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Dane County UW-Extension staff brought education to residents when and where they needed it in 2011 - assisting Ag producers to improve their profitability and protect natural resources; helping gardeners raise food, manage pests and beautify our community; supporting families to manage finances and eat healthy; assisting communities in planning for the future and protecting resources; and providing youth with opportunities to build life skills while learning leadership, science, technology and math. More than 57,500 people participated in a Dane County UW-Extension program in 2011 either in school, on the farm, in a community meeting or at an educational workshop.

Extension, a partnership between Dane County and the University of Wisconsin, responds to local needs with useful information, consultations and educational presentations. We provide knowledge and research from the University to help residents and community leaders make informed decisions.

This report highlights just a few of the many exceptional programs and activities accomplished by Dane County UW-Extension this past year. I hope you find this report helpful and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Best wishes for a Happy 2012!

Carrie Edgar, Dept. Head

Jennings Joins Dane County as Crops & Soils Educator

After serving for 10 years as the Dane County Crops & Soils Educator, David Fischer decided to make a career change last summer. David had been active in Dane County agriculture and his leaving was a big change for the Dane County office. Once the word was out about David leaving, we quickly began to hear from several groups in the community about how vital it was to refill this position. We listened and began a search for an Interim Crops & Soils Educator. Lee Jennings accepted the position and began this role on Dec. 1, 2011

Lee is a Certified Crop Advisor with over 25 years of agronomy experience. He specializes in troubleshooting crop production challenges and educating producers to maximize the profitability of their cropping operations. Lee began his agronomy career as a technician managing the Wisconsin Hybrid Corn Performance Trials and as a Seed Field Inspector and Laboratory Technician for the Wisconsin Crop Improvement Association. He has held several different positions in the agricultural seed business in foundation & commercial seed production, distri-

bution, agronomy, and sales management. He also worked for large crop protection and retail organizations. Lee is an accomplished public speaker and enthusiastic supporter of Wisconsin agriculture.

This position is designed to address the educational needs of Dane County's highly diverse agricultural sector by focusing Extension education programs on the following topics: plant sciences including crop production and horticulture, nutrient management, land management, economics and marketing, farm and agricultural business management, the economic development aspects of agriculture, Ag leadership development, natural resources and farm safety. Lee will work closely with the Dairy & Livestock Agent and other Extension staff on educational programs and activities.

Lee can be reached at the Extension office at 608-224-3716 or at Jennings.lee@countyofdane.com.



Lee Jennings

Emerald Ash Borer Management Workshop a Big Success

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an exotic pest of ash trees that is spreading through the U.S. and Canada. It was discovered in Michigan in 2002, and has killed millions of ash trees. It has been found in 11 Wisconsin counties and could be found in Dane County at any time.

In November, Dr. Chris Williamson of UW-Madison, Lisa Johnson, Dane County Horticulture Educator and the Dane County Tree Board partnered to present a workshop on EAB. The event was open to green industry members. It featured EAB identification and reporting, biology, management options, bio-controls, detection and the EAB cost calculator, which helps municipalities find the most economical strategies for EAB management.

A grant from Wisconsin DNR allowed us to offer the program free of charge.

Fifty-three participants attended the workshop. One emailed later: "I'm amazed at how much work is being done at all levels - research, teaching, industry - and at how quickly it's moving. It gives me hope that we may be able to stabilize the situation enough to preserve the species."

The workshop is part of a long-term effort to educate the public, green industry and Master Gardeners about EAB.



Lisa Johnson



Master Gardeners Making a Difference in Dane County

More than 390 Dane County Master Gardeners volunteered 11,957 hours of education and service in 2011 and participated in 3,015 hours of continuing education. Major accomplishments include:

- Madison Area Master Gardener Association awarded six community gardening grants totaling \$4,758 to area organizations.
- Partnership grants went to Allen Centennial Garden, the Dane County UW-Extension Teaching Garden, University Display Gardens and the UW Arboretum Native Plant Demonstration Garden.
- Hosted the 2011 Wisconsin Master Gardener Association Annual Conference in August with more than 250 people attending from Wisconsin and surrounding states.
- Created and published the 17th annual Wisconsin Garden Journal for 2012. All proceeds go to funding community grants.

Strategic Planning with Wisconsin Public Television

Wisconsin Public Television contacted Dane County Community Development Educator Bill Rizzo to facilitate a strategic planning process. Bill proposed a work group comprised of Leadership Team members be formed to work with him to design an inclusive strategic planning process that would involve the entire organization, create a unified sense of organizational direction, generate broad organizational support for that direction, and integrate strategic thought and action as a routine activity of the Leadership Team.

Bill assisted the Leadership Team members to design a strategic planning process. He worked with the Planning and Leadership Teams by facilitating the planning steps of strategic issues identification and strategy development, as well as serving in a coaching/advisory role for the Director of Television, Leadership Team and Planning Team around planning-related issues.



Bill Rizzo

At the same time, the Leadership Team worked independently to refine strategic issues and create an internal planning framework for conducting department-by-department operational planning for 2012.

Bill submitted the strategic planning report to the Leadership Team this past fall and they have used the report to design a planning document to roll out to their employees and stakeholders, as well as an operational planning template for 2012.

Ultimately, this program succeeded in accomplishing its original objectives of producing a strategic plan for WPT, producing a unique strategic planning process to use in subsequent years designed to engage the entire organization, and establishing strategic thinking and conversation as routine practice of the Leadership Team. The weekly meetings of the Leadership Team now include an agenda item for considering progress toward plan implementation, as well as the consideration of emerging and/or potential strategic issues.

Nutrition Education Program Expands Collaboration with MSCR

A new model of collaboration was implemented in 2011. Due to funding cuts, Madison School and Community Recreation (MSCR) could no longer provide the afterschool clubs that the Dane County Wisconsin Nutrition Education program (WNEP) had participated in for years. Historically, during the school year WNEP conducted nutrition education at seven afterschool clubs, entitled Fun with Foods. Although the clubs were terminating, MSCR valued the importance of the education and experience of making healthy foods and food choices that WNEP educators were providing for the students who participated in the afterschool clubs. The MSCR afterschool sites were interested in exploring how WNEP programming could be integrated into their existing afterschool programming.

Dane County WNEP Administrator, Tracy Smith, facilitated communication between the Youth Nutrition Educators, the MSCR director, and the MSCR site coordinators in an effort to continue the strong collaboration that had been established. The Youth Nutrition Education team proposed to change the format of the programming in a manner to accommodate the sites that WNEP would be serving. Tracy and the MSCR director worked with their staff members until they were able to produce a schedule that would benefit both agencies. As a result of this process, the partnership between WNEP and MSCR was maintained.

During 2011 Dane County WNEP educators conducted nutrition education at 11 afterschool sites in five week sessions with 2 groups of children at each site. In order to accommodate as many children as possible, the larger sites had two five-week sessions and the smaller sites had one five-week session. This change allowed for the addition of four new afterschool sites.



Tracy Smith

As a result of the new schedule the collaboration was made even stronger and the Nutrition Education program was able to serve 14% more students in the MSCR afterschool program in 2011 than in the previous year. This gave more students hands on learning experiences of making and eating healthy foods. At Mendota Elementary, a mom was excited that her son was eating mushrooms. A parent at the Midvale Elementary afterschool site reported that as a result of the nutrition program her daughter became a "trier". At Lowell Elementary, one of the new sites added in 2011, a nutrition educator reported that one of the students was excited to realize that he had all the ingredients at home to make one of the healthy recipes that he had learned.

Dairy Modernization Keeps Dane County in Top Three in State

Dane County dairy farmers have evolved rapidly in recent years. In the past 30 years the typical Dane County dairy farm has changed from an average of 50-60 cows in a tie stall barn to 140-150 cows in free stalls and milking parlors. Dane County's 52,000 milk cows averaged 23,100 lbs of milk per cow for a total of 1,201,200,000 lbs of milk.

Modernization is a continuous process. New technologies have become widely available. It is rare to find a dairy producer who has not made some changes in production practices in recent years. Some producers are undergoing major structural changes every year. Nolan Andersen, Dane County Dairy & Livestock Agent, assists producers in modifying existing facilities and adding new structures to improve the working conditions for families and employees, while making it better for the livestock. Modernization efforts include ventilation, manure handling/storage, feed storage, heifer housing, free stalls, installing parlors and all aspects of livestock housing. Nolan works with herds that range from 35 to 2,500 cows. His efforts help Dane County to be one of the top three dairy counties in the state.



Nolan Andersen

During 2011, Nolan made 247 farm visits to 122 dairy farms dealing with modernization questions. Some of these visits included Dane County Land Conservation staff, neighboring county agents, and David Kammel, UW-Extension Biological Engineering Specialist.

Twenty five area dairy producers who recently modernized their milking and/or housing systems were surveyed. 97% reported they received information and assistance that impacted their decisions in the modernization process. The herds indicated an increase in milk production of 1,200 pounds/cow/year after modernization. 90% of the producers observed overall cow comfort and health improvements after modernizing. Seventeen producers indicated they would no longer be in the dairy business if they had not modernized their facilities and 90% indicated that the overall health of their cows had improved as a result of modernizing their facilities.



4-H Youth Empowered to Teach Others Important Skill

The 4-H program has a long history of record keeping. The focus reflects the importance of this life skill in our daily lives. In 4-H, young people track their activities, events, profits and losses, skill development, learning experiences and much more using the 4-H Record Book. In addition to record keeping, the 4-H Record Book gives members an opportunity to reflect on their year, measure their achievements and growth, set goals and develop plans to meet those goals. It is also often used to help determine awards and scholarships.

The Dane County 4-H program has had sporadic and often inconsistent record book training available to youth interested in completing record books. A new leader may have no idea what a record book is or the importance of completing one. Many "young" clubs have had questions about whether or not records books are required and many youth have never seen a record book and have no idea how to start one.

During leader trainings, Jackie Gehin, Dane County 4-H Program Coordinator would mention the benefits of having a record book and how important they can be when completing applications for 4H scholarships and college entrance. This often piqued the interest of leaders but after visiting a few club meetings to deliver record book materials and get members started, Jackie realized that the youth would be best served hearing from other youth who have successfully completed a record book and what it has taught them.

Conflict Education for Community Leaders

As political discourse became more uncivil with the unveiling of suggested state policies under our new governor, local discussions tended to reflect less willingness to listen and respect others' viewpoints. Verbal aggression, displayed anger, people walking out of meetings and behind the scenes alignment and retribution for varying opinions or even speaking with and listening to "the opposing parties" was viewed negatively and sometimes punished. Two local institutions and one state leadership group approached Mindy Habecker, Community and Natural Resources Educator, about offering training in how to deal more effectively in conflict situations.

The groups included the Wisconsin Leadership Program, graduate fellows of the Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies and Community Action Coalition leaders who work with the community gardening program in Dane County.

The trainings were centered on experiential learning such as role playing, small group dialogue and peer

Jackie found a few older youth members who were very excited about the prospect of visiting clubs throughout Dane County to conduct trainings. They immediately began putting together materials, information, samples, activities, games and prizes to use for the record book teaching sessions.



Jackie Gehin

These three youth were innovative, creative, accommodating and masterful in getting this off the ground. The team has completed many trainings through a variety of venues. The most recent training was held at the 4-H office on a Saturday morning, with 22 in attendance. At the end of the training, all participants went away with a binder of information and materials to keep them going on a record book. In addition, each club represented was given a CD and training materials in order to take the information back to the club and get others interested in starting a record book.

These "train the trainer" materials were developed by the youth team because they felt it was necessary and beneficial to empower Dane County clubs to deliver this knowledge consistently to new members. The Record Book Training Team surpassed expectations and Dane County 4-H now has consistent record book training.

to peer learning. The trainings varied substantially in depth from two full days to three hours. Each was specifically targeted for the group and the situations they might encounter.



Mindy Habecker

In all, 108 community leaders learned how to more effectively deal with situations of conflict. Each group learned skills they could use for direct communication, how to design and run public meetings or events where one might expect conflict to occur, and how to create spaces and venues for dialogue to take place where people will be better able to hear differing viewpoints. Evaluations revealed participants improved not only their knowledge of conflict management skills, but their confidence in being able to utilize these skills. All reported the training will be very valuable to their future work.

Financial Coaching Partnership Helps Reduce Homelessness in Dane County

There are many individuals and families in Dane County that struggle to manage their household finances due to the current economic climate. These shocks to the family resources can spiral into significant negative financial outcomes including a decrease in credit worthiness, and in some severe cases, personal bankruptcy.



Deb Neubauer

In 2010, the Dane County UW Extension Financial Education Center (FEC), a program managed by Deb Neubauer, Family Living Educator, added a volunteer financial coaching program called "Financial CHANGE" to its list of services. The mission of the Financial Education Center is to give families the tools and guidance

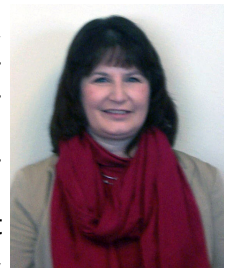
they need to become empowered to manage family finances on their own. A pilot project done by the FEC in conjunction with Dr. Michael Collins' Center For Financial Security in 2009 revealed that combining educational workshops, one-on-one assessment and financial coaching substantially increases the likelihood that a family will make positive behavior changes that increase financial security. A grant from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation provided funds to add FEC staff to expand the program, and a partnership with United Way and AmeriCorps supplied two full-time members to assume the role of volunteer coordinators for the Financial CHANGE program.

In 2011, the program was adopted by United Way of Dane County as a resource to assist its "Housing First" families in avoiding homelessness. The FEC

trained the existing caseworkers to do the coaching. This approach does two things. First, it provides financial knowledge to the case workers, who many times are struggling to make ends meet themselves, and secondly, it builds on a trusting relationship that already exists between the caseworker and client. The role of the coach is to assist the client in choosing one or two financial goals that can realistically be achieved in a 6 month period of time, and then act as a motivator to encourage the client to make good choices, holding the client accountable at all times.

Bringing formerly homeless families into financial coaching by careful outreach to their network of support was critical to the success of our program. By the end of 2011, five agencies (Elizabeth House, Salvation Army, Porchlight, Empower Home and The Road Home) have signed on to the program. Fifteen caseworkers have been trained and are participating as coaches.

Susan Taylor, Financial Educator, illustrates how the program is progressing with the Housing First clients: "Lydia, a client of The Road Home, working with her coach, collectively strategized on her financial goals, began cleaning up her credit report, established a bank account, and recently joined a homeownership "Rent to Own" program through the Urban League to purchase her own home. She periodically reviews her progress with her coach and is looking forward to setting additional goals as she accomplishes her current ones."



Sue Taylor

Dane County Food Council Develops Action Plan for Community Food System



Carrie Edgar

Established in 2005, the Dane County Food Council encourages active collaboration to explore issues and develop recommendations to create an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable local food system for the Dane County region. However, the Council had not been funded or staffed for the past few years resulting in low attendance and limited activity.

Carrie Edgar, Dept. Head & Community Food Systems Educator, volunteered to staff the Council and to help increase membership and develop a plan of work. After several meetings with existing Council members, Supervisors Richmond and Stoebig developed an ordinance amendment to change the membership of the Council to nine members with six citizen members and three

County Board Supervisors. The new Council was appointed in the spring of 2011 and completed an action plan to prioritize goals and activities as well as establish a timeline for their work. The following goals have been identified:

- Develop food and Ag policy recommendations for Dane County
- Advocate for food and Ag policy that supports the vision for the Dane County food system
- Promote public education and outreach on food and agriculture issues
- Establish a coalition of food system groups to collaboratively address food and Ag issues

The Council meets monthly and is working on the action plan items. To learn more about the Dane County Food Council Action Plan visit the website at www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil.



Teen Employment and Local Foods Education

After a series on cooking and food preservation conducted in fall of 2010, Goodman Community Center partnered with Extension staff to collaborate in delivering a more rigorous and intensive training series with a new class of TEENWorks participants in spring 2011. Working closely with a core of AmeriCorps members; Joe Muellenberg, Youth Nutrition Educator and Lesly Scott, 4-H Youth Development Educator, designed a six week series to meet the needs of the teens. This was a natural partnership that combined Joe's experience teaching nutrition concepts to youth and Lesly's experience in food preservation and youth development. This was also an ideal opportunity to collaborate across programs while taking advantage of the various resources the center had to offer.



Joe Muellenberg

In the early spring, Lesly and Joe met with the youth and adults involved in this series and they expressed a variety of interests around food preservation topics including seasonal foods, canning, freezing and dehydrating. It was agreed to tackle one ingredient or theme each week like jam or salsa. Throughout the educational series, Joe and Lesly used the recipes to teach various concepts while working with the youth. Using an antique apple press and shredder, we pressed apples to make juice, shredded them for apple sauce, and processed them for apple jam. They used the food processor to create freezer pesto utilizing ingredients such as basil, mint, rosemary, cilantro and parsley. Using the center's industrial-sized tilt-oven, they water bath canned spicy and dill-pickled beans, several different salsas, and various reduced-sugar fruit jams using UW-Extension food preservation publications. The teens learned healthier options such as various low-sodium reci-

pes and low-sugar jams as well as trying something new including fresh apple sauce and pesto.

For the majority of the participants, African American males age 16-18, cooking was familiar and comfortable. Preserving food, however, was new to all of them and they were thrilled with both the process and the results. One teen stated that after making and taking home his strawberry jam that he proceeded to eat nothing but peanut butter and jam sandwiches all week. He exclaimed that the jam was the best he had ever eaten. The same type of responses held true for the others. Whether it was sampling spicy green beans or homemade apple sauce, they all dug into their products with enthusiasm and an open mind. Naturally, some recipes were clear favorites, like strawberry jam or tomato salsa. Surprisingly other unique and uncommon favorites emerged like rosemary and parsley pesto or spicy mango salsa.



Lesly Scott

Each week the group focused on an aspect of commercial food production and the standards for safety, sanitation and hygiene. We discussed food safety issues and used best practices including proper foot wear, correct knife use, avoidance of cross-contamination, correct water-bath canning procedures and proper kitchen hygiene. The teens learned how preserving produce they have grown themselves is a cost-effective way to stretch food dollars and improve food security.

The series was so successful that the Goodman Community Center included Dane County UW-Extension as a community partner in a grant and has asked for us to continue the partnership to provide education for future cohorts of teens learning culinary arts under the TEENWorks program.

Dane County UW Extension Numbers for 2011

- Total direct teaching contacts: 57,681
- Total indirect teaching contacts: 325,414
- Volunteers Trained: 1,652
(4-H, Master Gardeners, Master Composters)
- 4-H Community Clubs: 40
- 4-H Adult Volunteers: 400
- 4-H Youth Members: 1,500



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