



Fond du Lac County University of Wisconsin-Extension 2006 Annual Report

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

Agronomy Web Site Celebrates 10-year Anniversary

It all started in 1996 with the thought that this World Wide Web thing might catch-on and what a convenient way it would be to both offer and obtain information. Armed with some primitive software and free server space from the University of Wisconsin, the Fond du Lac County Agronomy web site was launched. The basic premise of the site has not changed in the past ten years.....to provide east central Wisconsin crop producers and agribusinesses with both timely and timeless information that will aid in the profitable production of crops. It has proved invaluable in that role. What has changed significantly in the past ten years have been the number

of users, especially among farmers. It has now become the primary method to obtain alfalfa forage quality information in the spring, corn silage whole plant moisture testing results in the fall, and quality tested hay auction prices in the winter. Further, information from the past ten years is archived such that the hundreds of web based articles and fact sheets are accessible at any time. This makes it possible to reference information to clients and have them obtain it immediately from their home or farm office without us needing to send it out or the client having to make a trip to our office. Yep, this World Wide Web might just be here to stay. ■

Connecting with Families: *Make a Difference that Lasts*

Successfully raising children continues to be one of the most important responsibilities faced by society. While families remain the primary place where children are raised, there is increasing recognition that others share this task outside of the immediate family, due in part to parental employment and to the increasing number of parents unable to care for children because of issues related to substance abuse, incarceration, poverty, neglect, or death. Research tells us that high quality early care and education programs produce greater gains in child development than do low quality programs. So it would behoove us to work hard to provide opportunities for those caring for our children to get continual education and support in their important role.

As part of a continuing education plan for child care staff, UW-Extension in Fond du Lac County and Dodge County have been piloting a new educational series entitled, "Connecting with Families in Early Care and Education: Make a Difference That Lasts!"



The five part series includes research and best practices on involving families in the early care and education setting. It focuses on the importance of child care providers and parents becoming partners in supporting optimal growth and development of our nation's greatest asset – its children. ■

Master Gardener Program

Fond du Lac County has an evening spring program which is a general Master Gardener program. The 2006 spring program focused on general horticulture topics – designing with perennials, annual flowers and houseplants, vegetable production, fruit crops, landscape plant selection and care, and turf. People attended the program from different parts of Fond du Lac County. Following the spring program people work with the UW-Extension office on different horticulture projects in the county. ■



Small Business Education

Fond du Lac County UW-Extension co-sponsors small business counseling with the UW-Oshkosh Small Business Development Center. These confidential counseling sessions are offered at the UW-Extension office. Instructors are UW-Extension faculty. The business owner (or potential business owner) meets with the UW faculty to discuss issues related to their business. Additional counseling follow-up sessions occur with the individual on issues that impact their business. ■

Wis. Nutrition Education Program

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 2006, 1,981 learners attended one or more WNEP educational events; 200 more contacts than 2005. Nearly half (45%) of the participants represented families with children, 39% were youth ages 5-17, and 16% were adults without children. The majority of the participants were women (63%), but 2006 saw an increase in male participation in the program. Participants were 79% white, 5% African American, 2% Asian American, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native and 14% other. The 2006 year saw an increase in Hispanic/Latino program participants from 9% in 2005 to 14%. Sixty-two percent (1,222) of the learners attended a multi-group session, 22% (439) attended one-time group sessions and 16% (308) attended a learn-while-you-wait session. The remaining 1% attended an individual learner (one-on-one) session. The one time group sessions were just short of doubling from 2005 reported numbers. Fifty-five percent (1,084) of learners attended a teaching

event that addressed a dietary quality outcome, 31% (613) of the learners attended a teaching event addressing a food resource management outcome, and the remaining 284 (14%) received information on food safety and food security outcome topics.

The program emphasized indirect contacts in 2006 with three displays; one was to promote WNEP at the City-County Building in Fond du Lac and Green Lake DSS building. This was a first – to put up such a display on promoting the WNEP program in the two counties. Self-referrals did come from the displays. The other two displays were targeted to families with children, 70 attended. The topics focused on were under the categories of choosing a healthful diet and community programs and resources to improve food security. In addition to displays, 17,966 families with children were reached through newsletters or lessons by mail. This year, the Fond du Lac/Green Lake program strengthened the collaboration with the Salvation Army with educational activity sheets enclosed in the Brown Bag Lunch Program. The Salvation Army prepared and delivered 1,200 brown bag lunches a week during the summer break from school. WNEP developed 9 different educational inserts in the areas of food safety and vegetable consumption, which were a part of the 16,230 lunches that were provided by Salvation Army throughout the 2006 summer lunch program. ■

Dairy Partner / El Companero Newsletter

In Fond du Lac County, over 59% of the cows are on dairy farms that have over 150 cows. On most of these dairy farms, employees are responsible for much of the labor involved in feeding, cleaning and caring of the dairy cattle. There has been no newsletter in Wisconsin (& perhaps the US) that has targeted these employees on a continuous basis. Most publications and newsletters have targeted owners, operators, managers and sometimes herdsman of these operations. The new Dairy Partner / El Companero has its eyes set on changing this. The newsletter is a 4 page (2 page English / 2 page Spanish) newsletter that communicates basic farm skills to employees. In addition, the newsletter will have a small safety section and a life skills section. With the help of some industry sponsors, the newsletter will be printed in color with high quality pictures to improve value to employees with various levels of education. For 2007 the newsletter will be

distributed bimonthly to not only farms in Fond du Lac County but, in total, 500 farms in eastern WI (1000 issues) that represent about 50% of the cows on the eastern side of the state. ■



4-H Speaking and Demonstration Contest

When adults are asked, “What is one of the hardest things for you to do?” often the answer is “I have trouble talking in front of a group.” Speaking in front of a group may be stressful for many of us. But like in most things practice makes perfect and starting young can help. All 4-H members including our five year old Cloverbuds were invited to participate in the Speaking and Demonstration Contest. They chose to give a demonstration, memorized declamation, original speech, or interpretive reading of prose or poetry. 55 members participated ranging from ages 5 to 18. The ten volunteer judges for the event were area business people, teachers, or 4-H alumni. It was a very educational experience for all the people involved in this contest, and it strengthened a skill that they will use for a lifetime in school, with family and friends, and on the job. ■



Fox River Valley Area Woodland Owners Conference

The Fox River Valley Area Woodland Owners Conference provided educational information to woodlot owners. Program participants gained an understanding of woodlot management techniques that included tree planting, wildlife habitat, and protecting the woodlot from forest fires. Information was presented on establishment and selection of hardwood trees to plant in the woodlot. Additional program emphasis was placed on survey land and a representative from the Department of

Justice talked about methamphetamine labs that are occurring in rural areas. During part of the program, local woodland owners talked about their woodlots and how they manage them. The program is developed through UW-Extension, WDNR Foresters, and the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association. UW-Extension specialists, WDNR Foresters, private consultants, and private landowners presented the information. ■

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. In 2006, we had 100 gardener families (72% White, 27% Hmong, 1% Hispanic) using 153 plots. The Hmong gardeners continue to use more than half of the garden area by taking larger plots and doing a wonderful job of keeping them up. A garden newsletter is sent out several times throughout the summer with information to help the gardeners. The Master Gardeners give extra garden produce to local food pantries for the "Feed the Hungry" project. ■



How can Adults Help Children in the area of Financial Literacy?

Financial literacy has been in the news recently. Wisconsin DPI unveiled new educational standards for personal financial literacy. The standards are in relation to personal financial literacy benchmarks which will prepare youth for their adult lives.

Teaching money skills to youth can be complex, as there is a market place that provides a message of instant gratification and money is more abstract than it used to be. Seeing adults use credit cards, debit cards, ATM machines and the internet to pay bills instead of cash can be confusing for youth. Plus some adults have not perfected their financial habits yet.

On June 13th, UW-Extension Family Living Education and 4-H Youth Development Programs collaborated with area banks, financial institutions and Agnesian Foundation to present the Ultimate Money Quest. The Quest was a one-day event for middle school aged students designed to teach money skills in a fun learning environment.

After an opening session on Ident-

tity Theft, the 40 participants attended four active learning sessions dealing with:

- What is a want? What is a need?
- Your financial fuel tank! (buying with credit, just how much something can really cost, how ATM machines work)
- Careers in the financial field and the training, education required
- Money! Including the proper way of writing a check and balancing a register and how to make change

At the beginning of the day, each participant was given a job card and one week's wages (in fake money). This was their job and the money they needed to work with for the day. They earned or lost money throughout the day because after each session, they received a "Fate" card, two were a reward and two were a penalty or fine.



After redeeming their cards, they needed to do three more things: set up a virtual savings account, give a donation to a charity and purchase a virtual

article of clothing. After these requirements were fulfilled, they could go to our "Reality Mall" and with their fake money purchase real items to take home. We had five "shops" with balls, photo albums, picture frames, cologne, books, toss pillows, calculators, mini radios, flash lights, note pads, backpack bags, etc. for them to purchase. Donations from the financial institutions made it possible for us to offer these items.

Participants came from various areas of the county. Seventeen of the 40 had a mailing address of Fond du Lac, but others came from Waupun, Eden, Fox Lake, Brownsville, Lomira, Campbellsport, Plymouth, Rosendale, Theresa, Van Dyne and North Fond du Lac.

Evaluation from the day proved that the youth did gain financial literacy information. The topics of saving and how to use banking services were areas identified showing the greatest increase in awareness. ■

Nutrient Management Training

How nutrients (commercial and farm generated) are applied to the land impacts all residents of our community. Excessive runoff from farm fields can cause polluted surface and ground waters. Proper nutrient application has both environmental and economic benefits. For the past six years, UW-Extension and the Land Conservation Office have offered Fond du Lac County livestock producers the opportunity to participate in the Wisconsin Nutrient Management Farmer Education Program. The program consists of a two-day educational workshop, private consultation on nutrient management strategies, manure spreader calibration, updated soil conservation and field maps, and the development of a comprehensive nutrient management plan. To date, nearly 50 farm operations have participated in the program along with their field crop consultants. Dairy herd size has ranged from nearly 100 to over 1000 milking cows in these operations.

Extensive survey work is done with these producers prior to, during, and after completion of the program. Upon completion of the training, 98 percent of participants were able to identify the recommended nitrogen recommendation for corn and the proper alfalfa nitrogen credit for alfalfa. Additionally, 100 percent of participants indicated they learned something that would improve their soil fertility management and 97 percent of participants indicated they would change some aspect of their fertility management as a result of the program. ■

4-H Family Learning Day

Fond du Lac County 4-H families had an opportunity to learn together at the 17th annual 4-H Family Learning Day. It was a fun and informative day of learning a new skill about a current project that youth are involved in or they were able to discover ideas in other project areas. 193 youth, parents, and leaders learned from over 40 presenters. The participants were able to choose four sessions to attend. Some of the topics included origami, ceramics, swing dance steps, German, Nicaraguan culture, healthy snacks, building model rockets, bird feeders, computers, football, and candle making just to name a few. The Junior Leaders developed their leadership skills by helping with registration, teaching some of the sessions, and assisting in clean up. ■

Highlights in Numbers: 2006 Statistics

- 252 Teaching/Educational Events
- 562 Media Contacts
- 10,047 People Reached/Contacts

Fathers can have Enormous Impact on Children

In an analysis of nearly 100 studies of parent-child relationships, father love (measured by children's perceptions of paternal acceptance/rejection, affection/indifference) was as important as mother love in predicting the social, emotional and cognitive development and functioning of children and young adults. Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to *do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity* compared to children who have uninvolved fathers.

In a program coordinated by Head Start, UWEX provides dads, stepdads, uncles and grandfathers learning opportunities to interact with their 3-5 year old children with an age-appropriate activity and then to talk about specific parenting issues they may have. A main goal of the program has been to help fathers develop a close relationship with their child through a shared activity. A second goal of the program is to increase father's knowledge of child development and foster realistic expectations for children. As topics are led by UW-Extension, the fathers also learn from observing other men interacting with their children, seeing the results of different



parenting styles and gaining ideas for different guidance techniques. Fathers truly are an important part of a young child's life – programs to help them be successful in that role are worth the investment of time and effort. ■

Dairy Youth Day of Learning

Dairy Youth Day of Learning is held each year to provide educational programs for 4-H and FFA dairy project members. The 2006 program consisted of linear scoring of dairy animals, animal preparation two to three months before the fair, dairy exhibit teamwork, and other dairy youth activities, such as dairy judging, dairy bowl, quality milk auction, and dairy management project. Over 50 youth and 20 parents participated. ■

Afterschool Program

Fond du Lac County 4-H has worked with the Fond du Lac Boys and Girls Club Afterschool program for about three years. The program is a safe place at two local schools for students to go after their school day. They are served a meal, participate in fun learning sessions, and receive assistance with their homework. The state 4-H program has an Afterschool work team and last year the Riverside School program was a pilot to provide information to other 4-H After-School sites around the state.

Through the activities the children

develop skills such as getting along with others, decision-making, and communications. These skills are acquired depending on the sessions that are taught.

Presentations were made at Fahey and Riverside school where about 25 to 30, 4th and 5th graders attended sessions. Dr. Mike Jurmu, UW-Fond du Lac geography/geology professor; Carrie Hovland, Service-Learning coordinator and Gail Roberts, 4-H Youth Development, collaborated on six weekly sessions. Dr. Jurmu's Weather and Climate students are leading the sessions as a ser-

vice-learning project and are being graded on: developing lesson plans, giving a practice presentation to fellow students, giving the presentation at the Afterschool site and writing a reflection paper. Their teaching topics are earth/sun relations, light, pressure and wind, temperature, clouds and lightning, and precipitation and humidity.

This is a win/win project for UW-Extension, for the college's service-learning projects, but most importantly for the Afterschool youth. ■

Grow Wisconsin Farmer Workshop

A multi-county and agency team held a Grow Wisconsin Farmer workshop in January. The objective of the workshop is to inform beginning farmers about loan and grant programs, business arrangements, and what it takes to be successful.

A panel of dairy farmers explained how they got started. Josh Hiemstra from Brandon explained how he got started with his parents; another farmer got started through renting, and a third, through working in agri-business to gain experience before purchasing a farm.

The management team from Dick and Gail Wetzel's Pebble Knolls Dairy, LLC of Brandon talked about how ag professionals can assist in the dairy's success. A management team consists of a banker, accountant, veterinarian, nutritionist, farm advisor, or any other person who can help solve problems, set goals, and develop plans to achieve these goals. The following agencies collaborated: Badgerland Farm Credit, Lakeshore and Moraine Park Technical College, USDA – Farm Service Agency, UW-Center for Dairy Profitability, UW-Extension, Fond du Lac, Sheboygan, and Dodge Counties and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. ■

Indoor Air Quality Education

An indoor air quality educational display was developed for the Fond du Lac County Home Builders Show that focused on indoor air quality with an emphasis on building radon resistance construction techniques for new homes. The display highlighted the importance of testing your home for radon. Last year and this year Fond du Lac County UW-Extension and the Fond du Lac County Health Department worked with a local builder to promote radon reduction construction techniques in a newly constructed home through the Fond du Lac-Dodge County Home Builders Association Parade of Homes. The home features a radon reduction system and a display is at the home site to explain radon and the radon resistant construction techniques to the people that are attending the Parade of Homes. The Fond du Lac County UW-Extension office partners with the County Health Department in providing radon information to residents in Fond du Lac County. ■

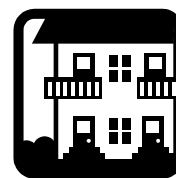
Rent Smart

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 Advocap Community Development counselors. One hundred five (105) individuals have participated in 2006 and to date, 24 individuals have participated in 2007. Participants indicated numerous times after completing the sessions, "I will pay closer attention to applications, reading the lease, check-in/check-out 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.

In 2006, Fond du Lac City Fair Housing Authority funded the printing of the Rent Smart booklet costs.



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. ■

A Certification Frenzy in 2006

Both young and old made their way to the certification scene this past winter with 21 youth participating in the Wisconsin Tractor and Machinery Safety Certification Program (WTMSCP) and 143 adults completing Private Pesticide Applicator Training and Certification.

The Fond du Lac County UW-Extension Office offers WTMSCP to county youth on an annual basis. Youth who work on farms are required to take the course if they are at least 12 years of age and want to drive tractor on a public road as they work for their parents or if they are 14 years old and want to operate farm machinery for a non-related employer. These guidelines are set forth by federal and state statutes. In Fond du Lac County, the course consists of lectures, guest



speakers, videos, and hands-on activities at local farm machinery dealers. Participants must also pass a written and driving examination after the 20 hours of instruction are concluded.

UW-Extension is also responsible for training private pesticide applicators to help insure safe application of restricted use pesticide products. The day long program covers basic pesticide use principles, proper handling of pesticides, laws and regulations, sprayer calibration and the potential environmental impact of pesticide applications. Participants must then take a written examination, which is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. ■

Working Caregivers Cost U.S. Business Up to \$33.6 Billion Per Year

Lost productivity of working caregivers costs U.S. business \$17.1 billion to \$33.6 billion per year, says a new report from the MetLife Mature Market Institute®. The average caregiver costs an employer \$2,110 per year, says *The MetLife Caregiving Costs Study: Productivity Losses to U.S. Business*, produced in conjunction with the National Alliance for Caregiving. For caregivers providing the most intense levels of care, the cost per employee is \$2,441, totaling \$17.1 billion. The total annual cost for all caregivers is \$33.6 billion. The findings represent an increase of approximately \$4 billion in both categories from 1997, when the study was first conducted.

It is these trends that have UW-Extension working to connect with employers about how to support employed caregivers. A workplace program entitled: ElderCare and Work: Finding the Balance may be one response for this complex issue. ■

Junior Master Gardeners

The Junior Master Gardener Program reached 70 youth in the 2006 program year. The program is a collaboration between the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program, 4-H and Master Gardeners. Youth that participated in the program were from the Boys and Girls Club, Salvation Army Child Care, 4-H and the WNEP Food Group.

The focus for the 2006 growing season was growing a rainbow of vegetables. USDA's My Pyramid recommends that Americans eat more vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet. The rainbow of vegetables focus en-

couraged youth to learn about vegetables, how they come in all colors of the rainbow and their importance for good health. Youth learned how to maintain a garden, use the produce raised to prepare food they ate and provided service to their community. Two garden sites were established — one at UW-Fond du Lac and the other at the Community Garden site.

Junior Master Gardener participants, their parents and Master Gardeners celebrated the end of the year with a meal the participants made using the vegetables from their garden. ■

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2006 STAFF

Agents/Educators

Nan Baumgartner, Family Living Educator/Dept. Head
Paul Dyk, Dairy and Livestock Agent (began Sept. 06)
Jim Hovland, Community Resource Development Agent (retired Nov. 06)
Irv Possin, Dairy and Livestock Agent (until Apr. 06)
Mike Rankin, Crops and Soils Agent
Gail Roberts, Interim 4-H Youth Dev. Program Advisor
Shelley Tidemann, Family Living Educator

Staff Assistants/Educators

Michelle Batterman, 4-H (until June 06)
Patty Percy, Community Gardens
Pamela Nelson, WNEP
Kristine Schaeffer, WNEP
Sharon Woolhether, WNEP

Program Assistants

Karen Fannin Kathy Schneider
Ann Kaiser Sue Siegesmund
Gloria Kelroy

University of Wisconsin-Extension,
United States Department of Agriculture,
and Wisconsin Counties cooperating.

Providing equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX requirements.

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