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Notes From Extension Waupaca County Community Development

By Jessica Beckendorf, UW-Madison Extension Community Development Educator for Waupaca County

We all know that so much has changed in the past month, so I thought I would share a few things that haven't:

First and foremost, **Leadership Waupaca County** has NOT been canceled. In January, we had a successful trip to Madison, followed by session 6 in Marion and session 7 in Weyauwega. As I write this, we have been working to converting session 8 to a completely online experience. At this time, we are postponing the April 30 graduation, but we are accepting inquiries about next year's program!

Second, the **Waupaca Area Social Connectedness Action Team** has continued planning for neighborhood development and neighbor engagement, now with a bit of a twist in these "spatial distancing" times. We began putting together a grant application through the Wisconsin Partnership Program to address social isolation in this challenging time - keep your fingers crossed for us, as social connection is more important than ever now!

I have continued to work on facilitating **organizational development processes** for groups doing work in Waupaca County - The only change is we now do this via video conferencing.

Local Voices Network, which seeks to lift up underheard voices as well as develop deeper connections within communities, has also continued offering conversations, though now they have been converted to an online experience.

While the above highlights some things that have not changed, I have also been keeping an eye on the COVID-19 situation and providing information for the Extension website and social media channels when something comes up that could be useful to businesses, non-profits, municipalities, and citizens.

Last year, I began updating the Community Development section of Extension Waupaca County's website. Take a look if you are interested in seeing any of my other programs. <https://waupaca.extension.wisc.edu/community-development/highlighted-projects/>

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Extension Impact: Education Makes a Difference

Local Research Helps Farmers Address Tight Feed Supply

By Greg Blonde, UW-Madison Extension Agriculture Agent for Waupaca County

Greg Blonde, Waupaca County UW-Madison Extension Agriculture Agent, and UW-Madison Extension Dairy Specialist, Dr. Matt Akins, presented results from their local field research project last year at the annual Extension Cow College program in Clintonville in January (see photo), and again at the Waupaca County Forage Council annual winter meeting in February near Manawa. In addition to their presentations, a detailed four-page summary report was provided comparing yield, feed quality and production costs between the following alternative forage crop options: corn silage; annual ryegrass and a summer seeded "cocktail" mix of sorghum/Sudan grass, Italian ryegrass and three types of clover. Their report was also widely shared with Extension colleagues across the state to help inform recommendations for dairy and livestock producers dealing with low forage supplies heading into spring planting.



Results showed the summer seeded "cocktail" mix can help stretch corn silage and/or alfalfa forage inventories, but only when stored separately and fed to beef cattle, or mid- to late-lactation dairy cows and dairy replacement animals. Funding (\$1,500) for wet chemistry analysis of the forage samples (38) was shared equally between the Waupaca County Forage Council, Upper Fox/Wolf Demonstration Farm Network and statewide Extension Forage Team.



The Midwest Forage Association (MFA) also presented Blonde with their Outstanding Service Award (see photo) in recognition of his many years of leadership and support to the Waupaca County Forage Council, one of eleven MFA affiliated groups in the state.

Blonde to Retire this Summer

In January, Greg notified the Agriculture & Extension Education Committee that he will retire this summer (last day Friday, June 5) after nearly thirty-six years as UW-Madison Extension Agriculture Agent for Waupaca County. He was the eighth and longest serving Agriculture Extension Agent starting in the summer of 1984. Other past local Extension Agriculture Agents included Joe Walker (1958-84); M. Drozd (1948-58); V. Quick (1938-48); G. Massey (1934-38); A. Knott (1923-34); J. Dance (1920-23), and P. Nyhus (1918-20).



FoodWise Pilot Tests a New Curriculum

By Christi Gabriliska, UW-Madison Extension FoodWise Coordinator for Calumet, Outagamie, Winnebago & Waupaca Counties

Waupaca County FoodWise team of Christi Gabriliska and Hailee Struck were one of a few county's in the state to be selected to participate in a pilot program teaching the Cooking Matters curriculum. This curriculum is unique because it incorporates adult and youth components and allows for children to learn alongside their parents.

FoodWise collaborated with Waupaca County CAP Services Head Start Program Clintonville to offer a three week series of lessons highlighting topics such as healthy snacks, incorporating more fruits and veggies into your diets and making recipes work for you. Ten families participated and 7 of those families attended all three weeks. The pilot program allowed FoodWise to offer participants incentives such as plastic cutting boards, reusable grocery bags and take home groceries. Families who attended all three lessons also received a Kwik Trip Gas Card.

FoodWise attributed the success of these classes to incentives offered and their partnership with Head Start. When lessons began each week parents went with the FoodWise educators for 30 minutes of nutrition education while their children stayed with Head Start Staff. FoodWise provided a snack recipe and ingredients the staff made with the children each week along with a book and activity. After 30 minutes, children were brought back together with their parents to make the meal highlighted that week, where parents could practice the skills they had learned during the nutrition education component of the lesson. Parents and children loved the cooking each week and parents commented that their children were trying foods they'd never had before and more likely to eat what was for dinner because they were a part of the meal preparation.

Waupaca County FoodWise looks forward to continuing this partnership with Head Start across the county and into the upcoming years.



Connecting with Extension Waupaca County Educators & Staff

Extension Waupaca County is closely monitoring the impact COVID-19 is having on our community and our Extension programming. We are following the guidance from UW-Madison, Waupaca County Public Health and our Waupaca County partner and adjusting our procedures for events and staffing as needed.

To continue to be a resource, Extension Waupaca County Educators have **transitioned to telecommuting and remote delivery of their programming!** We are very much available—email is best. **Staff are working on innovative methods to serve YOU!** Please check our website for the **latest** information and resources: **waupaca.extension.wisc.edu**

You may also **call** our office at 715-258-6230 or **email** dana.nelson@wisc.edu and **someone will get back to you as soon as possible.** Although we are closed to the public, County Support Staff is still able to **mail** 2019 Plat Books as well as provide assistance to our Educators!

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New 4-H Volunteers Trained in Waupaca County

By Penny Tank, UW-Madison Extension 4-H Program Coordinator for Waupaca County

The 4-H program relies on our partnership with adults serving as 4-H volunteers, chaperons, project leaders, general leaders, activity leaders, and other roles. For the safety and well-being of all participants, adults wishing to become 4-H volunteers need to complete the following steps:

- Successful background check
- Annually sign the Extension Volunteer Expectations and position/role description
- Attend face-to-face Volunteer in Preparation (VIP) training
- Complete the Extension Volunteer Mandated Reporter Training in 4-HOnline



In January and February, Tank had the pleasure of holding Volunteer in Preparation (VIP) training for 19 people. Seven of the participants wishing to become 4-H volunteers were recent 4-H graduates, which shows their commitment to the program and wanting to pass on to others what they gained and learned. VIP training includes the following sections: *explanation of Extension; how volunteers contribute to Extension programs; volunteer roles and responsibilities; creating a safe environment; best practices when working with youth; and resources available to help volunteers.*

Evaluations collected at the end of training showed the participants valued the information and opportunity to discuss the topics presented. 94% strongly agreed that they understand why Extension values volunteers and the role of volunteers, they understand their reporting obligations as an Extension volunteer mandated reporter, and that there are resources and staff they can contact to help in their role. Additional comments included: everything was helpful and useful information, I plan to help educate and encourage youth in their projects, and Penny has an awesome, welcoming approach to VIP training. Additional trainings will be planned in the months to come.

Human Development & Relationships Educator Responds to COVID-19

By Sandy Liang, UW-Madison Human Development & Relationships Extension Educator for Waupaca County

COVID-19 has, and will continue to influence the lives of Waupaca County families. For many organizations, it can feel isolating to shift focus, figure out new technology/working from home, while staying atop of the community's response and situation.

In a time of uncertainty for families across the county, Extension continues to deliver programming that supports the community. *Waupaca County Connects* is a newly created digital-based community made up of representatives from healthcare, education, non-profits and community services.

Waupaca County Connects participants work together to:

1. Understand how the pandemic is affecting the community from different perspectives to inform their own programming and work
2. Discuss and share best practices for telecommuting and technology to reach their target audience
3. Build their resilience through a supportive environment with meaningful connections
4. Find creative ways to collaborate--because we are stronger as a community

In addition the value of shared experience, the meetings will incorporate elements of mindfulness to promote well-being in professionals as work together.