

WALWORTH COUNTY EXTENSION MONTHLY REPORT



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



WALWORTH COUNTY
— WISCONSIN —



May 2026

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



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Janel Heidelmeier, 4-H Program Educator & Debbie Harris, 4-H Youth Development Educator

- Facilitated two of five planned 4-H resident **camp counselor training sessions** (Mar. 10, Apr. 16) for the 25-person teen leadership team selected to serve as cabin and resource counselors this summer.
- Conducted the fourth and final regular **Clover University** event (Apr. 21) offering 9 unique hands-on workshops for 4-Hers related to the *Art, Crafts, Foods-Nutrition, Horticulture, and Soil Science* project areas. Total reach was 61 youth participants with an additional five teens actually teaching three of the workshops.
- Facilitated the **Walworth County 4-H Junior Leaders' Association (JLA) Homemade Pizza** (Mar. 23) and **Small Group Olympics Nights** (Apr. 27) during which a total of 65 teen 4-Hers worked cooperatively in small groups to mix pizza dough and assemble their own pizzas based on their topping preference, engaged in participant-judging of member-created desserts, and competed in friendly games of "Spoons" and "Cornhole."
- Led a **4-H Record Book Workshop** for 16 adults and older members as a means of building awareness of best practices and new record form availability.
- Hosted face-to-face **Youth for the Quality Care of Animals Training** (Apr. 9) for 33 livestock project members.
- Conducted two **afterschool program sessions** with 10 third grade CCLC participants at Turtle Creek Elementary during which one-gallon terrariums were built, mini-pizzas were made, and slime was mixed up.
- 4-H Science Lab Programs** given this reporting period have included:
 - "From Dirty Water to Drinking Water" – 8 classrooms (grades 3-5) at 3 schools (Tibbets, West Side, Brookwood M.S.)
 - "Owl Encounter" – 6 classrooms (grade 2) at Turtle Creek School
 - "Reduced to a Pulp" – 8 classrooms (grades 3-4) at 3 schools (West Side, Tibbets, Brookwood M.S.)
 - "Ready-Set-Dough" – 1 session (grades 2-3 combined) at Traver School
 - "Ready-Set-Cinnamon Bread" – 4 classrooms (grade 5) at 2 schools (Brookwood M.S. and West Side)
 - "Eggsploring Incubation" – 20 classrooms (grades pre-K thru grade 7) at 14 schools county-wide (L.G.M.S., Lincoln, Turtle Creek, Lakeview, Traver, Delavan Christian, Central Dennison, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church School, First Lutheran, EASD Options Virtual Charter School, Williams Bay Elementary, Faith Christian, Tibbets, and Mt. Zion Christian)
 - "On the Technology Trail" – 4 classrooms (grades 4-5) at Brookwood Middle School
- Provided support and supplies for **Sheep and Swine Tagging and DNA collection** required of youth to meet Walworth County Fair Junior Department show eligibility requirements.



The Extension Institute of 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 afterschool programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.

AGRICULTURE - CROPS & SOILS



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Josh Kamps, Crops and Soils Regional Educator

- An educational workshop for farmers, agronomists, and conservation professionals where participants learned about updated research-based nitrogen management considerations and explored strategies to improve crop production profitability and local water quality through fine tuning on-farm nitrogen management. The workshop strengthened collaboration among farmers, agronomists, and conservation professionals, supporting broader adoption of nutrient-management practices that enhance both economic and environmental sustainability in the region.
- A multi-year, multi-location, nitrogen management on-farm study to better understand nitrogen value of manure, biosolids, or decomposing cover crops as nitrogen sources for corn production across the region. Results of this study will help farmers, agronomists, and crop consultants in targeting nitrogen rate recommendations to improve profitability with corn production and reduce the amount of residual nitrogen at risk of leaching into groundwater. The study generated regionally relevant data that improves understanding of how organic nitrogen sources contribute to corn fertility needs.
- Participation in regional winter agronomy meetings alongside farmers and agronomists promotes relationship building, program needs assessment and opens opportunities for new partnerships and collaborations. The goal of this participation is to serve as professional development and a measurement of the relevancy of my Extension education and outreach programming. Stronger relationships with farmers and agronomists led to new collaborations and invitations for future outreach efforts.
- An educational program for farmers seeking restricted use certification to apply pesticides for controlling weeds, pest insects, or plant pathogens that are impacting crop production. Participants learned about using pesticides safely for themselves, employees, and plants and animals within natural



The Extension Agriculture Institute is your connection to the latest University of Wisconsin-Madison research. Our five program areas; Agriculture Water Quality, Crops and Soils, Dairy and Livestock, Farm Management, and Horticulture, are here to educate and respond to the needs of the agriculture community while providing resources that promote economic and environmental sustainability in Wisconsin. We apply research to challenges facing communities and businesses.

AGRICULTURE - CROPS & SOILS



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Josh Kamps, Crops and Soils Regional Educator

- areas nearby to crop fields. As a result, farmers within the region are better positioned to manage crop pests effectively while maintaining compliance with regulations and promoting long-term agricultural and environmental sustainability.
- An educational workshop for farmers, agronomists, and conservation professionals where participants learned about the economics of cover cropping and other soil health practices for crop production. Research based information was shared from on-farm demonstration networks and replicated field trials that studied cover crop species selection, nitrogen rate, cover crop termination timing, crop rotation diversity, and beneficial insect populations to influence crop production decision making and move soil management towards more conservation cropping systems in Southern Wisconsin.



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AGRICULTURE - DAIRY



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Alison Pfau, Bilingual Regional Dairy Educator

- A statewide program promoting humane dairy cow handling practices for dairy cow handlers where the participants will learn to be aware of their own beliefs about working with cows, which affects how they interact with them. They will also learn how to form or maintain good habits, which will make the cows easier to handle and their job smoother.
- A statewide survey for dairy producers, where participants shared detailed records on inputs, management practices, and expenses associated with raising replacement heifers to generate updated benchmarks and highlight cost-saving opportunities, to support more informed decision-making and improve the economic sustainability of dairy operations.
- Developing the Bilingual Forward Farm Safety Toolbox. This hands-on resource is designed to support practical, effective safety training on dairy farms. This pilot event was at the Research Station in Arlington WI on April 14th and 15th. Farmer leaders were very engaged with the program, we received good feedback on the concept of the program and we will keep building the toolbox with more safety modules.
- Planning and developing a calving management and neonate care workshop program in collaboration with the dairy team and the vet clinic in Sheboygan county on May 28-29. We will have two sessions, one in Spanish and one in English. This program was developed to mitigate the need of educational programs in different languages at dairy farms in the northeast region of Wisconsin.
- Presenting at the Dairy Cattle Welfare Council Symposium on May 22nd in Minneapolis, MN. The discussion will be about the different educational tools to handle dairy animals in a smart way to keep animals and humans safe.



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The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS



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Amanda Kostman, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- **Rent Smart** - A Rent Smart milestone occurred the week of April 1st when registrations surpassed 2,500 for the online classes started in July 2020! 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, those new to renting are able to increase their ability to find and keep safe affordable housing, thereby increasing their stability and decreasing their reliance on public supports. The goal of this program is to increase participants' ability to meet their financial goals and increase financial capability and/or renter knowledge for long-term financial success.
 - Continued to offer an in-person 6-session course for renters at a local homeless shelter.
 - Conducted four 3-session (2 hours/modules per session) courses for incarcerated individuals at the Walworth County Jail.
 - Conducted one 3-session (2 hours/modules per session) course for young people participating in Youth Build at the College and Career Academy.
 - Continued to offer a virtual 6-session course for renters in Walworth County and beyond.
- Continued to offer a coaching 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.



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.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS



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Amanda Kostman, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- Continued to offer one-on-one canner gauge testing and education for interested adults, where participants learn best practices in food preservation to ensure safe practices are followed to provide safe food to families.
- In partnership with other UW-Extension educators, facilitated a six-session course, Encouraging Financial Conversations, to instruct helping professionals how to engage in positive conversations around money. The six-hour training is geared for helping professionals (case managers, social workers, and other front line staff), but open to anyone! They learn how to help empower clients to achieve their financial goals and manage their money.
- Offered credit and debt and financial record keeping programs with coaching after, to clients of Southeastern Monitoring.
- Conducted a five session (three-hours per session) **Rent Smart Train the Trainer** program designed to help social workers and other community service providers facilitate the Rent Smart program effectively in their own organizations and communities. Professionals and volunteers receive the tools they need to help their clients acquire and keep safe and affordable housing.
- Participated in community workgroups, including CHIP/CHA Group, Anti Human Trafficking Coalition, CNET and Join the Movement.



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HORTICULTURE



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WALWORTH COUNTY
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Julie Hill, Horticulture Outreach Specialist

- (Ongoing) A year-long activity/service for residents of Walworth County to provide research-based answers to their horticulture questions. The goal of this effort is to educate individuals of Walworth County so they can implement best practices in their landscapes that will positively affect the environment and their communities.
- An in-person information session for the general public, hosted by Delavan Public Library, where participants learned about proper horticulture practices to provide food resources and decrease/eliminate pesticide use to improve habitat availability for avian fauna.
- An in-person presentation for Walworth County Master Gardeners where participants learned about climate change impacts in Wisconsin and how these affect residential yards.
- An in-person presentation for the general public, hosted by East Troy Parks and Recreation, where participants learned about integrated pest management to reduce wildlife conflict in a way that supports both garden and ecological balance.
- An in-person presentation, hosted by Big Foot Recreation District, for the general public where participants learned about integrated pest management to reduce wildlife conflict in a way that supports both garden and ecological balance.



The UW-Madison's Extension Horticulture Program provides research-based horticulture information to Wisconsinites so they can make gardening decisions that keep their plants healthy while protecting the environment. We provide research- and evidence-based horticulture management education, resources and decision-making tools to home gardeners and commercial horticulture practitioners.

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- An in-person presentation for the general public, hosted by Fontana Public Library, where participants learned about integrated pest management to reduce wildlife conflict in a way that supports both garden and ecological balance.
- An in-person program hosted by Big Foot Recreation District, for the general public, where participants learned about different small space gardening techniques to maximize yield and integrated pest management to manage insects and diseases. The goal of this effort is to increase knowledge and confidence and build skills to successfully grow plants while minimizing contamination from horticulture chemicals.
- A weekly social media outreach campaign for consumer gardeners utilizing Extension Walworth County Facebook page to help promote local plant health diagnostic services and upcoming programs, and improve understanding of how sustainable horticultural practices positively impact landscapes and ecosystems.
- Programs coming up in May and June - please see attached flyer.

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Let's Connect!

Upcoming **FREE** Events



Gardening Small - May 4, 6:00 p.m.

Keeping in mind the basics of plant health, we will explore ways that you can maximize space for growing plants.

Location: Big Foot High School, 401 Devils Lane, Walworth

Pre-register: bigfootrecreation.org

Gardening for Hummingbirds - May 18, 6:00 p.m.

Find out more about the immense needs of hummingbirds, from territorial displays to rearing young and learn how your garden or yard can support them.

Location: Milton Public Library, 430 E High St # 100, Milton

Pre-register: als.lib.wi.us/MPL/#/events

Growing Vegetables In Containers - June 1, 10:00 a.m.

Learn about how to select and care for a variety of vegetables and keep them thriving all season long.

Location: Lake Mills Club 55 Meeting, 603 E. Lake Street, Lake Mills

Planting for a Buzz - June 3, 1:00 p.m.

We will talk about the pollinators that live in your landscape, why they are at risk, and gardening practices you can do to support pollinator habitats and health.

Location: Barrett Memorial Library, 65 W Geneva St, Williams Bay

From Scraps to Soil: Composting Basics - June 10, 2:00 p.m.

Find out the do's, the don'ts, and what happens to compost over winter so you can successfully recycle your lawn, garden and food scraps.

Location: Lake Geneva Public Library, 918 W Main St, Lake Geneva

Gardening with Nosey Neighbors (The Furry and Antlered Kind) - June 11, 1:00 p.m.

Keep the peace with your wild neighbors, and enjoy a space that grows in step with nature.

Location: Janesville Senior Center, 69 South Water Street, Janesville

Call to register: 608-755-3050



Horticulture Program
DIVISION OF EXTENSION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Julie Hill

Horticulture Educator
Walworth, Rock and
Jefferson Counties



Office: 262-741-4958
Cell/Text: 262-374-4191



Email: julie.hill@wisc.edu



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Ask Your Gardening
Question Online
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Check the Extension Event Calendar
extension.wisc.edu/events