



This monthly summary report highlights some of the programs and projects that Dane County Extension Educators are currently working on as well as upcoming events. If you would like more information on any of the programs mentioned here, please contact us or visit our [website](#).

Carrie Edgar, Director

Agriculture

Will Fulwider, Crops and Soils Educator:

- Serving on agrivoltaics demonstration project steering committee at the UW Physical Sciences Lab on the western edge of Lake Kegonsa. The goal is to ensure that the setup of the solar array and subsequent research efforts are scalable approaches that could be practiced by farmers on other solar farms.
- Moderated a group-wide conversation amongst farmers at the Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soils Healthy Waters' year-end social focusing on practices that worked and those that did not this past growing season. The goal was to facilitate exchange of best practices and allow farmers to provide feedback on attempts at new practices.
- Met with landowner to advise on beginning a grazing operation. The goal was to aid a new landowner in considering the best steps to establishing a grazing operation to keep the land under Ag production.
- Coordinating an on-farm research trial with farmers in Dane and Dodge County. The research goal is to estimate the nitrogen credits farmers can get from multi-species cover crop mixtures after wheat in order to incentivize farmers to diversify their crop rotations by adding wheat and take advantage of the growing window to plant cover crops that can reduce their inputs for the following corn crop.
- Developed an e-newsletter for farmers and partner organizations that provides timely, research-based updates on growing and farm management practices with a focus on sustainable production and improving profitability.

Claire Strader, Organic Produce Educator:

- Coordinated and taught a series of training sessions for diversified organic vegetable farmers on labor management techniques to improve employee satisfaction and retention on small-scale vegetable farms.
- Convened a new Midwest Vegetable Growers Network for farmers and technical assistance providers where we identify and meet the needs of vegetable farmers serving direct markets and focusing on organic practices. The purpose is to increase the success of vegetable growers.
- Planning for a conference for organic vegetable growers where they learn about crop production and farm management practices in order to improve the viability of small farms serving direct markets.
- Coordinate a registered apprenticeship program for beginning organic vegetable farmers where experienced producers provide hands on training and educators provide classroom instruction to build production skills for new growers and improve employee recruitment and retention for experienced growers.
- Collaborating on an on-farm research project that will study the use of living aisles and no-till planting strips to mitigate the impacts of intense rain events. The results will be used by diversified vegetable producers to improve the productivity of their organic vegetable farms while reducing soil erosion and effects on water quality.

Alison Pfau, Dairy Educator:

- Developed a survey of high producing dairy producers to share results with dairy producers interested in increasing productivity.

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- Coordinated networking meetings with farmers from the different counties to share information, create professional relationships, learn about the challenges, and explore how Extension can collaborate to mitigate those issues.
 - Assisted with coordinating a statewide webinar series (Badger Dairy Insight) for dairy farmers, employees, industry representatives promoting the latest research based information.

Chelsea Zegler, Ag Water Quality Specialist:

- Provided a presentation to a group of producer-led groups in Southeast Wisconsin on how to manage cover crops for water quality and agronomic success. The goal was to increase knowledge on how cover crops impact water movement in soil and nutrient availability, so individuals can implement conservation practices that better protect water quality.
- Coordinated a workshop for producers on grazing and conservation practices and the relationship between those practices on soil health and water quality. The event was a collaborative effort among producer-led watershed groups in the region to facilitate more interactions between the groups. The workshop also included a farmer panel that highlighted the projects, successes, and failures encountered in their soil health and grazing practices.
- Coordinated the first summit for the Southwest Producer-Led watershed group network where members learned about a groundwater study, soil health assessment, and what other producer-led groups are doing around the area, while having small group discussions around success, leadership, and member recruitment. The goal was to encourage networking between collaborators and farmer leaders of the producer-led groups to increase their effectiveness at improving water quality and soil health.

Community Development

Jess Guffey-Calkins, Food Systems Educator:

- Taught a one-time interactive session for ten teens participating in the PATCH program. The effort provided these youth advocates with an understanding of systems work related to food and health, and to identify points of intersection with their advocacy work related to health care.
- Planning for a "Farm to Food Access" landscape analysis for farm & food access stakeholders, local decision makers, and funders, to identify areas for growth and opportunity. This effort is designed to ensure that cumulative lessons from individual farm to food access initiatives and the recent influx of federal funding for new and existing programs contribute to improvements at local and system scales.
- Developing a Dane County food system concept paper for food system stakeholders in collaboration with Food Plan work group members. The goals are to facilitate understanding of the food system and build resources, support, and funding so that the food system can be strengthened.
- Convened meetings for state and county partners to strategize on collaborating to support BIPOC and immigrant food producers. This effort pools partners' funding and resources to maximize opportunities, support, and assistance offered to under-served food producers.
- Planning initiative for growers, food producers, and school food service staff with UW-Madison and community organizations to expand access to farm-to-school market opportunities (especially for people of color) and improve school food service worker labor conditions, in order to increase equity in school food operations.
- Serve as staff advisor for the Dane County Food Council to address pressing issues related to the food system in Madison and Dane County in order to strengthen and support the local food system.

Sharon Lezberg, Community & Organizational Development

- Facilitating a public engagement process for the City of Stoughton's Sustainability Committee to solicit input from community members on Stoughton's Sustainability Plan and develop goals and policies to address climate change.
- Facilitating with Michelle Probst a planning process for collaborative efforts in urban areas across the Midwest to help them develop an action plan for strategies to improve tree canopy in urban areas to mitigate climate change

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- Collaborating with community organization partners on the design of a neighborhood leadership training series to encourage more resident engagement in building better neighborhoods. The purpose is to reinvigorate neighborhood and community organizations in Southwest Madison through skill building and networking.
 - Facilitating and planning organizational development processes with WisCares, League of Women Voters, Focused Interruption Coalition.

Health and Wellbeing

Claire Mance, Healthy Communities Coordinator:

- Participated in the first in a series of meetings with partners across multiple sectors to discuss Food As Medicine efforts happening in Dane County. The purpose is to identify points of collaboration and collectively support efforts to improve physical health through increased access to healthy food.
- Presented to the Dane County HealthWatch Coalition on the FoodWise program and local food security efforts in order to identify potential collaboration opportunities to strengthen programming and address health inequities.
- Taught a one-time interactive session for ten teens participating in the PATCH program. The effort provided these youth advocates with an understanding of systems work related to food and health, and to identify points of intersection with their advocacy work related to health care.
- Planning for a community listening session that brings together Dane County community organizations and service providers in collaboration with partners from Unite Us. This effort is designed to convene partners to share their thoughts about efforts they are proud of, opportunities for improvement, how our communities are addressing the social determinants of health, and where collaborations are possible.
- Partnered with Jackie Gehin, FoodWise Administrator, to provide a monthly educational session for pediatric residents to describe school nutrition programs and policies that mitigate food insecurity among children from low-income families, and provides resources and training to expand pediatricians' understanding of food insecurity among their patient population and actions they can take to address food insecurity.

Jackie Gehin, FoodWise Administrator and Nutrition Educator Team

- Planning for Harvest of the Month activities for students at several Madison elementary schools in collaboration with REAP Food Group in which we will offer taste tests. This effort is designed to coincide with National Nutrition Month in March 2023 in order to garner greater attention and enthusiasm for healthy eating among young learners.
- Taught a 9 week nutrition education series (Eating Smart Being Active) offered to SNAP eligible residents who speak Hmong, where they learn healthy lifestyle choices, food preparation, food safety, food resource management and physical activity. The goal is to improve healthy eating and physical activity habits for caregivers and their children.
- Taught a 6 week series for teens in an alternative high school where they learned basic cooking skills, safe knife handling skills, food safety principles, label reading and choosing healthy alternatives in recipes. The goal is to build confidence in the kitchen and empower teens to make healthy choices by teaching them the skills needed to prepare nutritious recipes on their own.
- Leading a Strong Bodies physical activity 8 week training series for older adults where participants improved strength, balance, and flexibility. This effort is designed to help individuals develop regular physical activity routines into their lives.

Horticulture

Lisa Johnson, Horticulture Educator:

- Coordinated two sessions of the Green Thumb Gardening online class series. The first was on pollinator insect biology, the benefits of pollinators in crop production and sustaining native plant populations, and how to support

pollinators by growing native plant species. The second session was on how to grow annual plants, different species to use and how to design with annuals in garden spaces and container plantings.

- Planning statewide and local activities for consumer audiences (home gardeners) for National Pollinator Week 2023. This goal is to increase knowledge and awareness of pollinators, pollinator habitat, and adopt practices that increase habitat and mitigate pollinator decline.
- Planning for the 2023 online Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course, a four-week course with 8 sessions in February for green industry professionals, including arborists, landscapers, nursery, and greenhouse operators. Attendees will gain knowledge to increase business profitability and adopt Integrated Pest Management strategies to reduce use of pesticides and/or use only low environmental impact products when needed.
- Collaborating with partners to address issues related to community gardening in Madison and Dane County in order to improve and increase food growing opportunities for residents.
- Coordinating on planning for a statewide webinar series for consumer horticulture audiences where participants will learn about pollinator decline, climate change and environmental contamination, and pollution. The goal is to increase adoption of horticultural practices addressing identified environmental issues in Wisconsin.

Human Development and Relationships

Clare Dahl, Financial Security and LifeSpan Educator:

- Teaching 4 two-hour sessions for diverse, low income families in the Habitat for Humanity home ownership program where they participate in financial education workshops and coaching and learn to begin saving for housing related expenses they will incur after they purchase their first home. The goal is to comply with Habitat's "Sweat Equity" Requirements, prepare new homeowners to understand the additional costs of home ownership, and promote savings as a means to economic and family stability.
- Planning for collaborative partnership for low income families, seniors and the disabled that provides free tax assistance resources. The goal of this effort is to maximize their income tax refunds, earned income and homestead credit, recover missing stimulus payments due to COVID 19, and increase overall financial stability.
- Lead a monthly workshop for homeless veterans living in transitional housing, where residents can participate in one-on-one personalized financial education, coaching, and goal setting. This effort was designed to help veterans move toward financial stability while taking into consideration their particular strengths and challenges.
- Provide technical assistance and financial coaching for low-income families in a vehicle loan program to better manage finances, improve credit worthiness, and enable them to purchase a vehicle to access and keep employment.
- Planning and development of a Micro-lending Program in collaboration with a committee of community partners (St. Vincent du Paul, Work N Wheels, Summit Credit Union, Bank of Sun Prairie). The goal is to develop a lending program for low-income participants so they can avoid predatory lending/payday loans and improve credit scores.
- Coordinate a 2 session in-person course that helps adults approaching retirement age to make informed decisions about retirement accounts, tax distributions, and health and long-term care insurance. Through this program, participants can use the information to create a retirement plan that establishes long-term goals and promotes financial stability and well-being.

Natural Resources

Michelle Probst, Natural Resources Educator:

- Facilitating with Sharon Lezberg a planning process for collaborative efforts in urban areas across the Midwest to help them develop an action plan for strategies to improve tree canopy in urban areas to mitigate climate change.

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- Facilitating a public engagement process for the City of Stoughton's Sustainability Committee to solicit input from community members on Stoughton's Sustainability Plan and develop goals and policies to address climate change.
 - Facilitating the planning process for the Friends of Lake Wingra board of directors to help them develop a vision and expand their board to help move the organization forward and diversify their board.
 - Coordinate and write for the Dane County Extension Climate Change Blog in an effort to connect members in the community to the science of climate change and show how climate change is affecting the Dane County Community.

Positive Youth Development

Lisa Curley, 4-H Extension Educator:

- Coordinated an in-person training for 4-H volunteers serving in project leader roles where they learn and apply positive youth development foundations of 4-H in order to more effectively lead their project-based work in partnership with young people.
- Facilitate and support youth and adult leaders in Dane County on developing 4-H education meetings in project areas related to STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math). The goal is to support volunteers in the development of new project area learning.
- Facilitate and support for 4-H volunteers, providing them with resources and strategies to help them develop a plan of action and make sure youth have education opportunities and authentic leadership roles in the project.

Ely Moya Malaver, Bilingual Youth Development Educator:

- Planning for the Juntos 4-H program for middle/high school Latinx youth in Dane County. The goal is to provide career and educational pathway support to students to receive the tools they need to succeed.
- Coordinating the Youth in Governance Program and monthly educational meetings, in collaboration with the YGP Coordinator. The goal is to provide a positive and supportive educational experience for the students to learn about county level government.
- Assisting with planning UW Madison's Latino Youth Summit is a free two-day conference for Latino middle school students in the Madison area. Through a culturally relevant curriculum, students learn more about the path from middle school to high school to college for Latino students and academic subjects like science, art and history.

Taylor Seale, Community Youth Development Educator:

- Partnered with Rock County Educator to submit a WI Idea Internship Program application with UniverCity Alliance and the city of Milton. The project purpose is to support the city of Milton in collecting data and recommending safe community spaces for LGBTQ+ youth that are welcoming and inclusive.
- Facilitating a series of Tobacco Prevention Youth Coalition meetings with 7th-12th grade youth. The purpose of this effort is to engage BIPOC youth on the North Side of Madison in tobacco prevention public health experience, community engagement, and designing and executing community impact projects.
- Coordinating a series of meetings for a local committee of high school youth (By Youth For Youth) where they identify public health issues facing youth and funding priorities to be supported by County and City grants. The purpose of this effort is to provide an opportunity for youth to identify and support with funding, projects developed and implemented by youth to serve youth.
- Collaborated with the Health & Well-Being Institute to create activity guides for educators to supplement the Youth Advocates for Community Health guidebook. Efforts included creating, evaluating, and workshopping youth activities surrounding health equity, social determinants of health, and PSE change for state and nation-wide use.
- Collaborating with UW Health's Healthy Kids Collaborative for a local youth-centered coalition around LGBTQ+ behavioral health initiatives. Current preparation includes reaching out to existing stakeholders and organizations who are involved in this work.

Meet our new educators!



Ely Moya Malaver originally joined Dane County Extension in August 2022 as the part-time Juntos Coordinator and then in November she accepted a new position and became our Bilingual Youth Development Educator. Ely will coordinate the Juntos 4-H program and the Youth in Governance program.

Ely has a strong commitment to increasing the sense of belonging among Latinx students in their schools and community. Ely's experience in education and dedication to supporting and providing academic success strategies to students, as well as designing engaging instructions and activities makes her a great fit for Extension. She can be contacted at moyamalaver@countyofdane.com



Kula Yang joined the Dane County Extension team on Tuesday, January 3 as the Family Relationships and Financial Security Educator. She has a Master's degree in Social Work from UW-Madison and experience working in both human resources and with local nonprofits serving low-income and homeless individuals.

Kula is excited to use her professional experience serving low-income populations to improve individual and family relationships in Dane County. Kula can be reached at yang.kula@countyofdane.com

Visit our website to learn more about Extension and upcoming program opportunities

<https://dane.extension.wisc.edu/>

Dane County Staff

John Bedigian FoodWise Support Staff	Venkata Karri Nutrition Educator	Holly Simon FoodWise Curriculum Coordinator
Jess Guffey Calkins Food Systems Educator	Sharon Lezberg Community Development Educator	Claire Strader Organic Produce Educator
Lisa Curley 4-H Extension Educator	Claire Mance Healthy Community Coordinator	Phin Ter Thao Nutrition Educator (Bilingual – Hmong)
Clare Dahl Finance and Life Span Educator	Javiera Morales Clerk (Bilingual - Spanish)	Chip Thompson Clerk
Carrie Edgar Area Extension Director	Ely Moya Malaver Youth Development Educator (Bilingual – Spanish)	Maya Walther Natural Resources and Youth LTE
Will Fulwider Regional Crops Educator	Alison Pfau Regional Dairy Educator	Carla Williams Communication Specialist
Jackie Gehin FoodWise Administrator	Michelle Probst Natural Resources Educator	Kula Yang Family Relationships Educator
Edwin Huayta Nutrition Educator Bilingual (Spanish)	Emily Randerson Nutrition Educator	Ze Yang Nutrition Educator (Bilingual – Hmong)
Sandy Jensen Deputy Director	Kelsi Salm Nutrition Educator	Chelsea Zegler Agriculture & Water Quality Educator
Lisa Johnson Horticulture Educator	Taylor Seale Community Youth Development Educator	

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