



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.

Dairy | Manuel Peña, Regional Dairy Educator

A Bilingual presentation for managers and workers who have any connection to the calving area of the dairy farms where they learned about the importance of the nutrition of the transition cow and how to prevent some metabolic disorders that occur close to and/or right after calving.

- Calving management practices are crucial on a farm, as they lay the foundation for the future herd of milking cows. Proper care for future cows begins with the cow that is about to calve. Her nutrition and overall management are essential not only for producing a healthy calf but also for ensuring strong performance after calving. After hosting a couple events focused on calving management, farmers requested additional sessions, especially because they happen in English and Spanish and they help to improve communication in farms. Previously, we covered post-calving care, and given my background in nutrition, we expanded the topic to include the nutrition of the transition cow and its impact on reproduction. I developed a presentation that emphasized the importance of caring for newborn calves even before calving, creating a connection between the care given to the calves and the well-being of the cow. This approach ensures we don't overlook the cow that will produce milk and future calves, all by focusing on proper nutrition. My presentation brought a more holistic perspective to the program, offering a deeper understanding of the entire calving process. It highlighted the various physical and physiological stresses that cows experience during this critical period. Doing this presentation in both languages is really appreciated by the farmers since it helps to improve communication specially when there is a language barrier.

A workshop "Calving Management and Neonate Care in Dairy Cattle" for all the individuals that are involved in parturition, and calving management in dairy farms. We are creating an in person and bilingual event where participants will learn and reinforce their knowledge about obstetrics, care and support in the calving pen, neonate care and colostrum management, and how to maintain the success in the maternity areas. Through this effort we will increase the knowledge and good practices related to the earliest stage of life in dairy cattle, which will represent an increase in herd health, work safety and farm profitability.

- Dairy farm profitability, animal welfare, and worker safety are closely tied to effective calving and neonate care. To address the ongoing need for education in these areas, we hosted a bilingual, in-person workshop titled "Calving Management and Neonate Care in Dairy Cattle" on August 28–29, 2025. Designed for all personnel involved in calving, the workshop focused on obstetrics, calving pen management, neonate care, colostrum management, and transition cow nutrition. A hands-on session with a cow model allowed participants to apply key concepts in practice. This program aimed to improve herd health, reduce stillbirths, enhance worker safety, and ultimately boost farm profitability by promoting best practices during the critical early stages of life for dairy cattle.

**Crops** | *Liz Gartman, Regional Crops Educator*

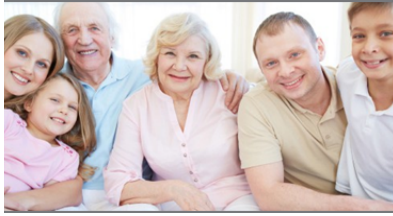
A collaborative effort between Extension educators, corn silage growers and consultants to gather and share corn silage production data including whole plant moisture. Through this effort, the data collected is used to drive an online tool that helps growers identify optimum corn silage harvest timing with the goal of producing high quality corn silage.

- Wisconsin is the number one corn silage producing state, driven by the need for large quantities of quality forage for milk production. Proper timing of silage harvest is primarily driven by the whole plant moisture of the crop. Silage that is harvested too wet or too dry results in poor fermentation, affecting the palatability, stability and hygiene of the stored feed.
- For years Extension educators have partnered with industry groups to host corn silage dry downs, but much of that data had use limited to that particular growing season and region of the state.
- A team of Extension educators, along with our data and marketing specialists created a data collection process that gathered additional sample data, including county, planting date, seed brand, hybrid, fungicide use, previous crop along with the whole plant moisture collected at each dry down event.
- A reactive tool was created to allow growers to hone in on data relevant to their harvest decisions, including a map that displays whole plant moisture based on the most recent sample dates.
- Further, Extension regional crops educators provide area updates each week to share the progress of crop harvest in their area, including relevant crop status information like disease pressure and weather conditions that are posted on the Extension Corn Silage website. These activities provide a holistic view of crop progress and help stakeholders better understand contributing factors to corn silage harvest progress.

A webinar series for farmers, crop consultants, and agency personnel, where timely crop and research updates are presented alongside agronomic recommendations from topic experts in the UW system. Through this webinar we inform our constituents so they can make the most economically and environmentally sound decisions which ultimately lead to better sustainability.

- Weather, economics, pest pressure, and research findings all change throughout the growing year. Our audience needs updates on these variables and resources to respond to them.
- We host a webinar twice per month and feature one to three topic experts, mainly UW faculty, to share their timely recommendations, research updates, and relevant resources with participants.
- Our webinar series delivered tangible, useful recommendations and suggestions from topic experts to our audience when they needed them. This helped to ensure a successful season for Wisconsin crop growers. In addition, this webinar series helped to strengthen the bond between the university and the communities we serve by connecting the faculty doing ag research to the growers using those research results.

Human Development and Relationships



The Extension Institute of Human Development & Relationships provides the tools Wisconsinites need to thrive as well-rounded, capable individuals and families. We support families in caring for each other in ways that promote growth and understanding. Our programs promote aging-friendly communities, coach effective parents and help families put technology, mindfulness and financial awareness to use.

Truong Tran, Human Development & Relationships Educator

Sheboygan Extension partnered with the Sheboygan County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to bring *Powerful Tools for Caregivers of Adults with Chronic Conditions* to the community. The six-week workshop quickly filled to near capacity, with 11 caregivers enrolled. Thanks to support from local sponsors, participants received meals—removing one responsibility from their day—and respite care if needed, allowing them to focus on learning and connecting fully.

Throughout the series, caregivers gained practical tools to reduce stress, improve communication, and care for their own health. Weekly sessions also created a safe and welcoming environment where participants could share their experiences, learn from one another, and build lasting connections. Many caregivers expressed that the opportunity to talk openly with others in similar situations was just as valuable as the strategies they learned.

Survey results confirmed the program's powerful impact. Before the workshop, only 37% of participants felt confident in their caregiving role. After completing the series, 100% reported improvements across all 12 measures, including stress management, decision-making, self-care, and awareness of local resources. Caregivers left the program with stronger skills, renewed confidence, and a greater sense of community support.

Sheboygan Extension recently hosted the *Planning AHEAD* program in Howards Grove, offering community members the opportunity to explore important aspects of end-of-life planning. The session grew out of interest generated during an August presentation and drew eight participants. Topics included financial changes, advanced medical and legal directives, estate planning, final wishes, and understanding grief.

Because end-of-life planning is often difficult to discuss, the program provided more than just information. It created a supportive space where participants could reflect, ask questions, and begin thinking about how to share their wishes with loved ones.

The outcomes were meaningful. Six of the eight participants strongly agreed that they left with greater knowledge across multiple planning areas, and the same number strongly agreed they now feel more confident having conversations with their families about end-of-life decisions. Another participant also reported positive outcomes, showing that nearly every attendee benefited from the program.

By building knowledge and confidence, *Planning AHEAD* helps individuals ease the future burden on their families and ensure their wishes are respected. Programs like this highlight Extension's role in supporting community well-being and preparing residents for some of life's most important decisions.

Positive 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.

Sarah Feider, 4-H Program Educator

A multi-day camp for youth in grades K through 3rd, where youth explored different sparks and built relationships with other youth. This effort aimed to increase interest in sparks and have youth feel a sense of belonging.

- Day Camp for Cloverbuds was a program that has been run annually. To allow for increased sparks and enrollment, Day Camp was 4 days in length. Of the 560 youth involved in Sheboygan County 4-H, 81 are Cloverbuds. Leaders indicated that it is difficult to find activities for Cloverbuds to do.

There were 5 older youth that attending each day to model and lead the younger youth.

Of the 81 Cloverbuds, 21 attended this year's Day Camp. Youth participated in the making of foods using recipe instructions, Lego creations, science experiments, team building activities, arts and crafts, a trip to Bookworm Garden, along with Master Gardeners partnering to create pollinator houses and insects created using reusable materials. According to the survey results, 100% of youth Strongly Agreed with the statement that they "felt welcomed into the space." Six youth ages 12 and up came to be leaders for Day Camp.



Diana Hammer, 4-H Program Educator

A situational analysis of youth empowerment opportunities and gaps in Sheboygan County so that program priorities can be determined for 2026.

- Diana Hammer started on June 9 as Sheboygan County's half-time Positive Youth Development Educator. The role is focused on centering youth voices in spaces where young people and adults work together. The first priority is to meet with youth and the adults who care about them to learn more about the strengths and opportunities for youth empowerment programming. In the last month, Hammer met with community leaders from Lakeshore CAP, Sheboygan Central High School, Kohler High School, Sheboygan Youth Voters, Plymouth High School, SASD middle school principals and instructional staff, Sheboygan South High School, SASD Community Recreation Department, Habitat for Humanity, and Sheboygan County Chamber Junior Leadership program. She also attended the Sheboygan County Planning, Recreation, Agriculture, and Extension Committee meeting and met with Extension colleagues as she continues to learn the role. By carefully listening to a variety of perspectives on youth empowerment, Hammer will be able to determine where to direct her efforts for maximum impact.



Jayna Hintz
Area Extension Director

Sarah Feider
4-H Youth Educator

Tammy Zorn
Emily Lamb
Support Staff

Liz Gartman
Regional Crops Educator

Diana Hammer
*Interim Positive Youth
Development Educator*

Cassi Worster
Marketing Specialist

Manuel Peña
Regional Dairy Educator

Truong Tran
*Human Development and
Relationships Educator*

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