



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
WASHINGTON COUNTY

MAY 2025 REPORT

AGRICULTURE



If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species.

Crops

Liz Gartman, Regional Crops Educator

A series of alfalfa measurements that will help to better understand optimum alfalfa and winter cereal harvest across Wisconsin. The results of this study will help forage growers to determine what techniques can best predict optimum forage harvest timing to improve first cutting forage quality for livestock.

- First crop alfalfa cutting tends to represent the largest quantity of forage yield for the year, representing approximately 36-41% of total dry matter (DM) yield. When harvested in a timely manner, it can result in high levels of neutral detergent fiber (NDF) digestibility while still meeting yield goals.
- Mismanaging first crop forage harvest timing creates challenges for the farm. Too early harvest leads to lower yield and extremely high-quality forage which some farms may struggle to properly utilize in their ration. Later than optimum harvest yields distinctly lower forage quality and may jeopardize a farm's plan for future harvest events.
- There is a diverse network of forage-focused staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension that have led the effort to track, report, and record alfalfa quality using Predictive Equations for Alfalfa Quality (PEAQ) and correlate with lab analyzed scissors cut results.
- A uniform statewide effort results in greater understanding and correlates relationships between PEAQ measurements and relative forage quality (RFQ) from lab reports in various growing regions across Wisconsin allowing for the development of future predictive tools to improve grower forecasting and decision-making capability.

A hybrid Foundational Crop Scout training that blends a series of webinar trainings with in person field days for entry-level crop scouts, crop growers and consultants where participants learn the basic skills necessary to scout field crops including corn, soybeans and alfalfa. Through this training series, we will provide "just in time" training to crop scouts as they begin work in the busy growing season.

A webinar where participants were introduced to the basic concepts of scouting grain and forage crops for pests, crop growth stages, nutrient deficiencies and other issues. Through this effort, beginning crop scouts will have the initial tools they need to effectively identify crop production issues that can help growers and crop consultants better manage through the growing season to secure crop yield and profitability.



- While it is important to master the technical skills related to crop scout work, the planning and pre-work is key to a thorough field visit. I identified some of the very basic needs related to crop scout work - identifying the necessary tools, gathering field history and grower information, creating reports, utilizing available resources.
- There were 17 live views of the webinar from non-extension viewers, and the recording will be posted to the Foundational Field Scout Training Website for on-demand viewing. When reviewing the evaluation, the following comments were shared: "I was excited to see that there are disease/pest calendars. I had many windows/dates in my head but it really helps me to see them all laid out visually." "Saved all the links and will look into them. Will do some additional scouting today!" "I plan to have a strong relationship with customers and my managers/agronomists. To make sure everyone is aware of what is happening."

A series of fact sheets on beef cow nutrition management. Beef producers will be able to better manage beef cow nutritional needs through the course of the year.



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YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Positive Youth Development prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs like teens in governance build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and after-school programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.

4-H

Ron Jakubisin, 4-H Program Educator & Kelly Dione, 4-H Educator

A series of classroom presentations to third and fourth grade youth in collaboration with West Bend School Counselors. The purpose of this effort is to improve problem-solving strategies, focusing on team problem solving, consensus building, and experiential team-work while providing an opportunity for youth to learn more about 4-H and build relationships with school personnel.

Based on a Needs Assessment conducted in January/February 2025, youth are in need of intentional programming to build communication and collaboration skills. There is also a need to build awareness of opportunities 4-H can offer in Career and College readiness as well as STEM programming in the younger grades of elementary and middle school. Continued partnership with the elementary schools in West Bend to deliver programming to youth to build relationships and promote 4-H and career and college readiness skills through a series of leadership workshops. The school partnership has created a continued trusting relationship in which the school requested 4-H to come to a family fun night and promote our 4-H STEM Day Camps and other 4-H club and project materials.

Development of a summer day camp offered for youth grades 3-8, where youth learn about Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). This effort is to encourage youth to feel a sense of belonging and increase their interest in STEM.

Based on a Needs Assessment conducted in January/February 2025, STEM programming is a priority in Washington County Schools. There is a lack of interest in STEM careers between middle and high school. The hands-on interactive STEM camp will serve to enhance awareness and excitement in STEM. Development of a STEM Summer Day Camp. Volunteers, youth leaders, the summer interns, and the 4-H program educator will facilitate the STEM Day Camp. This is a new camp offered in 2025. Youth leaders will help lead the camp. Youth who attend will share ideas for what they would like to incorporate into Camp for 2026. New opportunities for existing and new 4-H members to engage and learn about STEM and other 4-H opportunities.

Summer Camp Volunteer Trainings (in preparation of June Summer Camp). Design, plan and deliver camp planning/training meetings in which adult and youth members plan and train to be 'camp



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counselors' for Wash. Co. annual overnight camp experience to be held in June. Two trainings and one Zoom were offered in May. The Zoom was offered after low attendance of a training due to severe thunderstorms/tornado touchdowns. Facilitation skills, emergency preparedness and day-to-day camp responsibilities were taught/practiced in May's training; also planning & assigning roles for a May 28th Orientation Night for parents/guardians of our youth 3rd-8th grade campers.

Newsletters and Washington Co. 4-H member updates: A monthly Cloverline newsletter for all Wash Co 4-H families where information about all club activities, countywide projects, resources and announcements are contributed by and distributed to 4-H families that offer opportunities to increase skills and engage in 4-H activities

Weekly Club Leader Update email blast. Features 3 (new) priorities, announcements, and/or resources for 4H volunteers serving as Club and Project Leaders to increase the capacity of volunteers to deliver 4-H club and project activities.

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