

'I fell in love with agriculture'

New UW-Extension educator a Cedarburg native

By Melanie Boyung

News Graphic Staff

GRAFTON — Steph Plaster is taking up the lead in agricultural education for Ozaukee County.

Plaster began June 15 as the interim agriculture educator for both Ozaukee and Washington counties. The position, a part of the University of Wisconsin-Extension office, will keep Plaster involved in the Master Gardeners, youth livestock and dairy, livestock and farm programming.

A Cedarburg native, Plaster attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison; she earned a degree in international agriculture, with a focus on animal and dairy science, then went on to get her master's degree in agriculture for integrated resource management from Colorado State University.

She has worked in research, dairy, livestock and an urban aquaponic farm, according to information from the UW-Extension office.

"I was in 4-H in high school, I was more on the horse and pony side," Plaster said. "In college, I fell in love with agriculture."

In Ozaukee County, Plaster will oversee and coach the Master Gardeners, who are trained for that title and volunteer around the county teaching classes, holding workshops and working on community beautification.

She will also work with Ozaukee County's 4-H program with youth livestock programming; in Washington County, she will work with the same type of programming through Junior Holstein and Future Farmers of America as well.

Part of her role with the UW-Extension will be to work with local farms, dairies and animals. Plaster said she'll hold classes with different programs and training in her new position, as well as be able to work with individuals.

The UW-Extension program can help area farms with information, support and even technical assistance, calling in engineers or designers to help with agricultural design or systems.

"Anyone is welcome to visit me whenever they have any kind of question relating to agriculture, gardening or horticulture. They're welcome to drop by," Plaster said.

The interim position is for a one-year period to start. Plaster said that with the current reorganization going on in the UW-Extension system, nothing is certain as to what positions will remain where they are. Even so, she has hopes her new job will continue in Ozaukee County, where she's back living in Cedarburg where her family is within easy reach.

"I moved away for a while, but I wanted to come back and be close again," Plaster said.

"I'd love to stay in this area."

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Plaster

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