

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

Connie Creighton, 4-H Youth Development Agent

- The Market Animal Project Committee (MAC) offered an educational Bio-Agriculture tour of UW-Madison the end of April. The purpose of the experience was to educate our youth about the UW-Madison’s animal science and bio-technology programs and to increase awareness of career and degree choices that the UW-Madison and the agriculture industry has available. Seventeen youth and seven adults experienced the tour. The experience consisted of a tour of the new Meat Science & Animal Biologics Discovery Building, a tour of the Dairy Center, a tour of the Biotech Center’s core facilities, including DNA Sequencing, and a visit to the UW-Madison’s Arlington Sheep Ag Research Station in Arlington.

An electronic survey was distributed to participants. Six adults and four youth participated in the survey. N=10. When asked if the tour increased their comfort and knowledge about UW-Madison’s agricultural programs 100% said yes. 88% felt it was an excellent experience and was extremely appropriate. When asked why they would recommend this tour some remarks were: “You learn a lot of new things and it’s a very fun experience;” “Yes, very good overview of the UW-Madison offerings and the important work they do;” “Yes, if they are interested in research for a future job this would be a good intro for them.” Under additional comments a parent reported the following, “My 11-year-old daughter was very inspired by the bioscience part of the tour. It was great to see kids sparked about science.”



**Meat Science & Animal
Biologics Discovery
Building**

Dairy Center



DNA Extraction



Agriculture

Ken Schroeder, Agriculture Agent

- Assisted with planning and holding the 42nd annual Portage County June Dairy Day and Brunch. Narrated educational dairy farm tours and assisted with logistics. Approximately 2,500 attendees learned about dairy farming in Portage County and enjoyed a delicious breakfast and day on the farm.
- Set up and applied fertilizers to on-farm hop production plots. Focus of the study is to better understand the effects of potassium rate on Wisconsin hop production and hop quality as well as look at effects of high nitrogen fertility rates on disease development in Wisconsin hops. Wisconsin harvests about 300 acres annually. Research is lacking on hop production practices and impacts on yield and quality in Wisconsin and the upper Midwest. Proper nitrogen and potassium application rates need to be researched to understand costs and maintain or increase hop quality to provide a local source of hops to local craft brewers.



Additional Agriculture work being conducted in Portage County



A study to learn about how much neonicotoid 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. – *Geoffrey Siemering, Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison, Department of Soil Science*

- Planning for the Agriculture Education area at 2022 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, an outdoor trade show for farmers and rural communities to increase knowledge of Extension Agriculture programs in crops and soils, dairy, farm management, livestock, and horticulture. – *Matt Lippert, Wood County Extension Agriculture Agent*

Community, Natural Resources & Economic Development

Nathan Sandwick, Community Development Educator

- Began developing a new program (and started by sharing some informative resources and ideas with interested community partners) that may grow to help to support infrastructure planning, project selection, grant-seeking, and decision-making for community resilience and energy security.



- Consulted with City staff, sharing resources on BID creation, and enlisting the help of a state specialist to offer suggestions for neighborhood survey design.
- 💧 Convened the June meeting of the Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) featuring two presentations to give interested ag services professionals and perhaps other interested stakeholders a chance to get to know the CSGCC and its current work.
- 💧 Compiled a small set of informational resources on effective governance to add to a growing compendium (in progress) of informative resources that will serve as one of the deliverables for the CSGCC grant project. This resource may be useful for these collaborators, and likely others engaged in addressing public issues in general.

Additional Natural Resources work being conducted in Portage County

- 💧 A study to better understand neonicotinoid concentrations in groundwater and surface water in the Central Sands Region of Wisconsin. Results from this study will help farmers, citizens, scientists, local/county/state officials, and regulatory agencies make decisions regarding water-resources. – *Michael Parsen, Hydrogeologist, UW Madison Division of Extension*

💧 *Denotes educational or planning efforts that work toward improving water quality in Portage County, Central Wisconsin, and the State as whole. While these efforts are highlighted in this report, there is more work being done by Extension to address water quality concerns outside of what is here. For more information about these efforts, or other efforts Extension has undertaken regarding water quality, please reach out to our office.*

FoodWise

Kelly Hammond, Healthy Community Coordinator; Hannah Wendels & Penny Schmitt FoodWise Nutrition Educators, OPEN; Nutrition Administrator

- Expanded on Stockbox for seniors program to include fresh produce procured from Farmshed. Additional funding provided by Marshfield Clinic. "Stockboxes for Seniors", a monthly food box service where low-income seniors can receive at least 10 pounds of pantry staples and nutritious foods. The goal of this partnership is to promote the boxes with community partners with the overall goal to improve food security.
- Interactive Grocery Store Tours offered twice monthly at Walmart in Plover and Wisconsin Rapids to low-income families. The goal of this educational program is for participants learn about shopping healthy on a budget, increase fruit and vegetable consumption and improve overall health.





- Onboarded new WIIP (Wisconsin Idea Internship) intern, Abbey Rosenthal. Abbey will be conducting research at Central Wisconsin Farmers Markets to improve access to low-income/SNAP- Eligible families.
- A \$5,000 community-based research grant award for local farmers, where we can provide incentive dollars. This effort is designed to facilitate conversation with local farmers, farmers markets and research activities occurring through the Central Wisconsin Farmers Market Food Equity Project: improving FoodShare access at farmers markets through community investment and engagement.
- Summer school at McKinley Elementary, Pre-K, 2-3rd and 3-4th grade. Classes are ESL students and utilized growing healthy kids curriculum and focused on vegetables from the school garden.

Human Development and Relationships

Sherry Daniels, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- A course for renters where participants learn how to find and apply for rental housing, understand their responsibilities as a renter, how to communicate effectively with their landlords, and manage housing expenses. Through this, homeless populations and those who have negative rental records are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public supports.
- A program for families and individuals, where participants learn how to create financial goals and gain money management skills. The goal of this program is to enable participants to prepare for and take charge of household financial situations that occur due to changes in income or unforeseen hardships.

Area Extension Director

Jason Hausler, Area Extension Director, Serving Clark, Marathon, Portage and Wood Counties

- FoodWise Administrator Position Update: We are in the final stages of hiring the new FoodWise Administrator for Area 7. Final interviews are scheduled for the week of July 18 through the 22. Hope to have someone on staff by the middle part of August.
- Portage County Board Presentation: Set to present at the meeting on July 19th. Annual report will be in the board packet. Thank you to the Ag & Extension committee for your support to make this happen.
- Budget Preparation: Jason will be working with Denise and Lisa in the next couple of weeks to put together the budget for 2023. We hope to have that to the committee by the next meeting, depending on the official budget process calendar and meetings with finance, etc.