



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

February 2023 Report

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

4-H – Positive Youth Development

Holly Luerssen, 4-H Program Educator

Jasmine Carbajal, 4-H Associate Educator

Marathon County 4-H has started 2023 with lots of exciting and diverse programming and opportunities for our youth! Marathon County 4-H and the Marathon County Public Library-Wausau joined forces to offer Young Foodies: MyPlate Charcuterie Boards to youth in 3rd grade and up. During this interactive session, participants learned about MyPlate guidelines, charcuterie boards and walked to the indoor Farmer's Market to shop for ingredients to create their own MyPlate boards. Twenty-one participants attended and 95% reported trying something new at this event. Other great events included String Art with Wood, Clover-Kaboom for youth in K-2nd grade, Winter Leadership Camp for youth 7th grade and older, and 4-H Foodie: Edible Arrangement to help youth create something tasty and beautiful for Valentine's Day. The new year means that it is not too early to start thinking about summer camp! We have started our Summer Camp staff recruitment and we are excited to grow our camp participation from last year. Meanwhile, some of the awesome upcoming events to continue fostering sparks in youth (and adults!) include a Sewing Basics workshop, Mural Design and Painting with Stephanie Kohli, Quilt Camp, 4-H Foodie: Taco-About It!, Setting the Table, and a Wood & Marathon Counties 4-H Volunteer Retreat Day. Here are some pictures of our Marathon County Youth shining.



- A series of six afterschool programs for 2nd-5th graders at the Franklin Elementary where they explored STEM topics through hands-on activities. The purpose of this program is to increase teamwork, problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- An email newsletter for community partners involved with the Juntos Wisconsin Team where they learned about Juntos program activities and resources related to accessing higher education. The goal of this effort is to raise awareness of the Juntos Program and provide resources to individuals who work with middle school and high school students around higher education.
- A hands-on educational session where Marathon County youth in 3rd grade and up learned about chocolate, dipping and drizzling techniques and arrangement basics as they created an edible arrangement with fruit.



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- A hands-on educational program for Marathon County youth in kindergarten and up where they used wood, nails, a hammer, and thread to create string art. The goal of this session was to encourage creativity, enhance a new skill, and create something they could take to their local county fair.
- A hands-on educational activity where Marathon County youth in 3rd grade and older learned about the history of charcuterie boards, explored the local indoor farmer's market, and incorporated MyPlate guidelines into their own board creations. The goal of this program was to have youth practice healthy habits using MyPlate, encourage purchasing from local farmers/businesses, and taste new foods.

Agriculture

Heather Schlessner, Dairy Agent

- A live, in-person meeting for veterinarians and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest trends for using sexed semen and beef semen. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest University research on the use of sexed semen and beef semen, and how dairy professionals can practically apply these technologies to their clients' farms.
- An event for farm women, where participants learned about strategic thinking/ diversification ideas. This effort is designed to educate farm women about other business opportunities for their farm, so they can be sustainable.
- A research-based educational article for dairy farmers, and agri-business professionals, where participants will learn about current UW-Madison research and future applications of genomic testing in dairy cattle. The goal of this effort is to increase knowledge of Dairy cattle selection programs that aim to improve the profitability and sustainability of the dairy industry, either by targeting traits that increase revenue or traits that reduce expenses, of which fertility is one of the major traits included in selection indices.
- Planning a survey for past participants of the hybrid course, Planning Emergency Livestock Transport Response (PELTR), to find ways to improve the course. Our goal is to have the content be as valuable and concise as possible for future participants.
- Planning for bi-annual Midwest Manure Summit for farmers, managers, agronomists, engineers, nutrient management consultants, manure haulers, consultants, and other agri-business professionals. The goal of this effort is to teach individuals the latest, unbiased, university-based research on manure handling technologies, so that they can improve environmental sustainability and increase farm business viability.
- A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest research and applications regarding transition cow health, NSAID use at calving, and how genomic research can further improve dairy cattle fertility. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research on genomics, and how farmers can implement changes to management practices around calving time to set their dairy herd up for reproductive success.
- A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest trends and applications of use for sexed semen and beef x dairy semen use. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest University research on sexed semen and beef x dairy semen use, and how farmers can practically apply these technologies to their individual farms.
- A 3-part manure processing factsheet series for dairy owners/operators, managers, employees, consultants, and agribusiness professionals where they learned about struvite recovery from manure, systems approaches to managing manure using coordinated markets, and treating manure to produce clean water. This effort is



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designed to help individuals learn and adopt manure processing practices and technologies to improve farm viability, environmental sustainability, and food safety.

FoodWise

Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator
Gaonou Thao, FoodWise Educator

- Gaonou taught a monthly nutrition education series for Hmong women participating in a domestic abuse support group where participants taste new foods and learn healthy ways to prepare them. The purpose of this program is to improve the quality of their families' diet and improve food resource management.
- The FoodWise and Horticulture Educators provided education to Hmong women from the Women's Community (serving survivors of domestic violence), where participants received nutrition education while supporting positive mental well-being, and positive socialization.
- A lesson featuring healthy soup was offered in the "Healthy Eating" series offered to SNAP-eligible residents, where participants learn healthy lifestyle choices, food preparation, food safety, food resource management and physical activity. The goal of the series is to improve healthy eating and physical activity habits for Marathon County residents.
- StrongBodies classes began on February 14th and will run through April 20th on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-10:15am. These classes feature strength training and a nutrition education component that improve strength, balance, and flexibility so participants can stay healthy and socially connected.
- 4H and FoodWise Educators collaborated on a hands-on educational activity where Marathon County youth learned about the history of charcuterie boards, explored the local indoor farmer's market, and incorporated MyPlate guidelines into their own creations. The goal of this program was to have youth practice healthy habits using MyPlate, encourage purchasing from local farmers/businesses, and taste new foods.
- The FoodWise and Horticulture Educators partnered with the Hmong American Center and the ADRC (Aging & Disability Resource Center) to provide nutrition education on grains to Hmong elders at the Hmong American Center's cultural dining site.





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Horticulture

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

- A therapeutic horticulture lesson for Hmong women from the Women's Community (serving survivors of domestic violence), where participants learned how to grow new plants from kitchen scraps which supported the learning about propagating healthy plants while supporting positive mental well-being, and positive socialization.
- A therapeutic horticulture lesson for Hmong elders at the Hmong American Center's ADRC Senior dinner, where participants learned how to grow new plants from kitchen scraps which supported the learning about propagating healthy plants while supporting positive mental well-being, and positive socialization.
- A meeting with the members of the Northcentral Technical College's advisory committee to the new Garden to Market program, where members discussed emerging needs in green industry education to strengthen rural economic development in Central Wisconsin.
- A community of practice for horticulture educators where we explore strategies and resources to expand horticulture education and outreach to underrepresented audiences. The goal of participating in this group is to dig into ways we can locally continue to grow and enhance our horticulture programs to reach more diverse audiences.
- Planning for the creation of a repository of existing horticultural resources in multiple languages for home/community gardeners of all abilities. The goal of this effort is to make this repository accessible on the Horticulture Topic Hub.
- Developing informal learning communities utilizing the Horticulture Program's social media for all Wisconsin gardeners, including underserved populations. The goal of this effort is to provide accurate, practical and up-to-date information to the public primarily through the topic hub in order to bolster educational outreach efforts in support of addressing the Horticulture Program objectives.



Natural Resources

Kris Tiles, NRI Program Manager

Anna James, Regional Natural Resources Educator

- A winter forestry conference for Wisconsin woodland owners, where landowners networked with each other and learned from forestry experts to promote the sustainable management and conservation of privately owned woodlands in Wisconsin.
- Planning for an annual conference for producer, advisors, and conservation professionals where they learn to encourage profitable farming by building resiliency, diversifying farming operations, reducing inputs, and increasing farmers' return on investment. The goal of this effort is to improve water quality through farming practices.



Upcoming Programs

- **4-H Programming** – Information at marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/
- **StrongBodies** – StrongBodies Winter 2023 Session – Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/y6p5jy>
- **Starting Seeds Indoors** - Starting plants from seeds gives you more options to choose from, potentially cost saving, and provides a sense of life indoors. In this program, we'll discuss what you should consider when purchasing seed, containers, and growing media. Then we will learn how to apply important techniques in sowing and growing seedlings. Go to <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/> for more information and registration.
- **FoodWise Healthy Eating Series** – For SNAP eligible residents. Register at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/foodwise-program/>.

Jeremy Solin
Area Extension Director

Janell Wehr
Horticulture Educator

Kathy Johnson
Administrative Assistant

Heather Schlessler
Dairy Agent

Mallory McGivern
FoodWise Administrator

Holly Luerssen
4-H Program Educator

Gaonou Thao
FoodWise Educator

Jasmine Carbajal
4-H Associate Educator

Kris Tiles
NRI Program Manager