



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
MARATHON COUNTY

# June 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**

- A hands-on, interactive, and educational activity where Marathon County Youth in 3rd grade and up learned basic cuts of beef and how to make the perfect steak. The goal of the event was for youth to celebrate National Beef Month by learning and practicing how to grill steak.
- An outreach event where UW-Madison Extension-Marathon County shared the various programs they offer in an effort to increase participation in local sessions and increase diversity in future programs as the event was in celebration of World Cultures Day.
- An interactive session with a local Marathon County 4-H club to share county level programming opportunities with 4-H members and provide a connection activity to practice teamwork and communication skills within the club.
- A six-week educational series called Juntos (Together) where Latinx high school students and their families learned tools and resources to help students achieve high school graduation and post-secondary academic success which is the goal of the program.
- A one-time interactive outreach community event where youth in middle school and high school explore various careers and learn about Extension work. The goal was to encourage youth to learn about Extension and increase their knowledge of Wisconsin trivia.
- A hands-on educational activity called Sewing Basics where Marathon County youth learned how to sew simple stitches and the basics of a sewing machine. The goal of this activity was to help youth navigate a sewing machine and create a project to practice sewing skills.
- A hands-on educational activity where local Boy Scout members learned the basics of food safety, basic kitchen skills, and cooked a simple meal. The goal of the program was to help the participants achieve their cooking merit badge.
- A fun and interactive educational session where youth in elementary school built towers of spaghetti and marshmallows in order to learn about engineering and construction.





## **Agriculture**

**Heather Schlessor, Dairy Agent**

- A hands-on, interactive, and educational activity where Marathon County Youth in 3rd grade and up learned basic cuts of beef and how to make the perfect steak. The goal of the event was for youth to celebrate National Beef Month by learning and practicing how to grill steak.
- A research-based educational article for dairy farmers and agri-business professionals, where participants will learn about handling reproductive hormones and injection placement. The goal of this effort is to increase knowledge of best practices for worker safety, and injection placement according to quality assurance guidelines.
- A research-based educational article for dairy and beef farmers and agri-business professionals, where participants will learn about the different methods and timing for determining pregnancy status in cattle. The goal of this effort is to increase knowledge of the different options available, and the importance of implementing at least one method into their herd management.
- Planning for development of factsheets/articles, longer publications, and videos on nutrition, genetics, & reproduction topics. The goal of this effort is to increase farmer, nutritionist, veterinarian, and other agribusiness professionals understanding of management of these topics to help improve farm sustainability and economic viability.
- A newsletter for farmers and agribusiness professionals where they learned about upcoming programs and topics including potassium and nitrogen in pasture management, single gene inherited traits in dairy cattle, managing transition cows on small farms and pest management on vegetable farms. The purpose of this effort is to work collaboratively to provide timely education for improving agricultural production with multiple county farmers and stakeholders.

## **FoodWise**

**Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator**

**Michelle Van Krey, Healthy Communities Coordinator**



Welcome to our new FoodWise Healthy Communities Coordinator Michelle Van Krey. Michelle is serving as the Healthy Communities Coordinator for Clark, Marathon, Portage, and Wood Counties. She will work with the area FoodWise team and community partners to advance policy, systems and environmental changes to help to make the healthy choice, the easy choice. She graduated from the University of Georgia with a BS in Horticulture and has a passion for community building, public service and food security. She is excited to join the team and learn more about the counties in Area 7!



- A quarterly nutrition education series in Portage & Marathon County utilizing the Feeding for Healthy Eating curriculum for adults with young children as part of the Children's Wisconsin LEAP (Learning Essentials about Parenting) program where they learn about incorporating healthy eating habits into the family routine, including family meals and eating more fruits and vegetables. The goal of this effort is to encourage healthy eating behaviors at home.
- A tour of St. Bernards food pantry in Abbotsford to learn about emergency food resources available to (primarily Spanish-speaking) residents in Marathon and Clark County.

## **Horticulture**

### **Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator**

- An interview for the WAOW where viewers learned how to manage spongy moths and increase habitats for pollinators. This effort is designed to increase awareness of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments.
- A program (Good thymes at the library) for youth at the Wausau Branch of the Marathon County Public Library, where participants learned how to grow and maintain herbs. This effort is designed to cultivate science literacy skills in Marathon County youth.
- A panel interview for WPR Garden Talk with Larry Meiller show where the statewide listening audience learned how to care for landscape plants. This effort is designed to increase awareness of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments.
- An outreach event where UW-Madison Extension-Marathon County shared the various programs they offer in an effort to increase participation in local sessions and increase diversity in future programs as the event was in celebration of World Cultures Day.
- 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.
- A weekly therapeutic gardening program (Gaining Ground) for individuals with court mandated community service where participants develop vocational skills including a foundation in IPM to increase employability and reduce recidivism in Marathon County.



## **Natural Resources**

Kris Tiles, NRI Program Manager

Anna James, Regional Natural Resources Educator

- An online Canvas course, "Your Land, Your Legacy", for private woodland owners, using a combination of asynchronous and synchronous learning tools, to guide families through the legacy planning process for their woodlands.

## **Additional Extension Outreach Programming Occurring in Marathon County**

- Planning for a small ruminant management program for goat producers, typically members of plain faith communities so that they may improve their production practices, profitability and sustainability of their goat management programs.
- Planning for a pasture walk program to provide pasture management information for dairy and livestock producers so that they can produce better pasture-based forages to improve the profitability and environmental quality of their farms.
- A newsletter for farmers and agribusiness professionals where they learned about upcoming programs and topics including potassium and nitrogen in pasture management, single gene inherited traits in dairy cattle, managing transition cows on small farms and pest management on vegetable farms. The purpose of this effort is to work collaboratively to provide timely education for improving agricultural production with multiple county farmers and stakeholders.
- A farm financial management curriculum for beginning, female, and other farmers, where material was adapted into a more relevant format as an on-line course. The pilot course will assist farmers in identifying strengths and weaknesses of their business to assist them in making decisions that will improve their farm profitability.
- A Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) suicide prevention training for the WUCMAA Suicide Prevention Project where they learned to recognize the warning signs of suicide, how to offer help, and how to get help and save a life. This effort was designed to save lives and reduce suicidal behaviors by providing innovative, practical and proven suicide prevention training.
- An online program (Money Matters) for participants who want to improve their financial knowledge, where they complete 1-12 modules on different financial topics. The goal of the Money Matters modules is to increase participants' knowledge on topics such as credit scores and reports, making a spending plan, what to do when you can't pay your bills, and identifying financial strengths so that participants can apply these skills in the future.



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## Upcoming Programs

- **4-H Programming** – Information at [marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/](https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/)
- **StrongBodies** – StrongBodies Summer 2023 Session – Register at <https://go.wisc.edu/12rqa3>
- **Horticultural Programs** – Information at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/>

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