



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
MARATHON COUNTY

# November 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 series of two virtual orientation meetings to help prepare youth (age 15-19) to travel for the National 4-H Congress in Atlanta, GA. The meetings were designed to help youth lay the groundwork for success.
- Planning for a community-wide youth pinewood derby event in collaboration with Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Scouts BSA, and Girl Scouts. The goal of this effort is to increase awareness of the youth organizations in the community so that each organization can experience an increase in membership and youth participation.
- A community-wide youth pinewood derby event in collaboration with Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Scouts BSA, and Girl Scouts. The goal of this effort is to increase awareness of the youth organizations in the community so that each organization can experience an increase in membership and youth participation.
- Discover 4-H AgriScience is a 6 week afterschool program held at two different Wausau School Districts elementary schools with 3rd-5th grade students.

## **Agriculture**

**Heather Schlessor, Dairy Agent**

- The first quarter of the Prototheca Bovis Mastitis research project has come to an end. Of the 25 farms that were cultured, no farms were positive for Prototheca Bovis. The second collection time is in January of 2024. Results from this study will help Extension Educators provide tailored education to the farmers of Wisconsin on this type of mastitis.
- The first quarter of the colostrum management project also came to a close at the start of this month. So far we have collected samples on 750 calves aged 1 - 7 days, with half being retained heifers and the other being non-retained animals (either beef x dairy cross animals or dairy bulls). The study looks to determine if there are differences in the rate of passive transfer between these two groups of animals.
- Heather was honored by the Marathon County Farm Bureau by being awarded their Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award.





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- The dairy worker training modules for Module 1: Milking Skills and Module 2: Reproductive skills are live at: <https://dairy.extension.wisc.edu/2209-2/>, this month the materials for the Milking Skills Modules was submitted for Spanish Translation.
- Coordinating a Planning for Emergency Livestock Transportation Response (PELTR) hybrid training in collaboration with Waukesha County and the Humane Animal Welfare Society (HAWS) of Waukesha for area and statewide emergency response personnel to learn about responding to roadside incidents involving livestock trailers. The purpose of this program is to increase the effectiveness of emergency planning and the preparedness of local emergency response agencies (Sandy Stuttgen, Bill Halfman, Heather Schlessner, Lyssa Seefeldt, Sandy Stuttgen)
- Planning for a community-wide youth pinewood derby event in collaboration with Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Scouts BSA, and Girl Scouts. The goal of this effort is to increase awareness of the youth organizations in the community so that each organization can experience an increase in membership and youth participation.
- A community-wide youth pinewood derby event in collaboration with Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Scouts BSA, and Girl Scouts. The goal of this effort is to increase awareness of the youth organizations in the community so that each organization can experience an increase in membership and youth participation.
- 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.
- 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.

## **FoodWise**

**Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator**

**Michelle Van Krey, Healthy Communities Coordinator**

**Julia Perock, FoodWise Educator**

- 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 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.
- Nutrition education at First Presbyterian Church food pantry in partnership with the Marathon County Hunger Coalition's produce distribution during pantry hours. The goal of this program is to provide pantry guests with exposure to new foods and provide recipes to encourage increased vegetable consumption at home.



## **Horticulture**

**Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator**

- 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 12 week gardening course (Sowing Success) for the general public and potential Master Gardener volunteers where participants learned Integrated Pest Management concepts and skills to reduce environmental degradation due to pesticide and fertilizer misuse.
- In the "Wildlife Primer" class, participants learned IPM based skills to reduce wildlife damage while reducing environmental degradation due to pesticide misuse. The class was held 3 times, Mosinee Community Education and twice at the Marathon Public Library Wausau Branch.





- “Winterize” was a program held at the Woodson YMCA- The Landing, where participants learned specific techniques to prepare landscapes for winter, including vegetable and perennial gardens, lawns, and woody ornamentals.

## **Natural Resources**

Kris Tiles, NRI Program Manager

Anna James, Regional Natural Resources Educator

- Online and in-person hybrid classes for woodland owners, where participants learn about managing their property and protecting the health of their trees. This effort is designed to increase their engagement with their land and sustain the resource for the long-term.
- 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**

Following two previous years of successful fall grazing pasture walks, local Extension Educators organized a pasture walk on the farm of a very successful organic dairy producer belonging to the plain faith community. Working with the local County Land and Water Conservation departments, an organic milk cooperative, and a vendor and provider of organic farm supplies, and ultimately with the farmer host, topics of interest, addressing the current needs of organic dairy producers were identified. These topics included establishment of perennial pasture mixtures, maintaining high yield, crop rotation and high forage quality with maximum use of crop cover to minimize erosion and to maintain soil health; breeding and identifying the optimum type of dairy cow selecting for longevity, disease resistance, fertility and consistent yields of high component milk suitable for organic markets; raising of dairy replacements on pasture systems; and testing of soil and interpreting soil reports to economically improve pasture yield.

Extension educators were identified to present on these topics and to lead group discussions with the participants and the host farm to learn how these goals were being addressed on this dairy farm.

Promotion of the event among the plain faith organic dairy farm community and with Land Conservation Departments and other groups resulting in a successful day with dynamic and interactive discussion.

- 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.

- Shared leadership in the Eat Right Be Fit coalition in Clark County, where emphasis is placed on the health and safety of Clark County families through education and shared resources. The coalition's goal is to develop new projects and partnerships that will advance health equity in Clark County.
- A 5-week nutrition education series (Discover MyPlate) for 1st grade classrooms at Colby Elementary School, where students will learn about MyPlate, the five food groups, and try new fruits and vegetables. The goal of the series is for students to learn about being physically active and help them make healthy choices in school and at home.
- Plans for a dairy open house on a robotic dairy farm are being developed to address the high level of interest by dairy producers to embrace this cow management, production enhancing and labor saving technology.
- 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.
- 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/](https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/projects/programs/)
- **Horticultural Programs** – Information at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/>

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Jasmine Carbajal <i>4-H Associate Educator</i>	Michelle Van Krey <i>Healthy Community Coordinator</i>	