



Fond du Lac County University of Wisconsin-Extension 2005 Annual Report

Extending the knowledge and resources of the University of Wisconsin to people where they live and work.

Rent Smart: *Tenant Education*

Do you know what landlords look for in a renter? Do you know how much you can afford to pay for rent? How do you choose a place to rent; what do you look for? Individuals in Fond du Lac County are learning answers to these and additional questions on renting when they attend the Rent Smart Tenant Education classes. Rent Smart provides practical information to help people find and keep a decent place to live. Rent Smart is designed for individuals who are likely to have trouble securing rental housing.

This tenant education course consists of a series of two three-hour workshops, taught every other month throughout the year. Basic tenant responsibilities are taught by Family Living Educator, Michelle Tidemann, using the UWEX curriculum, "Rent Smart" and coordinated by Advo-

cap Community Development counselors. One hundred seventeen individuals have participated in 2005 and to date, 32 individuals have participated in 2006. Participants indicated numerous times after completing the sessions, "I will pay closer attention to applications, reading the lease, check-in/checkout and everything else that was taught during Rent Smart."

Participants receive a certificate for completing the program. The Fond du Lac Housing Authority and some landlords recognize this certificate as a positive reference on their housing applications.

Rent Smart is an example of how coordination of community resources improves outcomes for families. The goal of Rent Smart is to increase housing stability of individuals with poor rental histories. ■

4-H Afterschool Reaches New Audience

4-H creates non-formal, educational opportunities to help youth thrive in a complex and changing world. One of the settings this takes place in is the 4-H Afterschool Program. The Boys & Girls Club and Fond du Lac School District operate an after school program at Riverside School and Fahey Community Center. 4-H provides research based hands-on learning at the sites in multi-weeklong sessions and once a month on Fridays. Using 4-H curriculum, children have learned about nature, theatre and puppetry, leadership, mini society, listening, friendship, cultures around the world and insects. An official 4-H Afterschool Club was chartered this spring at Fahey. Children selected the name "Shining Shamrocks" for the club. This summer the youth have the opportunity to participate in 4-H camp. In all, 165 children in kindergarten through fifth grade have developed skills through 4-H Afterschool. ■



Demand for Low-Cost Parlor Information Generated by Demo Parlor

Many small and medium size tie stall and stanchion barn dairy producers would like to modernize to a parlor. However, most cannot afford the \$250,000-plus investment. UW-Extension's Dairy Team has developed a program to demonstrate how these dairy producers can build a low-cost parlor. A life-size demo parlor was built featuring a pit parlor with a parabone system on one side and a parallel system on the other. Dr. Dave Kammel, UW-Extension Ag Engineer, developed a paper outlining the options to keep the parlor low-cost by installing it in an existing stall barn. Other low-cost options are to use existing milking equipment to swing milking units side to side instead of installing a unit by each cow, owner-built parlor stalls, along with plans and dimen-

sions for self-construction. Typical costs for a low-cost parlor have been documented between \$20,000 to \$100,000.

The low-cost parlor demo was featured at the Ag Showcase in March at the fairgrounds, the PDPW meeting in Madison, at the Farm Show at the EAA grounds and at Farm Technology Days. Over 300 dairy producers expressed interest and requested more information. The interest in switching from stall barn milking to parlor is driven by improved operator health (limiting the number of deep knee bends), reduced labor by milking more cows per hour per milker and milking more cows to increase cash flow. UW-Extension was part of the process in getting grant money to fund the project and assist in organizing demonstration dates. ■

Junior Master Gardener Program

The Junior Master Gardener Program reached over 100 youth and 50 families in the 2005 program year. The program worked with individuals from the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, 4-H, Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club, Cobblestone Day Care and ADVOCAP. The focus for the 2005 growing season was family gardening. The youth learned



how to maintain a garden and use the produce in the kitchen, experienced hands on activities and performed community service. We helped establish garden sites at UW-Fond du Lac, the UWEX community garden, Cobblestone Day Care, Prairieview (which is affiliated with ADVOCAP) and the Boys and Girls Club at the Fahey location. The youth that meet at UW-Fond du Lac and the Boys and Girls Club even put together a planted pot arrangement for the Fond du Lac County Fair. Finally, this year the program held a Garden Café at all the sites to showcase our members and the program.

One of the youth from the Salvation Army group sums up his experience as follows, "My name is Joey and I have been in the Junior Master Gardener program for two years. The thing that I had fun with was making crafts and food projects for the fair. I got a lot of firsts and seconds. I learned how to garden and pull weeds. The new foods I tried were tomatoes, radishes, kohlrabi and peppers. I had a good summer."



ABOVE: Junior Master Gardener, Courtney Zamzow discusses her fair projects with a judge at the Fond du Lac County Fair.

LEFT: Joey along with other members of the Salvation Army group had the opportunity to make baked potatoes with the works. Most of the vegetable toppings came from their garden plot at UW-Fond du Lac.

Living Apart, Parenting Together

There are many threatening and frightening things that happen to individuals whose relationship ends up in separation or divorce. When there are no children of the relationship, the adults can separate their lives relatively easily, albeit not without pain. For a child, however, the termination of a nuclear family is, most often, highly traumatizing. A successful divorce, in which children are involved, is one in which the parents divorce each other but do not require the child to divorce one of the parents, either as a result of parental conflict or by one parent not being available to the child. Thus, it is a well-established fact that a child experiencing the dissolution of the family structure will do better if the parents are able to get along and reduce trauma in an already traumatic experience.

To help Fond du Lac County parents who are experi-

encing divorce, the Fond du Lac County Family Court Services, the Family Resource Center and the University of Wisconsin-Extension have teamed together to teach parents how to avoid putting their children in the middle of a divorce in order to reduce the stress and trauma it can have on kids. Co-parenting can be a viable option when it is implemented by parents who want it to work because they understand that the child's needs supersede their own self interest and it can be successful and rewarding for both the child and the parents. ■



Ag Ventures Grain Marketing Program

Grain marketing skills are critically important to maximize profitability from commodity crops. Concepts revolving around grain marketing alternatives and evaluation are often difficult to understand or implement. It's much easier to grow the crop and simply take what the market offers at a given point in time. During March, a 3-day introductory grain marketing seminar was offered in Fond du Lac to offer local producers an opportunity to build a background knowledge for marketing their grain crops. A total of eleven farm units participated. These individuals were taught how to evaluate and manage risk; determine their cost of production; use basic grain marketing tools such as cash, futures, or option contracts; and develop a marketing plan. Throughout the sessions participants played a marketing dice game which further reinforced the concepts of risk and volatility in grain markets. Pre- and post-test evaluations indicated that participants increased their understanding in all of the program concepts taught. ■

Yet Another Challenging Growing Season

The 2005 growing season was characterized early by the realization that area farmers had suffered the worst alfalfa winterkill in nearly 15 years. Numerous farm calls were made to help producers evaluate stands and, more importantly, seek short term forage production solutions. As the season progressed, even the solutions came upon hard times as rainfall from June through August was far below normal and crops wilted because of hot temperatures and a lack of soil moisture. The drought conditions brought on other problems such as spider mites in the soybean crop. UW-Extension, both state-wide and locally, provided crop consultants and producers information to help manage through the dry conditions with minimal losses. Crop concerns were addressed through the media, on the internet and personal contacts either over the phone or out in the field. This fall's Agronomy Field Day was attended by nearly 150 farmers and a variety of topics dealing with crop problems and marketing were presented. ■

The "Power" in Powerful Tools for Caregivers is Real

Former First Lady Rosalyn Carter once said, *"There are only four kinds of people in the world; those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers and those who will need a caregiver."* Each of us will fall into one of the categories some time during our lives. As people live longer and long-term health care costs continue to rise, more and more families take on caregiving roles. In fact, family caregivers are the backbone of the long-term care system. But caregiving can be an emotional roller coaster. Although there is a sense of personal satisfaction from caring for a loved one, caregivers may also experience a sense of burden, fair to poor physical health and de-

pression. In response to this growing trend, UW-Extension has been working collaboratively in the community to offer a six-week course entitled Powerful Tools for Caregiving.

Here is what some of the most recent participants have said about the program. "This class was so very emotionally and mentally empowering for me." "Invaluable for persons who are caregivers." "I feel better about myself and the care I can now provide." The program helps caregivers build effective communication skills, reduce personal stress, set important and realistic goals, learn how to make tough decisions and communicate effectively with medical staff. ■

Calf Care Dairy Workers Training

Processing newborn calves properly is extremely important to the health and survival of the newborn calf. Dairy managers and operators expressed a need for basic dairy worker training in reproduction, milking procedures, calf care and dairy herdsman skills. A calf care dairy worker training was held on the Gary and Rose Boyke farm on September 27 for 21 Hispanic workers from nine different area dairies. The Dairy & Livestock Agent taught the ten best management practices for raising calves with translator, Julia Reyes-Hamann, calf manager at Hanke Farms, Inc. of Plymouth. Dr. Mark Sosalla, Country Hills Clinic, Eden, taught testing for colostrum quality, feeding with an esophageal tube feeder,

ear tagging, navel dipping, BVD testing, dehorning and identifying sick calves via thermometer, observation and skin pinch retention test.

Before and after surveys were conducted to determine knowledge and understanding gained. Of the seven basic skills taught, with 1 being low and 7 high, the group averaged 4.12 before training and 6.02 after training. All of the group would recommend the training to other dairy workers.

At the conclusion of the training, each farm was given a laminated protocol sheet for each skill in English and Spanish to post on their farm for reference. ■

Providing Horticulture Information

Fond du Lac County residents receive horticulture information through different sources. Over the last couple of years the local newspapers and radio stations have requested programs and information on horticulture from the Fond du Lac County UW-Extension Office. As a result of these requests, information is provided through weekly articles in two local newspapers.

A live weekly radio program is conducted. Listeners call in with their horticultural questions. The programs are Saturday mornings from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. A radio program is also conducted each Friday in the early afternoon on another Fond du Lac radio station. Radio talk programs are conducted seasonally on other radio stations in Fond du Lac County. The UW-Extension Community Resource Development Educator along with Master Gardeners participate in the radio programs.

Comments from listeners and newspaper readers state that they enjoy the radio programs and newspaper articles and gain knowledge on what to do with their plants whether it is outdoors or inside.

Presentations are made to area community service organizations on horticulture and environmental topics. ■

The New Food Pyramid

In April of 2005, USDA released the new food guidance system -- MyPyramid. This guidance system provides the framework on which the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) operates. The target audiences for WNEP programming are families who are FoodShare eligible. In Fond du Lac County, the WNEP program has been implementing the new MyPyramid recommendations through educational sessions to the following groups: Boys and Girls Club youth involved in After School programming; AD-VOCAP Fresh Start young adults, as well as AD-VOCAP Head Start and Even Start parents in Fond du Lac and Green Lake County; Junior Master Gardener Program; ARC; and Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

Educational sessions using MyPyramid resources address food and physical activity choices each day that affect an individual's health—how you feel today, tomorrow and in the future. MyPyramid offers recommendations that can help Americans get started toward a healthy diet, which include the following food related suggestions and to increase physical activity. Here are starting points to consider:



- Make half your grains whole
- Vary your veggies
- Focus on fruits
- Get your calcium rich foods
- Go lean with protein
- Find your balance between food and physical activity

For an individualized estimate on what and how much you need to eat, log onto www.MyPyramid.gov and link onto the section MyPyramid Plan or to check your activity level link onto the section MyPyramid Tracker.

The FDL Children and Weight Coalition, which UW-Extension Family Living is a member of, helped initiate the production of the Physical Activities in Fond du Lac County Map. This was done through assistance with the Fond du Lac County Planning and Parks Department and was sponsored by the American Heart Association, Agnesian Healthcare, Aurora Health Care, Mercury Marine and the Children and Weight Coalition. The maps were distributed to families through the school system and sponsoring agencies. 41,000 have been distributed. More maps are planned for a 2006 reprint. This map has been used with WNEP programming to support the physical activity recommendation. ▪

Legal Issues for Farm Families

A Legal Issues for Farm Families workshop was held to help farmers with farm transfer and estate planning. An area agricultural attorney, George Twohig, and UW-Extension Attorney Phil Harris gave insight on various options. Individual consultations were offered. The meeting evaluation scored high in relevance, need and expanding the knowledge of the participants. ▪

Household and Agricultural Hazardous Waste Collection Program

Fond du Lac County UW-Extension was contacted by the Fond du Lac County Executive to look at conducting a household and agriculture Clean Sweep. Fond du Lac County residents had been contacting local officials about conducting a hazardous waste collection program. The Fond du Lac County UW-Extension office wrote a grant application from the State of Wisconsin to receive funding to conduct the program. The County was selected to receive \$27,500 towards the cost of conducting the program. In the fall of 2005 a household and agriculture Clean Sweep hazardous waste collection program was held. 222 households and 47 agri-businesses participated in the program. Residents were able to properly dispose of their hazardous waste.

Educational information for the program and alternative methods of waste disposal were provided through news releases, radio programs, newsletters and handouts distributed to 10,000 students through the Fond du Lac County schools. Students that received the educational information gained awareness of hazardous waste chemicals and methods on how to properly dispose of them. Fond du Lac County Master Gardeners conducted surveys at the two locations where program was conducted. ▪

Highlights in Numbers: 2005 Statistics

- 298 Teaching/Educational Events
- 807 Media Contacts
- 14,072 People Reached/Contacts

Higher Fertilizer Costs Cut Potential Crop Margins for 2005 Crops

One of the primary topics of conversation, concern and local Extension programming this winter has been the increased cost of fertilizer inputs, especially nitrogen and potassium. Fertilizer costs generally mirror energy costs and for the first time in many years (perhaps ever), the cost of nitrogen has reached a point where reducing fertilizer inputs below traditional UW-Extension recommendations has occurred. Further, the price of potassium fertilizer has increased a whopping 30 percent in the past 12 months. The issue at hand is to find the delicate bal-

ance of crop productivity versus crop profitability. Information surrounding the issue has been addressed at several winter crop meetings, in the print media and on radio programs. Further, I developed a computer spreadsheet program that will help producers and agronomists fine-tune nitrogen recommendations for corn based on expected crop price and fertilizer cost. The program has been made available on the internet and has been receiving statewide use. Incorrect fertilizer decisions in 2005 will spell the difference between profit and loss. ■

Community Garden

The Community Garden is located on ten acres of Fond du Lac County Airport property at the corner of Pioneer Road and Grove Street. The garden was started in 2000 with 32 gardeners having 56 plots on one acre. In 2005, the garden now has 102 gardeners having 167 plots on over six acres. ■

Where Does the Money Go?

From time to time, a person may have asked this question of themselves: "Where Does the Money Go?" when they find there is more month than money left.

Financial security is the goal for many Americans. Financial security is defined as, "a family's ability to meet its short-term needs and to reach its long-term financial objectives." The path to financial security begins with establishing financial stability or the ability to make ends meet. For many families, just one shift in the status quo of financial resources (e.g., loss of a job, death of a breadwinner, divorce, or long-term illness) can be detrimental to financial stability and, if persistent, will impact financial security.

According to the 2003 National Family Consumer Sciences POW Impact Committee on Financial Security, "an early, clear understanding of basic principles of budgeting and saving is linked to increased household wealth later in life." Financial education can help households learn the lifelong skills of creating and using a spending and savings plan and making strategic investment decisions.

In Fond du Lac County, Basic Spending Plan education has been the focus for two different community partnerships. Collaborators are: UW-Extension, with ADVOCAP and the Fresh Start program. The title of the course that is being taught to each audience respectively is: Where Does the Money Go? To date, there are 15 individuals in the ADVOCAP class which meets twice a month over a three month period and the Fresh Start program meets monthly with 20 individuals. The ADVOCAP class is intended to be offered four times a year with new class participants each time. Both courses are new endeavors for the collaborators and the final outcome intended is for participants to understand basic spending plan concepts of fixed, flexible and seasonal expenses, plus the importance of saving for emergencies. These basic lifelong skills will help those individuals in building and managing their own spending plans, which will aid them taking control of their finances. ■

Strategic Planning with Fond du Lac County Organizations

Fond du Lac County UW-Extension has developed a team approach to the requests for strategic planning. Extension Educator Jim Hovland worked with Educators Nan Baumgartner and Shelley Tidemann in facilitating the process for the different requests for planning. Four organizations that utilized UW-Extension were the Fond du Lac County Volunteer Center, Family Resource Center, Fond du Lac County Health Department and Wisconsin HCE organization. Several planning sessions were held for each of the different organizations. Sessions were held on issues identification, needs assessment and then developing the plan. Each or-

ganization provided the leadership in development of the plan. UW-Extension facilitated the planning process.

The Family Resource Center and Fond du Lac Area Volunteer Center participated in the planning process and each organization developed a strategic plan. These organizations' members were involved in the writing and the development of the plan. After the sessions, the organizations were involved in further development and implementation of the plan.

The Fond du Lac County Health Department over the next couple of years will be going through changes in their employees. The Director

approached the UW-Extension Office about facilitating a planning process to look at the future of the Health Department and what the needs/issues might be. Several sessions looked at identifying the issues/needs of the health department and then developing a plan for the future.

The Wisconsin HCE organization is involved in the strategic planning process. The organization's plan will be completed in 2006. During 2005 the organization's leadership went through an organizational assessment tool and conducted a membership needs/issues process. ■

Positive Parenting of Teens

For the past three years, UW-Extension has teamed with Ripon School District to provide a parent workshop for parents of teens. The 4 or 5 part series is co-facilitated by Nan Baumgartner, Family Living Educator, and Pat Sias, Ripon Public Schools Psychologist. Parents learn a variety of skills to help them in their important role as a parent of a teenager. Establishing negotiable and non-negotiable rules is one of the concepts taught as well as the importance of monitoring teens. Monitoring means supervising teens. It means knowing teens' whereabouts at all times, who they spend time with and all their social plans. It also includes being aware of a teenager's behavior when he or she is not in their parent's sight, such as during school hours.

Despite the increasing challenges, monitoring is one of the most important things a parent can do to prevent adolescent problem behavior. Research shows that better parental moni-

toring is related to lower rates of sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, truancy, thoughts about suicide and suicide attempts, running away and delinquency. One study showed that only eight percent of ninth graders whose parents monitored their activities closely were likely to have had five alcoholic drinks in a row during the past month, compared with 68 percent of ninth graders whose parents didn't keep close tabs on them. A similar trend was noted for sexual activity.

To be an effective monitor, parents don't need to be present at every moment. Nor do they have to become overly intrusive or violate the privacy that teens typically crave. Parents do need to show consistent and active interest in their child's life. And they do need to be willing to enforce family rules and raise issues that concern them. Parenting isn't easy, in fact, it is downright hard sometimes, but as the parents in the workshops learn, "it's worth it." ■

4-H Junior Leaders Make a Wish Come True

Because Fond du Lac County 4-H Junior Leaders wanted to do something special for someone else, they planned and hosted a charity dinner for the Make A Wish Foundation that raised \$2,204.20. To carry out this project the youth planned the menu, researched costs in order to set a price for the dinner, secured a location for the event, wrote PSA's and news releases to promote it and recruited 40 other 4-H members to help as waiters, child care providers, entertainers and kitchen help. The young people contacted businesses for donations, selected a Valentine's theme for the program and gathered decorations. They prepared and served the chicken dinner to over 70 individuals.

Through this community service project youth said they learned the following:

- How to properly set a table
- How to write a news release
- How to spend money wisely by comparing prices
- How to use Excel to make a ledger to keep track of money
- How to recruit people to help
- How to organize the entertainment
- How to wash lettuce, make gravy and peel potatoes
- How to contact businesses for donations
- How to make decisions as a group
- The importance of cooperation
- How to plan and organize
- That we made a difference for a good cause
- How to wait on an impatient customer ■

4-H Jr. Leaders prepare cheesecake with cherry topping for the Make A Wish Charity dinner fundraiser they hosted.



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University of Wisconsin-Extension,
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