

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES

L.I.F.E. Report: A Community Collaboration – Nan Baumgartner

The Local Indicators for Excellence (L.I.F.E.) report overviews the socio-economic conditions of Fond du Lac County in ten key areas: health, education, housing, public safety, civics and diversity, natural resources, children and families, arts and recreation, work and aging. It is an extension of earlier efforts by the Safe and Stable Families Initiative in both 1997 and 2001, to describe and quantify the quality of life in the county. The 170+ page publication provides a snapshot of demographic and statistical information on Fond du Lac County. The purpose of the report is to guide decisions and efforts at all levels within the community: from businesses as they work to recruit and retain employees, to non-profits or local government determining level of services, to coalitions addressing areas of need, to the general public becoming more aware of their individual community strengths, challenges and opportunities. When there is a greater understanding of current community conditions and trends, local leaders and residents can work together with more creativity in addressing the challenges that lie before them.

Leadership for the L.I.F.E. report was provided by Fond du Lac Area United Way, the Fond du Lac Public Library and UW-Extension. The report is a first step in a larger community visioning process which will continue to unfold in the months ahead. UW-Extension will continue to serve in a leadership role with the Fond du Lac Area United Way to help move this process forward.

AGRICULTURAL PROFITABILITY

On Farm Research Projects Involve Area Growers and Provide Important Information – Mike Rankin

The foundation of Cooperative Extension is to provide information based on unbiased research. In most cases, the research is done at our Land Grant universities and shared throughout the boundaries of the state. However, another type of research is that done on working farms. It is sometimes referred to as on farm research. This type of research has limitations, but also offers several advantages. First, for many farmers it is more “believable” because it is done close to home. Further, it utilizes farm scale equipment and fields. Through the years, there have been many on farm research projects done in Fond du Lac County involving a number of area farmers. The focus has varied from improving the environment to improving farm profitability, while many times accomplishing both. In 2007, field plots have been established to evaluate the use of fungicides on winter wheat and to look at the viability of producing “earless” corn for feeding to dairy heifers. There have also been programs set up on two farms to evaluate the yield and persistence of alfalfa over several years. As has been the case for many years, University of Wisconsin-Extension agronomists use Fond du Lac County farm fields to evaluate the performance of corn, soybean, and alfalfa varieties/hybrids being marketed in the state. All of these efforts are done using very specific research protocol and result in a more informed and profitable agricultural sector.

FOND DU LAC COUNTY UW-EXTENSION
Room 227, Administration/Extension Building
400 University Drive
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Phone: (920) 929-3170/748-7565/324-2879
Website: <http://fonddulac.uwex.edu>

Nan Baumgartner, Family Living Educator
Paul Dyk, Dairy and Livestock Agent
Position Vacant, Community Resource Dev. Agent
Mike Rankin, Crops and Soils Agent
Denise Retzleff, 4-H Youth Development Educator
Shelley Tidemann, Family Living Educator

ak 6/28/07