



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

September 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

The Marathon County 4-H team is excited to jump into fall programming and reflect on the success of summer opportunities. Marathon County youth were able to explore their sparks, increase their knowledge, and meet new people through the various programs like trips, 4-H Foodie, and the WI Valley fair. This year Discover WI took youth in 5th-8th grade to Southeastern Wisconsin where they explored places like Old World WI and the East Troy Electric Railroad Museum. Not to mention all the local fun and food participants had! In July, our 4-H Foodie Program was just as popular as last year. Youth learned to cook various recipes and enjoyed going to the Farmer’s Market to buy locally grown ingredients for the dishes we made. Finally, August brought the fair and our community was able to experience various 4-H activities at our “Discover 4-H” activity stations. 4-H youth showcased their skills and talents not only in departments like cultural arts, sewing, mechanical sciences and more, but also in the various animal they took to the fair. Our Marathon County 4-H team was so proud of their hard work and dedication, and they keep us motivated to keep offering more countywide programs!



This fall we have already offered things like a fall wreath making workshop in partnership with the Marathon County Public Library, quilting club, clover kaboom, and a teen movie night event. We will be rolling out more educational, fun, and hands-on programs so stay tuned.





- A hands-on educational workshop where Marathon County youth in 3rd grade and older learned the basics of quilting and practiced using a sewing machine. The goal of the workshop was for the participants to start a quilt project of their own that they can continue to work on during monthly meeting times.
- An educational booth at a local high school's open house where the goal was to promote 4-H and Juntos and to recruit families to participate in the program in the 2023-2024 academic year. Youth and families that stopped at the booth were able to learn about piñatas and make one for their family.

Agriculture

Heather Schlessor, Dairy Agent

Calf blood draws have started! Heather and Jade started collecting blood samples on heifers and crossbred calves this month. We are assessing the serum total protein of calves aged 1 – 7 days old to identify if calves are receiving enough colostrum to transfer passive immunity successfully. We have thirteen farms signed up for the project and hope to get as many as 30 farms. The project runs all year, with data collection occurring quarterly.



- A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest research and applications regarding a blood panel developed to predict high liver triglyceride status in multiparous cows and early lactation milking frequency in an automated milking herd. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research on impacts of fresh cow herd health and monitoring.
- A peer-reviewed journal article submission, for Extension Agriculture professionals, where participants will learn about beef x dairy sire selection and calf care practices. The goal of this effort is to share our scholarly work derived from surveying 40 Wisconsin farms on the beef x dairy crossbreeding practices.
- Planning for the release of the Dairy Worker Training Modules. The goal of this effort is to provide training material that farms can use with their employees, so that employees are better able to provide the labor needed on farms.
- Planning and creating videos for agriculturists including youth involved in livestock production where they will learn biosecurity principles in collaboration with the WI Department of Agriculture and Consumer Protection (DATCP). The goal of this project is to help livestock producers increase their understanding of biosecurity practices that will help them achieve and/or maintain economic viability.



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- 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 study to better understand the prevalence of *Prototheca Bovis* Mastitis on dairy farms in Wisconsin. Results from this study will help Extension Educators provide tailored education to the farmers of Wisconsin on this type of mastitis.

FoodWise

Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator

Michelle Van Krey, Healthy Communities Coordinator

Julia Perock, FoodWise Educator

Welcome to our new FoodWise Nutrition Educator Julia Perock. Julia is serving as the FoodWise Nutrition Educator in Marathon County. She will focus on school education programs, as well as work with families to provide nutrition education. She looks forward to partnering with food pantries to provide nutritional support within the community. She graduated from The University of Wisconsin Stevens Point in December 2022, with a BA in Sustainable Food and Nutrition. Julia is excited to step into this role and provide education about healthy food choices as well as encourage community members to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Julia also participated in the Hunger Coalition's Mobile Pantry at Head Start – offering samples, recipes, and other information to guests.



- Shared leadership in the Marathon County Hunger Coalition, where emphasis is placed on expanding healthy food access and developing new projects and partnerships that will empower Marathon County families through education and shared resources. The coalition's goal is to increase access to healthy foods in order to achieve health equity for all county residents.
- A quarterly nutrition education series in 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.

Horticulture



Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

- An in person horticulture course where Marathon County Master Gardener Trainees learn the fundamental principles of IPM based gardening to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments.
- A therapeutic gardening program for justice-involved individuals where participants developed vocation skills including a foundation in IPM while practicing positive self-management techniques to reduce recidivism in Marathon County.
- A meeting hosted by the Marathon County United Way with partnering organizations, where community leaders began the organization process to create a community garden. The garden will serve as a space for individuals to learn about preparing, managing, and sustaining a garden, as well as an opportunity for participants to also experience the therapeutic effects of gardening.
- Two presentations (Choosing herbaceous ornamentals), for the general public hosted by the Marathon County Public Library-Wausau Branch, where participants learned best practices for using herbaceous ornamentals in their landscapes. This effort is designed to increase awareness and knowledge of resources to address environmental contamination and pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals in urban and suburban environments.
- A therapeutic horticulture class (Sustainable lawn care) for community members aged 55+ at the Woodson YMCA The Landing, where participants learned best practices for maintaining a reduced risk lawn, supporting lifelong learning, healthy wellbeing, and positive socialization.
- A therapeutic horticulture class (Bring them inside!) for community members aged 55+ at the YMCA aquatic center in Mosinee, where participants learned how to apply IPM principles to indoor plants, reduce stress on plants reintroduced to indoor climates through light mitigation, and proper watering techniques while supporting lifelong learning, healthy wellbeing, and positive socialization.
- 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



- Participation in the advisory panel of a local producer-led watershed group for farmers, conservationists and community members of the Big Eau Pleine watershed, by assisting with planning and facilitating activities geared toward increasing the awareness and adoption of conservation and ultimately water quality of the Big Eau Pleine and Wisconsin River watersheds.

Additional Extension Outreach Programming Occurring in Marathon County

- 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.
- Participating on the steering team of a collaborative of local farmers and agricultural professionals called a "learning hub," based in a specific geography referred to as the Cloverbelt, focused on increasing grass-based agriculture in the region mainly by the implementation of grazing dairy heifers.
- Participated in pasture walks held in various locations around the state through the 2022 growing season. The goal of these events is to highlight specific methods and solutions that farmers can implement to improve their success in grazing.
- Coordinate the Grazing Management Team at the Marshfield Agricultural Research Station. The goal is to facilitate monthly meetings to make sure all research station staff and scientists are working toward the same goals, and to ensure success of the grazing program at the station.
- 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.

Upcoming Programs

- **4-H Programming** – Information at marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/
- **Horticultural Programs** – Information at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/>



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Heather Schlessler <i>Dairy Agent</i>	Mallory McGivern <i>FoodWise Administrator</i>	Kathy Johnson <i>Administrative Assistant</i>
Holly Luerssen <i>4-H Program Educator</i>	Julia Perock <i>FoodWise Educator</i>	
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