



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
MARATHON COUNTY

December 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 Planning for a presentation at the Tri-State Camp Conference in collaboration with three other colleagues all a part of the WI 4-H Camp Work Team. The goal of this effort is to share with other 4-H and Camp professionals about some of the great work being done in Wisconsin 4-H so that Wisconsin 4-H can continue to work towards becoming the premier youth development organization in the state and a leader among national 4-H programs.
- A hands-on educational activity with youth in 3rd grade and older learned the basics of crocheting. The goal of this session was for youth to learn and practice a new skill and experience a project that can be done in 4-H.
- A hands-on educational activity where Marathon County youth in 3rd grade and older learned about MyPlate and learned about healthy snacks. The goal of the activity was for youth to try something new and to make bean dip and yogurt parfaits.
- A hands-on activity for Marathon County youth in elementary school where they made Thanksgiving stickers. The goal of this program was to teach a new skill to youth and their families.
- Community event in Marathon County where youth and families were able to learn about Day of the Dead, participate in activities that were culturally relevant, and experience a live mariachi. The goal of the event was to expose the Marathon County community to a celebration from another country.
- The Winter Camp planning team meets bi-weekly to create a meaningful experience for older youth who will attend the upcoming 2024 Winter Camp.
- The 4-H Christmas Painting Party was held to help youth build painting skills and engage in a little holiday spirit. The event was held at Clay Corner Studio and attended by 19 youth from 5K-12th grade.
- The December Clover Kaboom program for youth in 5K-2nd grade provided youth an opportunity to build relations, engage in new activities, and have holiday fun.
- Discover 4-H: Trinity is a once a month 4-H program that enters a local elementary school and provides traditional 4-H education to grades 1, 4, and 6. The 4-H staff prepares hands on WI AgriScience lessons for 62 students including farm to table, pumpkin farms, cranberry farms, and evergreens.
- Partnership with MCHS Public Health AmeriCorps Community Corps program, the Marathon County 4-H Leaders Federation, and Wisconsin Juntos program to create the 4-H Program Assistant for 4-H programs. Two 4-H Program Assistants will provide a variety of programs through Growing Great Minds, Marathon County Library, camps, travel experiences, and traditional 4-H. The purpose of this effort is to improve program effectiveness and community outreach in the Marathon County 4-H program.



- New Family 4-H Newsletter is a monthly publication that is intended for and distributed to new 4-H families. The publication is intended to bridge the gap that 1st year 4-H community club families experience, especially those who are a first generation 4-H family (meaning no one else in their family has been in 4-H) and help them to understand common experiences across 4-H. The 4-H newsletter addresses the issues from both an adult and youth perspective.

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 effective animal handling and the impact that plays on efficiency on the farm. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research and provide a comprehensive understanding of effective dairy animal handling, grouping strategies and their impact on efficiency in the parlor and beyond.
- Planning for the 2024 Dairy Reproduction Roadshow, an in person educational program for dairy producers and dairy industry professionals, where they will learn the latest research based recommendations for managing dairy herd reproduction.
- Planning an in-person meeting for women in agriculture in collaboration with other agriculture educators. This effort aims to teach women about various dairy-related topics in an environment where they feel comfortable asking questions so that they can learn without fear of intimidation.
- 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.
- 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 farmers, nutritionist, veterinarian, and other agribusiness professionals understanding of management of these topics to help improve farm sustainability and economic viability.



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- 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

- Planning with partners in Clark, Marathon, Portage and Wood Counties to build a new platform that directly focuses on food access mapping for those with limited incomes. The goal of this effort is to provide current, reliable food access information for all community stakeholders in Central Wisconsin and the state.
- 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.

Horticulture

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

- 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

- A facilitated discussion with members of the Eau Pleine Partnership for Integrated Conservation, a producer-led watershed protection group, where participants discussed the group's strategic plan, logic model, and membership structure. Through this activity, the group was able to identify needs within their internal structure and current logic model.
- 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

- Program planning for Dean's Innovation Grant award to provide well water testing to farmers with employee housing to test water quality for underserved audiences. The goal of this program is to incentivize water testing for farms to ensure drinking water is safe for human consumption.
- 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.
- In 2023 the Healthy Grown program enhanced its innovative educational approach, expanded certification, and identified new research efforts which resulted in direct farmer engagement and on-farm BMP adoption outcomes.
- A study to learn about how much neonicotinoid pesticides from seed treatments and from field applications leach into groundwater in areas of sandy soil. Results will help WDNR regulate this class of pesticides to protect water supplies statewide and agricultural producers to design farm management practices to mitigate pesticide impacts.



- 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.
- A pasture walk on an organic dairy farm was held for local dairy producers to learn about sustainable practices in pasture management and the management of pasture grazed dairy cows and replacements.
- 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/
- **Horticultural Programs** – Information at <https://marathon.extension.wisc.edu/horticulture/programs/>

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