



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
OZAUCKEE COUNTY

**MAY 2025 REPORT**

## AGRICULTURE



*If it happens on a farm or in a field, the Extension Institute of Agriculture works with you to achieve better results. Our innovative dairy management programs range from genetics to farm and business management. Extension researchers work hand-in-hand with row crop, forage and fresh produce growers to provide best practices for every aspect of the growing phase. We also advise communities on using sustainable practices to create inviting spaces free from invasive species*

### Crops

Liz Gortman, Regional Crops Educator

A series of alfalfa measurements that will help to better understand optimum alfalfa and winter cereal harvest across Wisconsin. The results of this study will help forage growers to determine what techniques can best predict optimum forage harvest timing to improve first cutting forage quality for livestock.

- First crop alfalfa cutting tends to represent the largest quantity of forage yield for the year, representing approximately 36-41% of total dry matter (DM) yield. When harvested in a timely manner, it can result in high levels of neutral detergent fiber (NDF) digestibility while still meeting yield goals.
- Mismanaging first crop forage harvest timing creates challenges for the farm. Too early harvest leads to lower yield and extremely high-quality forage which some farms may struggle to properly utilize in their ration. Later than optimum harvest yields distinctly lower forage quality and may jeopardize a farm's plan for future harvest events.
- There is a diverse network of forage-focused staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension that have led the effort to track, report, and record alfalfa quality using Predictive Equations for Alfalfa Quality (PEAQ) and correlate with lab analyzed scissors cut results.
- A uniform statewide effort results in greater understanding and correlates relationships between PEAQ measurements and relative forage quality (RFQ) from lab reports in various growing regions across Wisconsin allowing for the development of future predictive tools to improve grower forecasting and decision-making capability.

A hybrid Foundational Crop Scout training that blends a series of webinar trainings with in person field days for entry-level crop scouts, crop growers and consultants where participants learn the basic skills necessary to scout field crops including corn, soybeans and alfalfa. Through this training series, we will provide "just in time" training to crop scouts as they begin work in the busy growing season.

A webinar where participants were introduced to the basic concepts of scouting grain and forage crops for pest, crop growth stages, nutrient deficiencies and other issues. Through this effort, beginning crop scouts will have the initial tools they need to effectively identify crop production issues that can help growers and crop consultants better manage through the growing season to secure crop yield and profitability.



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- While it is important to master the technical skills related to crop scout work, the planning and pre-work is key to a thorough field visit. I identified some of the very basic needs related to crop scout work - identifying the necessary tools, gathering field history and grower information, creating reports, utilizing available resources.
- There were 17 live views of the webinar from non-extension viewers, and the recording will be posted to the Foundational Field Scout Training Website for on-demand viewing. When reviewing the evaluation, the following comments were shared: "I was excited to see that there are disease/pest calendars. I had many windows/dates in my head but it really helps me to see them all laid out visually." "Saved all the links and will look into them. Will do some additional scouting today!" "I plan to have a strong relationship with customers and my managers/agronomists. To make sure everyone is aware of what is happening."

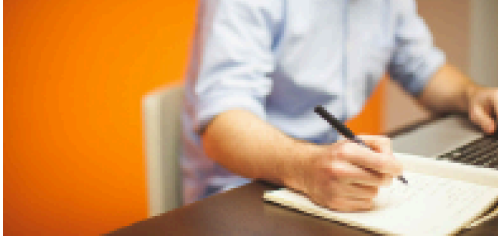


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DOUGLASS COUNTY

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



*Community Development provides educational programming to assist leaders, communities, and organizations realize their fullest potential. We work with communities to build the vitality that enhances their quality of life and enriches the lives of their residents. In short, the Community Development Institute plants and cultivates the seeds for thriving communities and organizations.*

### ***Paul Roback, Community Development Educator***

Two strategic planning sessions for the board and staff of the Mequon Nature Preserve, a local nonprofit, where we worked on updating the organization's mission and vision statements, discussed organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges, and identified goals. The intent of the planning process is to clarify the organization's purpose and develop achievable steps to realize their vision.

The executive director of the Mequon Nature Preserve (MNP), a local nonprofit, contacted Paul to facilitate a process that would create a strategic plan for their organization. This aligns with Paul's position description, which includes "building the capacity of nonprofits, community organizations, local governments, and coalitions." The MNP consists of "510-acres of prairies, wetlands, and hardwood mesic forests." The MNP includes environmental education, habitat restoration, research, agricultural heritage, and recreation. To achieve the planning objectives, Paul first conducted an external feedback survey to gain insight into how well the organization is achieving its mission and how inspired stakeholders are by the organization's vision. Next, he engaged the organization's staff and board with an online survey to solicit feedback on updating the organization's mission and vision statements. Then, Paul facilitated two strategic planning sessions attended by seventeen board and staff members where we worked on updating the organization's mission and vision statements; identified organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC); and identified goals. From the first session evaluations (N=15), 100% of participants agreed that conducting a SWOC Analysis assisted in the identification of internal strengths & weaknesses and external opportunities & challenges. From second session evaluations (N=10), 100% agreed that the updated mission statement helped clarify their role as an organization, 100% agreed that the updated vision statement assisted them in understanding the general direction for their organization's future, and 100% also agreed that the process of identifying goals increased their ability to identify issues and set priorities. 90% agreed that discussing action plans increased their ability to identify their next steps for future implementation. Participants evaluated Paul's facilitation as a 4.8 on a 5-point Likert Scale (1=poor and 5=excellent). One participant commented "I think this was a great exercise since not all meetings involve the board and staff. Understanding between everyone helps with clarification."



### 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



*Positive Youth Development prepares the youth of today to become the effective, empathetic adults of tomorrow. Our research-based youth enrichment programs like teens in governance build youth and adult capacity and partnerships that help both sides grow. 4-H clubs, camps and after-school programs give young people the hands-on experiences they need to develop an understanding of themselves and the world.*

#### **Abi Quinlan, 4-H Program Educator**

A needs assessment and planning process for 4-H youth and adult volunteers in the Horse and Pony project, where participants completed educator-developed surveys to identify strengths, communication gaps, and areas for improvement. Responses are now guiding a youth-adult partnership in strategic planning sessions led by the 4-H Educator to strengthen club culture, increase membership, and improve long-term retention.

The Ozaukee County 4-H Horse and Pony Project was experiencing challenges related to board communication, declining member retention, and an unclear vision for future growth. Youth and adult members expressed concerns about a lack of inclusivity, limited responsiveness to new ideas, and ineffective conflict resolution within the club's leadership structure. In response to these concerns, I, the 4-H Educator, initiated a structured assessment process to better understand the current culture and identify areas for improvement, laying the foundation for a strategic planning process aimed at rebuilding trust, increasing engagement, and creating a shared vision for the future. In response to the identified needs, I developed and implemented two targeted surveys—one for board members and one for youth participants—to assess communication effectiveness, leadership dynamics, and overall program experience. The results were compiled and analyzed to identify key themes and priority areas. Using this data, I am guiding a strategic planning process that actively engages both youth and adult leaders in co-creating a three-year plan focused on improving club culture, increasing membership, and enhancing retention. This process includes facilitated planning sessions, goal setting, and leadership development strategies to build a healthier, more inclusive program environment. The survey results revealed key areas for growth, including the need for improved communication, stronger youth voice, and more inclusive leadership practices. As a result, youth and adult leaders began working together to co-create a three-year strategic plan that reflects shared priorities and promotes a healthier club culture. Early outcomes include increased willingness among board members to engage in collaborative dialogue and more intentional opportunities for youth leadership. This effort lays the groundwork for sustained membership growth, stronger retention, and improved adult volunteer satisfaction. Long-term, this work supports positive youth development, strengthens community trust in the 4-H program, and builds a model for youth-adult partnership that can benefit other projects across the county.



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We teach, learn, lead and serve, connecting people with the University of Wisconsin, and engaging with them in transforming lives and communities.

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