

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES



4-H's Commitment to the Communities We Serve - Denise Retzleff

A mission statement describes an organization's commitment, what they are trying to accomplish and why they exist. It is used to make organizational decisions such as with budgeting, to develop goals, to support the organization's values and to assist in evaluating progress. Early in 2007 the Fond du Lac County 4-H Adult Leaders Association Executive Board began a process to clarify the County 4-H program mission. It began by asking 4-H members and leaders to respond to the question, "What does 4-H mean to me?" 4-H clubs were asked to have these conversations and to report their answers back to the board.

Common responses from youth and adults included: 4-H means.... New experiences and challenges; Projects such as archery, crafts, animals, knitting, rockets, and health; Learning by doing; Self improvement; Activities such as speeches, basketball, the Fair, club offices, games, meetings, and camp; New and diverse people; Families are included, Multi-generational efforts; Community service; Supportive adult role models; Preparing for the future; Developing life skills such as self confidence, leadership, record keeping, responsibility, and respect; Belonging and acceptance; Fun; Food; and Teaching values.

These responses were shared at a Leader Association meeting where the discussion then focused on identifying the strengths of 4-H and the opportunities that we might grasp. All of this information was then used by the Executive Board to draft a mission statement which was presented and approved at the annual meeting. The mission statement is our commitment to all of the communities we serve in Fond du Lac County; it's about the difference we make. It states, **Fond du Lac County 4-H: Enriching youth, families, and communities through citizenship, leadership and life skill experiences.** As we move into 2008, we will look at what new programs might be undertaken or what new audiences may be reached in fulfilling this mission.

AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY

Dairy Modernization Continues – Tiestalls Continue to Disappear - Paul Dyk

In Fond du Lac County, there are currently 395 farms. Of these 395 farms, 335 are farms that have less than 150 cows. A majority (>85%) of these farms still employ a traditional facility, usually referred to as a tiestall barn. These are the traditional "red" barns that house cows in individual stalls. Each cow is tethered in an individual stall. The dairy producer milks these cows by moving a milk machine from cow to cow (milk is transferred by a pipeline).

Tiestall barns conjure up idealistic images of farm life in rural America. Indeed they have been a staple of farm life for nearly 100 years in Wisconsin. In the last 30 years, however, almost no one has built this type of facility. Tiestalls are labor intensive and less efficient compared to freestall/parlor facilities. They often lead to many health issues for the dairy farmer like knee and hip replacements. And finally the production potential and profit is usually less than newer freestall/parlor operations. An obstacle to converting to newer facilities has been the high capital overhead of newer facilities.

In the fall of 2007, Paul Dyk took a small group of dairy producers to Crawford County, WI. He took this group of producers to six low cost parlors. These are parlors that range from \$4,000 to \$50,000 in cost. These parlors compare favorably to current commercial parlors in the \$100,000 to \$500,000 range. The producers were impressed by the functionality of these parlors and benefits to the producers. Producers had improved health, profitability and efficiency. Follow-up on farm visits were generated to ten farms in Fond du Lac County. In addition, a Modernization program was given in December of 2007. A number of parlors are being planned for construction in 2008. It is hoped that this core of producers will help spur on the final conversion and disappearance of tiestalls in Fond du Lac County.

HUMAN HEALTH & NUTRITION

Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program's Overview of Nutrition Education Efforts for the 2007 Year-End - Shelley Tidemann

The Fond du Lac County Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) is a UW-Extension Family Living nutrition education program that helps limited resource families and individuals choose healthful diets, purchase and prepare healthful food and handle it safely, and become more food secure by spending their food dollars wisely. WNEP is funded by Federal dollars. The program housed out of Fond du Lac County also serves Green Lake County.

In fiscal year 2007, 2,055 learners attended one or more WNEP educational events, 75 more contacts than 2006. Almost half (47%) of the participants represented youth ages 5-17, 35% were families with children, 17% were adults without children, and 1% were senior adults. The audience focuses changed this year with more youth reached than families with children. The majority of the participants were women (59%), male participation increased from 37% in 2006 to 41% in 2007. Participants were 73% white, 6%

African American, 1% Asian American, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 18% Hispanic or Latino. The program continues to see an increase in Hispanic/Latino program participants from 9% in 2005 to 14% in 2006 and 18% in 2007.

Fifty-nine percent (1,214) of the learners attended a multi-group session, 35% (709) attended one-time group sessions, and 6% (128) attended a learn-while-you-wait session. The one-time group sessions saw an increase of 17% from the number reported in 2006. Forty-nine percent (1,003) of learners attended a teaching event that addressed a dietary quality outcome, 33% (676) of the learners attended a teaching event addressing a food resource management outcome, and the remaining 111 (5%) received information on food safety and food security outcome topics.

In 2007, WNEP in Fond du Lac County focused on increasing contacts with potential WNEP learners. In the County, the following were added into the existing educational programming schedule:

- Sisters in Health group made up of Hispanic families that meet at the Family Resource Center
- Parents as Teachers (PAT) family events held at the Family Resource Center
- Friendship Corner transitional learning center for individuals associated with the Berry House
- A second section of ADVOCAP Fresh Start students has been added
- Boys and Girls Club of Fond du Lac added a second age group
- Added a second monthly food resource management class held at the Fond du Lac Job Center

In addition, 16,891 families with children were reached through newsletters by mail. More information on the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program can be found at: <http://fonddulac.uwex.edu/wnep/>.

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