potentially increase farm income. (Hosted with: Ann Kowenstrot)

An on-farm research study to better understand barley varieties for the malting industry and nitrogen application rates. Results from this study will help farmers make decisions on barley variety selection and nitrogen application rates improving barley quality and reducing risk of nitrogen moving to ground and surface water.

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. (Researching with: Joshua Kamps & Todd Prill)

Spotlight

A field day at an Adaptive Nitrogen Management on-farm research plot highlighted nitrogen application strategies, soil conservation practices, and nutrient management to improve farm profitability while protecting water quality. Participants heard from Extension and conservation experts, observed research plots and soil erosion demonstrations, and learned about the new Eau Claire County Watershed Alliance

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Producer-led Watershed Program. Twenty-one farmers and agronomy professionals increased their knowledge of nitrogen management, soil conservation, and marginal land management.

Ryan Sterry | Regional Livestock Educator



Demonstrations and interactive tabletop discussions during Farm Technology Days for beef producers. These activities are aimed to help participants gain awareness of management practices that influence the economic viability of their farms, including better understanding the impact of meat quality and yield grade on final saleable product. Other topics include animal health product handling and biosecurity. (Collaborated with: Adam Hartfiel, Bill Halfman, Casey Lobdell, and Sandy Stuttgen)

Interactive demonstrations on beef quality and yield grade for farms direct marketing, and consumers considering purchasing quarters, halves, or whole beef on-farm, at the Northern Wisconsin State Fair. Part of a larger collaboration promoting visibility of the Chippewa County Extension office with Jerry Clark, Jeane Walsh, Todd Prill, Margaret Murphy, and Jordan Blue.

Developing an enterprise budget spreadsheet for beef producers to project a cost of production to finish beef animals over multiple production phases. The goal is for farmers to determine their cost of production to make informed management decisions for finishing cattle. (Collaborated with: Bill Halfman, Adam Hartfiel, Casey Lobdell, Jackie Mccarville, Katelyn Goldsmith)

Spotlight

An enterprise budget spreadsheet was developed to help beef and dairy-beef producers calculate and project the cost of production from birth through finishing. The tool allows users to evaluate costs across multiple production phases and provides templates to account for key expenses. By improving their understanding of production costs, producers can make more informed management and marketing decisions, including feeder calf purchases, retained ownership opportunities, and feeding strategies to improve profitability.



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Horticulture

Margaret Murphy | *Regional Horticulture Educator*

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A second in-person hands-on class for at risk youth focused on signs of pests in their vegetable garden. Participants learned about common diseases, insect pests and other issues that may affect their vegetable garden and the importance of early detection. This effort was to help young gardeners understand how to recognize and sustainably manage common pests found in a vegetable garden. (in collaboration with the Dunn County Department of Human Services) Total Reach: 15 youth & 2 adults attended

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 on pests you might be seeing in the garden or landscape as well as gardening tips for older adults. 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.

Staffed an Extension information table at the Northern Wisconsin State Fair to provide the public with information about horticulture, other Extension programs, and upcoming events. The goal was to increase awareness of available Extension resources and connect community members with relevant educational opportunities. (Collaborated with Jerry Clark, Jeane Walsh, Todd Prill, Ryan Sterry and Jordan Blue).

An in-person, hands-on workshop at the Altoona Library for the public on designing and planting containers with summer flowers. Participants learned best practices for successful container gardening, including the fundamentals of container design, plant selection, planting techniques, and ongoing care. The workshop encouraged gardening for individuals with limited space or mobility while building participants' confidence in creating attractive container plantings and maintaining them throughout the growing season.

An in-person program for families at Lake Wissota State Park where participants learned about butterflies commonly found in the park through interactive, hands-on activities. The program was designed to spark youth interest in butterflies, increase understanding of their importance as pollinators, and encourage curiosity about the natural world.

Spotlight

Encouraging Families to Spend Time in Nature - Research has consistently shown the importance of spending time outdoors in nature. Studies support that people who spend more time in natural

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environments experience better mental health and a more positive outlook on life. For children, spending time around plants and in natural settings has been associated with improved concentration, focus, and learning. These experiences can enhance their ability to absorb, retain, and apply new information. My partnering with Lake Wissota State Park has provided opportunities to offer annual programs that invite families to explore the natural world together. These programs encourage meaningful outdoor experiences while fostering an appreciation for nature, supporting healthy lifestyles, and strengthening family connections.

Community Development

Garret Zastoupil | *Regional Community & Leadership Development Educator*



Co-Chairing the Childcare Action Team with Health Dunn Right, guiding a new group to identify its mission and goals, and development and implement an action plan. The goal of the group is to support affordable, accessible, high-quality childcare in Dunn County by bringing together a variety of partners from the business, education, and nonprofit communities.

Planning for a leadership development program for local government employees in collaboration with HR leaders and city and county officials. The goal is to identify and leverage existing resources to design a comprehensive program framework, so that local governments can build organizational capacity, foster positive workplace cultures, and attract and retain the talent necessary to effectively meet the public's needs.

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. (In collaboration with: Margo Dieck, & Deanna Wiersgalla)

Spotlight

The 2026 Partnership Summit brought together partners to strengthen long-term community resilience following the 2025 federal government shutdown, which increased demand for food, housing, childcare, and other basic needs services. The summit generated ongoing collaboration and action, with Extension continuing to support partners through small-group facilitation, resource development, a summit website, impact reporting, Q&A videos, and plans to reconvene participants to continue the work.



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Health and Well-Being

Sandy Tarter

FoodWise Coordinator



Joy Weisner

FoodWise Educator



Bi-weekly meetings of the WI Nutrition Incentive Program including individuals from Feeding America-Eastern WI, UW Madison-Extension, regional hub coordinators, farmers markets, American Heart Association, and others. This collaboration is a statewide effort to implement nutrition incentive programs including the Double Up Food Bucks program with farmers markets, community supported ag programs, and retail stores such as co-ops.

Weekly meetings with the state Double Up Food Bucks team and/or Western Hub to bring state funding for nutrition incentives to area farmers markets offering a Market Match/Double Bucks program. This effort will help support families with FoodShare to access bonus fresh fruits and vegetables. Markets are already seeing an increase in EBT purchases. Menomonie and Eau Claire Downtown Farmers Markets have expanded their match programs from \$10 per week up to \$20 per week to participants.

Collaboration with the Health Dunn Right- Mental Health and Wellness Action Team with support in helping to update the Community Resource Guide. This effort will strengthen coalition capacity and provide the most up-to-date resources for community members.

A series of 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.



Human Development and Relationships

Luisa Gerasimo | *Human Development and Relationships Educator*



Adopt a book bins placed in 4 local laundromats and the family visiting area in the Dunn Co. Government Center stocked with donated books. Through this effort children and families who are under-resourced are encouraged to spend more time reading in order to improve children's brain development and the bonding between adults and children.

Making Reading Memories, a program for families involved in the justice system where parents in jail are video recorded reading storybooks, which are then shared with their children at home. The goal is to reduce the trauma of separation, strengthen family relationships and at the same time increase children's exposure to books and reading.

Focus on Fathers, a monthly parenting program for fathers where participants learn skills to build their children's social and emotional learning. In July I co-taught a class on how fathers help children make good choices. This series is designed to improve understanding of positive parenting practices, while providing social connections for fathers and father figures. (In collaboration with: Pattie Carroll, Adam Trunzo, Amanda Griswold, Beverly Doll, Bob Wiegel, Heidi Ungrodt, Mary Campbell Wood, Renee Koenig, and Truong Tran)

Resilient Co-Parenting is a drop in series with a variety of topics for parents and caregivers experiencing separation, divorce, or changes in the custody of their children, where they learn skills to improve communication and problem-solving, support children emotionally, and keep kids out of the middle of conflict. This series is designed to improve understanding of positive parenting practices that are useful during stress, while providing social connection for parents experiencing family transitions. (In partnership with: Hannah Zellmer, Adam Trunzo, Amanda Griswold, Beverly Doll, Heidi Ungrodt, Jill Vanairsdale, Kaera Aubart, Mary Campbell Wood, Missy Bablick, Renee Koenig, Todd Wenzel, & Tracy Henegar)

Spotlight

To increase access to books and promote early childhood literacy, Extension partnered with local libraries, community members, and an independent bookstore to collect and distribute donated books through five community book bins. Since the beginning of 2026, more than 2,000 books have been donated and over 800 books have been distributed to local families. The initiative has engaged community members of all ages and helped connect children with books, supporting early literacy, family reading, and a love of learning.



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Positive Youth Development

Zachary Rozmiarek | 4-H Program Educator



The August Clover Courier can be viewed [HERE](#).

A series of three Tri-County Cloverbud Day Camps for youth in grades K–2, were hosted in Dunn, Eau Claire, and Chippewa County as part of a collaborative regional day camp series. A total of 25 youth explored different habitats through hands-on activities. Through this effort, youth strengthened their scientific curiosity, learned about ecosystems and animal habitats, and built connections

with peers in a positive youth development setting. (In collaboration with: Jordan Blue, Rachel Hart-Brinson, and area interns)

The 4-H team has been working together to plan the activities and displays for the 4-H Activity Barn at the Dunn County Fair. They are working on creating hands on displays that include a knot tying challenge, milking simulation, and beef education. They will also be offering a different craft each day. (Planned with: Ann Lee & Samantha Stephens)

The Dunn County 4-H Team staffed a table at the Colfax Fair. While there, they provided hands on activities to young fairgoers and shared about 4-H. They were visited by about 100 youth over the 3 days of the event. Dunn County 4-H's presence is valued at the fair because it allows the youth to participate in a hands-on activity that helps them discover a spark. (Hosted activities with: Ann Lee & Samantha Stephens)

At the Edible Engineering Project Day, youth learned the science behind engineering by using tasty items! They built structures using graham crackers, pretzels, frosting and more. They also used some of the same ingredients to make a tasty snack.

A group of 4-H'ers made different colored recycled paper, their own stamps which they used to decorate paper and wooden trays, and suncatchers that they could take home. We ended the morning by playing an Ocean Expedition Trivia board game. (With: , Ann Lee)

Value Added Programming

Covering Wisconsin creates education, outreach, and promotions messaging and tools for the public that are disseminated through myriad formats and venues around Wisconsin (e.g., toolkits for community collaborators, social media campaigns, billboards, streaming digital ads, resource events and fairs, trainings for professionals, and health insurance literacy "How To" web pages with printable PDF versions). Through this programming, we help people in Wisconsin obtain, effectively understand, and utilize health insurance, reducing the number of uninsured and underinsured people in our state. Over the past 12

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months, this included 16,914 people engaged at outreach events and trainings, 34,221 materials distributed, 181 professional trainings conducted, and over 900,000 views on social media and Google. (Colleen Harryman, Tina Marshalek)

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)

A study to better understand the bedrock geology of Dunn County. Results from this study will help the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and county officials make informed land and water use decisions. (Eric Stewart, Anna Fehling, Esther Stewart, Nick Rompa)

Area Extension Director

Kristen Bruder | *Area Extension Director – Dunn, Chippewa, and Eau Claire Counties*



Please reach out with questions and ideas. The role of the AED is much like the department head in the county. 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.

Upcoming events

[Event Calendar – Extension](#)

Dunn County Extension in the News

[4-H Key Award Recipients](#)

[Lego Inspired Siblings Award Winning Siblings Take 4-H Trifecta](#)

[Nitrogen and Soil Management Field Day in Menomonie Aug. 5](#)

[UW-Madison Extension to Host Nitrogen & Soil Management Field Day in Menomonie](#)

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