



### **Regional Crops & Soils Educator**

**Jordyn Sattler**

### **Regional Dairy Educator**

**Jackie McCarville**

#### **Nitrogen Optimization Program – Year 2 Harvest**

A study to better understand how optimum nitrogen rates for corn change with and without a rye cover crop. Results from this study will help grain producers determine the most economical and efficient nitrogen use for their fields in certain agronomic situations, promoting sustainability of the farming operation and reducing losses to the environment. (Sattler)

#### **Grant Proposal – Analyzing Alternative Traits and Technologies for Producing Highly Digestible Corn Silage**

Proposing and planning for a multi-location study to evaluate potential alternatives to brown midrib (BMR) corn hybrids for the production of highly digestible corn silage. Results from this study will help dairy producers and agronomists transition between various traits and technologies after the largest producer of BMR hybrids phases them out of production within the next five years. Mitigating potential decreases in milk production associated with lower silage quality will be critical for current BMR-users to sustain efficient production and profitability. This project is pending selection for grant funding. (Sattler)

#### **Call Radio Spotlight**

A monthly radio spot (on two different radio stations) for dairy producers, allied ag industries, and the general public to learn about Extension publications and resources, programming updates, and available webinars or workshops in the area. The intent was to reach a broader audience with timely topics and resources in order to positively influence on-farm economic viability, knowledge and skills, and overall impression of Extension. (McCarville)

#### **Navigating Nitrogen through Nitrogen Use Efficiency**

A presentation for producers and agronomy professionals where they learned how and why to calculate nitrogen use efficiency (NUE) on their farms. Through this effort, participants understand what information is needed, how to perform NUE calculations, ways to improve NUE, and why it's important. By monitoring NUE associated with nitrogen management changes, producers are more profitable and have a reduced risk of nitrate leaching to groundwater. (Sattler)

#### **Body Condition Scoring in Dairy Cattle**

An article written for dairy farmers and industry professionals where we discussed the importance and impact of Body Condition Score (BCS). The purpose of the article is to help farmers measure it on farm to help prevent digestible disorders at different stages of production, and to increase efficiency of the cows. (McCarville)



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#### **Save a Calf, Save a Cow**

A workshop for beef and dairy producers and their workers, where participants learned about colostrum, how to prepare cows for calving, the importance of calf care, when to intervene in a calving situation, and how to safely assist in pulling a calf or call a vet for help. Through this workshop, beef and dairy producers and their workers can help set their calves up for success from day one. Long-term, this creates a healthy and resilient calf crop that performs well in the next stages of production. (McCarville)

#### **November Badger Dairy Insight**

A webinar for dairy owners, employees, and industry professionals where participants learned about a free tool that can help calculate forage needs and track inventory plus a dairy producer panel of farmers who built feed centers to reduce waste and save them money. The goal is to help producers better manage feed costs. (McCarville)

#### **Scout School 2026**

Planning for a hybrid foundational crop scout training for entry level crop scouts. The goal is to provide updated, relevant resources and key skills to support crop scouts as they identify pests, nutrient deficiencies, perform basic sampling techniques and communicate their findings to managers and growers in real time. The impact is the ability to address important crop challenges in season and improve crop productivity and farm profitability. (Sattler)

#### **Navigating Nitrogen Workshop**

A workshop for farmers and agronomy professionals where participants learned about efficient nitrogen use, agronomic vs economic optimum nitrogen rates, environmental impacts of excess nitrogen in agronomic systems, and nitrogen-focused biological products. Through this program, participants have the tools to evaluate nitrogen use on their farms and will be better able to protect groundwater resources. (Sattler)

#### **Cost of Raising Heifers Survey**

A statewide survey for dairy producers, where participants shared detailed records on inputs, management practices, and expenses associated with raising replacement heifers to generate updated benchmarks and highlight cost-saving opportunities, to support more informed decision-making and improve the economic sustainability of dairy operations. (McCarville)





## Community Development Educator Victoria Solomon

### Green County Leaders: Leadership & Effective Communication

The fourth session of Green County Leaders, focused on Leadership and Effective Communication, was held at the Brodhead Memorial Public Library and the Kelch Aviation Museum. It included gratitude activities as well as sessions on effective communication, building trust, and connect-working by asking powerful questions and active listening. Additionally, there was a session on the process of running for local elected office and a session in which participants learned about third spaces and libraries.

In a First Impressions activity, participants explored Brodhead and gave perspectives on assets and challenges, which were shared with Brodhead leadership in attendance. Solomon and Green County Development Corporation (GCDC) will share the collective perspectives with the Brodhead community so they can be used to inform their action planning for the next year.

At Kelch Aviation Museum, participants learned about the museum then participated in an Urban Rural Action Dialogue Across Differences session. In response to a session evaluation:

- 81% (30 / 37) said the workshop helped deepen their understanding of different perspectives around rural identity and changing communities in Green County.
- 70% (26 / 37) said they are more confident now in engaging in conversations across difference than they were prior to the workshop.
- 92% (34 / 37) said they are "very likely" or "likely" to use the skills they learned today [at the workshop].

In response to the question "in what setting(s) do you imagine applying these skills?" participants shared:

- "Active work environment, patient care, team management."
- "Social, professional, familial"

Responses were across self-identified political perspectives.

In response to the question "What did you like about the workshop?" participants shared:

- "The ability to discuss and practice active listening, constructive conversation in a safe environment with mentors to guide / explore how it's done."
- "It got people thinking with different perspectives in mind. Taught us how to actively listen and coach (even ourselves) better."

In response to the question "What did you like about the workshop?" participants shared:

- "The questions were thought-provoking and had immediate relevance to our community. It was a chance for me to think through them in a safe environment."
- "I liked that we were able to express ourselves and learn through genuine conversation."

Participants overwhelmingly shared that it would be beneficial to have more of these sessions in Green County.

### Civic Engagement: Community Garden

In a community conversation facilitated by Solomon and Lezburg, Latino leaders identified a collective desire and opportunity to start a community garden, resulting in site exploration. In November, they facilitated a successful bilingual (Spanish / English) conversation with participants and Union Presbyterian Church leadership regarding a potential site. The number of interested and engaged participants has increased. Conversations are ongoing for building relationships and agreements over winter for a spring start.

### Monroe Noon Optimists

A presentation to the Monroe Noon Optimists where participants learned about the Wisconsin Idea, Extension, and Green County Leaders to better understand community issues and opportunities, leadership, and social capital and networking.







## 4-H Youth Development Educator

**Ellen Andrews**

### 4-H Club Leadership Team Training

4-H Community Clubs serve as the access point by which over 90% of our youth members access 4-H membership. These clubs are meant to be youth led and adult supported. While club have long used a youth officer and adult leader structure, it can be difficult to build and maintain an environment where all parties truly value each other's perspective, youth are prepared to take on meaningful responsibility, and adults are ready release control. Providing both youth officers and adult club volunteers with ongoing training is critical to fostering an effective youth-adult partnership. The 2025 4-H Club Leadership Team training aimed to bring together youth officer and adult club organizational leaders, as a means of creating a more shared youth-adult leadership model in clubs. The evening started with a free meal, followed by an interactive training that got participants moving and discussing issues of engagement and brainstorming ideas for encouraging 4-H members to be more engaged in 4-H at both the club and county levels. The training concluded with breakout sessions focused on their individual leadership positions. This was the third year of switching to a youth-adult Club Leadership Team Training, rather than simply a Club Officer Training. We had 16 of the 18 clubs represented, and 63 participants this year, which was a 21% increase in participants over last year. Evaluations of responding participants (n=55) indicated that as a result of this training experience...

- 65% of participants found working with a group helped them to think about an issue in many different ways.
- 96% of participants were encouraged to express their ideas and point of view.
- 100% of participants saw youth and adults showing respect for each other.
- 80% of participants found out more about their club leadership position than they knew before.

Both youth and adult participants noted useful ideas, perspectives and skills gained at this training, including ideas for encouraging more youth participation at meeting, opportunities to working collaboratively with other clubs, and many leadership specific skills. Following the training, we have seen multiple clubs already putting into use ideas and strategies they gained at this training.

### 4-H New Family Orientation

Parents and family members of 4-H youth play a major role in the learning and growth experiences that youth have in 4-H. Their interest and support of 4-H programming will help the 4-H member gain new skills, learn to work with others, and make new friends. The 2025 4-H New Family Orientation is a great opportunity for new families to learn about the 4-H program and how families can best support their member's 4-H experience. The event kicks off with a free pizza party, followed by fun activities for the kids, and an orientation for the parents and guardians. Thanks to the help and support of numerous volunteers, we engaged 12 families, with youth of a wide variety of ages. Evaluations of this event indicated that all of the responding parents (n=8) increased their understanding of Green County 4-H and how they can help and support their 4-H member(s) in having a great experience, plus helped them feel more connected to the 4-H program and more comfortable asking questions. Parents expressed lots of appreciation for the fun opportunity for them and their children to meet other new families. They also noted that the most useful part of the event was the parent orientation, where they got to learn more information about projects, member in good standing requirements and more.

### 4-H Awards Program

A 4-H Awards program, where youth are recognized through the 4-H Record Book process, which promotes outgoing learning and growth. The event further empowers youth through a variety of public speaking and leadership roles.







## Human Development & Relationships Educator

### Bob Wiegel

#### Financial Coaching—Green County Jail 11/25

Extension's financial coaching program provides one-on-one support that helps residents create their own plans to manage expenses, pay off debts, save money for emergencies and to reach their goals. Participants can meet with Extension educators trained to provide coaching as many times as needed to develop and implement plans to resolve their financial challenges. The three main outcome goals are that participants will learn about local resources (e.g. how to apply for FoodShare benefits), Extension resources (e.g. spending plan worksheets), and financial management steps (e.g. steps to improve their credit). In 2024, Wisconsin residents who received our financial coaching reported many positive changes, suggesting that they can now more successfully navigate financial services. These positive outcomes extend beyond the coaching clients themselves, with clients reporting that a total of 449 family members also benefited from them. Wiegel has worked with 9 participants so far, one stating, "That was more constructive than I expected".

#### Planning AHEAD—Green County Fall 2025

End of life planning can be an intimidating, confusing, and emotional process. In a 2019 needs assessment, Extension educators throughout Wisconsin indicated a need for educational programs targeted to older adults who are about to or have lost a spouse or partner. Proactive planning for end-of-life decisions and care can prevent associated financial and emotional burdens. In response to this need, Extension developed a comprehensive end-of-life program called Planning AHEAD. The Planning AHEAD curriculum covers seven topics: Getting Started, Handling Financial Changes, Advance Directives, Estate Planning, Choices in End-of-Life Care, Final Wishes, and Understanding Grief. The course is typically delivered in weekly hour-long sessions for seven weeks. A participant said "Appreciated the time and expertise devoted to helping traverse the journey to "Plan Ahead"". This class had 10 participants.

#### Poverty Simulation for SSM Leaders

On November 5, Extension facilitated a Poverty Simulation for SSM Health leaders in Monroe. Wiegel led the simulation with support from Bev Doll, Human Development and Relationships Educator in Grant County, along with assistance from Area 17 Extension team members, including Andrews, McCarville, Roth, Sattler, Solomon, and AED Perkins.

The event engaged 36 participants in a simulated month in the life of individuals and families living in poverty. Participants navigated real-world challenges and systemic barriers, gaining insight into associated complexities and frustrations. The program was highly successful, and SSM expressed deep appreciation for Extension's efforts in planning and delivering this impactful learning experience.



#### Fathers in Focus Conference

Extension hosted its second annual *Fathers in Focus Conference* on October 18. The event brought together over 340 participants and featured a diverse lineup of guest speakers, vendors, and interactive activities. The conference offered three educational sessions focused on best practices in fatherhood and strategies for being a positive, impactful parent.

Wiegel served on the volunteer planning committee and hosted the "Man Cave," a dedicated space designed to foster networking and social connections among attendees.