



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

October 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 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 activity where youth in 3rd grade and older toured a local television news station where the goal was for participants to learn about the broadcasting process and careers.
- A hands-on educational activity where Marathon County youth in kindergarten and older learned about Hispanic Heritage Month and the goal was to make Mexican snacks, try new foods, and play a traditional Mexican game, Lotería.



Agriculture

Heather Schlessor, Dairy Agent

- A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest research and applications regarding different manure processing options. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research on manure processing options including the good and bad of each system.
- A field study data collection in collaboration with Colorado State University to better understand the practices and challenges associated with transportation of pre-weaned dairy heifer, dairy bull, and beef x dairy calves from the source (dairy farms), hauler, and receiver (calf raiser). Results from this study will help



dairy farmers, managers, haulers, calf raisers, and the dairy community in adopting practices and improving transportation welfare to improve farm business viability and food safety.

- A research-based training module series for dairy farm employees titled “Dairy Workers Training.” The goal of this effort is to equip dairy workers with the essential milking and reproductive skills to enhance and refine their capabilities for optimizing their performance on the farm, thus improving farm business viability and food safety.
- 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.
- 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

FoodWise celebrated UW Madison’s 175th Anniversary by hosting an event at the Wausau Farmers Market, where Nutrition Educators gave out samples of healthy foods, flavored waters, and played games with those that stopped by the booth. Educators also shared recipes, budgeting tips, and farmers market shopping guides that included how to use EBT and other nutrition vouchers at the market as well as seasonality guides.

FoodWise also had the State Healthy Retail Specialist available to discuss FoodWise’s efforts to grow the sustainability of EBT programs at farmers markets across the state, as well as locally.

- 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.





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- Attended Aging Symposium which showcases cutting-edge science in critical aspects of aging, and the Food As Medicine conference which illustrates the importance of local, culturally relevant foods as a gateway to healthier living.
- Attended Marathon County Hunger Coalition sponsored carrot harvest where around 2,000lbs of carrots were picked, washed, and packed for donation to local food pantries.

Horticulture

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

Sowing Success is underway in Marathon County

Sowing Success is a 12 week introductory course in horticulture. The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) course teaches participants how to link gardening practices and biology to prevent plant problems. Students learn how to select, grow, and maintain the health of plants, including lawns, woody and herbaceous ornamentals, fruits, and vegetables. Students learn how to apply the principles of IPM to pests, including insects, diseases, weeds, and wildlife. As they learn about how to grow plants in a way that helps them plan for gardening success, they will prevent plant problems before they start and manage issues when they happen. They will leave the course with a combination of practical gardening skills to try plus the knowledge of why they work.



Sixteen students are enrolled in Sowing Success this fall. Students prepare for each session by reading assigned chapters and watching videos hosted on the web. During the sessions, students work through hands-on activities designed to reinforce the concepts introduced in the readings and video lectures. Pictured here, students are familiarizing themselves with all the information available on a fertilizer label. Marathon County Master Gardeners provide added support in mentoring students throughout the course.

Sowing Success is an approved learning opportunity for the Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Program in preparation to become a Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener. The Marathon County Master Gardener Association looks forward to adding these students next year.

- An in person horticulture course where Marathon County residents and potential 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 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. 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.
- 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.

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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