



Cooperative Extension •
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Clark County

Multi-Year (2008-2010) Plan of Work

For

Nick Schneider

Agriculture Agent

Assistant Professor

Winnebago County, Wisconsin

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Programming Area Title: Protecting Soil and Water Quality

	2008	2009	2010
Days	40	45	50

Situation Statement: Winnebago County has the largest area of water in any county of the state with 84,000 acres. Land area consist of 290,000 acres. Winnebago County also supports a large urban population of 160,000 people. In a typical year, forage is growing on 27,000 acres, wheat is planted on 11,000 acres, soybeans is planted on 33,000 acres, and corn is planted on 50,000 acres. 33,000 head of cattle and calves are raised in Winnebago County. The combination of large amounts of surface water that supports recreation and groundwater needed for home and business use makes water quality a priority. Managing water quality in agricultural and urban settings is a priority for the county. From a soil protection perspective, many Winnebago County farms use traditional tillage practices, such as moldboard plowing. Moldboard plowing and chisel plowing, especially in the fall, can contribute more soil erosion. Soil erosion adversely affects soil quality.

Surveying of the agriculture community in 2005 indicated nutrient and pest management is a high education priority. More detailed surveying in 2008 showed two of the most desired education curriculum are “ Write a Nutrient Management Plan ” and “ Soil Quality Field Day ”.

Program Objectives:

1. Increase the number of farms using a nutrient management plan.
2. Farmers and custom manure haulers will adopt practices that reduce the risk of phosphorus and nitrogen losses.
3. Farmers will implement practices that preserve soil quality, such as reduced tillage or cover crops.
4. Residents will gain knowledge of storm water threats to water quality.

Response and Planned Activities: Collaborate with the Winnebago County Land and

Water Conservation Department and NRCS to provide training on preparing and following nutrient management plans. SNAP-Plus training will be offered. Continue to serve on the Nutrient Management Team. Assist with Professional Manure Hauler certification training. Present summer field days that feature water quality, soil quality and reduced tillage. Utilize the Grains Team soil quality field day curriculum. Collaborate with SARE, soil scientist, and weed scientist to evaluate and improve professional development understanding of cover crops.

Evaluation Plan: Perform pre and post workshop testing at nutrient management education functions. Use the Farm Practices Inventory to determine what practices are in place and what practices have changed. Document the number of producers that develop nutrient management plans through participation in nutrient management education. Review nutrient management plans to ensure those farms have prepared a plan that reduces the risk of phosphorus run-off and nitrogen loss. Provide follow-up consultations with farmers using a nutrient management plan to evaluate how closely they followed the plan. Use survey evaluation tools to assess the knowledge gained and practices adopted from field days and classes. Document when farms adopt less erosive tillage practices and change their crop rotation.

Resources: Utilize the Nutrient Management Farmer Education curriculum to train all types of farmers to more effectively use the nutrients on their farm. Contribute to the custom manure haulers and research and demonstration work teams. Maintain a working relationship with soil science Extension Specialists. Serve on the state SARE Task Force.

Professional Development Needs: Maintain Certified Crop Advisors status. Attend agronomy, soil, and water quality professional development events.

Programming Area Title: Consumer, Fresh Market, and Commercial Horticulture

	2008	2009	2010
Days	60	55	50

Situation Statement: Inquiries regarding many issues that clientele face in the garden, at home, or in the communities at large become a significant source of education service contacts. Past documentation reveals approximately 300 inquiries covering a diverse spectrum of horticultural issues come into the Extension office. Master Gardener volunteers often address horticultural inquiries. They serve in the capacity of Plant Health Advisors. The Winnebago County Master Gardener Association has 113 members who contributed 5400 hours of volunteer service to local communities in 2007.

Fresh market produce production has potential to grow in Winnebago County. Community Gardens have been relatively stable in the county for the past few years. Since farmers' markets are present, there is an opportunity to provide production education support. The issue statement developed in winter of 2007/2008 states there is a growing, local interest in supporting local food systems and market opportunities for local and niche farm market products. During the summer of 2008, further assess the needs of the fresh produce audience.

Based on the publication "Winnebago County Agriculture: Value and Economic Impact" (2004) commercial horticulture is a \$15 million business in Winnebago County. Winnebago County Extension has an established history of providing education to the green industry.

Program Objectives:

1. Expand the scope of Master Gardener Volunteers in Winnebago County.
2. Improve the pest management, production, and marketing practices of fresh market gardeners.
3. Commercial horticulture businesses will gain knowledge of the most recent research based information.

Response and Planned Activities: Wisconsin Master Gardener Volunteer training will be offered yearly. Winnebago County Master Gardeners prefer to have a class presented live rather than via distance education. Collaborate with and advise the Master Gardeners to provide education in horticulture subject of community interest.

Provide education to community gardeners and market gardeners on best produce management practices. Visit the produce auction and farmers' markets to build relationships with growers. Utilize education and direct marketing material for use by fresh market produce growers. Organize regional fresh market produce education events.

Continue appropriate commercial horticulture education initiatives. During winter, host an annual commercial horticulture short course.

Evaluation Plan: Foster increased volunteerism with the Master Gardener by broadening the scope and communities served. Perform post workshop evaluations at horticulture education events questioning what participants have learned about pest management and production techniques.

Resources: UW publications and other research based information is requested through the county office on a regular basis. The plethora of print and internet resources covering diverse horticultural topics will be used on a regular basis. Direct support from state horticulture specialists is essential to the success of this programming. The soil and plant analysis labs will continue to be an important tool.

Professional Development Needs: Since my area of experience is in the agronomy field rather than horticulture, training opportunities will be pursued. Along with Master Gardener Volunteers, attend the annual horticulture training "Responding to horticulture inquires". Continue to read and review information covering fresh market produce production, consumer, and commercial horticulture.

Programming Area Title: Sustaining Dairy and Livestock Farms in Winnebago County

	2008	2009	2010
Days	70	70	70

Situation Statement: In the winter of 2007/2008 issue statements were developed for each county as part of an updated program planning initiative. An issue statement related to agriculture programming was, “Enhancing agriculture productivity and sustainability in Winnebago County.” The question that was presented is, “How can Winnebago County best protect its remaining farmland, while enhancing its productivity and sustainability?” A potential to improve the sustainability of dairy and livestock farms is for the University of Wisconsin Extension to provide them with the latest research based information, which if acted upon, will improve production practices.

Surveying of the agriculture community in 2005 indicated dairy/livestock production and farm management are a moderate education priority. More detailed surveying in 2008 showed dairy modernization, milk quality and farm transfers are highly desired education curriculum.

Program Objectives:

1. Dairy and livestock producers will modernize milking and animal housing facilities to make farm operations more efficient while providing for improved animal health.
2. Dairy and Livestock producers will adopt the latest research based forage production practices in order to increase yield and improve quality of forage.
3. Agriculture producers will use financial management tools, such as FINPACK, to guide farm business decisions and farm transfers.
4. County residents will improve their agriculture literacy thereby facilitating better relationships between urban and rural settings.

Response and Planned Activities: Use forage scissors clips and corn silage dry down events to provide a useful service to the local farmers. This will also serve as an opportunity to build relationships with local farmers. If adequate interest exists, advise

a local forage network. Recruit assistance from neighboring county Dairy Agents and State specialists to initiate dairy modernization education. Events should include farm tours, seminars, and one-on-one interaction with producers. Assist at the Center for Dairy Profitability booth at the WPS farm show in Oshkosh. Also collaborate with the Center for Dairy Profitability to provide the Farm Transfers and Business Arrangement Curriculum. Work one-on-one with producers to guide management and purchase decisions with FINPAK software. Assemble a presentation on the value of agriculture to Winnebago County and present locally so that a wider range of people are aware that sustaining the agriculture community in Winnebago County is important to the local economy.

Evaluation Plan: Conduct audience surveying at dairy education events to assess knowledge gained. Follow up with one-to-one interviews to determine if new production practices were adopted. Through financial tools such as FINPACK, producers will determine the financial viability of the future of their farming operation. The number of dairy producers that made a decision on a modernization option based on information and knowledge acquired from Extension will be documented. The method used in the dairy modernization will be included in the documentation.

Resources: Maintain membership of Midwest Forage Association because it draws on expertise from forage specialists and provides avenues for networking. Continue to contribute to Team Forages and draw direction from the team 's plan of work. Web resources such as the MFA homepage, Focus on Forage issues, and UWEX Forages provide excellent, timely information and are utilized on a regular bases. Develop a stronger relationship with dairy and livestock state specialists.

Professional Development Needs: Strengthen knowledge of dairy facilities and animal health by reading appropriate literature and attending relevant training. Attend FINPACK training in order to become more skilled with the software.

Programming Area Title: Profitable Grain Crop Production

	2008	2009	2010
Days	70	70	70

Situation Statement: Winnebago County has undergone a transition from dairy to more crop production in recent years. With the construction of the Utica Energy ethanol plant, there is a strong local marketplace for corn. Soybean and wheat acreage is significant here also. In a typical year, wheat is planted on 11,000 acres, soybeans is planted on 33,000 acres, and corn is planted on 50,000 acres. Surveying of Winnebago County farmers in 2005 indicated grain crop production specifically emphasizing corn and soybeans is the education farmers are most interested in.

Program Objectives:

1. Grain producers will better understand their costs of production and evaluate the profitability of their decisions.
2. Decrease grain producer risk by increasing the utilization of grain marketing plans.
3. Reduce the impact of pests such as weeds, insects, and diseases on crop yield through the adoption of integrated pest management.

Response and Planned Activities: Pesticide applicator training provides an opportunity to educate private applicators on not only safe pesticide application but integrated pest management. Offer the grain marketing workshop training offered through Team Grains and the Farm and Risk Management Team. Supply a summary of UW variety trials to producers through the Extension Views newsletter. Establish a sentinel farm network to monitor crop pests and health. Host yearly agronomy update meetings to share latest research findings with local crop producers. Establish a “Crops” email list serve to keep growers up-to-date on latest research and crop developments.

Evaluation Plan: Grain producers will complete a cropping budget for commodities produced on their farm. The information gained will aid in crop decision making proc-

ess. Grain producers attending grain marketing workshops will demonstrate an increased understanding and confidence in grain marketing plans as revealed through participant surveying. One-to-one interviews will be used to determine if commodity crop growers will make pest management decisions based on integrated pest management.

Resources: Software programs are important to the success of this programming. Utilize Center For Dairy Profitability website to obtain crop budgets. Assist farmers determine their cost of production through Excel spreadsheets. Utilize the AgVentures grain marketing curriculum. Obtain research results from UW specialists on grain economics, yield trial results, IPM, and crop production practices in order to educate producers.

Professional Development Needs: Maintaining Certified Crop Advisor status is important to staying abreast on current grain crop production practices. Attend the Wisconsin Fertilizer, Aglime and Pest Management conference each year. Also, participate in summer crop diagnostic training.